Locating home where discourses of gender and empire intersect: An analysis of selected excerpts from Lady Anne Barnard's Cape diaries and journals

Jessica Murray
University of South Africa
murraj@unisa.ac.za

Abstract

Lady Anne Barnard's abundant textual legacy has received a great deal of academic attention with scholars scrutinising her letters, journals and diaries. Although much excellent research has been done on her texts, no one has yet offered a sustained critical engagement with representations of home in her writings.[1] This is a curious omission since the construct of home offers rich analytical possibilities, especially in colonial contexts. The notion of the English home played a crucial role in the larger imperial project and women, through their gendered association with the domestic sphere, were able to contribute to this political enterprise in vital, albeit constrained, ways by means of their homemaking activities. References to the home and her homemaking activities at the Cape crop up repeatedly in Lady Anne's manuscripts, which signal the importance she attached to the loaded ideological construction of the home. A close reading of these extracts yields important insights into the racialised, gendered and classed experiences and identities of Europeans at the Cape in the eighteenth century.[2] This article attempts to fill the scholarly gap by exploring how discourses of gender and empire shaped Lady Anne's understanding of home. An exploration of these dynamics will shed light on the social and political economies that were operating at the Cape at the time, with a particular emphasis on their gendered dimension. By means

1 While not focussing on the theoretical construct of "home" as such, Kirsten McKenzie has done important work on domestic space and the significant ways in which social and geographical mobilities intersect with imperial identity in, for instance, K Mckenzie, Social mobilities at the Cape of Good Hope: Lady Anne Barnard, Samuel Hudson, and the opportunities of empire, c. 1797-1824, T Ballantyne and A Burton, *Moving subjects: Gender, mobility, and intimacy in an age of global empire* (Illinois, University of Illinois Press, 2009), pp. 274-295.

2 Gender, race and class are all social constructions. Gender refers to "the social meanings and value attached to being female or male in any given society, expressed in terms of the concepts masculinity and femininity". D Richardson, "Conceptualizing gender", D Richardson and V Robinson, *Introducing women's and gender studies* (New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp. 3-19. As with gender, the construction of race is a process of hierachisation with certain, superior attributes being linked to whiteness and negative characteristics being associated with various shades of blackness. Colonial authority relied on the mythology of race as it "was constructed on powerful, but false premises: the notion that Europeans in the colonies made up a superior, easily identifiable and discrete biological and social entity. The politics of membership in this elite was contingent on constructing categories, legal and social classifications designating who was 'white', who was 'native', who could become a citizen rather than a subject...". AL Stoler, "Making empire respectable: The politics of race and sexual morality in 20th-century colonial cultures", *American Ethnologist,* 16(4), 1989, pp. 634-660. Class refers to the socio economic position of an individual and it is connected with notions of status and respectability.

of a feminist literary analysis of selected excerpts from her writings, I will demonstrate the gendered and racial forces that come into play in Lady Anne's discursive and practical constructions of a home in the Cape Colony.

Keywords: Gender; Empire; Home; Lady Anne Barnard; Life writing; Cape Colony.

Introduction

The concept of home is a recurring theme in the diaries, journals and letters Lady Anne Barnard wrote after relocating to South Africa when her husband was appointed as the Colonial Secretary of the Cape Colony in 1797.[3] Her experiences at the Cape were shaped by the fact that she was a British woman who was affiliated to a British administration which was ruling a conquered Dutch colony. When reading her writings, it is important to consider her personal identity in relation to her location at the Cape. Lady Anne's texts can be categorised under the broad umbrella term of life writing or life stories.[4] According to Alison Blunt and Robyn Dowling, "life stories provide rich sources for studying personal memories and lived experiences of home" and they encourage scholars to engage with such writings "in relation to the wider political, social and cultural contexts within which they are situated and constituted".[5] Sagar notes that, "[b]ecause of the formidable emotive charge it carries, the idea of home tends to erupt without warning in non-domestic sites where it might be least expected, the supposedly public sphere of Empire and nation, for instance".[6]

An interrogation of Lady Anne's diary and journal entries reveals how her understanding of home is shaped by discourses of gender and empire. Blunt and Dowling remind us that "gender is crucial in lived experiences and

3 A number of researchers have offered excellent gendered readings of Lady Anne's texts. For some of the most important critical interventions in this regard, see, for example, M Lenta, "All the lighter parts: Lady Anne Barnard's letters from Cape Town", *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature,* 22(2), 1991, pp. 57-71; M Lenta, "The shape of a woman's life: Lady Anne Barnard's", *Memoir, Literator,* 14(2), 1993, pp. 101-115 and M Lenta, "Degrees of freedom: Lady Anne Barnard's Cape diaries", *English in Africa,* 19(2), 1992, pp. 55-68. See also D Driver, "A literary appraisal", AM Lewin Robinson, M Lenta and D Driver, *The Cape journals of Lady Anne Barnard 1797-1798* (Cape Town, Van Riebeeck Society, 1994), pp. 1-13. This article seeks to take this scholarly debate forward by focusing the analytical gaze on the ways in which discourses of gender and empire intersect to inform the construction of home.

4 Letters, diaries and journals are all very different forms of life writing with distinctive characteristics and various levels of mediation. For more on the constructed nature of life writing, in its many manifestations, see J Murray, "I write after the impression has been partly wiped away: Gender and the politics of memory in Lady Anne Barnard's textual legacy", *Scrutiny,* 2, 17(2), 2012, pp. 44-64.

