

VIEWS SEPARATED BY TIME AND TERRAIN: THE FEMININE PERSPECTIVE
IN THE TRAVEL WRITINGS OF ISABELLA BIRD AND KIRA SALAK

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CARLEIGH E. HILL

Dr. Charles Davis, Thesis Supervisor

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The undersigned, appointed by the dean of the Graduate School, have examined the thesis entitled

VIEWS SEPARATED BY TIME AND TERRAIN: THE FEMININE PERSPECTIVE
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Presented by Carleigh E. Hill,

A candidate for the degree of Master of Arts of Journalism,

And hereby certify that, in their opinion, it is worthy of acceptance.

Charles Davis

Mary-Kay Blakely

Andrea Heiss

E.J. Levy

A Lady an explorer? A traveller in skirts?

The notion's just a trifle too seraphic:

Let them stay and mind the babies, or hem our ragged shirts;

But they mustn't, can't, and shan't be geographic.

"To the Royal Geographical Society." *Punch*. 10, June 1893.

I couldn't have done any of this without Mom and Dad, who backed me financially, emotionally and tirelessly as I stretched a half-formed idea into these pages while also lifeguarding, working retail, teaching, running 5Ks, tailgating with my friends, sleeping late, taking on volunteer work, or generally making every task harder than it should have been.

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ABSTRACT

This study compares the feminine perspectives of Isabella Bird and Kira Salak, each of whom traveled alone across many continents and wrote - for publication - about her experiences. The purpose of this study is to identify some of the distinctive ways that women travel writers reveal a feminine viewpoint as a narrative style in their writings and to offer some speculations about the differences between the female self and the male ego.

This thesis follows a course of research focused on examining the construction of narrative styles by Bird and Salak within articles and books through a combination of theoretical criticisms from many academic disciplines. It is grounded in discourse analysis, gendered language use theory, dominance and difference approaches to speech theory, and postmodern feminist theory. Bird's feminine perspective is marked by an attention to domestic details, identification of feminine traits in others and a poetic style. Salak's writing includes themes of objectifying men, exhibiting her determined nature, subjectively presuming the thoughts of women, domesticity, and approaching obstacles with a pragmatic attitude.

CHAPTER 1: Introduction to women's travel writing

(A) What is a travel narrative?

I hate travelling and explorers... Amazonia, Tibet and Africa fill the bookshops in the form of travelogues, accounts of exhibitions and collections of photographs, in all of which the desire to impress is so dominant as to make it impossible for the reader to assess the value of the evidence... Nowadays, being an explorer is a trade, which consists not, as one might think, in discovering hitherto unknown facts after years of study, but in covering a great many miles and assembling slide-shows or motion pictures, preferably in colour, so as to fill a hall with an audience for several days in succession. For this audience, platitudes and commonplaces seem to have been miraculously transmuted into revelations by the sole fact that their author, instead of plagiarising at home has supposedly sanctified it by covering some twenty thousand miles. (Lévi-Strauss, 1955, p. 17-18)

One can hope that the extraordinary travels and writings of Victorian Isabella Bird¹ and present-day Kira Salak would not so offend anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss. Bird crafted much of her writing from the letters she sent back from remote locations to her frail sister and other friends and relations: letters would come from Australia, Korea, Japan, Hawaii and America. Salak seeks out places and experiences of the world that are still mysterious even to our 21st century sensibilities: the jungles of Papua New Guinea and Congo, the deserts of Mali and Libya, the spiritual ayahuasca ceremonies of South America. Both reveal to us not

¹ Isabella Bird was married late in life to a Dr. Bishop and is sometimes referred to as Isabella Bird Bishop or Bird-Bishop. To minimize confusion and keep references to her as concise as possible I have referred to her throughout the paper as Isabella Bird, not Bird-Bishop.

just details of landscape, but also portraits of individuals and relationships that stir readers' compassion and curiosity. They are considered travelers, writers, adventurers and eccentrics; the same as many men who came before and will go after them, but their work is pigeonholed as "women's" travel writing. This study does not seek to answer the larger question of why literature is grouped and labeled as it is, but instead examines Bird's and Salak's works as a small representation of "women's" travel writing to see if the writers compose their published non-fiction in different ways from men.

One scholar in the field of women's travel writing, Sara Mills, has proposed a discourse theory for reading historical women's travel writing that this study extends to the reading of contemporary women's travel writing in order to compare differences in the female Self perspective in various settings. A qualitative interpretation of quantitative studies of language-use differences between male and female journalists is employed to analyze the expressions and themes throughout Bird's and Salak's writings. First the writings of Bird and Salak are compared to the writings of males to show the language of the feminine perspective, and then Bird and Salak are analyzed in-depth separately to discover and compare their differences.

By using a textual analysis method, this thesis answers the following questions: Is there a similar feminine viewpoint that can be identified in non-fiction travel writing of two different time periods? Or have the discourses of colonialism and postmodern feminism influencing each generation transformed

the writing styles too completely? Most importantly, the thesis attempts to discover whether independent women writers create a distinct feminine narrative in their writing.

Salak's two non-fiction books and five articles from magazines are used as a sample of her work. Parts of three of Bird's books and three articles published in English magazines serve to represent hers. Close readings of these works yield an understanding of each woman's writing style and language use that complements the theoretical background of the present media, linguistic, psychological and discursive studies of similar work.

First we must establish what travel writing is. Many travelogues have been published of unedited letters and diaries, many articles have been packaged in travel sections of newspapers comparing amenities at popular vacation destinations; neither of these forms is strictly exempt from the classification of travel writing. Bird *based* many of her books on letters, but with the discovery of her original letters it is clear she edited for publication. Salak began her writing career with poetry and fiction, but has since been published by *National Geographic* and *New York Times* as a journalist. So from this we can begin to get a sense that travel writing is based on what happens when the writer is not at home, on a voluntary trip, written purposely for an audience, enhanced by incorporating factual information that may have been collected before, during or after the travel, and that is centered on the writer's perceptions of Self and her or his surroundings.

“Travel books are vehicles whose main purpose is to introduce us to the other, and... typically they [dramatize] an engagement between self and world” (Blanton, 2002, xi). This definition is simple enough, but others say it is non-fiction about a place – whether the place is down the road or across the globe. Susan Orlean writes in the introduction to one of the annual Best American Travel Writing collections:

The best travel writing, in my mind, is just a written document of a conversation with a captivating person who is just a little braver, a little smarter, a little more observant, a little funnier, and a little wiser than I, who has gone places I’ve either never gone and never will go, or places I’ve been to many times and never noticed quite the way he or she does, or can talk about the process of going and coming in a way I never imagined before (2007, p. xii).

Travel writing is a wide-ranging field claimed by English and creative writing departments, journalism schools, sociologists and anthropologists.

Women’s travel writing, as a subset of travel writing, is not balanced by the study of men’s travel writing as a subset. Salak, in the introduction of her dissertation, comments on the inequality:

I do expect my dissertation, *Four Corners*, to be viewed by many as an example of “women’s travel writing.” I must admit that I am reluctant to define it as such, as there is no comparable classification of “male travel writing,” just Travel Writing as a universal standard (Salak, 2001, p. iii).

She points out that in the discussion of male writing it generally falls into “the universally recognized category of ‘Literature,’ while women writers find themselves placed in subcategories or genres” (2001, iv). But there is something to be investigated when there are noticeable differences in readers’ responses to men’s travel writing and what women compose for publications. Perhaps it stems

from what Salak experienced while writing her dissertation, that readers and critics alike perceived harrowing experiences undertaken by women as the woman's "death wish," whereas similar behavior from men was viewed as "courageous or intrepid" (2001, vii). Women, including Bird and Salak, consciously or subconsciously write with a linguistically unique feminine perspective that includes narrative voice different from the masculine viewpoint to address the perception that what they are doing is somehow different from how men travel.

In the introduction of *An anthology of women's travel writing*, edited by Mills and Shirley Foster, they state that the "bigger picture" in women's travel is the "importance of gender as a factor which consistently makes a difference (although not always in the same way)" in the variety of ways women have "managed to travel and have written about their travels for a reading public" (Foster, S. & Mills, S., 2002, 1). Their collection includes the "exceptional" like Isabella Bird, as well as the "feminine" like Frances (Fanny) Trollope.

This is a small-scale qualitative study not designed to explain how all women travel writers write, but to open the door to the idea that rhetorical strategy is intentional, including gendered discourse, language and identity creation, when considering the construction of a female narrator in such narratives. The authors were chosen somewhat randomly based on personal taste in their style and subject areas. It is important to understand their individualism

and also see how they are similar to other women travel writers so that the study is limited, yet still tied to the larger field.

(B) Who are Isabella Bird and Kira Salak?

After years of back pain and illness, Isabella Bird, of England, began to travel in 1854, at the age of 23, upon her physician's advice. Her life of travel began with £100 from her father and a respectfully chaperoned trip to Canada (Slung, 2000, p. 147) that became a seven-month journey through Nova Scotia, Chicago, Ontario, Boston and New York. Upon returning home, she was encouraged by her father to write about her trip, and five months later she completed a manuscript titled, "The Car and the Steamboat" (p. 146). An acquaintance referred her to the London publisher John Murray who enthusiastically backed the project, and thus began her writing career with the release of *The Englishwoman in America* in January of 1856.

The next years of her life were not devoted to travel, as she instead concentrated her efforts on charitable works at home. She and her sister were left alone with the deaths of their parents and no spouses to care for (Slung, 2000, p. 147). In 1872, Bird left her sister and set out for Australia, only to leave after a few months. She boarded a ship to America, but set down unexpectedly in Hawaii (then the Sandwich Islands) for six months on the way and finally arrived in the western United States in 1874. This trip resulted in two books, *The Hawaiian Archipelago: Six months among the palm groves, coral reefs and volcanoes of*

the Sandwich Islands (published in 1875) and, perhaps her most famous book, *A Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains* (1879). By 1900 her fame was so cemented that *The New York Times* declared,

No woman traveler of our day is better or more favorably known than Isabella Bird Bishop, whose valuable works on travels in Japan, Korea, and various other sections of the globe have been read with avidity by thousands ("On the Yangtze," p. BR6).

She published ten books in all, as well as a series of articles, which appeared primarily in the English magazine, "The Leisure Hour." Much of her writing described her hosts and their lands with a thoroughly Anglo-centric perspective; when she had more comfortable living arrangements than primitive campsites, she spent time writing about details like the flora and fauna, statistics on people, and the economy (Hodgson, 2002, p. 148). This practice of dealing with statistics went beyond the constraints most women wrote within during the Victorian period (Mills, 1991, p. 81). Mills finds that the expectations about women's travel writing were not always met by writers like Bird for, "If the reader expects that the texts should only deal with pleasure or with trivial domestic information, then statistical information will not meet those expectations" (p. 82).

When Bird traveled through Persia and Kurdistan in 1890 she mostly journeyed alone, but was sometimes accompanied by Major Herbert Sawyer. "The fiercely independent Bird was unhappy to have to curtail her liberty, but rumored difficulties forced her to accept that she would have to go with an escort or not at all" (Hodgson, 2002, p. 116). Unlike some female travelers, Bird was not

daunted by “freezing, damp and filthy caravanserais,” “deep snow across windswept wastelands,” or her own pain from riding a mule during the trip (Hodgson, 2002, p. 117).

Her last voyage began in 1894, after the death of her husband Dr. John Bishop, lasted three years and resulted in three books published between 1897 and 1900. An article in *The New York Times* in 1904 (the year of her death) reviewed several recently published books about Russia and Japan and pointed out how other women’s writings on travels abroad were still reductively described as “charming and intimate,” whereas Bird’s book, *Korea and her Neighbours*, was listed alongside men’s volumes and considered to be a “lively narrative of travel and observation” (“Recent books on Russia and Japan,” p. BR119). For her contribution to geography and the knowledge of foreign peoples, Bird was admitted, along with Mary Kingsley, to the Royal Scottish Geographic Society and to London’s Royal Geographical Society with Kate Marsden – an English nurse who traveled through Russia on horseback in 1891 to care for lepers – and Mary (May) French-Sheldon – an American who traveled into Zanzibar and East Africa as early as 1891 with an entourage of more than 130 white and African men (Birkett, 2002, p. 282).

Bird had a habit of resisting what others would enjoy or seek out. Perhaps one of the most extreme examples is her trip to the Rocky Mountains when bad weather interrupted a two-week trip and forced her to remain in a crude cabin with two men and no semblance of propriety – most amazingly, her courteous

demeanor and well-bred comportment brought out the best in the men she was trapped with.

One hundred forty years after Isabella Bird, extreme travel has taken on new meaning. The places that Bird explored as a solitary woman are now listed in *Fodor's*, *Lonely Planet* and the like for backpackers the world over. Kira Salak is one of a limited number of individuals who ignores the beaten path looking for the same sense of solitude Bird often found on her trips.

Salak, born in 1971, began exploring extreme landscapes in 1991 at the age of 20. After using a Eurail pass to journey through Europe while she was studying in Holland, Salak said she realized how exciting travel was. In order to feed her longing, she said, "I worked in a crouton factory [in Europe] to save up money, then I backpacked alone around eastern and central Africa and Madagascar" (Salak, 2008). Her next trip made her the first woman to cross Papua New Guinea and became the subject of her first book, *Four Corners: One Woman's Journey into the Heart of Papua New Guinea*. The book was also her dissertation for a Ph.D. in English from the University of Missouri.

Shortly after her completion of the book, her older brother Marc drowned while swimming across a river in Africa. The resulting grief caused her to closet herself in a basement apartment in Columbia, Missouri, and write a novel about a female journalist searching the jungle for her missing mentor. Her fiction is one of the elements that sets Salak apart from other adventurer writers, but she remains primarily a freelance writer for National Geographic magazines.

