

The Englishwoman in Korea: Discourses of Colonialism, Gender and Class in Isabella
Bird's *Korea and Her Neighbours*.

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<p>This thesis examines colonial, gender and class discourses in Isabella Bird's travel account <i>Korea and Her Neighbours</i> (1898) in order to illustrate how women's travel writing affected and was affected by imperialism in the late nineteenth-century Britain. The study also outlines major historical developments in British travel writing and the study of travel writing, paying particular attention to Isabella Bird's travels and public image as a traveler.</p> <p>Postcolonial theory is much indebted to Michel Foucault's discourse theory and its use by Edward Said in his analysis of the colonial/orientalist discourses in Western texts dealing with the Orient. These two theories are first examined and reviewed in the light of more recent postcolonial studies which, while recognizing the value of their arguments, further develop them by addressing their shortcomings such as lack of address to gender and unproblematic access to discourse. This thesis highlights in particular three recent key parts in the study of women's travel writing: the reception and production of travel accounts, portrayals of native peoples and locations, and narrative voices, which have been used in earlier studies to challenge the traditional notion of colonialism as a unified force with a singular purpose and the straightforward role of women (and men) in it.</p> <p>The analysis concentrates first on discourses of colonialism in <i>Korea and Her Neighbours</i>, examining particularly instances in which Korean people and their society/culture are othered based on tropes in which they are represented only in opposition to West, i.e. what the Western 'self' is not. After this are analyzed discourses of gender, which focus on the form and the content, narrative voices, and the description of native Koreans in the account. The third and final part of the analysis takes a closer look at discourses of class mainly through Bird's depictions on her personal and material conditions, and Korean women.</p> <p>The findings show that in <i>Korea and Her Neighbours</i>, Isabella Bird frequently and quite freely engages in colonial (and class) discourses of power, suggesting that women travelers could indeed share in and be empowered by these discourses. This may partly be explained by her admittance in the Royal Geographical Society as the first woman fellow a few years before the publication of the account as well as her professional ambitions as a travel writer, documented by her biographers and scholars alike. These discourses, however, are contrasted with more ambiguous, subdued and discordant narrative voices that reveal the complexity of her position and refute any essentialist arguments of the determining effect of gender. Finally, the results of the analysis based on the largely overlooked discourses of class suggest that postcolonial theory would have much to gain by reconfiguring the theoretical framework to include class issues alongside those of gender and colonialism.</p>				
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1 INTRODUCTION

Humanities and social sciences have only recently taken a more active interest in travel and travel writing (Hulme and Youngs 1), and begun to unearth their role in the complex global mechanisms that have gradually given rise to colonial (and postcolonial) world order and will continue to influence societies all over the globe. Whether this academic interest stems primarily from the remarkable development of travel and tourism industry over the last two centuries, the societal changes and technological advancements that have for their part made this development possible, or the sheer volume of travel-related literature is not easy to ascertain, but all of these factors have undoubtedly made a notable contribution to making both legitimate objects of academic inquiry.

In this thesis I examine Isabella Bird's travel account *Korea and Her Neighbours: A Narrative of Travel, with an Account of the Recent Vicissitudes and Present Position of the Country*, first published in 1898, in order to look at the intimate yet complex connection between the late Victorian woman traveler's writing and British imperialism. Another factor which makes this particular narrative very much of interest is the tangled international relations of Korea at the time. Bird on many occasions describes the conflicting political and colonial aspirations of Japan, China and Russia in Korea, and actually in the course of her stay flees the outbreak of the First Sino-Japanese War, fought over the control of Korea in 1894-1895. In regard to the British intentions in Korea she does not go as far as to advocate colonization but in her concluding remarks on Korea it becomes clear she believes Koreans would have much to gain from such a relationship (457-58).

Post-colonial researchers such as Sara Mills (1991, 3), Chaudhuri and Strobel (3), Blunt and Rose (9) assert that both travel writing and the colossal British imperialist project in the late 19th-century were primarily masculine enterprises that only men had full and unrestricted access to, suggesting that women travel writers could not readily adopt what Mary Louise Pratt terms “monarchic male discourse[s] of domination and intervention” (213). Mills further notes that these women had to deal with different social restraints regarding the production and the reception of their texts; in other words, what the society at large back home in Britain considered suitable for a *voyagereuse* to write, as well as the form this writing took (1991, 31). A number of critics have argued that women travelers, due to their inferior and marginalized position in the Victorian society that to an extent perhaps made them ‘others’ in their own society, had more emphatic attitudes toward the non-European ‘others’ they encountered on their travels (e.g. McEwan 87; Mercer 147; Procida 188). It is hard to fully agree with this uncomplicated rationalization, however, and I tend to see the issue as more complex and agree with Susan L. Blake when she states that

the relationships of both men and women travel narrators to Africa [or any other non-European part of the world] are functions of their gendered relationships to their own society. [...] “A woman’s point of view” does not guarantee a reciprocal relationship with an Other, but it opens a crack in the concept of Self through which to examine the concept of Other. (32)

This crack, or “ambivalence” as Blunt and Rose (11) following Homi Bhabha’s formulation of the concept (18) call it, allows us to challenge the simplistic notions of race

and gender which have tended to overlook and oversimplify the agency of women within the undoubtedly gendered imperial context (Mills 1994, 30; Blunt and Rose 9).

Another aspect that has been ignored or at least largely overlooked by earlier research is the question of class – which in general seems to occupy a more peripheral position to race and gender in feminist studies as observed by Vivyan C. Adair (577), who argues that very few (U.S.) feminist studies have in general directly focused on class and poverty and that “poverty-class erasure” can be seen in the inherently authoritative middle-class voice of the academia which suppresses the full scale of the class experience (588-9). In the study of travel writing as well, I cannot but feel that, despite Cheryl McEwan’s postulation of there being several recent studies focusing on the “interplay of between gender, race, and class” (75), there has been a tendency to overlook the issue of class. Perhaps one reason is that women travelers, who, as McEwan (87) argues, were ‘othered’ on the basis of their gender, were actually more empowered by their mostly upper- or middle-class status, enabling them to ‘belong’ to the mainstream very similarly to their ‘race’. Another may be that the issues of class were practically joined at the hip with gender in the Victorian society, which becomes obvious in thinking about, for example, the social conventions regarding ‘middle-class women’ and ‘middle-class men’. In any case, I feel it is important to develop, as Anna Secor suggests, a reading which raises the question of class alongside those of gender and race as it can “provide a greater understanding of the complex construction of [Victorian travelers’] texts” (376).

In analyzing *Korea and her Neighbours* I will make use of Foucault’s influential discourse analysis, which a number of authors in the field of postcolonial studies such as Edward Said and Sara Mills have in their studies both drawn on and further developed. I believe it

is most apt for analyses in which intricate interplays of power and resistance – the most elemental forces behind imperialism – require revealing. Before moving on to discuss the theories of Foucault and Said, however, I will take a brief look at the nature and development of British travel writing and its study, as well as briefly discuss Isabella Bird, by which I hope to shed some light on the characteristics of travel writing and its study as well as the gender and class perspectives in this study. A more thorough discussion of postcolonial discourse analysis, its application in the study of colonial discourses as well as those of gender and class in travel writing, and an analysis of these discourses in Bird's *Korea and Her Neighbors* will follow this. In my reading I hope to highlight that, although Bird's *Korea and Her Neighbours* as well as other accounts she wrote towards the end of her travels move often towards the masculine in their portrayal of the narrator figure, as well as the native population and land, seeming to condone European colonialism, there is in the narrative present a very clear undercurrent that stems from the discourses of gender that resist and in some cases even directly oppose the colonialist ones. The thesis will conclude with an analysis of discourses of class which further allow for a more accurate reading of the narrative by adding an extra dimension into the reading which also enables a re-evaluation of the primacy of discourses of gender and colonialism.

2 BRITISH TRAVEL WRITING AND ISABELLA BIRD

2.1 History and Development of Travel and Travel Writing in Britain

Although travel and travel writing have gradually lost some of their novelty due to the developments outlined in the previous chapter, they have both undeniably come to occupy a very influential position within the rubric of the Western societies in the last few centuries and, perhaps more importantly, become accessible to nearly every social stratum within the last hundred years or so. In the case of travel the mere figures are quite telling: For example, according to *Travel Trends*, an annual publication of the UK Office of National Statistics, there were 30.0 million visits to the UK by overseas residents in 2005, and more than 66 million of UK residents to overseas – both all time records at the time, the former about double and the latter more than triple the figures in 1985 (National Statistics). The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) chart of international tourist arrivals 1950-2000 provides further evidence: According to this international tourist arrivals have increased more than tenfold in the last 50 years (International Tourist Arrivals).

It can be argued that the influence of the so-called traditional travel account culminated in the latter half of the 19th century, coinciding with the heyday of the British Empire around the turn of the 20th century (Carr 71). More recently other forms of media have, if not made it outright obsolete, at least surpassed the travel book in popularity by providing information and conveying experiences of the unfamiliar and the exotic for readers at home in easily accessible forms. This ongoing transition, however, can be seen as an

evolutionary process rather than the death of the travel book. In this sense, older travel accounts have evolved into new types of travel writing: highly specialized guidebooks such as those for budget travelers, online travel guides fashioned after Wikipedia such as Wikitravel.org, websites featuring online travel journals, and blogs, such as the TravelBlog.org that in January 2011 boasted more than 150.000 members and over 450.000 blog entries. The influence of television can be cited as well, as it has been providing viewers with audio-visual experiences of the exotic, directly accessible from the safety of their living rooms. More recently television has begun to feature whole channels focusing almost exclusively on travel, such as the US-based Travel Channel, as well as a multitude of travel programs ranging from the gritty, low budget backpacking shows such as the Finnish *Madventures* that searches for the ultimate in exotic experiences abroad to a myriad of more conservatively themed shows such as the American *Castles of Horror* that tours medieval castles around Europe. Nevertheless, recent U.S. book industry statistics actually show that the number of new travel books and editions published has steadily increased from just over 2.500 in 1995 to almost 5.000 in 2005 (Bowker). Taking these developments into account, the study of travel and travel writing therefore seems more important and current than ever.

How then, it could be asked, did travel writing develop into its own genre in the first place, and what common characteristics do works in this genre share? Whereas it may seem self-evident to most 21st-century readers that the genre includes texts ranging from narratives, letters and diaries that faithfully depict their authors' travels to and in foreign places, before developing into its own genre in the late 16th- and early 17th-century travel accounts were in fact often seen as preparatory – and therefore secondary – to more important works, such as scientific articles or novels (Hulme 1997, 2). Perhaps this is why travel

writing incorporates many features from other genres. Peter Hulme, for one, remarks that travel writing bears a close resemblance to four different types of text: the novel (literature), the ethnography (anthropology), the document (history) and the reportage (sociology) (ibid, 5). Given this extensive range of texts it therefore seems absurd to attempt to categorize travel accounts strictly as belonging to either the genre of travel writing or one of the others. Rather, I am inclined to follow Tim Youngs who in his foreword to the first number of *Studies in Travel Writing* aptly characterizes travel writing as “whatever is written, is about travel, and is interesting” (v). In this sense travel writing is more of a thematic categorization that both stresses the inclusiveness of the genre as well as reflects the cross-disciplinary nature of its study. This broad definition also enables the researchers to use it to their advantage by picking texts from any or all of the above genres, as well as texts which due to ambiguities and/or inconsistencies do not clearly fall into any of the above genres. For all its benefits, however, it must be noted this characterization reveals very little of the historical connections travel writing has with for example the developing scientific mode of inquiry and the expansion of European consciousness along with its frontiers, which Mary Louise Pratt takes up in *Imperial Eyes*, one of the first studies on Europe’s colonial expansion, European travel writing, and systems of scientific knowledge (5, 23-24).

Although travel accounts in one form or another have existed in societies throughout history, travel writing did not develop into a common practice in Europe, and more specifically in Britain, before the early modern period (Hulme and Youngs 2). According to William H. Sherman,

Travel writing emerged as one of the early modern period's most popular and flexible genres, and in a wide range of forms it educated and entertained readers, inspired national pride and commercial investment, and contributed to a public record of the world's 'markets, trade routes, personalities, and cultures'. (20)

Whether travel accounts of the early modern period were used to generate public interest in order to attract investments and settlers like Hulme and Youngs (3) suggest, bolster the claims of European nations to their newly acquired territories, or instill a sense of national pride in the subjects of these nations (Sherman 2), travel writing begun to attract sponsors as early as the 16th century, which soon multiplied the number of accounts and guaranteed their steady influx. The mere range of travel writers during the early modern period is quite astounding. Sherman, for example, in his introduction to travel writing in the early modern era, lists travelers from such a motley crew of professions as editors, pilgrims, errant knights, merchants, explorers, colonizers, captives, castaways, ambassadors, pirates and scientists (22-30). Needless to say, accounts from such a diverse group of authors varied considerably – nonetheless it was during this time period that the form of the genre first began to take shape. By the end of the 17th century many travel accounts already shared several common features, such as a justification for travel and travel writing in the beginning of the account, the account of travel(s) itself, which for example Sherman observes “combined a chronological narrative of movements and events with geographic and ethnographic observations”, and the inclusion of maps and/or illustrations (30-31). By the 18th century, travel narratives had often come to share a common pattern in which the travelers proceeded “from a base in civilization to an unknown region” and described “experiences and observations day to day on the basis of a log or journal”, while scientific accuracy had largely become the *comme il faut* mode of writing (56-57). According to

Pratt the intimate relationship between travel writing and the mode of scientific inquiry stem from this early modern period. In *Imperial Eyes* she links the emerging genre of travel writing closely to two major events in the history of science: the first European scientific expedition and the publication of Carl Linné's system to classify every plant form on the planet (whether unknown or known to Europeans) (15). Pratt asserts that these two events came to form a new "planetary consciousness" (ibid) based on categorization and division that in parts of the world eventually overrode the earlier developed indigenous systems of knowledge. One of a number of very illustrative examples of how tightly woven scientific descriptions were (and in some cases still are) to travel narratives can be seen in this description by Isabella Bird almost three centuries later in *Korea and Her Neighbors*:

Unlike the bare, arid, denuded hillsides between Chemulpo and Seoul, the slopes along much of the route are wooded, and in many cases forested both with coniferæ and deciduous trees, among which there are occasionally picturesque clumps of umbrella pines. The *Sinus Pinensis* and the *Abies Microsperma* abound, and there are two species of oak and three of maple, a *Platanus*, juniper, ash, mountain ash, birch, hazel, *Sophora Japonica*, *Euonymus alatus*, *Thuja Orientalis*, and many others. The heliotrope, pink, and scarlet azaleas were all in their beauty, flushing the hillsides, and white and sulphur-yellow clematis, actinidia, a creeping *Euonymus* were abundant. (71-72)

Parodies and social critiques in the form of travel accounts also first saw the light of day in the early modern period. Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516) paved way for others, and such works as Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) and Samuel Butler's *Erewhon* (1872)

serve to illustrate that they were not merely a passing fancy of the reading public. The popularity of these novels serves to testify of the popularity of the travel account itself and, perhaps more importantly, shows that travel writing's claim to authenticity from "having been there" and "having seen it with one's own eyes" was already by this time perceived a powerful means to level social criticism against the contemporary society (Hulme and Youngs 4).