5 A Blunt and R Dowling, *Home* (London, Routledge, 2006), p. 33.

6 A Sagar, "Homes and postcoloniality", *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies,* 6(2), 1997, p. 237.

imaginaries of home".[7] Feminist scholars have long argued that the distinction between the private and public realms is an artificial one and that, in fact, the supposedly private domain of the home "itself is intensely political both in its internal relationships and through its interfaces with the wider world over domestic, national and imperial scales".[8] Lady Anne's descriptions of her homemaking efforts at the Cape suggest that "the colonial Englishwoman's calling – homemaking in the colonies – was seen as not just a corollary but a vital enabler of the masculine work of Empire".[9]

By means of a feminist literary analysis of selected excerpts from Lady Anne's diaries and journals, this article explores the complex ways in which discourses of gender and empire inform conceptualisations of home in the context of the Cape Colony from 1797 to 1800. Although a range of scholarship suggests the "triangulated relationship"[10] between home, gender and empire, I seek to offer a sustained critical exploration of how these dynamics operated at the particular temporal and spatial location of the Cape from 1797 to 1800 and how they are textually represented in Lady Anne's writings. This close textual analysis adds to academic insights about the complex and fluid ways in which the social constructions of gender, race and class shape understandings of home.[11] My primary intervention here is a feminist one as I attempt to use Lady Anne's writings to illustrate how one woman utilised the conventionally female space of the home to political ends and how she engaged in nuanced gendered and racialised negotiations to do so.[12] It is also necessary to note that I consciously employ scholarship that is rooted in the mid or later nineteenth century as well as contemporary scholarly interventions while Lady Anne wrote and lived in an earlier period. This analytic and theoretical manoeuvre serves to highlight how persistent the forces of gender and race are in the construction of home.

7 A Blunt and R Dowling, *Home...*, p. 15.

8 A Blunt and R Dowling, *Home...*, p. 142.

9 A Sagar, "Homes and postcoloniality", *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies,* 6(2), 1997, p. 239.

10 I thank the anonymous reviewer from whose feedback I have taken this formulation.

11 While the intricately imbricated manner in which gender, race and class are mutually constituted necessitates reference to all three these markers of identity, the greater emphasis in this article will be on gender. This focus reflects my own location as a feminist scholar rather than suggesting that gender is somehow more salient or deserves more analytic attention than race or class.

12 The focus on home is part of the feminist nature of this scholarly intervention. This is similar to a point that Antoinette Burton also makes in her analysis of women's writing about home in late colonial India: "The frequency with which women writers of different nations have made use of home to stage their dramas of remembrance is a sign of how influential the cult of domesticity and its material exigencies has been for inhabitants of structurally gendered locations like the patriarchal household". See A Burton, *Dwelling in the archive: Women writing house, home, and history in late colonial India* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 6.

Lady Anne's gendered role in reproducing the imperial home at the Cape

In his exploration of the presence of British settlers at the Cape Colony, Alan Lester suggests that "women's provision of familiar domestic appearances, of household routine, and of reconciliatory diversions, lay at the heart of the settler community's reproduction".[13] At various points in her diaries, letters and journals, Lady Anne emphasises the contributions she makes to maintain a harmonious domestic space. The frequency with which her homemaking efforts feature in her texts indicates both that these tasks occupied a significant amount of her time and that she regarded them as more important than she sometimes lets on. Over the course of a single diary entry, dated "Monday, Feb 10 & so on – 1800", the reader can clearly identify the extent to which Lady Anne's construction of her role in the home at the Cape is profoundly gendered, racialised and classed. In one reflection, she trivialises her role as one that merely provides some light amusement when she states: "I begin to see myself a Glass of Champaign or a little cherry brandy to that home".[14]

Just after seeming to relish this ability to provide some antidote to the "naturally dull" disposition of some of her fellow settlers, Lady Anne shifts her tone and focus. She turns her attention to the domestic labour she is compelled to perform and she does so in a register that vacillates between complaint and stoic self-sacrifice. At this stage of their sojourn at the Cape, the Barnards are in the process of moving into a new cottage in the countryside and Lady Anne is busy with overseeing the renovations. Her reflections signal that she is very aware of her class position and she resents having to do such basic housekeeping tasks. She describes it as follows: "a disagreeable business, I am really tired of having houses to fit up & furnish but is has been my lot to be alternately the great Lady (sometimes very – very near being one of the

13 A Lester, *Imperial networks: Creating identities in nineteenth-century South Africa and Britain* (London, Routledge, 2001), p. 73.

14 The quotations from Lady Anne's texts are taken from various edited collections, including M Lenta and B Le Cordeur, eds. *The Cape diaries of Lady Anne Barnard 1799-1800, 1 and 2* (Cape Town, Van Riebeeck Society, 1999); AM Lewin Robinson, *The Cape journals of Lady Anne Barnard 1797-1798* (Cape Town, Van Riebeeck Society, 1994) and HJ Anderson, ed. *South Africa a century ago (1797-1801), Part 1: Letters written from the Cape of Good Hope; Part 2: Extracts from a journal addressed to her sisters in England by the Lady Anne Barnard* (Cape Town, Maskew Miller, 1924) [hereafter referred to as *South Africa*]. This quotation: M Lenta and B Le Cordeur, eds., *The Cape diaries of Lady Anne Barnard..., 2,* p. 52. I have retained the original spellings, capitalizations, indications of emphasis and abbreviations as they appear in these collections. Where I have italicized words or phrases to indicate my own emphases, I have acknowledged doing so in the article. In their preface to the first volume of her journals, Lenta and Le Cordeur offer more information about how they attempted "to preserve the individuality and idiosyncrasies" of Lady Anne's writing while also making it accessible to contemporary readers (M Lenta and B Le Cordeur, eds., *The Cape diaries of Lady Anne Barnard...,* p. x).

greatest) and then the upholsterer – Housekeeper etc".[15] In the parenthesis, Lady Anne is referring to her singular position at the Cape. She is the daughter of an Earl and, even though she is married to the Colonial Secretary of the Cape, her rank enables her to fulfil an elevated function. Margaret Lenta and Basil le Cordeur explain these dynamics:[16]

> As was so often the case at that time, the Governor was not accompanied [to the Cape Colony] by his wife, and Lady Anne, with her social accomplishments and experience, acted as official hostess for him, enthusiastically and successfully embracing the role of first lady of the colony.