Salak was the first documented person successfully to kayak six hundred miles down the Niger River to Timbuktu:

I get a lot of raised eyebrows from the men [when traveling]. But on my trip down the Niger River, the village women crowded on the shore and raised their hands in a cheer. They yelled out, '*Femme forte*' [strong woman] and cheered for me as I paddled by (qtd. in National Geographic, 2005).

Her female experience is often highlighted in her books by the interactions she has with women and men. She speaks about her encounters with men who have the misconception that she is “vulnerable because [she’s] female” in her National Geographic video profile (2005).

To date, Salak’s non-fiction work has been included in five *Best American Travel Writing* annual anthologies since 2000 and magazines like *National Geographic*, *National Geographic Adventure*, *The New York Times Magazine*, and *Travel & Leisure*. She also wrote a short work of fiction that was published in the literary journal *Prairie Schooner* and reprinted in *Nixon Under the Bodhi Tree and Other Works of Buddhist Fiction*.

Salak travels “in a way that lets [her] have a really intimate experience with local people” (qtd. in National Geographic, 2005) in order to tell their stories; and she says, "I'm attracted to places that people don't go to and don't want to go to" (qtd. in Mason, 2008). She continues to write for *National Geographic Adventure* regularly.

As the globe gets more accessible for all people, women’s and men’s travel writing will continue to grow. The purpose of this study is to identify some of the distinctive ways that women travel writers reveal a feminine viewpoint in their

writings and to offer some speculations about the differences between the female self and the male ego.

The following chapter provides some context for the books and articles that will be studied. It discusses the theoretical framework provided by Mills' discourse analysis and various language use studies. Chapter three lays out the methodology developed and used. Chapter four applies the theoretical framework to the study of women's travel writing through comparisons between Bird's and John Muir's writing as well as Salak's and Chuck Thompson's writing. Chapter five presents the main findings of this study; it examines Bird's and Salak's writings and identifies the feminine perspectives that run through their work. Chapter six summarizes and reflects on the results of this exploration of female travelers' narrative perspectives, it also outlines the limitations of the study and suggests future research.

CHAPTER 2: Theoretical framework

This thesis follows a course of research focused on examining the construction of narrative styles by female travel writers within articles and books as texts emerging from their letters, diaries and notes through a combination of theoretical criticisms from many academic disciplines. It is grounded in discourse analysis, gendered language use theory, dominance and difference approaches to speech theory, and postmodern feminist theory.

Dr. Sara Mills, a professor in the English department at Sheffield Hallam University in the United Kingdom, has written several books and articles on feminist linguistic theory, feminist text analysis, critical discourse analysis and feminist postcolonial theory. And it is her theory, as explained in *Discourses of Difference* (1991), that guided the discourse analysis of the texts. Research of women's travel writing has been limited, according to Mills, to "an attempt to examine more closely the public/private divide, and to question whether in fact women were, or have ever been, entirely confined to the private sphere" (1991, p. 28).

A review of the literature since 1991 has revealed little increase in the breadth of study of women's travel writing. *Discourses of Difference* focuses on writers during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, but Mills notes:

contemporary travel writers share many of the features I describe in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century travel writing, but the discourses of femininity and colonialism have changed beyond recognition and there

are other discourses, such as feminism, which inform texts more (1991, p. 68).

Mills suggests that women travelers have difficulty adopting the masculine narrative style of the active colonizer while balancing the narrative style of a passive woman (1991, p. 78) and she asserts several times that Victorian women travel writers, such as Bird, were constantly in conflict between these two discursive factors. With this view of production, Mills states, “all texts can be seen as heterogeneous, and the product of multiple constraints... [travel writing] must be seen in the light of discourse circulating at the time” (1991, p. 69-70).

Mills goes on to explain the feminine discourse of the Victorian era exhibits a concern with the “presentation of a well-behaved self” (1991, p. 72). Bird’s travels do not seem to fit into the pattern of “well-behaved,” but her writing contains marks of the feminine nonetheless as she discusses her own behavior and others’ from the perspective of a well-behaved English lady. “There are frequent remarks in travel texts about the importance of the feminine discourse of clothes, wearing correct clothes, gloves, skirts of a decent length, not riding sidesaddle and so on” (Mills, 1991, p. 72). These themes and attentions to the domestic run through Salak’s work as well. This discourse theory reinforces quantitative studies conducted in New Zealand on the use of language by women in fiction writing.

Studies by Levine & Geldman-Caspar (1997), Marschall (1997) and S. Peterson (2001) find that children’s informal writing clearly reflects gender in that girls tend to write about true, personal experiences, helping others, and

raising children; and boys write about imaginary, unrealistic events that include aggression (as cited in Janssen & Murachver, 2004, p. 182). Furthermore, “gender-related trends found in children’s writing continue into adulthood” (Janssen & Murachver, 2004, p. 182). Janssen and Murachver chose twenty-six linguistic variables as potential predictors of author gender and applied them to the professional fiction writing of fifty-nine women and fifty-two men; approximately half were classified as “award-winning” while the other half were considered “popular”; and half came from a contemporary time period post-1985, while the other half were from 1920-1960. Random selections were made from two or three different works, totaling nine from each author, consisting of 100-180 words each. They posited that professional editing, rewriting and tailoring to intended audiences worked as filters “preventing the writing from being a straight reflection of the author,” but maintained that “gender is a key aspect of every individual’s social world and self-identity” and “it is unlikely that author gender is completely obscured” (2004, p. 185). Janssen and Murachver found that:

The variables used more often by female authors included compliments, adjectives, questions, third person pronouns, adverbs, adjectival metaphor and simile, elliptical sentences, and intensifiers. This supports the notion that women are more involving, interested in interacting with their audience, and socioemotionally focused on their communicating style than men (2004, p. 195).

They were quick to point out that the observed differences were minimal “and this similarity may be what keeps any differences between the gender groups rather unapparent to the reader” (p. 195). Differences in grammar and language

construction may not indicate gender for the reader, but other research has shown that expressive language and themes in writing can accurately predict author gender a majority of the time and have an affect on reader response.

In a more recent study incorporating a much larger set of data from blogs, Argamon, Koppel, Pennebaker, and Schler (2007) examined age and gender in writing topic and style. They found “clear and consistent patterns of age- and gender-linked variation,” noting:

older bloggers tend to write about externally–focused topics, while younger bloggers tend to write about more personally–focused topics... [and] the linguistic factors that increase in use with age are just those used more by males of any age, and conversely, those that decrease in use with age are those used more by females of any age (Argamon et al., 2007).

Women are more introspective in their unfiltered writing about life experiences, a similar form to travel narratives. The study harvested more than nineteen thousand blogs containing more than 140 million words and analyzed 677 most common “content words” and performed an automated factor analysis to find groups of related words. That analysis yielded twenty coherent factors that depicted distinct themes: conversation, at home, family, time, work, past actions, games, internet, location, fun, food/clothes, poetic devices, books/movies, religion, romance, swearing, politics, music, school, and business. They also divided the 323 most common function words into categories according to their parts of speech: articles, personal pronouns, auxiliary verbs, conjunctions, and prepositions.

The results show that the findings of Janssen and Murachver (2004) can be extended to other genres of writing more similar to travel writing. The gender difference findings were as indicative as age difference indicators for Argamon et al.:

we see that *Articles* and *Prepositions* are used significantly more by male bloggers, while *Personal Pronouns*, *Conjunctions*, and *Auxiliary Verbs* are used significantly more by female bloggers... In content-based features, we see the factors *Religion*, *Politics*, *Business*, and *Internet* used more frequently by male bloggers, while the factors *Conversation*, *At Home*, *Fun*, *Romance*, and *Swearing* are more often used by female bloggers (2007).

Gender prediction from function words was accurate 80% of the time on average, and age predictors were accurate more than 75% of the time. The correlation between younger or female bloggers was true with very few exceptions.

Personal Pronouns, *Conjunctions*, *Auxiliary Verbs*, *Conversation*, *At Home*, *Fun*, *Romance*, and *Swearing* are used more by female bloggers as well as younger bloggers. There are only three exceptions to this pattern: *Family*, used more by older bloggers and by females; *Music*, used more by younger bloggers and by males; and, *School*, for which there is no significant difference between male and female usage (2007).

A review of speech theory from the early 1990s in *The International Journal of the Sociology of Language* reveals a divergence in analysis methods similar to the difference between Mills' discourse theory (1991) and the language use theories of Janssen and Murachver (2004) and Argamon et al. (2007).

Cameron (1992) explained two approaches of researchers in analyzing speech language use by sex: dominance and difference. The dominance approach, made popular in the early 1970s, asserted that the characteristic linguistic features of women's communication "connote tentativeness, deference, and lack of

authority” (Cameron, 1992, p. 15). The difference approach to communication analysis “views the behavior of women not as a mark of their subordinate status, but as a manifestation of distinctive female subcultural norms and values” (p. 15). Cameron considered the findings of two studies in an attempt to determine whether one of these approaches was more useful. The primary analyses of the tag question addressed issues of how women use interrogative and declarative tags (unnecessary phrasing of observations to form questions versus statements; “The weather is good, don’t you think?” as compared to “The weather is good today.”). Dominance scholars, Cameron explained, made the claim that women are more likely to use “illegitimate” tags to seek agreement for a proposition which does not require confirmation; while difference interpretation calls these “illegitimate” tags “hearer-oriented” and stated that it should be seen as attending to the needs of the hearer, which is a cooperative strategy in talk (1992, p.17).

Ultimately Cameron concluded that the preconceived concepts like “women’s” and “men’s” language were too rigid to “capture the subtle complexity of what is going on in talk” (1992, p. 24). She suggested a new sort of question: “So when women and men employ particular linguistic forms and strategies, how are these heard and used to reproduce or subvert social relations between the sexes?” Cameron stated that such an approach is “less reductive than the dominance position, and less reliant on sex stereotyping than the difference position” (1992, p.24). It can be applied to writing styles to understand the

creation of gendered narrative, not as a corrupting force, but the reflection of Self in choices and communication with surroundings.

Another article from *The International Journal of the Sociology of Language* in the late 1990s took on the position of dominance theory and proposed a “notion of Self and of Other points of view in language” and argued “that while men can fully adopt a Self masculine point of view, being the dominant group; women, as a powerless group, may find it difficult to identify with their group’s objectives” (Ariel & Giora, 1998, p. 59). They reasoned that feminist awareness would allow women to override social constraints and allow them to adopt a Self point of view that is feminine, in contrast to “traditional women” who are expected to adopt the point of view of the Other (p. 59). Following this logic, Bird would not be able to adopt anything outside the socially acceptable masculine point of view when regarding the Other; while Salak, who will have been exposed to feminist thought, will dispense with social constraints and adopt a true feminine Self point of view. They measured seven parameters of Self point of view in the writing of Israeli men and women by studying introductory patterns (how writers introduced new characters) and impositive speech acts (how power and cooperation were encoded by the writer during dialogue).

Some of Ariel and Giora’s parameters cannot be applied to the non-fiction travel writing of Bird and Salak, like number of male and female characters, because both women write about people they encounter, rather than create, for

their narratives. They did find that writers not long after Bird's time period (1928-1940) adopted masculine points of view regardless of sex, in that even women writers named more male than female characters fully, and were three times more likely to give a female character only a first name (Ariel & Giora, 1998, p. 68). Women writers were also found to present male characters more often through functional descriptions as opposed to family relationships, while the female characters were more likely to be introduced with family descriptions. The parameter where women most strongly adopted a man's point of view was in the objectification of characters through external description.

Men writers use such descriptions for females 6.3 times more than for males – a masculine point of view. Women writers are somewhat less extreme in adopting a masculine point of view here: 3.65 times more females than males are assigned sex-based descriptions (Ariel & Giora, 1998, p. 69).

In no category did the authors find that early women writers adopted a feminine point of view – only a weaker masculine point of view. Modern writers were chosen from the time period of 1965-1982 for studying introductory patterns compared to early writers. Ariel and Giora concluded that “all-in-all” modern writers take a masculine point of view, but in two areas women took a feminine point of view – when they referred to new (male or female) characters in relation to existing female characters and how they more often introduced men in relation to an existing character implying dependence rather than self-sufficiency (p. 70-71). “All women writers reviewed so far hardly exhibit feminine points of view although the strength of their male-oriented point of view is considerably weaker

than that of the men writers” (Ariel & Giora, 1998, p. 70). In a final test of the hypothesis that feminist writers will focus on the Self more than the Other (the first parameter of the Self point of view) the authors studied feminist and non-feminist magazines from Israel. They concluded that the feminist magazine did exhibit a predominantly feminine point of view while the other women’s magazine still exhibited a masculine point of view (1998, p.74).

Clearly a feminist discourse has influence over the writing of journalists, so this study reinforces Mills’ assertions about comparing Victorian and present-day travel writers. Mills contended in *Discourses of Difference* (1991) that as prevailing discourses evolve so does the writing of the times. Journalists’ writing patterns should be closer in style to Bird’s and Salak’s narratives than fiction writing. If following Ariel and Giora, Salak’s and Bird’s feminine perspectives should not share many similarities, but the action of traveling outside the traditional landscape has a different effect as shown in this study. The approach of dominance theory is therefore not valid.

In addition to the difference and dominance approaches of linguistic analysis, Margaret Gibbon outlines a third theory, postmodernism, that can be combined with feminism to focus on “how our language creates the categories and identities we come to see as natural, including sex and gender” (Gibbon 1999, p. 9). According to Gibbon, postmodernists see gender not as a division between two clear groups, but as a continuum, “we can present ourselves to the world as more or less feminine or masculine, as more or less heterosexual, as more or less

passive, active, deferential, authoritative” (1999, p.10). Gibbon goes on to outline major trends in sociolinguistic research. Summarizing the work of Janet Holmes in 1997, she states that Holmes’ position is close to postmodernist

insofar as she argues for an interpretation of the story-telling narrative strategies discussed in terms of the ‘doing’ of femininity or masculinity... presenting stylistic variation as available for people to construct their identities as they choose (1999, p. 107).

