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## Women's History Network Magazine

### Home and Away: Domesticity and Empire in the work of Lady Barker

The work of Lady Barker is a fascinating blend of colonial adventure and domestic advice. Beginning her literary career with the publication of *Station Life in New Zealand* in 1869, this now-forgotten Jamaican-born writer was well known for publications that recorded her experiences across the British Empire. Having made homes in diverse geographical locations that include an army tent at Lucknow; a prefabricated sheep station in New Zealand; Government House in Perth; and, a tropical 'palace' in Trinidad, Lady Barker was *the* authority on domestic aspects of colonial life. However, her work on the domestic was not confined to the colonies. A twice-married mother of six children<sup>1</sup>, Lady Barker was also the first female superintendent of the National School of Cookery; the editor of a family magazine; and, of the twenty books she wrote, three were domestic advice manuals.

Given Lady Barker's achievements it is not surprising that, since the late-1950s, her colonial experiences have been the focus for several female authors writing from the former 'white Dominions' of New Zealand, Australia and South Africa.<sup>2</sup> As an English design historian whose research focuses on the late-Victorian interior, my interest in Lady Barker relates to her writings on the domestic; focussing in particular on her contribution to Macmillan's 'Art at Home Series', *The Bedroom and Boudoir* (1878). It is beyond the scope of this article to offer a detailed analysis of that text, and instead, here I aim to present a brief biography and to highlight the themes of domestic advice and colonial adventure that co-exist in her books.

Written during the period of high imperialism, Lady Barker's books exemplify a genre that Sara Mills describes as:

a mixture of the thoroughly enjoyable (adventure narratives depicting strong, resourceful, women characters in situations rarely found in the literature of the period) and the almost impossible (the racism, the concern to present the narrator as feminine, and the lengthy descriptions of the domestic).<sup>3</sup>

In *Discourses of Difference: An Analysis of Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism* (1991), Mills rejects a 'realist' reading of women's travel writing which treats these texts as 'simple autobiographies'.<sup>4</sup> Instead, using an analytical framework

that draws on the work of Foucault, Said and feminist theories, she identifies the tensions between the discourses of colonialism and femininity present in the travel writing of women. Mills stresses that this genre ‘must be read as textual constructs emanating from a range of discourses in conflict’.<sup>5</sup> This model has been invaluable in interpreting the colonial writings of Lady Barker. Similarly, Jane Haggis in her essay ‘White Women and Colonialism: towards a non-recuperative history’, notes how the writings of white women from the colonies have been interpreted:

The recuperative drive to place women in the history of colonialism and imperialism takes the texts and reminiscences of white women as literal accounts of their experiences, authentic and significant on their meaning – a meaning directly available to the historian and providing a readily comprehensible and valid, if partial, account of the past.<sup>6</sup>

Haggis’s critique of ‘recovery’ and ‘recuperative’ modes<sup>7</sup> of writing the history of white women and colonialism demonstrates that these woman-centred approaches tend to represent white women either as:

patriarchal victims or as plucky feminist heroines, in both cases ignoring their racial privileges in colonial society, and to render white women visible at the expense of rendering the colonised invisible.<sup>8</sup>

Certainly, this has been the case with Lady Barker. Most of the scholars who have considered her work have treated her writings as straightforward autobiography and have used them to offer a ‘recovered’ history of an author who, to quote her earliest biographer:

was one of a small number of women who during the nineteenth century sailed, pen in hand, to the less-frequented parts of the world and set down their impressions for the stay-at-homes ...<sup>9</sup>

Of these biographies, the most comprehensive and celebratory is Betty Gilderdale’s *The Seven Lives of Lady Barker* (1996).<sup>10</sup> The sources that Gilderdale relies upon most heavily are Lady Barker’s books and magazine articles, which she uses as straightforward ‘historical’ evidence. Gilderdale justifies this decision, stating:

Almost all her books, for children and adults, are autobiographical, based on her observations and experiences. Owing to the scarcity of other material, they necessarily form the main sources for her biography.<sup>11</sup>

Thus, throughout *The Seven Lives of Lady Barker*, Gilderdale uses Lady Barker's writings to construct a linear biographical narrative, without ever questioning or analysing their content.<sup>12</sup> However, notwithstanding these methodological problems, Gilderdale's biography provides an invaluable starting point given that most of Lady Barker's personal papers were destroyed when the Harrod's Depository was bombed during the Second World War.

Despite the absence of primary documents, the public nature of Lady Barker's life has made researching her history comparatively straightforward. Indeed, the earliest published biographical information dates from 1885, when Lady Barker was included in Frances Hays' *Women of the Day – A Biographical Dictionary of Notable Contemporaries*. Highlighting the co-existence of colonialism and domesticity in her writing, this entry focuses on Lady Barker's travels across the British Empire and lists her literary works to date. In 1884, Lady Barker's second husband, Frederick Napier Broome received a knighthood, and she changed her title to Lady Broome, although she continued to publish as 'Lady Barker'.<sup>13</sup> Thus, there are also biographical entries for 'BROOME (Mary Ann), Lady' in reference works such as *Who Was Who, 1897 – 1915* (1967). However, she remains best known as 'Lady Barker', as is evidenced by her most recent entry in the online *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*.<sup>14</sup>

Perhaps the most important source of autobiographical information appears in her last book, *Colonial Memories* (1904). Originally published as a series of articles for the *Cornhill Magazine* and one in the *Boudoir*, these *Memories* are prefaced with 'A Personal Story'.<sup>15</sup> Written after an absence from the literary scene of almost twenty years, this introductory chapter describes the 'wandering up and down the face of the globe' that she had undertaken with both her husbands.<sup>16</sup> It also acts as a reminder to readers 'who have perhaps read my little books in their childhood', and to whom she ventures 'to address these lines explaining as it were my personal story, with an entreaty for forgiveness if I have made it *too* personal'.<sup>17</sup>

'A Personal Story' is explicitly autobiographical and, reading with an awareness of its competing discourses, here it is treated as an historical rather than a literary source. Thus, supplemented with information gleaned from secondary

sources, surviving personal papers and nineteenth century reviews and articles, it forms the basis of the following biography.

