

The imperial subject: geography and travel in the work of Mary Kingsley and Halford Mackinder

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How do places shape and interact with subjectivity? By exploring how a change of location had implications for the way the effects of imperialism were registered, this paper shows how imperialism shaped subjectivity both at home and abroad. It takes the travels and mountain climbing of Mary Kingsley and Halford Mackinder as case studies for a consideration of gender as an effect and as a part of these processes.

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Our sense of who we are has been learned, disciplined and rewarded. Discourses, including geographies, are part of this. Thus Althusser (1971) wrote of ideology as interpellating subjects. For Althusser, ideology works not by providing false knowledge about the world but by addressing people in ways which solicit and reinforce certain views of themselves. Geographical discourses can be ideological in precisely this sense. They can, in Foucault's terms, be part of a training in disciplines of self-reflection, a making of subjects, a subjectivation (Foucault 1986). I want to illustrate this by looking at Halford Mackinder's assault on Mount Kenya and at Mary Kingsley's on Mount Cameroon.

Halford Mackinder (1861–1947) was, from 1887, the first reader in geography at the University of Oxford in modern times. He was a prominent imperialist, Member of Parliament for Glasgow Camlachie (1910–22) and a prodigious writer and lecturer (Parker 1982). When he went to east Africa in the summer of 1899, he was doing practical geography in the scientific tradition. He wanted to collect valuable specimens of flora and fauna, to make a careful map and leave his name upon it, and he wanted to be the first white man up the second highest mountain in the region. Mary

Kingsley (1862–1900) was an anthropologist, a campaigner for an imperialism subordinate to mercantile rather than white-settler interests and a famous writer. When she went to west Africa from December 1894 to November 1895 it was her second visit within less than a year. In west Africa, she wanted to collect valuable specimens of fish, to complete her late father's study of world religions by studying fetish and she wanted to be the first white person to ascend the highest mountain in the region by its southeastern face.

Hansen has described the importance of mountain climbing to the professional middle classes of late-nineteenth-century Britain. They 'actively constructed an assertive masculinity to uphold their imagined sense of British imperial power' (Hansen 1995, 304). Mountain climbing might compensate for military reversals by cultivating the masculine resilience needed for the defence of the empire:

In their moral histories of climbing, the mountain turns headmaster, teaching its students the virtues that were supposed to make them truly *men*: brotherhood, discipline, selflessness, fortitude, sang-froid. And like the far-flung regiments of empire, like the missionaries under palm and pine, like the explorer toiling up the tropical river, they were the true

guardians of the patriotic flame. (Schama 1995, 503, original emphasis)

From 1857, the Alpine Club provided one important channel for these new aspirations and self-congratulations. Ryan (1994, 126) describes this new attitude:

As mountaineering was incorporated into the rhetoric of imperial exploration and adventure, mountains were no longer regarded solely as sublime landscapes demanding romantic reverence. Instead, mountains in Europe and further afield became pinnacles of the natural world to be 'hunted' and 'conquered' by robust and manly British men.

Mackinder duly made report of his success, his 'first', captured in photographs, colour as well as black and white. With all the peaks in the Alps mastered, the 1890s saw a shift to the 'Alpine' challenges of east Africa before attention shifted once again, and decisively, to the Himalayas. This sensibility allowed Mackinder to 'explore' by climbing. Kingsley faced a milder challenge but she too was 'exploring'; in her case, by tracking one of her heroes, Richard Burton, the first Englishman up her mountain.

Schama (1995, 497) provides a striking example of the gendering of Alpine mastery with Henriette d'Angeville (1838) seeking consummation with her Mont Blanc, waiting 'for the delicious hour when I could lie on his summit. Oh when will it come?' Mackinder and Kingsley's motives and pleasures were certainly overdetermined by gender. Their mountain climbing bore gendered relations to their imperial subjectivation and to the role of geography in this. I want to use a set of superficial similarities and coincidences between these two climbs to explore some dimensions, mainly conscious, but perhaps also unconscious, of imperial subjectivation. First, I say a little about subjectivity in terms of identity, desire, denial and pleasure. Secondly, I look at geography's place in the interpellation of subjects. I shall comment on the spatiality of subjectivity and then on geography as an organized knowledge sustaining these identities, desires, denials and pleasures. Finally, I turn to travel (and climbing mountains) as a trial of identity, as perhaps unsettling the spatiality of ideological subjectivation.

Subjectivities

British geographies of the turn of the century interpellated individuals as imperial subjects. The

imperial subject was a civilizing person, a reasoning person, thus conflating identity and desire: I am civilized, I want to civilize others; I am reasoning, I want to reason. The identity of the British imperial subject was male, English, white, Protestant, heterosexual, middle class and at home in England. This identity was avowed against its others: females, foreigners, blacks, heathens, homosexuals and those at home abroad. Each of these constituted a pole of non-reason (Gregory 1994) and together they formed a complex, the primitive, whose coherence refurbished fraught imperial identities. Women, foreigners, blacks, heathens, proletarians, homosexuals and those most at home abroad were seen as more primitive than their counterparts. The true white, middle class, heterosexual, Protestant Englishman was the acme of civilization. This collapsing of identities into a hierarchy expressing reason and civilization was, on the face of it, absurd. Why should white be opposed to black in exactly the same way as male to female, as reason to unreason, as civilized to uncivilized, as highly evolved to primitive and so on? There were at least two ways in which these confluences were unstable.

First, the separate poles themselves relied upon stereotypes which went far beyond what could be empirically established (Bhabha 1994). Experience or reflection might unsettle the extravagance of the ideal types. The practice of imperialism and the contemplation of its purposes were stalked by the anxiety of these extravagant assumptions. Bhabha notes a splitting of knowledge from power which asserts that whites know blacks to be of a character which demands authoritarian rule. This 'knowledge' is a fantastic stereotype. The authoritarian practices congeal as their own sanguinary knowledges. The objectifying glance at the black (or any category of) other is haunted by the suppressed recognition that the glance could be returned, a possibility which the objectification wishes away:

Stereotyping is not the setting up of a false image which becomes the scapegoat of discriminating practices. It is a much more ambivalent text of projection and introjection, metaphoric and metonymic practices, displacement and over-determination, guilt, aggressivity; the masking and splitting of 'official' and phantasmatic knowledges to construct the potentialities and oppositionalities of racist discourse. (*ibid.*, 81-2)

This failure of the stereotype really to keep the other at a safe remove might seem to invite a transcendental phenomenology where the self–other opposition could readily be deconstructed. It is perhaps more fruitful to examine the particular forms of instability contingent upon particular cultural and psychological contexts of attempted othering.

Suleri (1992), for example, writes of a ‘migrancy’ of cultures wherein the heterogeneous cultures of both colonizer and colonized are both traumatized by the violence of the colonial encounter. The trauma, then, and the migrancy, is tied to particular historical situations. The psychological dimensions of othering in imperial contexts is much contested. Gay (1993) treats white aggression towards blacks in the colonies as the result of sublimated sexual drives repressed in the core. This maintains the geographical and subject separations of the stereotype. Stoler (1995) proposes instead that the violence of colonialism may have more to do with the production rather than the expression of desire and that this took place in the colonies themselves. Various taboos on miscegenation and stereotypes of the relaxed sexuality of aboriginal people engendered desire. At the same time, the intense male camaraderie of the colonial commercial and administrative systems threatened to unmake heterosexual definitions of manliness. Thus Suleri (1992) finds homoerotic violence/desire more prevalent in white Anglo writing on India than any heterosexist rape metaphor. To some extent, the other was the same and all the more unsettling for that.

It only remains to note that, in psychological terms, this ambivalent process of othering might occur as easily in the metropolis as in the colonies. I am persuaded by Stoler that the imperial subject was shaped in the core against the threat of its likely dismantling in the periphery. The need to demarcate self from other came in part from the anticipation of situations where imperial identities might dissemble in the face of hybridity. In other words, racial difference was never secure in the colonies due to miscegenation, recruitment of comprador élites and the loss of whites going ‘native’. Rules devised for that context, and which served to distinguish a racialized other, became codes applied back home to stabilize bourgeois identities against the different threats of class, or ethnicity, which in turn became racialized. McClintock (1995) shows how these rules, centring in particular on

purity and cleanliness, could become internalized as obsessions which could make a fetish of various objects. These obsessions could serve, argues McClintock (*ibid.*, 184), to becalm the intolerable conditions of a person’s inner life:

fetishes can be seen as the displacement onto an object (or person) of contradictions that the individual cannot resolve at a personal level. These contradictions may originate as social contradictions but are lived with profound intensity in the imagination and the flesh.

In cultural and psychological terms, the distancing promised by the polarities was inherently dangerous and insecure.

The second set of difficulties with the notion of a stable hierarchy arose from the radical dissimilarities among the various axes of difference evoked. Mapping these hierarchies onto each other was impossible without supplementary explanations based, very largely, on biology. Nevertheless, the homologies between the various dimensions of imperial identity (race, gender, class, religion and so on) were but weakly articulated in theoretical terms. Biology was called upon to guarantee the homologies, largely by assertion:

Women were often associated in the male Victorian psyche with Negroes. Charles Darwin, for instance, believed that white women, like the ‘lower races’, possessed more intuition than ‘civilised’ men. Both were viewed biologically and were in fact the victims of crude biological reductionist reasoning. Both were *the other*, in contrast to which white males defined themselves. (Pearce 1990, 15, original emphasis)

And not just Darwin but Freud (Blunt 1994a) and Kingsley saw gendered and racial differences as similar. Recalling Victorian views of the hysterical woman, she wrote of Africans of the west coast that they were ‘far more liable than white men to many strange nervous disorders’ (Kingsley 1901, 185). Kingsley saw Africans as a female race, as in a letter of 1899 to Major Nathan:

I will impart to you, in strict confidence, for if it were known it would damage me badly, my opinion on the African. His is *not* ‘half devil and half child’ [as in Kipling’s ‘White man’s burden’ (1995 (1899))] anymore than he is ‘our benighted brother’ and all that sort of thing. He is a woman . . . I know those nigs because I am a woman, a woman of a masculine race but a woman still. (Birkett 1992, 150, original emphasis)

The bases of imperial identity, then, were complex, contradictory and not universally shared.

