



Eliza Hamilton Dunlop

edited by

ANNA JOHNSTON AND
ELIZABETH WEBBY

SYDNEY STUDIES IN AUSTRALIAN LITERATURE

Eliza Hamilton Dunlop



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Eliza Hamilton Dunlop

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Cover image and frontispiece: Portrait of Eliza Hamilton Dunlop (no date), colour photograph of oil painting (Wollombi Endeavour Museum).

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1

“Proud of Contributing Its Quota to the Original Literature of the Colony”: An Introduction to Eliza Hamilton Dunlop and Her Writing

Anna Johnston and Elizabeth Webby

Eliza Hamilton Dunlop spiritedly identified her contribution “to the original literature of the colony”, when promoting her poem “The Star of the South” in the *Sydney Morning Herald* in 1842.¹ Her new song was “an offering to the people of New South Wales”. She celebrated a newly formed society, populated by “sons and daughters of the land” who were privileged to inhabit “happy homes and altars free” where they found refuge and rest. Admiring Australia’s opportunities, Dunlop awarded the “moral bulwarks of a nation to this young country”. She thought poetry could enable a people to imagine themselves part of a nation, and urged readers into a form of democratic literary appreciation. Quoting great English poets – including John Milton, John Leyden and Alexander Pope – Dunlop wrote self-deprecatingly that a bush hut in “the untrodden ways” of Wollombi or by the lagoons of Watagan Creek might not inspire the same “precious stores of rule and precedent” in poetry when compared to a metropolitan library. Yet she suggested that her poetic inheritance still bore “the lustre of the original gem”. Poetry, politics and a new and progressive settler society: these were issues central to Dunlop’s writing and core tenets of her personal and public persona.

Dunlop published regularly in colonial newspapers between 1838 and 1873: we have identified about sixty poems from a range of Australian newspapers and periodicals.² In the early 1870s, Dunlop put together “The Vase”, a fair copy of nearly seventy poems selected from those she had written in Australia, Ireland and India, both published and unpublished. Her poetry was not always popular: the editor of the *Sydney Morning Herald* had agreed with Dunlop’s sentiments in “The Star of the South” but deemed it “bad poetry”. It was at times controversial, especially “The Aboriginal Mother” (1838).³ English poetry of the period was understood as being in a state of abeyance, if not decline, after the great Romantic

1 Eliza Hamilton Dunlop, “The Star of the South”, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 30 August 1842.

2 See Eliza Hamilton Dunlop’s Australian Publications, this volume.

3 Editorial comment, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 30 August 1842.

poets. Colonial Australian writers, readers and critics followed these debates closely and they influenced assessments of local writing too. Recently, literary scholars have reassessed early- to mid-nineteenth-century English poetry, noting several important and related features of the period: the increased number of women writing poetry and their publication in new media forms such as annuals and the popular press; a fresh appreciation of sentimental literary modes as vehicles for expressing political ideas; and the place of poetry in exploring ideas about Britain's nineteenth-century colonies.⁴ These important questions about poetry, literary history and culture open up new ways to evaluate Dunlop's writing.

No volume of Dunlop's poetry was published during her lifetime, which contributed to its ephemeral status. Twice it seems Dunlop had planned a book: first, as an eighteen-year-old poet in Ireland in 1814, "Ultoniana", a proposed volume of historical poems about Ulster; and then, in late life, "The Vase", Dunlop's own selected edition of her writing, which only exists in manuscript form. In both instances, circumstances conspired to prevent publication.⁵ Without a permanent record in book form, Dunlop's writing fell into obscurity, like that of many other colonial and particularly female poets.

This book is the first to restore the *oeuvre* of Dunlop's writing to Australian literary history, following Elizabeth Webby's identification of Dunlop as a colonial poet of note in the 1980s. It includes a new edited selection of Dunlop's poems, and draws upon specialist contributors to reassess the different forms of her writing and collaboration. It brings Dunlop into view as an independent and intelligent woman who determinedly crafted her life and her public contribution through writing. Her Irish childhood and her family's experience across the British Empire profoundly shaped her perspective. Together with her commitment to writing and reading as ways to engage with both social issues and personal experiences, these elements mark a distinctive literary presence. In her Australian writing, Dunlop imagined a new settler society that valued knowledge about Indigenous cultures and thoughtful responses to the environment, as well as having a deeply felt attachment to an Irish homeland that had undergone a violent and ongoing transformation. Dunlop's writing emerges at an important period in literary history in which we can see intensely local issues, places and people linked to global literary concerns. This introduction begins with an overview of Eliza Hamilton Dunlop's life in colonial Australia with her husband David and their children,

4 David Stewart, *The Form of Poetry in the 1820s and 1830s: A Period of Doubt* (Cham: Palgrave-Springer, 2018). See also Jerome J. McGann, *The Poetics of Sensibility: A Revolution in Literary Style* (Oxford: Clarendon / Oxford University Press, 1996); Katherine D. Harris, *Forget Me Not: The Rise of the British Literary Annual, 1823–1835* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2015); Jason R. Rudy, *Imagined Homelands: British Poetry in the Colonies* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins, 2017).

5 Evidence of Dunlop's intentions lies in two newspaper notices: "Notice", *Freeman's Journal* (Dublin), 7 October 1814; and "Local News", *Maitland Mercury*, 1 June 1871.

before canvassing the reception of Dunlop’s writing during her lifetime and more recently.⁶ It concludes by introducing the chapters in this volume.

“To seek a new home in a new country is a trying undertaking”⁷: Writing in the Colony

The year 1838 was a tumultuous one to arrive in New South Wales. The Dunlop family travelled aboard the *Superb*: Eliza and David and their four children (Eliza’s daughter from her first marriage, Georgina Law, joined them soon after). Captain John Biscoe had made his name for extensive voyaging in the south, including the circumnavigation of Antarctica, for which he received an award from the Royal Geographical Society, and he would have been an interesting interlocutor for the Dunlop family, who were well-read in exploration literature.⁸ The new Governor, Sir George Gipps, had arrived only days before the Dunlops, and one of his first acts was to table the House of Commons’ 1837 *Report from the Select Committee on Aborigines (British Settlements)*, which has aptly been described as “the most famous statement on the interests of indigenous peoples whose lands came within the [British] Empire’s vast territorial claims.”⁹ Gipps was about to attempt a radically new and contentious legal framework of protection of and jurisdiction over Aboriginal people. Gipps and the Dunlops arrived in Sydney only weeks after a massacre at Waterloo Creek, a punitive expedition of mounted police led by Major James Nunn to suppress Kamilaroi resistance on the north-west frontier.¹⁰ By mid-year, rumours of the June massacre of about thirty Wirrayaraay and Gamilaroi people at Myall Creek, 200 kilometres east, began to filter through official channels. In December 1838, Dunlop’s most famous poem, “The Aboriginal Mother”, was published in the *Australian*: inspired by the Myall Creek massacre, it was sympathetic to Indigenous survivors and highly critical of settler violence. In 1838, too, the Molesworth Committee formally recommended that convict transportation should be abolished, a decision with major implications for the economy and society of New South Wales. Reforms to convictism, to relations with Aboriginal people, and to land acquisition characterised the first decade of Eliza and David Dunlop’s colonial residence, and they were implicated in all three by dint of their personal connections, political interests and public roles.

6 A full biographical account of David Dunlop and Eliza Hamilton Dunlop in Ireland appears in Chapter 1.

7 William Hamilton Maxwell, letter to Eliza Hamilton Dunlop, 4 September 1837, qtd Margaret De Salis, *Two Early Colonials* (Sydney: printed by the author, 1967), 34.

8 Ann Savours, “Biscoe, John (1794–1843)”, ed. Douglas Pike, *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Canberra: National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, 1966), <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/biscoe-john-1784/text2009>.

9 Amanda Nettelbeck, *Indigenous Rights and Colonial Subjecthood: Protection and Reform in the Nineteenth-Century British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 12.

10 Roger Milliss, *Waterloo Creek: The Australia Day Massacre of 1838, George Gipps and the British Conquest of New South Wales* (Ringwood, Victoria: McPhee Gribble, 1992).

