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Thesis: Honey and Service
Exegesis: Miss Bumby's Mission

2023

Primary Supervisor: Siobhan Harvey

A thesis and exegesis submitted to Auckland University of Technology in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Creative Writing

Centre for Creative Writing,

School of Language and Culture

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Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Candidate's signature:

NAME: Joan Leitch

Acknowledgements

I have many people to thank for supporting my work. In particular, I would like to thank my husband Peter, for accompanying me on my research trips and spotting things I might otherwise have missed.

I would like to acknowledge the wise counsel of my supportive supervisor and mentor, Siobhan Harvey.

Thank you to the Franklin Writers Group, who have encouraged my writing over the last five years. I have missed your company and will be glad to return to our weekly meetings.

The staff of the Hocken Library in Dunedin and the Auckland War Memorial Museum Library were all particularly helpful.

I appreciate the advice of Ruby Rutherford, who has carefully proofread both the thesis and exegesis. Any mistakes that remain are my own. Also, my thanks to Janet Pates, who kept Mary Bumby in mind during her own historical research and pointed me to some interesting books. Thanks to David Bumby for sharing his copy of Mary's diary.

I am grateful to the Bees for Development Trust (UK) for their course on making straw skeps, and especially to Chris Park. Thank you also to the Franklin Beekeepers Club and particularly Peter Biland for introducing me to Mary Bumby.

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Ethics Approval

This research project did not involve human participants or any other potentially contentious elements, and as such did not require approval from the AUT Ethics Committee (AUTEC).

Abstract

This work comprises a creative element, *Honey and Service*, and a critical work, *Miss Bumby's Mission*.

Honey and Service is a historical novel about New Zealand's first beekeeper, Miss Mary Anna Bumby, who left England by sailing ship and arrived in the Hokianga in 1839 with two hives of honey bees. The novel explores her motivations and experiences on her journey and during her first four years in New Zealand. It highlights the difficulties of travelling with bees and working them in a new country with methods which were current then, but are now no longer used.

Miss Bumby's Mission is the critical component of the work. It investigates the author's motivation for writing this story, how the extensive research was undertaken, and decisions which were made on how to present the material. It discusses the responsibilities and difficulties which come from writing about a real person from the past in the form of a biographical novel.

Miss Bumby's Mission

An exegesis to *Honey and Service*

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Miss Bumby's Mission

Introduction

New Zealand has over ten thousand beekeepers, but it started with one.

In 1838 Mary Bumby left England and travelled by sailing ship to New Zealand. She'd promised her dying mother that she would take care of her brother John, the new supervisor for the Wesleyan missions. Mary was coming as his housekeeper.

As part of her luggage, she brought two skeps of bees. When she landed in the Hokianga five long months later, she became New Zealand's first beekeeper.

Life in this new colony was uncertain and eventful. She was host to the third and largest signing of the Treaty of Waitangi. Then she suffered the loss of her brother in a boating accident. With him, her reason for remaining in the country vanished into the depths, but a return journey to England was unimaginable.

Instead, she found herself thrust into an arranged marriage to another Wesleyan missionary, Gideon Smales. She became caught in a conflict between her husband and his supervisor, John Hobbs, which eventually proved too difficult, and her family fled south, away from Hobbs' influence.

Throughout these years, Mary continued to care for her bees and teach the art of beekeeping to local Māori. Many of the methods she used have since been lost to contemporary New Zealand beekeepers and are fascinating to learn about.

Mary Bumby rightfully deserves her place in New Zealand history.

Motivation and Research

Ten years ago, when I took a beekeeping course at night class, I learnt about this intrepid woman with the funny name. The more I thought about Mary Bumby, the greater my interest in why she'd gone to the effort of bringing honeybees on such a long journey.

These were the days of sailing ships and voyages of many months. I also realized that the familiar box hives (Langstroth hives, which now constitute the vast majority of hives in New Zealand) weren't invented when Mary Bumby arrived. Therefore, she probably brought straw skeps, those upside-down baskets we still see depicted on jars of honey.

