

Final Report for Summer 2010 Faculty Development Grant

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I received a Summer 2010 Faculty Development Grant for my project, an anthology of Indian-English poetry published during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This anthology, entitled *Mapping Indian-English Poetry during the Long Nineteenth Century, A Historical-Geographical Reader*, includes selections of poetry from the years 1800 to 1920 written by “native” Indians in English. This poetry circulated in a variety of media including periodicals, pamphlets, and books and was either self-published by the authors or brought out by small publishing houses and printing presses or major publishing firms in various regions throughout the subcontinent.

The grant was used to visit the archives in the British Library to gather material for the anthology and to spend time during the summer compiling and annotating the works included in the anthology. Editing and annotating the texts was a major project since many of the allusions made by this poetry were accessible only to a nineteenth-century colonial audience and so needed to be carefully researched through references to other nineteenth-century texts. The table of contents is divided according to a broadly-based region, which are designated by the headings East, West, South, North and Abroad, and place the poets within one of these headings based on the place of publication of their work (rather than on their personal place of “origin” or regional identification). These regions correspond to the British-administered presidencies of Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras and the imperial capital of Delhi (which was anointed as capital only in 1911 when it was moved from Calcutta) as well as the “center” of these imperial “outposts,” London. By including works from various regions throughout the subcontinent, this anthology places these regions in dialogue with one another to map out the cultural landscape of Indian-English poetry, and representations of “India” as both geographical space and idea, under Imperial rule. A brief outline of each these five “centers” is included at the beginning of the corresponding section. A short paragraph of two-three sentences briefly details any relevant biographical information for each poet.

In addition to the poetry, which takes up the bulk of the volume, the anthology includes an appendix of excerpts from prefaces and introductions to poetry collections by both British critics and the “native” authors themselves as well a selection of poetry from Ceylon (now Sri Lanka). Much time last summer was also spent writing an extensive critical introduction, which details the history of Indian-English writing, especially poetry, on the subcontinent up to the early twentieth century and which considers the various forms, styles, and preoccupations of this poetry. The final draft of the anthology was submitted to the publisher, Anthem Press, in February 2011. I am currently awaiting edits from the publisher to polish up the final version before publication (sometime in 2012).

This anthology will make texts that are otherwise difficult to access and that survive only in limited extant copies (found only in archives abroad for the most part), readily available for students and scholars. As such, it will be an invaluable resource for the

university classroom as well as for the research scholar, for the specialist in Indian-English literature and South Asian studies as well as for anyone working in and teaching courses on nineteenth-century colonialism and colonial and post-colonial Anglophone literatures.