Abstract

This dissertation comprises a novel and a critical study. It is an exploration of the possible literary and historical representations of the Horne narratives, a collection of documents from the 1857 Indian uprising. Amy Horne, a young woman of mixed European and Indian descent, was a survivor of the massacre at Cawnpore. Converted to Islam and married to an Indian soldier, she spent ten months in captivity with the rebel forces, before returning to British-controlled territory. She subsequently produced several different accounts of her experiences. The critical study is a detailed examination of these narratives, the contexts of their composition and their position within the contemporary historical record. My research, which has included archival reading in India and England, has uncovered both contradictions within the narratives and supporting evidence for their claims. I argue that in order to use such contentious material effectively in fiction, a full recognition of the possibilities of interpretation is vitally important. I further suggest that a close and comparative reading of the narratives, informed by an awareness of Horne’s own cultural and ethnic status within British society, reveals a dissonant relationship with the discourses of Imperial history, and allows a potentially subversive understanding of Horne’s story.

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And the uprising became extremely violent. Particular incidents became notorious: Meerut and Delhi: In a large military camp (called a cantonment) at Meerut, near Delhi, a number of sepoys refused to use the new rifle cartridges in early May 1857. The Indian Revolt of 1857 Brought the End of the East India Company. Dramatic depiction of an English woman defending herself during the sepoy mutiny. Wikimedia Commons/Public domain. Books and articles about the bloody fighting and heroic deeds by British officers and men were published for decades in London. Illustrations of events tended to reinforce Victorian notions of honor and bravery. Any British plans to reform Indian society, which had been one of the underlying causes of the revolt, were essentially set aside. The Indian Rebellion of 1857 was a major, but ultimately unsuccessful, uprising in India in 1857–58 against the rule of the British East India Company, which functioned as a sovereign power on behalf of the British Crown. The rebellion began on 10 May 1857 in the form of a mutiny of sepoys of the Company's army in the garrison town of Meerut, 40 miles northeast of Delhi (now Old Delhi). It then erupted into other mutinies and civilian rebellions chiefly in the upper Gangetic plain and central India India at the time of the 1857 rebellion. Click to view in higher resolution. Map: Wikicommons. The chupatty movement first came to British attention early in February 1857. One of the first officials to encounter it was Mark Thornhill, magistrate in the little Indian town of Mathura, near Agra. Thornhill came into his office one morning to find four “dirty little cakes of the coarsest flour, about the size and thickness of a biscuit” lying on his desk. He was informed that they had been brought in by one of his Indian police officers, who had received them from a puzzled village chowkidar (wat