

## **Place, Object, Text: Anglo-India in Australasia**

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**Abstract:** In the nineteenth century the ‘webs of empire’ that connected Anglo-India and Australasia were numerous, complex, and diverse. In the twenty-first century traces of those webs are inscribed on the cultural landscapes of Australasia—in place names, in displaced material objects, and in the texts of empire. How should we now trace, describe, and assess these particular webs of connectedness? Drawing on imperial history, cultural geography, and literary criticism, this exploratory article introduces some of the ties that bound Anglo-India and Australasia in the century from 1820-1920. First, it charts the imprint of Anglo-India on the landscapes of Australia and New Zealand—preserved in place names, military and domestic architecture, botanic gardens, and graveyards. Second, it explores the collections of museums and other cultural institutions to outline the circulation of the material objects of Anglo-India. Third, it considers some of the cultural texts—fiction, memoir, travel writing—that narrate the ties between the two regions.

**Keywords:** Anglo-India; Australasia; place; material objects; text

### **Introduction**

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the ‘webs of empire’ that connected Anglo-India (the British Raj in India) and Australasia were numerous, complex, and diverse. In the twenty-first century, traces of those webs remain inscribed on the cultural landscapes of Australasia—in borrowed place names and architectural styles, in material objects, and in the literary texts of empire.<sup>1</sup> However, while much scholarship has focussed on the cultures of empire, on particular colonies, and on the ways in which those colonies interacted with the centre in a hub and spokes model, there is less scholarship that interrogates the sideways, or radial, linkages and interactions between different colonial communities. Beyond several significant exhibitions, including the Australian National Maritime Museum’s “East of India: Forgotten Trade with Australia,” there has been no detailed study of Anglo-India in Australasia. And yet even the most cursory examination of colonial lives and careers—what David Lambert and Alan Lester term “imperial careering”—demonstrates how frequently individual, familial, and professional experiences of empire were of more than one imperial place. The British Empire was as much about social mobilities as it was about settlement. This is manifest, for example, in Malcolm Allbrook’s biography of Henry Prinsep, *Henry Prinsep’s Empire: Framing a Distant Colony* (2014), which records “life in the Western Australian colony and connections throughout the wider imperial world ... that spans generations and geographic spaces, incorporating a family heritage going back to the

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this article the terms Anglo-India and Anglo-Indian are used in their pre-1911 sense to refer to the British (and more broadly, European) community in India. In 1911 the term was adopted to define the mixed Indian and European community, and that definition is enshrined in the Indian Constitution. Whilst this article discusses the imperial ties between the British Raj and Australasia, we are aware that for many decades the Anglo-Indian (mixed race) community has and continues to have a significant diasporic presence in both Australia and New Zealand.

Hastings era of the East India Company in Calcutta” (1).

Prinsep’s story reveals the familial networks of empire, including connections between Anglo-India and Australia. In this article we shift the focus from people, from “the obsession with great men of Australian history” (Healy 91), to the way history is manifested in place, object, and text. Our aim is to add depth and nuance to the canvas of colonial life histories by painting in the ties that bound Anglo-India and Australasia from the early nineteenth century, when the trade between British India and the Australasian colonies was in its infancy, through to the aftermath of World War One, when the move towards decolonisation was already evident. We draw on the work of new imperial histories—which employ the metaphor of the “webs of empire” to describe empire’s entanglements and connections, the “multiplicity of metropolises and peripheries in the core British world” (Bridge and Fedorowich 2). In common with new imperial histories, we are concerned with the extensive reach of the Anglophone world, with colonial lives and careers, and with tracing and interpreting patterns of mobility. To these ends, our first step is to chart the imprint of Anglo-India on the landscapes of Australia and New Zealand—preserved in the names of towns, suburbs and streets, in military and domestic architecture, in gardens, and in graveyards. Second, we examine items from the collections of museums and other cultural institutions to outline the circulation of the objects of Anglo-India. And third, we consider some of the cultural texts—short fiction, memoir, travel writing—that narrate the connections between the two regions.

These various elements are joined by common threads: the human movement between places, whether impelled by career, marriage, leisure, or retirement, or imposed, as in the case of both military and civil convicts transported to Australia from India; the cultures of the military and civil administrations; the church and its various missionary arms and agendas; the cultures, practices, and ideologies of scholarship and ethnography, from the importation of Anglo-Indian rhetoric of race to the fashion for Europeanised versions of Indian religions; and Victorian literary forms, including the way that stock literary stereotypes and conventions were shared, developed, and modified in the two places.