Dunlop's first published poem in the Australian colonial press – "The Dream" – inaugurated a series of ten "Songs of an Exile" published in the *Australian* between November 1838 and October 1840. Conditions for writing were challenging. Dunlop had four children under sixteen; appropriate housing was difficult to secure and they moved around in Sydney from Castlereagh Street to Surrey Hills; and David's work increasingly took him away from the family. Dunlop's thoughts were often on the country, family and friends she had left behind: "What thoughts within this bosom swell, / What tears an Exile's eyes are filling".¹¹ The early death of a daughter in Ireland in 1835 weighed heavily upon her, and there is no evidence that Dunlop ever returned to visit Jane Wilson Dunlop's grave. Deaths of extended family members or friends regularly provoked Dunlop's colonial poetry, with a melancholy and elegiac mood prevailing.¹² Yet as the paired poems "The Aboriginal Mother" and "The Irish Mother" show (numbers 4 and 5 respectively in the Exile series), Dunlop's writing joined together sentiment and social issues. So too the diasporic locations of the Dunlops' extended Anglo-Irish family remained linked in her imagination and her poetic memorialisation.

Australian places, words and images became part of Dunlop's poetic repertoire, even though her poetry often focused on northern hemisphere topics and events. By 1839 the family had leased the former government house at Emu Plains, which supplied both an aesthetic location and social standing for the Dunlop household. From there, Dunlop was able to write again: poetry in her Exile series and "The Ford of the Emu Plains", her only known published short story.¹³ This story follows a party of bullock drivers travelling down the Nepean River who sing Walter Scott ballads and tell personal stories of emigration via America to Australia, marked by grief for a lost homeland and a son drowned due to a father's pride and prejudice. One key protagonist is a dray owner whose life in Ireland had become untenable because, although sympathetic to the politics of the 1798 rebellion, he had through long years of intimacy "learned to love and revere My Orange land lord, the proud-hearted Hamilton". He eulogises the *Personal Narrative of the Irish Rebellion* by Charles Hamilton Teeling. Teeling's eyewitness account remains a valuable source for what is now described as the forgotten history of the revolutionary political movements of Northern Ireland, led by the United Irishmen who mobilised Presbyterian and Dissenter political activity against the English in Ulster during the 1798 rebellion.¹⁴

11 Eliza Hamilton Dunlop, "Songs of an Exile (No. 1): The Dream", *Australian*, 8 November 1838.

12 For example, "Songs of an Exile: No. 3", *Australian*, 29 November 1838 (see Jason R. Rudy's analysis in this volume); "Rosetta Nathan's Dirge", *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 April 1843 (see Graeme Skinner's analysis in this volume).

13 Eliza Hamilton Dunlop, "Stories of an Exile: No 1 'The Ford of the Emu Plains'", *Sydney Monitor and Commercial Advertiser*, 29 May 1839; "Stories of an Exile No. 1 'The Ford of the Emu Plains Concluded'", *Sydney Monitor and Commercial Advertiser*, 31 May 1839. This story's numbered series title suggests that more might have been planned, although no evidence has been found of their publication to date.

14 Guy Beiner, "Disremembering 1798? An Archaeology of Social Forgetting and Remembrance in Ulster", *History and Memory* 25, no. 1 (2013): 9–50.

This was an important and personal history that Dunlop returned to on several occasions, including her dual eulogy for her husband and father-in-law in her late poem “The Two Graves” (1865), published in Australia and Ireland.¹⁵ “The Ford of the Emu Plains” also revealed Dunlop’s new responses to the Australian landscape. The colonial-era fords drew on Darug people’s use of the riverbanks along the Nepean River, and the Dunlops would have crossed the ford between their new home at Emu Plains and Penrith regularly.¹⁶ The narrator revels in a late February respite from hot summer winds, and eulogises the Plains:

bathed in semi transparent vapour, and looked like a waveless sea, bounded by, and blending with the blue firmament. The high land was covered to its topmost ridge with luxuriant sweet flowering shrubs, the wild apple, and the tall gum-trees, and the road, winding far down in front, was a good and smooth one.

Sydney, too, features as “that rising wonder of the southern hemisphere”. Dunlop’s only “Australian” story reveals her nostalgia for Ireland and her political sympathies, set in closely observed colonial environments. Its affective tone can mask its social, historical and political concerns, yet this connection between poetic feeling, place and politics was central throughout Dunlop’s *oeuvre*.

The Police Magistracy and Colonial Poets

David Dunlop was appointed by Gipps to the position of salaried Police Magistrate at Penrith in June 1838, which proved to be a difficult beginning to the family’s life in New South Wales.¹⁷ Magistrates in Australian colonies were loosely modelled on the British system: major landholders were expected to serve in an honorary capacity to maintain their districts.¹⁸ In New South Wales, emancipated convicts could not be magistrates, so the position became a powerful one for the Exclusives who were developing vast pastoralist interests. Their business interests were oriented around acquiring land (by dispossessing Indigenous people) and extracting produce and profit (by utilising assigned convict labour); by the 1830s under Governor Richard Bourke it was obvious that such personal interests were often in conflict with their official roles. Introducing stipendiary magistrates was one proposed solution, for these were paid by the Colonial Office on recommendation of the Governor, often to resolve particular problems in districts,

15 See Duncan Wu, this volume.

16 Godden Mackay Logan, *Penrith Lakes Scheme: Archaeological Management Plan Draft Report* (Redfern: Penrith Lakes Development Corporation, 2014). See Appendix A: Nepean River Fords and Associated Lanes.

17 On the Dunlops’ life in Ireland and motivation for immigration to Australia, see Anna Johnston, this volume.

18 This overview draws upon Hilary Golder, *High and Responsible Office: A History of the NSW Magistracy* (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1991).

and could serve short to medium terms. David was appointed to “a new kind of magistracy reinforced by paramilitary police”, part of Gipps’ extension of the powers of Commissioners of Crown Lands to be both protectors and magistrates.¹⁹ This was a daunting prospect for those with pastoral interests, because it promised to combine Aboriginal protection with the existing magistrate’s power to grant and withdraw the licences that gave pastoralists conditional rights to depasture cattle temporarily on Crown land, but not any other benefits of tenure.²⁰ When the honorary magistrates at Penrith had petitioned for a salaried magistrate, they had a favoured candidate in mind (J.C. Lethbridge, “a gentleman of Tory principles”).²¹ David was appointed instead.

David was assiduous and principled, but probably naive about colonial politics at this early stage and apt to take offence. He was seen as part of a new Whig governmentality that was strongly resisted by powerful pastoralists, whose tendency to evaluate people and issues on “party” grounds – political ideology and adherence – was noted by many officials and visitors. Even those who at first appeared to the Dunlops as allies – such as the Irish-born Member of the Legislative Council, Sir John Jamison, who helped the Dunlops rent the Old Government House at Emu Plains – would undermine officials if their private interests appeared threatened. Dunlop’s seventh and eighth poems in the Exile series were written from Emu Plains. In “Songs of Exile No. 8”, the protagonist’s lament might mirror David’s frustrations in his role in Penrith: “What dreary doom is mine! / Unblest ’mid Austral-wilds to roam / A slave at Mammon’s Shrine. / What weary lot – to count each link – / Whose rust is on my soul! / To chase life’s phantoms; and to sink – Untimely – at the goal”.²²

David Dunlop’s decisions as magistrate at Penrith created discord, not least because of his tendency to speak his mind in court. Charles Tompson brought a case of disobedience by his convict servant John Keane, which escalated into the pages of the *Sydney Herald* as a public appeal to the Governor by Tompson, condemning the police magistrate. (Tompson only later wrote personally to the Governor pursuing his complaint.²³) Tompson refused Keane’s request to attend Sunday Mass because he required his services as a cook: Keane had disobeyed. Although supportive of Keane’s religious attendance, Dunlop advised Keane that he disbelieved the convict’s accusations against his master about poor treatment

19 Lisa Ford, “Protecting the Peace on the Edges of Empire: Commissioners of Crown Lands in New South Wales”, in *Protection and Empire: A Global History*, ed. Adam Clulow, Bain Attwood and Lauren Benton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 183.

20 Ford, “Protecting the Peace on the Edges of Empire”, 184, 177.

21 “Vox Populi – Vox De”, *Australian*, 26 September 1839.