### **Mary Ann, Lady Barker: Author**

Born on 29<sup>th</sup> May 1831<sup>18</sup> in Spanish Town, Jamaica, Mary Anne Stewart was the eldest child of Susan Hewitt and the Honourable Walter George Stewart, ‘the last “Island Secretary”’.<sup>19</sup> Much of her childhood was spent in the homes of relatives in Ireland and England: she and her younger sister also lived in Paris for a short time.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, in *Colonial Memories* she commented ‘I began to wander to and from England before I was two years old and had crossed the Atlantic five times by 1852’.<sup>21</sup> She returned to Jamaica in December 1847, and later used her childhood experiences as the basis for several children’s stories.

In 1851 she met Captain George Barker R.A., the *aide-de-camp* to the Governor of Jamaica. They were married in Spanish Town Cathedral in 1852 and in August of that year returned to England.<sup>22</sup> While Mary Ann Barker (Annie) spent the next eight years in London facing the practical difficulties of home making and childbearing, her husband fought at the Crimea, where he rose rapidly to the rank of Colonel.<sup>23</sup> Sent to India during the Mutiny, Barker was instrumental in the relief of Lucknow, and consequently, he was ‘created KCB for services in the field’ and offered the command of the Royal Artillery in Bengal.<sup>24</sup> In October 1860, leaving her two surviving sons with relatives in England, Lady Barker undertook the journey to meet her husband in Calcutta.<sup>25</sup> Travelling north from Lucknow to Simla, Lady Barker later used the domestic concerns of ‘camp life’ experienced during this four-month military promenade in *Stories About*. However, it was at Simla that George Barker died.<sup>26</sup> Lady Barker returned alone to her family in England, where for the next four years she records that, she ‘lived quietly with my two little sons among my own people.’<sup>27</sup>

In 1865, however, she met Canadian-born, Frederick Napier Broome, ‘a young and very good-looking New Zealand sheep farmer.’<sup>28</sup> Broome, who was eleven years her junior, had been working as a cadet farmer in New Zealand.<sup>29</sup> He persuaded Lady Barker to marry him and leave England for a sheep station on the Canterbury Plains. She wrote:

I often wonder how I could have had the courage to take such a step, for it entailed leaving my boys behind as well as all my friends and most of the comforts and conveniences of life.<sup>30</sup>

They married in the summer of 1865<sup>31</sup>, and sailed immediately for New Zealand to establish their own sheep station – ‘Broomielaw’ – in the Malvern Hills, forty-five miles from Christchurch, on the Canterbury Settlement in the South Island of New Zealand. In *Colonial Memories*, Lady Barker describes this period as ‘three supremely happy years which followed this wild and really almost wicked step on our parts.’<sup>32</sup> This experience was to form the basis of her two best-selling books, *Station Life in New Zealand* (1870) and its sequel *Station Amusements in New Zealand* (1873), which according to the preface written by her husband:

Simply record the expeditions, adventures and emergencies diversifying the daily life of the wife of a New Zealand sheep-farmer; and, as each was written while the novelty and excitement of the scenes it describes were fresh upon her, they may succeed in giving here in England an adequate impression of the delight and freedom of an existence so far removed from our own highly-wrought civilization.<sup>33</sup>

For the most part, this remains the popular interpretation of Lady Barker’s earliest books. For instance, Fiona Kidman describes *Station Life* as, both:

a superbly written account of the way people lived on Canterbury’s back-country sheep stations during the 1860s [and] a classical chronicle of the adventures of a remarkable woman.<sup>34</sup>

However, in a short, but insightful, essay titled ‘An English Lady in the Untamed Mountains’ Nelson Wattie offers a more sophisticated analysis of Lady Barker’s *oeuvre*. Identifying major themes of New Zealand literature but focusing on the class and colonial content of her work, significantly, he notes:

In New Zealand, Lady Barker’s books are still being read, but it may be doubted whether the full ironic range of her talent is always appreciated, since the standard opinion holds that her books are no more than ‘still a valuable source for social historians of early Canterbury’. Such a judgement, it seems to me, is far too limited, both in its geographical and in its literary range.<sup>35</sup>

*Station Life* and *Station Amusements* were actually written in London following the Broomes' return to England in 1869. Forced to sell Broomielaw following a disastrous land venture and the loss of more than 4000 sheep in the snowstorm of 1867, they both turned to writing as a source of much-needed income. Frederick Broome wrote poetry and reviews for *Macmillan's Magazine*, and later became a Special Correspondent for the *Times*.<sup>36</sup> In *Colonial Memories*, with characteristic self-deprecating humour, Lady Barker records how she began to write:

Mr Alexander Macmillan, who was always kindness itself to both of us, [...] was responsible for putting the idea of writing into my head. At his suggestion I inflicted 'Station Life in New Zealand', as well as several story-books for children, on a patient and long-suffering public.<sup>37</sup>

