

THE TRAVELLER'S EYE: The Place of Male and Female Narratives in Nineteenth-Century Travelogues: the Imperialistic Scribes, the Franklins in Van Diemen's Land.

Lindsay Simpson

School of Humanities, James Cook University, Townsville, Australia

Abstract

The narratives of Sir John and Lady Jane Franklin are parallel accounts occupying the same and different gendered spaces. A woman of privileged class, Lady Franklin was both the observed and the observer, inhabiting a space that was public and private while her husband, fulfilling the myth of the heroic explorer, moved within the public sphere, mapping the colony in a patriarchal fashion. This paper compares and contrasts the Franklins' reading of Van Diemen's Land and examines their individual contributions to British imperialism as privileged scribes, fulfilling the role of energising the myth of Empire.

This paper focuses on the Van Diemen's Land narratives of former Governor Sir John Franklin and his wife Lady Jane Franklin during their time in the colony from 1837–1843. Both narratives are representative of a Western imperial discourse. Lady Franklin's narratives in particular, however, illustrate the complexities of defining such a discourse when considering modalities of gender and space. While the narratives of Sir John Franklin fit more easily into the conventional masculine imperial discourse of explorer and colonist, Lady Franklin's journals and letters illustrate the shifting and often contradictory positions occupied in the gendered space of a nineteenth-century woman who was also a Governor's wife. Her class and position ensured her empire status but, unlike other women who occupied similar adjunct positions (such as Lady Nugent, wife of the Governor of Jamaica), Lady Franklin did not merely occupy the margins of imperialism. Through her mapping of the scientific world, her contribution to the formation of the inaugural Tasmanian Society (later the Royal Society of Van Diemen's Land), her continual forays into the public sphere of colonial politics and her travels to sites outside of the usual domestic sphere, she occupied many guises, gaining a strong foothold more centrally located in the imperial travel narrative, usually seen as exclusively a male domain. Her position therefore is recognisably imperial.

Spatial politics play a central role in defining the distinction between genders (Blunt & Rose 1994, p. 3). The domestic space, representing the private sphere, is seen to be more commonly occupied by women while the public space, representing the political power matrix, is seen as a masculine space. This has obvious connotations for power relations between genders. The assumption in this divide is that in inhabiting the private (domestic) sphere, women are more concerned with particulars, in contrast to the masculine imperative that is concerned with generalities and 'the maintenance of the economic, cultural and political system as a whole' (loc cit). Using these definitions the imperial, with all its connotations of conquest and power and concern with the economic, cultural and political system, can be regarded as a masculine domain. I use these applications in analysing the Franklins' narratives to compare and contrast their positions within the British imperial discourse.

The cessation, in 1840, of transportation to New South Wales meant that Van Diemen's Land became the 'principal penal colony of the empire' (Fitzpatrick 1949, p. 23). A member of the British middle class who experienced rising social mobility, Sir John Franklin arrived in the colony with the imperial imperative of governorship. His narratives are clearly patriarchal and often mediated as official correspondence, government documents, reports and official letters, penned by his administrative staff and couched in language of warfare and bureaucratise. Even in his private letters to his wife he dwells on public concerns:

The revenue is greatly increasing since the abolition of distillation, and I really hope by the close of this year to be able to repay the £10,000 borrowed from the Military Chest (Mackness 1977, p. 58).

and

The matter which has most engaged my attention since my return and I think of Ex. Council is the probable effect of the large exportation of wheat and flour to Sydney may have upon our own supply (ibid p. 65).

As governor of Van Diemen's Land, Sir John occupied the more clearly-defined gendered masculine public space, of principal actor on a stage that was frequently shifting—and upon which he often lost control. He was first and foremost an explorer and naval officer with a distinguished record of naval duty, serving at Copenhagen and Trafalgar. He had little experience in politics, and was more comfortable in the role of imperial crusader concerned with the conquest and appropriation of foreign lands. As leader of a colony of the empire, his heroic status was undoubtedly considered prior to his appointment as relevant to the imperial role (although the success of some of his conquests is questionable). His public discourse, however, was as Arctic explorer, a writer of popular adventure narrative through publication of a bestselling book, *Journey Towards the Polar Sea*.