22 Eliza Hamilton Dunlop, “Songs of an Exile – No. 8”, *Australian*, 7 May 1840.

23 Dunlop heard the case against Keane on 17 September 1838. Tompson’s letter to the *Sydney Herald* was dated 20 September; his formal letter of complaint to the Governor was dated 29 October 1838, responding to the Colonial Secretary’s correspondence of 23 October, following a flurry of vituperative correspondence in the newspapers. Tompson to Gipps, 29 October 1838, in Colonial Secretary, CSO 709, “Police – Penrith”, NSW State Archives, 38/11.499.

because every person knew that Dunlop "made no distinction between Master and Servant in administering Justice".²⁴ Inadvisably, Dunlop allowed both the local priest Father Brady and Tompson to address the court, resulting in rancorous exchanges.²⁵ The religious overtones of the case made Dunlop uneasy. He noted privately to the Governor, "party and sectarian differences exist even more strongly here than in Ireland", a much gloomier interpretation than Eliza's "happy homes and altars free".²⁶ Tompson declared in the *Sydney Herald* that Dunlop's "belaud[ing] of his own impartiality ... was highly calculated to produce dissatisfaction and insubordination in the men, arising from imaginary grievances ... [I]t is democratical [sic] and levelling to the last degree".²⁷ Gipps supported Dunlop in the complaint, but advised him that "it would be better to leave the parties and the public to draw a conclusion ... [about your impartiality] from your decisions, and way of disposing of cases brought before you, than to impress it upon them, by any declaration of your own".²⁸ Gipps' counsel was wise, but both David and Eliza Dunlop were experienced in public debate given their training in Northern Irish politics and they used the newspapers to defend themselves when pushed. The settlers too manipulated the press as a vehicle to protect and promote their own interests.²⁹ Tompson's vigorous attack on David Dunlop in the *Sydney Herald* was not accidental: the paper promoted settler interests, including campaigning vociferously against the prosecution of men for the Myall Creek massacre, and in this period explicitly urged settlers to commit violence against Indigenous people for their perceived crimes and misdemeanours.³⁰ Tompson was an experienced colonial bureaucrat: he had been a clerk in the Colonial Secretary's office until 1836. He was also an accomplished poet, having published *Wild Notes, from the Lyre of a Native Minstrel* (1826), the first book of poetry published by a native born Australian.³¹ When solicited by Dunlop a year later for a character testimony, Tompson revealed publicly that his complaints had been encouraged

24 Dunlop to Gipps, 27 September 1838, in Colonial Secretary, CSO 709, "Police – Penrith", NSW State Archives.

25 Tompson condemned the Catholic Church's "hold" over the "illiterate part of their flock, and the power with which they have been known to wield it": he noted too that the vast majority of agricultural labourers in the region (and many in the public courtroom that day) were Catholic. Charles Tompson, "To His Excellency Sir George Gipps, Governor-in-Chief of New South Wales", *Sydney Herald*, 26 September 1838.

26 Dunlop to Gipps, 27 September 1838, CSO 709.

27 Tompson, "To His Excellency Sir George Gipps".

28 Gipps to Dunlop, Colonial Secretary, CSO 709, "Police – Penrith", 4/2420.3, NSW State Archives.

29 See Duncan Wu, "A Vehicle of Private Malice: Eliza Hamilton Dunlop and the *Sydney Herald*", *Review of English Studies*, 65(272), new series, (2014): 888–903.

30 See Rebecca Wood, "Frontier Violence and the Bush Legend: The *Sydney Herald*'s Response to the Myall Creek Massacre Trials and the Creation of Colonial Identity", *History Australia*, 6 (2009): 67.1–67.19.

31 Charles Tompson, *Wild Notes, from the Lyre of a Native Minstrel*, ed. G.A. Wilkes and G.A. Turnbull (1826; Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1973).

by “a Whig magistrate”: “your QUONDAM thick-and-thin supporter”, inspired by “private pique”.³² That was Jamison, whose colonial career was marked by bitter factional disputes that could suddenly reverse: his warm personal letters to the Dunlop family co-exist with this clandestine political campaign against Dunlop.³³ Jamison was primed to respond with suspicion to magisterial reform, having been part of the powerful Parramatta Bench with John Macarthur, responsible for hounding Governor Sir Thomas Brisbane from office for perceived prejudice.³⁴ Yet so much resentment had been raised, as shown in many letters to the newspapers, that by late 1839 Gipps made a new appointment of David as inaugural Police Magistrate at Wollombi.

Wollombi and Mulla Villa: “The Mulla’s emerald banks, in sunny southern clime”³⁵

Wollombi, a small township in the Upper Hunter River Valley, was a site of colonial contact between a number of increasingly dispossessed Aboriginal communities (Darkinyung, Awabakal and Wonnarua) and the rough edges of colonial expansion. Initially, conditions were so improvisational that David moved there alone, living in a bark hut that also served as his courtroom. It is likely this second posting was strategic to Gipps’ purposes of implementing protection policies, for David undertook the Aboriginal aspects of his responsibilities with seriousness from the start. Gipps’ removal of David from Penrith has been interpreted as evidence of David’s intractability or indicative of the power of the established magistracy.³⁶ There is likely some truth in both, but Wollombi was neither a sinecure nor an apolitical and distant placement. Landholders in Wollombi protected and perhaps sheltered John Fleming, the elite pastoralist implicated in the Myall Creek massacre who escaped justice.³⁷ From Penrith in September 1838, David had already provided some local knowledge when Gipps assiduously (but unsuccessfully) pursued Fleming’s whereabouts.³⁸ The Dunlops’ sympathies with Indigenous affairs

32 “Vox Populi – Vox Dei”, *Australian*, 26 September 1839.

33 G.P. Walsh, “Jamison, Sir John (1776–1844)”, *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/jamison-sir-john-2268/text2907>. Letters from Jamison relating to family matters and social occasions in November 1838 reside in Milson Family Papers, Further Papers 1826–1960, Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales, MLMSS 9409.

34 Golder, 31–32.

35 Eliza Hamilton Dunlop, “The Mulla, or Wollombi Creek, New South Wales” (1849), “The Vase”. See Elizabeth Webby this volume.

36 Even De Salis is critical, drawing a corollary between David and Captain Faunce, who had been an unpopular Police Magistrate at Brisbane Waters in the late 1830s (58).

37 Patsy Withycombe, “The Twelfth Man: John Henry Fleming and the Myall Creek Massacre”, in *Remembering the Myall Creek Massacre*, ed. Jane Lydon and Lyndall Ryan (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2018), 38–51.

38 Dunlop to Gipps, 12 September 1838, in Colonial Secretary, CSO 709, “Police – Penrith”, NSW State Archives, 38/9591.

were evident, and their posting to Wollombi would not have been welcomed by those who defended the massacre perpetrators. Even before David arrived to take up his post, another newspaper campaign critical of him began, repeating the pattern from Penrith. If anything, the Hunter Valley was a harder posting because it was an amateur magistracy in a convict community, as Hilary Golder describes it, made up of “newly-arrived entrepreneurs anxious for quick returns on the capital they had imported”: dependent on harsh physical punishments to control convicts and with a reputation for violent clearance of Indigenous communities.³⁹ Much of David’s daily work involved managing convicts in the region, and resolving tensions between masters and their assigned workers. Bushrangers also plundered the region regularly. Factional troubles continued throughout David’s posting, which lasted until 1846, when another set of political campaigns saw him removed from office. Gipps by then was keen on economising. The Legislative Council had successfully decimated policing budgets, priming the return of the honorary magistrates, as advocated by Henry Dangar, owner of the Myall Creek Station, who deplored the “secret correspondence” that police magistrates had with Sydney.⁴⁰ Given the association between Eliza Hamilton Dunlop’s overt criticism of “supers and stockmen” on Dangar’s station in her early poem “The Aboriginal Mother”, the proximity of many landholders and agricultural workers who had personal experience of violent conflict between settlers and Indigenous people in the region and the perception of powerful pastoralists that David opposed their interests, the Police Magistracy at Wollombi was inevitably challenging.

Yet the township became the Dunlop family home for forty years.⁴¹ By 1841, the substantial sandstone house Mulla Villa had been built on the Great North Road to provide for the family, for prisoners in cells beneath the house, and for the usual agricultural requirements of a settler family. Rumour has it that Eliza Hamilton Dunlop sheltered Aboriginal women from violence by secreting them in the space between the upper floorboards and the stone cellar.⁴² She certainly spent time with Aboriginal people in the region, learning some of their language and customs.⁴³ The house’s name reflected Irish and poetic references.⁴⁴ It was set by Wollombi Creek, and the 100-acre holding was fertile, marked by large sandstone rocks and escarpments characteristic of the area; it was also spiritually significant country

39 Golder 35.

40 Golder 62.

41 In David’s will, the house was for Eliza’s usage until her death, when it would be sold and the proceeds divided equally between his son and his daughters’ eldest children. “Will and Probate of David Dunlop”, State Archives Office NSW, Wills and Probates, 9 May 1859, MSS. 5959. The house was sold in 1881: “Classified Advertising”, *Maitland Mercury and Hunter River General Advertiser*, 23 August 1881.