Lady Anne keenly feels the classed conflict of being both the greatest of ladies and a housekeeper, but she appears to make this sacrifice because of the emphasis she places on her gendered role as "a married woman"[17] and she is determined to turn this dilapidated cottage into a "pretty place" for her and her husband. Even as she is trying to turn this into a liveable home, her understanding of what would constitute a home is clearly shaped by her memories of England. In an earlier diary entry, this nostalgic pull of the imperial homeland is articulated when she notes that "B & I sat in our room with a fire place tonight – had a good wooden fire – & fancied ourselves at an Inn in England".[18]

Her present home is always juxtaposed with her past and future homes and her gendered, classed identity is one that is as much in a state of flux as her home. She bemoans the fact that her "domestic compulsions" or housekeeping responsibilities have the following consequence: "I was greatly prevented from being the Woman I wished to be … for the Woman I was necessitated to be".[19] By focusing on making a home, she is acutely aware that she no longer has the scope for the activities that are associated with a woman of her class: "I longed to enjoy myself in writing … drawing … music … talking … in a lazy

15 M Lenta and B Le Cordeur, eds., *The Cape diaries of Lady Anne Barnard...,* 2, p. 53. It is doubtful that Lady Anne actually had to do any physical upholstery. Rather, she is more likely speaking metaphorically here to suggest how much more involved in the mundane details she needs to be at the Cape than she would have been in an upper-class English household where such oversight would have been delegated to a butler or housekeeper. Although Lady Anne's ideas about her gendered class position continue to be shaped by her experiences in the metropole, these constructions are now embedded in the different context of the Cape and they thus operate differently. At the Cape she is required to be more involved in household affairs but, as in the metropole, a woman of her class still had access to the labour of others. In her new homes at the Cape, as in the metropole, her gendered status demands that she, rather than her husband, should oversee the making of an acceptable home.

16 M Lenta and B Le Cordeur, eds., *The Cape diaries of Lady Anne Barnard...,* 1, p. x.

17 M Lenta and B Le Cordeur, eds., *The Cape diaries of Lady Anne Barnard...,* 2, p. 53.

18 M Lenta and B Le Cordeur, eds., *The Cape diaries of Lady Anne Barnard...,* 1, p. 96.

19 AM Lewin Robinson, *The Cape journals of Lady Anne Barnard...,* p. 228.

way but there was no time for the Elegant accomplishments for the homely cares". Her repeated references to the sacrifices that she is making in favour of homemaking serve to remind the reader that she is engaged in the much larger imperial project. William Glover notes that "[m]any scholars have underlined the importance of a discourse on 'domesticity' in the constitution of colonial power".[20] He goes on to explain that the "transplanted European in their colonial domicile, through an industrious application of effort, could realise the ideals of cleanliness and order required to both run an empire effectively and insure domestic tranquility".[21] Lady Anne stresses how she imposes this order on the building that is designated to become their home: "the paper tumbling down from partial damps in the walls, & want of proper air thro the rooms… I have ordered all to be scrubd & must go down myself to get it finished".[22] Even though she is no longer able to indulge in the activities that are proper to a woman of her class, she still occupies the relatively powerful class position that allows her to give the orders. She clearly feels the need to oversee the cleaning and ordering as she distrusts the "drunken carpenters & masons".

The image of the dilapidated house that she needs to get in order represents a domestic, private re-enactment of the imperial project of taming the "untried Land".[23] Her husband is seen fulfilling the traditionally masculine role of curbing the encroaching wilderness outside the home: "Mr B after dinner cutting oak hedges, working away in clearing off the Luxuriant wilderness on each side of our door which requires frequent clearings else every things sprouts up at once". The constant vigilance that is required to keep the untamed African landscape at bay is something that Lady Anne repeats in the domestic space of the home. After doing some travelling, she expresses her concern that her absence would have had an adverse effect on their home because "whoever leaves home without a very steady person in rule will be apt to find everything has gone Topsy Turvey in absence".[24] In her descriptions of their activities at the Cape, Lady Anne represents herself and her husband

20 W Glover, "A feeling of absence from old England: The colonial bungalow", *Home Cultures,* 1(1), 2004, p. 62.
21 W Glover, "A feeling of absence from old England...", *Home Cultures,* 1(1), 2004, p. 63.
22 M Lenta and B Le Cordeur, eds., *The Cape diaries of Lady Anne Barnard...,* 2, p. 53.
23 M Lenta and B Le Cordeur, eds., *The Cape diaries of Lady Anne Barnard...,,* 1, p. 7.
24 AM Lewin Robinson, *The Cape journals of Lady Anne Barnard...,* p. 422.

as a team working together in the service of Empire.[25] Although Mr Barnard has an official position in the Cape administration, Lady Anne is no less concerned with furthering the interests of Empire and she plays her gendered role conscientiously. She misses no opportunity to stress her allegiance to the Crown and she represents herself as a humble servant to "Lady Britannia".[26] She realises that the "Castle was a Government House" first and foremost. Even as she attempts to turn this into their temporary home, she does so in the best interest of Empire: "I of course called forth all the little invention I was Mistress of to cost Government as little as I could".[27]

