

Book Reviews

A. M. Lewin Robinson, Margaret Lenta, and Dorothy Driver, eds. *The Cape Journals of Lady Anne Barnard 1797-1798*. Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society, 1994. Pp. 431.

Lady Anne Barnard was a resident at the Cape of Good Hope between 1797 and 1802, with her husband, Andrew Barnard, who was secretary to the Governor of the Cape. "The Cape Journals of Lady Anne Barnard" discusses the Barnards' journey to, and stay at, the Cape. The reasons for the Barnards' residence at the Cape have been detailed elsewhere, and are to be found in the introduction to this book. This is the most recent in a series of publications of Lady Anne's writing—her journals have been reproduced in part elsewhere, and some letters have been published in *The Letters of Lady Anne Barnard to Henry Dundas*, edited by A. M. Lewin Robinson (who also worked on this edition) and published by Balkema in 1963.

The Cape Journals of Lady Anne Barnard 1797-1798 is divided into three parts, with an introduction to the text by A. M. Lewin Robinson and Margaret Lenta (who has herself written extensively on Lady Anne), and a discussion of Lady Anne's writing by Dorothy Driver. The first journal describes the Barnards' four-month sea voyage to the Cape. The second journal relates to the period the Barnards lived in Cape Town, when Lady Anne acted as hostess for the Governor. The third journal, which was published also in *The Letters of Lady Anne Barnard*, covers the Barnards' journey into the interior of the Cape Colony, in May 1798.

The first part begins with a preface by Lady Anne to her journals. In it she gives some of her reasons for preparing such a journal—as a record for her family of all she will see in a foreign country. She explains herself according to a standard which she presumes visitors to foreign places follow—throughout her writing she is conscious of how she measures up against other writers describing foreign lands. "I shall not have many opportunities of judging the Interior of the Country I fear, as I presume a Woman cannot travel far into it without danger, in-

convenience to herself & every body with her, nor will Mr. Barnard's occupation perhaps admit of long absences; . . . I cannot collect many Insects as I shall not have the means of catching them, or the skills to preserve the Volatile property in a right manner; all I can promise is to draw, & describe everything I see with my own eyes, in the best manner I can" (21). Fortunately her perception of what a travel journal ought to be does not restrict her choice of subject. Her commitment is to truth and humour, and both make frequent appearances within the remainder of what is a most enjoyable and occasionally wicked journal.

The journal of the Barnards' sea voyage is perhaps the most amusing. This part of the journal consists of descriptions of life at sea, the various animals and phenomena seen at sea, interleaved with descriptions of the human happenings on board. Lady Anne had little else to do but observe the vagaries of their fellow travellers, and character sketches of all are included. She includes descriptions of Portuguese men-of-war, dolphins, ship procedure, and illustrates many of these (some of her drawings are reproduced in this volume). Early on in this journal she includes a list of all the passengers on board the ship, calling it her "dramatis personae" (60). The party included several other women, the most notable from Lady Anne's purview being Mrs. Donald Campbell. This is how she described Mrs. Campbell: "By the General's left hand sits 'notre Belle.' . . . She placed herself here, at the centre of the Table as if by choice, fearing that in the arrangement of precedency the place might have been allotted her without a choice. . . . She is under thirty and might be thought handsome if bad temper did not disfigure her countenance . . ." (61). Discussions of Mrs. Campbell's unladylike behaviour feature throughout the first two journals—Mrs. Campbell's behaviour and Lady Anne's discussion of it marking the former out as the complete anti-thesis of the latter. Lady Anne was fascinated by the Dutch women at the Cape, and frequently remarked on their manners and their appearance.

At the start of the Cape Town segment of her journals, Lady Anne again repeats her desire to do fairly by the matters she describes: "yet you may trust to your Sister's natural turn for seeing things en Beau [fairly] if possible that she has not set down aught in malice" (150). What follows are one hundred and forty pages of anecdotes and descriptions of Cape Town and the people in Cape Town including, *inter alia*, a recipe for soup. She also presents her views on slavery at the Cape. This section has less of the coherence of the other two, possibly because it covered a much longer period of time during which Lady Anne was herself very busy. Throughout Lady Anne asserts the amenability of her own and her husband's characters: "In a few words I gave the Admiral a little idea of my style of thinking on such points, and that he was mistaken if he supposed I was one woman, that I was

one, two, or three different ones, and capable of being more, exactly as the circumstances I was placed in required, for that if I had a merit in the World, it was the facility with which I could fit myself to my lot . . ." (164). However, her tolerance extends to conditions rather than people and it is possible to detect, in her writing, categories of us and them—included in the former an admiral "who would be no bad member of our domestic circle." Clearly Mrs. Campbell was not included in this category, as was the case with many of the English at the Cape. Only a few select Dutch and English made it into the Barnards' circle, and it is interesting to note in Lady Anne's writing the reasons for this. She was very conscious of her position of first lady at the Cape, and aware that she was "supposed to be a sort of binding Cement" among the Dutch and the newly arrived British (177).