The early 18th century saw the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, originating in Britain from where it steadily spread to the rest of Europe and, eventually, North America. The technological advancement in Europe at this time was rapid; subsequently, to many Europeans it began to slowly set Europe (and, to an extent, America) apart from the rest of the world. The technological dominance quite naturally led to a perception of intellectual, social and racial superiority in comparison to non-European peoples (Bridges 53; Carr 73). The competition among the up-and-coming new European powers, France, Britain and the Netherlands, was a tumultuous scramble for territory and resources throughout the world that culminated in the race for the control of Africa. These developments were reflected in the travel writing of the time which, with emerging new authors such as David Livingstone, John Speke, Richard Burton, and Henry Stanley, to name but a few, was becoming more colonially oriented and Eurocentric – and, it should be added, more popular than ever before. Yet, as Helen Carr, partly in the words of Nicholas Thomas argues, it should not be assumed that this massive colonialist undertaking brought all social classes and interest groups neatly together:

Colonialism, he [Thomas] suggests, needs undoing as a "coherent object"; we must recognise that "colonial ideologies may have been more variable, complex,

and ambivalent than has been generally acknowledged". One needs to account for the anxieties, uncertainties, and increasing dissent of those years, the fragmented, contentious nature of imperialism, the profound doubts about the continuation of Western progress, indeed doubts about the possibility of progress at all. (71-72)

The early years of the 20th century leading to the Second World War were a more unsettled period, and new travelers such as Hilaire Belloc, Henry James, Edith Wharton and Gertrude Bell described cultures that were fast becoming fragmented and hybridized (Carr 82), while the earlier image of the 'noble savages,' the others of Europe that earlier travel writing had earlier created, was slowly fading (Pratt 5). In the same way as the literature of the late 19th and early 20th century was becoming infused with new realist and naturalist ideas, many travel narratives in the 1920s and 30s, such as Edith Wharton's *In Morocco* and Graham Greene's *Journey Without Maps*, were turning away from the romantic and heroic notions of travel (Carr 82). Wharton's description, for example, of the colonial rule in Morocco is laden with mockery and derision of the earlier colonists:

Before Morocco passed under the rule of the great governor who now administers it, the European colonists made short work of the beauty and privacy of the old Arab towns in which they established themselves.

On the west coast, especially, where the Mediterranean peoples, from the Phenicians to the Portuguese, have had trading-posts for over two thousand years, the harm done to such seaboard towns as Tangier, Rabat and Casablanca is hard to estimate. The modern European colonist apparently imagined that to plant his warehouses, *cafés* and cinema-palaces within the walls which for so long had

fiercely excluded him was the most impressive way of proclaiming his domination.

(17)

The two World Wars largely restricted traveling in the early half of the 20th century and themes of war, social unrest, and the feel of impending doom were never far in many of the accounts. Graham Greene, for example, in *Journey Without Maps* (1936) uses descriptions from the “British Government Blue Book” which detail pests, lawlessness and lack of any recognizable government, diseases and atrocious acts of cruelty in Liberia to foreground his want to travel there:

There was something satisfyingly complete about this picture. It really seemed as though you couldn't go deeper than that; the agony was piled on in the British Government Blue Book with a real effect of grandeur; the little injustices of Kenya became shoddy and suburban beside it. (6)

Greene also describes his attraction to the “seediness” of Liberia, the way it represents “the sense of nostalgia for something lost” (7), and states that unlike others who may prefer to look ahead, his journey represents “a distrust of any future based on what we are” (8). His descriptions are a very poignant example of how the nature of travel writing was changing due to the escalating tensions in Europe and the social conditions back home in England.

In the post-war period the general trend in travel writing seemed to turn inward into the personal journey, and Peter Hulme suggests that by this time travel writing could often turn into a writing career in literature or journalism (2002, 88-89). Based on travel

accounts by such contemporary writers as Peter Mathiessen, Bruce Chatwin and Colin Thubron, the focus is indeed often on the personal, the subjective experience which in some cases is marked by an almost confessional quality, as well as experimenting with, for example, the boundaries of fact and fiction which further blur the demarcation of the genres and play with the notion of the veracious travel account. An apt example is Bruce Chatwin's *The Songlines* (1987), an account of his journey to Australia in which he mixes fiction (novel) and non-fiction (travel writing) while depicting himself as well as other characters in his account attempting to escape from the "dystopian modernity," forces of globalization and colonialism through nomadism in order to dream a utopian future (Williams 2003).

2.2 The Study of Travel Writing

During recent decades the study of travel writing has gradually gained recognition within the study of literature and become acknowledged as a legitimate academic area of inquiry of its own. The number of articles, journals and books, either partly or fully dedicated to the study of different aspects of travel writing, increased quickly within only a decade after Edward W. Said's *Orientalism* transformed travel writing into an acceptable object of academic study and outlined a set of adequate tools for its analysis in the form of Michel Foucault's discourse analysis and Antonio Gramsci's cultural hegemony. This is how the field of colonial discourse studies slowly began to take shape in the 1980s as well as the early 1990s. A few other notable works include Peter Hulme's *Colonial Encounters* (1986), in which he utilized Said's Orientalist discourse among other textual interpretations to provide insight into the colonial encounters in the Caribbean region

through the analysis of the discourse of cannibalism, *Imperial Eyes* (1992), in which Mary Louise Pratt delineates how “travel writing produced ‘the rest of the world’ for European readerships” (i), and Sara Mills’s *Discourses of Difference* (1991), in which she looks at how discourses of colonialism together with discourses on femininity and feminism affected late 19th- and early 20th-century women travelers and their accounts by analyzing the travel narratives of Nina Mazuchelli, Mary Kingsley and Alexandra David-Néel. Year 1997 also marked the launch of *Studies in Travel Writing*, the first journal dedicated to the multi-disciplinary study of travel writing in all its forms, edited by Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs.

The study of travel writing, in many cases, starts from the assumption that in the core of travel writing there is a particularly strong focus on ‘the self’ (Hulme 1997, 5). Generally, as “we tend to brace a sense of our selves against our sense of everyone and everything we are not (i.e. others)” (Pope 145), it is in travel writing where the (writing) self defines and redefines itself constantly through what it is not, ‘the other’. This dichotomy can be argued to exist in all literature. However it is in travel writing that the displacement of the self to an unknown land, surrounded by the unfamiliar, the exotic, and ‘the other,’ causes a significant rift between the self and the other, therefore underlining this dichotomy. The attempts to describe this unknowability of the other and, at the same time, the will to know, understand and in some case conquer this other, its land, society, language, culture and its psyche, have produced innumerable travel accounts, in which these aspects of the other came to be regarded as backward, eccentric and undesirable in comparison to their European counterparts, and created the illusion of superior European culture and society. In this way, ‘the self’ and ‘the other’ became to signify much more than concepts used to describe individual members of cultures and their differences. As members of dissimilar

cultures they were seen as representing the primary qualities of their cultures, and in the case of 'the others', who could not represent themselves, stereotypes based on the emphasis of difference and reinforcing 'the European self' were created in order to ultimately empower the colonizers. Obviously this should not be considered a conscious process but one that came about as a result of a skewed, one-sided discourse. These ways of producing the other(s) of Europe were first analyzed by Said in *Orientalism*, which to this day remains immensely influential in the postcolonial study of travel writing, as the discussion on Orientalism in next chapter will illustrate.

With *Orientalism*, many scholars began to look at the connection between travel writing and imperialism and colonization. Nupur Chaudhuri and Margaret Strobel characterize imperialism and colonialism in the following manner:

Imperialism is a concept that signifies any relationship of dominance and subordination between nations, including the modern form of economic control. Colonialism is the specific historical form of imperialism that involves direct military, economic, and political control. (2)

These systems along with the scientific mode of writing enabled the travelers to produce accounts that were regarded as scientific and undisputable in their claim to truth. The travelers' descriptions of the native peoples, based primarily on their inferiority with the Europeans, became the natural order of things, and gave Europeans the grounds for the justification of colonialism: to carry the 'light of civilization' to the 'darkest' parts of the non-European world. And, as more and more accounts were uncovered, the researchers quite naturally turned their attention to women travelers and travel writers, who at first

glance did not seem to quite fit the unifying Orientalist theory according to which these travel accounts were largely an instrument used in the creation and development of the colonial system. This critique quite rapidly grew into the postcolonial study of gender in both literature and travel writing as it chipped away the fallacy of the unity and internal consistency of colonialism that few if any earlier theorists had challenged.

2.3 Isabella Bird

Isabella Bird was born in Boroughbridge, Yorkshire in 1831 to a Victorian middle-class family. Her father, Edward Bird, was a priest in the Church of England. She was only in her early twenties when she set out on her first journey to Canada and the United States in 1854 – a journey which resulted in the publication of her first travel account *The Englishwoman in America* in 1856, compiled from her letters to her younger sister Henrietta. 1850s was still early into the period of high colonialism that saw for example the race for Africa between England and France, but perhaps some of this tension can be sensed in the way Bird describes the French colonization of “New France” (northeastern part of North America including parts of eastern Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, and New England) in her first travel account:

When the French first colonised this country, they called it “*Acadie*.” The tribes of the Mic-Mac Indians peopled its forests, and, among the dark woods which then surrounded Halifax, they worshipped the Great Spirit, and hunted the moose-deer. Their birch-bark wigwams peeped from among the trees, their squaws urged their light canoes over the broad deep harbour, and their wise men spoke to them of the

“happy hunting grounds.” The French destroyed them not, and gave them a corrupted form of Christianity, inciting their passions against the English by telling them that they were the people who had crucified the Saviour. Better had it been for them if battle or pestilence had swept them at once away. (19-20)

By the time *Korea and Her Neighbors* was published in 1897, Bird had written more than ten travel accounts detailing her journeys around the globe, including America, Australia, Japan, Persia and Tibet. She had become a well-known figure to the reading public back in England, as can be alluded from her admission as the first woman fellow into the Royal Geographical Society (RGS) in 1892 (Middleton 11-12), the largest promoter of travel and exploration in Britain in the late 19th century (Bridges 60). Very revealing of the gender issues of the time, however, is the fact that the RGS only agreed to this after Bird had first refused to address the Society (unless they receive her as a Fellow) and had subsequently given a presentation at the Royal Scottish Geographical Society that allowed women as Fellows (Bell and McEwan 1996). The popularity of her travel accounts is also testified by the foreword of professor Pow-key Sohn to the 1970 edition of Bird’s *Korea and Her Neighbors*:

Isabella Bishop’s *Korea and Her Neighbors* was first published in two volumes on January 10, 1898; the next day 2,000 copies were sold, and the second edition was out within ten days. The demand [sic] for it in England brought forth edition after edition, and there were five editions in the United States. (iii)

Known as one of the great Victorian lady travelers along with Marianne North, Mary Kingsley, Constance Gordon-Cumming and numerous others, Isabella Bird has been a

popular subject of biographies, the first of many which is *The Life of Isabella Bird*, written by Anna M. Stoddart in 1906, only two year after Bird's death. Others include Dorothy Middleton's *Lady Travellers*, Evelyn Kaye's *Amazing Traveler Isabella Bird*, and Robert Root's *Following Isabella: Travels in Colorado Then and Now*. Her travel accounts, especially the later ones, however, have surprisingly rarely been the subject of any extensive academic inquiry, although a number of scientific articles have been written by scholars such as Karen Morin, who in "Peak Practices: Englishwomen's "Heroic" Adventures in the Nineteenth-Century American West" examines the travel accounts of seven women in order to show how gendered discourses work in conjunction with imperialist, nationalist, and class discourses (489). Many scholars who discuss Bird in their studies argue that she, perhaps more than any of the other writers, very strictly controlled how her public persona as a traveler was portrayed – both in her accounts as well what was written of her in the newspapers of the time (see e.g. Bassnett 234-5). For example, in Dorothy Middleton's biography Bird reportedly demanded John Murray, her publisher, to "personally horsewhip *The [London] Times* correspondent" (8) who had portrayed Bird riding in the Rocky Mountains in a male outfit (a divided riding skirt), as she had no brother or father to do it for her. In *A Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains* she herself stresses that she only rode in that fashion as she could not "ride any distance in the conventional mode" (10) and because the local man who had helped her secure the horses had no less than given her a permission to ride in her own fashion when she was about to give up the idea of riding altogether (10).

Carolin Mawer, who in *Three British Ladies in Bakhtiariland* looks at the image and development of Bakhtiariland in Iran through three British women's travel accounts (28), also notes a curious division in the accounts Bird and her traveling companion Major

Sawyer wrote of their travels in Persia. Whereas Sawyer conveys their group of ladies and gentlemen being able to spend their time pleasantly in the local peoples' mountain homes, which they used as their base camps, Bird "doggedly" details "the many and varied occasions she is shot at, robbed, threatened with robbery, a witness of a variety of dreadful events, or otherwise personally close to death" (Mawer 30). This illustrates how both, having their own reasons for writing their narratives and focusing on different aspects of the journey, create such different accounts that the veracity of both becomes quite questionable. Susan Bassnett notes that in the transition from an amateur writer to a professional one Isabella Bird's travel accounts come to display a tension between the veracity of the account and the reinvention of the narrator figure, which she terms "self-fictionalizing" (232, 235). Anna M. Stoddart's biography of Bird only serves to reinforce this image. In its preface, Stoddart depicts her in the following manner:

As a traveller Mrs. Bishop's outstanding merit is, that she nearly always conquered her territories alone; that she faced the wilderness almost single-handed; that she observed and recorded without companionship. She 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. Nor did she ever lose, in numberless rough vicissitudes, in intercourse with untutored peoples, or in the strenuous dominance which she was repeatedly compelled to exercise, her womanly graces of tranquil manner, gentle voice, reasonable persuasiveness. (vi)

This description continues to portray Bird as a unique traveler who, despite having managed to enter the masculine realm of the traveler, has not negotiated her femininity, her "womanly graces". Stoddart's depictions of Bird's childhood and adolescence only

further reinforce this image of her as the perfect image of a proper yet exceptional lady, which is exemplified by her “almost passionate love” (10) of flowers she retained all her life, the “rapidity and courage” (27) by which she as a young woman managed to prevent a political assassination by reportedly exchanging an assassination plan left in her taxi with a stack of advertisements when the perpetrators returned to look for it, or her besting an American pick-pocket who had stolen her wallet just seconds before the conductor’s arrival at the scene by calmly informing him that “this gentleman has my checks” (30-31).