Four years later I was on a writing course and looking for a subject for a novel. I started researching Mary Bumby and found very little information about her. However, I learnt that she had lived in a very interesting time of New Zealand history, and that her story was more than one of just bringing bees to this country. I started writing, but put it aside after 25,000 words because I needed much more for research.

In 2018, I treated myself to a trip to Sydney to attend the Historical Novel Society of Australasia (HNSA) conference. Here, I heard about the Australian resource website *Trove*. Speakers emphasised the importance of staying true to the period and known facts, while making the story accessible to modern readers.

There were also discussions about how women and servants aren't often featured in narratives from the past. As Eberhardt says, 'Here's the problem with female protagonists: There aren't enough of them.' (1)

Then there is the problem of how they are portrayed. Saroff, in her 2014 comparison of historical fiction from 1960 to 2000, says:

> 'The importance of the representation of women in literature and culture was a strong tenet of the second wave feminist movement … However, it is clear that, at least in the realm of historical fiction, there are still many changes that need to be made. Although it is admirable that more stories with female protagonists are being told, the characterization of these female characters is equally important.' (2)

One of the early examples of a female protagonist in a novel set in New Zealand was Alice Roland in *The Story of a New Zealand River* by Jane Mander (1920). The Penguin website says this about it:

> 'First published in New York in 1920, this is the first New Zealand novel to confront convincingly many of the twentieth century's major political, religious, moral and social issues − most significantly women's rights. Daring for its time in its exploration of sexual, emotional and intellectual freedom, the *New Zealand Herald* found the ending 'too early for good public morality'. (3)

These issues presented me with quite a challenge. However, I realised that the sub-group of New Zealand writers who are also beekeepers is very small, and that if I didn't write Mary's story, it might not be told at all.

The difficulty in choosing to write about Mary was that there was very little written information on her. In Alfred Barrett's biography on Mary's brother (1853), Mary is consigned to the role of John's housekeeper. Her brother John's diary doesn't mention much about her, and when he does, he merely calls her *sister*. Similarly, Williment's 1985 biography of John Hobbs, another missionary who proved important to her story, hardly mentions Mary at all. Yet she was a real person in their lives, helping to entertain visitors and keep the house running. If it weren't for her beekeeping, her name might be forever lost to us.

Similarly, the only reason I knew that Mary and John had brought a servant with them was from a contemptuous remark by Hobbs. I made a decision to give this servant a name and personality, and a future once she was in New Zealand.

> 'Shortly afterwards, I become even lonelier when Nancy decides to leave. The servant girl is company on short winter days, someone I can talk to without the difficulty of translation.' (4)

I'm also of the firm belief that history is best conveyed through an imagined retelling of events. Novels have the advantage of allowing the writer to portray events and speech which help readers understand what might have happened. My story aims to show the conditions of life in New Zealand in the early Nineteenth Century, and to make the protagonists feel like real people with similar desires to the reader.

Online research uncovered more about Mary's brother John than of her, and I started reading about his life in the hope of glimpsing hers. I also found an excellent book about the man she was eventually to marry, Gideon Smales, although it was light on information about her and contained only one paragraph about her bees.

> 'On her way out to New Zealand during their stopover in Sydney, she acquired two straw hives from a local bee-keeper, apparently because her brother loved honey on his toast.' (5)

Steele's book suggests that Mary obtained her hives from Sydney. I couldn't find any compelling evidence that this was the case. Her ship did not call into Sydney, but only went as far as Hobart. Besides, others had brought bees from England to Australia. I made the decision that she had likely brought the bees all the way out.

In 2019 I travelled to the UK. While I was there, I visited Mary's hometown of Thirsk to gather a flavour of what it might have been like. I approached the information centre without much hope of success. 'Oh yes, Bumby, that's a Yorkshire name,' they said, and pointed me to the small museum, located in Thomas Lord's old house (he of Lord's Cricket Ground fame). The museum uncovered a letter from David Bumby, a distant cousin who was also researching Mary Bumby. I wrote to him and eventually heard that he'd published a book on her. I was devastated. He'd beaten me to the mark. However, when I bought a copy of the book, I found that it was very dry and factual, and I felt that there was still a place for my novel of her life.