### **Place**

According to Philip J. Ethington, “All human action *takes* and *makes* place. The past is the set of places made by human action. History is a map of these places” (465, emphasis in original). Colonial maps claimed the new, familiarised the strange, and frequently commemorated home (or Home). Colonial naming (or renaming), replicated places of origin, honoured patrons, venerated past histories, and erased disturbing native or Indigenous names. But what happened when one part of the empire was named for another? Were the same motives in play? Was there a sense that India (rather than Britain) had become “Home,” and that nostalgia for the subcontinent fuelled the commemorative moment in Australasia? Were Indian place names made innocuous or somehow naturalised when relocated to Australasia?

A brief survey of place names clearly indicates the colonial and military networks that operated between British India and Australasia, and the extent to which Anglo-India is inscribed on the landscapes of both Australia and New Zealand. The maps of both countries are dotted with transplanted place names and the names of civil and military figures associated with British India, reflecting the strong British imperial connections, rather than British metropolitan ones. In Australia, both Victoria and Tasmania have towns called Mangalore, New South Wales has a village named Lucknow, Queensland has a rural town named Surat, Western Australia has a settlement called Madura, as well as a town named

Australind (a toponym that combines parts of the names Australia and India). A suburb of Melbourne is named Travancore, a suburb of Sydney is named Malabar, and a suburb of Hobart is named Howrah.

In New Zealand, the Hawkes Bay settlements of Clive, Hastings, Napier, and Havelock North, are named after administrators and military figures who played prominent roles in British India. Major General Robert Clive—popularly known as Clive of India—a soldier of fortune who established British military supremacy in Bengal and Warren Hastings, the first Governor of the Presidency of Fort William, were key figures in the early history of British India; General Sir Charles James Napier, conqueror of Sindh, and Major General Sir Henry Havelock, particularly associated with the relief of Lucknow during the Uprising of 1857 (also variously known as the Indian Mutiny, the Sepoy Mutiny, the Sepoy Rebellion, the Sepoy Revolt, and the First War of Independence),<sup>2</sup> are also commemorated in bronze statues in London's Trafalgar Square. Napier has a suburb called Meeanee, named for Napier's victory in the Battle of Meeanee or Miani in 1843, and many streets named by the statesman and poet Alfred Domett (then Commissioner of Crown Lands at Ahuriri) to commemorate both the places and people of British India, including Delhi Road, Hyderabad Road, Lucknow Terrace, Shimla Terrace, Kavanagh Road, Havelock Road, and Napier Terrace. Havelock North also has a Lucknow Road and streets named after other military figures who played prominent roles in 1857, including Napier Road and Campbell Street (after General Sir Colin Campbell, Commander in Chief of the British Forces in India) while in the Marlborough region there is a second settlement named after Sir Henry Havelock, a coastal village laid out in 1858, with the main street being Lucknow Street. Auckland is dissected by the Khyber Pass Road and the Bombay Hills serve as its approach from the south. In Wellington there are suburbs named after the Indian military stations of Berhampore and Khandallah, with the latter having many streets with Indian names, as F.L. Irvine-Smith records:

*Indian Street Names of Khandallah:* Agra Crescent, Amritsar Street, Baroda Street, Bengal Street, Calcutta Street, Cashmere Avenue, Dekka Street, Delhi Street, Everest Street, Ganges Road, Indus Street, Kim Street, Lucknow Terrace, Madras Street, Maldiva Street, Mandalay Terrace, Omar Street, Poona Street, Rangoon Street, Simla Crescent, Simla Avenue. (302)

Elsewhere in Wellington, Ghuznee Street “was so named in memory of the storming and taking of an Afghan stronghold, Fort Ghuznee, by the British in 1839” (Irvine-Smith 175). Out of the city, the sheep-farming district of Coonoor in the Wairarapa takes its name from the Indian hill station. In the South Island there is a Christchurch suburb named Cashmere (Kashmir) via the farm named by the Indian-born Sir John Cracroft Wilson (Nabob Wilson), which, like Khandallah, continues to use Indian place names for its streets in recognition of the area's Anglo-Indian history; the settlement of Kirwee was named by ex-East India Company soldier, Colonel De Renzie James Brett to commemorate his successful attack on the Fort of Kirwee (Karwi) in June 1857; and there is a Dehra Doon Road in Riwaka, near Motueka—all of which reflect imperial connections to India rather than to the metropolitan centre.