42 The house is privately owned, though recent owners have utilised its historic associations for various small business ventures, including historical tours in which local knowledge is disseminated. See <https://www.mullavilla.com.au/>.

43 See Anna Johnston and Jim Wafer this volume.

44 See Wafer this volume.

for Indigenous groups. For Dunlop, it was an evocative environment. Poems such as “The Mulla, or Wollombi Creek, New South Wales” (1849) linked her love of landscapes in Ireland and Australia. In some ways, Dunlop considered herself to be isolated, such as when she introduced herself in a letter to the composer Isaac Nathan in 1841: “I who am in the forest far from human habitation of civilized beings”.⁴⁵ Certainly at Wollombi she was not surrounded by a cultural milieu, although fellow poets such as Tompson had resided at Penrith, and Charles Harpur lived and wrote during the 1840s and 50s at nearby Singleton and Jerry’s Plains. John Walker Fulton – editor of the short-lived *Blossom* magazine (1828) and advocate for arts in the Colony – had publicly supported David in his Penrith troubles.⁴⁶ While there was a (predominantly male) Hunter Valley literary circle there is little evidence that Eliza engaged with them, although they certainly knew about her work.

Mulla Villa was the site from which Dunlop wrote and published regularly, well into her seventies: poetry, letters to editors about the reception of her poetry, and on local issues. Dunlop’s musical collaborations with Nathan – notable and occasionally controversial in the 1840s – were regularly featured in Sydney newspapers, with timely ripostes from Wollombi when she felt a correction or self-defence was warranted.⁴⁷ Like many female poets, Dunlop balanced writing with family responsibilities, including the education and marriages of her son and daughters. She was also highly involved in David’s career. Anonymous newspaper correspondence suggests that Eliza had a hand in shaping public opinion to support David’s initiatives. For example, David relentlessly petitioned the Governor for blankets and clothing rations for the Aboriginal community at Wollombi.⁴⁸ Gipps was sceptical of the annual blanket distribution, and withheld supply on the grounds that he wanted to encourage Aboriginal involvement in the colonial economy. David was excoriating about this decision even though he too wanted to employ Indigenous men for police work, declaring to an 1845 inquiry that blankets functioned “as a recognised tie between the ruler and the ruled”. They provided “no sufficient recompense” for the loss of Aboriginal land, trees and possums, but

45 De Salis, *Two Early Colonials*, 101.

46 Fulton published at least three letters in the *Commercial Journal and Advertiser* in 1838–39 supporting David Dunlop’s magistracy at Penrith, drawing fire from detractors as a consequence. On the *Blossom*, see Elizabeth Webby, “Australia”, in *Periodicals of Queen Victoria’s Empire, an Exploration*, ed. Rosemary VanArsdel and J. Don Vann (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 28–29.

47 See Graeme Skinner this volume.

48 This began at least by March 1841, when he requested “50 blankets, 6 shirts 6 pair of trousers” as part of his plan to engage the Aboriginal community with local police work. David Dunlop, “Letter to NSW Colonial Secretary” (1841), in Stan Parkes Papers, State Library of New South Wales, MLMSS 8823. On David Dunlop’s understanding of blanket economies, see Anna Johnston, “Mrs Milson’s Wordlist: Eliza Hamilton Dunlop and the Intimacy of Linguistic Work”, in *Intimacies of Violence in the Settler Colony: Economies of Dispossession around the Pacific Rim*, ed. Penelope Edmonds and Amanda Nettelbeck (Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan-Springer, 2018), 225–47.

Aboriginal people "accepted [them] from want".⁴⁹ In 1846, a correspondent from Wollombi – likely Eliza – reported on sustained cold and frost in the valley: "The sufferings of the helpless and wretched aborigines are ... extreme, deprived during the most inclement season, even of their former scanty covering – the 'Government blankets,' – their wretchedness is enhanced ten-fold by the withdrawal of that penurious loan".⁵⁰

Dunlop's involvement in public affairs exposed her to ridicule. When David once again clashed with pastoral interests, she became a target. The *Australasian Chronicle* published a scurrilous letter inferring that David was ruled by his wife. An anonymous correspondent claimed that while David was responding to a plan for secular, state-based education, "Mrs Dunlop mounted the bench, interrupted Mr. Dunlop, and said that for her part she would have 'the bible, the whole bible, and nothing but the bible'", having personally compared the Protestant and Douay versions and found no differences.⁵¹ As intriguing as this vision of Dunlop is, it can only be satirical. The alleged proponent of secular education in this vignette was Richard Alexander Wiseman, son of Solomon Wiseman, the dominant ex- convict landholder of the Hawkesbury. Richard Wiseman's advocacy for education was ironic given that Justice Roger Therry had described his father as "sadly deficient" in literary attainments and dismissive of education: a man who "took unmerciful liberties with the English language and English history".⁵² Instituting a national system of education had been controversial and resisted by both Catholic and Anglican churches during this period. Like Governor Sir Richard Bourke, who had first attempted to introduce a new education bill, the Dunlops were liberal and pro-Catholic emancipation. David Dunlop had been involved in the introduction of the Irish national schools system which, in 1831, had enabled state funding of schools that both Protestant and Catholic children could attend while also being instructed by different religious personnel.⁵³ Other slanderous representations of

49 NSW Parliament Legislative Council, *Report from the Select Committee on the Condition of the Aborigines, with Appendix, Minutes of Evidence and Replies to a Circular Letter* (Sydney: Government Printing Office, 1845).

50 "The Wollombi", *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 July 1846. This letter was reprinted in the *Maitland Mercury*, 22 July 1846.

51 "Wollombi", *Australasian Chronicle*, 22 March 1842. The debate about King James and Douay editions split Protestants and Catholics.

52 Roger Therry, *Reminiscences of Thirty Years' Residence in New South Wales and Victoria*, 2nd ed. (London: Low, 1863), 122. Therry also noted that Solomon Wiseman confused Catholics with Romans, and advised Bishop Polding that the reason for sectarian tension was that the English Protestants had never forgiven Julius Caesar for invading ancient Briton (123). Wiseman remains well known for the ferry service he ran on the Hawkesbury and his corrupt but highly successful business interests: he was the model for the protagonist of Kate Grenville's novel *The Secret River* (2005), based on her own family history.

53 Kelvin Grose, "1847: The Educational Compromise of the Lord Bishop of Australia", *Journal of Religious History* 1, no. 4 (1961): 233–48; Geoffrey Sherington and Craig Campbell, "Middle-Class Formations and the Emergence of National Schooling: A Historiographical Review of the Australian Debate", in *Transformations in Schooling: Historical and Comparative Perspectives*, ed. Kim Tolley (New York: Palgrave Macmillan US, 2007), 15–39.

Eliza continued to be circulated, with derisory comments about her Irish poetry made as a postscript to other politicised criticism of David's duties as Police Magistrate.⁵⁴ Reflecting the snobbery inherent in the honorary magistracy, David was sneered at as a "stationer" (he had been a book binder);⁵⁵ on other occasions, the Dunlops were criticised as "would-be aristocracy". In 1846, David sued Jonas Morris Townshend for libel over a petition published in *Bell's Life in Sydney and Sporting Reviewer* that contributed to his removal from office. His case was unsuccessful, but elsewhere the presiding Judge Windeyer was scathing about the publications of Thomas Revel Johnson (*Bell's Life* and *The Satirist*) and cited their pernicious effect as part of his reasons for drafting Australia's distinctive *Libel Act* (1847).⁵⁶ While David described himself as "unfeignedly averse" to resorting to the media for personal or individual concerns, the colonial press was vociferous and Dunlop certainly asserted herself through that vehicle.⁵⁷ Yet the role of women in the colonial public sphere was controversial and, despite Dunlop's active engagement with criticism, the reception she received at times must have rankled.