At various stages of her writing it emerges that the members of this team are far from equal. She is very aware that her power and role in the imperial enterprise is curtailed by her gender. Even as she proves herself to be an astute observer of the political dynamics at the Cape, she knows that she is primarily there as a wife. At one stage she articulates how this gender position limits her power when she reflects: "My situation as Wife to the Colonial Secretary unfortunately rendered it improper for me to interfere in Military matters…".[28] Although any "interference" in military matters by non-military personnel would likely be regarded as unwelcome, Lady Anne's remarks here are explicitly gendered. The terms "interference" and the notion of propriety are themselves fundamentally gendered. In the case of the former, the term implies a devaluation of a contribution that is associated with women and, in the case of the latter, propriety constitutes a crucial component of respectable femininity. Behaviour that is improper and suggests that a woman does not know her place has specifically gendered implications for the construction of femininity. Rather than allowing this exclusion from the public space of the military to render her passive and disempowered, however, Lady Anne focuses on the domestic sphere of the home. She explains that she "turned [her] thoughts to making a little Vauxhall" of their residence. This is a reference to Vauxhall Gardens which was a "popular place of entertainment in London".[29] Even though gendered notions of propriety prevent her from direct political involvement, the

25 Although this article focuses on Lady Anne's construction of home at the intersection of gendered and imperial discourses, she was, by all accounts, a most astute observer of the larger political and socio economic dynamics that shaped her immediate and broader surroundings. Her interests and observations in the diaries are varied and these are authoritatively discussed in M Lenta and B Le Cordeur, *The Cape diaries of Lady Anne Barnard...*, pp. xvii-xxxv.

26 AM Lewin Robinson, *The Cape journals of Lady Anne Barnard...*, p. 176.

27 AM Lewin Robinson, *The Cape journals of Lady Anne Barnard...*, p. 176.

28 AM Lewin Robinson, *The Cape journals of Lady Anne Barnard...*, p. 195.

29 AM Lewin Robinson, *The Cape journals of Lady Anne Barnard...*, p. 192.

replication of a part of London in their colonial home is no less of a political act. Dorothy Driver contends that the "place of women in the colonies was carefully defined and circumscribed within what was an avowedly masculine enterprise" and this proper place was undoubtedly centred on the home.[30]

Of the gendered division of labour in the imperial project, Driver explains that, "[i]f the myth regarding white men is that they penetrated and tamed the 'dark continent, the myth regarding white women is that they made that continent 'liveable'".[31] In her analysis of women's writings of home in late colonial India, Antoinette Burton reminds us that "the domain that home houses has its boundaries drawn for it by the larger culture, as well as by the political economies of race, nation, sexuality, and empire that shape it".[32] However much the construction of the home in the metropole informed Lady Anne's homemaking efforts at the Cape, the realities of the Cape context and the specifically colonial political economies that manifested themselves at the Cape, circumscribed her efforts.

Home as a recurring image in women's life writing at the Cape

The intersections of racialised and patriarchal discourses in representations of homes in colonial South Africa are by no means unique to Lady Anne's writings. They also crop up in the diary of another European woman who travelled to the Cape shortly after Lady Anne's stay in Africa. Augusta de Mist, who is more accurately situated within the context of Batavian Republicanism, was very differently located than Lady Anne, but her travel writings contain similarly interesting observations about women's roles and relative powers in homemaking activities. Augusta was only eighteen when she joined her father who was travelling to the Cape to assume the position of the "Commissary-General in the name of the Republic [of Batavia]"[33] after the Cape of Good Hope passed from Britain to the Batavian Republic. They stayed at the Cape from 1802 until 1805. Unlike the substantial textual legacy Lady Anne left behind, Augusta's diary is barely 50 pages long. A few extracts from this brief diary are, however, worth including in this article because, although they offer

30 D Driver, "Woman as sign in the South African colonial enterprise", *Journal of Literary Studies,* 4(1), 1988, p. 6.

31 D Driver, "Woman as sign...", *Journal of Literary Studies,* 4(1), 1988, p. 9.

32 A Burton, *Dwelling in the archive: Women writing house, home, and history in late colonial India* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 6.

33 EH Burrows, "Introduction", EH Burrows ed., *Diary of a journey to the Cape of Good Hope and the interior of Africa in 1802 and 1803 by Jonkvrouw Augusta Uitenhage de Mist* (Cape Town, AA Balkema, 1954), p. 6.

another woman's observations about women and the home during roughly the same time period, they focus on how these dynamics play out in the indigenous population. These observations emerge during a journey to the "interior of Africa in 1802 and 1803".[34] Like Lady Anne, Augusta speaks very much in the authoritative voice of Empire. Although she has fairly limited exposure to the indigenous population, she regards the colonial reading of the indigenous people as factual. This power that resides in the colonial gaze and interpretations is revealed in Augusta's terminological choices. During their journey, they meet the Commandant at the Algoa Bay military post and Augusta notes that Captain Alberti, who had "frequent dealings with the Kaffirs… had the kindness to relate the following *facts* about them" (emphasis in italics added). She then goes on to describe a number of "their habits and customs".[35]

Of particular interest for the purposes of this article is the way in which discourses of empire and gender intersect when she relates the gendered interactions in the space of the indigenous home. She starts this part of her diary with a blatantly racist, imperial and profoundly gendered comment about the manifestation of so-called civilised power relations: "It is a general belief, and experience corroborates it, that the respect that each nation shows its womenfolk runs parallel with its level of civilisation".[36] The unstated reality here is, of course, that this "general belief" is shaped by the European middle-class imperial and patriarchal ideologies with which Augusta was raised. As an eighteen year old girl, it is also doubtful how much corroboration her experience can offer. She then uses the racist assumption of the savagery of the indigenous population to cast doubt on "general belief": "yet this sentiment appears to be contradicted here; at least it appeared to be the exception with those whom one sees amongst the Kaffirs". According to her theory, the uncivilised "Kaffirs" should have been treating their "womenfolk" abominably. To her surprise, this expectation is contradicted as she notes that, "[h]owever much the men appear to exercise authority in a more positive and strongly expressed manner, the woman possesses a softer control, based only on respect, and which assures her of her influence over the men". In the next line of her diary, Augusta neatly encapsulates the insidious way in which women's supposed power in the private sphere serves to mask their exclusion from the public realm: "She [indigenous woman] takes no part in the meetings

