

Early Women Mountaineers Achieve Both Summits and Publication in Britain and America

[Chapter 7 of *Women in Transit Through Literary Liminal Spaces*, Teresa Gómez Reus and Terry Gifford (eds) (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013)]

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‘The critic, after searching in vain for more satisfying matter, has to remind himself that he is dealing with a lady’s book, and the book of a lady who has written to amuse the idle hour.’ *Alpine Journal* review of Elizabeth Le Blond’s *The High Alps in Winter* (*AJ XI*: 306)

‘When, later, woman occupies her acknowledged position as an individual worker in all fields, as well as those of exploration, no such emphasis of her work will be needed; but that day has not fully arrived, and at present it behoves women, for the benefit of their sex, to put what they do, at least, on record.’ Fanny Bullock Workman, *Two Summers in the Ice-Wilds of the Eastern Karakoram* (1917: 284)

‘Some [philosophers] argue that space is itself a feature of the external world, whereas others regard space as a concept whereby the mind imagines something that is, in fact, quite different from space’ (Callicott and Frodeman 2008: 273). The summit of a mountain is a very precise physical space. To have occupied a space one metre below the summit does not enable a mountaineer to claim to have reached the summit of the mountain. In the case of some holy mountains where stepping onto the actual summit space would be regarded by local people as sacrilege, such as Kangchenjunga in 1955, this has been accepted by the mountaineering world as a first ascent (Isserman and Weaver 2008: 325). But this is an exception that proves a rule rigorously endorsed. Alone and in a whiteout in 2005 Alan Hinkes thought he had reached a space close enough to the summit of Kangchenjunga to claim that he had made an ascent, but the climbing community expressed some doubt about whether he had (*Alpine Journal* 2006: 308).

On the other hand, precisely because claims to have occupied the summit space require some sort of evidence to be evaluated by people not present, the summit of a mountain is also a conceptual space. One of the forms of evidence commonly produced is a written report of the ascent which includes a description of the occupation of this conceptual space. Successful re-assimilation after a journey in transit is dependent upon written or photographic evidence of a successful passage to the summit. Indeed, this is one of the reasons why the sport of mountaineering has such a strong literary heritage. But the function of such writing is the opposite of geographer Donald G. Janelle’s theory of ‘time-space convergence’ (1969) which suggests not only that the global environment has shrunk, but that this has resulted in

¹ This chapter is indebted to an earlier unpublished essay by Kaydee Summers and Terry Gifford.

a diffusing of responsibility for individuals. Because in mountaineering there can be no time-space convergence for the individual climber and the climbing community, the responsibility for providing evidence of the climb is upon climbers themselves. In the nineteenth century the lack of time-space convergence in mountaineering resulted in the sport's being dependent in more ways than one on 'the word of a gentleman', as the members of the Alpine Club would have put it: 'the word' as trust derived from personal integrity and 'the word' in some form of written account. The male gender would obviously have been intrinsic to the notion of 'gentleman'. But the male gatekeepers of alpine journals would question whether the word of a transgressional, ambitious, eccentric woman who was clearly not a 'lady' could be trusted. Had the trial of being in transit been successfully accomplished for reassimilation to be recognised?

It has long been the convention that exploration in general, including that of mountain summits, has been a male activity. Laurie Miller, author of *On Top of the World: Five Women Explorers in Tibet*, writes: 'Tales of adventure since the time of Homer have glorified those daring men who have distained the safety of well-worn roads to discover what lay beyond the known world. They were heroes: brave, imaginative, resourceful, shrewd, and bedevilled by a curiosity that would not let them rest long in the confines of society. Underlying all the great sagas of exploration was an understanding that the impulse to roam and explore was masculine' (1984: 13). In the nineteenth century's so-called 'Golden Age of mountaineering' the summit spaces of the world were male domains. Two male historians of Himalayan climbing express this in a sentence remarkable for its publication in 2008: 'Himalayan mountaineering [...] was an exclusively British and masculine enterprise, and so it remained until 1898 when, quite unexpectedly and unbidden, an American woman arrived on the scene' (Isserman and Weaver 2008: 51). The 'arrival' of Fanny Bullock Workman in such an apparently 'unbidden' manner on the male spaces atop mountains will be discussed below. But this sentence contrasts with the tone of the female historian of women's mountaineering who wrote that in the Alps 'men were the first exponents but women followed almost at once and, having started, have never stopped' (Williams 1973: 16). This positive tone actually disguises the difficulties put in the way of women seeking to cross the threshold into the sport in the second half of the nineteenth century and especially their making themselves 'visible' in those male spaces at the summits of mountains by writing about their being in transit in those liminal spaces.