Table I Identity and duty for the imperial subject

<i>Identity</i>	<i>Duty</i>
Protestant	Missionary Instrumental control of nature
Rational	Education
Civilized	Justice
<i>Difference</i>	<i>Erase difference</i>

Imperial subjects drew on each of these bases of identity in distinctive ways to sustain themselves in their various imperial duties or desires. These drives included the wish to subdue the earth and fill it (Worster 1985), the mission to Christianize the heathen, the obligation to diffuse science and technology, the calling to spread justice and liberty, and the compulsion to accumulate knowledge. These motives are well-attested by the imperial subject and are presented as following from the separate bases of that subject’s identity. Because one is a true Protestant, one must be a militant missionary. Because one is rational, one must accumulate knowledge, diffuse science and technology, and subdue the earth and fill it. Because one is civilized, one must spread liberty and justice. This coupling of identity to duty is contradictory. Identity asserts that the imperial subject is quite unlike the other, the primitive. The civilizing duty promises to erase that difference (see Table I). For example, Hall (1992) remarks upon the instability of evangelical missionary discourse whereby Christian brotherhood with black converts must accommodate white superiority as the source of religious enlightenment; the lamb of spiritual equality lay down with the lion of economic inequality as Baptists urged blacks to become reliable proletarians as well as devout Christians.

The aims of the imperial mission were inconsistent. Imperialism in practice was a good deal less lofty than its ideology. The imperial identity served

in some ways to inoculate its subjects against disturbing experience. Violence was seen as transitory due to the recalcitrant primitiveness of the blacks or the perfidious competition of imperial rivals. In various ways, imperial subjects denied the sordidness of empire or, at least, denied that they were complicit in it. Pratt (1992, 7), in a quite brilliant and suggestive analysis, writes of ‘anti-conquest’, ‘strategies of representation whereby European bourgeois subjects seek to secure their innocence in the same moment as they assert European hegemony’. Alongside desire as duty, then, we have denial as innocence. Three such strategies are important here: objectivity, sentimentalism and anti-historicism (see Table II).

The objective scientist stands apart from the imperialist scene and, in a disinterested manner, learns things about the topography, flora, fauna and ethnography of the land. This detachment often treats knowledge as visual and conceives of the world as an exhibition (Mitchell 1988; discussed in Gregory 1994). Objectivity places the imperial subject offstage. Sentimentalism, instead, recognizes the European as an actor but gives the writer honorary status as impotent. Pratt (1992, 56) describes the central importance of self-mockery:

When he does appear, the self-effacing protagonist of the anti-conquest is often surrounded by an aura not of authority, but of innocence and vulnerability.

This is in contrast to the omniscience of the objective scientist. For example:

Though he certainly could have done so, Mungo Park [1799] did not write up a narrative of geographical discovery, observation, or collection, but one of personal experience and adventure. He wrote, and wrote himself, not as a man of science, but as a sentimental hero. He made himself the protagonist and central figure of his own account, which takes the form of an epic series of trials, challenges, and encounters with the unpredictable. (*ibid.*, 75)

Table II Imperial discursive strategies

<i>Discursive strategy</i>	<i>Main features</i>	<i>Object of pleasure</i>	<i>Form of pleasure</i>
Objectivity	Detached, visual	Landscape	Aesthetic
Sentimentalism	Self-effacing, humorous	Nature	Comic
Antihistoricism	Archaeological: empty lands. Improving: reinvigorate them with European influence	Ruins	Antique

Sentimentalism even allowed women to extend sympathy to natives in ways men could not. In part, this came from a gendered notion of upper class philanthropy and was part, therefore, of the justification for the imperial civilizing mission (Mills 1991).

Anti-historicism is central to eurocentric (Amin 1989; Young 1990) discourses such as orientalism (Said 1985). It invokes a distinction between Europe as the bearer of history and the rest of the world as beyond the margins of history. Taken together with the injunction to subdue the world and fill it, this treated the indigenous peoples of the periphery as truly marginal. There were two stages: the archaeological and the improving. Again, Pratt (1992, 134, original emphasis) puts this very well:

The European imagination produces archaeological subjects by splitting contemporary non-European peoples off from their precolonial, and even their colonial pasts. To revive indigenous history and culture as archaeology is to revive them as *dead*. The gesture simultaneously rescues them from European forgetfulness and reassigns them to a departed age.

Without history, the indigenous peoples have no meaning, are insignificant and lack civilizing title to their lands:

The European improving eye produces subsistence landscapes as 'empty' landscapes, meaningful only in terms of a capitalist future and of their potential for producing a marketable surplus. (*ibid.*, 61)

The security of innocence was vital to the pleasure the imperial took in its identity at home or abroad, in its contemplation of the pleasures of other imperial subjects recorded in texts or gestures. Sentimentalism accompanied the pleasures of feeling lost in nature, as when Kingsley (1897, 178) was transported by a view of some rapids:

The majesty and beauty of the scene fascinated me, and I stood leaning with my back against a rock pinnacle watching it. Do not imagine it gave rise in which I am pleased to call my mind, to those complicated, poetical reflections natural beauty seems to bring out in other people's minds. It never works that way with me; I just lose all sense of human individuality, all memory of human life, with its grief and worry and doubt, and become part of the atmosphere.

Mackinder was more inclined to the objective and in the main eschewed such pantheism in favour of the pleasing prospects of a landscape aesthetic.

Occasionally, he adopted an improving tone: 'If only water were available what glorious wheat fields these would make' (Mackinder 1991, 98). In general, his field sketches and notes are geometric, geological and quite lack the descriptive density of the landscape aesthetic as described by McEwan (1995), for example. Only at a moment of great danger does Mackinder (1991, 201) allow himself to 'exult in the great nature around'.

If the sentimental pleasures of 'being there' centre on nature while the objective pleasures are of landscape, the anti-historicist mode discloses the pleasures of ruins. We might also suggest that the texts they produce allow the distinctive pleasures of, respectively, the comic, the aesthetic and the antique. The final set of pleasures, beyond place and text, that I want to mention, briefly, concern identity and sociability. Mackinder (*ibid.*, 31) wrote of going to Kenya as 'a spell of freedom'. Kingsley (1901, xxi) went to west Africa only once free of nursing obligations upon the death of her parents and of housekeeping duties as her brother decided to travel abroad himself: 'there were no more odd jobs any one wanted me to do at home'.

Mackinder had his name put down for the Club in each of the colonial towns he stopped in. He frequently mentions Oxford and, occasionally, Reading connections as facilitating contacts. He luxuriates in the semi-official status of his expedition; it had the approval of the Royal Geographical Society (RGS) and was at least known to the Foreign Office. He exploits family connections in the area. He plays the man of action to the hilt, soliciting telegrams from London confirming his status - 'Secretary Royal Geographical Society London Foreign Office apparently not written Craufurd can you get very strong recommendation cabled Mackinder Mombassa' (Mackinder 1991, 65) - in order to help him deal with 'Craufurd, the acting Commissioner, a self-important little cad' (*ibid.*, 62), having the temerity to slow up the expedition with worries about famine and disease. The Assistant Commissioner in the area, Ainsworth, eventually recalled the expedition but Mackinder received the letter upon his descent, gloating 'rather comic!' and sending off a telegram to the International Geographical Congress in Berlin proclaiming his triumph (*ibid.*, 246). Because of the sort of imperial subject he was, Mackinder could enjoy himself in this way, an upper-middle class Oxford don amidst an expatriate community.

Kingsley's pleasures were different and relate to her ambivalent location as a single (though white) woman, with a lower class accent, some upper class friends, sceptical relations with the Church of England and a sense that she was more at home in west Africa than back in London. Her own sense of the ambiguity of her class position may, indeed, have influenced her political career in England supporting the Liverpool merchants trading with west Africa:

Kingsley felt insecurity in her mixed class background, her father from a prominent literary family, her mother a servant; in imperial politics she sided with the traders against upper-class establishment interests. (Callaway and Helly 1992, 92)

Pratt (1992, 210) writes of the 'perverse perspectives' allowed to people of such ambivalent reasoning and civilizing status. Kingsley takes the pleasures offered by sentimentalism and relishes how the authority of experience allows her to slip the ring of feminine unreason; gently mocking herself the while and savaging male pretension. As Halperin (1995) notes in the context of resistance to homophobia, such a mocking tone can be a way of fighting an intolerable subjectivation. Sexism is a form of delegitimation (disqualifying the right to speak and be heard) and mockery can serve to devalue it through exaggerated repetition and ridicule. Outwith the gendered corral of being a white woman among white men, Kingsley became the sort of person denoted 'a man of action'. Racial inequality compensated in some ways for gender inequality. She met Mary Slessor (see McEwan 1994), whose independence, integrity and identification with African women offered her a vision of how she might make a difference. She nursed, traded with and befriended African people. She collected scientifically valuable specimens of fish and she went where few white people had been before. She received approval from those Liverpool traders whose political interests she championed. She proved herself in certain characteristically 'manly' ways while clearly remaining a woman with her heavy skirts, fiercely asserted purity and generous care for black and white alike. In the case of both Mackinder and Kingsley, the anti-conquest rhetoric of science allowed them to enjoy the pleasures of being an imperial subject abroad. It justified their being there and placed them outside any local embarrassments of empire.