Mulla Villa was a busy family establishment and the Dunlop children too were involved in the town. The eldest son David Henry was postmaster in the newly established Wollombi Post Office and later Clerk of Petty Sessions in various regions in the Hunter Valley. Augusta was sent to school in Liverpool, although this proved unsuccessful due to her independent temperament, so by 1844 she returned to Wollombi and took over the postmistress role. Dunlop clearly adored her youngest child Rachel Rhoda. She wrote a very fond poem describing her as "my blithsome Irish girl". From her description it is clear that Rachel resembled her mother: "Redundance rich of chestnut hair / Shading a forehead high and fair".⁵⁸ By the 1850s, the Dunlop children began marrying into notable settler families, and clearly were seen as good matches. David Henry married Thalia Raine, descendant of Thomas Raine, ship's captain and entrepreneurial merchant in early Sydney. Augusta also married into the Raine family, although the early death of her husband Edmund required her to run the family mill and educate her only surviving son, Thomas, who later established the Raine and Horne real estate business. Wilhemina married Richard Kirk, who with his family had various mercantile interests that spanned the early colonies. Rachel married David Ambrose Milson (the Milson family had been major landholders in early colonial Sydney, then developed substantive business interests): they lived nearby on Byora

54 "Wollombi", *Bell's Life in Sydney and Sporting Reviewer*, 17 January 1846.

55 See Johnston this volume.

56 See "Dunlop v J.M. Townshend", *Bell's Life in Sydney and Sporting Reviewer*, 25 July 1846; Paul Mitchell, "The Foundations of Australian Defamation Law", *Sydney Law Review* 28, no. 3 (2006); on Johnson, see 492–93, and *Colonial Australian Narrative Journalism*, Centre for Media History, Macquarie University, <http://www.auslitjourn.info/writers/q-z/revel-johnson-thomas/>.

57 David Dunlop, "Original Correspondence to Charles Cowper", *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 June 1848.

58 Eliza Hamilton Dunlop, "A Portrait. Rachel Rhoda", in "The Vase", State Library of New South Wales, B1541.

Station, which David managed for his father. Rachel cared for her mother as she aged, and was the preserver of her mother’s papers, hence Dunlop’s archives mostly reside within the Milson family papers in the Mitchell Library.⁵⁹ Grandchildren proliferated, and the Dunlops’ children had become sufficiently financially secure for David Dunlop’s will to disperse money directly to his grandchildren for their education. Eliza’s first daughter Georgina Law did not marry, but worked as a governess for the Hassall family, at Denbigh Estate at Cobbitty, from the 1840s. She was clearly bright like her mother, and benefited from the association with the Reverend Thomas Hassall, a notable clergyman and educator. By the early 1860s, Georgina was headmistress of Sydney’s St Catherine’s Church of England School, the first Anglican girls’ school in the colonies, established for clergymen’s daughters. During all this public service and family life, Eliza and David resided in Wollombi until David’s unexpectedly early death in 1863, and Eliza’s demise in 1880. Both are buried in the Wollombi Church of England graveyard that they had advocated for from the 1840s.⁶⁰

Eliza Hamilton Dunlop’s Poetry: Reception and Scholarship

During her lifetime and for a century after her death, little attention was paid to the poetry of Eliza Hamilton Dunlop. Her now best-known poem, “The Aboriginal Mother”, does not seem to have attracted much attention when first published in the *Australian* newspaper in 1838.⁶¹ Three years later, after it had been set to music by the composer Isaac Nathan, it was reprinted in a slightly revised version in a number of Sydney papers as well as in Melbourne’s *Port Phillip Advertiser*. This was part of the advertising for a concert Nathan held on 27 October 1841 in which “The Aboriginal Mother” was performed by his daughter Rosetta. Several papers later published reviews of the concert, most of which made favourable mention of the song and its reception by the audience. The *Colonial Observer*, for example, noted that “This beautiful piece, the subject and the language of which are so rich in poetic feeling, was sung by the youngest Miss Nathan with great simplicity and feeling, and called down the plaudits of the assembly”.⁶² The *Sydney Herald*, however, which in 1838 had condemned the death sentences imposed on some of the men responsible for the Myall Creek murders, ridiculed Dunlop’s sympathetic portrayal of the grief-stricken mother:

⁵⁹ See Johnston this volume.

⁶⁰ De Salis speculated that the following article was penned by Eliza Dunlop, and she is likely correct – noting that “even in the deep wilderness of the Wollombi”, Bishop Polding had visited (on David’s instigation) and promised a minister and building for the congregation. “Wollombi”, *Australian*, 20 October 1840, 2. See Margaret De Salis, “Notebook”, in Margaret De Salis – Papers, 1965–1980, Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales, ML MSS 5745/1/3.

⁶¹ Eliza Hamilton Dunlop, “The Aboriginal Mother”, *Australian*, 13 December 1838.

⁶² *Colonial Observer*, 4 November 1841.

The words are pathetic, and display much poetic feeling, but they ascribe to the aboriginal woman words that might have been used by a North American Indian, but which our very slight acquaintance with the natives of this colony would enable any one to say never issued from the mouth of the woman who escaped from the New England massacre for which, we may remark, seven men were executed in Sydney. The lines will no doubt be copied in England where they are almost sure to be popular.⁶³

Eliza Hamilton Dunlop replied to this criticism in a letter to the editor of the *Herald*, confirming that the poem had indeed been written “in the hope of awaking the sympathies of the English nation for a people whom it is averred, are rendered desperate and revengeful by continued acts of outrage”.⁶⁴ She concluded with a strong condemnation of the attitude displayed by the *Herald* and its correspondents: “the author of the Aboriginal Mother did hope, that, even in Australia, the time was past, when the public press would lend its countenance to debase the native character, or support an attempt to shade with ridicule, ties stronger than death, which bind the heart of woman, be she Christian or savage”.⁶⁵

As Duncan Wu noted in an essay on Dunlop’s interactions with contemporary newspapers, it was “most uncommon, up to this period, for a female author to bite back”.⁶⁶ The *Herald*’s animosity towards Dunlop’s poetry continued for several months and, he argued, could be linked to its earlier attacks on her husband in his role as Police Magistrate at Penrith. When Isaac Nathan published his setting of “The Aboriginal Mother” in 1842, the *Herald* praised the music but regretted that “the words are not more worthy of the music”.⁶⁷ It returned to the attack later in the year when Nathan published another setting of one of Dunlop’s poems, “The Eagle Chief”, with a long critique of the poem published on 18 April 1842, which concluded:

We should not have taken the trouble to show the folly of this second attempt of Mrs. Dunlop’s to make the blacks appear a different race of people from what they really are, were it to be circulated in this Colony only, but Mr. Nathan’s music is likely to make it known in England, and therefore we thought it a duty to shew the real character of the verse. Mrs. Dunlop appears to have a poetic turn of mind, and we should be glad to see her attempting some subject unconnected with the blacks.

But when Dunlop did so, in the patriotic song “The Star of the South”, the *Herald* continued its attack, making the following patronising comments:

63 “The Aboriginal Mother”, *Sydney Herald*, 15 October 1841.

64 Eliza Hamilton Dunlop, “The Aboriginal Mother”, *Sydney Herald*, 29 November 1841.

65 Dunlop, “The Aboriginal Mother”.

66 Wu, “A Vehicle of Private Malice”, 11.

67 “Domestic Intelligence”, *Sydney Herald*, 22 January 1842.

we have nought but delight, as far as the composer is concerned. We wish, for gallantry sake, that we could speak of the poetry in the same terms, but we cannot, even in our most allegorical mood, imagine what the “Star of the South” has to do with either “Soft flowing tresses”, or “Proud eagle glances.” It is not polite of us, but we do wish that the new “National Melody” had been set to better words.⁶⁸

These comments provoked another letter to the editor from Dunlop, complaining that the newspaper had criticised her poem without printing it to allow readers to make up their own minds: “To have given that poetry to your readers unslurred by prejudicial remark, would have been no more than justice to a pen, not a paid one, but proud of contributing its quota to the original literature of the colony”.⁶⁹ Wu has noted that Dunlop’s response deterred the *Herald* “from persecuting her again. Reviewing ‘The Aboriginal Father’ in January 1843, it focused exclusively on the music, giving her no cause for comment”.⁷⁰ Just over a year later, however, it published what was clearly a parody of “The Aboriginal Mother” entitled “Song of the Aborigines” by one S.P.H., otherwise the playwright and minor versifier Samuel Prout Hill.⁷¹ This repeated the extremely negative views of Indigenous Australians that had featured in the paper’s earlier attacks on Dunlop’s poems.