This is an important distinction from dominance and difference approaches as it applies to non-fiction writing, that what is true is necessarily influenced by the construction or “action” of gender, not just that gender happens to affect perspective.

Ultimately the research shows that language use differences between men and women are not significant (Janssen & Murachver, 2004), but gender can be determined by topic and theme (Argamon et al., 2007), although point of view (except in highly feminist publications) is predominantly masculine (Ariel & Giora, 1998) perhaps because narrative strategies are a construction of identity (Gibbon, 1999) and women writers may only imitate the dominant perspective.

CHAPTER 3: Methodological approach and texts

(A) Why textual analysis?

The studies and writing in the field skirt the edges of comparing the point of view of women travel writers in the late nineteenth century to contemporary women travel writers. As shown in the previous chapter, there is no doubt that an identifiable difference exists between men and women travel writers. The purpose of the study is an exploration of a field relatively uncharted by academic work. By examining language use in a qualitative way for indicators and themes like those explored by Cameron (1992), Ariel & Giora (1998), Janssen and Murachver (2004), and Argamon et al. (2007) in selections of Isabella Bird and Kira Salak's writing and comparing those specific findings, this thesis may open the door to a larger comparative study of how women travel writers from different generations communicate the Self and a female perspective in light of being surrounded by the Other.

Considering the theoretical framework and the literature about women's travel writing, the language of gender in professional and personal writing, and the cultural discourse affecting each text, I look to answer the following questions:

Is there a (consciously or subconsciously) constructed feminine style in the writings of Kira Salak and Isabella Bird?

Is there a unique viewpoint that can be identified in non-fiction women's travel writing of two different time periods?

How are these viewpoints identified by readers of the texts?

Does the length of the text change the viewpoint or the ways of identifying the viewpoints?

The appropriate qualitative method for this exploration is textual analysis. The questions are not asking why, but how a feminine viewpoint manifests itself and what meaning that can have for readers.

Textual analysis has been used as an alternative to quantitative content analysis in many media studies. Textual analysis typically fills the gap between categorizing words and phrases (as has previously been done in this field) and drawing out potential meaning a text may hold for its readers. Quantitative research may give us an idea of how many women travel writers wrote about a certain part of the world at a particular time, or tell us the number of adverbs or adjectives used by women travel writers per 1,000 words on average, but, as shown in the existing research, it has not explored or explained the differences between women travel writers and men travel writers that readers identify and are drawn to. Qualitative analysis can do more to delve into what readers interpret as the differences and how that might impact how they read the texts.

The process of textual analysis is described and understood in many ways, but essentially starts with the assumption that any cultural artifact can be treated as a text that communicates certain meaning using certain strategies (McKee, 2003). Textual analysis involves examining those texts in detail to determine

what the likely interpretation of those texts will be. Practitioners of this method of textual analysis make no claims as to the generalizations about or repeatability of their work.

Immersion in the text is the primary method for this approach. Initially, I read the books and articles multiple times. The texts became familiar enough so that I was able to examine the language on several levels, and differences and similarities existing between and among the texts were documented.

I took extensive notes on frequently recurring themes, the style of recorded interactions with men and women, and the awareness or creation of female viewpoints, as well as other interesting linguistic patterns that arose. The notes created the foundation for a rich description of how the texts represent Bird's and Salak's discussion of Self when surrounded by the Other.

(B) Which texts?

The following is a list of the texts included in this study:

Of Bird's writing

Six Months in the Sandwich Islands (originally published in 1875),
A Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains (originally published in 1879),
Unbeaten Tracks in Japan (originally published in 1880),
"The Two Atlantics" (1876),
"A Pilgrimage to Sinai" (1886),
"Notes on Morocco" (1901)

Of Salak's writing

Four Corners: One woman's journey into the heart of Papua New Guinea (2001),
The Cruellest Journey: Six Hundred Miles to Timbuktu (2004),
"Places of Darkness" (2003),
"Hell-bent for the Arctic" (2005),
"Libya: The land of cruel death" (2005),
"Iran: Into Hostile Territory" (2007),
"Trekking Bhutan's Higher Planes" (2009)

These texts represent roughly an equal amount of work produced by the authors spanning as much of each of their professional careers as possible.

For purposes of focusing on the analysis and discussion in later chapters, short synopses of the longer works are here included.

The earliest Isabella Bird book discussed is *Six Months in the Sandwich Islands*. This was an unplanned trip for Bird. She originally traveled to Australia and New Zealand, but upon finding them less enjoyable than she hoped, she left New Zealand in mid-January of 1873. Her intention was to go straight to America to explore the Rocky Mountains. Instead she was convinced to join a Mrs. Dexter, whose son was gravely ill, when she disembarked in Honolulu to seek medical attention for her son. Within a few days of landing Mrs. Dexter had been settled and Bird had been invited to accompany a woman traveling to the volcano on Hawaii. She took off for the big island, still intending her stay to be fairly short.

Perhaps the most important development of her life occurred on the island of Hawaii. She learned to ride a horse astride using a "Mexican saddle." In such a manner she explored most of Hawaii – for three months – before eventually

returning to Honolulu by way of Lahaina on Maui. She spent two months exploring the rivers, jungles, waterfalls and volcanoes of Oahu before she felt drawn back to her friends on the “fairest of the island Edens,” and returned once more to Hilo, Hawaii. It was not until August that she finally boarded a steamer for America.

A Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains is arguably Bird's most well known work; it is her account of what happened immediately following her trip to Hawaii. She landed in San Francisco in early September with the express desire to visit Estes Park, Colorado. She took a train over the Sierra Madres and got her first taste of the cold temperatures to come when she stopped off in Truckee, California. The railroad finally deposited it her in Greeley, Colorado for the start of her horseback adventure. She traveled west to Cedar Cove and Drake before seeing Long's Peak and Estes Park, where she met Griffin Evans, a Welshman, and Jim Nugent, better known as Mountain Jim. Mr. Evans introduced her to several residents who helped her along her way and Mountain Jim became a good friend. Though she “shrank” from the idea of it, she also visited Denver on her way south as far as Colorado Springs. By this time it was late October. With winter weather truly setting in, she headed toward the mountains to visit Pike's Peak and Lake George on a route that ultimately led her almost all the way to Breckenridge and back east to Webster.

At this point she was anxious to return to Estes Park and headed north, reaching her destination November 20. She stayed more than two weeks through

several storms and became very close with Mountain Jim. He copied out poetry from books, or wrote his own, which he read to her. She attempted to convince him to quit drinking. They must have made a very odd pair in many of the places they visited. On her last day, Bird boarded a stage coach and left her horse “Birdie,” with her Mexican saddle, and Mountain Jim, surprising herself with the realization she would never see either again. And indeed Evans fatally shot Mountain Jim nine months after Bird left Colorado.

Unbeaten Tracks in Japan is a collection of her letters from a trip taken in 1878. She had returned home after seeing Australia, Hawaii and the Rocky Mountains, cared for her sister for a time and traveled shortly in Europe. She arrived in Yokohama on May 21, writing her first impressions of the country and people from the ship’s place in the harbor. She traveled to Tokyo by rail a few days later, but ultimately returned to Yokohama in June, where she hired Ito, a young Japanese man who acted as her companion and translator for the remainder of the trip. She visited several temples and shrines on her way to Nikko and around the Nikkozan Mountains. She then took a river boat to the port city of Niigata, which she remarked was the “cleanest and most comfortable looking town seen yet” on her journey.

She took to horseback travel again to “luxuriate” in the hot springs of Akayu in early July, but came down with a fever and suffered pain horrible enough that she sought out a Japanese doctor while staying in Kanayama at the Transport Offices. She continued her travel though, recording the populations of

towns as she came across them and commenting frequently on the changing manner of dress in the different regions. At Kubota she writes that she no longer has any desire to meet Europeans and has found Kubota the most pleasant of the villages because it is so thoroughly Japanese. She reached the Yezo region at the beginning of August and spent the remainder of the month and two weeks in September traveling among its communities and learning all she could about the Aino people. On September 14 she said goodbye to Ito and boarded a ship back to Yokohama, and from there she sailed to the Malay Peninsula, seeing the rugged coastline of Japan for the last time on Christmas Eve, 1878.

Four Corners: One woman's journey into the heart of Papua New Guinea is Salak's debut book, and also her dissertation, about her solo trek from Port Moresby on the southern coast, up rivers and through jungles, finally winding up in Hagen, in the Western Highlands Province. By this time she has spent days in leech-infested mud in the jungles, scammed officials representing PNG's Ministry of Foreign Affairs to get access to refugee camps where leaders of the Free Papua Movement (a guerrilla resistance force) reside, and hitched a ride in a helicopter owned by the Ok Tedi mining company, among other things.

It is a rambling story that often loses momentum when Salak starts describing the people she meets and their daily lives or her own feelings and reflections on danger (both in her current situation in PNG and in flashbacks to an experience in Mozambique). She is often very introspective when not accompanied by other travelers or locals, and then she tries to engage them in

conversation using what Pidgin she knows, to try to understand them. She is swindled on a number of occasions when she relies on PNG men who have no qualms about taking her money and leaving her in random locations.

In *The Cruellest Journey: Six Hundred Miles to Timbuktu*, Salak tells the story of how she decided to attempt a 600-mile journey from Old Segue, Mali to Timbuktu, paddling along the Niger River alone. National Geographic funded most of the trip, including a photographer who periodically met up with Salak along the river. She packed some food and supplies in her inflatable kayak, but relied on finding friendly villages to “purchase” food and shelter.

Within the first hours of the trip she ripped a muscle in her arm, but kept paddling. In the last days of the trip she got dysentery and was greatly weakened by dehydration. She dealt with hostile villages where young men would proposition her or try to steal her things. She constantly had to ignore or avoid demands for gifts of money from Africans who saw her only as a rich white tourist. When she reached Timbuktu she sought out a slave owner and bought two young women out of slavery for the price of \$130 per person. She battled her own fears of hippopotami, crocodiles, being robbed or assaulted, losing her way or being capsized by wind or waves.

She was the first woman to successfully make the trip and possibly the first person ever to do so. She modeled her trip after the trips of Mungo Park, a Scottish explorer and doctor of the 18th century. Park began the trip from the western part of Mali, twice attempting to reach Timbuktu or the headwaters of

the Niger. He was forced to turn around on his first trip and died on his second trip. Salak frequently compares the writings of Park to her own reflections on what she is trying to accomplish and what she is facing.

CHAPTER 4: Establishing the feminine perspective

The following passages represent a more-or-less random selection from the primary authors in this study and from typical male travel writers of the same time periods in similar locations (typical in that they were chosen with no foreknowledge of the authors' writing styles). Analysis of these texts shows how the theories of language use discussed in this chapter can be applied qualitatively to discover how readers respond to the different narrative and travel styles of women and men travel writers. Statistically speaking, these passages may not differ significantly, but readers respond very differently to them.

(A) What defines the Victorian colonial feminine perspective?

The first passage is Bird's description of the start of a short trip into the Rocky Mountains. The next passage is the famous explorer and naturalist John Muir's description of the beginning of a short side trip he took while exploring Yosemite. Bird and Muir were born within seven years of each other, she in Yorkshire, England, he in Scotland. Bird's father was a vicar, Muir's father a strict religious farmer. Both discovered a love for reading and writing at an early age and sought scientific knowledge during their travels. Neither had much patience for superficial touring of an area and both strove to journey away from the customary places to seek the incredible and unique.

Isabella Bird, *A Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains*, Letter VII:

Long's Peak, "the American Matterhorn," as some call it, was ascended five years ago for the first time. I thought I should like to attempt it, but up to Monday, when Evans left for Denver, cold water was thrown upon the project. It was too late in the season, the winds were likely to be strong, etc.; but just before leaving, Evans said that the weather was looking more settled, and if I did not get farther than the timber line it would be worth going. Soon after he left, "Mountain Jim" came in, and he would go up as guide, and the two youths who rode here with me from Longmount and I caught at the proposal. Mrs. Edwards at once baked bread for three days, steaks were cut from the steer which hangs up conveniently, and tea, sugar, and butter were benevolently added. Our picnic was not to be a luxurious or "well-found" one, for, in order to avoid the expense of a pack mule, we limited our luggage to what our saddle horses could carry. Behind my saddle I carried three pair of camping blankets and a quilt, which reached to my shoulders. My own boots were so much worn that it was painful to walk, even about the park, in them, so Evans had lent me a pair of his hunting boots, which hung to the horn of my saddle. The horses of the two young men were equally loaded, for we had to prepare for many degrees of frost. "Jim" was a shocking figure; he had on an old pair of high boots, with a baggy pair of old trousers made of deer hide, held on by an old scarf tucked into them; a leather shirt, with three or four ragged unbuttoned waistcoats over it; an old smashed wideawake, from under which his tawny, neglected ringlets hung; with his one eye, his one long spur, his knife in his belt, his revolver in his waistcoat pocket, his saddle covered with an old beaver skin, from which the paws hung down; his camping blankets behind him, his rifle laid across the saddle in front of him, and his axe, his canteen, and other gear hanging to the horn, he was as awful-looking a ruffian as one could see. By way of contrast he rode a small Arab mare, of exquisite beauty, skittish, high spirited, gentle, but altogether too light for him, and he fretted her incessantly to make her display herself (Bird, 1879, p. 84-85).