Indeed, the advantage of visibility in the male domain was the very reason for the first woman to reach the summit of Mont Blanc in 1808. Marie Paradis sought to attract attention to her little souvenir shop below Mont Blanc by achieving the notoriety of a female ascent. In the event she was dragged to the summit by the local guides: 'They seized hold of me, they dragged me, they pushed me, they carried me, and at last we arrived ... Once on the summit I could see nothing clearly, I could not breathe, I could not speak' (Brown 2002: 4). She later wrote, 'I have made a very nice profit of it, and that was what I reckoned when I made the ascent' (Brown 2002: 4). This motivation, together with the manner of her ascent, devalued its achievement in

the eyes, not only of the male mountaineering world, but of the woman who wished to match the men by defining that summit space as occupied by a woman in the same manner of transit as men. Thirty years after the ascent of Marie Paradis, Henriette d'Angeville, upon seeing the mountain in fresh snow, was driven by a mountaineering desire expressed in erotic terms: 'I was transported into a state that even today I can hardly understand or explain; my heart beat violently, my breath became short, profound sighs escaped from my breast. I felt a desire to climb it so ardent that it gave movement to my feet ... I was late for my wedding, for my marriage ... for the delicious hour when I could lie on his summit. Oh! When will it come!' (Mazel 1994: 4; Brown 2002: 18). On 4 September 1838 Henriette d'Angeville took possession of this male space with a gesture that matched male conquest: 'At twenty-five past one, I finally set foot on the summit of Mont Blanc and drove the ferrule of my stick into its flank, as a soldier plants his standard on a captured citadel' (Brown 2002: 27). D'Angeville's subsequent book clinched her visibility in this space: summit, self-achievement, reputation and history – a successful re-assimilation.

So how have the first women climbers have been made 'visible' to us? How do we actually know about the climbs of later non-writers such as Lucy Walker, for example? What if there were others who wrote nothing themselves of their experience of transit and about whom no-one else wrote either? In the *Alpine Journal 2001* Hermann Reisach published the results of his painstaking research into the achievements of a woman whose climbing successes slipped away from the collective memory of mountaineering history (Reisach 2001: 105-113). Beatrice Tomasson actually initiated one of the greatest rock-climbs of her day by hiring guides in 1901 to make the first ascent of the 2,500ft South Face of the Marmalada in the Italian Alps. She chose not to join any of the British climbing clubs and as a result seemed to exist only as a name in the list of first ascentionists. We do not know how many other women remain 'invisible' from our necessarily limited awareness of the early achievements of women mountaineers. But obviously the writing of essays, articles and books plays a key role in providing the kind of visibility of early women mountaineers with which we are left. To compare the British with American examples reveals cultural differences in approaches towards female emancipation in general around the opening of the twentieth century. Some female mountaineers wanted to occupy as equals more male-dominated spaces than just mountain summits and intended to use the latter to transform the former.

It is hard for us now to imagine the culture in which women began mountaineering in the late nineteenth century. Kathleen McCrone, a historian of sport, suggests that, although a minority of women, of any class, were actively involved in sport between 1700 and 1850 in both England and the United States, a decline of women's participation in sport occurred in the early nineteenth century. She attributes this decline in physical activity to the Victorian ideal of femininity: a woman's character was linked to her feminine body, which was viewed to be the root of her weakness. This Victorian notion defined the woman's role on both sides of the Atlantic and certainly deterred them from considering separating from convention by participating in such rigorous activities as mountaineering.