David Bumby was able to supply me with a digital copy of Mary's diary, something I had heard existed but had been unable to source. Cliff Van Eaton's book on manuka honey (2014) said that the diary had been lost. Disappointingly after that excitement, her diary is sparse and doesn't have even one mention of bees. She has an entry marking her wedding day, and the following entry is the birth of their first child ten months later. Still, it was useful in giving some details of her journey to New Zealand, especially when cross-referenced with her brother's diary. It also gave me some indication of her observations on her new home.

While still in UK, I visited places such as the county records office in Northallerton; the home town of Gideon Smales (Whitby, also famous for James Cook); Cowes on the

Isle of Wight; Leeds, and Birmingham − all places which are important to the background of Mary and her family.

I am a beekeeper and know quite a lot about the subject. The use of skeps is no longer permitted in New Zealand because of disease concerns and so it's something I've never experienced. I spent a day on a skep-making course near Hay-on-Wye on the Welsh border, getting my hands dirty, my clothes wet, and querying the instructor on the differences between keeping bees in skeps and in boxes. I also bought some excellent books on skep-keeping from him which have been useful resources.

Now that I had a mental picture of Mary's home and journey, I started researching her New Zealand residences in the Hokianga. The Mission House that she lived in for nearly two years is back at Mangungu after having been moved to Onehunga years ago. It is a Historic Places Trust site, open only in summer as the finishing point of the Twin Coast Cycle Trail. It was here that I found a biography on John Hobbs, a fellow missionary from that time, and realised that he was Mary's antagonist.

This became even more certain when I read about his dealings with Gideon Smales and understood that John Hobbs was the reason the Smales' had fled the Hokianga.

The excellent small museum at Ōmāpere was able to fill in some further blanks about the pilots of Hokianga who guided ships through the dangerous Heads. Ōmāpere is close to Pakanae/Newark, where Mary (now Mrs Smales) spent the second part of her time in the Hokianga. Very little remains of the site of this mission, except for an extensive but modern gravesite.

The research aspect of writing a novel has been a revelation. Some years ago, when I was at a talk by the novelist Geraldine Brooks, she said that she researches to understand the era, and then begins writing. When she finds some gap in her knowledge, for example, what they might have eaten for breakfast, she makes a note of that in the text and carries on. I have tried to emulate her in that.

At first my search for information was focused on Mary Bumby. Then it widened to include her brother John, her husband Gideon Smales, her antagonist John Hobbs. It expanded further to her shipmates, her fellow missionaries, the Māori she would have

met, and then the visitors to her missionary station, such as the Wakefields and Governor Hobson. Finally, I had to focus again on the small details, such as when Queen Victoria gave birth, and what gifts Mary might have sent to friends.

I recognise that I might not have all the correct details. There are three main areas where I feel I should seek further assistance. I have tried to portray the religious side of the missionaries' lives, but I lack a deep understanding of their belief system. I intend to seek out someone from the Wesleyan Church to read the novel for credibility.

Similarly, I have used *te reo* and written about some Māori customs and will use a sensitivity reader to check these.

Finally, the extensive passages of information on beekeeping will need a reader to ensure that I have depicted them correctly.

Structure of the Novel

Mary Bumby's main claim to fame is that she was the first person to bring honeybees to New Zealand. I felt it was important to include bees throughout the novel to show what it is like to care for these creatures and to indicate some of the fascination they have.

> 'I like being a skeppist because it is an excuse to be outside, instead of sitting in a dim room doing needlework. I also enjoy working with the bees. I love their busy lives, constantly on the move for the betterment of their fellows. I've learned that if I am gentle, they won't bother me.' (6)

Also, keeping bees in skeps is a dying art, although there has been some resurgence of interest in the UK. I decided that it would be interesting, especially for New Zealand beekeepers, to show the different methods used in the past. Some aspects are the same, of course, since bees are still bees. But keeping bees in the early days of colonization would have been very different to current practice, with fewer flowering plants like clover and gorse and camellias which can extend the range of food sources for bees.