In the latter half of the 20th century the interest in women’s travel accounts was rekindled and many of the women travelers became the subject of new biographies. Many of these works treated women travelers as a rare breed: they were eccentric and exceptional, strong individuals who still managed to retain their femininity (Mills 1991, 32-34). This approach, no matter how beneficial to the feminist movement, still quite thoroughly overlooked the issue of what these women’s relationship to the colonial project was and read texts largely from a personal point of view. In other words, the texts were analyzed in terms of their compliance with the author’s life and persona. For example, looking at one of the early ones, the above-mentioned Middleton’s *Victorian Lady Travellers*, it gives a very stereotypical account of Bird that corresponds to the image of a strong and exceptional, yet feminine, traveler. Middleton states that the illnesses Bird often suffered at home were the reason for her traveling, because they were due to her “frustrated egosim [sic] ... struggling to be free” that “could not find release within the range of a Victorian woman” (21). Nevertheless, she sees Bird as a conservative woman, who has a “horror of ‘masculinity’” (22) so strong she fears it would be “untrue to her sex as to ride ‘cavalier fashion’” (22), while staying on the Sandwich Islands in the early 1870s. Middleton describes the later parts of Bird’s life largely through her relations with two men, Jim

Nugent (Rocky Mountain Jim), “the romance of her life” (27), and Dr. John Bishop, the Bird family doctor and Isabella’s husband for 5 years, “the tragedy of [her] life” (40). Still, Middleton sees Bird as a traveler with a “cast-iron digestion ... covering thousands of miles on horseback over the highest mountain passes and in native boats down the farthest rivers of the world, on a handful of rice and raisins” (20), making her appear feminine, yet uniquely strong and persistent, a woman who was practically forced to travel due to the constraints of the Victorian society. In this light, studies on women travelers would do well to remember to give these women’s narratives the primacy they deserve so that they will not be interpreted based on an overarching theme in its author’s life (Mills 1991, 32-33, 36). Naturally it is equally unwise to completely remove the author from its pages, no matter the amount of self-fictionalizing there may be.

Bird made a total of four visits to Korea between 1894 and 1897, based on which her account was written. On her first journey, she set out from Nagasaki landing in Chemulpo (current Incheon), the nearest seaport to Seoul. After shortly settling herself down in Seoul, Bird journeyed out southeast on the Han River, first following the southern branch of the river before eventually going up the northern branch. From there her travelling party of four ascended Geumgang-san, the Diamond Mountain, and crossed over the mountain range to the Eastern coast of Korea. Her travelling party then followed the coastline northward to the port town of Wonsan, from where they via Fusan (Busan) again returned to Chemulpo by a steamer. At this time, with Chinese and Japanese governments both keen to bolster their position in Korea the political situation there was becoming quite volatile so Bird decided to escape the turmoil to northeastern China. After visits to Mukden (Shenyang) and ‘Peking’ she journeyed to Vladivostok via Nagasaki, visiting several Korean settlers’ villages in Siberia. From there she again moved back to Seoul in

1895 and left for her second inland journey northward to Pyongyang and the Pyongang province. In 1896 and 1897 Bird paid two more visits to Seoul but made no further journeys inland.

3 POSTCOLONIAL DISCOURSE THEORY: FROM *ORIENTALISM* TO DISCOURSES OF GENDER

In this chapter I will be looking at the theoretical foundations and the development of the postcolonial study of travel writing, as well as the impact feminist postcolonial theory has had on it. I will show that although Edward W. Said's *Orientalism* can be seen as the first study to involve postcolonial critique of travel writing, later research has often turned away from Said toward the theories and analyses of Michel Foucault due to a number of discrepancies in Said's theory which seem to stem from his inability to fully bridge the gap between his humanism and the Orientalist discourse. This is the main reason why I will first concentrate on Said's *Orientalism* and only then move on to discuss Foucault's discourse analysis and its application by later scholars. Finally, recognizing that both Said and Foucault's theories have their drawbacks, I shall turn to examine how later feminist research has, through the careful critique and development of both theories, begun to uncover the different layers and ambiguities within colonialism that was earlier perceived quite uniform and coherent an object.

3.1 Edward Said's *Orientalism*

The contemporary study of travel writing can be located within the field of postcolonial studies, which draws from a number of interdisciplinary theories in order to locate and reveal not only instances of colonization in history but also to show how its effects that

have shaped the West in relation to its others. John Phillips has divided post-colonial theory into two intrinsic dimensions:

The first, as colonial discourse analysis, examines European culture and literature for how the West produces representations of its others, against which and through which it defines itself. The second examines the ways in which the contradictions and inconsistencies of colonial theory produce a locus of instability from which the central epistemological, ontological and legislative terms of the West can be challenged. (64)

Edward W. Said's *Orientalism* was the first, groundbreaking work to suggest that the Orient depicted in countless Western (European) works is a Western invention rather than a veritable and accurate description. Although not centered on travel writing *per se*, the study nevertheless focuses on Western accounts of the Orient and quite contrary to tradition includes analyses of travel accounts in terms of their participation in the imperialist project. Said argues that these accounts, as well as other official and literary texts written by Westerners about the Orient, use an implicit style or preconception – which Said calls Orientalism – based on the image of the Orient as an opposite to Western society and culture:

Taking the late eighteenth century as a very roughly defined starting point Orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient – dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as

a Western style for dominating, restructuring and having authority over the Orient.

(3)

Drawing on Michel Foucault's work Said identifies Orientalism as a discourse, for he contends that otherwise it is not possible to "understand the enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage – and even produce – the Orient politically, sociologically, and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period" (3). This draws attention to the idea that Orientalism has developed not so much out of struggles over control between the West and the East, but more as a consequence of internal constraints within the Western culture. Western accounts actively (re)produce the East as 'the (Oriental) Other' seen through the eyes of 'the (Western) Self' and in this way tell more about the West than the actual East (12). Furthermore, to account for the persistence and force of Orientalism within the Western culture, Said evokes the concept of cultural hegemony by Antonio Gramsci, which according to Said is a form of "cultural leadership" (7) that functions through consent that enables certain cultural forms and ideas to influence and dominate over others. Said argues that

the major component in European culture is precisely what made that culture hegemonic both in and outside Europe: the idea of a European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures. There is in addition the hegemony of European ideas about the Orient, themselves reiterating European superiority over Oriental backwardness. (7)

To Gramsci hegemony does not simply constitute direct political rule or predominant influence of, for example, one state over the other. Raymond Williams in *Marxism and*

Literature states that in the work of Gramsci, hegemony is “either a complex interlocking of political, social, and cultural forces [...], or the active social and cultural forces which are its necessary elements” (108). It is closely related to the concepts of culture and ideology, but in comparison should be thought of as an elusive and elaborate process that influences both of these systems. According to Williams (109), hegemony goes beyond the concept of culture as a social process that allows people to freely shape their lives, because it recognizes that the process is hampered by the unequal distribution of power in all societies, particularly in class societies where social consciousness both naturalizes the class structure and limits the human consciousness. It partially corresponds to that of ideology, but whereas the latter is a “relatively formal and articulated system of meanings, values, and beliefs, that can be abstracted as a ‘worldview’ or a ‘class outlook’”, hegemony is “distinct in its refusal to equate consciousness with the articulate formal system which can be and ordinarily is abstracted as ideology” (109). In other words, ideology can be regarded as the upper layer of hegemony that it is possible to perceive and understand, whereas hegemony cannot be reduced to mere ideology; it is present in the “process of living” in the form of complex power relations that are constantly being redrawn, renegotiated, resisted and supported (110). This notion is in fact not completely unlike Foucault’s formulations of power in that it sees hegemony in terms of never being total; it always includes, even creates its own opposition and resistance:

It can be persuasively argued that all or nearly all initiatives and contributions, even when they take on manifestly alternative or oppositional forms, are in practice tied to the hegemonic: that the dominant culture, so to say, at once produces and limits its own forms of counter-culture. (Williams 114)

In order to more accurately portray the Western discourse on the Orient as the behemoth of essentially unchanged nature throughout the historical development of the West he sees it as, Said divides the Orientalist discourse into two dimensions: latent and manifest Orientalism. According to him, the former is the deeper layer of Orientalism that remains unchanged – according to Said “an almost unconscious (and certainly untouchable) positivity” – while the latter reflects any changes in the surface knowledge of the Orient (206). Said uses these two concepts to explain why the changes in the knowledge of the Orient over time do not affect the unchanging nature of the discourse: the changes are superficial and do not go deep enough to have any significant sway over the latent Orientalism.

There is no question of the remarkable effect of *Orientalism*. As Gyan Prakash for one believes, this effect was largely due to its dissolution and crossing of both physical and theoretical boundaries which undermined the whole Orientalist authority of the West, resulting in an initial backlash of criticism (200-201) but eventually creating way for new areas and methods of inquiry, as can be seen with the emergence of postcolonial studies, including studies on travel writing. While *Orientalism* did receive an early flood of criticism from those directly connected to Said’s work such as ‘Orientalist’ and ‘Oriental’ scholars, there were also attempts to build upon and reformulate this theory (see, e.g. Hulme 1986, Mills 1991, Porter 1993, Prakash 1995 and Marrouchi 1998), which in themselves can be considered signs of the impact of *Orientalism*. Many, while recognizing the importance of and debt to Said’s work, also focus on inconsistencies in his theory.

Researchers such as Dennis Porter have noted that, on one hand, Said states that there is no distinction between pure and political knowledge (151), adopting a position very

similar to Foucault who argues that societies produce and authenticate their own knowledge in constant power struggles (Mills 1991, 72). On the other hand, Said suggests that behind the Orientalist representations there is a “real” Orient that it is possible to describe (21). Porter argues that this unresolved contradiction is essentially caused by the “incomparability of the thought of Said’s two acknowledged maîtres, Foucault and Gramsci, of discourse theory and hegemonic theory” (151). To Porter, hegemony is a process directly related to the historical conditions that have given rise to it, whereas Foucault’s discourse analysis is ahistorical. As Mustapha Marrouchi points out (232), however, Said’s focus on authority “does not entail analysis of what lies hidden in the Orientalist text, but analysis rather of the text’s surface, *its exteriority to what it describes*” (Said 20, emphasis added), and therefore does not make any claims as to the nature of the ‘real’ Orient. However, according to Prakash (100-101), Said treats Orientalism as a discourse that is unified by its will to dominate, which externalizes resistance and critique, and signifies another fundamental break from Foucault, who argues that discourses contain their own resistance. These above-mentioned unresolved contradictions in *Orientalism* have lead researchers to focus more closely on Foucault’s ideas of discourse and power/knowledge, which deconstruct Orientalism as the unified and historically immutable discourse Said portrayed it as. Given this direction, I will next focus on Foucault’s ideas of discourse and power/knowledge and their development.

3.2 Foucault: Discourse and Power/Knowledge

Michel Foucault’s first extensive study on the discourse is *Archaeology of Knowledge*, in which he attempts to find answers to issues regarding the ideas of historical continuity and

progress, as well as the unity of constructs he feels are much too readily being accepted as self-evident, such as the author, oeuvre and individual (3-4, 21). The so-called archaeological analysis he formulated in response aimed to shift the analysis onto the level of “discursive events” (27). Foucault treats discourse as a versatile term that can have a number of applications:

Instead of gradually reducing the rather fluctuating meaning of the word ‘discourse’, I believe that I have in fact added to its meanings: treating it sometimes as the general domain of all statements, sometimes as an individualizable group of statements and sometimes as a regulated practice that accounts for a certain number of statements. (80)

According to Sara Mills, this first meaning of discourse as the general domain of all statements refers to “all utterances or texts which have meaning and which have some effects in the real world” (1997, 6), whereas the second group denotes all statements that have the same topical locus – for example, Said’s Orientalist discourse. By the third group, discourse as a regulated practice, Foucault means rules and conventions that allow particular statements to be produced (ibid), such as what constitutes a particular scientific discourse and who is considered able to participate in it. Mills offers us a slightly more pragmatic definition in *Discourse* (1997) and *Michel Foucault* (2003). She identifies statements as utterances or sentences that are “enacted within a social context, which are determined by that social context and which contribute to the way that social context continues its existence” (1997, 11). In this way, discourses can be thought of as networks of statements that render certain objects and relations comprehensible to people (instead of others). This highlights that what for example we (as members of a certain culture or

society) think of as the natural order of things is actually imposed on us in struggles over authority in discourses. Mills talks about discursive structures that construe the non-discursive realm and bring the physical objects of the real world to our attention so to speak (2003, 55). It is these structures that vary for example from culture to culture or from one time period to another, and cause us to interpret and react to events and relations of the physical world in a different way, or pay attention to different aspects or objects of the real world. According to Mills,

we can only think about and experience material objects and the world as a whole through discourse and the structures it imposes on our thinking. In the process of thinking about the world, we categorise and interpret experience and events according to the structures available to us and in the process of interpreting, we lend these structures a solidity and a normality which it is often difficult to question. (2003, 56)

In understanding Foucault, then, it is critical to see that to him there is no 'real world' that can be found. People (and societies to a larger extent) are able to access the world only through discursive structures, which define the aspects of their reality (1997, 45):

We must not imagine that the world turns towards us a legible face which we would only have to decipher; the world is not the accomplice of our knowledge; there is no pre-discursive providence which disposes the world in our favour. (Foucault 1981, 67).

The concepts of power and knowledge are also closely connected to that of discourse in Foucault's work. Shortly put, Foucault thinks that societies produce and validate knowledge through discursive practices. For him the discourses in any given society are sites of constant power struggle which result in the production and validation of knowledge (Mills 1997, 21; 2003, 68). The significance here is not on the type of knowledge created but rather on how power within social relations enables a particular discourse to become dominant and "produces possible forms of behaviour as well as restricting behaviour" (18). In other words, the production of knowledge is never neutral; it becomes an exercise of power itself (69). This connection between power and knowledge demonstrates how relationships of power have also been maintained in the colonial period and how travel literature has taken part in the imperialist agenda – not simply constrictingly but productively, authoring 'scientific' truths of the colonized (or othered) peoples by means of textual narratives that gain an authoritative position within the colonial discourse. These then, together with a number of other documents, texts, and studies, accumulate to form a 'true' and 'objective' knowledge about the indigenous peoples. Knowledge of the colonized peoples is therefore an example of a Western system of knowledge being ratified and institutionalized. This particular knowledge, however, very aptly illustrates that the more unbalanced the power relations, the stronger the tendency of those in power to produce more knowledge of the marginalized. When thinking of the relationship between the colonizers and the colonized peoples, it becomes instantly obvious that the latter had very little if any access to colonial discourse, which produced them exclusively as objects of the knowledge. During the period of high colonialism, a myriad of information of these peoples circulating in both textual and spoken form continued to be produced very much in similar fashion as with other social groups that were in some aspect ostracized from mainstream the Victorian society, such as

women (as opposed to men), homosexuals (as opposed to heterosexuals), and even the working class (Mills 2003, 69).