34 EH Burrows, "Introduction", EH Burrows ed., *Diary of a journey to the Cape of Good Hope...,* p. 15.
35 EH Burrows, "Introduction", EH Burrows ed., *Diary of a journey to the Cape of Good Hope...,* p. 46.
36 EH Burrows, "Introduction", EH Burrows ed., *Diary of a journey to the Cape of Good Hope...,* p. 50.

at which matters of general interest are dealt with; but she exercises almost unlimited control in her own household". These meetings where "matters of general interest" are discussed are the spaces in which political decisions are made and the consequences of women's exclusion from such spaces are far reaching. In a system of structural gender inequality, the supposed control that women exercise in the home is, in any case, doubtful. Augusta's diary entry suggests that women in precolonial South Africa enjoyed a considerable degree of power and equality in the home.

The notion of patriarchy as a colonial imposition has been thoroughly discredited. One of the most authoritative scholars in this field is Belinda Bozzoli who describes how indigenous and colonial forms of patriarchy in Africa "result... in a 'patchwork-quilt' – a system in which forms of patriarchy are sustained, modified and even entrenched in a variety of ways depending on the internal character of the system in the first instance".[37] This analysis does not mean to imply that either Africa or the various and diverse manifestations of patriarchy on the African continent can be regarded as monolithic. Susan Geiger, Nakanyike Musisi amd Jean Marie Allman's edited collection, *Women in African colonial histories,* offers detailed explorations of a variety of gendered social structures in different African contexts.[38] Without suggesting any homogeneity in gender relations in Africa, Augusta's observations are included here to emphasise how constructions of race and gender shape understandings of "home" and that these understandings are profoundly politicised.

Negotiating racialised and classed manifestations of patriarchy

Lady Anne's experiences at the Cape reveal that she has to negotiate her way amongst various manifestations of patriarchy that is always already racialised and classed. Although she sometimes appears to minimise the significance of her "little Household cares in Africa", the critical reader notes the extent of the ideological work that she is doing as she attempts to make enough sense of her place in Africa to establish a temporary home. [39] She realises that the women

37 B Bozzoli, "Marxism, feminism and South African Studies", *Journal of Southern African Studies,* 9(2), 1983, p. 149.

38 S Geiger, N Musisi, JMAllman, eds., *Women in African colonial histories* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2002). For different examples of gendered power relations in various African contexts, see also I Berger, "Feminism, patriarchy, and African women's history", *Journal of Women's History,* 20(2), 2008, pp. 130-135; I Amadiume, *Male daughters, female husbands* (London, Zed Books, 1987); J Weir, "I shall need her to rule: The power of royal Zulu women in pre-colonial Zululand", *South African Historical Journal,* 43, 2000, pp. 3-23.

39 M Lenta and B Le Cordeur, eds., *The Cape diaries of Lady Anne Barnard...,* 2, p. 112.

who were prepared to go to the colonies are granted some leeway in terms of their gendered and class roles: "the European women and particularly the English are highly prized here, and whatever women arrive from Europe, have the liberty of wearing their old clothes for two years without any reflection before they refit themselves…".[40]

This "liberty" is, however, constrained and the energy women expend on making homes in the colonies allows them to delay attending to their classed appearance rather than to avoid it altogether. In her exploration of the experiences of female emigrators to the British Empire, Julia Bush notes the "intractability of class and gender roles forged in Victorian Britain" and she argues that these were "only slightly more malleable in colonial contexts".[41] There is some indication in her writing that Lady Anne is aware that the gendered and class expectations of her are less rigid at the Cape, even if slightly so. Lady Anne admits that "[t]hat which is least agreeable in [her] lot is certainly more done away in Africa than it could be in England".[42] She continues to explain: "I am married to an amiable good man, but he is neither a nabob or a peer – in Africa I am not reminded of this by any thing which brings my influence to the test of comparison…". The class pressures are far more acute in England and Lady Anne describes the effect of these class dynamics as follows: "in England where I live with those who in almost every respect are better respected than myself, I have sometimes … felt myself more secondary that I would have wished…".[43]

Interestingly, in a diary entry dated August 1799, she describes her homes at the Cape and in England in a way that signals different "degrees of freedom".[44] Of the home she is making at the Vineyard at the Cape, she makes the following

40 AM Lewin Robinson, *The Cape journals of Lady Anne Barnard...,* p. 283. Lady Anne here seems to be imposing her own class-based expectations concerning sartorial conventions (which are shaped by her experiences in the metropole) on the women she encounters at the Cape, without considering the very different positions that these women occupied. Although a detailed exploration of this issue is beyond the scope of this article, I raise the point here to emphasise the greater perceived scope for flexibility at the Cape. In her study of respectability in colonial Sydney and Cape Town, Kirsten McKenzie also observes that "[w]hether or not expectations were realised, there was a sense that the colonial setting was more flexible than Europe itself". See K McKenzie, *Scandal in the colonies* (Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 2004), p. 12.

41 J Bush, "The right sort of woman: Female emigrators and emigration to the British Empire, 1890-1910", *Women's History Review,* 3(3), 1994, p. 391.