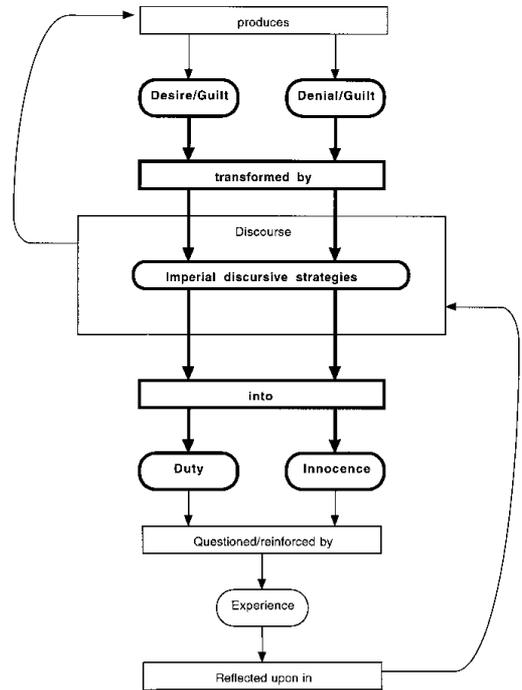


Figure 1 Discourse and experience in the shaping of imperial subjects

Figure 1 places discourse between desire, denial and guilt on one hand, and duty and innocence on the other. In other words, behind the duty of science lay the desire to control. Objectivity served to distance the one from the other by means of claiming scientific detachment. This separation is a difficult one and from the impossibility of the duty itself and from the embarrassments of experience, guilt as well as desire is induced in the subject. When the separation seems to be working well it delivers certain pleasures. In the case of objective detachment, these include the aesthetic pleasure taken in landscape. In similar fashion, sentimentalism cloaks the denial of the imperial subject's complicity in the sufferings of the imperial objects (such as aboriginal peoples) with the innocence of irony. Again denial is haunted by guilt, or at least 'anxiety' (Bhabha 1994). Archaeological anti-historicism likewise denies complicity while improving anti-historicism lightly veils a colonialist desire to exploit aboriginal peoples and their natural resources.

In climbing mountains, Kingsley and Mackinder could take several of these pleasures, follow many

of these forms of desire and deploy many of these strategies of denial. This, in one sense, is what they wanted to do and were doing. In tracing how they made good sense of what they were doing, we are tracking the making and testing of two rather different imperial subjects. One dimension of difference was gender and the forms of separation between desire/denial and duty/innocence were overdetermined by gender. [Monicat \(1994\)](#) remarks on the way women could validate their voice as one of objective science only by picking up topics in which men had no interest or about which they had less opportunity to learn, such as the customs of the harem. Objectivity and sentimentalism, for example, were differentially available to gendered men and women. This subjected the desires and denials of men and women to guilty strains of differing strengths and character. In describing the 'feminine picturesque', [Suleri \(1992, 75\)](#) writes of Anglo women in India that

They could sketch landscape and capture physiognomy as long as they remained immune to the sociological conclusions of their own data, entering the political domain in order to aestheticize rather than to analyze. Such a colonial immunity, however, was arduous to sustain in the infectious imperial climate of nineteenth-century India, where the psychic strains of self-censorship were far more the burden of the Anglo-Indian female than of the male.

In the related, but different, situation of being an Anglo woman visiting west Africa in the late nineteenth century, Mary Kingsley put the injunction only to aestheticize under impossible pressure and the psychic strains were clear.

This gendered relationship to science was particularly pertinent in the case of the ideological role of geography in imperial subjectivation and its implications for, on one hand, the reader in geography at the University of Oxford and, on the other, a travel writer. This distinction is, in large part, the result of a gendered subjectivation and can hardly be the point of departure for a properly contextual understanding of geography (*pace* [Stoddart 1991](#); compare [Domosh 1991a, 1991b](#)). There is a continuity of subject matter and problematics across the works of Kingsley and Mackinder; a continuity which was interrupted, deformed and policed by their own gendered senses of how they could relate to the science of geography.

Geography

The first geographical theme I want to broach is what we might call the territoriality of subject constitution or the spatiality of subjectivity ([Gregory 1994](#)). I included the sense of being at home in England as a dimension of the British imperial identity. I also referred to pleasures this offered abroad. Place is implicated in this imperial identity. [Said \(1994\)](#) comments on how spaces become differentiated by the imperialist process of the taking of land and how those spaces then get used for different purposes by various social groups. Since identity is largely relational – a set of overlapping differentiations between self and various sorts of other – the local presence of various groups of others and the power relations under which they are encountered strongly affects how it is constituted and experienced. This is more evident with Kingsley than Mackinder because of her ambivalent status as an imperial subject. [Blunt \(1994a\)](#) remarks that Kingsley was perceived in racial terms in the masculine world of the colonies but in gendered terms in the domestic, feminine world at home; that Kingsley adopted a masculine or feminine voice depending on where she was; and that in Britain it was only through private contacts and correspondence that she could have any public role in a male political world. If location so strongly affects identity, then movement is itself a source of ambivalence. This has been referred to as a 'formative psychological splitting *en route*' ([Arshi et al. 1994, 229](#)) to the colonies.

Geographies sustained this imperial subjectivity in other ways too. As knowledge of empire, geography implied that a knowable empire was a controllable one ([McEwan 1995](#)) which in turn was a belief intrinsic to British imperial self-confidence. In praising George Goldie and the Royal Niger Company, [Kingsley \(1901, 307\)](#) claimed, somewhat extravagantly, that 'For twenty years the natives under the Royal Niger Company have had the firm, wise, sympathetic friendship of a great Englishman, who understood them, and knew them personally'. Knowledge was felt as power. In education, some geographers justified colonialism at home and abroad (see, for example, [Myers 1994](#)). As explanations of national space needs, geographies sustained expansionist ideologies ([Murphy 1994](#)). As technologists of imperialism, geographers have been termed 'soldiers of modernity' ([Godlewska 1994](#); [Soubeyran 1994, 264](#)) for the way

their insights were developed and applied in the management of both colonial and domestic populations. Geographers explained racial difference through environmentalism; racial superiority was asserted to follow.

As an objective science, geography distinguished itself from travel writings as male knowledge from female intuition. Mackinder opposed female suffrage (Kearns 1993) but, as far as I am aware, took no public part in the debates over including women among the Fellowship of the RGS (Birkett 1989; Blunt 1994a; Middleton 1965). Those who were adamant about women being unsuited for geography took their stand in part on the triviality of any subject open to women. Williams Hicks told the annual meeting of the RGS in 1893 that the Society faced a choice between remaining a learned society and descending instead to that of a mere pleasure society (*The Times* 30 May 1893, 10a) and W H Russell wrote that the overwhelming majority of women who attended RGS meetings came simply to be entertained (*The Times* 1 June 1893, 4e). An anonymous letter in support of the admission of women, gossiped that

One young Fellow told us at a recent meeting that he objected broadly to any woman taking any part in any scientific society whatever. Another Fellow assured us that his family would not allow him to attend meetings open to women in their own right. (*The Times* 29 May 1893, 7d)

George Curzon stood behind the manly requirements of exploration in making his case against women. Women were unsuited by 'sex and training' for 'exploration' and, since geography was not about library work, like the Asiatic Society, or merely a social club, like the Zoological Society, then, to preserve its focus on exploration, it had to exclude women from its Fellowship (*The Times* 31 May 1893, 11d).

When Kingsley first spoke to the Liverpool Geographical Society, her paper was read by a man (Frank 1987), although twenty months later, in November 1897, the same group suspended their local rules to allow her to address them in person. There was a hierarchy of Victorian field sciences from the hard to the soft, from collecting rocks to collecting flowers, from the exclusively male to the largely female (Birkett 1992). When Kingsley proposed the founding of an African Society as a pressure group of intellectuals, she explicitly directed that, to ensure its status, it should be

exclusively male. She did not contest the barring of women from hard-science societies, claiming that when cases could be made for individual women the societies would yield but recognizing that this was hampered by women's limited access to higher education. After her first trip to west Africa, her name came up as likely to be the first woman to address the RGS. She protested to Keltie: 'I am very vexed to see a paragraph that is going the rounds saying that I am to read a paper before the RGS. I should not if you asked me and you have not asked me' (*ibid.*, 63). In 1899, her support was solicited for a campaign pressing for the admission of women to scientific societies. She demurred:

I have never had a school education to entitle me to a degree and in science I am only a collector of specimens and as a traveller though I have travelled further in West Africa than any of my countrymen still I have never fixed a point or taken an observation or in fact done any surveying work that entitles me to be called a Geographer. (*ibid.*, 156)

She was, however, invited to join the Anthropological Society after she had privately asked Edward Tylor, Professor of Anthropology at Oxford, to arrange this (Frank 1987).

Geography was certainly a gendered knowledge. This was part of its status and gave an inflection to the authority of geographical discourse, the authority of the theoretical wood rather than of the empirical trees. Again, Kingsley (1901, viii) was aware of this, referring to herself as 'someone who cares for facts, without theories draping them' and flattering Joseph Chamberlain that, as a woman, she, Kingsley, was good on details but left abstract concepts to the men (Blunt 1994a).

Mountains, geography and travel

Against this background of the relations between geographies and imperial subjectivities, I now want to consider Kingsley and Mackinder as mountaineers. I want to approach their travels as tests of their imperial identities. I want to examine whether movement truly was unsettling, a source of ambivalence. As traveller, explorer or scientist, the imperial subject placed its own body in trust to its imperial identity.

Kingsley climbed, from sea level, Mount Cameroon (Mungo Mah Lobeh, Throne of Thunder; 13 435 feet), the highest peak in west

Africa, in one week in September 1895. Mackinder climbed from about 5000 feet up Mount Kenya (Donyo Egere, the Striped Mountain; 17 058 feet), the second highest peak in east Africa, during three months in 1899. Why did they do it? Each gives several reasons. Of course, climbing mountains (being first and going highest) was an established part of exploration, as was writing up the achievement:

Victorians opted for a brand of verbal painting whose highest calling was to produce for the home audience the peak moments at which geographical 'discoveries: were "won" for England'. (Pratt 1992, 201)

For Kingsley, Pearce (1990, 66) proposes the following:

Her hero Richard Burton had been the first Englishman to ascend the Peak, and . . . she would be the first Englishman, as she termed herself, to ascend by the south-east face.