The Franklins travelled at the time of Britain's second empire (1784–1867), during which imperialism was the primary justification of exploration. Bolstered by the British command of the seas, further expansion of Britain's territories was prompted by commercial and political motives. With his expeditions to discover the North-West Passage and his charting of some of the shores of Arctic North America, Franklin represented the new territorial phase of capitalism and a shift towards European 'planetary consciousness' involving 'national imperatives to seize overseas territory' from rival powers (Pratt 1992, p. 9). In the case of Van Diemen's Land, this imperative was hastened at the prospect of the island being claimed by the French. Colonisation through transportation was also a solution to the increasing numbers of criminals in Britain. Franklin's contribution to the imperial territorial conquests was his continuation of the mapping of the colony.

In a letter to her sister dated September 1841 Lady Franklin wrote that Sir John was aware of the 'precious privilege of nomenclature in the eyes of all discoverers' even as 'a young middie' aged 14 or 15 when he accompanied his uncle, Matthew Flinders, in his 1802 survey of the South Australian coast (Franklin manuscript MS114-Letters cc1). In examining the distinction between the public and private space, Rose suggests that traditional mapping is perceived as an inherently male act, since the intention is to circumscribe, define, and hence control the world. (Rose 1993, p. 35) Susan Bassnett points out that Rose argues that the notion that everything is knowable and mappable is fundamentally a patriarchal concept;

there is no part of the planet, no society so distant that it cannot be mapped, described and hence contained. (Bassnett 2002, p. 230).

It is clear that Sir John Franklin was better suited as a colonial mapmaker than as a political leader. His official correspondence and his private letters from Van Diemen's Land are preoccupied with aspects of exploration and mastering his geographical location. On 24 March, 1842 he abandoned his office for a walk across the island to a region virtually unexplored by white settlers. Ostensibly the purpose of his visit was to visit the abandoned penal settlement of Macquarie Harbour, but his imperative was as a mapmaker. The trip to Transylvania (as the west coast of Van Diemen's Land was then described) was supposed to take eight days but instead took three weeks, the miscalculation partly attributed to Sir John's poor judgement of the difficult weather conditions at that time of year. The entire party almost starved through lack of provisions. On finally reaching the west coast and the rescue schooner, with no wind to get the ship outside of the sandbar at Hell's Gates, Franklin's mind was not on his empty stomach, nor on his role as Governor, but on his maps. He bemoaned in a letter to Count Strezlecki dated 24 May, 1842 that he 'was not provided with a pocket sextant or horizon' (Franklin, M721). In the same letter he expressed anxiety, asking the Count if he could supply him

with the position of Lake St Clair and of some points of the Mountain ranges which I consider to be not at all correctly placed. The French Man's Cap is not where it is put on the map—and I very much doubt whether the Mountain so called and seen from the Sea is the Mountain so named on our Maps. The cap pointed out to us and seen from the *Eliza* is not the same—but the top of a mountain nearer to the Coast.

Franklin spent so much time away from Hobart Town during this trip that he was criticised in the local press for a dereliction of his duty. The *Van Diemen's Land Chronicle* stated, 'Immense sums of money have been wantonly and disgracefully lavished upon ridiculous journeys and fantastical deviations from the beaten paths of men' (Fitzpatrick 1949, p. 269). However, whether mapmaker or governor, Franklin's narratives clearly fit within both the imperial and patriarchal discourse.

On the other hand, Lady Jane Franklin contested the distinction between the gendered spaces of the public and the private sphere. Indeed, she could be characterised as an early feminist. Pateman writes that contesting the private and the public spheres is central to understanding two centuries of feminist struggle (1989, p. 3). However, as Blunt and Rose qualify, this definition of spatial divide is more relevant to white, middle-class feminism (1994, p. 4). Nevertheless, this definition could apply to Jane Franklin. Unlike Lady Arthur and Lady Denison, the wives of other Van Diemen's Land governors, Lady Franklin was not simply an observer. Russell comments that it was 'staggering self deceit' that Lady Franklin put down travelling across five continents and 'meddling' with public affairs as 'proof only of her domestic attachment to her husband' (2002, p. 6). Her imperial role in Van Diemen's Land was not peripheral but centre-stage, and she continually challenged her gendered space in a white middle-class environment. While researching the wives of Van Diemen's Land governors, Alison Alexander comments that she had difficulty locating material for most wives but, '[t]he exception was Jane Franklin, where there was the more usual problem of selecting from a mass of material to write one chapter' (1999, p. 3).