John Muir, *The Yosemite*, Chapter XV:

Galen Clark was the best mountaineer I ever met, and one of the kindest and most amiable of all my mountain friends. I first met him at his Wawona ranch forty-three years ago on my first visit to Yosemite. I had entered the Valley with one companion by way of Coulterville, and returned by what was then known as the Mariposa trail. Both trails were buried in deep snow where the elevation was from 5000 to 7000 feet above sea level in the sugar pine and silver fir regions. We had no great

difficulty, however, in finding our way by the trends of the main features of the topography. Botanizing by the way, we made slow, plodding progress, and were again about out of provisions when we reached Clark's hospitable cabin in Wawona. He kindly furnished us with flour and a little sugar and tea, and my companion, who complained of the benumbing poverty of a strictly vegetarian diet, gladly accepted Mr. Clark's offer of a piece of bear that had just been killed. After a short talk about bears and the forests and the way to the Big Trees, we pushed on up through the Wawona firs and sugar pines, and camped in the now-famous Mariposa grove.

Later, after making my home in the Yosemite Valley, I became well acquainted with Mr. Clark, while he was guardian. He was elected again and again to this important office by different Boards of Commissioners on account of his efficiency and his real love of the Valley.

Although nearly all my mountaineering has been done without companions, I had the pleasure of having Galen Clark with me on three excursions. About thirty-five years ago I invited him to accompany me on a trip through the Big Tuolumne Cañon from Hetch Hetchy Valley. The cañon up to that time had not been explored, and knowing that the difference in the elevation of the river at the head of the cañon and in Hetch Hetchy was about 5000 feet, we expected to find some magnificent cataracts or falls; nor were we disappointed. When we were leaving Yosemite an ambitious young man begged leave to join us. I strongly advised him not to attempt such a long, hard trip, for it would undoubtedly prove very trying to an inexperienced climber. He assured us, however, that he was equal to anything, would gladly meet every difficulty as it came, and cause us no hindrance or trouble of any sort. So at last, after repeating our advice that he give up the trip, we consented to his joining us. We entered the cañon by way of Hetch Hetchy Valley, each carrying his own provisions, and making his own tea, porridge, bed, etc. (Muir & Rowell, 2001, p. 205).

The purpose of this study is not to repeat quantitative analysis of the grammatical language, because surely there would be little difference in these two passages; perhaps Muir's sentences are shorter, and Bird's adjectival phrases are longer. Clearly their experiences differed whereas their language construction did not; Muir frequently traveled alone and advised others not to join him, while Bird was generally discouraged in her plans and traveled with others because it was

necessary. Placing these passages side-to-side elicits different responses from the reader. While there is no “ideal” reader, reader-response criticism reveals themes that set apart the two passages. A comparison suitably begins at an exploration of reader response.

Engaged readers will discern a greater connection to the domestic in Bird’s description of the travel preparation process. Interestingly this follows Janssen and Murachver’s findings at a quantitative level that women were more likely to blog on topics “At Home” (2007). Though Bird did not have an active hand in preparing the foodstuffs, she notes that there was “bread for three days” and that the steer “hangs up conveniently” for the woman of the house to be able to cut meat from it. In contrast, Muir takes for granted the offering of “flour and a little sugar and tea” and “a piece of bear that had just been killed” and does not speak to the conversion of these ingredients into edible food by his or another’s work. The attention to domestic concerns, amid the toil of travel, is a theme that runs throughout women’s travel writing.

Identification of the narrator within the text also brings up different themes in women’s and men’s travel writing. Bird describes how she “carried three pair of camping blankets and a quilt, which reached to [her] shoulders” and admits her “boots were so much worn that it was painful to walk, even about the park, in them, so Evans had lent [her] a pair of his hunting boots.” These are quite practical considerations, the recounting of them is factual and straightforward. Bird does not further comment on the wisdom of taking so many

blankets or not having access to new boots. Muir speaks about his own involvement in the travel process as an expert who advised “an ambitious young man... not to attempt such a long, hard trip, for it would undoubtedly prove very trying to an inexperienced climber.” He also states that he and his companion “had no great difficulty, however, in finding our way by the trends of the main features of the topography,” despite the area being “buried in deep snow.” His detached confidence in his own abilities without discussion of the plain difficulties he must have been prepared for is in conflict with Bird’s description of the immediate condition in which she traveled. The people around Bird see her actions as a kind of death wish – at bare minimum a social death after spending unchaperoned time at the mercy of purported outlaw Mountain Jim. As Mills stated, the Victorian discourse was concerned with appropriate comportment (1991, p. 72). Muir on the other hand is hailed as courageous for exploring and documenting areas of Yosemite, regardless of the conditions or his companions’ abilities.

Bird’s writing also includes not-so-subtle representations of femininity juxtaposed with phallic imagery, an element completely lacking in Muir’s writing. Bird’s description of Mountain Jim is entirely external, from his appearance to his apparel and equipment. This kind of representation follows Ariel and Giora’s findings that point of view can be determined in part through the objectification of characters through the sex-based descriptions (1998). Bird’s account of Mountain Jim’s equipment includes a long list of masculine items (in both use

and imagery): “his knife in his belt, his revolver in his waistcoat pocket, his saddle covered with an old beaver skin, from which the paws hung down.”

She follows this masculine imagery with a short, but nonetheless telling, description of the only other female on the trip, “a small Arab mare, of exquisite beauty, skittish, high spirited, gentle, but altogether too light for him, and he fretted her incessantly to make her display herself.” The contrast is striking as she moves from the objective list of Mountain Jim’s appearance, to subjective judgment of the horse’s personality and behavior. She identifies with the female horse and distances herself from him. She too is “skittish” in the sense of “spirited” and “lively,” but also (perhaps less consciously) in the sense of “nervous” and “somewhat frightened.” Isabella Bird (her first name being a highly feminine one since “bella” means “beautiful” in both Italian and Spanish) *is a belle*. “Belle” is of course the French word for “beautiful,” and “belle” also means a young woman, a “fille.” “Fille” can’t help reminding one of a “filly,” a vivacious young woman or a young mare. Plus, a “Cheval Isabelle” is a cream-colored horse. And her last name, “Bird,” suggests a small, winged creature. Isabella Bird, like the “small...mare,” is ready for flight and is “too light” to be ridden (no comment) by Mountain Jim.

Even while describing Jim, this “ruffian” with his phallic “one long spur, his knife in his belt,... his axe,” Bird falls into a bit of feminine rhetoric: she calls his messy hair “neglected ringlets.” Let’s just say that neither Mountain Jim nor John Muir would describe this man’s long curls in these delicate terms. Bird also

uses some of the techniques of poetry in her prose, to a much greater extent than Muir does. Just look at the alliteration of the “t” and “s” sounds in her lyrically lovely description of the mare: “of exquisite beauty, skittish, high spirited, gentle, but altogether too light for him, and he fretted her incessantly to make her display herself.”

Muir concentrates on male friendship and camaraderie in his passage. Muir and his men have a “short” talk about “bears and the forests and the way to the Big Trees” (capitalization is his). He commends men for “efficiency,” for being “ambitious,” “equal to anything,” and “meet[ing] every difficulty.” He describes one of his male companions who “gladly” eats a piece of (presumably raw) bear that has “just been killed.” It inspires a reader response, reminding the literary reader of a passage in Shakespeare’s *Antony and Cleopatra*. Shakespeare based the play on the historic anecdotes of Antony and Octavius Caesar. When Caesar gives his very highest praise of Antony, he is recalling the time when Antony was starving in the Alps but survived by drinking “the stale [urine] of horses” and “didst eat strange flesh which some did die to look on” (Shakespeare, I, iv, 61 & 67-8). And Antony actually thrived on this diet. This is what real men, whether Roman soldiers or mountaineers, should do. It’s all about physical resilience and proving oneself.

(B) How is the contemporary feminine perspective different from the masculine perspective?

In contemporary writing, differences are harder to pinpoint, but analyzing sections that deal with similar experiences of travel emphasizes the small but significant distinctions. The passages below both describe less-than-friendly but critically important interactions between the traveler and local people. The authors use colorful adjectives and construct their sentences with irregular lengths and rhythm to build the emotion of the situation. Both encounters take place in Africa in the last decade. Chuck Thompson, who was once a features editor for Maxim magazine, has stated,

I've been to a lot of cities and countries I was repeatedly warned not to go because it was so dangerous. Muslim-rebel territory in Mindanao in the Philippines. The Congolese jungle. Caracas. Wherever there are people, there's normalcy. People go to work and school, they buy food at the market, they make dinner, they love their families, they're generally kind or at least civil with strangers (Malpani, 2007).

He was also the first editor in chief of *Travelocity* magazine and has traveled on assignment in more than thirty-five countries. His purpose in his books is “to make it funny, entertaining... humor, opinion, insight, solid anecdotes, and maybe a few poignant moments” (MacKenzie, 2008). A review of *To hellholes and back* said it is “smart, funny, and unorthodox travel writing.” His style is comedic; what he chooses to write about, the interactions and his reactions, show how differently he constructs his own identity from his travel experiences compared to Salak. Both are Americans, about forty years old, who have writing-related degrees – Salak’s MFA in Fiction Writing from the University of Arizona

and Ph.D. in English from the University of Missouri, and Thompson's undergraduate degree from the University of Oregon in History and Journalism. Interestingly, neither considered a career in writing travel nonfiction. Thompson said after college he "didn't much care for the J school experience and left U of O thoroughly disabused of the idea that I ever wanted to write for a living. Didn't put pen to paper for maybe five or six years after that" (C. Thompson, personal communication, October 19, 2010). Like Salak, he traveled and worked in a variety of jobs before his writing earned him a position as senior editor at *American Way* (the American Airlines in-flight magazine). From there he moved to New York to work for Maxim, "which was probably the most fun I've ever had in the business, though not for the reasons people popularly assume. That was during Maxim's heyday and post-heyday and the people there were incredibly smart and serious about what they were doing and the magazine was a huge success, so that is always fun to be involved in a hit product" (October 19, 2010).

Kira Salak, *Cruelest Journey*, Ch.11:

As I go in search of the chief, it quickly becomes evident that they don't want me here. Young toughs, one sporting a black T-shirt with Osama bin Laden's face painted on it like a rock star's, start harassing me in pathetic French. Where's my husband? Would I like to have sex with them? What man back home allowed me to travel here by myself? Their faces are covered with indigo head-wraps, in the manner of North African Tuaregs, just their eyes peering out at me. Obviously, it's cool to look Tuareg here. I ignore them, nearly being knocked off my feet by the crowd of pushy onlookers as I try to move forward. I've noticed a fine but palpable division between curiosity and aggression toward outsiders along the Niger, and Berakousi village clearly crosses the line. I don't want to stay here. But food is important, so I need to find the chief.

He's out in the fields, so I sit on a wicker chair to wait for him. I refuse numerous requests from women who keep trying to pass me their babies,

wanting me to breastfeed them. The sun is fast departing, and I'm worried now, because the river's too choppy and mercurial along this stretch to make paddling safe, and I didn't see an alternative village nearby.

Finally, the chief appears, an old man named Gardja Jemai, who walks over and surveys me, frowning. I give him a large sum of money as *cadaeu*, explain as best I can that I'd like to buy a meal if possible. And if he can't spare any food, I'll just be on my way. He stands there, frowning, saying nothing. I pass money to the best French speaker in the crowd and ask him to translate my request. There is a brief exchange and I'm told to wait.

I wait, and wait. The sun, I notice is nearly gone. Too late to go elsewhere. The village people continue to crowd around me. I sigh and try to resign myself to the situation, asking the chief if I can sleep on a patch of ground nearby. He holds out his hand for more money, and when I give him a wad of bills, he nods. The young men sit around me, demanding money, too. One guy tells that he wants the watch and flashlight that I've just taken out of my backpack. He picks up these things and fingers them. Meanwhile, I am subject of a large, communal conversation, my title *tubabu* – “whitey” – being exchanged excitedly by members of the crowd (Salak, 2005, p. 171-172).

Chuck Thompson, *To hellholes and back*, Ch. 3:

“What the hell is going on?” I shout at Henri.

“Do not panic,” he answers, not unlike the pilot fumbling for his rosary beads as the second engine catches fire and the nosedive begins.

With the car careening through traffic, the guy on the hood spreads his body across the windshield. It's an effective tactic. We're forced to slow down.

The car is surrounded again, this time by eight or ten men. A short guy in a black shirt jogs along next to me, actually smiles and says hello, then thrusts his hand through the open window. Money, passport, camera – everything important to me is in the backseat of the car. A reasonable lunge and the guy could have it all, a move I'd be forced to resist. Judging that a physical altercation here will greatly complicate matters and likely result in defeat for me, I begin cranking up the rear window. The driver wheels on me and shouts to leave the window down. “If they really want to get inside they'll break the windows!” he shouts. “I cannot afford such a repair!” Impressed with this flash of Congolese horse sense, I leave the window down and do what I can to push the guy away from the car.

Seconds later, a soldier with a bandolier of high-caliber shells strapped across his chest steps in front of the car. At the wave of his rifle our attackers disperse like roaches. The soldier directs us to the side of the road. After a brief negotiation we cough up five dollars and receive full military escort into a dirt parking lot. Here we find D.B. and the world's largest mechanic – six-eight, shoulders like shanks of beef, ass like a beer keg – waiting with the Mercedes.

With the soldiers and motley security types gathered a few feet away, the mechanic informs Henri that the difference between his original estimate and the actual cost of the repairs differs by about 400 percent. This touches off one of those high-comedy French arguments in which all participants wave their arms in a blind fury and make faces that suggest the accidental intake of German wine. Between outbursts, Henri regards the mechanic with icy glares and sucks in the soothing lungfuls of cigarette smoke. Eventually, he motions to Gilles, who reaches into his bag and hands the mechanic a wad of cash the size of a Jack Daniels bottle.

Once final details have been wrapped up and the mechanic departs, Henri turns to me and says, "I like that guy. He's the only honest mechanic in Kinshasa" (Thompson, 2009, p. 68-69).