Mackinder, likewise, was following in distinguished footsteps, hoping to go further. Explorers and geologists, Count Teleki and J W Gregory, had got close to the top of Mount Kenya and a German mountaineer, Meyer, had already climbed the two peaks of Kilimanjaro and had 'announced his intention of climbing [Mount] Kenya' (Mackinder 1991, 31). Thus 'Our project was kept a secret, for I had no wish to find myself competitor in a race up a virgin peak' (Mackinder 1945, 231). Within the RGS a conflict between explorers and educationalists was partly expressed as being between practical and academic geography. With the RGS support for continuing his readership at Oxford unclear, Mackinder was following in the explorer tradition to curry favour with those who 'had no use for a geographer who was not an adventurer and explorer' (*ibid.*). Scientific credibility was claimed with a promise to make 'a thorough scientific examination of the mountain and its vicinity' (Keltie 1899, 94). Mackinder (1900a, 454) wrote of 'completing the revelation of [Mount Kenya's] alpine secrets'. Kingsley (1897, 594) expresses few such lofty ambitions, although upon reaching the top in mist, she did regret that 'the weather has robbed me of my main object in coming here, namely to get a good view and an idea of the way the unexplored mountain range behind Calabar trends'. In one sense, they were both trying to prove themselves equal to earlier explorers: Kingsley challenged by her sex and Mackinder by

his status as a mere armchair geographer. Kingsley is clear that this also has something to do with race and that in this case her imperial identity as white and English bids her take up a challenge her gendered identity could easily refuse:

From the deck of the *Niger* I found myself again confronted with my great temptation Mungo Mah Lobeh – The Throne of Thunder. Now it is none of my business to go up mountains. There's next to no fish on them in West Africa, and precious little fetish, as the population on them is sparse – the African, like myself, abhorring cool air. Nevertheless, I feel quite sure that no white man has ever looked on the great peak of Cameroon without a desire arising in his mind to ascend it and know in detail the highest point on the western side of the continent, and indeed one of the highest points in all Africa. (*ibid.*, 549–50)

Climbing the mountain was the main purpose of Mackinder's expedition but one among many elements for Kingsley. Comparing the travel writings of the capitalist vanguard to those of the women she terms the 'exploratives sociales', Pratt (1992, 157–8) notes:

In structuring their travel books, I have suggested, the capitalist vanguardists often relied on the goal-directed, linear emplotment of conquest narrative. [Maria] Graham's and [Flora] Tristan's accounts do not, though they might have. They are emplotted in a centripetal fashion around place of residence from which the protagonist sallies forth and to which she returns.

Blunt (1994b, 61) likewise comments on Kingsley's interest in positionality rather than in linear mapping. Eloquent as ever, Kingsley (1897, 100–1) explained her own discomfort with linear narratives of geographical exploration:

When a person is out travelling, intent mainly on geography, it is necessary, if he publishes his journals, that he should publish them in sequence. But I am not a geographer. I have to learn the geography of a region I go into in great detail, so as to get about; but my means of learning it are not the scientific ones – Taking observations, Surveying, Fixing points, &c., &c. These things I know not how to do.

This was precisely the practical geography to which the explorers at the RGS subscribed. Mackinder had spent much of the summer of 1898 in the Alps training in climbing and surveying (Mackinder 1945) and, upon his return from Mount Kenya, proudly displayed his plane table sketch of the upper part of the mountain based on a circuit

of 14 miles which very nearly closed (Mackinder 1900a). He took heights all along his route and submitted a map with these to the RGS.

By contrast, in a notice of Kingsley's *Travels in West Africa*, Keltie (1897, 324) took up the question of maps: 'We notice with regret that she does not publish her promised maps'. Accepting her disclaimer not to be a geographer, Keltie added that she certainly 'proves herself possessed of the geographical instinct in many particulars' (*ibid.*). Instinct not science, particulars not generalities, Keltie finds the same protean geography in one of the Fan chiefs Kingsley met and who drew her a map with leaves. Kingsley's reluctance to have a map related in part to her difficulty in finding an accurate one. Henry Guillemard promised to find her one at the RGS and when a suitable map was sent to the printers, it was subsequently lost (Frank 1987; Pearce 1990). Better no map than a poor one was part of her reasoning. To be sure, poor maps were likely to receive geographical rebuke, as did one book on west Africa:

The maps are not quite up to date, old plates having (as is too often the case in this country) been utilized. Thus, for the Sierra Leone boundary, the results of the latest survey are not shown, and the source of the Niger is over a half degree out of its true position, while Abyssinia is still shown as an Italian protectorate. (Heawood 1899, 414)

Hence her relief at being perhaps the only explorer of west Africa not to have published an inaccurate map of it (Pearce 1990). She also realised that the length of her route seemed insignificant alongside the difficulties she had endured. When *West African studies* was published, it included a map which yet did not show her route. The map was of such small scale and so cluttered with place names that Kingsley (1901, 37) was quick to belittle its value, directing the reader at one point to consult a map, 'not mine, but one visible to the naked eye'. Finally, whereas Kingsley was keen to admit the value of an accurate knowledge of topography – 'very noble and necessary work' (*ibid.*, 378) – she also detected a preference for plans over people in the explorer tradition and bemoaned imperial policies which knew more of lands than of their inhabitants. Seventeenth-century ethnology had been forgotten in favour of contemporary geography. As an ethnologist, she was of a group 'who are not explorers of Africa – because we never exactly know where we go, and we never exactly

care' (*ibid.*, 379). The geographical training of Mackinder's imperial identity was barely ruffled by his expedition but Kingsley's discomforts led her thus to excavate some of the links between science, gender, race and geography; the implications of which Mackinder appeared blissfully unaware.

Race

The imperial subject was strongly racialized. Both Mackinder and Kingsley depended upon black people for guidance and protection in the field. Mackinder benefited from the good relations of his brother-in-law, Sidney Hinde (a British official), with a local Masai chief, Lenana. Mackinder was given a staff to carry as a sign that he came with Lenana's blessing. This gave him respect with other Masai tribes (Mackinder 1991) but the Masai were not present along the whole route.

Mackinder was convinced that physiognomy, race and character were deterministically linked. A cooperative chief, he found to have 'avarice and cunning written in every line of his face' and one uncooperative chief he described as 'a man of singularly deceitful and repellent countenance' (Mackinder 1900a, 456). He remarked on 'the fatalism and dislike of responsibility which characterizes the Swahili. He has no morals' (Mackinder 1991, 56). This 'fatalism' made them easy to enslave. At another point, when food for the blacks had all but run out, Mackinder recorded that:

I have two Swahilis with me, but a few isolated words suffice to convey my wants to them. One smiles at everything I say or when I smile at him, the other never smiles. Both obey like the faithful dogs they are; though free, slave blood still runs in their veins. But one could pet a dog and talk nonsense to him and would not catch him every now and again eyeing you in the effort to fathom where *mzungu* [master] is going to produce *potio* [food] from next. It is rather dreadful to feel such trust and yet to be so helpless. (*ibid.*, 200)

The other group that Mackinder had among his 170 porters were Kikuyu. When he wrote of the punishments he delivered to porters caught abandoning specimens, Mackinder drew the following contrast between the Swahilis and the Kikuyus:

A Swahili takes a just *kiboko* [whipping] with curious submission, lying down in orthodox position even before the executor is ready. A Mukikuyu, on the other hand, rebels and struggles, and, if he can, runs away. It

is the contrast between the freedman and the freeman born. (*ibid.*, 240)

Mackinder (1900a, 457) learned little if anything of local languages and described the Kikuyu porters at a group meeting as giving 'loud grunting responses' to the questions put to them by their headman. For Mackinder, blacks were either cooperative or not and for neither did he evince much respect.

Mackinder was moving through this area at a time of smallpox and starvation, yet he feels every right to commandeer food, taking hungry men with him as porters, eking out the minimal supplies available for them and remarking when one porter died of dysentery that some of the Kikuyu porters were 'mere famine stricken skeletons. The wonder is that we had not lost some of the latter before now' (Mackinder 1991, 158). The problem for Mackinder was to get to the mountain with enough food to sustain the party during the climb. To this end, each porter carried 50 lbs weight, a black person's rations for a month, or two of the tin boxes which each represented a day's rations for six white men. These white men's rations included 'meat, fish, vegetables, cheese, biscuits, matches, jam, sanitary paper, etc.' (*ibid.*, 32–3). Mackinder saw these as

a kind of iron ration *de luxe*. The kinds of meat, fish and jam were so assorted that there was a betting chance as to the contents of any given box. On safari it is all-important to provide cheerful encouragement in times of discouragement. (*ibid.*, 33)

The difficulty in securing food for the porters certainly left them discouraged. Mackinder noted that the villages normally kept food reserves in store but that in this case the British had bought up all they could to support a military action, the Uganda Relief expedition, and the surveying and building of the Uganda railway on which as many as 16 000 people were employed. In this way, as Mackinder conceded, the British had 'indirectly caused the famine' (*ibid.*, 95). Yet when he surveyed the scene around a railway town, he made no reference to the British and the white man (such as himself) is curiously absent from the picture:

At Ntotot Ndei, half-way between the Tsavo and Kibwezi, was horrid evidence of the famine among the Wakumba. Four skeleton women, with a child of perhaps six years were begging, their skins all shrivelled. Around, in contrast, were the Indian railway people, lackadaisical and hand in hand, and Swahilis, burly

and laughing, buying food from the Indian traders. No wonder the Wakumba curse the white man and his railway. (*ibid.*, 84)

The detachment and denial are clear. The white man is culpable only to the extent that his railway introduces lackadaisical (effeminate?) Indians and laughing (manly?) Swahilis to the starving gaze of the Wakumba.