Sir John Franklin's ineffectual governorship (he was dismissed from his position) ensured his wife had a space in the public discourse. The colonial newspapers of the day accused him of

‘demonstrated feebleness’ and continually mentioned his wife’s role on matters of governance. Recognising this, Sir John wrote in his explanatory text on the reasons surrounding his dismissal:

... because the duty of protecting my wife from the injurious statements which I believed Mr Montagu [Colonial Secretary to Sir John’s predecessor and enemy of the Franklins] was prepared to make against her, had obliged me to introduce her name into a despatch, her name should therefore have been placed at the head of one of Lord Stanley’s divisions of the subject before him in terms of most ambiguous meaning (1967, p. 47).

Lady Franklin also played an active role in map-making, albeit of a sort somewhat different to that of her husband. In some ways, she fits the stereotype of the nineteenth-century woman traveller who wanted to maintain her own standards, avoiding the gendered constraints of life in the home country while engaging in often life-threatening expeditions around the colony and beyond. Comparisons, therefore, might be made with Isabella Bird, Isabella Eberhardt and Mary Kingsley, who also took on ‘courageous’ masculine pursuits of exploration in foreign lands. Like these other nineteenth-century women travellers, Jane Franklin’s motivations fell between the masculine and feminine space. Travelling was her ‘way of mastering the world,’ an ‘enthusiastic quest for knowledge, understanding and ‘Truth’ (Russell 2002, p. 5). Like her counterparts, she clearly also saw it as ‘a medium of emancipation’ (Holland & Huggan 2000, p. 20). She was ‘an eager sponge, thirsting for knowledge and determined to learn, to know, to see with her own eyes’ (Russell 2002, p. 5). What ‘drew her beyond the boundaries of conventional femininity’ (ibid, p. 6) was a desire not to conquer, but to interpret herself and her world. Russell writes that Lady Franklin was ‘brought up to develop an informed understanding of the world through reading and travel, to espouse a fervent English nationalism and a Tory ideology and to regard marriage and domesticity as the ‘supremest bliss’ of women’. According to Russell, she considered her education inadequate, and in her later years she ‘struggled’ to extend her awareness of the world around her (ibid, p. 4). For example, her journals document her observations about issues such as transportation—she had read half a dozen books on the subject before arriving in the colony.

Unlike many other nineteenth-century women travellers, however, Lady Franklin was not single. SHE was introduced to travel in her younger years by her father and later explored *Terra Australis* due to her husband’s position as Governor. Her occupation of a public as well as a private role means that it would be more apt to compare her not with other travellers but with Lady Maria Nugent, wife of Sir George Nugent, Governor of Jamaica from 1801 to 1805. Brandenstein (2002, p. 47) observes that Lady Nugent was acutely aware that her ‘presence in the colonial landscape [would] involve the performance of imperialism and a gendered imperial subjectivity, playing a part and acting out a very public role.’ In occupying this public role, both women still travelled in a gendered space. Upon arrival in their respective colonies, for example, they had to wait for on board ship while their husbands were honoured in public ceremonies.

Until Lady Franklin reached Van Diemen’s Land, ‘she lacked the status which would make her behaviour a matter of public interest rather than mere private curiosity’ (Russell, 2002, p. 6). Her status in the colony turned her into a ‘public person’ for the first time. Like many of her nineteenth-century travelling counterparts, Lady Franklin’s texts align ‘with colonial

practices and traditional feminine values, [but] there is also a constant subversion of these two positions' (Blanton 1995, p. 47) heightened because of her public position.

Colonists also commented on this subversion. J. E. Calder, the Surveyor-General of the colony at the time of the Franklin governorship, observes in an obituary to Jane Franklin in the *Tasmanian Tribune* in October 1875:

To look at her in a drawing room no one would suppose she could undergo any physical exertion: but see her under the clear heavens, ascending the slopes of Mount Wellington, and brushing the dew away through dense forests of underwood, in deep and gloomy recesses, in search of natural productions and to view from the abyss the sublime and beautiful basaltic peaks and rugged rocks and waterfalls ... who could believe it was the same delicate, fragile lady who was overcome by the fatigues of a ball' (1984, p. 9).

Lady Franklin encouraged these subversions by entering the public sphere quite deliberately, using her position, class and gender on a number of occasions in a way her fellow travellers and other Governors' wives did not. Her journals and other correspondence indicate a continual blurring of the distinctions between her public and private identity; in her public role as the Governor's wife, setting the social agenda for the colony, and her more private role as a traveller/explorer.