Between 1869 and 1876, Lady Barker wrote thirteen books. Her work falls into three main categories: those books that recount her experiences of life in the colonies; others best described as juvenile fiction; and, three books that are domestic advice manuals.<sup>38</sup> She also wrote stories for *Good Words for the Young*; reviewed books for the *Times*; and, in 1874 became editor of the Church of England family magazine *Evening Hours*, which serialised several of her books.<sup>39</sup> Given her connections with *Evening Hours* and the religious feeling apparent in much of her writing, it is tempting to view Lady Barker's work as rectory literature. However, the publication figures held by the Macmillan Archive indicate that her books were widely read and contemporary reviews in the *Times* suggest they were well received.<sup>40</sup>

In addition, during this prolific period of writing Lady Barker also gave birth to two more sons<sup>41</sup> and, to her own 'deep amazement' having never cared what she ate 'provided it was "neat and clean"'<sup>42</sup> became the first Lady Superintendent of Henry Cole's newly founded National School of Cookery.<sup>43</sup> The entry on Lady Barker in *Women of the Day* (1885) explains her appointment, and stresses the popularity of her best-selling book *The First Principles of Cooking* (1874), which:

had a very large circulation, and almost immediately after its appearance Lady Barker was appointed superintendent of the National Training School of Cookery, South Kensington.<sup>44</sup>

Throughout 1874, Lady Barker also contributed a series of ten articles entitled ‘Notes on Cooking’ to *Evening Hours*; and, in *Colonial Memories* she included an amusing chapter, ‘A Cookery Memory’ in which she describes the foundation of the School.<sup>45</sup>

However, early in 1875, Frederick Broome began his diplomatic career, having been appointed Colonial Secretary to the Province of Natal.<sup>46</sup> Later that year, Lady Barker and her two youngest sons left their South Kensington home, and went out to Africa to join her husband at ‘poor sleepy Maritzburg.’<sup>47</sup> She recorded her experiences, again using the device of the letter ‘home’, in *A Year’s Housekeeping in South Africa* (1877).<sup>48</sup>

After a brief return to England in 1877, Lady Barker joined her husband in Mauritius where he served as Colonial-Secretary and later Lieutenant Governor.<sup>49</sup> However, in December 1882, Broome was appointed Governor of Western Australia. Expressing its surprise at the appointment, the *Western Australian* commented rather more on Lady Barker than the new Governor:

Mr Broome has had rather a chequered career, and was at one time a journalist on the staff of the *Times*. .... Mr Broome’s literary style is said to be admirable, but the writings of his wife have been more widely read, for, to the world in general, he is best known as the husband of Lady Barker with whose delightful descriptions of New Zealand station life most readers are acquainted.<sup>50</sup>

During Broome’s governorship of Western Australia, Lady Barker was to write *Letters to Guy*, which was first published by Macmillan in 1885. This book, also uses the epistolary form, this time to the Broomes’ eldest son, Guy, (who had remained at school in England) and describes the first year of their time in the colony.<sup>51</sup>

Leaving Western Australia in 1889, Broome was appointed Acting Governor of Barbados in 1891; and, finally Governor of Trinidad until just before his death in 1896.<sup>52</sup> Having returned to England, the widowed Lady Barker (now titled Lady Broome) lived in straitened financial circumstances: the Broomes had always assumed that Frederick would survive his wife and had made no financial provision for her.<sup>53</sup> At the end of 1897 the Government of Western Australia eventually awarded Lady Broome a widow’s pension of £150 a year. In a letter to Sir John Forrest, the premier of Western Australia, she thanked the Legislature for their assistance:



which just makes it possible for me to have a little house of my own ... I am going at 65 years old, to start work as a practical worker again, and am begging all my friends to find me a place as housekeeper, or to take care of motherless children. This is all I can do ... What I fear is that no one will have anything to do with so broken and shattered an old woman.<sup>54</sup>

Despite the small pension, Lady Broome was obliged to supplement her income by writing and in 1904 published her last book, *Colonial Memories*. This, the only book to be published under the name 'Lady Broome', draws on all her experiences across the British Empire. Here she comments poignantly:

I often wonder which is the dream – the shifting scenes of former days, so full of interest as well as of everything which could make life dear and precious, or these monotonous years when I feel like a shipwrecked swimmer, cast up by a wave, out of reach of immediate peril it is true, but far removed from all except the commonplace of existence.<sup>55</sup>

Following her death on 6<sup>th</sup> March 1911, Lady Broome's obituary in the *Times* **recorded** the careers of her father and husbands, but commented that 'She was a woman of no small ability'.<sup>56</sup>

### **Domesticating Empire: The Literary Works of Lady Barker**

Lady Barker's descriptions of life in the colonies should be considered as a type of colonialist literature, which Elleke Boehmer defines as that:

which was specifically concerned with colonial expansion. On the whole it was literature written by and for colonizing Europeans about non-European lands dominated by them. It embodied the imperialists' point of view [and] was informed by theories concerning the superiority of European culture and the rightness of empire. Its distinctive stereotyped language was geared to mediating the white man's relationship with colonized peoples.<sup>57</sup>

This description applies to all Lady Barker's colonial books, which are described as having 'achieved legendary status in their respective countries'.<sup>58</sup> Presumably, it is the descendants of white settlers who considered these texts to be legendary. For instance, Fiona Kidman, ignoring the Maori population, suggests that:

To Barker, New Zealanders owe a debt not only for drawing such an illuminating record of early colonial life but also for preserving the origins of much of our language.<sup>59</sup>

Written for metropolitan readers, the stories are largely concerned with the experiences of European settlers, and, in the case of the New Zealand stories, are marked by an absence of indigenous people. While there are human-geographical reasons for this, it should nonetheless be remembered that this book was written during a period that witnessed the Land Wars (1845-72) between the white settlers and the Maoris of the North Island. Indeed, in 1869, Frederick Broome contributed a political paper to *Macmillan's Magazine* titled 'The Crisis in New Zealand' that discussed this conflict from the perspective of a colonist. The only reference to any direct contact with the Maori population appeared much later in *Colonial Memories*. Here, rather scandalously, Lady Barker describes dancing 'the Lancers' at a ball with a Maori chieftain from the North Island, who was said to complain: 'Ah, if I might only dance without my clothes! No one could really dance in these horrid things!'<sup>60</sup> Thus, claiming that New Zealand 'has always been beautifully and distinctly English',<sup>61</sup> Lady Barker either ignores its indigenous peoples or represents them as tattooed savages who preferred to dance naked: in so doing she clearly contributes to colonial ideology.

Instead of absence, *A Year's Housekeeping in South Africa* describes the homes and customs of the black Africans whom Lady Barker observed. She devotes chapters to descriptions of 'The Kafir at Home', 'Zulu Witches and Witchfinders', and, 'Kafir Weddings and Kafir Kraals'. However, this was Africa and Africans as experienced, misunderstood and represented by an upper class 'English' lady:

I must say, however, that I like Kafir servants in many respects. They require constant supervision; they require to be told to do the same thing over and over again every day, and what is more besides telling you have to stand by and see that they do the thing; they are also very slow: but still with all these disadvantages they are far better than the generality of European servants out here, who make their luckless employers' lives a burthen to them by reason of their tempers and caprices. It is much better, I am convinced, to face the evil boldly and to make up ones mind to have none but Kafir servants.<sup>62</sup>

The theme of racial difference is explicit in this book.<sup>63</sup> Yet, often critical of the behaviour of low-class white immigrants 'who sit indoors, listless and discontented, grumbling, because the Kafirs won't come and work for them'<sup>64</sup>, class differences are also apparent in her writing. Bemoaning the behaviour of her

servants, black and white, Lady Barker happily entertains a Zulu Princess to afternoon tea.

Significantly, Lady Barker's own class status, and a conspicuous lack of other *ladies*, allowed her to transgress the socially defined gender role she would have played in England:

It may be strange to English ears to hear a woman of tolerably peaceful disposition, and as the advertisements in the *Times* so often state, 'thoroughly domesticated', aver that she found great pleasure in going after wild pigs.<sup>65</sup>

Elleke Boehmer comments that the 'majority of narratives of Empire involved masculine heroes and assumed a predominantly male audience'.<sup>66</sup> In the work of Lady Barker, the opposite is true. Her colonial stories present a predominantly female readership with a feminine heroine whose adventures centre on domestic concerns: out in the colonies household chores and everyday outings take on the characteristics of the quest romance. She wrote: 'one's nerves and courage are in very different order out in New Zealand to the low standard which rules for ladies in England, who "live at home in ease!"'<sup>67</sup> Thus, afternoon tea becomes an adventure when imported into the New Zealand bush; collecting the post is a perilous quest involving a ride across flooded rivers; and Zulu Witchfinders appear at a Garden Party.<sup>68</sup>

Writing for the Virago Press, perhaps unsurprisingly, Fiona Kidman describes Lady Barker as having 'many attributes of an early feminist [...] a courageous person ready to try any adventure', and one who was not 'prepared to be excluded from any activities because she was a woman'.<sup>69</sup> Similarly, Gillian Whitlock describes Lady Barker as an 'intrepid colonial matriarch'.<sup>70</sup> However, Sara Mills warns against an interpretation that depicts female travel writers like Lady Barker as proto-feminists who live up to the titles 'indomitable' and 'eccentric'.<sup>71</sup> Indeed, as Mills points out:

Much of the analysis done by women critics so far falls into this category of proto-feminist reading, yet it is possible to 'prove' by selective reading, that these writers were proto-feminist, anti-feminist, colonial and anti-colonial.<sup>72</sup>

These dual readings of Lady Barker's work are certainly possible. She did not represent herself as either indomitable or eccentric: her readers – and certainly her reviewers – saw her as 'thoroughly domesticated'.<sup>73</sup> Moreover, her public position at

Lady Superintendent of the National School of Cookery and her magazine articles and advice manuals confirmed her feminine position as an expert on the domestic. Instead, Lady Barker exemplifies the imperial role of Englishwomen, whose ‘civilising mission’ was to carry English ideals abroad. As Mackay and Thane comment:

The ideal was the healthy, practical, but cultured, woman with domestic training, ‘who will keep up the tone of the men with whom they mix by music and booklore when the day is over’.<sup>74</sup>

Following her success in the genre of household management with the publication of *The First Principles of Cooking*, Lady Barker wrote a series of articles on ‘Houses and Housekeeping’ for *Evening Hours* during 1875.<sup>75</sup> Her reading public was already familiar with her domestic concerns and the decoration of her houses, for example, in *Station Life in New Zealand* (1869) she describes ‘Our Station Home’:

My greatest interest and occupation consist in going to look at my house, which is being *cut out* in Christchurch, and will be drayed to our station, a journey of fifty miles. It is, of course, only of wood, and seems about as solid as a band-box, but I am assured by the builder that it will be a ‘most superior article’ when it is all put together. F- and I made the little plan of it ourselves, regulating the size of the drawing-room by the dimensions of the carpet we brought out.<sup>76</sup>

Later collected and published as *Houses and House-keeping: A Fireside Gossip upon Home and its Contents* (1876), each of the seven articles deals with a different room in an imaginary London house. However, Lady Barker’s writing inevitably draws on her colonial experiences, exporting the ‘English home’ to the colonies and importing the ‘Empire’ into the domestic spaces of England. Thus, when advising on suitable decoration for a London drawing room, Lady Barker recalls her Indian ‘tent drawing-room, which moved twenty-five miles ahead every day.’<sup>77</sup> She also describes ‘a little wooden house, up a quiet valley on a New Zealand station’ where ‘every article of furniture had been slowly and expensively conveyed over roads which would give an English upholsterer a fit to look at.’<sup>78</sup>

This co-existence of the domestic and the colonial is best demonstrated in Lady Barker’s contribution to Macmillan’s ‘Art at Home Series’, *The Bedroom and Boudoir* (1878). Here she gives advice on the most private space in the domestic

sphere, writing remembrances of colonial bedrooms<sup>79</sup> around illustrations of imported and exotic furniture.<sup>80</sup> She told her readers:

I don't suppose any human being except a gipsy has ever dwelt in so many widely-apart lands as I have. [...] Especially pretty has my sleeping-room always been, though it has sometimes looked out over the snowy peaks of the Himalayas, at others, up a lovely New Zealand valley, or, in still earlier days, over a waving West Indian 'grass piece'. But I may as well get out the map of the world at once, and try to remember the various places to which my wandering destiny has led me.<sup>81</sup>

In all her advice literature Lady Barker ostensibly advocates domesticity, yet her constant references to travel and her own colonial experiences imply that the home could be anywhere within the British Empire. Thus, exploiting domestic ideology and embracing the 'civilising mission' designated to 'the Englishwoman' abroad, she managed to wander 'up and down the face of the globe' *and* to write professionally on matters concerning the home.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Lady Barker had three sons by each of her two husbands: John Stewart Scott Barker b. 1853; a stillborn son (unnamed) b.1856; Walter George Barker b. 1857; Frederick Hopton Napier Broome (died in infancy) b. 1866; Guy Saville Frederick Broome b.1870; and Louis Egerton Broome b. 1875.

<sup>2</sup> See A. Hasluck, 'Lady Broome', *Western Australian Historical Society Journal*, vol.5, part 3, 1957, pp. 1-16; A. Hasluck, *Remembered with Affection*, Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1963; F. Kidman, 'Introduction' to Lady Barker, *Station Life in New Zealand*, Macmillan, 1870; reprint with notes by Fiona Kidman, London: Virago Press, 1984; B. Gilderdale, *The Seven Lives of Lady Barker*, Auckland NZ: David Bateman, 1996; G. Whitlock, 'A 'white-souled state' Across the 'South' with Lady Barker' in Darian-Smith, K., Gunner, G., & Nuttall, S., (eds.), *Text, Theory, Space. Land, literature and history in South Africa and Australia*, London: Routledge, 1996; C. Hankin, 'Barker, Mary Anne 1830 – 32? – 1911', *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, updated 11 December 2002, URL: <http://www.dnzb.govt.nz/>; and Selzer, A., *Governor's Wives in Colonial Australia*, Canberra: National Library of Australia, 2002

<sup>3</sup> S. Mills, *Discourses of Difference: An analysis of Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism*, Routledge, 1991, p. 20

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*, p. 4

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*, p. 20

<sup>6</sup> J. Haggis, 'White women and colonialism: towards a non-recuperative history' *Gender and Imperialism*, edited by C. Midgley, Manchester University Press, 1998, p. 47

<sup>7</sup> C. Midgley, 1998, p. 7, offers a definition of the 'recovery' mode as work 'much of it aimed at a popular audience, [that] seeks to restore women to Imperial History and demonstrate the scope of women's involvement in the Empire: as the wives of colonial administrators, settlers, explorers, missionaries and nurses'. She defines the closely related 'recuperative' works as those 'which aim to debunk myths of the 'destructive' female whose racial prejudice led to the disruption of 'good' relations between male colonial official and indigenous peoples, and to reassess women's imperial roles in amore positive light'.

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*, quoting from J. Haggis, 'Gendering colonialism or colonising gender? Recent women's studies approaches to white women and the history of British colonialism', *Women's Studies International Forum*, 13, 1990, pp. 105-15

<sup>9</sup> A. Hasluck, 1963, p. 1

<sup>10</sup> Rather disappointingly, the titles of Gilderdale's chapters: 'The Soldier's Wife'; 'The Farmer's Wife'; 'The Governor's Wife' and 'The Colonial Widow' place Lady Barker in a subordinate position. This is ironic given her complaint that 'Lady Barker's obituary in the *Times* of London said more about her husband's achievements than her own' (B. Gilderdale, 1996, p. xiv). Only the chapter entitled 'The Author' suggests an independent role, but given that Gilderdale discusses Napier Broome's poetry and journalism throughout, perhaps this chapter should have been called 'The Author's Wife'?

<sup>11</sup> B. Gilderdale, 1996, p. xv

<sup>12</sup> Especially those texts that use the device of the letter 'home' such as *Station Life in New Zealand* (1870); *A Year's Housekeeping in South Africa* (1877); and *Letters to Guy* (1885).