42 M Lenta and B Le Cordeur, eds., *The Cape diaries of Lady Anne Barnard...,* 2, p. 113.

43 M Lenta and B Le Cordeur, eds., *The Cape diaries of Lady Anne Barnard...,* 2, p. 113. For more on the malleability of class roles afforded by Empire, see K McKenzie, "Social mobilities at the Cape of Good Hope: Lady Anne Barnard, Samuel Hudson, and the opportunities of empire, c. 1797-1824, T Ballantyne and A Burton", *Moving subjects: Gender, mobility, and intimacy in an age of global empire* (Illinois, University of Illinois Press, 2009), pp. 274-295.

44 M Lenta, "Degrees of freedom...", *English in Africa,* 19(2), 1992, p. 55.

observation: "I dare say this will be a choice birds nest, but I shall not be the bird to sing in it long – England I hope will be my cage …".[45] While a nest evokes a sense of warmth, safety and comfort, the image of a cage suggests entrapment. The space of becoming and potential that is a nest, makes way for the certain restriction that can be found in a cage. That Lady Anne prefers to occupy the stereotypical position of the upper class woman trapped in the gilded cage, hints at the powerful pull of home, in this case both as the current domestic space that she occupies and as an ideological construction of the metropolitan home to which she will return.[46] The limited power that women do have access to certainly revolves around their homemaking roles.

In one of her early diary entries, Lady Anne recounts a conversation in which they (Lady Anne and Mr Barnard) discuss whether the new Governor and his wife will move into the Castle. This is a frequent and loaded topic of conversation since it will necessitate that the Barnards vacate the premises and set up a temporary home elsewhere. It is apparent that no one has any concrete information in this regard, but their speculations are directed by gendered assumptions about women's role on deciding matters of home. Someone has heard that the new Governor's wife "does not like your House [the Castle where the Barnards are residing at this stage] at all & as the *ladys govern* these things a good deal perhaps he will remain as he is…" [emphasis added].[47] The use of the word "govern" is a significant terminological choice here since it implies that women have the type of power that is associated with formal politics within the sphere of the home.

In one of her first letters after their arrival at the Cape, Lady Anne describes how they took up residence at the Castle.[48] The passage is worth quoting at length for the insight it grants the reader into the complex ways in which her understanding of home crystalizes at the intersections of racial, gendered and classed discourses:[49]

> It is a palace, containing such a suite of apartments as makes me fancy myself

45 M Lenta and B Le Cordeur, eds., *The Cape diaries of Lady Anne Barnard...,* 1, pp. 231-232.

46 The notion that the home and domesticity can constitute an oppressive gilded cage is well documented by B Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (London, Penguin, 1963). For a reference to the home as a "gilded cage", see also A Blunt, "Imperial Geographies of home: British domesticity in India, 1886-1925", *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers,* 24(4), 1999, pp. 421-440.

47 M Lenta and B Le Cordeur, eds., *The Cape diaries of Lady Anne Barnard...,* 2, p. 12.

48 For more on Lady Anne's utilisation of domestic decoration as a political strategy, particulary by means of the interior décor of their Castle apartments, see K McKenzie, *Scandal in the colonies* (Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 2004), pp. 53, 56.

49 HJ Anderson, ed., *South Africa a century ago...*, p. 10.

> a princess when in it – but not an Indian or Hottentot princess, as I have fitted all up in the style of a comfortable, plain, English house – Scotch carpets, English linen, and rush-bottom chairs, with plenty of lolling sofas, which I had made by regimental carpenters and regimental tailors.

Georgina Gowens explains that "the notion of home is based around an organising principle of inclusions and exclusions and is a way of establishing difference that is fundamental to imperialism".[50] The most obvious difference that is emphasised here by means of dashes is that of racial difference. Lest there be any confusion, Lady Anne reminds the reader that, although this home may be physically located in a colony, it remains an English one as she distances herself from the racial identity of "Indians" or "Hottentots". Rosemary Marangoly George notes that "homes and nations are defined in the instances of confrontation with what is considered 'not home', with the foreign, with distance".[51] In his analysis of settler women's activities in homes, Simon Dagut articulates a similar point in even stronger terms when he argues that these women were "acting as colonialism's social border police on subliminal orders from racist patriarchy".[52] This policing takes place at a practical as well as an ideological and discursive level. In addition to being the English Lady of the manor (or, in this case, the Castle) who hosts her "balls & partys",[53] Lady Anne is patrolling the ideological understanding of what constitutes a home and, in the extract above, white Englishness is posited as an inextricable element of her discursive construction of home.

As in the rest of her writings, the extract reveals that Lady Anne's gendered role in the home is conceived as anything but powerless or passive. Her activity in this case centres on her homemaking efforts and these are also a significant, and fundamentally gendered, source of power. She is the active agent as she explains that "I have fitted it all up". Marongoly George argues that the "establishment of English homes in the colonies increased avenues through which Englishwomen could directly contribute to the national enterprise of imperialism".[54] With her turning this Cape abode into an "English house", Lady Anne is, in essence, "replicat[ing] Empire on a domestic scale".[55] She does so by importing commodities from England. David Ralph and Lynn

50 G Gowans, "Imperial geographies of home: Memsahibs and Miss-Sahibs in India and Britain, 1915-1947", *Cultural Geographies,* 10, 2003, p. 428.

51 RM George, "Homes in the empire, empires in the home", *Cultural Critique,* 26, 1993-1994, p. 4.

52 S Dagut, "Gender, colonial 'women's history' and the construction of social distance: Middle-class British women in later nineteenth-century South Africa", *Journal of Southern African Studies,* 26(3), 2000, p. 559.