Mackinder could never have said, with Kingsley (1897, 653), that:

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

She made an effort to understand blacks by learning Kru-English, the pidgin *lingua franca* of trade in the British areas of the west coast. Kingsley, of course, was interested in different things than Mackinder and this would explain why she learned so much more about her hosts in Africa. She gave an account of their ways of fishing, of weaving, of believing, of regulating their society. She defended, or at least explained, many 'barbaric' customs; mainly by finding them sensible given the overall level of civilization in Africa which she estimated as being at about that of Europe in the thirteenth century (Kingsley 1901), or else by showing that they were little more ridiculous, or perspicacious, than British beliefs, as in her discussion of the unhealthiness of the coastlands:

Many times have I, and others, been told by interior tribes that there is a certain air which comes from the sea that kills men – that is just their way of putting it. I call it Paludisme Malariae, which is just my way of putting it, and of course I fancy that it comes from the rotting, reeking swampland and lagoons, and not from the sea. Anyhow, white men and black feel it, and suffer and die. (Kingsley 1897, 409)

She was much less secure than Mackinder with the superiority inherent in the civilizing mission. Describing a night of dancing, she exclaimed:

Ah me! if the aim of life were happiness and pleasure, Africa should send us missionaries instead of our sending them to her – but fortunately for the work of the world, happiness is not. (*ibid.*, 201)

Kingsley did not usually arrange African and European on the same path of civilization. She saw a difference in kind between the two. With help, she thought the African could advance from their

thirteenth century to their own distinctive version of the nineteenth (Kingsley 1901). Against linear readings of history which placed the African far behind the European, she introduced the idea of a reversion to a dark age in Africa resulting from Arab invasions and European slave trading (McEwan 1995). Kingsley gave up some of the securities of the imperial subject in this reading of race evolution. Mackinder never did.

Sexuality, gender and introspection

If anything, Mackinder's trip to Mount Kenya appears to have stabilized rather than unsettled his imperial identity. In England, his professional position seemed unclear and he was worried that the RGS might not renew its support for his readership. In Africa, he was unquestionably an Oxford don. In England, his marriage was shaky; in Africa, he socialized with his wife's sister, Hildegarde, and her husband, Sidney Hinde, while another of his wife's relatives, Campbell Hausburg, was the professional shot on the expedition, with both rifle and camera. Bonnie Mackinder had originally been expected, by Halford, to accompany her husband to the Uganda Protectorate (Barbour 1991). She did not go, on grounds of cost or disinclination I do not know, but, some time after Mackinder's return, they separated and she subsequently joined Hildegarde to live in Cyprus. By April 1902, Mackinder wrote to Hausburg on being unable to finish his book on Kenya due to a 'trouble' that had come down upon him and 'of which you have no doubt had one account' (*ibid.*, 20).

If introspection is any sort of barrier to sublimation, Mackinder's prodigious energy may owe something to his abhorrence of the first. Mackinder resorts but rarely to extravagant language of any kind. His landscape descriptions stress geometry, geology, vegetation type and, occasionally, geomorphology. The sexual imagery discussed by Blunt (1994a, 28), among others, with its 'penetration', 'fertility' and 'unveiling', is largely absent. Instead, Mackinder (1991, 66) noted matter-of-factly that

Stallibrass tells me that the Swahili women have a way of wearing black or dark blue dress at the period of menstruation. I have seen several so dressed, but somewhat doubt that is the sole reason.

Another time, he saw 'a mosque with a peculiar rounded top, which has every appearance of being

phallic' (*ibid.*, 75) and even provided a simple sketch to illustrate his point. Later still, he finds that: 'The configuration of [Mount] Kenya as seen from the western front is that of a flat breast, with a pronounced teat' (*ibid.*, 183). He had also referred to cones and hump-backed whales to describe mountains. Metaphor is rare in this text, likewise introspection.

The crisis of the expedition came, for Mackinder, when they were through the forest and preparing for an assault on the peak. A group had been despatched to get more food from a local village and two Swahili porters among them had been killed in a raid by some local people. Mackinder and Hausburg shared a tent the night Mackinder heard the news: 'We had a candle with us, and Hausburg read the *Old curiosity shop* for an hour, while I thought over recent events' (*ibid.*, 181). There was little they could do beyond await another party which had been sent back to the nearest town to request food from the British authorities. A little over a week later with the relief convoy still not in sight, Mackinder recorded that:

I am trying to read the *Old curiosity shop*, but it is hard work ... Home is a very sweet word to-night ... To-morrow morning there will be action, to-night I can but try to read. (*ibid.*, 198)

The next day brought no respite and Mackinder seemed to find both introspection and pleasure in reading: 'Have slept well, and read several chapters of the *Old curiosity shop* ... The wait is the most trying part of the business. It makes one very introspective' (*ibid.*, 199). Down to their last food for the blacks and preparing to abandon the attempt on Mount Kenya, Mackinder returned to Dickens later the same day: 'Strange, but I am becoming quite interested in the *Old curiosity shop*' (*ibid.*). The following day found Mackinder preparing for disappointment:

It is curious to experience such quiet in a great crisis in one's life. I have realised some things as never before, but would prefer never to be so placed again. How I long for civilisation at times, and yet at others, despite anxiety, exult in the great nature around. (*ibid.*, 201)

Mackinder did not share his new insights with his diary but returned twice to Dickens the next day:

Thank God for Charles Dickens. The *Old curiosity shop* has kept me from the morbid. How sane his humour is ... I must return to my *Old curiosity shop*.

Unfortunately, the left hand is now the major part of the book'. (*ibid.*, 202)

When food arrives, in the nick of time, Mackinder can turn his attention once again to the peak. Reading gets no further mention, introspection fades, but the thought of the final challenge brought out a truly rare metaphorical flourish from Mackinder: 'The peaks were again clear. What a beautiful mountain Kenya is, very graceful, not stern, but, as it seems to me, with a cold feminine beauty' (*ibid.*, 215).

We might be tempted to make more of Mackinder's rare excursions into simile and metaphor. We might reflect further on a challenge which is seen both as a breast and as feminine, yet cold although graceful and not stern. To do so, I suggest, we would need to set Mackinder's language and preconceptions against the way breasts, women, beauty and mountains were conceptualized by people more forthcoming about their moments of self-reflection than was the reader in geography at Oxford. Instead, while noting the extent to which scientific preoccupations crowd out the introspective writing – so little time, so many meteorological observations to make and record – I want to underline a gendered notion of the man-of-action. Whether as scientist or leader, action is the manly course to take, decision the manly moment. This had implications for geography as a manly pursuit. As late as 1963, Mackin (1963, 136) claimed that some geologists 'think of W M Davis [d. 1934] as an old duffer with a butterfly catcher's sort of interest in scenery'. In climbing Mount Kenya, Mackinder (1991, 31) had an 'ambition no longer to count as a mere arm-chair geographer'. To ally geography to manly action was to accept the challenge of exploration and, given the hierarchy of Victorian field sciences with rocks and men on top, butterflies and women below, practical geology and topography in extreme conditions in the colonies must have been quite comforting. For this Oxford geographer, travel consolidated, even consoled the gendered dimensions of the imperial subject.

Among the pleasures of Kingsley's writings is the sensual and metaphorical quality of her descriptions. Here she enjoys sunrise while going upriver into the forest:

Glorious morning . . . The forest to the east shows a deep blue-purple, mounted on a background that changes as you watch it from daffodil and amethyst to

rose-pink, as the sun comes up through the night mists. The moon sinks down among them, her pale face flushing crimson as she goes; and the yellow-gold sunshine comes, glorifying the forest and gilding the great sweep of tufted papyrus growing along the bank; and the mist vanishes, little white flecks of it lingering among the water reeds and lying in the dark shadow of the forest stems. (Kingsley 1897, 128)

Or consider this account of a storm at sea:

Striding towards us across the sea came the tornado, lashing it into spray mist with the tremendous artillery of its rain, and shaking the air with its own thunder-growls. Away to windward leisurely boomed a third thunderstorm, apparently not addressing the tornado but the cloud mountain, while in between these phenomena wandered strange, wild winds, made out of lost souls frightened and waiting to be let back into Hell, or taken care of somehow by some one. This sort of thing naturally excited the sea, and all together excited the [boat], who, not being built so much for the open and deep sea as for the shoal bars of West African rivers, made the most of it. (Kingsley 1901, 17)

This was no good as geography, of course. Mackinder would have given barometric pressure and wind direction at the very least (and probably most). Geography is so easily, and correctly, identified as a visual science (Gregory 1994; Rose 1993) that it is worth noting how little pleasure its scientific claims allowed to following the geographical gaze into its texts. Kingsley did not deny herself or her readers these pleasures in her texts. These pleasures may well be subjective where that conveys reproach.

Following Foucault, Mills (1991) notes how the confessional mode turned reproach into duty; women were to reveal themselves, subjectively. Their texts were often in the diary form that, for example, the letters of a traveller abroad allowed. Kingsley's brother destroyed her journals after her death but from surviving letters Blunt (1994a), for example, is able to show how far the letters formed the basis for some of her writings. Nevertheless, writings are a public confession and McEwan (1994) finds the letters more frank than the books. Kingsley certainly hinted at topics, intimate to west African women, which she could not discuss in front of men (Frank 1987) and in 1899 she confided to Keltie:

I sincerely hope if the big scientific [societies] ever let them [women] in they will make a separate department – or let the ladies have a separate council-chamber in which they can speak their minds . . . Women like your

own Isabella [Bishop] and myself know lots of things no man can know about the heathen and no doubt men do ditto. (Birkett 1992, 157)

Yet discussions of female circumcision, of menstruation or of the control of fertility appear in none of the extracts from her private letters to women friends that I have seen quoted, although McEwan (1995) refers to discussions of miscegenation in the letters. Sentimentalism was, at least in Kingsley's case, a controlled public performance of a strongly gendered subjectivity. Her public femininity set limits to the topics on which she could publish. Pratt (1992) suggests that femininity allowed public admissions of vulnerability. Yet Kingsley also wanted to write with authority about the people of west Africa and about British commercial policies towards them. This authority was in tension with her proclaimed femininity and its introspective self-deprecation. Her books are not straightforward narratives and, while on occasion she referred to *Travels* as a log (Frank 1987) and even jested that the book be called *The log of a light-hearted lunatic* (Pearce 1990, 75), in print she disavowed the diary form because 'I am not bent on discoursing on my psychological state, but on the state of things in general in West Africa' (Kingsley 1897, 101). Unfortunately, we have neither the journals nor the poems (Frank 1987) where we might have explored her private self-awareness.