Although Eliza Hamilton Dunlop continued to contribute poems to newspapers in Sydney – even on occasion to the *Sydney Morning Herald* – these later works do not seem to have attracted much notice, unlike her collaborations with Nathan. In the third of a series of lectures on “Modern Poetry” given at the Sydney School of Arts in June 1846, the Reverend R.K. Ewing mentioned the work of seventeen local poets. “Mrs Dunlop” was the only woman included among them according to a report in the *Spectator*.⁷² A long article in the *Band of Hope Journal* for June 1858, entitled “Aborigines of Australia. The Muses – Poetry”, quoted Dunlop’s transcription and translation of “Native Poetry”, originally published in the *Sydney Morning Herald* ten years earlier.⁷³ Its author, the Reverend Lancelot Threlkeld, added further information about the Aboriginal songman responsible for the original song. Jim Wafer explores all of this in his 2017 essay, “Ghost-writing for Wulatji: Incubation and Re-Dreaming as Song Revitalization Practices”.⁷⁴

68 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 August 1842. Note that the *Sydney Herald* was renamed in August 1842 by its new owner John Fairfax.

69 Dunlop, “The Star of the South”, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 30 August 1842.

70 Wu, “A Vehicle of Private Malice”, 12–13.

71 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 April 1844.

72 *Spectator* (Sydney), 4 July 1846.

73 Eliza Hamilton Dunlop, “Native Poetry: Nung-Ngun”, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 October 1848; Lancelot Threlkeld, “Aborigines of Australia. The Muses – Poetry”, *Band of Hope Journal and Australian Home Companion*, 5 June 1858, 179–81.

74 Jim Wafer, “Ghost-Writing for Wulatji: Incubation and Re-Dreaming as Song Revitalisation Practices”, in *Recirculating Songs: Revitalising the Singing Practices of Indigenous Australia*, ed. Jim Wafer and Myfany Turpin (Canberra: Asia-Pacific Linguistics, Australian National University, 2017), 193–256.

Many years later in 1908, Dunlop's "Native Poetry" was again discussed in an anonymous article in Sydney's *Evening News*, headed "The Australian Aborigines. A Conquered Race. Rude Works of Art and Superstitions".⁷⁵ Before this, a certain J.C. Laycock had had the temerity to publish the 1841 version of "The Aboriginal Mother" under his own name in the *Clarence and Richmond Examiner* in 1891.⁷⁶ Leo Butler, writing on Isaac Nathan as "Australia's First Musician" in the *Newcastle Morning Herald* in 1951, at least knew that "The Aboriginal Father" had been "versified from the original words by Mrs EK Dunlop", even though he did not get her initials quite right.⁷⁷ The link with Nathan is also mentioned in "One of the Old Brigade", about the death of one of Eliza Hamilton Dunlop's grandchildren, R Newby Kirk, which appeared in the *Age* in 1936: "Mrs Dunlop was a cultured woman and a poet and anthropologist".⁷⁸ In 1967, one of her great-granddaughters, Margaret De Salis, published a joint biography of Eliza and David Dunlop under the title *Two Early Colonials*.⁷⁹ Interestingly, it was Eliza rather than David who was chosen to appear in the first volume of the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, published in 1966, and her biographical entry was written by Niel Gunson, one of Australia's foremost missionary historians, who brought an appreciation of Eliza's linguistic and ethnographic contributions.⁸⁰

Since the 1980s, increasing attention has been paid to Eliza Hamilton Dunlop's work, mainly in relation to her "The Aboriginal Mother". Elizabeth Webby republished this poem in 1980 in an article in *Southerly* that discussed early colonial poetry about Indigenous Australians and it was later included in a small selection of Dunlop's poems she compiled for Mulini Press in 1981.⁸¹ In 1988, Webby published a short discussion of poems by Dunlop and by three other colonial Australian women entitled "'Born to Blush Unseen': Some Nineteenth-Century Women Poets".⁸²

During the 1990s, "The Aboriginal Mother" appeared in a section on "Early Newspaper Poetry", in *The Penguin Book of Australian Ballads*, edited by Philip Butterss and Elizabeth Webby in 1993.⁸³ In 1995, Susan Lever also included "The Aboriginal Mother" in her *Oxford Book of Australian Women's Verse*.⁸⁴ In the

75 *Evening News*, 11 February 1908.

76 *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 14 February 1891.

77 *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 10 March 1951.

78 *The Age*, 25 August 1936.

79 De Salis, *Two Early Colonials*.

80 Niel Gunson, "Dunlop, Eliza Hamilton (1796–1880)", in *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Canberra: National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, 1966).

81 Elizabeth Webby, "The Aboriginal in Early Australian Literature", *Southerly* 40, no. 1 (1980): 45–63; *The Aboriginal Mother and Other Poems* (Canberra: Mulini Press, 1981).

82 Elizabeth Webby, "'Born to Blush Unseen': Some Nineteenth-Century Women Poets", in *A Bright and Fiery Troop: Australian Women Writers of the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Debra Adelaide (Melbourne: Penguin, 1988), 41–52.

83 Philip Butterss and Elizabeth Webby, eds., *The Penguin Book of Australian Ballads* (Melbourne: Penguin, 1993).

84 Susan Lever, ed., *The Oxford Book of Australian Women's Verse* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1995), 2–4.

twenty-five years since then it has appeared in seven further anthologies, most of them major historical surveys of Australian poetry, so it could be said to have now achieved recognition as a classic. In 2014, "The Aboriginal Mother" reached an even wider audience when included in a Norton anthology, *Poetry of Witness: The Tradition in English 1500–2001*, edited by Carolyn Forché and Duncan Wu from Georgetown University.⁸⁵

Between 2004 and 2010, John O'Leary, who had completed a PhD on nineteenth-century European writing about Māori at Victoria University of Wellington in 2001, published four essays in Australian and postcolonial journals outlining his further research into nineteenth-century settler poetry about Indigenous peoples.⁸⁶ These were followed by a monograph, *Savage Songs and Wild Romances: Settler Poetry and the Indigene, 1830–1880* (2011).⁸⁷ Eliza Hamilton Dunlop was one of the poets O'Leary included since, as well as "The Aboriginal Mother", she wrote other poems dealing with Indigenous topics and transcribed Aboriginal songs, with English translations. O'Leary discussed Dunlop's Aboriginal poems in relation to the literary traditions of expressive women's poetry and Romantic primitivism, as well as the historical context of their production.

A few years earlier, Ann Vickery had published an essay entitled "A 'Lonely Crossing': Approaching Nineteenth-Century Australian Women's Poetry".⁸⁸ She included a brief discussion of Eliza Hamilton Dunlop, also focusing just on her poems on Aboriginal subjects, while examining the reasons why nineteenth-century women poets had received so little attention in Australian literary history. As she noted: "Even feminist critics of the late twentieth century directed their energies to recovering nineteenth-century novelists, finding in that genre a more accessible form and – as a more acceptable genre for women's writing – the results of a potentially greater freedom for expression".⁸⁹ Indeed, even when feminist critics turned their attention to earlier poetry by women, they found very little that they liked. This is well demonstrated by the contents of the first historically based anthology, *The Penguin Book of Australian Women's Poetry*, edited by poets Susan Hampton and Kate Llewellyn, which appeared in 1981.⁹⁰ It begins

85 Carolyn Forché and Duncan Wu, eds., *Poetry of Witness: The Tradition in English, 1500–2001* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2014).

86 John O'Leary, "Giving the Indigenous a Voice: Further Thoughts on the Poetry of Eliza Hamilton Dunlop", *Journal of Australian Studies* 28, no. 82 (2004): 85–93; "'The Life, the Loves, of That Dark Race': The Ethnographic Verse of Mid-Nineteenth-Century Australia", *Australian Literary Studies* 23, no. 1 (2007): 3–17; "Speaking the Suffering Indigene: 'Native' Songs and Laments", *Kunapipi* 31, no. 1 (2009): 47–60; "'Unlocking the Fountains of the Heart': Settler Verse and the Politics of Sympathy", *Postcolonial Studies* 13, no. 1 (2010): 55–70.

87 *Savage Songs and Wild Romances: Settler Poetry and the Indigene, 1830–1880* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2011).

88 Ann Vickery, "A Lonely Crossing': Approaching Nineteenth-Century Australian Women's Poetry", *Victorian Poetry* 40, no. 1 (2002): 33–53.