Interestingly, given how prominent mānuka honey is now, in earlier days it was discarded as being too strongly flavoured and difficult to extract. Cliff Van Eaton (2014), in his book *Manuka: the biography of an extraordinary honey,* says that in 1910 the

price of 'bush blend' honey was half that of clover, and by 1990 '… it was sometimes the case that you literally had to give the stuff away.' (7)

The bees which Mary brought to New Zealand were not the stripey black and yellow variety we are used to now, but were small, black-bodied bees that adapted well to the New Zealand conditions and became feral until the varroa mite reached here and wiped them out.

I wrote the first draft of the novel in third person past. I wasn't happy with the tone. It felt too removed, as if I was merely reporting events. When I put the flashbacks into first person, they felt more immediate. After one of the lectures on point-of-view, I decided to rewrite a whole passage in first person. I felt that improved it, allowing the reader more access to Mary's thoughts and feelings. It started as:

> 'Still, it was her duty, as she kept reminding herself. Both to her brother, and to her Church. If her sex had ever rankled with her, limiting the choices she had compared to John, then she could not shirk this opportunity to show she was equal to the task.' (8)

Changing this to first person, it became:

> 'Still, it was my duty, as I kept reminding myself. Both to my brother, and to my Church. If my sex had ever rankled with me, limiting the choices I had compared to John, then I could not shirk this opportunity to show I was equal to the task.' (9)

Then I changed it to present tense and the work came alive:

> 'Still, it is my duty, as I keep reminding myself. Both to my brother, and to my Church. If my sex has ever rankled with me, limiting the choices I have compared to John, then I cannot shirk this opportunity to show I am equal to the task.' (10)

There is a danger that this restricted point of view can limit what is known, but I chose to introduce a few other voices briefly through letters and Gideon's diary:

> 'My great fear today was that I would lose both mother and child. The agony my poor Mary went through was incredible. I could do little but kneel by her side and pray.' (11)

Redrafting the entire novel into first person present tense was tedious and was inclined to introduce grammatical errors, but I believe it was worthwhile.

The voice I used is more formal and old-fashioned than we are used to reading. Initially this was not a conscious decision but came from all the research I was doing

based in that period. I've repeated some words and phrases that Mary and her brother wrote in their diaries and letters. The voice that resulted seemed to suit the story, so I have deliberately continued with it. The formality softened when put into first person.

It is increasingly common for novels to feature more than one narrator. An excellent example of this approach is *The Captive Wife* by Fiona Kidman (2005), a story about another pioneering European woman in early New Zealand. Betty is married to the whaler Jacky Guard and they, with their two young children, are shipwrecked near Mount Taranaki. Betty and the children are captured by local Māori while Jacky makes his way to Sydney for help.

Kidman's story uses multiple points of view. There are pieces from Jacky's journal, chapters from Betty's viewpoint in first person present, letters between Miss Adie Malcolm and her brother, and third person chapters featuring Adie Malcolm. Therefore, we get to see Betty's story from different angles, and better understand the complexities and misunderstandings that occurred. While Betty is the main protagonist, the one we feel engaged with the most, we can better understand both her actions and those of others around her through this technique.

I considered various options to widen my story away from Mary Bumby but didn't find enough compelling reasons to do so. Her brother John was a distant and self-absorbed person and didn't pay sufficient attention to her. While it might have been useful to have him tell the story of his travels and drowning, I found other ways to do that. Mary's husband is only present for part of the story, as is John Hobbs, her nemesis. Another possibility was to make the bees anthropomorphic, so that they were observing Mary's life on our behalf. However, I thought this might be distracting and difficult to achieve. I decided to let the bees remain insects and show their lives through Mary's interactions with them.