While linked and linking place names and their relationship to the cartography of empire may

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<sup>2</sup> For more on the naming of the conflict see Crane, *Inventing India* (11) and Herbert, *War of No Pity* (7-8).

be the most overt signals of connectedness on maps of Australasia, evidence of the adoption and adaptation of civil and military architecture, gardens, and graveyards is also visible across the physical landscapes of both Australia and New Zealand. Numerous buildings erected during the early decades of settlement in Australasia were influenced by Anglo-Indian-style bungalows with verandahs<sup>3</sup>—described by Anthony King as “a product of cultures in contact, an indigenous mode of shelter adopted and adapted for Europeans living in India” (14). According to Cleveland Salmon, the Australian bungalow “was a version of the Bengal double-roofed house, which ... had four to six rooms back to back surrounded by a deep verandah” (67), and “many of the early architects and engineers were associated with India, and the Anglo-Indian bungalow architecture was adapted to Australian conditions” (70). King further notes that evidence of the Anglo-Indian bungalow in New South Wales dates back to the early 1790s in buildings such as Elizabeth Farm in Parramatta, while Miles Lewis, in his research database, *Australian Building: A Cultural Investigation*, identifies several early Australian residences with obvious Indian connections (10.03.5). “Denbigh,” in the township of Cobbitty, which “features teak weatherboards imported from India” (Binney 78), was built in 1817 by Charles Hook, a former Calcutta merchant. The Rev. James S. Hassall, whose father purchased Denbigh in 1826, described it as “similar to an Indian bungalow, having two large rooms in front, with a spacious verandah” (3). “Horsley” in Fairfield (now a suburb of Sydney), built for Lieutenant George Weston of the East India Company around 1832, is described by James Broadbent as “wholly Indian in its design” (qtd. in Lewis 10.03.5). And there are numerous other early dwellings across the country that provide early traces of Anglo-India on the Australian landscape, including “Quamby” in northern Tasmania, which, along with “Horsley,” Howard Tanner and Philip Cox cite as “accurate reproductions of the Indian model” (Tanner and Cox qtd. in King 232). These were often built for British army officers who had served in India and understood the advantages of verandahs as protection from the Australian climate. Similarly, across the Tasman in Canterbury, the aforementioned Colonel Brett, formerly of the 31st Madras Light Infantry, specifically “drew on his experiences in India” when he chose to build a bungalow—“that quintessential symbol of British India” (Beattie, “Making Home” 144)—for his family when he retired to New Zealand in 1863 after thirty-six years of active military service.

Brett and John Cracroft Wilson were also responsible for two early Indian-inspired gardens in New Zealand, as James John Beattie details in “Making Home, Making Identity: Asian Garden Making in New Zealand, 1850s-1930s”:

The first, by Wilson, drew on the plants of India to evoke memories of his home and its cuisine, and, through the use of naming, associated New Zealand with the qualities of particular Indian therapeutic landscapes. The second by Brett and his descendants, domesticated elements of British-Indian designs, inscribing onto the local Māori tribe, Kaī Tahu elements of his own personal history evoked by India’s military landscapes. (139-40)

Like their naming of place, Wilson’s and Brett’s gardens were deliberate attempts to reproduce Indian landscapes in New Zealand, to remind them of the connections between seemingly disparate parts of the imperial world, and, in Wilson’s case, of the land of his birth. While all trace of the Anglo-Indian gardens may be long gone, the legacy of Brett’s

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<sup>3</sup> The words bungalow and verandah were originally introduced into English from India, and are found in several Indian languages including Hindi, Bengali and Sanskrit. For detailed etymologies see Henry Yule and A.C. Burnell, *Hobson-Jobson: A Glossary of Anglo-Indian Words and Phrases*.

Indian-inspired water-race scheme, opened in December 1877, is still written large on the landscape. A 2011 Strategic Review prepared for the Selwyn District Council notes that: “The intakes and tunnels on the Kowai river still have many of the same features provided when built in the late 1880’s by Colonel James De-Renzie Brett” (“2011 Waterrace Strategic Review” 3). Brett’s achievements are commemorated by a monument erected in January 1930. An article in *The Press* (Christchurch) reporting the unveiling of the monument draws attention to the Anglo-Indian connection: “From India, Colonel Brett brought with him the idea of serving the Plains with water from the hills” (“Honour for a Pioneer” 8). His Indian experiences are thus imprinted on the Canterbury landscape in several ways, as Beattie observes in “Plants, Animals and Environmental Transformation: Indian-New Zealand Biological and Landscape Connections, 1830s-1890s”: in the name of the region, Kirwee, where he farmed; through the water-race that is still in use, “modelled, so Brett argued, on his experience of irrigation works in Central India” (240-41); and in the monument in the centre of the Kirwee settlement. But as Beattie explains, “By far the most unusual landscape monument to India Brett established was a plantation in which each tree was said to represent the disposition of Brett’s troops during the storming of the Fort of Kirwee” (“Plants, Animals and Environmental Transformation” 241). While the horticultural legacy of Anglo-India may have faded from the landscape, the connections are preserved in architectural influences and the continued naming of streets that look back to the earlier transplanting of place names.