It was not until the mid-to-late nineteenth century that this Victorian ideal began to alter in England, although it was slightly earlier in the United States (Mazel 1994: 7). This disruption was primarily due to the first stirrings of the women's emancipation movement. Among the goals of woman's rights activists was a demand for extended education for women, which included physical fitness being taught in schools. As women became more educated they realized their supposed 'limited energy' (McCrone, 1988: 199) was actually limitless and hence expanded their choices of sport immensely to include such things as fell walking and mountaineering. Women who chose vigorous sports were not ostracised entirely if they chose to maintain a sense of femininity while in transit. Mountaineering, however, did not favour the icons of Victorian femininity: corsets, skirts, and fair skin. Sport that bordered on the masculine was seen as potentially harmful to a woman's female attributes. Elizabeth Le Blond, in *Day In Day Out* (1928), famously revealed that around 1881 her grand-aunt, Lady Bentnick, sent an urgent letter to the family: 'Stop her climbing mountains! She is scandalizing all London and looks like a Red Indian!' (Le Blond 1928: 90). Obviously Le Blond did not stop climbing, although she maintained her femininity by wearing appropriate dress.

Two of the earliest women who struggled to discredit the limited energy theory by mountaineering were Lucy Walker and Meta Brevoort. Lucy Walker is famous for being the first woman to summit the Matterhorn in 1871, accompanied by her father and the guide Melchior Anderegg. She made many 'lady's first ascents' and her impressive climbing record proved that women did not in fact suffer from a limited supply of energy and may even have a supply of energy equal to that of men.

Lucy Walker, whose father was among the first members of the Alpine Club and whose brother Horace was also a climber, did not write of her experiences and so her reactions to the climbs are not known. Acquaintances described her as a perfect Victorian lady: 'Climbing mountains seemed her only nonconforming habit; her other pastimes included croquet and needlework' (Brown 2002: 48). Walker's proper Victorian lady status seems not to have been altered by her adventurous pastimes. She kept the ideals of femininity by wearing a white print dress even when bloomers became an alternative (Brown 2002: 49). Walker's lack of writing leaves tantalising questions, but interestingly her presence on the mountains inspired a handful of men to mention Lucy Walker in their accounts. A poem titled 'A Climbing Girl' commemorating her triumph on the Matterhorn was published in *Punch* (1871) shortly after her success. The last verse reads: 'No peaks rise above her, however sublime/ Give three cheers for the intrepid Miss Walker./ I say, my boys, doesn't she know how to climb!' (Gardiner and Pilkington 1917: 98). Walker was among the first women to demonstrate the possibilities for feminine transit in the sport of mountaineering and her male contemporaries were taking notice. Yet that phrase 'my boys' makes it obvious that Walker was a minority in the mountaineering community and suggests a mocking of her transgression, as if the trial of the steep space itself was not enough.

Frederick Gardiner, who was with her on the Matterhorn in 1871, wrote an obituary (with C. Pilkington) for the *Alpine Journal*, the journal of the (British) Alpine Club, in 1917: ‘In those far off mid-Victorian days, when it was considered even “fast” for a young lady to ride in a hansom, Miss Walker’s wonderful feats did not pass without a certain amount of criticism, which her keen sense of humour made her appreciate as much as anyone’ (Gardiner and Pilkington 1917: 98). Gardiner admitted that Walker received criticism in some quarters, but was careful to avoid implying that it was unjustified. Gardiner was also careful to emphasise her feminine characteristics such as her hospitality: ‘Her geniality, humour, and lively wit made her a favourite wherever she went, and her hospitality and kindness of heart endeared her to all her numerous friends’ (Gardiner and Pilkington 1917: 101). Her female contemporaries expressed their love for her in an obituary in the *Ladies Alpine Club Journal* (1917) which ended with the lines, ‘There are many who, while life lasts, will value the memory of their friendship with a good and gentle English lady’ (1917: 25). It is apparent from both obituaries that the Victorian ideals were regarded as having been upheld and that Miss Walker was still a ‘lady’. It is tempting to ask whether her influence would have been stronger for other women if she had written about her experiences, although it is questionable whether she would have then been able to publish her writing since she was a woman transgressing on male spaces, as the case of her American rival was to suggest. Reassimilation was clearly to be limited by male journal editors.