Writing about a real person brings some responsibilities you don't find in a novel based entirely on imagination. I had to decide which timeframe of her life I would cover, because she lived for twenty years beyond where I left her. In the end, I decided that because her beekeeping was the reason for her fame, I would take the story to the point

she stopped having bees. There is no evidence either way that she didn't take some hives with her, but the rapidity of her exit from Hokianga leaves me to conclude that she wouldn't have the time or energy to take any bees.

There were several real instances in Mary's life that lent themselves to building drama in the story. The first was the decision to accompany her brother to a country on the other side of the world. This was a logical event to use as an inciting incident.

Mary's diary showed that she had a horrendous time on board ship. As the *James* sailed from England, it truly was a 'Point of No Return'. Apart from the embarrassment of changing her mind and abandoning her brother, she would then have had to find a passage back to England and suffer terrible seasickness all over again.

Settling in to her new life in New Zealand was difficult. It was often lonely and strange, with her brother abandoning her for months at a time. She worried about his health and his safety. It appears from the comments of others that she was a good hostess, and she probably preferred to cater for a crowd. She must have wondered what the use of being her brother's housekeeper was, when he was so frequently away.

Then her brother was drowned. Her diary shows her deep distress. This is a 'Major Setback'. The very purpose of her existence is threatened. She has no formal role at the mission station and no-one to care for.

Mary's marriage to Gideon Smales is a 'Complication'. Some other writers (Steele 1985; Middleditch & Bumby 2018) have presented this as a love match, but I think that is wishful thinking on their part. There is no indication from her writing that she wanted to marry. I have presented this marriage as the only viable option for a single woman far from her home country and with no means of support. As for Gideon, it is quite likely that he was in love with her. He'd proposed much earlier on, and Mary had turned him down. This isn't to say that the marriage wasn't successful. There would have been no chance of divorce, so they were bound to work together for the success of their family.

Gideon's clashes with John Hobbs, his superior, are well documented (Steele, 2011). They provide a tension which can only be resolved by the Smales family fleeing the Hokianga. If I were not constrained by having to stick to reality, I could increase the

drama by having Gideon (or Mary) murder Mr Hobbs, or have them find some way to blackmail him, but the true 'Resolution' is that they had to escape.

There were a few instances where I needed to decide on the likely truth of information from various sources. Where Mary had obtained her bees was one.

I also wondered why Mary decided not to stay in England to look after her elderly widowed father. Both Mary and John mentioned in their diaries how distressed they were to leave him, and they feared they might never see him again. One census record indicated that their father had remarried, and I took that as a reasonable excuse for why Mary would feel free to go.

I decided to present the story in chronological order, with only occasional flashbacks to show events out of the timeframe of the novel. This seemed to fit well with the identified turning points of the novel and lent itself to building a picture of this part of Mary's life.

In contrast, Paula Morris' book *Rangatira* (2011) is told as an extended flashback as the protagonist, Paratene Te Manu, sits for a portrait by Gottfried Lindauer and remembers his trip to England twenty years earlier. 'There is too much to this story – too much to remember, too much to explain. I will write it down . . .' (12). This device serves to emphasize the changes that have occurred in his life over that time, from being an honoured and feted chief to being a dispossessed old man at the time of telling.

I considered this approach but felt that it wouldn't contribute anything to the story.

The flashbacks in my story have been chosen to show Mary's motivations. Other authors (Steele 2011; Middleditch & Bumby 2018) have paid only a passing mention to the fact that Mary's sister Jane died at sixteen. I have interpreted this event as a major influence on Mary, in wanting to care and protect her brother, especially after the subsequent death of their mother.

When Mary and John arrived in New Zealand in 1839, there were only about one thousand Europeans in the country, compared to an estimated 70,000 to 90,000 Māori. Missionaries were encouraged to learn the native language, as it was believed that

teaching the native people to speak English would further expose them to the bad influence of whalers and traders. In correspondence between missionaries, there was much praise when various missionaries were able to preach in the native tongue.