The Anglo-Indians who settled in Australasia did not only name their new homes after places they left behind, or design houses that reminded them of an earlier ‘home’; they also brought with them the flotsam and jetsam of their previous lives.

### **Object**

As Annabel Cooper, Lachy Paterson, and Angela Wanhalla point out in their introduction to *The Lives of Colonial Objects* (2015), “objects serve as pathways into ... colonial history” (13); they are also a means of tracing pathways between imperial spaces, both geographical and cultural. With this in mind, in this section of our article we turn our attention to the empire of objects—to the migration of things, and the circulation of the material stuff of empire as it relates to Anglo-India in Australasia in order to explore, and, in Jonathan Lamb’s phrase, “the things things say.” Following the models of *The Lives of Colonial Objects* and Neil MacGregor’s *The History of the World in 100 Objects* (2010), we investigate specific objects—household objects, collected objects, and displaced objects—to reveal traces of the stories they contain about mobilities between Anglo-India and Australasia.

Amongst the objects in the Picture Collection of the State Library of Victoria there is “a very good example of an Anglo-Indian nursing chair of mahogany circa 1850” (Agnew 27). The presence of the chair amongst the realia of the State Library of Victoria’s collection prompts questions about colonial mobilities: Who brought it to Australia? How did they bring it to Australia? When did they bring it to Australia? Why did they bring it to Australia? The untold story of this household object participates in the domestic history of empire, in the history of the colonial family, and in the shared history of Anglo-India and Australia.

The more comprehensive provenance of a copy of the Koran held in the Special Collections section of the University of Melbourne’s Baillieu Library still provides only a partial life of the object. The single-volume parchment Koran, bound in leather, dates from the eighteenth century, and its particular narrative history as an object is revealed in an inscription on the front cover verso:

Koran

Picked up in the rebel camp at Seekur Shikawathee country camp under Tantiu Tope, Rau Sahib and Feroze Shah surprised by Colonel Holmes' column on the 21st Jan 1859 5 a.m.

George G. Beasley Lt.

HM 83rd Rgt.

This displaced physical object, or what Nicholas Thomas might call an abducted treasure, was witness to the Indian Revolt of 1857 in general, and more particularly the surprise attack on Taty Tope's camp on 21 January 1859. The movement of the Koran from India to Australia thus carries with it traces of the history of the Revolt of 1857 and the lives of the Indian leaders named in the inscription: Taty Tope, Rao Sahib, and Feroze Shah. It invites questions about Lieutenant Beasley and the type of memorabilia he and his fellow soldiers collected, and enquiry into troop movements from India to Australia and New Zealand, the lifestyles of the officers and men who moved between the colonies, sometimes not seeing Britain for several decades.

*The New Annual Army List, Militia List, and Indian Civil Service List, for 1870* notes that George Gant Beasley of the 83rd (County of Dublin) Regiment of Foot, by this time a Captain:

Served with the Force which attacked and destroyed the town of Malageah W. coast of Africa in May 1855. Served with the 83rd Regiment during the suppression of the Indian mutiny, and was present at the affair of Sanganeer 8th August 1858, defeat of the Gwalior rebels at Kotaria, surprise and attack of the rebels at Seekur (Medal with Clasp for Central India). (329)

The leather-bound Koran is one of over two thousand rare and valuable books bequeathed to the University of Melbourne by George McArthur, a retired baker from the Victorian goldfields town of Maldon, who committed suicide in 1903.<sup>4</sup> We know that after serving in India the 83rd Regiment returned to England in early 1862, after twelve and a half years' service in India. We know, too, that in 1871 Beasley was elected a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, and that he retired with the honorary rank of Lieutenant-Colonel in 1881. What we do not know is how the Koran he souvenired got from India to Australia. Did it pass through other diverse hands in the half century between being picked up by Beasley and being bequeathed by McArthur?