Unlike, for example, the customary 'amiable' social engagements of afternoon tea and dinner parties performed by other Governor's wives, Lady Franklin's domestic duties had a more patriarchal approach, with discussions of the public sphere on the agenda. Louisa Anne Meredith, a renowned early writer and artist of the colony, complained that being invited to Government House meant being 'stuck up in rooms full of pictures and books, and shells and stones and other rubbish, with nothing to do but hear people talk lectures, or else sit as mute as mice listening to what was called good music' (1979, p.12).

Lady Franklin continually inhabited that space between the masculine and the feminine. Her discursive presence is quasi-male and she often placed herself, or was placed, within the masculine space of discourse and power. John Montagu, an enemy of the Franklins who helped bring about Sir John's dismissal as Governor, stated in a letter to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Lord Stanley:

My whole case turned upon the fact of Lady Franklin's improper interference in the business of the Government, which, because I mentioned it to Sir John Franklin, led to his suspending me from office (Fitzpatrick 1949, p. 22).

Jane Franklin also occupied the imperial discourse of mapping the natural world and the scientific, both masculine gendered discourses. Along with her husband, she formed the first Royal Society outside of England. Her diaries and letters are full of identifiable structures that are patriarchal; for example, engaging in discourses about specimens and having conversations over dinner about Wheatstone's Electric Telegraph and Harris's Lightning Conductor. In Government House she had a boudoir, according to one colonist's description:

more like a museum or a menagerie than the boudoir of a lady, snails, toads, stuffed birds and animals, weapons of savages, specimens of wood and stone fossils, and,

last though not least, a juvenile lubra arrayed in bright scarlet being the staple articles of furniture (Woodward 1951, p. 211).

Lady Franklin wrote to her sister Mary Simpkinson in 1839:

I hope with Sir John at their head to make next winter a reunion every fortnight or month at our house, for the purpose of discussing scientific subjects. Get Mr Wilkinson or Mr Hoskins or Captn Washington to send us the current facts and novelties of the day in scientific matters so that we may be the immediate source of information for the Colonists who will never read the English or Scotch Journals, but will have curiosity enough to look into the productions of the wise men of Government House Hobarton (Woodward 1951, p. 223).

Susan Bassnet writes that, 'Naming the new and labelling it became a means of marking ownership, in both physical and intellectual terms' (2002, p. 230). Unlike her husband, Lady Franklin did not have the patriarchal imperative of conquering place, although on the journey to Transylvania she named a cascade 'Bagota, in honour of the aide-de-camp' (Fitzpatrick 1949, p. 296).

Her diary entries are also conventionally sprinkled with domestic references representative of a feminine gendered space, concerned with the particular. Rose writes that 'a feminist concept of geography sees the world differently: here the goal is not to map every detail, but to reinsert a physical dimension into the discourse, to engage with the everyday as an end to itself' (Blunt & Rose 1994, p. 3). Blunt and Rose note that according to Michelle Rosaldo, an anthropologist, 'The domestic sociality of women is interpersonal and particularistic; because women are daughters and mothers, women relate to other people as individuals, seeing each as different and unique (1994, p. 3). Lady Franklin continually records not only the names of particular people, but their past lives, marital status, number of children and, in one case, describes someone as having false teeth (Alexander 1999, p. 148). Her diaries usually specify names, not simply someone's title or function. For example, in one diary entry of 5 November, 1839, she identifies a room by the name of one of Government House chefs:

I was busy for three hours this morning in Margaret's confectionary room, learning ... the act of making sponge cakes, Naples or finger biscuits and drops, cheese-cakes, tartlets and puffs. With a white muslin apron on, prepared for me by Margaret, I practised some of the manual acts of her profession half-smothered by smoke, however, by the oven of this ill-constructed room (Franklin Jane, R/S 248/87).

She often details particular menus or recipes. On her voyage out to Van Diemen's Land on 28 August, 1836, she notes:

This was fortunate (the direction of the wind) for the dinner party which amounted to 26 and the table appeared full as if it could well hold tho [sic] our complement I understand is 35 ... The dinner was abundant in coarse joints of meat, but deficient in vegetables, there being nothing but potatoes and a few half boiled cabbages ... the wine was complained of as being very indifferent (Franklin Jane, MS 248/84).