This comparison does not account for all differences or similarities in the books of Thompson and Salak. It is limited to just these passages, and must be considered in this way. Neither of these experiences is less frightening than the other, and both have elements of physical harm as well as the threat of personal theft. In both situations the traveler is at the figurative mercy of the natives around her or him. Interestingly Salak and Thompson respond in similar ways by avoiding a violent confrontation and letting the people around them come to a decision. How they write about the tension, and thus how the reader responds to it, is very different.

Salak's description of the hostile youth in the village is frank in its anxiety-inducing details. A reader might easily ask if she has a death wish because why

else would she travel to a part of the world that reveres America's enemies and commonly subjugates females. Yet she still focuses on the people as individuals, singling out "one sporting a black T-shirt with Osama bin Laden's face painted on it like a rock star's" among the toughs, not stereotyping the group, but providing details that reveal cultural values. Like Bird, she is straightforward about the conditions she is experiencing: "it quickly becomes evident that they don't want me here..." "I don't want to stay here. But food is important..." "I'm worried now, because the river's too choppy and mercurial along this stretch to make night paddling safe, and I didn't see an alternative village nearby." If there's any doubt about the difficulty of the trip she is attempting, encounters described like this put those ideas to rest. Not all of the people she meets in the village are hostile. While she waits for the chief, Salak's writing addresses the domestic life she witnesses. "I refuse numerous requests from women who keep trying to pass me their babies, wanting me to breastfeed them." Obviously if she were a man this wouldn't be happening, but it is a critical observation about the conflicting treatment she received along the river, and a detail about the burdens of womanhood. While the young men have time to harass a visitor, and the chief is out in the fields presumably with other farming men, the women of the village are looking to outsiders for support in their duties.

Bird identifies herself as a traveler by a list of supplies, the stack of blankets and borrowed boots, while Salak speaks more to the vulnerability of being a traveler as she hands over cash to the chief, the translator, and the chief

once again, and endures demands for her watch and flashlight. Thompson is able to physically resist such vulnerability a little better than Salak because he has the physical barrier of the car he rides in as well as the men with him and “a soldier with a bandolier of high-caliber shells strapped across his chest.” He can daringly resist the theft of his “Money, passport, camera – everything important,” but Salak must “try to resign [her]self to the situation” as she hands over more money and tolerates the handling of her personal belongings. This difference in reaction to such harrowing moments shows more than just how two individuals react; it also reveals the difference in construction of the experiences as well. Thompson’s descriptions of the characters in this passage are as distinct as Salak’s, and yet the reader’s reaction to young men wearing Osama bin Laden T-shirts and women passing off babies to be breast fed is quite different from the reaction to “the world’s largest mechanic – six-eight, shoulders like shanks of beef, ass like a beer keg.” Thompson’s description invites the reader to discount the possible threat in the face of male ego and the infallibility of the newly formed trust between Thompson and his guide, who has brought him to this fenced lot in the middle of one of the most crime-ridden cities on the planet. Similar to Muir, he retells the experience of facing down danger as a matter of bravado and camaraderie among men.

It is also interesting to look at differences in how Salak and Thompson are spoken to and then respond. As Salak walks through the village, she deals with men “harassing [her] in pathetic French” and she paraphrases their questions for

the reader, “Where’s my husband? Would I like to have sex with them? What man back home allowed me to travel here by myself?” She doesn’t immediately tell the reader her response to the questions. She switches her train of thought to their physical appearance, which, according to the theories of Self perspectives, means she is trying to establish a dominant identity in light of the Other. “Their faces are covered with indigo head-wraps, in the manner of North African Tuaregs, just their eyes peering out at me. Obviously, it’s cool to look Tuareg here.” Only after diminishing their identity to their external traits does she tell the reader that she ignored them. In the section from *To hellholes and back*, Thompson is reliant on the local driver and guide, though they are not hostile toward him. Nonetheless, the clash between friendly locals (with Thompson) and hostile locals (outside the car), brings out revealing perceptions in Thompson’s writing. The driver yells at him, “If they really want to get inside they’ll break the windows! I cannot afford such a repair!” and Thompson does not assert or defend his identity separate from the others in the car. The camaraderie of the adventure is extended to the collective need to “push the guy away from the car.” In the next paragraph he further attaches himself to the group identity when he describes how the appearance of the soldier causes “our attackers [to] disperse like roaches.” It does not seem difficult for him to make that personal connection, whereas Salak can find no group to be allied with in the cultural order of the village.

Clearly the main difference between the Salak and Thompson accounts is that she is passive and he is active. The woman is “told to wait,” and she “sit[s] on a wicker chair to wait for him....I wait, and wait.” The female “ignores,” “refuses requests,” “explains.” The male swears, “shout[s],” “crank[s]” a window, “push[es] a guy.” He declares he will act if someone tries to steal from him. The man is surrounded by other tough men, one of whom has “high-caliber shells strapped across his chest.” The woman sits among women who want her to “breastfeed” their infants. Thompson is energy, intensity, and vigor—as demonstrated in his language full of vivid, two-fisted comparisons (“a wad of cash the size of a Jack Daniels bottle”). Salak is patience, forbearance, and resignation. Thompson talks about what is happening around him; Salak also lets us know what is happening in her mind -- her feelings, her thoughts, her anxiety. The emphasis in the male's account is on the outside; in the female's, the inside.

Contemporary differences between male and female travel writers are subtler, hidden perhaps, but no less central in classifying the feminine point of view in Salak's writing. Her perspective is identified by individual-focused details, candid observations on the difficulties of travel and an outsider relationship to the Other; while Thompson's masculine position dismisses difficulty in the face of male camaraderie and readily accesses the group identity.

CHAPTER 5: Findings

(A) What is Isabella Bird's colonial feminine perspective in articles and books?

Mills's idea that women travelers had difficulty overcoming the conflict among various discourses in their writings appears to be an understatement in Bird's writing. There is practically no sign of the linguistic factors identified by scholars to identify her perspective as feminine. Her point of view is primarily colonial and secondarily masculine. There is however an attachment to establishing the well-behaved female function in her observations of the exotic locales and people. As was found in the comparison to Muir's writing Bird also identifies herself as a practical traveler. She employs feminine rhetoric and poetic techniques more often than a colonial masculine narrator, and this mostly holds true in her articles and other books as well.

In "Notes on Morocco" published in *The Monthly Review* in 1901, Bird reports on the political climate of the country that she has recently visited. The entirety of the text reads like a sociological or political study; it is highly Anglo-Christian centric and relies heavily on stereotypes to describe groups of people found in the region. The Berber of the mountains "with his narrow head, somewhat classic features, tan complexion, and lithe, active form" (1901, p. 92), or the Jew, who is "ubiquitous, irrepressible, in business dominating the coast towns... he never amalgamates with those who of necessity tolerate him, or

swerves by one hair's breadth from his Hebrew customs" (p. 93), and the Arab of the plains, "if of fairly pure blood, is in the cities deadly white, flabby, anaemic, and fat, and in the country swarthy and lean" (p. 92). It was unusual and not customary for Victorian women travel writers to include this kind of cultural and statistical information in their travel accounts (Mills, 1991, p. 81). If Bird had no model on which to base a feminine point of view, perhaps that is reason for the lack of one. The entire article reads like a political treatise except a few passages, most of them quite short, where Bird's feminine sensibilities overpower her colonial English voice.

The longest section such as this is ripe with the poetic technique of parallel construction used to describe the horrid condition of the prison system. Bird writes that the prison system "demands the reprobation of all civilised nations, and an emphatic condemnation of its infamies" (p. 99). And even though "it would be superfluous to write further of the dark and fetid dungeons in which thousands of innocent men live and die" (with expressive alliteration no less) she constructs a long list of further evils:

...of cold and hunger; of starving, naked captives clothed only with the iron chains and collars which fasten them to the walls; of prisoners slowly done to death or swept off by typhus the offspring of starvation and indescribable filth; of prisoners forgotten and perishing in chains and darkness; of guiltless men paying for the soldiers who seize them, for the gaolers who keep them, for the chains they wear, for the bolting on of their heavy ankle irons, and for their lodging in these foul dens, often incurring "prison bills" which neither they nor their friends are able to pay, some who would otherwise go free remaining in captivity for the debt (p. 99).

When Bird is in the act of travel her personal viewpoint is more likely to surface. “Notes on Morocco” is only 20% longer than “The Two Atlantics” and was published in a similar magazine 25 years earlier, yet the feminine is absolutely more apparent in Bird’s account of passing from the Northern to the Southern Hemisphere on her way to Australia. In the very first paragraph Bird writes descriptively of her surroundings, a “murky evening,” the ship “swathed in folds of its own smoke,” and “a few ships at anchor; a few fussy tugs panting Glasgowwards... a few boats in which people were taking pleasure drearily; a few crowded steamers whose trails of low-lying smoke added to the murkiness” (1879, p. 549).

The discourse of well-behaved females affects not just the ladies onboard (including Bird), but also the ship on which they travel.

She was a superb, full-rigged iron clipper, finished with solid teak, with a stem like a knife, a full, unencumbered poop, all the latest patented improvements, splendidly ‘found,’ everything of the very best, spreading nearly an acre of canvas, running twelve knots before the wind, as if she were scarcely moving through the water, and on a wind making 300 miles a day without fuss or effort (p. 550).

Indeed, can one imagine a more ideal female than one with an “unencumbered poop” that makes “300 miles a day without fuss”? She also dissociates herself from the “moral deterioration” of other passengers who are seemingly unable to make “a long voyage something better than a blot or a vacuum in life” by depending “entirely” on her own resources:

Needlework, on which I had placed much reliance for deck occupation... books, I had too few, but as a result the few were re-read and studied. I may safely place the Bible first, for its eternal freshness never had been so fresh, its ‘great biography’ so full of lessons (p. 550).

In her perspective, the “other” in this case is not an exotic foreigner, but the passengers who do not meet with her identification of a proper Christian English traveler. In Bird’s estimation, true femininity is decorous and devout.

“A Pilgrimage to Sinai” (1886) is a short article about Bird’s trip to the heart of Christian scripture in the spring of 1879. Her descriptions of the sun’s effect on the landscape are one of the unique features of this article. She returns again and again to the colors created by the light over the mountains, the sand, and the water, at sunrise, sunset, and the height of the day. This combined with her frequent reflections on the Christian history that could have taken place “in yonder tent” (p. 533), makes this travel narrative quite different from others in *The Leisure Hour* or *Littell’s Living Age*. As she embarks on a “large Arab sailing-boat” (p. 532) from Ain Musa, she makes the following comments:

Blithely it sped over the rippled waters of turquoise blue, its great red sail nearly crimson in the sunlight; blithely the blue waters laved their golden margins – so blithe and beautiful it all was that I forgot that the “waste howling wilderness” stretched almost infinitely in all direction. There, on the right, were the high hills of Africa, red and orange, fiery and blasted-looking; and on the left rose-colored ranges, with violet shadows in their clefts, all outlines sharp, distance obliterated (1886, p. 532).

For Bird, this is a romantic description of a water journey, compared to the “murky and miserable” travels recounted in “The Two Atlantics.” Her color-saturated descriptions include very little in the way of geographic information, like names of locations or distances; this is a noticeable difference from the blatantly colonial scientific style of writing adopted in other articles. She also heightens the Christian perspective by quoting a passage from the Bible, “waste

howling wilderness” from Deuteronomy 32:10, which she repeats in a later paragraph as well.

The topic of Christianity is frequent and very personal in this article. Bird’s perspective in her articles and books is often affected by the discourse of Christian society in England. It is more than a passing influence when she remarks that “it was the first time that I had stood on the actual track of Scripture history,” and describes the local guides as “swarthy Bedaween, with their untamed walk and expression, their wild look of freedom, their high foreheads and hawk-like noses, are the children of ‘our father Abraham,’ and Sarah’s entreaty to him” (p. 531, 533). Her opinion of them is divided between the exotic other, in their “untamed” and “wild” ways, and the familiar Christian self because they are also children of Abraham. It is difficult for her to hold onto the masculine colonial ego when she feels so connected to the Bedaween. At the end of the article, Bird’s concluding remarks are more typical. She reestablishes the superior ego and objectifies the men who travel with her, for her pleasure.

Hassan is a city Arab, a tall, fine-looking man, with the harassed melancholy look which seems habitual to his race. He dresses well in a white garment, with a colored silk girdle, over which he wears a burnouse, and his turban is of striped yellow silk. He knows hardly any English, but attends on me well, and things go very smoothly. Sheykh Barak is a handsome young man, with truly Ishmaelitic features and the look of scorn which these desert rangers wear. He makes a courteous salutation morning and evening, and helps me to mount and dismount... The other Bedaween are swarthy, lean, wiry men, about the middle height, quiet and well-behaved, as, for instance they never hang about my tent or stare at me. Each man is dressed in a single, girdled cotton garment, which has once been white, a whitish turban, and a pair of hide sandals (p. 535).

This narrative point of view is representative of Bird's short works. The articles were all published in popular magazines for the middle and upper class, well-behaved society families who might consider traveling to these exotic locales, but ultimately would not expose themselves to similar classes of people in their own country.

Six Months in the Sandwich Islands, originally published in 1875, is from the letters written to her sister from January through August of 1873. The letters offer scientific and anthropological details along with Bird's personal, subjective comments on her experiences. Within moments of her arrival, she has already noted that "foreigners" (other white settlers) have conformed to the native customs of adorning themselves in flowers and avoiding the "humpings and bunchings, the monstrosities and deformities of ultra-fashionable bad taste" (1998, p. 15). Bird is rather surprised by this. "But where were the hard, angular, careworn, sallow, passionate faces of men and women, such as form the majority of every crowd at home, as well as in America and Australia?" (p. 15). Already her expectations of colonial dominance have started to dissolve and are quickly outright challenged.