Lucy Walker’s visibility inspired other women to climb, in particular her rival, Meta Brevoort, who was her American pioneering equivalent. They would be the first in a long line of female mountaineering rivalries. In his obituary for Walker, Gardiner quoted Brevoort’s nephew, W.A.B. Coolidge: ‘My Aunt (Miss Brevoort) would certainly never have started if Miss Walker had not set the example. They never met but once at Zermatt, just after the Matterhorn ascent’ (Gardiner and Pilkington 1917: 98). Walker climbed to the summit of the Matterhorn on 21 July 1871, the day before Brevoort was to set out for the same mountain. It is quite apparent that the women were rivals and after the Matterhorn incident they sought to beat one another to the other summits.² But Walker and Brevoort did not see their rivalry as a constraint, more a reason to continue climbing.

Brevoort climbed exclusively with her British nephew William Coolidge, her dog Tschingel, and the guides Christian and Ulrich Almer. Brevoort had an impressive climbing list that included many first ascents, as well as first ascents by a woman. However, Brevoort was less visible than Walker because Brevoort’s presence was obscured by her nephew. Coolidge was the focal point of the expeditions and was the prolific writer of the pair. Brevoort only published one article about her experiences and she judged it best to write under her nephew’s name.³ The essay was titled, ‘A Day and Night on the Bietschhorn’ and appeared in the *Alpine Journal* in 1872.

² This resembles what Teresa Gómez, in the following chapter, calls ‘competitive heroism’ in women at the front in the First World War.

³ See Valerie Fehlbauer’s chapter for evidence of women deploying a journalistic male pseudonym in order to be published.

Brevoort had a style distinct from her nephew's, writing with more candour and detail. She appears to have intentionally disclosed her identity within the article by calculated slips in her disguise as author. She wrote very early in the essay of the party being delayed 'in procuring a horse for the lady of the party' (Coolidge 1872: 115). Then a few lines later she wrote: 'The sun had set by the time we had finished the endless zig-zags on the first part of our road, and darkness overtook us as we left the little village [...] Not a pleasant road this to traverse in the dark on horseback, thought the unfortunate equestrian' (Coolidge 1872: 115). Since Brevoort was the only member on a horse, although she attempted to neutralise the gender of the lady on horseback by referring to her as 'the unfortunate equestrian', the author is revealed to the attentive reader. As if in confirmation of this, Brevoort went on to describe the danger the equestrian might incur: 'Nor was it reassuring to hear *the men* caution one another, lest the poor animal should step between the disjointed planks of the crazy little bridges which occurred now and then' (emphasis added, Coolidge 1872: 15). Clearly the *Alpine Journal* in 1872 required writers to be male. But a threshold had been crossed, even if literary reassimilation was to be denied.

The British woman Elizabeth Le Blond climbed actively roughly a decade after Walker and Brevoort had succeeded in their significant climbs. Le Blond climbed difficult routes and was among the first to advocate winter climbing. What makes Le Blond remarkable is that she achieved a degree of reassimilation from her liminal journeys by managing to publish eight books describing her travels and help found the Ladies Alpine Club in 1907.

Le Blond sought to heighten the liminality of her journeys by distancing her own writing from that of 'the lady traveller' of the 1880s. In *High Life and Towers of Silence* (1886) Le Blond described with heavy sarcasm the lady traveller (as opposed to mountaineer) as a 'species against whom all the winds of heaven are arranged [...] who encounters a gale impossible to withstand, on one part of [a] ride while another party is basking in hot sun and still air a little higher up'. She went on to say that these women were always 'having their tents blown away, and [are] very critical as to the achievements of other lady climbers, by reason of the fact that they have failed to imitate them' (Le Blond 1886: 35). The final irony is that Le Blond produced eight books which could certainly be considered as constituting travel literature.