Much of her travel writing within the colony is also concerned with food and daily menus. Writing about a journey to the Huon, Woodward (1951, p. 211) notes that Lady Franklin

describes dining on ‘‘a loin of roasted pork and cold plum pudding with some magnificent potatoes’ in the home of a couple who conferred her name on their child’.

Unlike Lady Nugent’s journeys, Lady Franklin’s travels were not restricted to accompanying her husband on a tour of duty. Most of her tours of Van Diemen’s Land and outside of the colony were conducted without her husband. She travelled almost every year. She was not restricted in her movements, and was often unchaperoned. Nor was she particularly concerned about whether or not her journeys were construed as public or private. After her journey overland from Melbourne to Sydney, she called alone on the New South Wales Governor Gipps, presumably with a political motive.

As a nineteenth-century woman traveller, her journeys in colonial and post-colonial texts typically represent her as ‘exceptional’. She is continually referred to as ‘the first woman’ to achieve a particular goal. For example, in *The True Colonist* of 4 October 1839 she was recorded as ‘the first white woman’ to travel overland from Melbourne to Sydney. The newspaper labelled this expedition as ‘her last wild expedition in the Australian wilderness; and cast the journey as the ‘perversion of ordinary female qualities’ (cited in Russell 2002, p. 10). Later, it was claimed (probably erroneously) that she was the first white woman to climb the 1270 m-high Mount Wellington, overlooking Hobart Town (Woodward 1951, p. 231). Bassnett notes that this theory of listing nineteenth-century woman travellers as ‘exceptional’ was ‘one of the classic ways of marginalising women’s achievements’ (2002, p. 228). Bassnett warns that women travellers of this era tended to be categorised as doubly different: differing both from other women and male travellers ‘in flight from something, seeking to escape’ (ibid, p. 226).

Lady Franklin’s public role also inserted her in the space of imperial theatre. Gilbert and Johnston write that travel during the time of the second empire ‘generally saw Europeans dependent on the labouring bodies of the colonized and expectant of their cooperation’ (2002, p. 8). In the Franklins’ case, it was not the non-European world on which they were dependent but the underclass of criminals, which made up the majority of the population at this time. By 1837, the Van Diemen’s Land population of 42,000 consisted of 17,592 convicts serving sentences and 24,000 classified as ‘free’, either ex convicts or free settlers (Fitzpatrick 1949, p. 11). In 1842, Lady Franklin travelled for almost half of the journey to Macquarie Harbour, on the west coast of the colony, on a palanquin borne by convicts freshly released from the Port Arthur penal colony. After meeting the convicts shortly before the expedition, Calder wrote that they:

were so unaccustomed to considerate treatment of any sort, that at first they seemed not to understand it; but after a time no men were more appreciative of kind words and good offices than they; and better servants than the seven rough-looking fellows who I now took with me to the westward, I never desired to have under me (1984, p. 21).

Calder writes that Lady Franklin ‘was borne on the shoulders of a party of willing volunteers for about thirty miles of the entire distance; the remaining thirty-six being either too steep or too scrubby for such a means of conveyance, she had to travel it like the rest of the party afoot’ (ibid, p. 53). Not only was her body conveyed in this way, but her luggage as well. Although partly tongue-in-cheek and while admiring of Lady Franklin’s abilities, Calder conjures up an image which evokes the imperial:

Her style of going to work, though a little disagreeable, was wonderfully businesslike. Without wasting any words upon us, she kept handing over to us bag after bag, and bundle after bundle, until I began to wonder whether she were really serious in believing that we were able to travel under such a load of things as she had with her, about enough to fill a cart. After our knapsacks were crammed almost to bursting, I made several respectful, though unsuccessful trials at persuading her that we had quite enough of it and that the best thing she could do with the rest, whatever it might be, was to put it all on to the cart and send it back to town. I might just as well have addressed myself to Mount Olympus, which would have taken quite as much notice of my remonstrances as she did. They had not even the effect of interrupting her movements for the instant, for the seemingly unfailing stream of her baggage kept pouring out of the hut as fast as ever, being nearly as inexhaustible as the widow's cruse. Of course there was an end to it at last, when her ladyship having condescended a glance or two of satisfaction, first at ourselves and next at the bloated knapsacks, walked off and joined Sir John, leaving me to settle matters as amicably as I could with the men, whom after about an hour's wrangling with one another, as to who should have this, and who should get that, I contrived to start with their ungainly loads to our next camping ground, about eight miles off ... (Calder, p. 54).