Mary's diary shows that she'd become competent in understanding *te reo Māori* by the time John died, fifteen months after arriving. I have used passages she wrote in her diary when John died and she was being comforted by her 'girls'. Then, to make it easier for the reader, I've included the translations. For example: 'Kua mate te pumipi,' Hemima says. The Bumby is dead. 'Ka noho ahau ki to taha ka hoe.' I will sit beside you to paddle. (13). I've also used the occasional *te reo Māori* word throughout the text where appropriate.

> 'Maketū say they hurt his mana,' Hera explains.
> I know that a native's honour, or mana, is a powerful force. It is easy to offend them and hard to apologise. Their way is to exact revenge. (14)

As mentioned in the historical notes at the end of the creative work, Māori were commonly known as New Zealanders. I have usually called them natives, or occasionally savages, a term that was still being used, such as in: 'On either side of us were hundreds of savages, naked apart from their belts and cartridge boxes, all ready for action at a moment's notice.' (15)

The relationship between Māori and missionaries was complicated. It was the start of the colonial era, where outsiders felt the need to impose their values and culture on the indigenous people. I have shown that the missionaries strongly believed they were there to help. Their primary concern was the native soul, but they worked to 'civilize' the Māori by teaching them to read and write, and by discouraging war and cannibalism and polygamy.

In return, the missionaries were granted protection by various chiefs. They received assistance in setting up missions. Much of their food was given or sold to them by enterprising Māori. Power was still held by Māori, even after the signing of the Treaty, and I have tried to show that Mary was very aware of this. In only a few short years colonialism would upset this balance, but many of the missionaries were working to protect the native people. My understanding of this relationship comes from reading

the diaries and letters of various missionaries of the time, and it may be different to what the various Māori tribes thought about the missionaries. However, I feel it is valid to portray this from the missionary point of view, since the book is about Mary and her perception of the situation.

The Place of the Biographical Novel

The biographical novel is a sub-genre of the historical novel, one where the main protagonist and many of the secondary characters are based on real people from the past.

While there is no consensus about what constitutes a historical novel, it is generally agreed that most of the action should focus on the past. The Historical Novel Society of Australasia (HNSA) suggests that the majority of the narrative should take place at least fifty years before publication. This means that in most books, the author will not have lived through those times. One feature of a historical novel is that it requires extensive research to get the details correct.

Why should we even bother to read or write about the past? The philosopher George Santayana said that 'Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.' (16). Yet our understanding of the past can change, as we gain the viewpoint of a different time and changing attitudes. As David Lodge says:

> 'A twentieth century perspective brought to bear upon nineteenth century behaviour reveals things about the Victorians that they themselves did not know, or preferred to suppress or simply took for granted.' (17)

This was something I had to be aware of when writing *Honey and Service*. While there was a strong and growing women's suffrage movement in the early Nineteenth Century, Mary was probably not aware of it. I gave her thoughts about the differences between men's and women's roles, and the restrictions which women suffered through marriage, but she wasn't living in a time or place when those thoughts could be expressed or acted on.

Then, if we are writing about history, why should we focus on one particular person? Professor Suzannah Lipscombe, writing in *History Today*, says:

> 'Individual lives do not encompass all history, but despite their messiness, obscurity and fictions, individual lives are the stitches of the past. There would be no fabric of history without them and sometimes we can only really feel the past one thread at a time.' (18)

By choosing to write about Mary Bumby, I also got to show what life might have been like for missionaries and the Māori around the Hokianga at that time.

Who deserves to have a book written about them? It used to be the domain of rich and educated men whose deeds had been recorded and analysed. More recently, it has been recognised that we can also learn much from the stories of marginalised groups, including women and servants. One example is Jennifer Ashton with her 2022 book about Charlotte Badger, who says that:

> 'Traditionally, historians have viewed biography as the poor relation to 'real' history writing. Those criticisms mostly centre on the narrowness of a biography's focus and the ability or otherwise of an individual life to illustrate anything helpful about the past.' (19)

As a counter-argument to this view, Professor Barbara Caine asserts that:

> 'biography is . . . seen to offer ways of throwing new light on a range of different historical periods and problems and of bringing individuals and groups who had previously been ignored into the framework of historical analysis.' (20)