<sup>13</sup> Although Lady Barker was known as 'Mrs Broome' in New Zealand, she retained the title 'Lady Barker' until Frederick Napier Broome was knighted in 1884. The retention of her first married name and title after her marriage to Broome troubles many scholars from the Southern Hemisphere. Kidman uses the notion that Lady Barker had already 'established some writing credentials' to explain this potentially 'snobbish' act. Gilderdale suggests that it is likely that Macmillan encouraged her to write as 'Lady Barker' to differentiate her from her husband, 'and also because the 'cachet' of a title automatically lifted the book in the eyes of the Victorian public' (B. Gilderdale, 1996, p. 140). More amusingly, Nelson Wattie comments on Lady Barker's aristocratic pretensions in retaining her title and remarks that 'Her readers might be excused for thinking that 'Lady' was her Christian name' (N. Wattie, 1981, p. 98).

<sup>14</sup> C. Hankin, 2002

<sup>15</sup> *Colonial Memories* begins with the following 'Note' dated October 1904: 'My cordial thanks are due – and given – to the Editor of the *Cornhill Magazine*, within whose pages some of these 'Memories' have from time to time appeared, for permission to republish them in this form. Also to the Editor of the *Boudoir*, where my 'Girls – Old and New' made their *début* last season. M. A. B'.

<sup>16</sup> Lady M. A. Broome, 1904, p. xxi

<sup>17</sup> *ibid.*, p. xxii

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- <sup>18</sup> FamilySearch™ International Genealogical Index for the Caribbean at <http://www.familysearch.org> gives her date of birth as 1830 (film number 1903747). Gilderdale gives it as 1831.
- <sup>19</sup> Lady M. A. Broome, 1904, p. xxi
- <sup>20</sup> ‘Woodville’, Lucan near Dublin was the home of her paternal great-grandfather, an Indian Army General, Sir Hopton Stafford Scott. Her mother’s cousins, the Maynes, provided a home at Tixhall Lodge, Cannock Chase Staffordshire.
- <sup>21</sup> Lady M. A. Broome, 1904, p. x
- <sup>22</sup> B. Gilderdale, 1996, pp. 40-8 writes that on their return to England from Jamaica, the Barker’s were initially based at the Woolwich Barracks (headquarters of the Royal Artillery), later renting a small house in Woolwich. In 1857 Mary Anne Barker stayed with her sister-in-law at Chiddingstone Rectory in, Kent, but later took a house in Kensington where she lived until she left for India.
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid., pp. 41-2 drawing on Col. Julian R. J. Jocelyn’s *The History of the Royal Artillery (Crimean Period)*, Murray, 1911, pp. 43-6 and pp. 203-4 details the rapid promotion of George Barker.
- <sup>24</sup> F. Hays, *Women of the Day – A Biographical Dictionary of Notable Contemporaries*, Chatto & Windus, 1885, p. 11
- <sup>25</sup> Gilderdale uses Lady Barker’s ‘Indian Diary’, an unpublished private source now the property of her descendants, to construct a narrative of her journey to India and her travels across the sub-continent. This primary document also records the death of her husband and her journey home.
- <sup>26</sup> Barker died of hepatitis and dysentery.
- <sup>27</sup> Lady M. A. Broome, 1904, p. xii. B. Gilderdale, 1996, p. 86 suggests that Lady Barker and her two boys lived with her sister-in-law at Chiddingstone Rectory.
- <sup>28</sup> Lady M. A. Broome, 1904, p. xii
- <sup>29</sup> At the age of 15, Broome went to New Zealand to work for Richard Knight at ‘Steventon’, a run of 9,700 acres (3,925 hectares), which was situated on the south bank of the Selwyn River (the Wai-kiri-kiri). Knight was a nephew of Jane Austen – ‘Steventon’ was named after the rectory in Hampshire where Austen was born. Broome and a partner, H. P. Hill, bought the property in April 1864 from Richard and his brother Arthur Charles Knight. Hill and his farm manager lived on at Steventon while the Broomes moved into and extended a small cob cottage two miles away which they named Broomielaw.
- <sup>30</sup> Lady M. A. Broome, 1904, p. xii
- <sup>31</sup> FamilySearch™ International Genealogical Index for the British Isles at <http://www.familysearch.org> gives the date of their marriage as 21 June 1864. Lady Barker and Gilderdale both give it as the summer of 1865.
- <sup>32</sup> Lady M. A. Broome, 1904, p. xiii
- <sup>33</sup> Lady M. A. Barker, *Station Life in New Zealand*, Macmillan, 1870; Virago reprint, 1984, Preface. Macmillan & Co., first published *Station Life in New Zealand & Co.*, in December 1869 but it was dated 1870. The first print-run was 1500 copies and the book retailed at 7/6d. A second edition was printed in November 1871, this time 3000 copies retailing at 3/6d. A third edition of 3000 copies appeared in December 1873 again selling at 3/6d, and a fourth of 1500 copies was printed in June 1883, once more costing 3/6d. There were two further reprints, a Colonial Library edition in 1886 and another in 1887. *Station Amusements in New Zealand* was serialised in *Evening Hours* during 1873 and published by this journal’s owner, William Hunt & Co.
- <sup>34</sup> F. Kidman, 1984, p. v
- <sup>35</sup> N. Wattie, ‘An English Lady in the Untamed Mountains: Lady Barker in New Zealand’ in *English Literature of the Dominions: Writings on Australia, Canada and New Zealand*, edited by K. Gross & W. Klooss, Königshausen & Neumann, 1981, p. 97 quoting from A. H. McLintock (ed.), *An Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, Wellington, 1966, vol. 1, p. 158
- <sup>36</sup> Broome published two volumes of poetry: *Poems from New Zealand* (1868) and *The Stranger of Seriphos* (1869)
- <sup>37</sup> Lady M. A. Broome, 1904, p. xiv
- <sup>38</sup> The stories of life in the colonies or on travel include: *Station Life in New Zealand*, Macmillan 1870; *A Christmas Cake in Four Quarters*, Frederick Warne, 1871; *Travelling About over Old and New Ground*, Routledge, 1872; *Station Amusements in New Zealand*, William Hunt, 1873; *A Year’s Housekeeping in South Africa*, Macmillan, 1877; *Letters to Guy*, Macmillan, 1885; and (writing as Lady Broome) *Colonial Memories*, Smith, Elder & Co., 1904. The juvenile fiction comprises *Stories About*, Frederick Warne, 1871; *Ribbon Stories*, Macmillan, 1872; *Holiday Stories for Boys and Girls*, Routledge, 1873; *Sybil’s Book*, Macmillan, 1874; *Boys*, Routledge, 1874; *This Troublesome World, or Bet of Stowe*, Hatchards, 1875; and, *The White Rat*, Macmillan, 1880. Unsurprisingly, Lady Barker’s juvenile fiction is also full of colonial references. *Stories About* (1871), for example includes chapters