The journey of Egerton Peters' polo trophy from India to New Zealand is much more clearly mapped by his great-granddaughter, Jane McCabe, in her essay "From Polo to Poultry: A Planter's Legacy." And as the editors of *The Lives of Colonial Objects* succinctly observe, "Egerton Peters' polo trophy is a tangible trace of the networks between former British colonies, in this case between India and New Zealand" (Cooper, Paterson and Wanhalla 15). Peters' grandfather and father both served in India, and he, too, spent thirty years there—as a

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<sup>4</sup> He bequeathed his substantial collection of other artefacts to the Museum of Victoria. For a detailed account of the McArthur bequest see Ian Morrison, "'A Most Valuable Acquisition': Melbourne University Library and the Bequest of George McArthur."

tea planter—before retiring to New Zealand in 1926. The transplanted polo trophy and other Indian objects later served as “visible reminders” (275) to McCabe of her Indian background. These material objects also carried with them their own biographies, stories “not only of a different place, but of a very different kind of life” (McCabe 275) that have the capacity to give narrative to the past. However, it is important to note that the movement of artefacts can change their meaning. As McCabe explains of the colonial artefacts her great-grandfather brought to New Zealand from India, “Whereas in India these relics continue to speak of a British heritage, in New Zealand their ‘Indianness’ has taken priority” (278). In New Zealand the polo trophy carries stories of British life in India during the Raj: it speaks of both polo in India and the lifestyle of a tea planter there—of comfortable bungalows, servants, hunting, sport, and Clubs. It epitomises the importance of material objects in the webs of empire which, less mediated by the centre than metropole-colony models assume, connected the colonies. As Nicholas Thomas explains in *Entangled Objects*:

Something as simple as the movement of an object thus needs to be heard and said and talked about, rather than simply seen. The circulation of objects, especially across the edges of societies, civilizations, and trading regimes, is not merely a physical process but is also a movement and displacement of competing conceptions of things. (123)

The impetus for this circulation, or traffic of objects, was often rooted in exhibitions such as the New Zealand Exhibition of 1865, held in Dunedin. As an article in the *Otago Daily Times* reports, 1041 exhibits were dispatched from India of which only 169 had to be returned, the remaining 872 being presented to the Commissioners of the exhibition. Many of these were perishable exhibits; it was the hope of Dr Forbes Watson, who prepared the catalogue, that others “may assist to form the nucleus of a Local Museum” (“The Indian Collection”), establishing a connection with India in the cultural collections of New Zealand. Such connections were continued by private individuals such as William Bell, as the *Otago Witness* reports:

Mr Wm. Bell, manager of the Dehra Doon tea plantation in the North-West Province of India, and who was in Dunedin about two and a half years ago, has forwarded to the Dunedin Museum a large collection of birds from the Himalayan Mountains. These comprise vultures, the wild jungle fowl, the wild peacock, and others; also, a number of eels. The whole collection consists of nearly 500 skins. (“News of the Week”)

While Anglo-Indian settlers in Australia and New Zealand brought with them objects that would recall specific temporal or spatial moments in their past lives, it is clear that the past was not simply the past. Settlers brought Anglo-India with them, not only in material objects, but also emotionally, and the emotional baggage of Anglo-India can usefully be explored by looking at the textual life of Anglo-India in Australasia.

### **Text**

With this in mind, we now turn our attention to a historical, geocritical reading of text—to the way Australasia read and wrote about Anglo-India, because, we believe, the British Empire was connected textually as much as it was linked geographically, politically, socially, or materially. And yet, while there are studies of British readership of the literature of empire, studies of local colonial readers reading their own material, and studies of colonial readers reading British works, there is little examination of how one part of the empire wrote and

read about and edited and published another. Consequently, in the final section of our article we look at the texts, both factual and fanciful, that narrate Anglo-India in Australasia.

Textual evidence of this nexus is evident, for example, in the serialised “Leaves From an Indian Diary,” that appeared in Dunedin’s daily *Evening Star* in the 1880s. Memoirs and travel literature are the most obvious literary genres which describe the links between Australasia and Anglo-India, with their delineation of place and the movement between places. This is writing based on spectatorship—that of the new eye or the experienced eye, the innocent traveller or the informed veteran; originality of response is played against conventional ways of looking at landscape, country, and culture. Colonial values of imperial loyalty, racial hierarchy, and gender differentiation structure the traveller’s response, while tropes and frames from fictional and imaginative literature infiltrate the factual account. However, travel writing is naturally picaresque rather than formally shaped and plotted as a novel might be. If it has a controlling context it is that of purpose—the writer travels because of their career; because of their husband’s career; they travel for their health; they travel as migrants; they travel as tourists.