Part three of the journals describes the Barnards' journey into the interior of the Western Cape in May 1798. The Barnards journeyed in a horse-drawn ox-waggon as far as Swellendam in the east and Saldanha Bay in the north. Throughout this trip Lady Anne was concerned to discover something more of the Khoikhoi and San in their natural state: "my great wish is if we can to see a little of the Real natives . . . Hottentos, caffres, Boshemen . . . the African Hollanders are not my pursuit" (320). It is sad for her then that she only sees one, a Khoikhoi woman. Most of the Khoikhoi whom she saw were the servants of the Dutch farmers, and she was conscious of their not being the "real" thing.

On this trip, as throughout her writing, she viewed everything quite explicitly by its ability to conform to European standards. In this regard the Dutch fall short—the local born Dutch are inferior versions of the European Dutch, and the same criteria apply to anything else that can be compared to something European. On the other hand, several Khoikhoi women (she describes few men) are written of in approbatory terms—their equivalent is not to be found in Europe and thus Lady Anne has no yardstick against which to measure them.

In places the difficulties of travelling through the South African countryside emerge in Lady Anne's writing, and it is very easy to remember, in these instances, that she was narrating real events. She described to her sisters an accident that occurred "At last . . . 'Hey' cried Mr Barnard . . . the Waggon rocked . . . I felt its wheel sinking on the side I was, and in a moment down we came like a Mountain . . . the Waggon was overturned" (313), but managed to play down what must have been a fairly alarming experience.

Each of the Cape Journals represents Lady Anne's own editing of earlier journals and letters, completed long after she had returned to Britain. The journals therefore, are in the intriguing position of being self-edited. Lady Anne's editorial voice intrudes into her own writing as brief comment, both from an earlier and later stage of revision. This

indicates an awareness of her audience—both the familial audience for whom Lady Anne intended the journals and a possible wider audience. This claim to be writing for an audience is linked to the continual assertions that Lady Anne made about the veracity of her observations.

The import of Lady Anne's writing is discussed by Dorothy Driver in the "Literary Appraisal" (1-13) at the start of "The Cape Journals." The journals contain minimal footnoting by the editors (one of its strengths) as Lady Anne provides her own measure of self-reflexivity to understand what she has written. However, the various strands of Lady Anne's writing are picked out in Driver's cogent analysis. She discusses Lady Anne's own views on publishing and her narrative tendencies which lead her to construct some of her writing as a novel. Lady Anne's function as a socially aware commentator (which is how previous writers on Lady Anne have construed her worth) on the Cape scene is contextualized in terms of the different tendencies in her writing—her private voice and perceived public functions sometimes being at odds with one another. Driver also discusses Lady Anne's writing in relation to other work in the genre of colonial travel writing and examines the way in which Lady Anne defies some current thinking in colonial discourse theory to construct an identity that is rooted in fluidity: "Lady Anne continually fluctuates between the so-called 'masculine' and the 'feminine' positions, and between other positions designated in terms of 'centre' and 'margin,' 'culture' and 'nature,' 'self' and 'other'" (11). This multiplicity of roles is strongly reinforced by Lady Anne's own writing, and her own ironic comment that she could be several women depending on circumstances.

I have one more comment to make about Lady Anne Barnard. This edition of her journals is the third volume (out of seventy-four) of women's writing that the Van Riebeeck Society has published. This is a frustrating set of affairs—both because Lady Anne runs the risk of being cast as the archetypal autobiographical female historical text in South Africa—and because it reflects quite strongly the bias in South African history towards the publication of texts by men. This point has been made before, and no doubt produces yawns in many people interested in South African history. However, the situation is yet to be rectified, and as the research of a new generation of postgraduate (and do I need to write "women") students demonstrates, is not necessarily the product of a lack of existence of texts written by women. It is to be hoped that Lady Anne continues to receive the attention she deserves, but that other women writers will also see the light of day.

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