53 M Lenta and B Le Cordeur, eds., *The Cape diaries of Lady Anne Barnard...,* 2, p. 48.

54 R Marangoly George, "Homes in the empire...", *Cultural Critique,* 26, 1993-1994, p. 98.

55 R Marangoly George, "Homes in the empire...", *Cultural Critique,* 26, 1993-1994, p. 50.

Staeheli argue that the "importance of material objects in creating a sense of home and of sustaining relationships that help to constitute home can hardly be overstated".[56] Divya Tolio-Kelly explains that such objects "are connective markers to geographical nodes of identification. Through their prismatic nature, 'other' lives, lands, and homes are made part of this one".[57]

It seems clear that, for Lady Anne, this place can be transformed into some type of home when she is able to view it through the prisms of her English possessions. In a journal entry dated January 1799, Lady Anne reveals the profoundly jingoistic imperialist assumptions underlying the process of importing material possessions in order to replicate English homes in the Cape Colony. She is describing a discussion with their "judicious agent Mr C"[58] about the logistical arrangements that are involved in their relocation. Mr C is very much subscribing to the notion of Africa as *terra nullius,* the "dark continent" that is to be civilised by the influx of English customs and objects. He tells the Barnards that "[t]here are few luxuries to be found at the Cape … but as the place belongs to *us* now, Every English Article will be exported to it in such abundance that you will soon find things cheaper there than at home" (emphasis as in the original text). When Lady Anne orders their home to be equipped with "Scotch carpets" and "English linen", she is thus actively contributing to the larger imperial project and the home is the locus of this political participation. The preference for and belief in the superiority of English objects are built into the very structure of the home for, as Lady Anne explains, they may use local clay and plaster during the building process but "for all the essential parts we buy English bricks".[59] Her belief in the superiority of English material objects finds a disturbing corollary in a general view that Europeans are so superior that the local Cape population is basically dehumanised. She states, for instance: "but feeling of all sorts in any acute degree seems to me to belong to Europeans only".[60]

56 D Ralph and LA Staeheli, "Home and migration: Mobilities, belongings and identities", *Geography Compass,* 5(7), 2011, p. 519.

57 D Tolia-Kelly, "Locating processes of identification: Studying the precipitates of re-memory through artefacts in the British Asian home", *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers,* 29(3), 2004, p. 317.

58 AM Lewin Robinson, *The Cape journals of Lady Anne Barnard...,* p. 24.

59 M Lenta and B Le Cordeur, eds., *The Cape diaries of Lady Anne Barnard...,* 1, p. 74.

60 M Lenta and B Le Cordeur, eds., *The Cape diaries of Lady Anne Barnard...,* 1, p. 295.

Constructing a home in the shadow of a past and future home

It seems that Africa is not only empty of material objects. Lady Anne depends on news from England to preserve their links to home. The African curiosities and adventures she describes in her letters are no more than that: they are diversions rather than substantive points of connection. She bemoans the fact that "there has been no ships from England for an age" and she describes the consequence of this lack of communication from the homeland as follows: "nothing new to create new ideas or a new fund for conversation".[61] The distance from England causes her to lose touch with the customs that are demanded of a Lady of her social standing and this places her at a distinct disadvantage when she attempts to solidify the connections they left behind in England. She is often apologetic about this in her writing but she assumes that her readers at home will understand the notion of the nothingness with which she is confronted in Africa. An extract from one of her letters reveals how profoundly she feels the Imperial construction of Africa's emptiness and darkness: "Here living far from the world of London – in Africa – uncertain when I may see England again & totally in the dark of what it is the fashion to say – to think or to advise, you have simply the sentiments of a heart that loves you".[62] Note that her formulation suggests that the entire world is contained in the centre of London while the whole continent of Africa is so peripheral that it offers no clue as to what she should be thinking.

Pauline Leonard contends that gender differences are very pronounced in expatriate discourses of home "as maintaining links with the old 'home' (both relationships and the domestic home) and reproducing those links in the new context, are mainly feminine responsibilities and a key part of many feminine identities".[63] Lady Anne is very much occupied with maintaining their personal links to England and these efforts emerge throughout her texts as well as in the paratextual elements. The dedication that precedes the second volume of her Cape journals, for instance, reads "To the dear people at home".[64] She repeatedly refers to the African curiosities that she will send to

61 M Lenta and B Le Cordeur, eds., *The Cape diaries of Lady Anne Barnard...,* 1, p. 235.

62 M Lenta and B Le Cordeur, eds., *The Cape diaries of Lady Anne Barnard...,* 2, p. 174.

63 P Leonard, "Migrating identities: Gender, whiteness and Britishness in post-colonial Hong Kong", *Gender, Place and Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography,* 15(1), 2008, p. 50. I thank the anonymous reviewer for pointing out that the male colonial officials also maintained connections with the metropolitan home through their daily activities in the colonial administration. The notion of home encompasses a broad range of identifications, including the social and political structures and systems as well as households and personal and familial relationships. In the section above, I explore how Lady Anne's maintenance of a particular dimension of the personal connection to the metropolitan home is gendered.