The title of Elizabeth Muter’s two-volume work, *Travels and Adventures of an Officer’s Wife in India, China, and New Zealand*, published in London by Hurst and Blackett in 1864, reflects the operations of the occupational webs of empire which joined India and Australasia. Nineteenth-century women travel writers needed a pretext to explain and excuse both their mobility and their pretensions to voice. In both her title and her preface, Mrs Muter presents her work as authorised by her husband and his professional status. Her book is, she emphasises, a hybrid enterprise, developed from notes in her journal and dictated to her by her husband: “Thus the contents came to be coloured by the peculiar character of his mind” (v). This narrative intervention ensures, she suggests, that her account will not be limited by the perspectives of her gender: “Professional subjects are touched on, which many of my readers will see could not have emanated from me” (v).

Yet Mrs Muter is more than the obedient voice of her husband. Readers who take her preface at face value might be brought up short by the opening sentence of Chapter One: “On Sunday, 10th May, 1857, I was at Meerut” (1). This is followed by a vivid eye-witness account of what was referred to by contemporaries as the Indian Mutiny. Her descriptions are first-hand and immediate—entirely free of the “professional subjects” her husband’s perspective might introduce, or anyone’s “peculiar character” but her own. The page headers indicate the nature of her narrative: “The Sepoys in Mutiny”; “The Escape of the Chief Commissioner”; “Scene of Terror.”

More than eighty Mutiny novels were published in the ninety years between the revolt and Indian Independence—indeed, Christopher Herbert claims that “Mutiny fiction proliferated to the point of becoming a major subcategory of the British novel” (273). Veracity was this genre’s authenticating characteristic; accounts such as Mrs Muter’s both contributed to the factual background of the overtly novelistic accounts, but also took from the Mutiny novel the literary techniques of melodrama, the adventure story, and what Patrick Brantlinger has described as “imperial Gothic” (227).

If India is configured as a place of danger, a text such as Mrs Muter’s both enthrals and reassures, as it enables the reader to move imaginatively from the horror of Anglo-India in 1857 to the serenity of Australasian settlement, from the contested status of the British in India to what was seen as the peaceful potential of Australasia—or, as her title puts it, from

adventures to mere travels. As she leaves India and follows her husband to China and thence to New Zealand, Mrs Muter's prose shifts from the novelistic drama of her account of the 1857 Revolt to a more removed, considered, and touristic spectatorship. Robert Gray's *Reminiscences of India and North Queensland, 1857-1912*, published in London in 1913, similarly begins with a personal account of the Indian Revolt and then moves, with its narrator, to Australia: Gray was a Bengal Cavalry officer, who settled in Burdekin district of North Queensland. The title of his book, as Richard Gehrman notes, "is a telling reminder of the linkage his colonial experiences provide" ("Passages to India").

These accounts stress their improvised, unfinished, almost amateur status—offered as a mark of their authenticity. Mrs Muter describes her text as "rambling and diffuse," in a "very crude and incomplete state" (vi), and, as we have seen, credits her husband with the more informed and argumentative threads it might contain. The tone of Gray's memoir echoes this apologetic tone when in his preface he informs the reader "that it is with considerable diffidence the writer offers the following jottings from diaries and reminiscences of a subaltern for the perusal of the public," and noting that while "Possibly this story might have been embellished to make it more interesting reading," this was not attempted (vii). While both writers may utilise literary forms and tropes in their descriptions of the events of the Mutiny, the remainder of their narratives are avowedly more modest, as Gray concedes: "Of course these are trivial incidents and I only give them as instancing the sort of life we used to lead on stations in those days" (159).

Both Muter and Gray offer personal perspectives. But the travel literature of Anglo-India and Australasia can also be more purposive and polemical. In his 1830 *Observations on the Colonies of New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land*, published in Calcutta, John Henderson tells his readers:

I proceeded to Van Diemen's Land from Bengal, in 1829, on account of my health; and after having recovered a portion of my usual strength, I made several short pedestrian excursions from Hobart Town into the interior of the country. ... Being naturally anxious to render my temporary visit as generally beneficial as the opportunities I possessed would admit, and being fully convinced of the great and mutual advantage which would result from the measure, I endeavoured to pave the way for officers from the East Indies, who might desire to form permanent settlements in these Colonies, instead of retiring to their native country ... to organize a Society for the collection and publication of information peculiar to these Colonies; as well for the purpose of affording the world an opportunity of becoming more intimately acquainted with their productions and formation, as to bring to light their latent sources of wealth, for the benefit of the European emigrant. (iii-iv)

Henderson's stance is not personal; his purpose is to describe the virtues and drawbacks of emigration from India to Australia. Describing his task as "of a sterner and more arduous nature," he sets out to "rather shew the defects than the advantages; to exhibit things in their proper colors, when they are wrong; adding, at the same time, the plans I would propose for alleviating the injury they may produce" (3). Emigration propaganda is a pervasive nineteenth-century mode; but Henderson's readers are here specifically the Anglo-Indian community, who may, he suggests, be better served "by being brought into contact with the cold hand of truth," than by "the numerous lighter works on the subject" which he characterises as "romantic panegyric" (3).