Two important implications of Foucault's reconfiguring of power as a relational force working through the discursive structures are that, firstly, power always fails to fully achieve its purpose, and, secondly, power contains its own resistance. Although this offers a much more intricate theory on how power functions in the society, some critics such as Mills (2003, 40) argue that the latter may have the effect of lessening the importance of individual agency when they resist oppressive systems of power. According to John Hartmann, however, Foucault only initially saw that resistance could be located in the "tactical reversal" of power relations, making resistance entirely reactive and reducing the role of the individual (3-4). In Hartmann's discussion of Foucault's later development of the concept he sees the functions of power affecting the subject in a positive, creative way:

If power functions through the structuration of a field of possible actions, resistance to power should not only be understood in terms of agonistic force relations, but in terms of a creative traversing of the field of possible action. Resistance – positive resistance – is no longer merely reversal, but consists in a subject's becoming-autonomous within a structured set of institutions and practices through immanent critique. (10)

To Hartmann, this revised notion of power makes it possible to account for a number of "non-dominating techniques and apparatuses" (6-7) such as the Christian confessional and what Mills calls the "disciplining of the self by the self" (2003, 43), which for example

surrounded the production and reception of texts by women authors in the late Victorian period.

3.3 Colonial Discourses in Travel Writing

In his analysis of the scope of *Orientalism*, Said was the first to look at the ways in which colonial knowledge is produced. Mary Baine Campbell notes that Said

took sophisticated hermeneutic methods normally used to approach the high literary texts he taught in the department of English and Comparative Literature at Columbia University and applied them to non-poetic and non-fictional works, helping to open up the field of literary studies to an apparently endless supply of new and socially salient texts. (266)

Said's analysis focuses foremost on the author's position in a text, which he calls the strategic location, analyzing it through narrative voice, structure, images, themes and motifs; In Said's words, "all of which add up to deliberate ways of addressing the reader, containing the Orient, and finally, representing it or speaking in its behalf" (20). He primarily identifies the juxtaposition of 'the Orient' and 'the Oriental' with the Occident in terms of eccentricity and backwardness, noting that the Orient in the texts he analyzes represents such qualities as silence, indifference, femininity, passivity, pliability, racial inferiority, and so on (206) – everything the West essentially is not. Mills, following in Said's footsteps, distinguishes this "Othering" or the dehumanization of colonized people by means of cultural generalizations made of them as an undifferentiated group, such as

having animalistic features (1991, 48-49; 1997, 98). Furthermore, their culture is likened to a past state of Western culture to show their backwardness, the ethnographic present is used to refer to them and their culture to signify scientific detachment and an image of the culture as frozen in a past state of development (Fabian 80-81), the native peoples are in general described largely in negative terms, and the country filled with unearthly filth and odors (Mills 1991, 89-94; 1997, 99-105). Even the seemingly innocuous observation of the landscapes is often empowering to the narrator, as they either survey the land for a future use or display their scientific superiority by cataloguing the plant and animal life around them (Pratt 133; Mills 1991, 76). All of these have the effect of putting the narrator and the British Empire in a superior position in the text. Mills argues that these conventions of travel writing often pose problems to women travel writers due to their masculine nature. It does not, however, mean that women's heroic/scientific narratives displaying a colonialist attitude toward the natives do not exist; they do but are often more constrained by the very conventions themselves. As an example of the colonial discourses present in Bird's *Korea and Her Neighbours* consider the following passage about Seoul which includes many of the ways of Othering described above:

I shrink from describing intra-mural Seoul. I thought it the foulest city on earth till I saw Peking, and its smells the most odious, till I encountered those of Shao-shing! For a great city and a capital its meanness is indescribable. Etiquette forbids the erection of two-storied houses, consequently an estimated quarter of a million people are living 'on the ground,' chiefly in labyrinthine alleys, many of them not wide enough for two loaded bulls to pass, indeed barely wide enough for one man to pass a loaded bull, and further narrowed by a series of vile holes or green, slimy ditches, which receive the solid and liquid refuse of the houses, their foul and fetid

margins being the favorite resort of half-naked children, begrimed with dirt, and of big, mangy, blear-eyed dogs, which wallow in the slime or blink in the sun. (40)

This passage, it should be added, is not a mere exception; in the first section of the next chapter I will demonstrate that most if not all of these above-mentioned Orientalist tropes Said, Pratt and Mills among others have identified are present in Isabella Bird's accounts. These tropes arguably exist in other Victorian women's travel writing, as well. Alison Blunt, for example, in her study on Mary Kingsley asserts that women travelers who left the British (and Western) colonial societies behind became able to identify and share in the power of the male colonizers and travelers as the imperial discourses of power, that to an extent replaced the domestic patriarchal ones, were primarily concerned with race and nationality (36) and thus replaced the domestic discourses. This is not to say that it was the only option for these women; focusing solely on these instances would only lead to a partial reading of their accounts without taking into account their gendered subjectivity, the theory of which is first discussed in the next section and then utilized in the analysis of Bird's account in the second part of next chapter.

3.4 Postcolonial Theory and Gender

Despite the fact that early postcolonial scholars saw primarily men as active participants in colonialism and overlooked women and the issue of gender in travel writing, scholars such as Sara Mills, Alison Blunt, Gillian Rose and Cheryl McEwan gradually turned their attention to women travelers and their accounts. These new studies both criticized and further developed earlier theories of a unified discourse of colonialism and focused on

revealing positions and attitudes of women travelers who were either directly or indirectly involved in colonialism in order to dissect the image of colonialism as a consistent and singular object of discourse. Although the theoretical foundations of early postcolonial studies were largely informed and influenced by Said and Foucault, these later scholars were quick to point out that neither in their studies gave gender the consideration it deserved, managing to almost completely overlook the whole issue. Sara Mills, for one, considers both Said and Foucault “inspiring and yet disappointing” due to their lack of address to women and gender in their studies (1991, 13).

Edward W. Said’s colonial discourse has come under criticism in recent feminist postcolonial studies in a number of ways. One of the most discernible of these shortcomings is discussed by a number of scholars, who point out that his discussion excludes or at least treats women’s agency – whether as colonizers or colonized – as an uncomplicated issue. For example, Albet-Mas et al argue that Said

posits *Orientalism* as a homogenous discourse enunciated by a unified colonial subject, unmistakably male. [...] He never questions women’s apparent absence as producers of *Orientalist* discourses or as agents in the making of colonial culture, and so mirrors the traditional view that ignores the role of women in colonial expansion. (231)

Said’s point of view can be assessed as a masculine one because he sees the relationship between the Orient and the West as unidirectional and unproblematic: the feminine Orient penetrated by the masculine West (206). He refuses to allow resistance, conflict or ambivalence within the Orientalist discourse, a point not only criticized by feminist

scholars but one that also separates him from Foucault who, as was established in the previous chapter, sees discourses as open sites of struggle for power.

As shown earlier, Foucault's conceptualizations of discourse and power/knowledge are very powerful tools for the analysis of travel accounts, but simultaneously it must be kept in mind that they contain some problematic issues, too. Mills, for example, perceives Foucault a very male-centered thinker (2003, 7). She states that

this problem of a sexist focus in his work cannot be solved simply by adding women to his analysis; analysing his androcentrism means that the reader of Foucault's work is forced to fundamentally reconsider the way in which his focus on men alone skews some of the insights which he has to offer." (ibid)

In this light the most prominent problem in Foucault's thinking becomes the access to discourse. He himself considers the access to any discourse fairly unproblematic (as it is generally not mentioned in his work), although later critics such as Mills have pointed out that for example in many Western societies there are "institutionalized constraints" (2003, 87) that make it more difficult for women to speak for example in such public occasions as wedding receptions. Furthermore, in a larger sense it is not only women who suffer from a limited access to discourse; class also becomes a meaningful signifier in the access to discourse. This is why any study related to postcolonial discourse theory must take into account the constraints that limit certain groups from full access to discourses.

In Victorian travel writing particularly, the unequal access to discourses stems largely from the conventions of the time regarding the different privileges and responsibilities of

the genders; their inherent power in and access to social spaces such as writing and travel. Following Foucault's idea of discourses as sites of struggle, Alison Blunt and Gillian Rose identify social spaces as similarly contested sites:

The social construction of gender difference establishes some spaces as women's and others as men's; those meanings then serve to reconstitute the power relations of gendered identity. However, since the outcome of the decoding process can never be guaranteed, contestation and renegotiation of the meaning of spaces is also always possible. (3)

In the Victorian period the private sphere was discursively constructed primarily as the women's space in opposition to the public realm of the men. Consequently, this social process of mapping female space resulted in women's inability to fully access and exercise their power in the public realm. This can be observed, according to Mills, in 3 ways, i.e. in the form of constraints having to do with the reception and production of women's travel accounts (1991, 5-6), in the style in which it was socially preferable for women to describe foreign locations and people, and the manner in which their narratives reveal the 'travelling self,' referring to the Mills' narrative voices (1991, 9) or Blunt's subjective personas (51) that are constructed in these narratives of travel. She argues that it is in these three categories where the discursive pressures that made most Victorian women's accounts different from men's can be observed. Especially her third observation, following Said's focus on the narrative voice – except that Mills' inclusion of gender enables the mapping of a much broader array of narrative voices – has been discussed and used extensively by other postcolonial researchers concentrating on discourses of gender, such as Lewis (20-30) and McEwan (78-83). In the following paragraphs I will first

discuss these three factors in more detail and then turn to examine Bird's account on Korea through the new cracks and openings this set of tools allows me to inspect, assuming that they will allow the "politics of difference" (Blunt and Rose 7) to be more accurately articulated. In addition, A reading such as this argues against a purely essentialist notion that deems women's accounts different simply based on their sex, instead taking into account the full range and complexity of the Victorian women travelers, which in their accounts occupy these fragmented and ambiguous spaces, shifting along the axes of race, nationality, gender and class all the while negotiating the constraints of the dominant discourses.

Looking at the category of gender and women, there are several considerations that have to be considered first, starting from the very category of 'women'. Scholars such as Blunt and Rose (3), and Chaudhuri and Strobel (3) argue that women cannot be so readily grouped in one category merely on the basis of their gender. The group can in fact serve to eradicate differences within this larger group (Blunt and Rose 4-5). It has to be remembered that gendered spaces are cultural constructions and more often than not vary from culture to culture, as well as between social classes, which is precisely why an accurate reading has to take into account the axes of race, nationality, and class in conjunction with gender. In travel narratives these ambiguous and at times uneasy gaps that emerge between groups of women must be identified and contextualized together with these other discourses to better understand the positions of these women, whether colonizers or colonized, or, as in the case of Korea, 'othered' native women. Moreover, as Lila Abu-Lughod points out (105), feminism itself is originally a Western construct and therefore Western scholars have to be most careful in acknowledging that their positions and those of their work, no matter how good their intentions may be, are still involved in

the project Said outlined in *Orientalism* and may unintentionally reinforce the Western cultural hegemony.

The constraints on Victorian discourses on femininity affected the way women wrote their travel narratives as well as how they were received. In regards to women's production of travel accounts, this is also observed by Mary Louise Pratt who states that "women's access to travel writing [is] even more restricted than their access to travel itself" (171). As it was generally difficult for women to publish travel accounts, many of them were initially written as productions of the private realm, in other words in the form of a confessional such as a private diary or letters. This is also how most of Isabella Bird's early travel accounts were written, for example *A Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains*, which even includes a prefatory note in which Bird explicitly makes it clear that the "letters, as their style sufficiently indicates, were written without the remotest idea of publication" and that she only decided to publish them in book form after they had appeared in a magazine "at the request of its editor, and were so favourably received" (i). It is noteworthy, however, that by the time of her two later narratives, *Korea and Her Neighbours* and *The Yangtze Valley and Beyond*, published respectively in 1898 and 1899, the form and style have changed noticeably and they can no longer be considered confessional. The accounts include such details as statistics of foreign trade and discussion of politics and British colonial interests in the areas which are conspicuously absent in her earlier accounts.

As for the reception of women's travel accounts, Mills cites the example of Alexandra David-Néel who was accused of exaggerating and lying in her travel account *My Journey to Lhasa* when she wrote of at one point having to carry her injured male companion in the

mountainous region of Tibet (1991, 110). To Mills these accusations were based on the dominant discourses of femininity circulating at the time, in which women were seen more passive and incapable of this kind of heroic feats that men were more commonly associated with (ibid). She further notes that

One of the major problems for women travellers was whether their texts would be believed or not. This had certain effects on the way the texts were produced. This is not to say that the texts are necessarily different because they were written by women but that conventions have a determining role in the way a text is produced and judged. Women writers knew that their accounts would be considered odd and eccentric, and would be accused of falsehood, therefore they adopted several strategies. (121)

Mills continues that examples of these strategies women travelers chose to use are downplaying their adventures and using maps, images and other evidence to support their accounts of the events (121). Looking at Isabella Bird's accounts verifies that she readily utilizes maps, images, and other documents, as can be seen from, for example, *Korea and Her Neighbors*, which includes two maps, more than twenty photographs and illustrations, official Korean government documents, and trade statistics. It can hardly be said, however, that she is in the habit of downplaying her adventures. Quite conversely, she seems keen to paint a vivid picture of them to her readers in most if not all of her narratives. A few notable examples include her recount of a furious gale on Lake Erie which flings her steamer "like a plaything" on the waves and leaves almost everyone but her debilitated in *The Englishwoman in America* (172-76), a further account of Bird and her two guides ending up quite completely astray in the wintry and treacherous Rocky Mountains on their

search of a famous peak known as Estes Park in *A Lady's Life in The Rocky Mountains* (63-72), as well as a description of Bird's party surviving a fierce blizzard that claims the lives of five men from a caravan travelling ahead of them in *Journeys in Persia and Kurdistan* (122-28). If anything she seems to underline these experiences and her part in them.

According to Mills' second assertion of Victorian women's travel accounts, they often display a tendency with the private rather than presenting factual details that would require (public) "authorizing" (81). This has an effect on what the author decides to single out as a subject for description from the surroundings, how the author depicts encounters with the native peoples, and how travelers depict themselves in the text. In the case of women travelers Mills asserts that they were conscious of being "objects of a male gaze" (98) which shows in their accounts in the form of a much more self-conscious tone that affirms and reaffirms the propriety and femininity of the narrator (72). In women's travel writing, this also means that a number of subjects were considered unsuitable for the Victorian women to write about. The most obvious examples were events or things of sexual nature (82). This absence can also be observed in *Korea and Her Neighbours*, which contains no sexual references of any kind, apart from an isolated comment on the concealment of Korean lower class women when doing laundry in public: "It is as well that the Korean woman is concealed, for she is not a *houri*" (45). Even here the sexual imagery is externalized with the Orientalist "*houri*" that refers to a "beautiful maiden which in Muslim belief live with the blessed in paradise" or a "voluptuously beautiful young woman" (Merriam-Webster), originating from Persian and Arabic languages and making the reader focus on the foreign origin of the term indicating the sophistication and knowledgability of the author rather than impropriety.