89 Vickery, "A Lonely Crossing", 33–34.

90 Susan Hampton and Kate Llewellyn, eds., *The Penguin Book of Australian Women's Poetry* (Melbourne, Penguin, 1981).

with two transcriptions of Aboriginal songs, made by a woman in the twentieth century, and one ballad about a woman convict, which would most likely have been written in England by a man. The earliest colonial poet included is Ada Cambridge from near the end of the nineteenth century. The editors' choices were clearly influenced by a desire to appeal to the interests and concerns of a 1980s readership. As Anne Jamison noted in a recent essay, "Women's Literary History in Ireland: Digitizing *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing*", feminist critics have established "a tradition of ideological retrieval which favours explicitly subversive and transgressive writing and which excludes women writers and texts that do not sanction conventional, and often contemporary, feminist thinking".⁹¹ This can lead to a distorted account of what women were actually writing at a particular time.

An additional distortion results from the favouring of poems on local subjects and themes, a natural enough bias when editors are putting together a national anthology. Hampton and Llewellyn were not alone in choosing to present Ada Cambridge as the first Australian woman poet. Two anthologies published over a century apart did the same: *The Golden Treasury of Australian Verse*, edited by Bertram Stevens in 1909, and *Australian Poetry Since 1788*, edited by Geoffrey Lehmann and Robert Gray in 2011.⁹² While Cambridge's poetry is not usually about specifically Australian topics, there is a clear bias towards bush themes in the case of other nineteenth-century women poets who have been regularly anthologised, such as Mary Hannay Foott. As Webby noted in her essay in *A Bright and Fiery Troop*, Foott's "Where the Pelican Builds" was, apart from Caroline Carleton's patriotic "Song of Australia", "the only poem by a woman to receive wide recognition in nineteenth-century Australia".⁹³ "Where the Pelican Builds" was also chosen as the title poem for Foott's first collection although only one other poem in it deals with life in the bush.⁹⁴ The others cover a range of themes, including the biblical and memorial poems on great men such as Dickens, W.C. Wentworth and Napoleon III.

It is not surprising then that, with respect to the work of Eliza Hamilton Dunlop, most emphasis has been given to her poetry on Aboriginal subjects, especially as this coincides with postcolonial as well as nationalist critical interests. Many more of Dunlop's poems deal with her love of Ireland, and her feelings of exile from her native land, as well as with other themes. A chapter on Dunlop was included in Katie Hansord's 2012 doctoral thesis, supervised by Ann Vickery, which examined the work of five colonial Australian women poets.⁹⁵ Both this

91 Anne Jamison, "Women's Literary History in Ireland: Digitizing *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing*", *Women's History Review*, 26, no. 5 (2017): 758.

92 Bertram Stevens, ed., *The Golden Treasury of Australian Verse* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1909); Geoffrey Lehmann and Robert Gray, eds., *Australian Poetry Since 1788* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2011).

93 Webby, "Born to Blush Unseen", 51.

94 Mary Hannay Foott, *Where the Pelican Builds and Other Poems* (Brisbane: Gordon and Gotch, 1885).

95 Katie Hansord, "'Spirit-music' Unbound: Romanticism and Print Politics in Australian Women's Poetry, 1830–1905" (PhD diss., Deakin University, 2012).

and an essay on Dunlop that Hansord published earlier focus mainly on "The Aboriginal Mother" in the context of nineteenth-century women poets' support for the anti-slavery movement and interest in the plight of racial others.⁹⁶ But Hansord also draws attention to Dunlop's nationalism, as seen in her poems on both Irish and Australian topics. Graeme Skinner has developed an ongoing interest in Dunlop's poetry, initially in relation to her collaboration with Isaac Nathan on his "Australian Melodies", part of the research for his 2011 PhD thesis entitled "Toward a General History of Australian Musical Composition: First National Music 1788–c.1860".⁹⁷

Readings of Dunlop's poems in relation to Indigenous issues continue to be important. This volume reprints the first published Indigenous analysis of "The Aboriginal Mother", Peter Minter's "Settlement Defiled: Ventriloquy, Pollution and Nature in Eliza Hamilton Dunlop's 'The Aboriginal Mother'".⁹⁸ Dunlop's work is also discussed in *Imagined Homelands: British Poetry in the Colonies* (2017), in which Jason Rudy argues convincingly for the contribution that colonial poetics made to the global Romantic movement.⁹⁹ Questions of memory and memorialisation across diverse cultural forms are raised in Anna Johnston's "'The Aboriginal Mother': Poetry and Politics" as part of the 150-year memorial history of the Myall Creek massacre, edited by Jane Lydon and Lyndall Ryan.¹⁰⁰ She explores Dunlop's collection of Indigenous languages in "Mrs Milson's Wordlist: Eliza Hamilton Dunlop and the Intimacy of Linguistic Work", examining Dunlop's wordlists and considering how they have been used alongside other colonial sources by linguists and contemporary Indigenous communities involved in language reclamation and revitalisation.¹⁰¹

96 Katie Hansord, "Eliza Hamilton Dunlop's 'The Aboriginal Mother': Romanticism, Anti Slavery and Imperial Feminism in the Nineteenth Century", *JASAL: Journal of the Association for the Study of Australian Literature* 11, no. 1 (2011): 1–12.

97 Graeme Skinner, "Toward a General History of Australian Musical Composition: First National Music, 1788–c.1860" (PhD diss., Sydney Conservatorium of Music, University of Sydney, 2011).

98 Peter Minter, "Settlement Defiled: Ventriloquy, Pollution and Nature in Eliza Hamilton Dunlop's 'The Aboriginal Mother'", in *Text, Translation, and Transnationalism: World Literature in 21st Century Australia*, ed. Peter Morgan (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly, 2017), 137–51. We are grateful to Peter Minter for his collaboration in our project, and to Peter Morgan and Australian Scholarly Publishing for permission to reprint.

99 Rudy, *Imagined Homelands*.

100 Anna Johnston, "'The Aboriginal Mother': Poetry and Politics", in *Remembering the Myall Creek Massacre*, ed. Jane Lydon and Lyndall Ryan (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2018), 225–47.

101 "Mrs Milson's Wordlist". On linguistic uses of Dunlop, see Peter Austin, "The Gamilaraay (Kamilaroi) Language, Northern New South Wales: A Brief History of Research", in *Encountering Aboriginal Languages: Studies in the History of Australian Linguistics*, ed. William B. McGregor (Canberra: Australian National University, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, 2008), 37–58; Caroline Jones, *Darkinyung Grammar and Dictionary: Revitalising a Language from Historical Sources* (Nambucca Heads: Muurrbay Aboriginal Language and Culture Co-operative, 2008); Caroline Jones and Shawn Laffan, "Lexical Similarity and Endemism in Historical Wordlists of Australian Aboriginal Languages of the Greater Sydney Region", *Transactions of the Philological Society* 106, no. 3 (2008): 456–86. See also Wafer this volume.

This book, *Eliza Hamilton Dunlop: Writing from the Colonial Frontier*, brings together Australian and international scholars to provide new perspectives on Dunlop and her writing. Our contributors draw on archival sources and twenty-first-century digital resources to draw public and scholarly attention to Dunlop's significant contribution to colonial literature. Bringing together a variety of disciplinary and interdisciplinary methods in this book provides an approach that aims to account for the range of Dunlop's literary, intellectual and political interests. It also manifests new modes of researching and teaching literary texts, and engaging with colonial and imperial archives, that foreground how literary history sits within historical, social and cultural contexts that shaped aesthetic and political representations such as Eliza Hamilton Dunlop's poetry.¹⁰²

Anna Johnston's chapter provides a literary biography of Dunlop's life and writing in Ireland as a child and young woman, traced through the sources and archives that underpin this research. In "The Poetry of the Archive: Locating Eliza Hamilton Dunlop", Johnston demonstrates how Dunlop's life and writing emerge relationally within archival holdings (like many women's lives), emphasising how we need to read across different kinds of literary and history sources to build a comprehensive picture of the past. She concludes that colonial writers such as Dunlop provide ways to connect nineteenth-century Australian literature with key developments in the literary and cultural history of the British Empire. In doing so, we gain a rich understanding of literature and history that can underpin conversations about difficult colonial histories and pressing contemporary political concerns such as relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