Henderson presents India and Australia as symmetrically and fruitfully aligned and he continually makes comparisons between the two places as to terrain, climate, sea temperature, the language differences and similarities of the Indigenous inhabitants, their facial characteristics, mythologies, and religious symbols and ceremonies. His tone moves from that of a tourist to a surveyor to an anthropologist, each mode inviting its appropriate range of comparative focuses. In keeping with the Victorian belief in the ultimately unitary nature of knowledge, he has no problem aligning what he sees in Australia with his memories of India: “the different tunes,” he says of the music of Aboriginal women at “a Korobery” in Victoria, “perfectly corresponded with those which are at present common throughout Hindostan; evincing in this respect a much nearer resemblance to the inhabitants of that country, than could be now recognised amongst either their present language or their customs” (151). Reassuringly the empire is essentially one of familiarity. However superficially discordant, there is an underlying sameness which reinforces the metropole and colony logic by collapsing India and Australia as “the colony,” and Indians and Australian Aborigines as “natives.” Thus while he “was disappointed in procuring a native guide” for a particular expedition, he is accompanied by “A Servant, a native of Hindostan” (xii).

Henderson establishes his authority through his ability to deploy a range of experientially tested fact. “Lighter works” and “romantic panegyrics” (3) are not appropriate to the generic modes of travel, memoir, or polemic. Muter, Gray, and Henderson all stress the credentials which underwrite their authorship—albeit that in Mrs Muter’s case she modestly signals the incapacities of her gender. Imaginative literature needs no such qualifications although the imaginative literature of empire is often underwritten by fact and its fiction voiced by narrators whose experience with their subject is an implicit or explicit part of their narrative persona. Nevertheless, the literature of empire shares travel writing’s open-ended uncertainty even as it attempts to construct a narrative of the globally connected and coherent.

Rudyard Kipling, an Anglo-Indian, and a foundational figure in the literary depiction of empire, visited both Australia and New Zealand in 1891, soon after the runaway success of his first collection of stories, *Plain Tales from the Hills*, published in Calcutta in 1888. The *New Zealand Herald* of 19 October 1891 records that Kipling “left India in 1889, and travelled in China, Japan and America, and thence to England, where his short racy stories and graphic sketches of Indian character became all the rage. Mr. Kipling is now on his way to Samoa to visit Mr. [Robert Louis] Stevenson, the novelist” (“Mr. Rudyard Kipling”). Whilst he quickly became a literary lion in England, he is also indicative of a network of colonial authors and a developing colonial literature derived from the peripheral empire rather than one defined by the centre.

Kipling’s short story “One Lady at Wairakei,” written for the *New Zealand Herald* and published on 30 January 1892, is concerned with the need for a national literature separate from that of Britain. The narrator is a visitor who despite his neophyte status insists on the veracity of his account: “The extraordinary thing about this story is its absolute truth ... none of them [tourists] have seen what I have seen” (199). While visiting what was becoming an established stop on the New Zealand tourist experience, the thermal activity of the central North Island, a vision arises out of a hot pool announcing that she is Truth:

“Tell me the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, about New Zealand,” I said promptly.

“Banks—railways—exports—harbour boards, and so forth—eh?” She smiled wickedly. “You will find all that in books.”

“No. I want to know how the people live, and what they think, and how they die; and what makes them love and fight and trade in the particular manner in which they fight and love and trade. That isn’t in the books.”

“No—not yet.” said Truth thoughtfully, drawing her pink fingers to and fro through the water. “It will come some day.”

“That’s just what I want to know. When is it coming?”

“What?”