The third observation by Mills is linked to the observation of the gendered nature of the narrative voice(s). This refers to deducing from the text certain personas or roles through which the narrator in the course of the account is depicted. Blunt in her study on Mary Kingsley's landscape descriptions discusses this concept under the term of "author positionality" (1991, 54). She links it to the poststructuralist movement and the well-known essay *Death of the Author* (1967) in which Roland Barthes repudiates the notion that a text should be interpreted through the intentions and life of its author speaking through the mouth of a single narrator, and Foucault's concept of the author-function that similarly challenges the interpretation of a written work according to a single voice of its author (1991, 53). In travel writing, for most male travelers it was natural to use such voice that could be interpreted as 'the adventurer' or 'the hero' in the narratives, because according to the discourses of gender at the time men were perceived to naturally possess and embody the essential qualities required by these roles, whereas for women it was more difficult to fall into the more masculine roles. This is not to say that women completely avoided these voices, but that they were more open to be challenged and doubted, as in the case of Alexandra David-Néel discussed earlier on. An example of a role which most male Victorian British travel writers had no trouble slipping into was the hero with a "stiff upper lip" (1991, 78), so thoroughly masculine a voice it made it very difficult for most women travelers to adopt. A case in point is David Livingstone's description of his hunter-cum-hunted experience during a lion hunt in Africa. In his narrative Livingstone is first attacked and bitten by a wounded lion, an experience he describes akin to a patient undergoing a surgery under the influence of chloroform (12), highlighting the severity of his wounds yet simultaneously managing to come across very clinical and professional. Then, after the lion has fallen dead moments later having been shot twice by the wounded

Livingstone (as he is careful to point out), despite portraying the lion's bite "crushing the bone into splinters" and leaving "eleven teeth wounds on the upper part of [his] arm" he merely brushes off his own injuries by writing of escaping "with only the *inconvenience* of a false joint in [his] limb" (15, emphasis added). It is not enough that the lion, as if it was Africa herself against the British Empire, experiences total defeat in the hands of Livingstone, but as suitable to a heroic description, even its most lethal attack is in the end revealed to have done no lasting damage to the hero.

Although not directly comparable, the narrative voice Bird's descriptions reveal in threatening situations is quite different. To illustrate, on a number of occasions in both *Korea and Her Neighbours* (e.g. the frantic *mapu* (131-32)) and *Journeys in Persia and Kurdistan Vol. II* (e.g. an incident with the *Lurs* (16-17)) Bird, in her rejection of a straightforward hero position in the text, comes across quite passive, which often results in the narrator being rather curiously removed from the center of the commotion, while the actions of others around her are given a much more prominent place. In one illustrating passage she tells of their encounter with a hostile tribe near the Kala Kuh mountain range in *Journeys in Persia and Kurdistan Vol. II*:

I was riding as usual with Mirza behind me, when a man with a gun rushed frantically towards me from an adjacent camp, waving his gun and shouting, "Who are you? Why are you in our country? You're friends of Khaja Taimur, you've given him presents, we'll rob you"! With these and many similar words he pursued us, and men started up as by magic, with long guns, running alongside, the low spurs became covered with people in no time, and there was much signalling from hill to hill, "A-hoy-hoy-hoy-hoy," and sending of messengers. Mirza pacified them

by saying that we are friends of Isfandyar Khan, and that I have presents for Aslam Khan, their chief; but soon the shout of “Feringhis” was raised, and from group to group along the knolls swelled the cry of “Feringhis! Feringhis!” mixed with a few shouts of *Kafir*; but without actual molestation we reached a steep and uncomfortable camping-ground, Padshah-i-Zalaki, at an altitude of 7800 feet, with an extensive view of the broad green valley.” (59-60)

Her account continues with the pitching of tents and people eventually lining up to receive medicine from the foreigners, but although Bird is the one administering the treatment as well as in charge of the medicine she mentions herself only twice in the whole section: first in connection to someone tumbling over her, and second, her leaving the tent “to avoid further mischief” (ibid, 61). The narrative gives instead much more consideration on the active roles of her travel companions Karim, Agha (Major Sawyer), and Aziz Khan, who are respectively described as protecting the medical tent, ordering people to stay in lines, and sending people to organize the treatment of the sick (60).

4 DISCOURSES OF COLONIALISM, GENDER AND CLASS IN ISABELLA BIRD'S *KOREA AND HER NEIGHBOURS*

In this chapter I will examine the discourses of colonialism, gender and class present in *Korea and Her Neighbours* that were explained in detail in the previous chapter. I will first focus on discourses of colonialism in order to point out that women's travel accounts can not be considered to have existed outside the imperialist agenda and that this agenda can be seen in Isabella Bird's writing. Next, I will look at discourses of gender in order to offer a more thorough reading of *Korea and Her Neighbours*. As I will show these gendered discourses most commonly offset and undermine the colonial ones, but in some cases also lend support to them, revealing the complex and even contradictory connection of Bird's account and historical colonialism. Finally, in connection with Bird's description of Korean women, I will show that colonial and gendered discourses alone cannot fully explain these accounts, which is why the account must be interpreted through discourses of class.

4.1 Discourses of Colonialism

Although women travelers had different constraints and often chose to write from a more personal point of view, their narratives were still informed and partly shaped by colonial discourses of the time. In *Korea and Her Neighbors*, Isabella Bird on many occasions Bird describes an innate difference between the Westerner and the Oriental. She depicts Koreans as indifferent and absent of any religious faculty (64), and deems ginseng,

popular local medicine, unsuitable to Europeans even with its “apparently partially deserved reputation” (299). Another pertinent example of cultural stereotyping can be seen when she describes how, as they are procuring a boat for her first journey down the Han River, Mr. Miller’s (a young missionary who was Bird’s travel companion on her first inland journey) servant Che-on-i emerges “with the broad smile with which the Orientals announce bad news” (68), informing them that the boat is too small for their purposes. In addition, the introductory chapter features a chart of measurements taken from over 1000 Korean men, including their height, size around chest, and size around head (13), strengthening the image of Korean people as objects of scientific knowledge. In the same chapter Bird also discusses mental aspects of the Korean people, and although initially seeing them as “gleg on the uptak” (13), she also describes them as having “the Oriental vices of suspicion, cunning and untruthfulness” (13-14) which makes “trust between man and man [...] unknown” (14). The description of the current condition of Korea, which Bird saves for last in her introduction, is very illustrative of how she sees Korea in relation to the West:

It is into this archaic condition of things, this unspeakable grooviness, this irredeemable, unreformed Orientalism, this parody of China without the robustness of race which helps to hold China together, that the ferment of the Western leaven has fallen, and this feeblest of independent kingdoms, rudely shaken out of her sleep of centuries, half frightened and wholly dazed, finds herself confronted with an array of powerful, ambitious, aggressive, and not always overscrupulous powers, bent, it may be, on overreaching her and each other, forcing her into new paths, ringing with rude hands the knell of time-honored custom, clamoring for

concessions, and bewildering her with reforms, suggestions, and panaceas, of which she see neither the meaning nor the necessity. (22)

In addition to the easily detectable qualities that are presented in the text as Orientalist, the whole country is posed as “archaic” and “unreformed” and made to stand in opposition to the Western ideas of progress and enlightenment. The whole description likens Korea to a young child to whom older siblings are about to teach proper manners to, forcibly if necessary. It seems that Bird has taken quite a traditional colonialist position in this discourse.

In later passages the dehumanization of Koreans becomes even clearer. Bird describes children living in Seoul in the following fashion: “Mangy dogs and blear-eyed children, half or wholly naked, and scaly with dirt, roll in the deep dust or slime, or pant and blink in the sun, apparently unaffected by the stench which abound” (27). Another similar description can be found when Bird approaches the eastern lake area of Ma-cha Töng:

In the early twilight, when the fierce sun blaze was over, in the smoky redness of a heated evening atmosphere, when every rock was giving forth the heat it had absorbed in the day, across the stream which is at once the outlet of the lake and the boundary between the provinces of Kang-wön and Ham-gyöng, appeared a large, straggling, gray-roofed village, above high-water mark, on a beach of white sand. Several fishing junks were lying in shelter at the mouth of the stream. Women were beating clothes and drawing water, and children and dogs were rolling over each other on the sand, all more or less idealized by being silhouetted in purple against the hot, lurid sky.

As the enchantment of distance faded and Ma-cha Töng revealed itself in plain prose, fading from purple into sober gray, the ideal of romantic halt by the pure sea vanished. A long, crooked, tumble-down narrow street, with narrower off-shoots, heaps of fish offal and rubbish, in which swine and, mangy blear-eyed dogs, and children, much afflicted with skin disease, were indiscriminately routing and rolling, pools covered with a thick brown scum, a stream which had degenerated into an open sewer, down which thick green slime flowed tardily, a beach of white sand, the upper part of which was blackened with fish laid out to dry, frames for drying fish everywhere, men, women, children, all as dirty in person as it was possible to be, thronging the roadway as we approached air laden with insupportable odors, and the vilest accommodation I ever had in Korea, have fixed this night in my memory. (156-157)

As soon as the earlier romantic ideal turns into a grotesque nightmare, Bird begins to portray the place and people using extremely negative vocabulary that turns the illusion of a pastoral heaven into a repugnant scene of horrors that no (civilized) person can be expected to withstand. Bird describes the children among dogs and swine with animal-like qualities such as being naked or “blear-eyed.” The effect is furthermore only reinforced by her interchanging use of these, as “mangy dogs and blear-eyed children” of the first quote is later contrasted with the “mangy, blear-eyed dogs, and children, much afflicted with skin disease” of the second passage. Children are also pictured in the first passage as being “scaly with dirt”, which further dims the boundary between them and animals. This animalism reaches its peak when in both scenes the children and dogs “indiscriminately rout and roll” and “roll in the deep dust, pant and blink in the sun”. Furthermore, the village itself is the very image of filth and of disgusting smells: it is filled with “heaps of

offal and rubbish,” there are streams of “thick green slime” and pools “covered with thick brown scum” and the white beach that has been turned black by drying fish only strengthens the juxtaposition of the first and second paragraph and reinforces the idea that the villagers have completely destroyed this romantic and picturesque idyll, turning it into what by its descriptions sounds more of an animal den or lair unfit for (civilized) humans. The narrator becomes doubly removed from the native people as she is in a position to degrade the village and inherently the only one there who can recognize a true romantic idyll for what it is – and, in this case, what it is not.

Koreans are also set apart from the Westerners by their impolite manners and insufferable curiosity. In the beginning of her first trip down the Han River Bird details the people generally friendly if rather curious, travelling miles just to see her (97). Later on, however, she portrays their curiosity as being much more intolerable. Consider, for example, the following passage after she has been given a room at a local inn in Sang-pang Kori:

The unwall'd space at once filled up with a crowd of men, women, and children. All the paper was torn off the doors, and a crowd of dirty Mongolian faces took its place. I hung up cambric curtains, but long sticks were produced and my curtains were poked into the middle of the room. The crowd broke in the doors, and filled the small space not occupied by myself and my gear. The women and children sat on my bed in heaps, examined my clothing, took out my hairpins and pulled down my hair, took off my slippers, drew my sleeves up to the elbow and pinched my arms to see if they were of the same flesh and blood as their own; they investigated my few possessions minutely, trying on my hat and gloves, and after being turned out by Wong three times, returned in fuller force, accompanied by unmarried

youths, the only good-looking 'girls' ever seen in Korea, with abundant hair divided in the middle, and hanging in long plaits down their back. The pushing and crushing, the odious familiarity, the babel of voices, and the odors of dirty clothing in a temperature of 80°, were intolerable. Wong cleared the room a fourth time, and suggested that when they forced their way in again, they should find me sitting on the bed cleaning my revolver, a suggestion I accepted. He had hardly retired when they broke in again, but there was an immediate stampede, and for the remainder of the evening I was free from annoyance. (126-127)

Bird seems to suggest here again that there is a fundamental difference between the Koreans and the Westerners. The Koreans simply do not know any better as they keep on returning to her room every time Wong, her servant, turns them back, so she is eventually forced to resort to the cleaning of her revolver, which the Koreans will instantly recognize as a sign of danger and escape. Although it is hard to say precisely whether Wong first tries to reason with the crowd or simply ask them to leave Bird alone, it certainly seems as if there is very little negotiating going on, as both of them seem resigned in the belief that this is the Korean character and it cannot be reasoned with.

Korea becomes firmly established within the evolutionary past of the West in the description of a royal procession in Seoul. In Seoul, preparing for her first journey inland, Isabella Bird describes the *Kur-dong*, a procession made up by the King and his 1000 guards, in the following fashion:

It would be impossible for a stranger to give in detail the component parts of such a show, the like of which has no existence elsewhere on earth, passing for more

than an hour in the bright sunshine, in detachments, in compact masses, at a stately walk or a rapid run, in the full splendor of a *barbaric mediævalism*, or to say what dignitaries flashed by in the kaleidoscopic blaze of color. (55-56, emphasis added)

To understand the significance fully, it must be stated that this is not the only instance of “mediævalism” in the chapter: soldiers and cavalry are seen by Bird to carry “mediæval” or “antique” armor on several occasions (56-58), and she fails to “detect the flattery of their imitation” when Korean cavalry dressed up in “loose-cotton frocks” and “baggy trousers” (56) marches by. Bird’s description of the parade sets herself apart as the modernized westerner who is again in an expert position to describe the proceedings as barbaric and medieval as if they belonged to an era long passed in Europe. She also seems to point out that the colors and different styles of marching in the procession, the overall heterogeneity of the army is nothing but a caricature of how this kind of a display would be organized in England.

In Chemulpo near Seoul, where Bird first lands after making a brief stop in “Fusan” (Japanese pronunciation of the port town of Busan) on her way to Korea from Japan, she construes the filthy alleys as “swarming with quiet dirty children” who “emulate the *dolessness* of their fathers” (33). Again the adjectives are indicative of the qualities Said has pointed out as inherently Oriental (206). Bird also describes the backwardness of the Koreans on many occasions. When writing about trade she considers the mere existence of foreign trade a surprise in light of Korean backwardness (391-2). On several occasions she also personifies Korea/Seoul in quite a backward manner:

It is in the capital that the Korean feels the first stress of his unsought and altogether undesired contact with Western civilization, and resembles nothing so much as a man awaking from a profound sleep, rubbing his eyes half-dazed and looking dreamily about him, not quite sure where he is. (59-60)

Another feature of travel accounts that had by this time become common, especially in more scientifically endowed ones, was the categorizing, classifying and naming of local flora and fauna according to the European classificatory system first invented by Carl Linné. Mary Louise Pratt argues that Linné's publication of *The System of Nature* (1735), a work to categorize and name every plant on the planet, whether known or unknown to Europeans, gave travel writers and scientists alike an uncanny power of defining and so fundamentally rediscovering the landscapes they depicted. With a mere glance the travelers become the masters of the scene as their gazes process, name and categorize the details before them scientifically, i.e. in a way that the native people are unable to do. Pratt asserts that this system of classification, which came to encompass minerals, animals and humans among others (32-33), eventually in this manner became a narratable and natural part of the text (28). Consider, for example, the following passage from Isabella Bird, in which she describes the landscape near Tan-Yang village on her first journey southeast from Seoul on the River Han:

On the 30th of April we tugged and poled the boat up seven long and severe rapids, with deep still stretches of water between them. The flora increased in variety, and the shapes of the mountains became very definite. Among other trees there were a large branching *Acanthopanax ricinifolia*, two species of euonymus, mistletoe on the walnut and mulberry, the *Rhus semi-alata* and *Rhus vernicifera* pines, firs, the

Abies microsperma, the *Actinidia pueraria*, *Elæagnus*, Spanish chestnuts in great groves, alders, birches, maples, elms, limes, and a tree infrequently seen which I believe to be a *Zelkawa*. (98)

The process of naming allows the traveler to familiarize the unknown and assert their symbolic colonial control over the landscape as they display that the ultimate knowledge – and therefore power – lies with them.