However, Le Blond paid a price for the audacity of publicising her mountain travels.⁴ The anonymous reviewer in the *Alpine Journal* echoed her own attitude towards writers of female travel books when reviewing Le Blond's *The High Alps in Winter: or, Mountaineering in Search of Health* (1883):

It is a disappointment to find only a collection of slight and hasty sketches filled out into a volume by the use of the largest type, and in themselves made up with an altogether undue proportion of details of small mishaps and smaller jokes which have been the bane of so much alpine literature. The critic, after searching in vain for more satisfying matter, has to remind himself that he is dealing with a lady's

⁴ In contrast to Isabella Bird's reception and invitation to address the Royal Geographical Society in 1892, the first women to do so. See Daniela Kato's chapter.

book, and the book of a lady who has written to amuse the idle hour [...] She has chosen to record them in a volume which is probably the flimsiest and most trivial that has ever been offered to the alpine public. (*AJ XI*: 306-307)

The reviews got slightly better and her second volume, *High Life and Towers of Silence* (1886) received an apparently sympathetic review which damned with faint praise:

But these are only small blemishes in a pleasantly-written volume which will agreeably while away an hour or two in a winter's afternoon, though it does not contain the tale of any hairbreadth escapes, and is not likely to rank among the Alpine classics. The authoress tells us that she has much enjoyed 'the labour of writing it,' and we may say that we have enjoyed the labour of reading it. (*AJ XIII*: 186-188)

Le Blond never received a rave review, but with each publication the reviews increased in compliments and sincerity, indicating, perhaps, that, with time, women's climbing writing was becoming more acceptable to the male climbers of the Alpine Club as the trials of being women in transit in the mountains were gaining recognition.

In 1889, Mrs. E.P. Jackson was the first woman to be published under her own name in the *Alpine Journal*. Margaret Anne Jackson had successfully accomplished the first winter traverse of the Jungfrau, an act not even the Alpine Club could ignore. Her essay begins, 'Either the days of witchcraft are at an end or I am a very degenerate descendent of the once powerful Lancashire witches. No ancestress of mine, taking her midnight ride, ever came to warn me of the fate the weird sisters were perhaps then weaving for me - that the story of my winter wandering in the Alps might be required of me' (Jackson 1889: 200). Despite this very engaging beginning, the entirety of the essay is not discernable as being written by a woman. According to Rebecca Brown, Jackson 'suffered such severe frostbite on her journey that she lost several toes which essentially ended her climbing career' (Brown 2002: 111). The readers of her essay would never have known that Mrs. E. P. Jackson was suffering on this trip because she betrayed no emotion in her writing so that it blended in with the other detailed winter accounts written by the men who fill the same volume. Writing as a man rather than under a male pseudonym was the compromise necessary for Mrs E. P. Jackson to increase the visibility of women by becoming the first woman to be published by the *Alpine Journal*.

Female mountaineers may have been becoming more visible in the Victorian era, but the first gatekeepers of the spaces of the summits were male companions and guides. And then there was a second space of publication guarded by the male gatekeepers of the journals. So far no woman who had gained entry to both these spaces had made a connection between women mountaineering and women's emancipation and suffrage. Women needed to begin climbing and writing with a more explicitly feminist agenda if they were to use the liminal spaces of the sport of mountaineering to enable the transit of other women and to link this to emancipation in general.