Such behaviour was not without precedent. Like many nineteenth-century middle-class travellers, the vice-regal couple indulged their taste for travel while at the same time treating the colony as their own informal empire. In a biography of Jane Franklin, Woodward writes that it was not fanciful to compare the role of Governor to that of king. 'A slave to the home government, in the colony he had the position of a despot. And it was not long before his wife was given the 'jocular' name of queen' (1951, p. 203). Calder wrote that during a trip to the east coast of Van Diemen's Land, the Franklins were accompanied:

not only by their own personal retinue of about half a dozen men and women (besides their horses), but by a considerable convoy of mounted settlers of the districts passed through the day before, forming altogether a caravan of about half a quarter of a mile long; so that in these progresses of a Governor of old, his visit to a settler must have been almost as great an infliction as those of King Lear were to his relative, with his hundred attendant knights in the traditional times of Old England (1984, p. 15).

A journey undertaken by the Nugents in Jamaica in 1802 similarly attracted such fanfare and other 'theatrics of empire', with whole neighbourhoods gathering 'to witness and marvel at the spectacle of imperial travel' (Brandenstein 2002, p. 55).

Both Lady Nugent and Lady Franklin employ the common nineteenth-century convention of irony in their journals, acknowledging how their identity might be construed as imperial. Lady Nugent compares herself to the Queen of Sheba when describing the way she was received by the Jamaican public (ibid, p. 53). Lady Franklin, while visiting New Zealand, comments:

What would be said if I had happened to (be) a sister of King William's which is it probable they fancied I might be (Franklin Jane, 1841, MS 248/91).

It is significant that, unlike their husbands' more public accounts, Lady Franklin and Lady Nugent's narratives are not public discourses but mostly constructed either through diary entries or letters considered private space. A diary by definition involves the individual narrator, where subjectivity, not objectivity, is central. Like Lady Nugent, Jane Franklin's diaries read as though they were 'a public performance or presentation of the self' (Brandenstein 2002, p. 46). Significantly, though, neither Lady Franklin nor Lady Nugent strove to make public history through their writing. This role was presumably regarded as a masculine prerogative reserved for their more heroic husbands, as demonstrated in Lady Franklin's letter to her sister, Mary Simpkinson, in 1837. The letter also illustrates her ambivalence about her gendered position:

And a woeful reputation it is in the estimation of weak minded and malicious and jealous men to be very clever. And if a Governor's wife is 'very clever' and is known to sit much in her own room and does not exhibit her fancy works and has travelled on three continents and is suspected of writing a book, why if she does not overturn the state, or keep it going, it is not because she has not the means ... (Woodward 1951, p. 204).

Both Lady Nugent and Lady Franklin proclaim that they wrote their journals not for publication but for friends and family. In 1863, twelve years before her death, Lady Franklin wrote to Tasmanian publisher Richard Bentley: 'I never had the intention of publishing a narrative of my travels and on that ground therefore, have only to acknowledge your flattering desire to be my publisher' (Franklin Jane, 248/90cc). Nevertheless, Lady Franklin's diaries, like those of Lady Nugent, were placed in the public arena after her death. In an irony that she may have appreciated, they were repositied in the male bastion of polar explorers, the Scott Polar Research Institute in Cambridge. The placement of her diaries and letters 'was determined by her husband's public activities and his involvement in what is generally acknowledged as 'history', writes Russell (2002, p. 3); they are valued almost exclusively for what they told of her husband's conquests as an explorer. In the National Library of Australia, again in recognition of her husband's achievements, her diaries and private writings are catalogued under the heading: Sir John Franklin, Diaries and Letters (loc cit).

'Jane Franklin's descriptions of colonial life, precise, vibrant and exhaustive as they are, gain new significance,' writes Russell,

if they are read also as evidence of her own fragile but tenacious sense of self. Viewed in this way, they become a remarkable display of the paradoxes of nineteenth century femininity: a sustained testament to the enormous contradiction of being, at that time, both a lady and a clever, energetic woman (2002, p. 24).

