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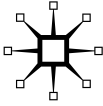
Empire and Environmental Anxiety

**Health, Science, Art and Conservation in
South Asia and Australasia, 1800–1920**

James Beattie

Associate Professor in History, University of Waikato, New Zealand

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*To my girls, Eloise, Ida and Ondine,
and to the memory of my late father, John.*

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Foreword

James Beattie's interdisciplinary and transnational approaches make *Empire and Environmental Anxiety* an exciting book. Beattie's PhD on environmental anxiety in nineteenth-century New Zealand traversed health, science and art history, as well as the history of ideas, the influence of the British and German diasporas and environmental history. He adds to that promising beginning by expanding his study to include Australia and India. Normally, Australasia is not compared with India because Australia and New Zealand are usually categorised as white settler colonies, or colonies of settlement, rather than as colonies of extraction, even though multiple extractions of timber, minerals, flora, fauna and land occurred in Australasia as well as India, especially during the so-called 'quarry' phase of development that dominated in the nineteenth century and persists in more attenuated form to the present.

But the Australasian colonies also belonged to the same Empire as India, and all of these places were linked in myriad ways: through trade and shipping; exchange of plants, animals and materials; the movement of officialdom, including administrators, scientists, doctors and foresters; the army and navy; ideas; and individuals such as retired Colonels and Magistrates from India setting themselves up as sheep farmers in Australia and New Zealand. By utilising Alan Lester's idea of 'imperial careering' and Tony Ballantyne's notion of 'webs of Empire', Beattie demonstrates that the histories of India and the Australasian colonies were bound together in terms of influences that ran both ways across the equator, as well as via the rather longer loops radiating out from the centre of the Empire in London. Sometimes, he shows, the individuals who connected these histories and added to anxieties such as the deleterious impacts of deforestation came from outside the formal Empire.

Applied science, Beattie's scholarship reinforces, developed more rapidly in countries such as Germany and Denmark than in Britain itself, meaning that knowledge bases and skill sets acquired in those places better suited the needs of British colonies. This pattern replicated the development of introduced pasture plants in both New Zealand and Australia, because Swedish and German scientists had displayed much more interest in pasture improvement than their British peers. Pasture development, along with environmental anxiety, thereby linked Australasia and India to Leipzig, Copenhagen and Uppsala, as well as

Kew. Later, Beattie shows, the growing corpus of environmental writing emanating from the USA via George Perkins Marsh and others began to shape concerns in Australia, New Zealand and India, as well as in North America. Beattie's story thereby becomes international as well as Imperial.

It is this broad sweep and ambition that have made this book so popular with audiences in many places because it reminds us that all people, at all times and in all places, have been concerned with environmental degradation. Beattie builds thereby on the work of scholars such as Clarence Glacken, Carolyn Merchant, John F. Richards and James R. Fleming, whose study of the classical and early modern eras reminds us that current alarm at climate change and environmental despoliation is just the latest in a long and deep line of environmental anxieties. Beattie adds growing concern with the impact of environmental degradation and change (especially deforestation) on health, including declining ozone production and the spread of epidemic disease. His work on 'romantic' concerns regarding damage to aesthetically pleasing landscapes and utilisation of the perceptions of art historians is all too rare amongst environmental historians. So too is his respectful but critical appraisal of some of the big ideas of pioneer environmental historians, such as Richard Grove.

Palgrave Macmillan's decision to produce a paperback edition of *Empire and Environmental Anxiety* becomes understandable when Beattie's clear writing and meticulous scholarship, reflected in his impressive footnotes and his deft use of both archival and net-based sources, is added to his clever conceptualisations and intellectual curiosity and courage. This book is, therefore, an important contribution to environmental history that should be read by as many practitioners and students as possible, especially as we struggle to come to terms with the challenges and fears related to global warming.

Tom Brooking,
Professor of History, University of Otago,
Dunedin, New Zealand.

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I hope in its small way this book is a testimony to the ideals of scholarship that are under threat in so many institutions around the world, particularly in the Arts.

About the Author

James is Associate Professor and Director, Historical Research Unit, University of Waikato, New Zealand, where he teaches imperial, environmental, garden and world history. He has published over 50 articles and chapters on topics in imperial environmental history, history of science, garden history and art history covering China, Australasia and South Asia. He has also written and co-edited seven books, including most recently *Environment, Modernization and Development in East Asia: Perspectives from Environmental History* (2016), edited with Ts'ui-jung Liu. He is Founding Editor of *International Review of Environmental History* (ANU Press) and Co-Principal Investigator with Richard Bullen of a Marsden Royal Society project on Rewi Alley, Art and Chinese Cultural Diplomacy. He is working on three current book projects: *Chinese Art and Cultural Diplomacy during the Cold War: Rewi Alley, Museums and the Politics of Art Display* (with Bullen); *People and Environment since the Holocene* (with Bruce Clarkson); and *Chinese Migrant Landscapes: Environmental Exchanges between South China and New Zealand*.

Also by the Author

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List of Abbreviations

IFS	Indian Forest Service
NSW	New South Wales
WA	Western Australia