At times there is present an ambiguity in Bird's descriptions, as she on a number of occasions writes in a manner where she first states a fact in a very colonial tone yet later attempts to explain or at least alleviate the effect of her previous statement. The first example is her discussion of Korean music:

At this inn there were some musical performers who made both night and day wearisome to me, but gave great pleasure to others. I have not previously mentioned my sufferings on the Han from the sounds produced by itinerant musicians, and by the *mutang* or sorceress and her coadjutors; but, as has been forcibly brought out in a paper on Korean music by Mr. Hulbert in the *Korean Repository*, the sounds are peculiar and unpleasing, because we neither know nor feel what they are intended to express, and we bring to Korean music not the Korean temperament and training but the Western, which demands "time" as an essential. It maybe added that the Koreans, like their neighbors the Japanese, love our music as little as we love theirs, and for the same reason, that the ideas we express by it are unfamiliar to them. (164)

Her description of her experiences of Korean music at first seems very dismissive, but then she explains that her sufferings could be caused by the different standards she uses to judge the music. On the one hand this could be interpreted as an Orientalist statement, but in the light of her last addition it seems improbable as she points out Western music is similarly disliked by the Koreans and Japanese. Granted, it could be argued that Bird conveys this difference as a sign of the essential difference between the West and the (Far) East, but nevertheless there are no judgments to the nature of the cultural superiority of the West. Interestingly enough, in a discussion of love songs and allusions to nature in them she feels they display “a quick and sympathetic insight into her beauties” and that occasional stanzas have “a delicacy of touch not unworthy of an Elizabethan poet” (168).

Bird also depicts Seoul in this manner that alternates between colonial and more feminine discourses:

I know Seoul by day and night, its palaces and its slums, its unspeakable meanness and faded splendors, its purposeless crowds, its mediaeval processions, which for barbaric splendor cannot be matched on earth, the filth of its crowded alleys, and its pitiful attempt to retain its manners, customs, and identity as the capital of an ancient monarchy in face of the host of disintegrating influences which are at work, but it is not at first that one "takes it in." I had known it for a year before I appreciated it, or fully realized that it is entitled to be regarded as one of the great capitals of the world, with its supposed population of a quarter of a million, and that few capitals are more beautifully situated. (38)

She first sees it in a very Orientalist light: it is backward, indifferent and passive, clinging onto its old habits not realizing that external influences are about to change it forever. Immediately after this foregrounding, however, she changes her tone completely and follows it with a very positive account of the city. I believe these above-mentioned examples illustrate that Isabella Bird certainly takes part in and (re)produces the colonial discourses so common in men's travel writing of the period. As seen in the last few examples though, an analysis of colonial discourses cannot provide a full reading of the account as the more feminine discourses that in many cases follows the colonial ones are impossible to fit into a colonial reading without leaving the interpretation wanting. These breaks and silences in the text are examined more fully in the following section.

4.2 Discourses of Gender

As illustrated in the previous chapter, the limitations on women travelers' texts in terms of their form and content that Mills bring up do not fully fit my analysis of Bird's travel accounts. Especially in regard to the form of the narrative, there is an interesting split between the travel accounts Bird wrote. The accounts before *Korea and Her Neighbours* seem to all share the common feature of having been written in the form of letters, whereas beginning with the account on Korea this more private form has been discarded. Dorothy Middleton accords this split to the death of Bird's sister Henrietta in 1880, remarking how Bird's accounts after the incident have very little of the "individual sparkle" that make the early ones "so delightful" (41), although simultaneously noting that her journeys themselves are becoming all the more impressive (ibid). This switch, however, seems to alter the content and focus of Bird's descriptions as well. The

confessional form, according to Mills, is one of the textual strategies that women were allowed and even encouraged to use in their writing from the eighteenth-century onward (1991, 19; 42). As such this form displays a focus on the 'self' – which in Bird's case was rejected in favor of a style that is closer to the scientific mode of description of the day, striving toward anonymity and objectivity. These modes can be observed in, for example, two passages Bird wrote, first one of the Japanese school system in her earlier travel narrative *Unbeaten Tracks in Japan* (1878), and the second about the schooling and education system in Korea described in *Korea and Her Neighbours*. The former passage is foregrounded by her visit to the village of Irimichi and its school, which becomes the setting of the description. She describes the teaching and the discipline system in the classroom in largely positive tones, questioning only the overly "Europeanised" classroom benches, on which the children look "very uncomfortable sitting" instead of "squatting native fashion" (1878, 66), and a recital of a poem that to her "indicates the singular Oriental distaste for life but is a dismal ditty for young children to learn" (67). By contrast she describes "the school apparatus very good" (66) and marks the almost "painful earnestness" in the "old-fashioned faces" poring over textbooks (66-67). There are no larger generalizations except for Bird's statement that Chinese classics as the basis of Japanese education are becoming superseded and are now used only when learning to read Chinese (67). In *Korea and Her Neighbours*, though, her tone completely changes. Nearly the whole passage is a generalized statement of the poor state of the education, which is substantiated by examples of 'proper education' in Korea given by foreign schools and institutions (389). Her introduction of the education system sets the tone of what is to come:

Korean education has hitherto failed to produce patriots, thinkers, or honest men. It has been conducted thus. In an ordinary Korean school the pupils, seated on the floor with their Chinese books in front of them, the upper parts of their bodies swaying violently from side to side or backwards and forwards, from daylight till sunset, vociferate at the highest and loudest pitch of their voices their assigned lessons from the Chinese classics, committing them to memory or reciting them aloud, writing the Chinese characters, filling their receptive memories with fragments of the learning of the Chinese sages and passages of mythical history, the begoggled teacher, erudite and supercilious, rod in hand and with a book before him, now and then throwing in a word of correction in stentorian tones which rise above the din. (387)

Next, she dismisses the education system on the basis that it is completely unable to “develop the thinking powers or to enable the student to understand the world he lives in” (387), and ascertains that the products of the Korean education system appear to be

narrowness, grooviness, conceit, superciliousness, a false pride which despises manual labor, a selfish individualism, destructive of generous public spirit and social trustfulness, a slavery in act and thought to customs and traditions 2,000 years old, a narrow intellectual view, a shallow moral sense, and an estimate of women essentially degrading. (387-8)

As stated, for Bird the only recent positive development in Korean education are the founding of foreign schools, such as the Royal English School, Russian School, and Pai Chai College (“Hall for the rearing of Useful Men”), the latter of which she commends on

developing “a patriotic spirit” and “something of the English public school spirit with its traditions of honor” (389-90). In her opinion, these examples along with missionary schools are the right (and only) way to develop Korean education. Telling of her overall attitude towards the Korean education system is her concluding remark: “Altogether the Korean educational outlook is not without elements of hopefulness” (391).

This previous example shows a considerable change in the two accounts. As for Middleton’s argument of the reason for this switch, however, I find it rather implausible that her sister’s death would have made her abandon her previous style altogether. Furthermore, as can be deduced from Bird’s accounts, the change seems to have taken place only about a decade after the passing away of Henrietta. In examining, for example, *Journeys in Persia and Kurdistan*, detailing Bird’s journeys there during and after 1889, her writing is still marked by the familiar narrative form of letters and interspersed with recounts of dangerous and life-threatening adventures, which, as I mentioned in my earlier discussion on Bird’s image, even Karoline Mawer in her study makes a note of.

Susan Bassnett suggests that Bird’s gradual change from an amateur travel writer to a more professional one can be observed in the pages of her travel accounts (235), a hypothesis that the previous findings in this section also support. Consequently, when this line of development is considered along with her admittance into the RGS in 1892, after which her account on Korea was written, I find it very plausible – though impossible to deduce with full certainty – that these factors may have had quite a big role in her decision to make a conscious and ambitious change in the form and style of her travel accounts by rejecting the earlier letter-form, instead drawing from the scientific tradition in travel writing. This also explains the persistent masculine and colonialist voice throughout her

account, as it was needed in order for her to stake her claim as a professional and established travel writer among her new peers in the RGS, whose final assessment was probably the only true measure for her, as she had already achieved quite a large following among the public with her earlier accounts, most of which had to be reprinted because of their popularity. One of the clearest indications of the change in *Korea and Her Neighbours* is the structure of the introductory chapter, which is written according to an “informational order” common to travel accounts (Mills 1991, 79). The order in Bird’s account closely follows that of *Hints to Travellers*, a guidebook published earlier by the RGS, to the point of including measurements of average height, girth round chest and skull measurements (13) and a bizarre paragraph on arts in which she states: “The arts are *nil*” (18). In this light it is not surprising that *Korea and Her Neighbours* comprises of numerous instances of colonial discourses whereas those discourses of femininity that conflict with the former seem to have been almost unnaturally downplayed and silenced.

In examining the narrative voices of *Korea and Her Neighbours*, Bird seems certainly capable of producing herself as the type of a hardened traveler who is not easily put off by the first sign of hardships and is able to evaluate them level-headedly based on her wealth of experience:

It was certain only that that the country was mountainous, and that the rapids were numerous and severe. It had also been said earnestly, and with an appearance of knowledge, by several people that it would be impossible for a lady to travel in the interior; and certainly much of what I heard, supposing it to be fact, was sufficiently deterring, but from many similar statements in other countries I knew that a deduction of at least fifty per cent. must be made! (68)

She practically highlights the point that people believe travelling in the interior is impossible to a “lady” such as her, but is then quick to refute this claim as an exaggeration on the grounds of her personal experience, which suggests that this is a strategy to boost her status as an experienced traveler even further. The fact that it comes across as an off-hand and rather humorous remark adds to the initial lightness of the assertion, but nevertheless underneath there lurks badly hidden Bird’s assertion of her expertise; she is the one who truly knows the heart of the matter.

This image of the experienced traveler is reinforced on several occasions during the treks in the interior. She portrays the roads as “deep in dust in summer and in mud in winter, where they are not polished tracks over irregular surfaces and ledges of rock” (128) but makes a point of having traversed on them herself by referring to her “extensive experience” on the “infamous bridle tracks” (128). When discussing the Korean ponies, she also describes herself as such an experienced “muleteer” (121) that she takes measures to divide all the loads the mules carry herself so as to prevent the Korean *mapu* from their usual quarreling. Furthermore, a few days later, as she begins the ascent to the Diamond Mountain monasteries, she again quite off-handedly disproves an assessment of an earlier traveler that leaves the reader without any doubts of her superior status:

Mr. Campbell, of H.B.M.’s Consular Service, one of the few Europeans who has crossed it, in his charming narrative mentions that it is impassable for laden animals, and engaged porters for the ascent, but though the track is nothing better than a torrent bed abounding in great boulders, angular and shelving rocks, and

slippery corrugations of entangled tree roots, I rode over the worst part, and my ponies made nothing of carrying the baggage up the rock ladders. (133)

This image of a hardened traveler is not, however, the only narrative persona found in Bird's account. On her journey northward to Pyongyang it is contested with a softer, more maternal image that undermines the earlier authority and her mastery of a situation, when an incident with their ponies leaves Mr. Im, one of Bird's two servants, with a broken arm:

Then Im had to be attended to, and though I was very anxious about him, I could not be blind to the picturesqueness of the scene in the hovel, Mr. Yi sitting in my chair holding the candle, the soldier, with his face puckered with pain, squatting on the floor with his swollen arm lying on a writing board on my lap, and no room to move. I failed there as elsewhere to get a better piece of wood for the splint, which was too short, and I could only get wadding for padding it by taking some out of Im's sleeve, and all the time and afterwards I was very anxious for fear that I had put the bandage on too tight or too loosely, and that my want of experience would give the poor fellow a useless right arm. (334)

Here it is possible to observe that the anxiety and worries of Bird Bishop actually force her to abandon the position of the experienced traveler in favor of a more traditional, maternal nurse. She is also capable of voicing her fear that "the poor fellow" may well lose the use of his arm permanently because of her inexperience, a curious remark from one who undertook training at St. Mary's Hospital in London to the effect of successfully dealing with abscesses and whitlows on her travels in Persia (1891, vol. II, 50).

Yet another situation in which the voice of the seasoned traveler is undermined is Bird's description of her arrival to a British Embassy in Chefoo, China after making a hasty escape from the Korean capital to avoid the approaching war between China and Japan:

Though I landed at Chefoo in heavy tweed clothing, I was obliged to walk up the steep hill to the British Consulate, though the mercury was 84° in the shade, because I had no money with which to pay for a *jinriksha*! My reflections were anything but pleasant. My passport and letters of introduction, both private and official, were in Seoul, my travelling dress was distinctly shabby, and I feared that an impecunious person without introductions, and unable to prove her identity, might meet with a very cool reception. I experienced something of the anxiety and timidity which are the everyday lot of thousands, and I have felt a far tenderer sympathy with the penniless, specially the educated penniless, ever since. I was so extremely uncomfortable that I hung about the gate of the British Consulate for some minutes before I could summon up courage to go to the door and send in a torn address of a letter which was my only visiting card! I thought, but it may have been fancy, that the Chinese who took it eyed me suspiciously and contemptuously.

(185)

This anxious and uneasy behavior is in direct contrast to her previous explorer-like narrative voice. It is clearly anti-heroic and more passive, uncertain, and self-searching, all qualities seen primarily as feminine. Furthermore, the narrator feels even the local people starting to stare at her “suspiciously and contemptuously” signaling that the earlier self-assuredness has been replaced with a sense of disgrace and humility that, I dare say, a more masculine narrator would be extremely reserved to reveal.

Although the more masculine voices of the scientist and traveler often surface in her account, there are no passages in which the narrator is portrayed as a straightforward hero. Instead, Bird again seems to employ the strategy of self-effacement, as this following example, in which she recounts the panic that the *mapu* (the pony grooms and the “coolies”), who in their fear of tigers usually refuse to travel after dark, display:

As they [the tracks] became less and less obvious, and the valleys more solitary, our tergiversations were more frequent and prolonged, the *mapu* drove the ponies as fast as they could walk, the fords were many and deep, and two of the party were unhorsed in them, still we hurried on faster and faster. Not a word was spoken, but I knew that the men had *tiger on the brain!*

Blundering through the twilight, it was dark when we reached the lower village of Ma-ri Kei, where we were to halt for the night, two miles from the Pass of Tan-pa-Ryong, which was to be crossed the next day. There the villagers could not or would not take us in. They said they had neither rice nor beans, which may have been true so late in the spring. However, it is, or then was, Korean law that if a village could not entertain travellers it must convoy them to the next halting-place.