In their individual ways then, the Franklins used travel to energise the myth of Empire. As colonisers of the new empire of Van Diemen's Land, they differed in their approaches to being imperialistic scribes but in other ways, their pursuits ran parallel. While Sir John's motivation was clearly patriarchal and concerned with the imperial conquest of territories and mapping the geographical and scientific world, Lady Jane shared the public sphere by engaging in activities seen as masculine, and by becoming involved in the process of colonisation through governance. Both of them arguably contributed to improving the cultural climate of the colony. Lady Franklin's narratives, though, also inhabit the private sphere dealing with the particular and the domestic aspects of life. Like many of her nineteenth-century counterparts, she used travel to pursue a quest for identity by escaping the

gendered constraints of her era, an era in which upper-class women led 'lives of elaborate idleness' (Altick 1973, p. 51). However, as Hassam points out we must view such culturally-specific evaluations with caution, since they are relative. He writes that 'any form of writing rises and falls by its assimilation into a wider, if dominant cultural system of values' (1993, p. 25). If that is so, we should beware of reading the Franklins through twenty-first-century eyes and using hindsight enhanced by drawing on our own cultural values.

References

Alexander, A. (1999). *Obligated to Submit: Wives and Mistresses of Colonial Governors*. Hobart: Montpelier Press.

Altick, R. D. (1973). *Victorian People and Ideas*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

Bassnett, S. (2002). Travel writing and gender. In Hulme, P. & Youngs, T. (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Blanton, C. (1995). *Travel Writing: the Self and the World*. New York: Routledge.

Blunt, A. & Rose, G. (eds) (1994). *Writing Women and Space: Colonial and Postcolonial Geographies*. New York: The Guildford Press

--- . Introduction: Women's colonial and postcolonial geographies. In Blunt, & Rose, G. (eds) (1994). *Writing Women and Space: Colonial and Postcolonial Geographies*. New York: The Guildford Press.

Brandenstein, C. (2002). "Making the agreeable to the big wigs": Lady Nugent's grand tour of duty in Jamaica, 1801–1805. Cited in Gilbert, H. & Johnston, A. (eds), *In Transit: Travel, Text, Empire*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing.

Calder, J. E. (1984, first published in *The Tasmanian Tribune*, October 1875). *Recollections of Sir John and Lady Jane Franklin in Tasmania*. Adelaide: Nag's Head Press.

Fitzpatrick, K. (1949). *Sir John Franklin in Tasmania 1837–1843*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press.

Franklin, Jane (1836–1843). Unpublished transcription of journals and correspondence relating to the Franklin's life in Van Diemen's Land. Transcribed by Jenny Parrott for the Centre for Tasmanian Historical Studies. Includes Franklin MS 114-Letters cc1; Franklin Jane R/S 248/87; MS 248/84; MS 248/91; 248/90cc. Held in the School of History and Classics, University of Tasmania, Hobart.

Franklin, John (1967, originally published 1845). *Narratives of Some Passage in the History of Van Diemen's Land*. Hobart: Mercury Press.

Franklin John (1836–1843). Unpublished transcription of correspondence from Sir John Franklin in Van Diemen's Land. Transcribed by Jenny Parrott for the Centre for Tasmanian Historical Studies. Includes Franklin, M721. Held in the School of History and Classics, University of Tasmania, Hobart.

- Gilbert, H. & Johnston, A. (eds) (2002). *In Transit: Travel, Text, Empire*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing.
- Hassam, A. (1993) *Writing and Reality: a Study of Modern British Diary Fiction*. Westport: Greenwood Press.
- Holland, P. & Huggan, G. (2000). *Tourists with Typewriters: Critical Reflections on Contemporary Travel Writing*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Hulme, P. & Youngs, T. (eds). (2002). *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mackness, G. (1977). Australian Historical Monographs: *Some Private Correspondence of Sir John and Lady Jane Franklin (Tasmania, 1837–1845)*. Dubbo, NSW: Review Publications.
- Meredith, L. A. (1979). *My Home in Tasmania*. Adelaide: Sullivans Cove.
- Pateman, C. (1989). *The Disorder of Women: Democracy, Feminism and Political Theory*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Pratt, M. L. (1992). *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*. London: Routledge.
- Rose G. (1993). *Feminism and Geography: The Limits of Geographical Knowledge*. Cambridge, Polity Press
- Russell, P. (2002). *This Errant Lady: Jane Franklin's Overland Journey to Port Philip and Sydney, 1839*. Canberra: National Library of Australia.
- Woodward, F. (1951). *Portrait of Jane: A Life of Lady Franklin*. London: Hodder & Stoughton.

Address for correspondence

Lindsay Simpson
Head of Journalism
School of Humanities
James Cook University
Townsville QLD 4811
AUSTRALIA
Lindsay.Simpson@jcu.edu.au