Drawing together Dunlop's Irish background and her poetry published prior to arriving in Australia with her better-known colonial works, Part 1 of this volume situates Dunlop within global literary trends of the early nineteenth century. Romantic poetry specialist Duncan Wu explores Dunlop's literary sensibility in her 1835 poem "Morning on Rostrevor Mountains" to provide an account of Dunlop's interests and literary influences, based on her exposure to French revolutionary ideas, Indian uprisings against the British, and Irish rebellions. Wu's reading of Dunlop's poem provides evidence about her influences, including the rich literary history of the 1798 Irish Rebellion. Joining this Empire-wide experience to Dunlop's Australian revisions of this poem, Wu provides a compelling pre-history of how Dunlop came to New South Wales in 1838 with a mature and politically engaged poetic voice, ready to respond swiftly to her colonial environment. Katie Hansord's chapter follows

102 Ronjaunee Chatterjee, Alicia Mireles Christoff and Amy R. Wong, "Undisciplining Victorian Studies", *Los Angeles Review of Books* (10 July 2020), https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/undisciplining-victorian-studies/#_edn3. For an invigorating repositioning of another settler Australian canonical poet, Henry Lawson, see Manu Samriti Chander, *Brown Romantics: Poetry and Nationalism in the Global Nineteenth Century* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2017), Chapter 3.

as a companion piece, focusing attention on Dunlop's childhood reading of Enlightenment philosophers in her father's library. Gender, education and the role of romantic love are brought together with questions of natural rights, ethics and the passions in Hansord's reading of Dunlop's early journals and her poem "To Home and Friends" (1857). Hansord argues convincingly for Dunlop's engagement with eighteenth-century progressive thought, such as that of Mary Wollstonecraft, and shows how reading and writing were political activities for ambitious intellectual women such as Dunlop. Yet she also reveals the uneven complexities of imperial feminism, through which white women painstakingly forged a public role, while colonised and Indigenous women struggled to find platforms to articulate their experience. Jason Rudy's chapter concludes the first section of this book, by tracing how race, genre and sentiment accompanied Dunlop's movements between Ireland, India and Australia, and her engagement with a wide Anglophone literary culture that encompassed the United States. Rudy traces the circulation of Dunlop's "Songs of an Exile – (No. 3)" (1837/38) through its various publication venues to map colonial print culture, especially in the important eighteenth- and nineteenth-century genre of sentimental literature. Drawing attention to Dunlop's intertextual references to key texts of North American settler literature reveals how the poet memorialised family members who had joined the Irish diaspora in the Americas, and how the colonial experience of Native Americans influenced her thinking about Australian settler colonialism. Rudy persuasively shows how different variants of Dunlop's poem accrued meaning in different publication locations, and how diverse readers might have understood and responded to her writing. He argues that Dunlop's poetry confounds assumptions about the supposed universalism of sentiment in the period.

Part 2 focuses on Australian readings and histories of Dunlop's writing. It opens with Peter Minter's Indigenous reading of "The Aboriginal Mother" (1838). Drawing on transnational and postcolonial ecopoetics, Minter links the poem to questions of pollution and defilement in a powerful reading of the ontology of settlement. While not doubting Dunlop's well-intentioned engagement with Aboriginal topics, Minter reminds readers that settler writing emerged in Australia by displacing Indigenous peoples, their voices and their culture. Even sympathetic settler writers like Dunlop "ventriloquised" Indigenous perspectives. The poem's structure of possession and dispossession, he argues, provides a correlation with racial politics, and reveals an alienated relation to nature. The dead bodies created by colonial violence and massacre literally and metaphorically pollute the settler polity and the Australian landscape. This reading of Dunlop's best-known poem advocates for an ecocritical approach to the poet's work.

Situating Dunlop within the context of colonial Australian music history, Graeme Skinner's detailed analysis of the poet's collaboration with the composer Isaac Nathan shows another important aspect of her writing that reveals her musical significance alongside her literary contributions. Dunlop used existing and well-known songs, often from an Irish tradition, to structure her writing. Nathan's English experiences included setting Byron's "Hebrew Melodies" to music and

his own *oeuvre* included original compositions alongside adaptations of existing melodies. Nathan's ambitious plan for "Australian Melodies" utilised lyrics from five Dunlop songs, as Skinner outlines, and in collaborating with him Dunlop's public profile increased, even if several of their joint works received a highly critical reception. Understanding Dunlop's active interest in Irish national music reveals another sphere of influence for her Australian work, as well as how aesthetic and political registers worked together during this period. Skinner's meticulous mapping of the "Australian Melodies" uses the lyrics and musicological aspects together to enable us to appreciate this aspect of Dunlop's poetry in new ways.¹⁰³

James Wafer maps Dunlop's work onto local landscapes that connect her house on a tributary of the Hunter River with the beloved Irish landscapes that remained central in the poet's imagination throughout her life. In an extended reading of Dunlop's poem "The Mulla, or Wollombi Creek, New South Wales" (1849), Wafer teases out the speculated reasons for the naming of the Dunlop house "Mulla Villa", connecting the English poet Edmund Spenser's writing about Ireland from his manorial estate in County Cork to Dunlop's location between two Australian watercourses. Wafer draws attention to Dunlop's linguistic abilities and poetic borrowing from both European and Australian languages. He shows how Indigenous languages influenced a range of Dunlop's works, including "The Mulla" and "Erin Dheelish" (1865). The languages of the Hunter River and Lake Macquarie ("HRLM"), Darkinyung, Gamilaraay, the Sydney language and hybrid linguistic forms appear in Dunlop's work, indicating her engagement with a range of Indigenous peoples in the Hunter region. This reveals a persuasive if conjectural reading of Mulla Villa's joint naming: with Indigenous language references and Irish literary allusions that might enable a decolonising reading of time and place.

This volume ends with a new selection of poems by Dunlop with a scholarly introduction by Elizabeth Webby, a fitting conclusion to a collaborative project that seeks to make Dunlop's work better known and more accessible. Webby's meticulous bibliographic scholarship enables a better understanding of Dunlop's poetic work across a long period, and reveals Dunlop's continuing engagement through revision and self-conscious arrangement of her life's work in the unpublished manuscript volume "The Vase" (c. 1873). Read as a literary biography, Webby's selection of poems provides a moving insight into Dunlop's life, her intellectual and poetic preoccupations, and her personal experiences. Fittingly, it concludes with Dunlop's own eulogy, framing the poet's life within her own words.

* * *

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103 This can be heard on Skinner's AustralHarmony website, where he includes audio files of some songs, <http://sydney.edu.au/paradisec/australharmony/dunlop-eliza-hamilton.php>.

the resources and staff at the State Library of New South Wales, the State Library of Victoria, the National Library of Australia and various regional and community organisations. We are particularly grateful for the support of specialist Mitchell Library staff – especially Rachel Franks, Richard Neville, conservator Kate Hughes and Indigenous curator Ronald Briggs – whose advice has been invaluable. We have worked closely with the Mitchell Library to digitise Dunlop’s archives and develop new finding aids that will enable enhanced future access by students, researchers and community members. In this way, we see the current book as beginning new conversations with a diverse range of interested readers and researchers and we welcome future opportunities to extend the work. We have also benefited from conversations with leading Indigenous and colonial historians John Maynard, Victoria Haskins, Jane Lydon, Lyndall Ryan, Lynette Russell and Grace Karskens – each of whose work intersects with the local and global histories of colonial New South Wales – and with members of the Wollombi community, especially Hugh Craig, Donna Snowdon, the Wollombi Endeavour Museum and Stuart Gibson. Thanks also to Dunlop descendants Tom R. Raine and Michèle Celler for their enthusiasm for this book, and to Jenny Johnston for invaluable and exhaustive family history research. Robert Dixon, series editor at Sydney University Press, has been an important interlocutor for the book since its inception, and we thank him and the Press for their support. Earlier versions of the material benefited from feedback from colleagues at the University of Tasmania, the University of Queensland, the University of Melbourne, the University of Newcastle, and University College Dublin, and audiences at conferences including the Association for the Study of Australian Literature and the Australian Historical Association. Several research assistants – notably, Gemmia Burden and Ingrid Finnane at the University of Queensland – have assisted in the research and the book’s production. Finally, it has been a pleasure for Anna and Elizabeth to work together commissioning, shaping and editing this book. We are confident that this book demonstrates the strength and longevity of excellent scholarship in Australian literary studies that is enabled by cooperation and mutual respect across generations of academics, committed to engaging Australian material with the best global scholarship and bringing scholarly expertise into mutually stimulating conversations with our readers and publics.