The *mapu* were frantic. They yelled and stormed and banged at the hovels, and succeeded in turning out four sleepy peasants, who were reinforced by four more a little farther on but the torches were too short, and after sputtering and flaring, went out one by one, and the fresh ones lighted slowly. The *mapu* lost their reason. They thrashed the torchbearers with their heavy sticks; I lashed my *mapu* with my light whip for doing it; they yelled, they danced. (131-2, original emphases)

Although it is discernible that the narrator does not necessarily see the situation eye-to-eye with the *mapu* with statements such as “I knew the men had *tiger on the brain!*,” she is nevertheless not straightforwardly portrayed as a hero, either. Despite coming across as coolheaded and in charge of the situation when she lashes the *mapu* for hitting the torch-bearing villagers, the narrator persona, the inner voice that reveals ‘the inner thoughts’ and attitudes of the author, is curiously absent throughout the episode. Even after they find a hovel to spend a night in the only comment made is about it being “welcome after being eleven hours in the saddle” (132). If this passage cannot be considered to appropriate the typical hero description, however, it fails to fit snugly into the feminine category either. It is in no way confessional and almost void of any feeling, the events being described with almost scientific detachment, as if the author is the calm eye of the storm quietly observing the chaos around her. This automatically distances her from the frantic panic and yelling of the “mapu” but at the same time it fails to further empower the narrator as she gives no indication as to the reasons behind her lashing out, such as telling the reader that she takes no pleasure in it but it must be done in this kind of situations. These are strong indications that the narrator figure is carefully considered and constructed by the author. It is also quite similar, if not as conspicuous, to Mary Kingsley’s use of satirical and deprecating humor to undermine the authority of the narrative voice in her travel account, discussed by both Mills (1991, 172-74) and Blunt (58).

The third factor in this analysis is a detailed examination of Bird’s depiction of the native Koreans and especially Korean women. The issue is more complex than it may at first seem for, as Bird herself admits (78), her views of Koreans come to change in the course of her travels – mainly as a consequence of her eventual realization that one of the reasons

for the laziness of the people can be attributed to the traditional Korean class system which allows the nobles the right to the earnings of the peasants, of a voyage to Vladivostok to meet and observe Korean immigrant families, as well as her audiences with the Queen and the rest of the Korean royal family. Moreover, her relationship with Korean women is very much dependent on Bird's perception of these women's class and status, and therefore requires incorporating discourses of class alongside colonialism and gender.

As discussed in the previous chapter, in the introductory chapter Bird constructs Koreans as objects of scientific knowledge by the use of various textual strategies. In the travel narrative itself she continues in similar vein. In her first encounter with Korean people in Fusan (Pusan) she conveys their general appearance in typical Orientalist fashion as "grotesque" (27). Furthermore, on first seeing the town of Chemulpo near Seoul her attention is instantly drawn to a lethargic male crowd that seems intent on loafing away the time, earning in this process the narrator's evident disapproval (33). In this manner the reader is gradually introduced to Bird's first, rather negative image of the Korean people, which reaches its crescendo with her comments on the Koreans' lack of religious faculty:

The religion the Korean would accept is one which would show him how to get money without working for it. The indifference is extreme, the religious faculty is absent, there are no religious ideas to appeal to, and the moral teachings of Confucius have little influence with any class. The Korean has got on so well without a religion, in his own opinion, that he does not want to be troubled with one, specially a religion of restraint and sacrifice which has no worldly good to offer. (64-65)

As they set out on their first trip down the River Han, however, Bird makes an effort (though as an afterthought as she herself admits) to mitigate this earlier opinion:

They [Koreans] appear lazy. I then thought them so, but they live under a *régime* under which they have no security for gains of labor, and for a man to be reported to be ‘making money,’ or attaining even the luxury of a brass dinner service, would be simply to lay himself open to the rapacious attentions of the nearest mandarin and his myrmidons, or to a demand for a loan from an adjacent *yang-ban* [nobleman]. (78-79)

This more sympathetic opinion of the Korean peasants and their downtrodden position is constructed largely in passages where Bird details “the social evils” (101) that she considers the Korean class system directly at fault for, and overall seems to have very little to do with the earlier discussed traveler/scientist-figure in the text, which this softer narrative voice challenges. The following is a particularly illustrating example of her opinion of the system:

There is no doubt that the people, *i.e.* the vast mass of the unprivileged, on whose shoulders rests the burden of taxation, are hard pressed by the *yang-bans*, who not only use their labor without paying for it, but make merciless exactions under the name of loans. As soon as it is rumored or known that a merchant or peasant has laid up a certain amount of *cash*, a *yang-ban* or official seeks a loan. Practically it is a levy, for if it is refused the man is either thrown into prison on a false charge and whipped every morning until he or his relations pay the sum demanded, or he

is seized and practically imprisoned on low diet in the *yang-ban*'s house until the money is forthcoming. (101-02)

The most approving portrayal of the Koreans is written during her visit to a Korean settlers' village near Vladivostok, Russia, where she compares the 'reformed' manners of the settlers to that of the British:

The air of the men has undergone a subtle but real change, and the women, though they nominally keep up their habit of seclusion, have lost the hang-dog air which distinguishes them at home. The suspiciousness and indolent conceit, and the servility to his betters, which characterize the home-bred Korean have very generally given place to an independence and manliness of manner rather British than Asiatic. (235)

Regardless of whether she sees this amelioration primarily as an achievement the settlers achieved on their own or as a result of living under the Russian government, it still clearly contests the Orientalist image of Koreans.

It is obvious that Bird has added some parts regarding the Koreans to better accommodate the smooth development of her opinion on them, but her views on Koreans did alter tremendously in the course of her travels. The only descriptions, however, in which the narrator figure remains rather aloof and negative are her views on Korean women. As her views seem to reflect more of a class distinction than one based on notions of gender or race, in the next section I will first take up discourses of class and then discuss their influence on the overall reading of this travel account.

4.3 Discourses of Class

Although a number of postcolonial researchers have recognized the need for a wider theoretical framework to accommodate the largely neglected discourses of class, very few have actually taken up this lack of address in their studies. Those who have, such as Anna Secor or Karen Morin, have more often than not opted against constructing a refined theoretical framework that would treat these discourses equally significant to those of race, nationality and gender. Instead, they have chosen to deal with more specific instances of these discourses as they have cropped up, such as Secor's observations on Lady Montagu's views on individual Turks (discussed below), or Morin's discussion of the ways in which class discourses intersected with those of gender in several Victorian women's accounts reporting of the quality of their accommodations and food, as well as their daily domestic routines (498-502). Whereas establishing such a framework or theory for discourses of class may be beyond the confines of this thesis, I still feel that this line of inquiry has the potential to lead to new insights in the field of postcolonial theory and should therefore be advocated. Two particular reasons for this are, firstly, the primacy of domestic class relations in Victorian Britain; they permeated every level of the society and to a very large extent determined the material existence of the British subjects, though social mobility was certainly not completely impossible. Secondly, most if not all travel writers of the time, especially in the case of women, come from both middle and upper class families and were able to travel precisely because of their material conditions. This means that the Victorian working class is, if included at all, even more underrepresented among travel writers than, for example, writers of the time, and can be said to have slowly

emerged after the dawn of mass-tourism which permanently lowered the costs of traveling. I believe these points sufficiently illustrate the need to examine the naturalization of class differences in travel accounts, for, if travel accounts took part in the creation of British Empire and helped justify colonialism in their part, surely it can be hypothesized that they might promote the internal coherence of the Empire in the form of naturalizing class differences as well as describing similar systems abroad.

Class discourses in *Korea and Her Neighbours* surface in Bird's descriptions of Korean women, which at least partly contradict with the positive tone she uses when discussing Korean people, discussed in the previous section. The descriptions reveal a curious polarity, but not one that one would expect in light of the depictions of Koreans, for in these cases her earlier sympathies are completely reversed: the peasant women are seen from an adverse point of view while the description of upper classes, namely the royal family and particularly the Queen, sides on the affirmative and even laudatory. In the account women of the lower class are most often perceived as either intolerably curious (126), "destitute of manners" (88), or simply dirty (339), whereas in her audition with the queen Bird's portrayal is full of personal and flattering adjectives when she depicts the Queen as a "very nice-looking slender woman" with "cold and keen" eyes and "the general expression [...] of brilliant intelligence" (252). To further illustrate this dichotomy, consider the following two passages, the first one of the Queen and the second of the Korean peasant woman:

On each occasion [audience] I was impressed with the grace and charming manner of the Queen, her thoughtful kindness, her singular intelligence and force, and her remarkable conversational power even through the medium of an interpreter. [...]

Her life was a battle. She fought with all the charm, shrewdness, and sagacity for power, for the dignity and safety of her husband and son, and for the downfall of the Tai-Won-Kun [King's father]. She had cut short many lives, but in doing so she had not violated Korean tradition and custom [...]. (254-55)

The peasant woman may be said to have no pleasures. She is nothing but a drudge, till she can transfer some of the drudgery to her daughter-in-law. At thirty she looks fifty, and at forty is frequently toothless. Even the love of personal adornment fades out of her life at a very early age. Beyond the daily routine of life it is probable that her thoughts never stray except to the dæmons, who are supposed to people earth and air, and whom it is her special duty to propitiate. (340)

Secor, in her study of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's letters written during her husband's ambassadorial mission to the Ottoman court, observes a similar duality in Montagu's description of the violent and irrational behaviour of an Ottoman soldier in her service and, on the other hand, the humanity with which the Turk slave-owners treat their slaves (386). She concludes, "the upper classes of Ottoman society are presented as more similar to the British than to the lower classes, and class order in Ottoman Turkey is presented as parallel to that of eighteenth-century England" (387). I believe that Isabella Bird assumes a similar position to the one adopted by Lady Montagu, in which the Victorian class discourses serve to naturalize the difference between the lower and upper class women of Korea.

In some cases the discourses of class also coincide with those of gender. A case in point is Bird's description of being left stranded in Chefoo after being forced to make a hasty departure from Seoul by the impending war (185), which I previously discussed in section 4.2, my reading largely focusing on the uncharacteristically hesitant and anxious narrative voice that cause the readers to see the narrator in a more feminine light. Focusing on the passage and especially on the class-based material conditions of the narrator reveals much in terms the source of her anxiety. First of all, she is forced to walk to the embassy (though the temperature is close to 84°F) as she has no money to pay for the rickshaw. Although this seems only a minor inconvenience to the narrator, she becomes more concerned by her lack of passport and letters of introduction, which remain behind in Seoul. What tells us most of her class, I believe, is her focus on her "shabby" travelling dress, which she cites as the second reason – lack of passport and letters of introduction being the first – for her fear of possible meeting "with a very cool reception." Furthermore, immediately after writing of her predicament she mentions it as the reason why she has ever since felt much more sympathetic towards the penniless, doubly reconfirming the earlier reading by adding "specially the educated penniless," which again invokes the class-based difference she feels there is between her and those with an insecure material existence.

5 CONCLUSION

In this thesis I set out to examine the complex connections of imperialism and women's travel writing in late nineteenth century in order to deconstruct early colonial configurations of power that to still continue to linger and exert influence in the postcolonial world. My aim was to show that British women travel writers of the late Victorian period occupy a very ambiguous and shifting position in their accounts in relation to the dominant discourses, which simultaneously tend to both marginalize them on the basis of their gender and empower them due to their race, nationality and class. There were a number of reasons why I chose to analyze Isabella Bird's *Korea and Her Neighbours*, but perhaps the most significant was the lack of previous in-depth studies, especially of her later work, which was quite surprising considering her status as one of the "globe trotteresses" (Middleton 19) and the number of studies on her female colleagues such as Mary Kingsley.

The thesis began with a look at the historical development of travel, travel writing and the origins of the study of travel writing due to the quite recent formation of the field that was overlooked for a long time. Next, the discussion turned to Isabella Bird and especially her image as a traveler in her own accounts as well as those of her biographers. This section revealed, on one hand, that Bird was conscious of her image to the point that she would, for example, in one of her accounts describe refusing to ride in male fashion until it threatened to jeopardize the whole trip (1881, 10). Dorothy Middleton, one of her biographers, also mentions her turning absolutely furious when a story of her in "masculine habiliments" was run in the English press, and demanding her editor to

“bullwhip” the responsible parties (Middleton 25). There have also been suggestions (Bassnett, 234-35) that Bird to some extent fictionalized herself in the narratives because of her concern how the public would view her, a claim that this thesis had to acknowledge in the analysis of her account on Korea.

The theory focused first on Edward W. Said’s Orientalist discourse as well as Michel Foucault’s concepts of discourse and power/knowledge, but quickly moved to look at more recent theoretical developments in the field of feminist postcolonial theory. Perhaps the thesis could have benefited from a more thorough discussion on the different directions research has taken after Foucault and Said, but in the end it made sense to concentrate primarily on Sara Mills’ discourses of femininity as well as feminist discourses in *Discourses of Difference*, for they provided a solid foundation into the study of gendered discourses by focusing on social issues affecting women’s travel writing, such as the constraints regarding the production and reception of their accounts. She also manages to continue on the path Said took the first steps on by discussing the narrative voice, but developing his argument by demonstrating how subject positions become gendered, which other researchers such as Alison Blunt have later discussed in their studies on women travelers. A number of researchers, such as Cheryl McEwan, have also persuasively argued that the descriptions native peoples and landscapes show the differences in women’s writing, which is why this factor was discussed third. At this point the most interesting point that an initial look into Bird’s account uncovered was the sudden change in the form of her accounts, which had, before the publication of *Korea and Her Neighbours*, been written in the form of letters, which Mills states many women were forced to use due to the discursive pressures of the time.

The analysis of *Korea and Her Neighbours* was accordingly split into three separate sections: first focused on discourses of colonialism based on the literary tropes used by Said in his analysis of the Orientalist discourse, second dealt with discourses of gender that feminist postcolonial critics have applied in their studies to demonstrate how women travel writers' accounts undermine the earlier colonial discourses, and the third pertained to discourses of class that have been neglected in a number of earlier studies. The findings illustrate that to Bird it was certainly not impossible to engage in a masculine colonial discourses. Whereas in her previous accounts she at times adapts softer and more private voice, in *Korea and Her Neighbours* the conclusions she draws often follow the colonialist discourses, which is demonstrated for example in her description of the state of the Korean education system. Nevertheless, the account in several cases reveals softer discourses of gender that signal a clear break from this colonialist point of view. The narrative voices reveal that Bird is very conscious of the way in which she describes herself in the narratives so as to appear proper and lady-like in the eyes of the reading public. Throughout her account, in fact, the heroic adventurer's voice is conspicuously absent; the closest she comes is the voice of an experienced traveler, which she displays on a number of occasions to rebut arguments and dispute claims about travel that she sees flawed. This voice, however, is amply contrasted with those working to the opposite effect, such as the maternal care and worry she displays when a Korean member of her party breaks his arm, the time she ends up penniless and without any travel documents in China after escaping an impending war in Korea. This is also supported by the change that takes place in her opinion regarding Korean peasants (although perhaps not as smooth a process as the narrative leads the reader to believe). Overall, it is fascinating to note that Bird adopts strategies and devices that affirm and reaffirm her femininity while undermining the colonialist tone in the account very much to the same effect as, for example, Mary

Kingsley's self-depreciating humor in *Travels in West Africa* (Mills 1991, 154; Blunt 1994, 60), even if they do not stand out as clearly as hers.