It was at once apparent that the conditions of conquerors and conquered do not exist. On the contrary, many of the foreigners there were subjects of a Hawaiian king, a reversal of the ordinary relations between a white and a coloured race which it is not easy yet to appreciate (p.16).

Bird covers a great many topics, including the masculine realm of the sugar trade, but finds great pleasure in relating the domestic life of her hosts.

... people whose faces are not soured by the east wind, or wrinkled by the worrying effort of 'keeping up appearances,' which deceive nobody; who have no formal visiting, but real sociability; who regard the light manual labour of domestic life as a pleasure, not a thing to be ashamed of; who are contented with their circumstances, and have leisure to be kind, cultured, and agreeable, and who live so tastefully, though simply, that they can at any time ask a passing stranger to occupy the guest chamber, or share the simple meal, without any of the soul-harassing preparations which often make the exercise of hospitality a thing of terror to people in the same circumstances at home (p. 80).

Her feminine attention to the concerns of hospitality is a logical extension of her point of view on food preparation and clothing, as seen in the earlier comparison of her work to John Muir's. And indeed the chapter continues from hospitality into the local diet and her own riding costume and health, as well as how the balmy weather affects household tasks, servants' work and short excursions away from the house. On diet: "We have China or Japan tea, and island coffee... Bananas are an important article of diet, and sliced guavas, eaten with milk and sugar, are very good" (p. 80). On clothing: "I wear my flannel riding-dress for both riding and walking, and a black silk at other times... Flannel is not required, neither are pugarees, or white hats, or sunshades at any season" (p. 80). On health: "It is a truly delightful climate and mode of living, with such an abundance of air and sunshine. My health improves daily, and I do not consider myself an invalid" (p. 80). On domestic servants:

There is not a bell in this or any house on the islands, and the bother of servants is hardly known, for the Chinamen do their work like automatons, and disappear at sunset. In a land where there are no carpets, no fires, no dust, no hot water needed, no window to open and shut – for they are always open – no further service is really required (p. 79).

Hospitality in the islands is often remarked upon by Bird, as well as by other women she meets. A Mrs. ----- tells Bird that on a recent visit to England “she felt depressed the whole time by what appeared to her ‘the scarcity’ in the country” (p. 208). Bird writes that Hawaii enjoys a blessing of plenty, which

at home we know nothing of this... A man feels more practically independent, possibly, when he can say to all his friends, ‘Drop in to dinner whenever you like,’ ... for meat is only twopence a pound, and bananas can be got for the gathering. The ever-increasing cost of food with us, and the ever-increasing love of display, wither up all those kindly instincts (p. 208).

The scenic quality of the islands inspires Bird’s poetic prose upon arrival, and she picks up the style again in her last letter. When she first comes into the harbor she writes,

the coral fishers plied their graceful trade; canoes with outriggers rode the combers, and glided with inconceivable rapidity round our ship; amphibious brown beings sported in the transparent waves; and within the reef lay a calm surface of water a wonderful blue, entered by a narrow, intricate passage of the deepest indigo (p. 14).

Subtle alliteration, “canoes” and “combers,” “rapidity round,” “brown beings,” “water a wonderful blue,” and active striking verbs like “plied,” “glided,” and “sported.” She describes the typical acts of fishing, diving, rowing and swimming in an unreservedly sumptuous way. When she leaves the island her final descriptions are just as rhythmical.

The air still rang with laughter and *alohas*, and the rippling music of the Hawaiian tongue; bananas and pineapples were still piled in fragrant heaps; the drifts of surf rolled in, as then, over the barrier reef, canoes with outriggers still poised themselves on the blue water; the coral divers still plied their graceful trade, and the lazy ripples still flashed in light along the palm-fringed shore (p. 292).

The lush foliage, bountiful fruits and friendly people regularly elicit the poetic in Bird. Her next stop was not more of the gentle temperate jungles of tropical Pacific islands; it was the wilds of the American West.

Bird traveled primarily by horse and found lodging with various sorts of people while in Colorado, as recounted in *A Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains*. Early in her trip she stayed with an interesting American family, who have a certain perception of what an English lady is capable of.

Mrs. Chalmers comes in... and makes a fire, because she thinks me too stupid to do it... by seven I am dressed, have folded the blankets, and swept the floor... After breakfast I draw more water, and wash one or two garments daily, taking care that there are no witnesses of my inexperience (1960, p. 41).

She seems offended that the American woman assumes she can't light a fire, but easily confesses that she has trouble with laundry. In every home there are different responsibilities undertaken by Bird, and her hosts, sometimes by gender and sometimes by necessity. While the work itself is probably not unique to women travelers (since men would eventually need to wash a shirt or two), the discussion of the labor involved is characteristic of Bird's perspective of travel.

In the comparison between Bird and Muir, it was noted that Muir reflects on his activities with unemotional confidence. He has "no great difficulty" in finding his way through deep snow based on the "main features of the topography." In a similar situation, Bird's first remarks are about her emotions, however difficult to identify, she needs to share that aspect of travel.

I cannot describe my feelings on this ride, produced by the utter loneliness, the silence and dumbness of all things, the snow falling quietly

without wind, the obliterated mountains, the darkness, the intense cold, and the unusual and appalling aspect of nature. All life was in a shroud, all work and travel suspended. There was not a foot-mark or wheel-mark. There was nothing to be afraid of; and though I can't exactly say that I enjoyed the ride, yet there was the pleasant feeling of gaining health every hour.

When the snow darkness began to deepen towards evening, the track became quite illegible, and when I found myself at this romantically situated cabin, I was thankful to find that they could give me shelter (p. 142).

Essentially she is plodding along through the dark and cold, with no trail to follow in the deepening snow, and she chooses to emphasize the serenity and health effects, rather than her own daring at traveling through such a storm.

At the end of her trip she has fallen in love with the area, despite the horrid temperatures (30 degrees below), and wild American characters she's met a long the way. Her lyrical, color-infused illustration confirms her admiration for the landscape and her feminine perspective.

I never saw the mountain range look so beautiful – uplifted in every shade of transparent blue, till the sublimity of Long's Peak, and the lofty crest of Storm Peak, bore only unsullied snow against the sky. Peaks gleamed in living light; canyons lay in depths of purple shade; 100 miles away Pike's Peak rose a lump of blue, and over all, through that glorious afternoon, a veil of blue spiritualized without dimming the outlines of that most glorious range, making it look like the dreamed-of mountains of "the land which is very far off," till at sunset it stood out sharp in glories of violet and opal, and the whole horizon up to a great height was suffused with the deep rose and pure orange of the afterglow (p. 244).

Like many of her extended descriptions, this passage is full of subtle alliteration, simile and romantic imagery. Note the alliteration in "...the lofty crest of Storm Peak, bore only unsullied snow against the sky," "Peaks gleamed in living light;

canyons lay in depths of purple shade,” and “at sunset it stood out sharp in glories of violet and opal.” Her attention to colors is so unique. Even pastels are made more bold, “transparent blue,” “purple shade,” and “deep rose” are not just light blue, lavender or pink.

By the time *Unbeaten Tracks in Japan* was published Bird was famous in her home country for *A Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains* and *Six Months in the Sandwich Islands*. The early letters of *Unbeaten Tracks in Japan* are focused mainly on Bird's arrival and preparation for her journey into northern Japan. She has no trouble whatsoever asking for assistance or accepting advice from the men she is acquainted with who work in various positions associated with the English government. She happily reports that Mr. Wilkinson, the acting consul,

thinks my plan for traveling in the interior is rather too ambitious, but that it is perfectly safe for a lady to travel alone, and agrees with everybody else in thinking that legions of fleas and the miserable horses are the great drawbacks of Japanese travelling (Bird, 1880, p.11).

This contradiction between colonial concern over the interior and the idea of a competent lady being able to travel alone is repeated often. Bird writes about her own actions through the eyes of other Westerners, primarily men, and maintains a respect for the well-behaved expectations of those men when it comes to her conduct, but frequently makes note of colonial hurdles to her unconventional plans. This perspective does not focus on the Self as feminine according to the parameters set out by Ariel and Giora (1992). Bird's writing instead reflects identification with Westerners in general and most closely English men. The 'Other' that is homogenized and controlled are the Asian races encountered on

the streets or in the homes of the English she meets. Bird describes two hundred Japanese people with basic indistinguishable traits whom she watches while they disembark from a train.

Few of the men attain 5 feet 7 inches, and few of the women 5 feet 2 inches; but they look far broader in the national costume, which also conceals the defects of their figures. So lean, so yellow, so ugly, yet so pleasant-looking, so wanting of colour and effectiveness; the women so very small and tottering in their walk; the children so formal-looking and such dignified burlesques on the adults, I felt as if I had seen them all before, so like are they to their pictures on trays, fans, and tea-pots (1880, p. 16).

Her early interactions with individual Japanese men are characterized by her objectification of them, rather than any cultural understanding. Her friend, Dr. Hepburn, acts as an interpreter while she interviews assistants for her journey. While he speaks to them, she assesses them based on her perception of their appearance.

One was a sprightly youth who came in a well-made European suit of light-coloured tweed, a laid-down collar, a tie with a diamond (?) pin, and a white shirt, so stiffly starched, that he could hardly bend low enough for a bow even of European profundity (1880, p. 20).

And the one who is eventually hired?

...is only eighteen... and only 4 feet 10 inches in height, but, though bandy-legged, is well proportioned and strong-looking. He has a round and singularly plain face, good teeth, much elongated eyes, and the heavy droop of his eyelids almost caricatures the usual Japanese peculiarity. He is the most stupid-looking Japanese that I have seen (p. 21).

Because the first can be described by his Western clothing, his physical appearance is ignored, while the latter is reduced to a list of traits like an animal for sale. Bird firmly placed herself within the group identification of the superior

Westerner before adopting a feminine point of view. A later trip to hospital grounds in an un-Westernized area of Japan reveals her discomfort at balancing the colonial Western with her feminine appreciation for native fashion.

After our round we returned to the management room to find a meal laid out in English style – coffee in cups with handles and saucers, and plates with spoons. After this pipes were again produced, and the Director and medical staff escorted me to the entrance, where we all bowed profoundly. I was delighted to see the Dr. Kayabashi, a man under thirty, and fresh from Tôkiyô, and all the staff and students were in the national dress, with the *hakama* of rich silk. It is a beautiful dress, and assists dignity as much as the ill-fitting European costume detracts from it. This was a very interesting visit, in spite of the difficulty in communication through an interpreter.

The public buildings, with their fine gardens, and the broad road which near they stand, with its stoned faced embankments, are very striking in such a far-off *ken*. Among the finest of the buildings is the Normal School, where I shortly afterwards presented myself, but I was not permitted till I had shown my passport and explained my objects in travelling. These preliminaries being settled, Mr. Tomatsu Aoki, the Chief Director, and Mr. Shude Kane Nagishi, the principal teacher, both looking more like monkeys than men in their European clothes, lionised me (p. 163).

She exclaims delight at “national dress” that “assists dignity” at the hospital, but she is then idolized by educators at a school “looking more like monkeys than men in their European clothes.” A colonial discourse would encourage the adoption of Western dress, but Bird prefers the hakamas, a seeming feminine acceptance of the cultural identity of the people she meets. She also pays special attention to observing the preparation of a woman’s wedding toilette, and finds the construction of the traditional hairstyle and application of the make-up to be fascinating enough to spend several long paragraphs in describing details of the ritual. When the whole process is complete some three hours later “[the bride]

looked as if a very unmeaning-looking wooden doll had been dressed up with the exquisite good taste, harmony, and quietness which characterise the dress of Japanese women” (p.207).

(B) What is the postmodern feminine perspective in Kira Salak’s articles and books?

Salak’s short non-fiction has appeared in *National Geographic*, *National Geographic Adventure*, *Washington Post*, *The New York Times Magazine* and *Travel & Leisure* magazine. Educated, upper-middle class males make up more than half of *National Geographic* magazines’ readership, and 40% live outside the United States (National Geographic, 2009). The *Washington Post* has a nearly equal split of men and women readers: more than half earn more than \$100,000 annually and more than 40% are in management, business or financial operations or a professional field (doctors, lawyers, etc.) (Washington Post, 2010). *The New York Times Magazine* boasts that 88% of its readership is college-educated and 85% have traveled outside the United States in the past three years (Reader Survey, 2006). *Travel & Leisure* reports similar reader profiles: educated, affluent, and well traveled (Travel+Leisure, 2010). What can be surmised from these profiles? Salak is writing, or being edited, for a population that might identify with her, but would not be likely to mimic her lifestyle or travel example. The lack of gendered perspective in the articles studied in this thesis is therefore not surprising because of journalism’s

attachment to objectivity. There are still markers of female subjectivity in her work.

Janssen and Murachver (2004) noted an increased usage of descriptive metaphors and similes by female authors as compared to male authors, and whether it is a noticeable difference or just the mark of strong descriptive writing, Salak fluidly incorporates metaphor and simile into her writing regardless of format. The image of a bear as “a slow, lumbering giant, a world-weary emperor with golden fur and tiny eyes” opens her account of biking nearly 1,000 miles through Alaska to the Arctic Ocean (Aug. 2005). When the animal approaches her at her most vulnerable, when she has just been injured and can no longer even pedal her bicycle, she slows down her description of the encounter in a reversal of the adrenaline rush she is experiencing. She recounts the advice she’s heard about dealing with bears, she thinks about how close she is to her destination, goes back to observing the bear’s progress, and describes almost yard by yard as he takes “a diagonal path, huffing at me,” and how “we slow down together, we speed up,” all the while, “his course stays sure, with me at the other end of it” (Aug. 2005, para. 3).