64 AM Lewin Robinson, *The Cape journals of Lady Anne Barnard...,* p. 147.

her friends and family: "While here and at leisure I began to collect my Cape trifles for my Friends at home…".[65] She is scrupulous in keeping her family, especially her sisters, informed of their activities and when she describes the 1798 tour "into the interior of Africa", she notes that her account of this journey "was written and sent to England to [her] Sisters at the moment it took place".[66]

It seems that the return home is never far from her thoughts and, by nurturing the ties they left behind, Lady Anne is ensuring that she and her husband will have a home to which they can return after their sojourn at the Cape. In the preface to one of her journal collections, dated January 1797, she closes the paragraph "hoping and trusting that I shall find you all as well as I left you, and as happy on my return to see me again, as I shall be to see you".[67] As she is creating a provisional home at the Cape, Lady Anne reveals the temporal complexities that come into play in the construction of home. Her present is infused both with memories of her past home in England and with projections of her future home there. In her analysis of the ways in which travellers understand the concept of home, Magdalena Nowicka explains that, for such people, homes "are not only where they are at the moment, they are also where and when they potentially are, and they reflect and bind the past as well".[68] In terms of her spatial orientation, Lady Anne also seeks to acclimatise to the Cape by stressing the tiny bit of continuity that she can identify in the landscape: "A Series of Skies continued from that which canopies sweet old England, to that which festoons the Table mountain…".[69]

Despite the impermanence of their home at the Cape, Lady Anne often surprises herself by identifying it as such. After being away from the Cape for a while, she makes the following observations in a journal entry dated Thursday May 31st 1798: "We then proceeded homewards. *Think* of my calling the Castle in the Cape of Good Hope, Africa … *Home*? … But *here* it is so at present…" (emphasis as in the original text).[70] The way in which these comments are structured suggests that this is an anomaly. Lady Anne invites her imagined readers to question this phenomenon of regarding Africa as home and she stresses the temporary nature of the situation by noting that it is only

65 AM Lewin Robinson, *The Cape journals of Lady Anne Barnard...,* p. 285.
66 AM Lewin Robinson, *The Cape journals of Lady Anne Barnard...,* p. 289.
67 AM Lewin Robinson, *The Cape journals of Lady Anne Barnard...,* p. 23.
68 M Nowicka, "Mobile locations: Construction of home in a group of mobile transnational professionals", *Global Networks,* 7(1), 2007, p. 83.
69 AM Lewin Robinson, *The Cape journals of Lady Anne Barnard...,* p. 86.
70 AM Lewin Robinson, *The Cape journals of Lady Anne Barnard...,* p. 421.

so "at present". Gowans explains that the "imagined geographies of Britain positioned it as home, linking into wider debates about the construction and definition of 'self' so crucial to political discourses of British nationalism and imperialism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries". Despite her success at creating a temporary home at the Cape, Lady Anne's texts confirm Gowans' contention that "Britain was seen as *the* place of belonging for the imperial elite… and return home was constructed as their reward for being away".[71]

In the preface to her journals, Lady Anne makes it quite clear that their contribution to the imperial project will be rewarded in this manner. She argues that, after three years at the Cape, Mr Barnard will have "some right to expect an eligible Situation at home… We shall then return to our friends and to our House".[72] Their stay at the Cape will allow the Barnards to take up the class position that Lady Anne feels they should occupy, but which had been elusive because of financial difficulties. In addition to their main house, she hopes that they will also be able to afford "a small one in the Country" where Mr Barnard can indulge in some "rural sports". Lady Anne similarly regards her own contributions at the Cape as deserving of gratitude and reward when she returns to her true home in Britain and she represents these contributions primarily as centred on her gendered homemaking role as Mr Barnard's wife.[73]

Conclusion

In all Lady Anne's travel writings, her present home at the Cape is constructed with reference to her past home in Britain and in service of their future home in the heart of the Empire. She ends a journal entry from 1798 with the

71 G Gowans, "Imperial geographies...", *Cultural Geographies,* 10, 2003, p. 425.

72 AM Lewin Robinson, *The Cape journals of Lady Anne Barnard...,* p. 23.

73 The influence of Lady Anne's experiences and understandings of home in the metropole on her construction of homes in the colony would necessarily have been a two way process. In other words, the ways in which she, as well as other settlers at the Cape, experienced life in the colony would have shaped their homemaking efforts when they returned to the metropole. At the level of material objects, for instance, Lady Anne at various points notes that she is sending things to her acquaintances in England. Her diaries suggest that, in addition to transporting objects back home, her encounters at the Cape also brought about changes in her tastes. The following extract from her diaries speaks to how these changes flow from her homemaking activities and how they will be conveyed back to England: "Got some flower beds made in the garden today, & hope to carry home a collection of tolerable bulbs to my friends in England when I go – I have got a few of the rose apple fruit seeds, a Bengal fruit & the Cape is half way home by which it is hoped to be conveyed to Europe … it is a new taste to me & I am not enough accustomed to it to like it but I dare say I shoud in time" (M Lenta and B Le Cordeur, eds., *The Cape diaries of Lady Anne Barnard...,* pp. 69-70). In another diary entry, she describes how she sent ostrich feathers to Europe where they will likely be displayed in metropolitan homes: "I, possessed of his relics, viz feathers have sent them off as curiosities to many of the great & fair of Europe" (M Lenta and B Le Cordeur, eds., *The Cape diaries of Lady Anne Barnard...,* p. 246).

following insistence: "… but I will resume all my old Rights believe me, it is no prodigal Sister who comes back … but a prudent Sister" who has "undertaken a voluntary banishment from those she loves" for the sake "of her Lord … her Master … lover … and friend".[74] She notes that she has spent her time at the Cape "acting up to her duties" and she hopes to be recognised for this by the "gratitude" of her husband and the "approbation" of the friends and family at the home to which she is returning. While Mr Barnard was acting in the official colonial structures, Lady Anne was enabling him to do the work of Empire by replicating pieces of England in their Cape homes. Her activities were shaped by gendered discourses of women's place in the home and the "rights" which emanate from the dutiful accomplishment of her wifely burdens are all tied to her gendered identity in relation to others, as a sister and mainly as a wife. As they both fulfilled their gendered roles in service of the imperial project, she expects that they will be rewarded by returning to Britain, which retains its primary ideological position of Home throughout Lady Anne's texts.

74 AM Lewin Robinson, *The Cape journals of Lady Anne Barnard...,* p. 424.