Bird's descriptions of Korean people follow largely a similar pattern in which she alternates between a colonialist and more feminine discourses. Her portrayal of Korean women, however, more particularly the duality between the contempt in her voice when she describes lower-class women with whom she comes into contact with, and the genuine admiration by which she describes the Queen (as if her peer), seemed out of place in light of the two discourses, which lead me to examine issues of class. I believe that the findings, such as Bird's anxiety due to her radically altered material conditions and the class-based assessments of Korean women clearly illustrate there is a clear need for a theoretical framework which highlights class as another fundamental axis by which British women's travel writing can be examined in greater detail in the future.

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FINNISH SUMMARY

Matkakirjallisuuden tutkimuksesta on muutaman viime vuosikymmenen aikana tullut yksi keskeinen osa postkoloniaalista tutkimusalaa, joka keskittyy tarkastelemaan kolonialismin ja imperialismin ilmiöitä monitieteellisestä näkökulmasta sekä paljastamaan niiden monisyisiä vaikutuksia myös nyky-yhteiskunnassa. Tämä tutkimus tarkastelee brittiläisten naisten kirjoittaman myöhäisviktorianaisen matkakirjallisuuden kytköksiä kolonialismiin analysoimalla Isabella Birdin *Korea and Her Neighbours* matkakirjan diskursseja. Tutkielman alkuosa paneutuu ensin lyhyesti englantilaisen matkakirjallisuuden historiaan ja tutkimukseen sekä Isabella Birdiin. Teoria käsittelee diskurssitutkimuksen kehitystä Michel Foucault’sta ja Edward W. Saidista lähtien aina feministiseen naisten matkakirjallisuuden teoriaan saakka, ja varsinainen analyysi puolestaan pureutuu teorian pohjalta Birdin matkakirjan koloniaaliin sekä sukupuoli- ja luokkadiskursseihin.

Matkakirjallisuuden varhaisimmat teokset ovat peräisin ajalta ennen länsimaalaisen ajanlaskun alkua, mutta niiden kirjoittaminen Euroopassa ja Englannissa alkoi yleistyä vasta ensimmäisten suurten löytöretkien jälkeen 1500-luvulla. Vaikka nämä ensimmäiset tuotokset olivat usein virallisia dokumentteja, joilla valtiot ja muut tahot pystyivät todistamaan aluevaltauksensa tai keräämään rahallista tukea uusille löytöretkille, alkoivat kirjalliset kuvaukset yleistyä nopeasti matkailijoiden löytäessä toiminnalleen rahoittajia. 1600-luvun lopulla matkakirjat olivat jo saaneet varsin yhtenäisen ulkoasun niin sisällön kuin muotonsa suhteen. Kehittyvillä tieteenaloilla, kuten luonnontieteellä, oli myös suuri vaikutus matkakirjojen kuvauksiin, jotka usein sisälsivät esimerkiksi paikallisten kasvien tai eläimien lajittelua.

Vaikka eurooppakeskeisyys ei sinänsä ollut täysin uusi ilmiö, 1700-luvun lopun teollisesta vallankumouksesta juontaneet yhteiskunnalliset muutokset ja teknologinen kehitys alkoivat entistä kärjistetympin erottaa 1800-luvun Eurooppaa sekä Amerikkaa muusta maailmasta. Materialistinen ja teknologinen ylivoima kääntyi hiljalleen myös kulttuuriseksi ja yhteiskunnalliseksi paremmuudeksi. Uudet nousevat eurooppalaiset valtiot alkoivat myös kiinnittää huomiota luonnonvaroihin, joista käyty kamppailu huipentui suurimpien siirtomaavaltujen taisteluun Afrikasta. Tämä oli myös matkakirjallisuuden kulta-aikaa, sillä yhä useammat englantilaiset matkustivat Euroopassa ja sen ulkopuolelle, tai toimivat siirtomaissa tehtävissä, jotka mahdollistivat kirjoittamisen lähes missä tahansa maapallon kolkassa. 1900-luku toi kuitenkin muutoksen, sillä useimmat paikat oli jo kartoitettu ja monet ihmisryhmät olivat hybridisoituneet ja pirstaloituneet eurooppalaisten vaikutuksesta. Tämän sukupolven matkakirjailijat hylkäsivät aiemmat romanttiset ideat löytöretkistä ymmärtäessään, että maailma, jota heidän lapsuutensa matkakirjat kuvasivat, oli mennyttä. Myös maailmansodat ja niiden välinen 1930-luvun suuri lama vähensivät matkustamista, ja vaikuttivat osaltaan matkakirjojen yhä pessimistisempiin ja sisäänpäin kääntyneisiin kuvauksiin. Sotien jälkeisellä aikakaudella matkakirjoittamisesta alkoi muodostua eräänlainen sivutyö, joka näkyi uusien kokeellisten teosten syntynä. Tärkeimmäksi ei välttämättä muodostunut enää teoksessa kuvattu fyysinen, vaan sisäinen ja henkinen matka.

Isabella Bird syntyi keskiluokkaiseen englantilaiseen perheeseen 1831, ja matkusti sekä kirjoitti koko 1800-luvun loppupuolen aina kuolemaansa saakka. Häntä pidetään yleisesti yhtenä aikakautensa tunnetuimmista naismatkakirjailijoista, mistä kertoo myös hänen jäsenyytensä Englannin Kuninkaallisessa Maantieteellisessä Seurassa (Royal

Geographical Society), johon hänet hyväksyttiin seuran ensimmäisenä naisjäsenenä vuonna 1892. Birdin matkakirjat ja hänestä kirjoitetut elämäkerrat antavat hänestä varsin mielenkiintoisen vaikkakin osin ristiriitaisen kuvan, sillä varsinkin elämäkerrat kuvaavat häntä voimakastahtoisen ja epäsoinnaisena matkailijana, mutta silti erittäin varovaisena naisellisen julkisuuskuvansa suhteen. Susan Bassnetin mukaan Bird onkin esimerkki kirjailijasta, joka on tietoisesti pyrkinyt rakentamaan teoksissaan itsestään tietynlaisen fiktiivisen kuvan. Olen siksi pyrkinyt tutkimusasetelmassani huomioimaan että vaikei toisaalta kirjoittajaa voida kokonaan teoksestaan irrottaakaan, on Birdin tapauksessa vaarana silti hänen tekstiensä liiallinen tulkitseminen hänen persoonansa kautta.

Matkakirjallisuus on pysyi pitkään lähes kaiken tieteellisen tutkimuksen ulkopuolella. Sen tutkimukselle ei nähty tarvetta, koska se nähtiin jo itsessään eräänlaisena aikaansa sidottuna pseudotieteellisenä tekstinä. Postkoloniaalinen tutkimussuunta avasi kuitenkin pian uusia näkökulmia matkakirjallisuuden tutkimiseen, kun Edward Said osoitti *Orientalism*-teoksessaan, että matkakirjallisuus on analysoitavissa samalla tavalla kuin mikä tahansa teksti. Saidin mukaan itää (Orient) ja itämaalaisia (Oriental) käsittelevät eurooppalaiset teokset ovat luoneet hegemonisen diskurssin idästä ja itämaalaisuudesta, minkä ytimessä on niiden vastakkainasettelu ja toiseus lännen ja länsimaalaisuuden kanssa. Käyttäen diskurssiteoriaa yhdessä kirjallisuustutkimuksen keinojen, kuten esimerkiksi kertojan, rakenteen, kuvien, teemojen ja motiivien analysoinnin kanssa, Said tuo esille kuinka idän toiseus näkyy negatiivisiksi miellettyjen ominaisuuksien, kuten takapajuisuuden, välinpitämättömyyden tai laiskuuden, käsittelyn kautta.

Saidin orientalistinen diskurssi perustuu Michel Foucault'n määritelmään, jossa diskurssi monessa merkityksessä: se voi olla ryhmä tiettyyn aiheeseen liittyviä lausumia tai

kaikkien lausumien yhdessä muodostama joukko, ja toisinaan se voidaan ymmärtää myös käytänteinä, jotka määrittävät kuinka ja mitä lausumia voidaan tuottaa. Lausumat ovat puolestaan merkityksellisiä lauseita (puhuttuja tai kirjoitettuja), jotka yksittäisessä diskurssissa muodostavat verkoston, jonka kautta tietyt objektit ja merkityssuhteet nousevat esiin jostakin aiheesta. Diskurssit voidaan siis ymmärtää tavoiksi, joiden avulla me jäsenämme maailmaa ja yhteiskuntaa ympärillämme. Foucault yhdistää diskurssit myös läheisesti tietoon ja valtaan. Hänen mukaansa diskurssien lausumat ovat kaikki totena esitettyjä lauseita, joista vain osa nousee sosiaalisen vallan verkostoissa pinnalle. Instituutiot puolestaan ratifioivat nämä totuudet ennen pitkää tiedoksi. Tästä syystä on tärkeää ymmärtää, että tietomme on vain yksi tapa katsoa maailmaa, jota emme kuitenkaan pysty tavoittamaan ilman diskursseja. Tässä suhteessa Said eroaa Foucault'sta, sillä hän näkee, että on olemassa 'oikea' itä, jonka kuvaaminen on mahdollista orientalistisen diskurssin ulkopuolella, kun taas Foucault näkisi ettei meillä voi koskaan olla muuta kuin kuvaus idästä, jonka senhetkinen sisältö riippuu vallitsevista diskursseista. Toinen olennainen ero Saidin ja Foucault'n välillä liittyy vastustukseen. Saidin mielestä orientalistinen diskurssi on siinä määrin hegemoninen ja yhtenäinen että hän ulkoistaa kaiken vastustuksen diskurssin ulkopuolelle, kun taas Foucault'lle vastustus kuuluu olennaisena osana kuhunkin diskurssiin.

Niin urauurtavia kuin nämä kaksi teorian ovatkin, viimeaikaiset postkoloniaaliset tutkimukset ovat paljastaneet niissä puutteita, joista vakavimmat ovat esimerkiksi naisten puuttuminen analyyseista lähes kokonaan, sekä diskurssiin osallistumisen vaikeutuminen esimerkiksi luokka- tai sukupuolistuksesta johtuvien esteiden vuoksi. Ensimmäinen puutos omalta osaltaan on johtanut melkein pä räjähdyksmäiseen feministisen postkoloniaalisen tutkimuksen yleistymiseen 1990- ja 2000-luvulla. Tutkijat kuten Sara

Mills, Mary Louise Pratt, Alison Blunt, Cheryl McEwan ja monet muut ovat tutkimuksissaan paitsi osoittaneet matkakirjallisuuden maskuliinisen luonteen myös nostaneet esiin historiallisia sukupuolidiskursseja, jotka ovat vaikuttaneet naisten kirjoittamiin matkakirjoihin eri tavalla kuin miesten. Näistä etenkin Mills on ensimmäisenä pureutunut sukupuolidiskursseihin tarvittavan laaja-alaisesti tutkimuksessaan *Discourses of Difference*, jossa hän kolmen varhaisen naismatkakirjailijan teoksia analysoidessaan jatkoi jo Saidin viitoittamaa tietä keskittymällä teosten kertojien roolien sukupuolistumiseen, paikallisten asukkaiden sekä paikkojen kuvauksiin, sekä avasi uusia näköaloja tuodessaan esiin aikakauden sukupuoleen liittyvät diskurssiiviset paineet ja rajat, jotka vaikuttivat naisten matkakirjallisuuden muotoon ja sisältöön toisella tapaa kuin miesten. Vaikka monet tutkijat ovat keskittyneet tarkastelemaan myöhemmissä tutkimuksissaan lähinnä kahta ensimmäistä tekijää, tässä tutkimuksessa on tarkasteltu sukupuolidiskursseja kaikkien kolmen näkökulman kautta, sillä Isabella Birdin aiemmin käyttämä tyylilaji, jossa hän kirjoitti matkakirjansa (ikänsä kuin) kirjeiden muotoon, vaihtui juuri tutkittavana olevan teoksen kohdalla, eivätkä kaksi ensimmäistä tarkastelun kohdetta ottaneet huomioon tätä muutosta tarpeellisessa määrin.

Varsinainen analyysi koostui kolmen eri diskurssin tarkastelusta Isabella Birdin teoksessa *Korea and Her Neighbours*: koloniaalisen, sukupuoli-, ja luokkadiskurssin. Löydökset osoittavat, että Bird kytkeytyy teoksessa koloniaalisiin diskursseihin huomattavassa määrin ja jopa enemmän kuin hänen aikaisemmissa teoksissaan, joissa hän usein kuvaa vain yksittäisiä kohteita juurikaan yleistämättä. Esimerkiksi Korean koulutusjärjestelmän lähes täydellinen ylenkatsominen on aineksiltaan melkein pä klassinen esimerkki Orientalismista. Narratiivi paljastaa kuitenkin myös toisenlaisen, pehmeämmän ja feminiinisemmän

diskurssin, joka haastaa teoksen kolonialistisemmän näkökulman. Kertojan roolien tarkastelu osoittaa Birdin olevan erittäin varovainen kuvatessaan itseään teoksessaan, ja hän pyrkii niissä antamaan itsestään hyvin säällisen ja asianmukaisen naisen vaikutelman, eikä teoksessa kertoja-minä esiinny missään vaiheessa sankarina, vaan tätä asetelmaa vältetään jopa niin paljon, että kertojan passiivisuus työntyy etualalle. Lähimmäksi sankari-roolia Bird tulee kuvatessaan itsensä kokeneen matkailijan roolissa, jonka avulla hän useasti puolustautuu syytöksiltä ja tuomitsee vääriksi muiden mielipiteet ja oletukset varsinkin naismatkailijoihin liittyen. Tämä rooli jää kuitenkin monesti taka-alalle ja sitä heikentävät vastakkaiset roolit, jotka ilmenevät esimerkiksi hänen melkein päidillisestä hoivastaan ja huolestaan kun hän auttaa kätensä katkaissutta kiinalaispalvelijaansa.

Birdin kuvaus korealaisista ihmisistä ja paikoista seuraa pitkälti samaa linjaa molempien diskurssien vaikuttaessa selvästi taustalla, mutta korealaisista naisista kirjoittaessaan hänen kuvauksensa tuntuvat vaihtelevan ylenkatseen ja arvonannon välillä riippuen hyvin pitkälti siitä, mihin yhteiskuntaluokkaan hän mieltää nämä kuuluviksi. Sen vuoksi viimeisessä osiossa olen pyrkinyt lyhyesti käsittelemään luokkadiskurssia Birdin teoksessa sekä osaltaan osoittamaan myös sen merkityksen postkoloniaaliselle matkakirjallisuuden tutkimukselle tulevaisuudessa. Mielestäni tulevissa tutkimuksissa luokkanäkökulma tulisikin ottaa huomioon ja käsitellä yhtä tärkeänä osana kuin koloniaalisia sekä sukupuoleen liittyviä diskursseja on tähän asti käsitelty.