on her Jamaican childhood, army camp-life in India and riding in New Zealand. One of the heroines in *Sybil's Book* (1874) marries and goes out to live in Australia, and another travels to the West Indies. Similarly, *Boys* (1874) contains stories titled 'My Emigrant Boy' and 'My Missionary Boy'. The domestic advice books are *First Lessons in the Principles of Cooking*, Macmillan, 1874; *Houses and Housekeeping*, William Hunt, 1876; and *The Bedroom and Boudoir*, Macmillan, 1878. Lady Barker's only attempt at fiction *Spring Comedies*, (Macmillan, 1871) was poorly received.

<sup>39</sup> See *Evening Hours* Volume 1, 1871: 'Our Recreations in New Zealand', pp. 449 – 457; *Evening Hours* Volume 2, 1872: 'New Zealand Amusements'; *Evening Hours* Volume 3, 1873: 'Bet of Stow: A True Story'; *Evening Hours* Volume 4, 1874: 'Notes on Cooking'; *Evening Hours* Volume 5, 1875: 'Houses and Housekeeping'; and, *Evening Hours* Volume 6, 1876: 'Life in South Africa'.

<sup>40</sup> See reviews in the *Times* for *Stories About*, 23rd December 1870; *A Christmas Cake in Four Quarters*, 25th December 1871; *Station Amusements in New Zealand*, 10th October 1873; *Sybil's Book*, 23rd December 1873; *A Year's Housekeeping in South Africa*, 20th August 1877

<sup>41</sup> Her fourth son was born soon after the Broomes arrival in New Zealand had died of diarrhoea aged 2 months. The infant's death is recounted in *Station Life*.

<sup>42</sup> Lady M. A. Broome, 1904, p.241

<sup>43</sup> Sir Henry Cole and a committee, which included the late Duke of Westminster, the late Lord Granville, Mr Hans Busk, Sir Daniel Cooper, Mr (Rob Roy) McGregor and 'many other experts' founded the National School of Cookery at South Kensington in 1874. With its low fees, the School aimed to attract and train working class women and servants. However, Lady Barker notes that when the school opened Henry Cole was unhappy because the 'pupils were by no means the class he wanted to get at. Fine Ladies of every rank, rich women, gay Americans in beautiful clothes, all thronged our kitchen, and the waiting carriages looked as if a smart party were going on within our dingy sheds'. See Lady M. A. Broome, 1904, chapter XVI 'A Cooking Memory', pp. 240 - 254

<sup>44</sup> F. Hays, 1885, p. 11. The Macmillan Archive records that *First Lessons in the Principles of Cooking*, was her most successful book. Selling at 1/-, there were three editions with print runs of 10,000 (February 1874), 5,000 (October 1875) and 3,000 (January 1886).

<sup>45</sup> The chapter describes the ignorance of young ladies regarding the cooking of eggs; a gas explosion in the kitchens, which resulted in a 'rain of potatoes'; and, the story of a young curate, whose landlady was such a poor cook, that he took the desperate step of dressing as a woman, in order to learn how to cook a mutton chop!

<sup>46</sup> In 1874, there had been an uprising in the Province of Natal led by Chief Langalibalele. Sir Garnet Wolseley replaced Natal's Colonial Governor and Broome was appointed his secretary.

<sup>47</sup> Lady M. A. Barker, 1877, p.59

<sup>48</sup> *A Year's Housekeeping in South Africa* has prompted further critical consideration of Lady Barker's writing. Gillian Whitlock, 1996, for example, uses post-colonial theories to discuss *A Year's Housekeeping* alongside Lady Barker's later Australian book, *Letters from Guy* (1885). Here she identified the colonial ideology produced by Lady Barker's responses to Natal and Western Australia 'from her privileged position as a senior colonial official's wife', K. Darian-Smith, et al., (eds.), 1996, p. 17. Whitlock's essay raises several interesting points that relate to the *domestic* in Lady Barker's writing. In her discussion of Lady Barker's domestication of the 'South', Whitlock described Lady Barker as 'an expert on domestic management, as the first Lady Superintendent of the National School of Cookery', but does not consider any of Lady Barker's writings on the domestic. This omission was unfortunate given that she states that post-colonial analysis 'must examine the discursive production, reproduction and power of colonial ideology in various texts – both literary and non-fiction, including conduct manuals and cookery books' (p. 71).