“The story of the lives of the people here. I want to read it.” (200)

The narrator knows that he does not have “the key to the stories myself, but they are here in the country somewhere—thousands of them.” He asks: “When are they going to be written, Truth, and how are they going to be written, and who are going to write them?” (200-1). Both Truth and the narrator concede the difficulty of producing literature in a settler society: “You can’t fell timber with one hand and write a tale with the other” (201). But both the narrator and his vision are convinced that when such stories are produced, “The world will listen to them.” The narrator’s next question is who the story-tellers will be, to which Truth replies:

“I don’t quite know. Perhaps one of her children, or grandchildren, as soon as the spirit of the fern hills—they are very lonely, you know—and the snow mountains has entered into his blood. Yes, it shall be one of her children (that is to say, one of *his* children) and he shall lie under wool-drays in summer, and sleep with his back on a salt-bag, and his heels on a bag of harness, and be frozen and sun-tanned, and ride long rides at night, fording rivers, to make love to big, round-faced girls, till he finds that story. Then he will tell it and a hundred thousand things with it, and the world will say, ‘This is the truth, because it is written so.’” (201)

The landscape will produce the writer that is particular to it: “It is no easy work to weave the souls of men into their surroundings,” says Truth (202). But gradually the lives of the inhabitants will be told and retold as stories and become a literature. Truth offers a vision of the plethora of potential narratives the new place might offer:

There were tales of the building of new cities; desperate intrigue for diversions of the local railroad; of railway frauds; local magnate pitted against local magnate, both fighting furiously, first for their own pockets, and next for the interests of their towns; tales of gumdigging under the dusty manuka scrub, and dreams of lost loves and lost hopes in the dead-houses of the country pubs; stories of the breaking of new lands, where the wisdom of men said that there was not feed for a rat; of Toil that began before dawn and lasted far into the starlight, when men, women, and children worked together for the sake of their home, amid the scarred and blackened stumps. (203)

When the narrator suggests—“loftily”—that what is being described is “the Future of Colonial Literature,” Truth is scathing, deriding such a nationalist categorisation: “until you step off this world can you expect anything more than stories of the lives of men and women written by men and women” (205). The narrator sees her point:

“Ah!” I said triumphantly, “they will talk rubbish about a Distinctively Colonial Literature, a Freer Air, Larger Horizons, and so forth. They’ll vex ’emselves with unholy comparisons between their work and other people’s work. They’ll flatter each other and write of the Oamaru Shakespeare, and the Timaru Tennyson, and the Dunedin Dryden, and the Thursday Island Thackeray, won’t they?” Truth reassures him that “those who make the noise will not be the people who tell the stories.” (205)

By the time he visited New Zealand Kipling was already a literary celebrity and there was a range of critical responses to his persona and his work in newspaper interviews, reviews, and articles during his visit and later. Despite Truth’s scorn for “a Distinctively Colonial Literature,” Kipling’s influence on the literature of both Australia and New Zealand is palpable. The suggestion in “One Lady at Wairakei” that however raw, even desolate, the local landscape is, it is pregnant with stories, is also found in Kipling’s Anglo-Indian tales. The influence of Kipling’s Anglo-Indian material can be traced in Australasian literature—in the short stories of Henry Lawson and Katherine Mansfield, and in the contrasted Indian and Australian settings of Ethel Anderson’s short stories. Kipling presents an unromantic landscape, physically, socially, and spiritually, which is replicated in Lawson’s Joe and Mary Wilson stories, and in Mansfield’s “Woman at the Store,” “Millie,” and “Ole Underwood,” written when she first arrived in London, and the later “Daughters of the Late Colonel,” where the bereaved Constance and Josephine inhabit a house marked by their father’s colonial service and the resultant material detritus of empire. In Kipling’s incipient modernism, there is no straight story; facts are conveyed in fragmented conversations and fraught with mystery and supposition. “I have lived long enough in this India to know that it is best to know nothing” (229), the narrator explains to the reader at the outset of “By Word of Mouth,” a story first published in the *Civil and Military Gazette* and collected in *Plain Tales from the Hills*. As with Mrs Muter and Robert Gray, there is no official version, just tentative scraps and linkages.

### **Conclusion**

Conventionally, history concerns itself with events, with objectively measureable facts, with the interpretation of documents. This article describes the more nebulous aspects of the historical process—connections, relationships, links, influences, comparisons—any of which may appear and disappear over time. Chronological narratives seem inadequate and restrictive; individual biographies isolated and anecdotal; purely literary frames compromised by genre conventions and stereotypes. As literary critics we seek to read not just literary texts but also the material evidence that surrounds those publications, the present-day traces of the connections between Anglo-India and Australasia—in objects, in buildings, and in names on maps. Our interest is in the relationships between, on the one hand, the imperial networks of migration, travel, and career, and, on the other, the literary modes of travel, memoir, polemic, and fiction that record, describe, and construct these interactions. The focus of this article—on geographical place and historical period interrogated in terms of place, object, and text—acts as a prism through which the connections, operations, and value systems of empire can be traced and interpreted.

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