Her descriptions of the journey, from the exterior and interior landscapes to the RVs that run her off the road and the motorists who offer water and Gatorade, include many of the subtle feminine linguistic patterns proposed by Janssen and Murachver, as well as Argamon et al. (2007). She turns her discerning comments on herself concurrently describing herself “like someone

who charges forward with the starting gun but never asks for how many laps” (Aug. 2005, para. 11) and “as if I were an inmate who had launched an audacious escape from a life of habit and routine” (para. 15).

Salak leaves out the more feminine point of view in the magazine articles when she adopts the clear role of a journalist. “Hell-bent for the Arctic” (the *National Geographic* account of her Alaskan cycling trip) presents a linear review of the scenery, difficulties and triumphs of attempting such a long trip without tour support, or as she calls it the “equivalent of using a porter” (para. 16). She is cognizant of listing highway numbers, town names, and the names of the people she speaks to.

In “Rediscovering Libya,” Salak spends more time describing people and appears to take care not to stereotype Libyan men or women by simple homogenous traits. She gives names of minor characters whenever possible, which, according to Ariel and Giora (1998), implies an unusual individualization of the Other, rather than a focus on the Self (p. 62). But she reveals a kind of amusement concerning the local people’s beliefs about a mountain she wants to climb. She writes that Jinoon “has been a stomping ground for evil genies for centuries” (2006, para. 63) in a dismissive summary of the stories told by the Tuareg people about “small, red-bearded devils,” tourists attacked by swarms of wasps, or the Libyan soldier “who saw something so awful, so terrifying, that he went into shock and couldn’t walk for a year” (para. 62). This assessment is in keeping with Ariel and Giora’s parameters for measuring a Self point of view.

The external descriptions of people are lacking a distinct perspective. Almost all descriptions are limited to the clothing or location of the individual, with no mention of function in society or familial relationships: “most Libyan wear headscarves and long coats to hide the shape of their bodies. Libyan men wear whatever they please,” or “wearing a traditional Tuareg face wrap and a not-so traditional fluorescent yellow jacket, Yahya proves to be the real-deal.”

In Libya, unlike Alaska, the people Salak comes in contact with are more affected by her gender than her gender affects her writing. She is told that women “aren’t allowed to see or interact with males outside of their immediate family” (para. 34), but tourism is prevalent enough that her treatment is not as severe as during her travels through rural Mali. Her guides are still “alarmed” when she traipses through thigh-high mud and reeds to reach a lake in a volcanic basin and comes back dirty and bloody (para. 58). In a matter of fact way, she then describes how she sews up a deep slice in her finger with a cheap hotel sewing kit while “Magdy and the Omars stand back by the car, watching in horror” (para. 58). The fact that she is female is not so much the oddity, but that she is not the typical female; and her attitude of apathy toward discomfort and physical challenges is reflected in her writing and in males’ reactions to her. One of the guides, Omar No.2, believes she is crazy for what she wants to do, but only because she wants to climb Jinoon, the demon-haunted mountain, not because she is a woman who wants to climb a mountain.

“Places of Darkness,” from *National Geographic Adventure*, is quite different from “Rediscovering Libya” and “Hell-bent for the Arctic” because it tells concurrent stories: Salak’s exploration of the mountainous region of Congo in order to see the endangered gorillas, and her contact with the people of Congo who have survived years of brutal war. She is forced to face the realities of a near-police state from the very start in her search for the mountain gorillas. She must convince a military leader in Eastern Congo that, although she is a writer, she is truly interested in seeing only the gorillas. During this crucial interview she describes the soldiers’ weapons in an unusual way that clearly illustrates her feminine perspective, “their AK-47s leaning daintily against their chairs like parasols” is not a likely simile for a man to use (2004, Rutchurua, Eastern Congo para. 5). Still her practicality prevails as she sits in the presence of men who might rape her if not for her protectors, who are “starting into yet another large bottle of Primus beer, slurring their words and stroking their crotches, sharing *mzungu* (white person) jokes with some of the soldiers nearby” (para. 5). She says nothing of her awareness of the danger or the turmoil that the people who try to save the gorillas cope with at the hands of soldiers just like the ones she sits near. She reflects on how the gorillas are only alive because they are worth more alive than dead, but in the effort since the war began eighty-two park rangers have been killed. She accompanies the scene with the colonel with several paragraphs of reporting about the country and the gorillas. Her reporting point of view is very different from her point of view when she records first-person

observations. When she writes about Dian Fossey's (gorilla conservationist and author of *Gorillas in the Mist*) and Ruth Keesling's (Fossey's successor and leader of Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund Europe) struggle to save the animals, she records the facts chronologically, with as many relevant details at the first telling as possible. There are fewer fiction story-telling devices to build tension, and more devices common to journalism. Imagery and personification are present, but in a non-gendered way, "the snow-covered 14,000-foot peaks of the volcanoes lorded over the countryside, revealing themselves through breaks in the clouds" (para. 20). When she leaves the human-inhabited areas to seek out the gorillas, her feminine perspective becomes much stronger.

She presumes to understand the motivations of the female gorillas, but not the male one she sees. "They are determined to touch me... they seem to want to greet me, welcome me. The females regroup for another approach, but the tracker is too fast for them" (Jombe, Eastern Congo para. 19). She tells us only what Rugendo, the giant silverback with the two females, does in the presence of humans, but leaves out any guess at his motivations (he is not "determined," or does not "want to greet").

Rugendo rolls onto his back – his enormous pot belly facing up, his legs splayed and toes wiggling – and yawns. Casually he grabs some young bamboo and gnaws on it, glancing peacefully at me and the trackers as he chews. Humans could do anything to him right now, but he simply scratches his great belly, farts, and sighs, closing his eyes to us (para. 20).

She identifies with the female gorillas in this country, as she too tries to engage the people she meets even though it could mean misfortune or death.

It is harder for her to find the feminine in Iran. She has to compare herself to another female explorer and writer, and the first Westerner to travel in parts of the Middle East, in order to imagine someone like herself.

I wonder what really lies in Iranians' hearts. And in my own. I've come to travel Iran as a foreigner and a woman, much like my inspiration, the 1930s-era writer and explorer Freya Stark, and as I move from Tehran into the remotest corners of the country, my goal is to keep an open mind (2007, para. 5).

As an American she is already hard-pressed to construct a perspective that is not repressed by the anti-Western (especially anti-American) sentiments in her host surroundings. In fact, she does spend some time establishing what it means to be Western, by revealing the contrast between philosophy and practice in the city of Tehran.

This feverish city is fueled by expediency and profit, feeding on a materialism that smacks of the forbidden West. Levi's and Samsung phones. Peugeot cars. Madonna CDs. Any conceivable thing you could find in the land of the Great Satan exists here, imported from other countries. The finest titanium crossbows. The newest, most expensive digital cameras. Even pornography buffs stay up to date with the latest, raunchiest titles (para. 19).

"Into hostile territory" is Salak's article chronicling her and photographer Bobby Model's trip through Iran in search of some understanding about the culture and a glimpse at Infidel Canyon, that Freya Stark believed might have been the location of a lost Bronze Age treasure.

When Salak's group gets to the rural areas of the country, her perspective becomes more feminine because the women are not being forced to hide under hejabs, therefore allowing Salak also to come "out of hiding." When she is in the

city she is also required to don a hejab, but is reluctant to group herself with the other women she sees. “Most women I see do their utmost to shirk the laws. They wear skin-tight *manteaux* in bright colors that stop mid-thigh. They show painted toenails and bare necks” (para. 22). There is no indication of how her own hejab is fashioned, or what she thinks of the modern versus traditional style. In the mountains, Salak meets a tribe of nomadic people and introduces the matriarch to the reader with a subjective physical description and reference to her function in the tribe.

The matron is Shanoz, 45, who flashes a warm, artless smile and a youthful radiance that belies her age and heavy responsibilities. Here, at nearly 8,000 feet, in all manner of extreme weather, she and her family must be self-sufficient, depending exclusively on their animals for sustenance (para. 43).

This is a woman Salak appreciates, and Shanoz accepts Salak into the familial sphere. Salak gets the opportunity to explore domestic themes with the family while the male photographer and guide are focused on the outside.

Shanoz welcomes me into the tent where Fatome and her husband rest. They have a baby, whom Fatome rocks in a hammock in the corner. I ask if I can take over, and I swing the child back and forth, making funny faces. The baby fills the tent with her laughter, and I find myself intoxicated with the sound. In her smile, I discover, is something wholly beautiful and ineffable (para. 48).

Like the passages compared to Thompson’s writing, this account clearly shows a different focus in both experience and writing.

“Trekking Bhutan’s Higher Planes” is unusual in the body of Salak’s travels because she is part of a guided group made-up of Western travelers. Most of her other articles are accounts of her solo or very small group travel and contact with

locals, while almost all of her interaction is within the climbing group during this trip. She also has more of an opportunity to examine her own thoughts and feelings in a country where spiritualism and the belief in karma dictate a peaceful life, a “modern day Shangri La.”

I'd found that the dangerous, difficult trips asked certain questions that none others do. If there's a higher chance of returning home sick, maimed—even killed—then the journey forces an examination of what matters in life. Specifically: Why such a trip? To what end? (2009, para. 10 & 11).

She can think and walk through Bhutan in the middle of the night and not fear for her life, an almost unheard of circumstance during most of her trips. When she introduces the climbing group, she starts with a few physical descriptions, in the style of establishing a Self point of view, but shifts to a neutral journalist's point of view as the descriptions continue.

I was doing my trip through Canadian Himalayan Expeditions, which works in tandem with a Bhutanese partner. CHE's owner, Joe Pilaar, 46, a wiry Canadian, was one of eight doing the trek with me. In addition, there was Rob, 52, my red-headed Aussie friend of 12 years, an itinerant carpenter and former Papua New Guinean traveling buddy who'd driven his Royal Enfield motorcycle across India and Nepal to join me for the trek. There was also Paul, 52, a Brit who owned his own landscaping company, and “Team America” as Rob called them: Larry, 66, a former army chemical engineer; Tom, 57, a retired social studies teacher, owner of a climbing gym; Pete, 36, a photographer; Kevin, 33, a West Coast real estate agent and aspiring screenplay writer; and Ryan, 30, an oil company engineer (para. 15).

It is as if she is trying to balance her subjective objectification of the other with her need to give the type of objective information expected by *National Geographic Adventure*. The feminine subjective narrative plays second to the objective journalist, but not for too long. Once the trekking begins, Salak returns

to her feminine narrative style with descriptions of the native “horsemen” including the “toughened nonchalance,” “the arrogant swagger...,” “you’d be nowhere without them...,” “our men seemed to gaze on our group’s dining tent, on our ‘tea time’ biscuits and brand-name sleeping bags, with barely concealed amusement” (para. 23). They are without a doubt the Other, to be claimed and categorized in relationship to the group Salak belongs to. Notice the group does not belong to the guides, the guides belong to the group. Much of the rest of the trip continues along chronologically, as the group members get to know each other, face the first tough day of climbing, Salak faces a medical issue that almost forces her to quit, and they reach the halfway point of Laya village at 12,500 feet. In Laya she slows down the story to explore her own thoughts and feelings because “I had a decision to make about how much pain I was willing to endure... My plan had been to confront and beat this mysterious condition, but it was starting to seem like an abysmal failure” (para. 46). She spends an afternoon sitting with “an ancient woman with tangled white hair and cataract eyes” while the woman spins a prayer wheel and sings. Salak sits for hours, introspective, and finally comes to the decision she will continue the trek, though she has only told Rob, her Australian friend, what is going on, and not sought out advice from the guide, she quietly lets the decision come, she does not actively seek it out through activity or others’ advice.

In a complete reversal of this passivity, Salak reveals her own competitive streak in a thoroughly unfeminine narrative style full of military language and

themes of male camaraderie. Her ownership of those themes is similar to her assertion of her adventuresome nature and the “unfeminine” becomes an indication of the contemporary feminine perspective.

It was time for a little fun. For a challenge. I wanted to beat the Germans to the Snowman’s highest pass tomorrow. But I would need to assemble a team, construct a battle plan. We already had a name for the mission (courtesy of Paul): “Operation Squash Bratwurst.”

“We mustn’t let the Germans beat us to the pass tomorrow,” I announced to the men that night before dinner. “Remember World War II.” (para. 61 & 62)

In this way the modern feminine perspective is very unlike the colonial Victorian. Salak feels free to express this competitiveness, she does need to link it to a greater colonial desire or Christian superiority; as a woman she has as much right to express her aggressive nature as the men have.

In *Four Corners* Salak writes with a more apparent feminine viewpoint, disposing of some of the journalistic or objective tendencies. Displaying a clear willingness to cooperate with the familiar, she exhibits trust in the authority of information provided by women in the YWCA and is suspicious of the intentions of men who offer assistance (Ariel & Giora, 1998, p. 63). Salak writes about the PNG (Papua New Guinea) tradition of creating *wantok* networks that act as families.

The word ‘wantok’ comes from the English ‘one talk,’ and literally means someone who speaks the same language, comes from the same tribe or extended family... the idea of a wantok is a powerful one as it describes who’s a member of the tribe and who’s an outsider” (2001, p. 89).

She quickly accepts the label of wantok from the women staying at the YWCA with her in Port Moresby. When she attempts to arrange passage for herself out of Port Moresby, she comes up against the male authorities at the shipyard. The “Big Boss” flat out refuses her request for passage on a steamship, citing company policy and insurance liability; she leaves his office to be approached by a different manager: “He looks so unusually well-dressed in his crisp white shirt and tie. He can’t be more than twenty-seven, has light-brown skin, hazel eyes, and the strong, fit body of an athlete” (2001, p. 95). Her objectification of this male character further illustrates her identity as feminine, especially as she interprets his offers of “help.”