<sup>49</sup> Broome was appointed Lieutenant-Governor of Mauritius in 1880.

<sup>50</sup> *Western Australian*, 8 December 1882

<sup>51</sup> Several writers discuss Lady Barker's use of this literary form. The New Zealand novelist, Fiona Kidman, (p. vii) believes 'they were real letters'. However, suggesting an alternative to the simplistic autobiographical interpretation of Lady Barker's writings, Peter Gibbons remarks: 'Even if the letters of *Station Life* rest upon original correspondence they have been worked over later, and the epistolary form is largely, perhaps entirely, a device. [...] Lady Barker's artful prose is most fully demonstrated when her books are read as comedies of manners rather than as transparent documentary episodes'. See P. Gibbons, 'Non-Fiction' in *The Oxford History of New Zealand Literature in English*, edited by T. Sturm, Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1991, p. 47

<sup>52</sup> Broome was 54 years old when he died; his widow was 65 years old.

<sup>53</sup> Lady Broome's address was 42 Eaton Terrace, London, SW

<sup>54</sup> Western Australian Archives, CSR 3371/97



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- <sup>55</sup> Lady M. A. Broome, 1904, p. xxi - xxii
- <sup>56</sup> The *Times* Obituary: Lady Broome, Tuesday, March 7, 1911, p. 11
- <sup>57</sup> E. Boehmer, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*, OUP, 1995, pp. 2-3
- <sup>58</sup> B. Gilderdale, 1996, dust-jacket description.
- <sup>59</sup> F. Kidman, 1984, pp. ix - x
- <sup>60</sup> Lady M. A. Broome, 1904, p. 38
- <sup>61</sup> *ibid.*, p. 2
- <sup>62</sup> Lady M. A. Barker, 1877, p. 118
- <sup>63</sup> The working title for this book was *Sketches in Black and White*. Reading University, Ref. MS 1089: Lady Barker to Alexander Macmillan, 25<sup>th</sup> November 1876 (written from Maritzburg, Natal)
- <sup>64</sup> Lady M. A. Barker, 1877, p. 247
- <sup>65</sup> Lady M. A. Barker, 1873, p.47
- <sup>66</sup> E. Boehmer, 1995, p. 9
- <sup>67</sup> Lady M. A. Barker, 1873, p.74
- <sup>68</sup> Lady Barker's description of the Zulu witch-finders (Letter IX, 4 April 1876) should be compared with the more masculine and blood-thirsty version described by H. Rider Haggard in *King Solomon's Mines*, 1885, Chapter X: 'The Witch Hunt'. Dennis Butts' explanatory notes to the Oxford World Classics edition of *King Solomon's Mines* state that 'in March 1876 Rider Haggard himself witnessed a Zulu witch-dance.' It is tempting to think that this may have been at Lady Barker's Garden Party, given that Haggard was on Broome's staff in Natal and is mentioned in two of Lady Barker's letters to Macmillan, in which she recommends articles he had written on the Transvaal. Reading University, Ref. MS 1089: Lady Barker to Mr Grove, 11<sup>th</sup> August 1879
- <sup>69</sup> F. Kidman, 1984, pp. vii-viii
- <sup>70</sup> G. Whitlock, 1996, p. 72
- <sup>71</sup> S. Mills, 1991, p. 20
- <sup>72</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>73</sup> Lady M. A. Barker, 1873, p.47
- <sup>74</sup> J. Mackay and P. Thane, 'The Englishwoman', in *Englishness: Politics and Culture 1880-1920* edited by R. Colls and P. Dodd, Croom Helm, 1986, p.203
- <sup>75</sup> 'Houses and Housekeeping' in *Evening Hours*, 1875, is a series of seven articles that deals with a variety of subjects. The first article deals with the attic rooms allotted to servants; the second and third consider 'The Nursery'; the fourth deals with 'Bedrooms'; the fifth is titled 'The Dining-Room'; the sixth is 'The Drawing-Room'; and, the final article looks at 'Kitchens'.
- <sup>76</sup> Lady M. A. Barker, 1870, p.39
- <sup>77</sup> Lady M. A. Barker, 'Houses and Housekeeping: The Drawing-Room', *Evening Hours*, 1875, p. 315
- <sup>78</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>79</sup> Lady M. A. Barker, 1878, pp. 33-4: 'I have slumbered 'aright' in extraordinary beds, in extraordinary places, on tables, and under them (that was to be out of the way of being walked upon), on mats, on trunks, on all sorts of wonderful contrivances. I slept once very soundly on a piece of sacking stretched between two bullock trunks ... I know the uneasiness of mattresses stuffed with chopped grass, and the lumpiness of those filled by amateur hands with wool – *au naturel*.'
- <sup>80</sup> For a discussion of the problems associated with using the illustrations as historical evidence, see E. Ferry, '... information for the ignorant and aid for the advancing ...' Macmillan's 'Art at Home Series', 1876 – 1883' in J. Aynsley and K. Forde, *Design Values and the Modern Magazine*, Manchester University Press, 2006
- <sup>81</sup> Lady M. A. Barker, 1878, p. 20