In 1858 Julia Archibald Holmes climbed to the summit of Pikes Peak, the first high mountain climbed by a woman in America (Mazel 1994: 7). An article of her experience in *The Sibyl*, a journal published by women devoted to social reform, blatantly linked women's emancipation and mountaineering. Perhaps due to the earlier rise of women's emancipation in the U.S., it was American women climbers who initially merged political statements with high mountain climbing. It is Annie Smith Peck who is remembered as the first mountaineer to be closely associated with the American suffrage movement. Peck understood the power of the media and agreed to have a picture of herself in full mountain regalia packaged with every 1895 Singer sewing machine. She was outspoken about her political motives regarding climbing mountains, as shown in a 1906 article for *Appalachia* titled 'Climbing Mt. Sorata': 'Being always from earliest years a firm believer in the equality of the sexes, I felt that any great achievement in any line of endeavour would be of advantage to my sex' (Peck 1906: 95). Peck's writings and actions demonstrate her desire to prove that the 'New Woman' could indeed do what a man could do and that women no longer possessed that 'limited supply of energy' (Brown 2002: 146). Peck did not hesitate to make her dual role as climber and women's suffragist explicit: 'Then, too, I became a suffragist in my 'teens when it was very unfashionable [...] Meanwhile, I thought I could help the cause by doing what one woman might to show the equality of the sexes' (quoted in Cahn 1975: 92). From this statement it is clear that Peck understood the political potential of her marginal position within the male-dominated mountaineering community. For her liminal journeys could bring about altered social structures that would benefit women. In many ways, although Peck was undeniably physically visible on the mountains, she remained largely invisible to her fellow male mountaineers. This issue faced each female mountaineer of the era, who desired a shift from the invisible to the visible in order to encourage other women to participate and men to change their attitudes. Indeed, before her 1895 ascent of the Matterhorn, letters from friends and family attempted to dissuade her, suggesting that she return home and 'commit suicide ... in a quiet, lady-like manner' (Brown 2002: 151). In fact, the notoriety she achieved from this ascent gave her the financial security with which to become the first American woman professional mountaineer. And Peck always understood that written material was crucial in advocating the rights of women and bringing them into the realm of the visible through her mountaineering exploits.

Peck published articles in many popular American magazines such as *Harper's Magazine* and the *New York Times*, not only bringing climbing experiences to the non-climbing world, but also helping to fund her expeditions (Peck 1911: 122). Through her obligations to the magazines, Peck was actually required to write extensively about her expeditions. Peck published 'Climbing Mount Sorata' in May 1906, revealing both her sense of independence and her difficulties in dealing with the gatekeepers to the summits. The essay describes how she has to ultimately turn away from her goal due to constant disagreements between the porters, guides, and herself. She admitted her lack of experience in instructing men – a liminal experience indeed: 'Never before had I felt so helpless. Perhaps some of my more experienced married sisters would have done better' (Peck 1906: 101). So Peck went on to record that she

did not make it to the summit of Mount Sorata due to lack of cooperation from her guide and porters.

Peck wrote *A Search for the Apex of America* in 1911, describing her life-long adventures through the prism of her radical feminist agenda. The same year her book was published, Peck, at the age of 61, put a yellow *Votes for Women* banner on a 21,000-foot-summit in Peru (Brown 2002: 184). To the end of her active days, Peck always combined her climbing with the cause of women's emancipation. At the time of her death in 1935 the *New York Times* made the inevitable direct comparison with male mountaineering achievements: 'She has done all that a man could, if not more' (Brown 2002: 185).

Fellow American Fanny Bullock Workman followed Peck's approach to liminal mountain spaces by combining climbing and the agenda of women's emancipation. But when she wrote with her husband William they assumed the mountaineer was male: 'The mountaineer must go, fully provided for with mountain and camp outfit, many days' march beyond even semi-civilized villages, into savage and trackless wastes that surround giants he would conquer' (Brown 2002: 194). Perhaps the most significant mode of taking possession of a summit space was to name it Mount Bullock Workman, as she did in 1899 for a 19,450 feet peak in Pakistan.⁵ Three years later she broke her own record for the altitude achieved by a woman when she stood on top of Pinnacle Peak in Pakistan at 23,300 feet. This record became a competition between Bullock Workman and Annie Peck when Peck claimed that the summit of Huascarán Norte was 24,000 feet. Workman Bullock was so enraged that she commissioned two French topographers to travel to Peru to record the correct altitude, which they fixed at 21,812 feet. In her turn, Peck questioned the triangulation, claimed she had only ever offered an estimate and challenged Bullock Workman to substantiate her own height claims, a challenge that was ignored.