Arm snugly around my waist now, he starts to introduce me to each of the men as if we were old buddies. I smile briefly and give them little nods. Barely into these introductions, I pry Thomas’ hand loose and give it back to him... His secretary eyes us wearily as we walk by, as if Thomas is often in the habit of bringing women into his office. What he doesn’t seem to realize, though, is that I’m on to him. Or, perhaps realizing it, he doesn’t care. When his eyes and nose crinkle up with laughter, it’s hard for me not to be taken by him (p. 96).

She is marking him as someone outside the group who cannot be trusted, even though her familiarity with her wantok is hardly greater than her familiarity with Thomas. Throughout the book there is a pattern of men underestimating her and Salak using their misconceptions to her advantage by not giving in to their point of view of how she should make decisions or whom she should know and trust.

Four Corners includes statistical and historical information, but it is so spread out and surrounded by her observations and interactions with characters

that the idea of reporting on her information gathering in Papua New Guinea is secondary to her impressions of her personal journey. The following passage illustrates the main identifying elements of Salak's postmodern feminine perspective.

I tell him that if it's possible to walk to Hotmin, I'm doing it. I look at the mountains, covered by jungle. It seems as if Hotmin is on the other side of them. Just a few of these mountains to get over. How bad could a few mountains be?

Sighing, Sammy says he'll come along with me, and I wonder if he knows what he's getting himself into. Coming from Tabubil, he is the equivalent of a well-fed, sedentary city-dweller in this village of emaciation. He has a paunch and wears a clean dress shirt and pants. He flashes frowns of disapproval at the overall inconvenience of his predicament here, and at the gathered villagers surrounding us. Sammy asks in his fluent Pidgin if anyone knows how to get to Hotmin. An older woman – she tells us her name is Mila – says she's willing to lead us there for twenty kina. She wears a threadbare gray T-shirt and holey skirt, her thin body covered with the telltale round lesions of flaking skin and itchy sores called *grile* in Pidgin – ringworm, common among the forest people here. The ringworm has even infested parts of her scalp, making her short hair look patchy. Sammy isn't thrilled about Mila, I suspect because she's a woman. He crosses his arms and asks if anyone else would be willing to guide us, and I have to cut in to remind him that I'm the one who's going to be paying the twenty kina. I tell him I want Mila to guide us, and she runs off to get some food for the trip from her hut.

A man offers to come along as porter for my backpack (which weighed in at an embarrassing forty-three pounds at the Tabubil airport), but I tell him no thanks. I always lug my own stuff. Having someone else do it would make me feel like some haughty, pampered English aristocrat on an elephant safari. And, in this case, I'm also nervous about embarking through the jungle with two men I don't know, all of my possession on me. Papua New Guinea expatriates are full of stories of foreigners getting robbed, raped in the bush. Just Sammy is probably OK, but not anyone else besides him and Mila.

Mila comes back. No further ceremony, we follow her down the muddy airstrip just as a heavy rain starts. The mountains are starting to disappear in cloud and fog, giving the illusion of a flat landscape and a straightforward journey to Hotmin. I change out of my hiking boots because the mud is too thick and my boots keep getting hopelessly stuck in

it. Sammy does the same. No one, I notice, ever wears footwear in the PNG jungle except clumsy foreigners.

Mila glances over her shoulder at us, smirking as a mother would at the silly antics of her children. Machete in hand, she is already far across the airstrip and entering the jungle (p. 245-247).

Reappearance of familiar narrative topics begins almost immediately in the passage. “Just a few of these mountains to get over. How bad could a few mountains be?” (p. 245). Her question shows an ironic awareness of the difficulty ahead along with her indomitable nerve pushing her forward. The matter-of-fact look at the mountains “covered by jungle” reinforces the similar themes in her articles. Her external physical description of Sammy objectifies him as “a well-fed, sedentary city-dweller” with “a paunch” and “a clean dress shirt and pants” (p. 245). She doesn’t in fact know whether or not he is capable of the hike she is proposing, but in her evaluation he falls short, he is an outsider in this jungle village. Salak’s description of Mila starts with her bedraggled clothing and physical malady (ringworm), but she doesn’t disbelieve her ability to guide them to Hotmin, and, instead of judging the ringworm as a vulnerability, she offers it up with the anthropological context of PNG jungle living conditions. Mila can be trusted, or so Salak asserts, when she reflects on “embarking through the jungle with two men I don’t know” because “expatriates are full of stories of foreigners getting robbed, raped in the bush” (p. 246). The unspoken belief is that men do this to women; women do not do this to other women.

At the end of the passage readers can see the surfacing of the domestic in Salak’s description of Mila waiting for her and Sammy. Mila is described as

“smirking as a mother would at the silly antics of her children” (p. 246-47). There is no evidence that Mila is a mother, and the same assumption made by natives about Salak (that because she is a woman she is a mother) makes her uncomfortable in *Cruelest Journey*. It is an interesting observation that enforces Salak’s female point of view even as it shows her trying to attribute femininity away from herself. This is in direct conflict with Bird’s desire to show herself as a well-behaved female while she continually does very unladylike things. Another section of this passage is contrary to Bird’s perspective. “I always lug my own stuff. Having someone else do it would make me feel like some haughty, pampered English aristocrat on an elephant safari” (p. 246). Bird would accept local guides to “lug her stuff” because it was the English colonial way of doing things, and even if she described her travel as solitary she often had this kind of assistance. The anti-colonial aspect of Salak’s point of view is possibly what makes her most different from Bird.

From this brief analysis it is evident Salak’s themes of objectifying men, trusting women, exhibiting her determined nature, subjectively presuming the thoughts of women, interposing domesticity into her experience of travel, and approaching obstacles with a pragmatic attitude appear in this relatively short passage. Some of these themes also appear in the previously analyzed passage from her other book, *Cruelest Journey*, like individual-focused details, domesticity, and candid observations on the difficulties of travel. Salak’s travel in *Cruelest Journey* is much more solitary than in *Four Corners*. This difference

lends itself to her introspective disposition, and to the reader's view of her as more passive when she accepts her circumstances with patience and resignation. In light of this difference, a reader might respond differently to similar themes in each book.

Domesticity, for example, is introduced almost ironically in *Four Corners*, but more admiringly in *Cruelest Journey*. Domesticity almost always separates Salak from the natives, but several times she uses domestic pursuits to link herself to the female in-group.

But here in Wameena we have only a single night together, and the women are busy patching houses and cooking, and the men are discussing plans, language difficulties separating us more easily than continents ever can... I offer to help the women repair their houses, but they laugh and wave me away (2005, p. 144).

When she stays in a village not far from the end of her journey, she comments on how she tries to repay the hospitality of the villagers and reveals her partiality to the females' condition. She quietly approaches the chief while he is working on a canoe, presumably surrounded by other men, and is able to "slip him some money as a gift," but the same strategy does not work to repay the women. In the cooking area she "surreptitiously pass[es] them something, but an old woman catches sight of the bills exchanging hands and all hell breaks loose" (p. 188). The women's network is put to action and Salak is beseeched by "the female populations of both Nakri and the nearby village of Tindirma" who ask for money, for "sick children, injury, illness" (p. 188). When men ask her for money it is rarely accompanied by reasons for the money, and even though Salak does

not hand out bills to the women who approach her, she refuses because “it’s not possible for me to help everyone, and I don’t want to further damage matters by indiscriminately handing out cash” (p.188). She wants to help, she sees the individuals in the crowd, “old women with painful arthritis,” and “a woman holding a sick little boy, her child probably has dysentery or giardia,” (p. 189) unlike the groups of men whose descriptions often resemble animal packs, not people.

Her relationships with women are not always represented with sympathy. Her only contact with non-Africans is her infrequent meetings with the photographer Remi Benali from National Geographic with his assistant-girlfriend Heather and a chance meeting with a Belgian backpacking couple – a grand total of eight meetings with white women. Salak’s first impression of Heather is mostly external and cursory, “a lithe, pretty red-head from the States,” “a graduate of the Yale theater school,” “this is the first time, she tells me, that she’s been to a place like this. A place as poor as Mali” (p. 69). Salak spends more time describing the poverty of Mali and how the women and children suffer in the streets that smell like “rotting fruit and urine and diesel exhaust” trying to sell fruit laid out on tarps, or the more prosperous able to sell cigarettes and Coca-cola from “tiny wooden shacks” (p. 70). Or how she

passed old women with leprosy, missing hands and feet, begging in the dirt. There were blind women. Women suffering from AIDS with small children in their arms. Boys with legs contorted behind them by polio... [she] quickly ran out of spare change or bills to drop in all the extended palms (p. 70).

While Salak is embarrassed about being photographed among the poor Malians, Heather “rests under the pinasse’s awning, drinking bottled water and trying to escape from the sun” (p. 74). Salak’s feminine point of view does not extend to identifying with another female merely for the sake of gender solidarity. In truth, she seems to scorn the self-indulgent younger woman.

CHAPTER 6: Discussion and conclusion

(A) Were the research questions answered?

This thesis sought to answer the following primary research question: *Is there a (consciously or subconsciously) constructed feminine style in the writings of Kira Salak and Isabella Bird?* In a comparison of Salak's and Bird's texts to Chuck Thompson's and John Muir's texts, a noticeable difference was found between men's and women's writing. The women generally related a greater observation of their domestic surroundings, more concern for or identification of individuals within Other groups, and more passivity than their male counterparts. A further study of Salak's and Bird's writing clarified and reinforced the style markers of women writers in some forms of writing. The idea that the feminine style is constructed, rather than intrinsic, is valid because both women altered their style depending on the length and audience of the material. Both women construct a more objective or journalistic style for articles and a more subjective, reflection-based and anthropological style in their books. The findings confirm, therefore, that a feminine style exists in the travel narratives of these two authors. The characteristics listed above were similar between the women, but other writing traits were not, a finding that enforces Mills's (1991) discourse theory that writers are influenced by the predominant discussions and concerns of their society.

Is there a unique viewpoint that can be identified in non-fiction women's travel writing of two different time periods? The answer to this question is yes and no. The expectation was that there would be parallel themes that would emerge in the writing of Bird and Salak. Instead, it was found that similar themes, while present, are handled in very different ways. For example, domesticity, or domestic details, is a common topic in both women's writing, but not for the same reasons. Bird discusses home life and women's roles as a measure of respectability or good behavior. Salak often approaches the topic as an anthropologist observing the local social customs, or in a contrast between typical women and herself. Salak's discussion of domestic affairs often acts to distance her from the Other or is ironic in its treatment.

By applying the ideas of Cameron (1992), Ariel & Giora (1998), Janssen and Murachver (2004), and Argamon et al. (2007) to a selection of Bird and Salak's texts, we see the difference in how one woman presented her ideas in travel writing in the nineteenth century from how a contemporary travel writer generates her point of view. It seems that feminine point of view *was*, for the most part, the masculine point of view during the Victorian age when considering that one of the most independent and successful women travel writers of the time could not break from the discourses of her time.

How are these viewpoints identified by readers of the texts? This question was not answered by the research. The researcher identified the viewpoints as a single reader and did not conduct surveys or focus groups to determine other

readers' opinions. That being said, the question evolved into a simplified version: How are these viewpoints (or perspectives) identified? It did not take repeated reading of travel narratives to pick out the female viewpoint through the choice of topics and writing style of Bird or Salak. The women's observations and opinions are a result of their reflective natures, rather than a dominating spirit. Often the pace of the narrative does not match the pace of the journey as the writer writes about her emotions, or a single moment in the day that revealed a deeper understanding or appreciation of the experience of travel. A deviation in language use patterns toward poetic devices often signaled a unique passage of observation or insight.

Does the length of the text change the viewpoint or the ways of identifying the viewpoints? Without a doubt Salak and Bird construct different viewpoints in articles and books, or rather they emphasize a less feminine perspective in articles in favor of a more objective style. There is a dislocation of sex and gender in articles when the perspective employed is that of a traveler and reporter. Bird acted like a cog in the colonial machine when she reported back to her English brethren on the people, industry and culture she found abroad. Salak is being paid to create copy for a magazine with certain expectations of content that will appeal to its audience. Salak, for all her extreme locations and activities, easily identifies with the feminine Self in her book.

Some of the original questions were not satisfactorily answered, but only because more interesting and relevant questions evolved from the findings. Those

questions could fuel additional studies like exploring the construction of masculine style or conducting wider comparisons between women writers.

(B) What are the limitations and future possibilities of this research?

This course of research has aimed to analyze a large enough selection of texts from Isabella Bird and Kira Salak in a thorough enough method to provide insight into the narrative style of female non-fiction travel writers. It has also aimed to further more generalized gendered language use scholarship.

Ultimately, this analysis leaves much more to be explored. This study focused on the product of women travel writers, not the motivation or process. The writers' interpretation of what they were producing is entirely absent, as well as the interpretation of a greater audience. Future scholars might expand the study by conducting interviews with authors to discover the "why" or survey different audiences to determine to what effect the feminine perspective is identified.

As discussed in the literature review, women's travel writing has not been studied qualitatively in light of identity creation and narrative style. This research indicates, however, that there is something to discover about how travel narratives bridge language use and authorship theories of fiction and non-fiction writing.

This study was limited by the chosen framework of theories and methods. Further influence from gender-based or linguistic-based theories could yield different understandings of the texts. It was also limited to just two authors

among a surprisingly large population of women travel writers from both time periods and did not even consider all of the texts produced by either author. This very practical limitation allowed the study to be qualitative, whereas a larger sample pool would have changed the method and therefore the interpretation of data.

It's hard to make general theoretical statements at the end because women travel writers, by their very nature, challenge and repudiate generalities. They don't conform even if they try to. Bird, in spite of her name, will not be pigeon-holed; Salak is singular. In writing this thesis, I've also been on my own journey. I have been inspired by Bird and Salak – and aspire to be like them, whether traveling in far away places or "traveling" in what John Keats called "the realms of gold" (i.e. books).

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