A biography of Mary Bumby had already been written by her relative David Bumby and a British beekeeper, Anne Middleditch. While it was excellent at gathering facts about Mary, her brother, and her husband, I found it rather dry to read and lacking depth. It also had some errors due to the authors not being familiar with New Zealand. In her article *Resurrecting the Dead*, Helena P Schrader says biography suffers:

> '. . . the added challenge of trying to understand motives for recorded actions and the emotions of the individuals involved – unless, of course, the subject kept diaries or wrote letters and memoirs describing emotions. In that case, however, the biographer is confronted with the equally challenging issue of how honest or self-serving such documents are!' (21)

Additionally, Louisa Treger writes that:

> 'Biography is only as reliable as its sources: it can be made up from letters and friends' reminiscences, which are less than objective. For this reason, fictional

> biography may be more honest. Of course, one can argue that all fiction is lies, but biographical fiction might be a lie through which the truth can emerge.' (22)

For these reasons, I chose to write a biographical novel about Mary's life. Biographical fiction is a popular genre in New Zealand. Authors such as Graeme Lay and Jenny Pattrick regularly make the Neilsen Bestsellers list. Fiona Kidman's *The Captive Wife* (2005) was runner-up for the top fiction prize and a joint winner of the Readers' Choice award at the 2006 Montana New Zealand Book Awards. Paula Morris's *Rangatira* was the winner of the New Zealand Post Book Awards in 2012 and is being translated into *te reo Māori.*

The Australian historian Mark McKenna says:

> 'The only way of grasping our history – […] the only way of really coming to terms with that is by people's entering into it in their imaginations, not by the world of facts, but by being there. And the only thing really which puts you there in that kind of way is fiction …' (23)

Bringing a novelist's skills to the retelling of a person's life helps the reader to connect with characters that are well-rounded. As Schrader says: 'It turns a name in the history books into a person so vivid, complex, and yet comprehensible that history itself becomes more understandable.' (24)

I found writing a biographical novel challenging. There was a duty of care to the reader to get the facts correct, while presenting Mary's story in an engaging way. Numerous drafts were needed so that I could turn her from a historical footnote into a realized person. Sometimes I had to make a judgement call, such as deciding that she would have brought the bees with her from England. I hadn't understood how much research it would take to fill in the background of her life.

Because I was using known facts to build my story, there were times when I had to find a likely reason for Mary's behaviour. For example, the mourning period after John's death should have been closer to a year. However, it was a fact that she married only six months after John died. The additional fact of having Mr Waterhouse at Mangungu and being the person to marry Mary to Gideon Smales meant that I was able to extrapolate from that and find a reason for the lessened mourning time.

My aim is that my research and the use of my imagination allows readers an insight into what Mary Bumby's life might have been like. She probably didn't think that she had a remarkable life, and until recently she has been merely a slight mention in history books because of her hobby. Indeed, if it weren't for the fact that she was the first to bring bees to New Zealand, I wouldn't have been drawn to her story.

While all stories of people from our history are valid, I feel that Mary's mission to bring bees with her is a tale which is particularly compelling.

Conclusion

I'm happy that *Honey and Service* honours the memory of Mary Bumby, bringing her from near obscurity into the public arena. Choosing to focus on this novel for my MCW course has meant that I could justify the time and research needed to uncover details of her life. It has also allowed me the opportunity to investigate various ways of presenting the story, with guidance from my supervisor and lecturers.

I knew that the beekeeping aspect of the story needed to be at the forefront, but I wasn't sure how to integrate it with the rest of the tale. I feel pleased that the device of Mary teaching others has enabled me to pass on some of the most interesting facts. Be assured, there are plenty more bee facts which I've withheld, some because they were unknown in Mary's time. Beekeeping is a fascinating endeavour, which I hope I've conveyed.

I have worked to give an authentic portrayal of Mary's life, as much as I could imagine it. My aim is to let the reader see a real person living in a New Zealand that is now lost to us, doing what she could to adapt and follow her beliefs and desires.

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