Bullock Workman was photographed in 1912 at 21,000 feet on the Siachen Glacier in the Himalaya reading a suffragette broadside with the headline 'Votes for Women'. The photo is featured in her book, co-authored with her husband, *Two Summers in the Ice-Wilds of the Eastern Karakoram* (1917) and it was obviously taken in order to appear in the book so that, like Peck, Bullock Workman could use her publications as a vehicle to support the emancipation of women as an outcome from her liminal journeys. In *Two Summers* Bullock Workman explains the reason she took complete credit for that particular expedition:

The object of placing my full name in connection with the expedition on the map, is not because I wish in any way to thrust myself forward, but solely that in the accomplishments of women, now and in the future, it should be known to them and stated in print that a woman was the initiator and special leader of this expedition. When, later, woman occupies her acknowledged position as an individual worker in all fields, as well as those of exploration, no such emphasis of her work will be needed; but that day has not fully arrived, and at

⁵ This echoes possession by the naming of plants in Niamh Dowling's concluding chapter.

present it behoves women, for the benefit of their sex, to put what they do, at least, on record. (Bullock Workman 1917: 284)

This passage perfectly describes the feelings of women and the political constraints placed upon them in the early 1900s. Bullock Workman admitted to feeling invisible and hoped her attempts at visibility would achieve a transformation that enabled women of a later generation to be visible in the everyday exercise of their equal rights. It is tempting to ask if that day has now arrived. Should we still be concerned about the issue of the visibility of women's climbing writing?

In the 1925 *Alpine Journal* obituary for Fanny Bullock Workman, a male contemporary admitted that in a male-dominated mountaineering culture, Bullock Workman fought hard to gain equality for women:

She herself felt that she suffered from "sex antagonism" and it is possible that some unconscious feeling, let us say of the novelty of a woman's intrusion into the domain of exploration so long reserved to man, may in some quarters have existed. Whatever the cause, she was involved at times in warm paper arguments. She was no "quitter", and her enthusiastic nature induced her to sustain her opinions by vigorous arguments based on facts which it was difficult to controvert. (Farrar 1925: 182)

Are 'warm paper arguments' about women in transit in mountaineering still need today on the issue of 'Going Manless', for example, as Molly Loomis argued in the *American Alpine Journal* 2005?

Both Peck and Bullock Workman understood that they were in a unique position as a result of their experiences of liminality. They had climbed mountains, which alone was important for the women's rights movement, including the right for women to climb mountains. Yet, they chose to pursue their political motives further and publish their adventures, enlivening their pages with polemic in support of both the women mountaineers of the future and wider equal rights. Of course, they were still very much the minority in the mountaineering and the literary world. But they made it clear that women do need to put what they do on record if they want to establish the total 'normality' of the presence of women in all aspects of mountaineering culture. It seems clear that reading the writings of role models still has a function, even for the role models themselves. Molly Loomis quotes Kitty Calhoun who, whilst on the one hand objecting to the differentiation of first *female* ascents, also says, 'It is just nice for me to read articles written by women, about women. Almost all I ever read in the climbing genre is written by men about men' (Loomis 2005: 110). Lizzy Scully, the founder and publisher emeritus of the US women's climbing magazine *She Sends*, is also quoted by Loomis as wanting 'other women to see that women could climb big walls in foreign countries and organise expeditions' (Loomis 2005: 104). So Fanny Bullock Workman's anticipated day of 'unemphasised' female achievement that did not need to be written about by women mountaineers appears not to have arrived yet. It seems that the spaces of both mountain summits and the pages of mountaineering magazines, journals and books remain largely male domains today. More upward travel by women in transit through

the highest liminal spaces clearly remains to be done and reported by them if the momentum of the early women pioneers is to be continued. Van Gennep's stages of rites of passage, referred to in the Introduction of this book, remain the challenge for women mountaineers today.

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