Guarding her public femininity, Kingsley dressed soberly in funereal black on the public platform in Britain, confining her African bangles to private dinner parties (Birkett 1992; Pearce 1990) and her cigarette smoking to her own flat (Frank 1987). Going to west Africa and alone among the indigenous peoples was seen by many contemporaries, and in this case the *Daily Telegraph*, as 'a risk to something more than life' (Birkett 1992). Frank (1987, 77) presents Kingsley's first trip to the west coast as a challenge to her notions of sexual propriety:

The sexual awakening West Africa brought her was never fulfilled because she never experienced physical love. Still, her views on and understanding of it were freer and more profound than were most married women's and mothers' back in England.

Kingsley herself regaled a close friend, Violet Roy, with the following sketch:

Think of a modest girl . . . hitherto shielded with such jealous care from contact with anything coarse or

impure . . . think of her suddenly thrust into a barbarous country where the inhabitants are naked and not ashamed, and where they exhibit a wanting knowledge of decency. (Birkett 1992, 19)

Kingsley avowed a certain 'coarsening' of her mind as a result but, while she was tolerant of sexual love across the colour line where white men were involved, as with the missionary Robert Nassau and his black nurse Anyentyawa (McEwan 1995), she was vigilant on the question of white women consenting to such relations. She told Roy that such 'revolting animalism' made her 'mentally sick' and left her 'inner soul sick and ashamed' (Frank 1987, 74–5). This emphatic self-control preserved her against imprecation although, to underline her submission to conventional femininity, she was equally adamant in rejecting feminism. Her more indulgent view of white males saved her from having to censure her father's behaviour. At one point, George Kingsley left his wife with a one-year-old and a five-year-old (Mary) to go on a four-year jaunt around the South Seas intending, recorded his travelling companion, 'to have a look at the hot lakes, and make love to Maori girls' (Birkett 1992, 8). As she grew up, Mary cannot have remained completely ignorant about her father's character, however much she idolized him.

Be that as it may, Kingsley was a spinster in England and of independent and intellectual spirit. Of itself, this called suspicion down upon her. As a traveller to west Africa, she was entering an imperial, male world. This further destabilized her subject position as a white, English woman. I think it obvious that she enjoyed this. Certainly, while in Africa she could use her race and location to enmasculate herself in her own eyes as she maled it over her black companions. Back in England, with white-males-feeling-at-home as the reference group, her satisfactions were perforce more private and were accompanied by a string of compensatory denials. She pleaded the private duty of completing her father's researches on religion as the reason for her study of fetish and the duty of a lowly collector in defence of her escapades in search of fish. She stressed her feminine clothes while abroad; not for her the ghastly trousers of the archetypal androgen. She referred to her womanly domestic service abroad as cook and nurse. She recalled how much she relied upon men to achieve all she had done. She cultivated the style of the frump back in England in order to unsex herself in the eyes of her public. And yet, she had been in

among cannibals in areas no white man visited and she had followed Burton up Mount Cameroon. Mary Kingsley was doing something quite dangerous with imperial identities.

Race, gender and authority

Of course, neither Mackinder nor Kingsley could have mounted their challenges unaided. Mackinder was accompanied by five white men and 170 black porters. The size of the party was determined in some part by the scientific instruments carried up to Mount Kenya and by the biological specimens to be carried back. The main luggage was food. First, they needed food to support the party for 30 days in the Alpine mountain zone where there were no villagers to turn to. Then, of course, they needed food for those carrying the mountain load and to get the whole group from one village to the next before reaching the mountain. This was a hungry land when Mackinder (1991, 63) came through: 'three successive rains having failed'. In the wake of the famine, the cattle got rinderpest, smallpox strode through the villages and desperate vagrants plodded to the railhead. The British exacerbated the situation, buying up food stores at high prices for their own various expeditions. Mackinder learned of incompetence in the organization of food and water supplies which, following the Uganda mutiny, left local black traders gathered at a railhead, drinking from 'filthy pools' where 'thousands of them died of enteric fever' (*ibid.*, 71). Mackinder's route was set so that it would pass through the only area which still had any food (Hinde in Mackinder 1900a). Local officials of the British government tried to dissuade and even to recall the expedition. They failed. Mackinder was fully aware that he was going to have problems with food and, noting that when a 'Dr Kolb had gone up; he had fought for food and made things bad for those who followed' (*ibid.*, 77), he accumulated as large an arsenal as he could muster.

Upon his return, Mackinder told the Alpine Club that

As things were we had no difficulty in feeding our white men until quite near the end of our journey. The black men's food, however, presented considerable difficulty, since, owing to the fact that he eats 50 lbs weight in a month, a porter can do little more than

carry his own month's rations, unless his food-stock be replenished every ten days or so from local sources. (Mackinder 1900b, 104)

Thus speaks the true imperial subject. We need to be clear about this. Mackinder placed little value on black life when set against his 'scientific' ambition. Famine was an obstacle to be surmounted, an obstacle solely to the success of the mission. Upon arriving at the British port of Naivasha, he arranged to have news of the successful climb wired to his wife, reassuring her that 'Party all well' (*ibid.*, 246) which, of course, meant the whites, including her relative Hausburg. We know there were at least eleven deaths. In addition to the death from dysentery and the two porters killed in the attack on the food party, eight Swahili porters were 'shot by orders' (Barbour 1991, 22).

Violence against the porters was seen as a prerogative, even, by some, a prerequisite of successful white leadership. On Mackinder's arrival in Zanzibar, one European 'represented the Swahili as undrivable but easy to manage by laughter and joke' (*ibid.*, 41). Soon, Mackinder was instructed in other realities:

There are elaborate printed regulations dealing with the treatment of the men while on Safari. Sleeman says that this red tape was caused by Astor Chanler [an earlier explorer]. He started from the coast with [a] supply of [leg-] irons, and his men very naturally gave trouble. (*ibid.*, 51)

It is because of these regulations that we know of the murders of the eight Swahili porters. Hausburg was obliged to make a report to Boustead, Ridley and Company upon their return. No such return exists in relation to the 111 Kikuyu porters. It is only in Hausburg's list that the eight murders are mentioned. They feature in none of the four published lectures Mackinder (1900a, 1900b, 1930, 1945) gave about his expedition, nor in the unpublished typescript account nor in Mackinder's own diary. This 'red tape' explicitly forbade any killing of Swahili porters.

Beatings were routine and it is Mackinder's brother-in-law who is first recorded ordering one while the party were yet in Nairobi: 'Hinde tried our cook for striking Ali, our interpreter, and sentenced him to ten *kiboko*' (Mackinder 1991, 101). Force was integral to Mackinder's authority; the doing of his will: 'I determined that my will must prevail' (*ibid.*, 111). Mackinder soon went further than *kiboko*. After a meeting among themselves

early in the expedition, 'the whole body of Kikuyu porters tried to desert, and were only checked by a display of firearms' (Mackinder 1900a, 457). Two days later, their Mombassan interpreter, Ali, fired unsuccessfully after one porter's boy-slave he had thought had been trying to escape (Mackinder 1991). Much later, during a desperate dash to Naivasha for food, Saunders, a collector of biological specimens sent in charge of the caravan, resorted to his fists:

The whole caravan was very much upset, and repeatedly asked to go back, until, losing my patience, I set about those nearest to me with my fists. The effect was really marvellous. (*ibid.*, 211)

Although Mackinder (1900b, 104) declared to the Alpine Club that 'the people of Meranga we found very friendly and from them took all the food we could carry', in the journal he records 'a long negotiation for food. Mbuthia [the chief] issued loud commands but his people did not obey with alacrity' (Mackinder 1991, 119). It was not until nightfall and 'while our Swahilis cleaned their rifles ostentatiously and drilled one another' that the women of the village brought sufficient food for the expedition. As they went into the areas of severe food shortage, Mackinder found 'The people here were afraid of us, and hostile' (*ibid.*, 123). Mackinder held one chief captive until his people broke open their stores for the scientific expedition. It was when they applied again to this same village for further food that the food caravan was referred to another village and then ambushed while on its way, leaving two black porters dead. On two separate occasions, Mackinder (*ibid.*, 182) contemplated reprisals for the attack (although he was not sure which of the two villages was responsible) but on each occasion he lacked the manpower to ensure a successful engagement:

I doubt whether we were justified in retaliating. We were a scientific expedition, and had reached the scene of our work. The caravans to Naivasha, even in the circumstances under which the second started, involved no more risk than an attack on Wangombe, through a long forest, with demoralised forces. Had we failed, the Government might have had forced upon it retribution for a white man's death at an inconvenient time; therefore, much against natural impulse, I refused to consent to an attack upon Wangombe.

The calculation was based primarily on mainforce. Mackinder considered 'our men undisciplined and badly armed' (*ibid.*, 204). Even so, Mackinder did

not rule out a future attack should reinforcements arrive or upon the 'urgent necessity for food' (*ibid.*, 182). Yet this military weakness only underlines the broader context of violence of this expedition and its many contemporaries. Clifford (1992, 112) has remarked that behind the general safety of anthropologists in the field

was a prior history of violent conflict. All over the world 'natives' learned, the hard way, not to kill whites. The cost, often a punitive expedition against your people, was too high.

Indeed, in 1898, a Captain Haslam had wandered into this region without warning and had been captured and killed. Retribution involved the torching of villages and the slaughter of 100 Kikuyus by the British (Barbour in Mackinder 1991).

Alone among his expedition, Mackinder had a Mauser, a German rifle of 1897 which could fire ten times without reloading. With this gun he intimidated a local chief - 'I practised with my Mauser in the afternoon against a tree trunk for Ngombe's benefit' (*ibid.*, 156) - prevented desertions and protected supplies - 'The moral suasion of my Mauser saved the position several times that day' (*ibid.*, 159). He recognized the importance of the gun to his authority: 'It was a strange experience to be thus brought face to face with the ultimate sanctions of society' (*ibid.*, 160). Mackinder had been using the gun as a threat almost from the start. The three white men who took charge of caravans of porters were Mackinder, Hausburg and, later, Saunders. One of these must have shot or ordered the shooting of the eight Swahilis. Barbour eliminates Hausburg on the grounds that, on arriving in Naivasha, he wrote letters to await Mackinder which contained sensible suggestions about the 'arrangements for the return of the Kikuyu porters to Nairobi and the Swahilis to the coast' (Barbour 1991, 24). Upon reaching Naivasha, the food supply was secure. It seems unlikely that the trip from Naivasha down to the coast can have been as distressing as the forced marches from Mount Kenya down to Naivasha, of which Saunders, Hausburg and Mackinder each led one. Saunders, who led the caravan back down to the coast was back in Africa near Khartum by March 1900 (Mackinder 1900b). Furthermore, Saunders made no mention of using more than his fists during his frightening march to Naivasha. At least one of the slaughtered Swahilis

was with Mackinder and not with Hausburg on the march to Naivasha. Mackinder recorded this part of the trip in brief, though lurid, terms, probably sometime after the event. During this march, he ordered twenty lashes for a Swahili 'who had thrown away a bottle of specimens in spirit' and bemoaned there being an 'epidemic' of such discarding of science, amounting to the loss of all the bats and frogs they had gathered (Mackinder 1991, 239). Soon he had to deal with a sick man collapsing at least twice: 'The day had been spoiled by the sick man. He made no effort to come on, and would have laid down for the lions to take him if we had not forced him to continue' (*ibid.*, 240–1). Mackinder's (*ibid.*, 241) account continues:

The Swahili seemed to enjoy life, yet did not cling to it. I did not like this slave driving, for that is what it really was. The Swahili still had the slave mentality. It was all done according to the *daituri* [custom] of the African safari, and we could not stay, for supplies were running short.

What action required the alibi of *daituri*? This reference to local practices may invite reflections upon the relativity of morals. This behaviour (slave-driving at the least, murder possibly?) was sanctioned by local codes. A few days later *kiboko* is again imposed for the jettisoning of three-quarters of the botanical specimens. The recipient, Musa, is among those recorded as 'shot by orders' and, uniquely, no quantity of *kiboko* was noted by Mackinder. Other expedition leaders, such as Stanley, exacted mortal retribution for similarly venial sins (McClintock 1994). Four days after this, on 19 September, Mackinder reached Naivasha a few hours before the rest of the safari. He cabled his wife that he would be in Marseilles on 14 November. This was in fact when the other Europeans reached that port but the very next day (29 September) Mackinder began a furious dash alone to the coast which brought him to Marseilles by 29 October.

We can only speculate, unless further research, perhaps into Foreign Office or missionary records from the region, yields further evidence. Barbour writes that Hausburg and Mackinder were barely in touch after the expedition. Mackinder's brother-in-law, Sidney Hinde, was in the audience when Mackinder gave his paper on the 'Journey to the summit of Mount Kenya' and remarked laconically that he had 'not had the opportunity of talking [the details of the trip] over with him, but I think he

said too little of the difficulties he had to overcome' (Mackinder 1900a, 477). Mackinder's precipitate departure may well have deprived Hinde of the opportunity to talk after the descent and perhaps they had not found the opportunity to do so in London. The tone of Hinde's remarks seemed intended to divert any possible criticism from the British officials who had not been as enthusiastic about the expenditure as Mackinder would have liked. At the very least, Mackinder's reckless pursuit of his 'scientific' goal was careless of Swahili and Kikuyu lives in all sorts of ways.

This sort of violent command over black lives was intrinsic to much exploration and discovery. The white male though was expected to hold a monopoly on disciplinary violence. Pearce (1990, 14) reports that

when May [French Sheldon] revealed that she had disciplined her porters with the whip, the editor [of the *Spectator*] refused to credit her story. No woman would be strong enough to take such manly action, for women were by nature delicate and gentle; and if a woman did resort to such action, she was not truly a woman.

Kingsley complied more with womanly convention in this respect. Although in one of her letters home from her first trip (1893), she reported having both a bowie knife and a revolver, and told her friend that 'be a man as fine as they make them, it is always advisable to supplement their charms with a revolver' (*ibid.*, 38), she intended the gun to destroy her own life should she be faced with that risk to something more than life about which the *Daily Telegraph* so worried. On her second voyage she left her revolver at the Customs Port in Glass after being asked to take out a game licence (Kingsley 1897). She could neither afford nor wished to have a large safari to accompany her. She traded for food and thus largely ate local food and carried few supplies. She took her portion of tumbles and falls, taking a share of the lead when in country that none of the party knew:

The Fan took my conduct as a matter of course, never having travelled with white men before, or learnt the way some of them require carrying over swamps and rivers and so on. (*ibid.*, 276)

All dangers but fever, she insisted, could 'be avoided by any one with common sense, by keeping well out of the districts in which they occur' (*ibid.*, 86). Behind her safety lay, of course, local black people's experience of white violence. Nevertheless, Kingsley buys rather than coerces

black support in her adventures. It was her proud boast that 'I have never raised hand nor caused hand to be raised against a native' (*ibid.*, 503). The contrast with Mackinder is sharp:

I have never had to shoot, and hope never to have to; because in such a situation, one white alone with no troops to back him means a clean finish. But this would not discourage me if I had to start, only it makes me more inclined to walk round the obstacle, than to become a mere blood splotch against it, if this can be done without losing your self-respect, which is the mainspring of your power in West Africa.

As for flourishing about a revolver and threatening to fire, I hold it utter idiocy. I have never tried, however, so I speak from prejudice which arises from the feeling that there is something cowardly in it. (*ibid.*, 330)

The difference extends to acts of generosity. Mackinder appears to have begrudged making gifts of tobacco to his Kikuyu and Swahili companions and explained away the one gift he recorded as being to a headman in consideration of Mackinder's thinking that one Masai was jealous of the attention another was receiving. In this case, he had to get the tobacco from others among the whites; clear evidence that this was an unusual occurrence (Mackinder 1991). Kingsley (1897, 125, 1901) was quite generous in her gifts of tobacco: 'Remember that whenever you see a man, black or white, filled with a nameless longing, it is tobacco he requires'. She drew a contrast between force and intelligence as forms of authority (Blunt 1994a) and, interestingly, turned to mountaineering for the metaphor:

My most favourite form of literature, I may remark, is accounts of mountaineering exploits, though I have never seen a glacier or a permanent snow mountain in my life. I do not care a row of pins how badly they may be written, and what form of bumble-puppy grammar and composition is employed, as long as the writer will walk along the edge of a precipice with a sheer fall of thousands of feet on one side and a sheer wall on the other; or better still crawl up an *arête* with a precipice on either side. Nothing on earth would persuade me to do either of these things myself, but they remind me of bits of country I have been through where you walk along a narrow line of security with gulfs of murder looming on each side, and where in exactly the same way you are as safe as if you were in your easy chair at home, as long as you get sufficient holding ground: not on rock in the bush village inhabited by murderous cannibals, but on the ideas in men's and women's minds; and those ideas, which I think I may say you will always find, give you safety. (Kingsley 1897, 329)

Hardly qualifying as alpine mountaineering, her ascent of Mount Cameroon in the tornado season nevertheless took a week and tested her authority.

She showed more concern not to admit mistakes than in having her will obeyed at all times. Listening to her helpers, she postponed her departure until they had cooked enough food to take with them in case they could make no fire nearer the summit:

I never saw a forest yet in Africa where you could not get a fire, but knowing that my previous experiences have never been beyond 5000 feet in elevation, I let them have their way. (*ibid.*, 568)

She allowed desertion: 'Cook does not feel these forest charms, and gives me notice after an hour's experience of mountain forest-belt work; what cook would not?' (*ibid.*, 570). All bluff, it seems because the cook remained on board. Tricked by her assistants about their supplies of water, she was forced to send back down for more. She did not abandon the ascent as her servants assured her others had under similar circumstances. She repeatedly had to track back to collect her wayward men and in her exasperation was all the more resolute about guiding the party to the top: 'I would not prevent those men of mine from going up that peak above me after their touching conduct today. Oh! no; not for worlds, dear things' (*ibid.*, 580). In fact, with the morning, her assessment of their value had changed and she sent half of her party of six back down. Two more were sent up by the German official below and onwards and upwards they all went. Setting her face against inclement weather, she decided to ask for volunteers for the final ascent; two agreed. Even they gave up before the summit was reached and Kingsley, having wrapped them in blankets, went on alone and collected them on her way back down. Cajoling, giving way and respecting her men's right to refuse risks she accepted, she had gone to the top of the hill and come back down again:

The only point I congratulate myself on is having got my men up so high and back again, undamaged; but, as they said, I was a Father and a Mother to them, and a very stern though kind set of parents I have been. (*ibid.*, 604)

This 'paternal-maternal duty' (*ibid.*, 605) gives a very different tone to the direction of black labour by white master. Behind it lie some of the same economic and mainforce relations but it is

conducted with greater solicitude and does not treat black lives as expendable. As Pearce (1990, 92) remarks:

[N]o doubt George Bernard Shaw was not the only reader of *Travels in West Africa* and the books of H M Stanley to 'compare the brave woman, with her commonsense and goodwill, with the wild beast-man, with his elephant rifle, and his atmosphere of dread and murder, making his way by mad selfish assassination out of the difficulties created by his own cowardice'.

Treating Africans as children, and, in her case, taking on both paternal as well as maternal roles, was still an imperial gesture.

Writing of Mary Hall, a later traveller in Africa, who modelled herself on Kingsley, Blake (1992) describes a set of relations between Hall and her black acquaintances based on 'chivalry'. Blake (*ibid.*, 30) notes Hall's compromised authority: 'Like her male contemporaries, Hall participates in the chivalric structure of social relations, but her position in it is split – superior in race, inferior in gender'. This much seems true of Kingsley too. Blake goes on to suggest that, whereas many secure male travellers treated African chiefs outside any code of chivalry since they related to chiefs as subject to object, Hall imagined a chief deferring to her in race while she deferred to him in gender. Recognizing his subjectivity allowed her to presume upon his chivalry towards a defenceless woman. No such reciprocity governed her relations with her porters with whom she evoked her class superiority, allowing her to patronize and matronize them. But to see African society in the class terms of her own England was to worry the fundamentally racist basis of imperial control. Again, this rings true of Kingsley, although her class position was more ambivalent and she may have extended greater empathy across the division between master and servant given that her mother had worked as a domestic servant. Blake's (*ibid.*, 32) conclusion seems apposite:

Hall represents her relation with the Sultan in a way that both fulfils and resists Victorian expectations of a lady: 'A woman's point of view' does not guarantee a reciprocal relationship with an Other, but opens a crack in the concept of Self through which to examine the concept of Other.

Spatiality and subjectivity

Location affects the performance of identity, the affirmations and sanctions received from the

worlds of objects and other people. The imperial subject is defined not only with respect to its various others but also with the intention of belonging properly and securely to the group of its varied selves (Porter 1991). Keeping up appearances illustrates this dual regard. McClintock (1994, 137) asks why colonial motifs were so important to the marketing of domestic hygiene in Britain and suggests that

Soap offered the promises of spiritual salvation and regeneration through commodity consumption, a regime of domestic hygiene that could restore the threatened potency of the imperial body politic.

Potency was expressed at home by implicit contrast with others abroad. The contrast presented 'me' as a member of 'us'. In some ways, the imperial subject alone amongst the others faced no such collective censorship. This is among the pleasures of slipping the reins of the metropole for a jaunt in the periphery. In the company of other Europeans, the discipline returns. Faced with a choice between washing in the company of black men and women having fun while washing clothes and appearing before a European 'in an awful mess', Kingsley's (1897, 563) choice was clear:

Naturally I wash here, standing in the river and swishing the mud out of my skirts; and then wading across to the other bank, I wring out my skirts, but what is life without a towel?

She displays anxiety about letting down the English nation before other Europeans, although this is caught up with a wish not to disappoint the chivalry of the French and Germans by being dirty and disgracefully unfeminine. These anxieties apply with much less force in front of Africans.

Mackinder spent hardly any time completely away from Europeans, although during one of the periods, just before his ascent of the summit, he was alone with some of his porters. He spent four nights (3–6 September) alone with at times two, three or six Swahilis. This was his period of introspection. It was then he 'long[ed] for civilisation' (Mackinder 1991, 201). It was then he wished he 'could say more to [the Swahilis] than "margi" and "motu", fire and water' (*ibid.*, 198). At one point, when there were six porters and two tents (4 September), he shared his tent with two porters. Finally, Mackinder and a porter bespied the food party but

had the greatest difficulty in attracting the attention of the column ... They took no notice of us, for they

thought that we were both merely black porters, such apparently was my dishevelled condition. (*ibid.*, 203)

Not only the danger, then, but possibly also the company unsettled temporarily Mackinder's imperial self-assurance.

There can have been few people less likely to 'go native' than Mackinder. Kingsley noted and admired Mary Slessor (McEwan 1995) who in turn modelled herself after David Livingstone (Frank 1987). Their Christian mission brought them to understand the black people they lived among in ways which seriously unsettled the received wisdom about the gap between the heathen and the Christian. Kingsley identified with the religious beliefs she studied as 'fetish'. In a remarkable letter to the editor of a magazine for black nationalists, *The New Africa*, written on her last trip to Africa where she was to die nursing Boers in a British hospital, Kingsley (1901, xix) referred to the 'Bushman[s] . . . native form of religion, a pantheism which I confess is a form of my own religion'. Furthermore, in the same letter, she turned her attention to Europe and averred that the mission to Christianize Africa could never bring peace between black and white since Europeans themselves were largely resistant to the Christian message. The European should not seek to make the African more like the European's own ideal conception of themselves. Difference should be respected: 'The great difficulty is of course how to get people to understand each other' (*ibid.*, xvi). This understanding, this dialogue is what undermined the certainties of her imperial training:

I venture to believe that my capacity to think in black came from my not regarding the native form of mind as 'low' or 'inferior' or 'childlike', or anything like that, but as a form of mind of a different sort to white men's - yet a very good form of mind too, in its way. (quoted in Pearce 1990, 145)

Place unsettled imperial identities by modulating references to the imperial 'we' and inviting dialogue with the colonized 'they'. Where imperial identity was already unsettled back home by the unsatisfactory way one melded with the asserted homogeneity of 'us', travel may even have repaired that subject position. Mackinder's composure rarely slipped and the desire and satisfaction represented by Mount Kenya appears to have consolidated his imperial identities. Kingsley took an imperial subjectivity already partially disqualified by her experience of being treated just like a

woman and to some degree satisfied the imperatives of the imperial subject by substituting the authority of race for the hidden injuries of gender. Mackinder barely came close to meaningful conversation with black people. Kingsley as trader, nurse and employer pursued it. In time, she came to unlearn some of her privilege. Mackinder and Kingsley's relations with geography reveal it as an imperial science *par excellence* for the consistency with which it enacted, enforced and explained the multiple dimensions and conflations of the imperial subjectivity.

Conclusion

There are two main problems with my using a comparison of Kingsley and Mackinder as a way of talking about the imperial subjectivity. The first concerns evidence; the second, theory.

If one wishes to explore how people saw themselves and how they felt about being like that, we require evidence of self-reflection, if not on their part, then on that of people we feel sure were quite like them. The invitation to share inner thoughts was directed more insistently at women writers; they were expected to be subjective. Mackinder was particularly self-disciplined in this regard, certainly in his published works, in the version of his Mount Kenya diary edited by Barbour and in the personal letters that I have seen quoted by Blouet (1987) and Coones (1987). There may be more to learn from the extant letters. On the other hand, much of Kingsley's introspection comes in published works and here, of course, one must be aware that she is performing a personality. A study such as this, which is interested in the unsettling of subjective certainties, relies upon subjects with a space and a wish to admit this. We need to recognize that there may be connections between a propensity to introspection and rich metaphor on the one hand and various forms of subjectivity on the other (take, for example, the contrast between Flaubert and Nightingale that Gregory (1995a) describes).

Case studies draw on and test theory. Here I have been learning from works by and about the late Foucault. The troubling question, for me, concerns the status of psychoanalysis in the study of subjectivity. In speaking of unconscious drives, psychoanalysis questions accounts of the rationality of behaviour which ignore those drives. Explanations of behaviour in terms of social

context appear to do this (Deutsche 1995; Gregory 1995b). If our concern is with, say, the relations between knowledge and subjectivity, geography and imperial training, then, we are asking how people are constituted as subjects and how that subjectivity shapes actions. Private and public levels are both implicated. Simply relating psychological states to immediate stimuli ignores the work the mind has done before to prepare the response. It can be mere correlation not causation:

If I say that X's depression was caused by his mother's death, I have formulated a trivial causal explanation; whereas if I say that X's depression is due to 'oedipal fixation' or 'guilt', I am manipulating theoretical concepts to account for causal events (however imperfect those concepts may be in the above example). Empirical causality *per se* is theoretically valueless, unless it is deducible from the theory or can lead to theoretical thinking. (Obeyesekere 1981, 16–17)

Mackinder's estrangement from his wife and Kingsley's role as dutiful daughter coming to an end with her parents' deaths were traumatic events, the full ramifications of which reverberated into the unconscious. The unconscious is also present in speaking of their desire to travel. Porter (1991, 11–13) writes of the unconscious links between childhood experiences and the projection of fantasies on geographic spaces:

Since the narrative of a journey gives an author great freedom to focus on whatever it is in an unfamiliar land 'that strikes his fancy', it invites a form of self-disclosure that is only partially conscious ... [and] it stimulates free association of a kind that is not reproducible in other ways.

The structure of the unconscious is contingent upon context and our knowledge of this depends upon the quality of introspective writings and recorded therapies from that time, place and social group. The discovery of the unconscious decentred understanding of the human subject. The claims of historicism relativize those of psychoanalysis should it be conceived as a humanism, a claim that people have always and everywhere been much the same:

No one, of course, denies that there are universal facts, such as birth or death. But take away their historical and cultural context, and anything which is said about them can only be tautological. As Chandra Talpade Mohanty observes, 'that women mother in a variety of societies is not as significant as the *value* attached to mothering in these societies'. (Young 1990, 123)

The way those great facts of human development obtain purchase on the unconscious is likewise mediated by their cultural context. To treat discourses as private symbols in Obeyesekere's terms is to supplement and not replace their formal analysis in terms of conscious uses of imagery, rhetoric and evidence.

Althusser (1994, 160) wrote of 'how I came to invest and inscribe my objective, public activities [including his philosophical position] with my subjective fantasies'. He also claimed that

It is no good looking for the ultimate and objective meaning of a particular philosophy in an analysis of this kind. Whatever a philosopher's conscious or rather subconscious inner motivation might be, his published philosophy has an entirely *objective reality* and its effect on the world, if it has one, is similarly *objective* and may, thank God, have almost no connection with the inner world I have described. (*ibid.*, 175, original emphasis)

The effect of discourse is certainly external to the writer but its reception by the reader may yet be partly unconscious on the reader's part. If we can explore materials which disclose that, we might be able to move beyond the description of the largely conscious elements of imperial identities with which I have been concerned to an exploration of the powers of their unconscious elements.

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