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# Introduction

*Tamara L. Hunt*

When colonial powers considered their subject peoples, they often employed what could be called the “colonial gaze”: that is, they saw the colonies through eyes that were blurred by misinformation, misconceptions, and stereotypes. Since the 1970s, scholars such as Edward Said have cast this in terms of the imperialist viewing the “Other,” arguing that colonial powers construct conceptualizations of subject peoples that serve the interests of those who rule.<sup>1</sup> But the use of the “Other” to refer to women pre-dates Said’s work, and women’s studies scholars have used the term ever since Simone de Beauvoir set forth her theory of “Woman, the Other” in *The Second Sex* in 1949.<sup>2</sup> The essays in the present volume suggest that there is a distinct juncture between these two views of the “Other,” and that imperialism and gender were closely linked in a number of ways. Because imperialistic nations typically have patriarchal social structures, the fact that women in subject lands often did not conform to the gender constructs of the dominant imperial culture was used to explain the “uncivilized” nature of their society. Similarly, conquering countries often attributed “feminine” characteristics to all subject peoples as a means of explaining characteristics that from the colonial point of view were unfamiliar and undesirable. This tends to throw into high relief the notion that the “masculine” characteristics of the conquering nation are naturally dominant, thereby legitimizing colonial rule as a reflection of male superiority which was seen as “natural” in society.

Thus, this work contributes to the recent literature on colonialism in a number of ways. For example, some scholars have shown that the colonialist mentality tended to portray subject countries and their citizens as effeminate, weak, submissive, and irrational – and thus in need of protection and guidance from masculine imperial authority. This is one of the themes in *Imagining India* (1990), in which Ronald Inden posits that the development of Orientalist European ideologies during the Enlightenment ultimately excluded Indians and their institutions from playing an active role in the development of their own history.<sup>3</sup> Complicating this issue, however, are questions of complicity, resistance, and adaptation, all of which have been

raised by a number of scholars, including Mrinalini Sinha in *Colonial Masculinity* (1995), who suggests that middle-class Bengali men (often portrayed as “effeminate” and thus different from the “masculine” Englishman) ultimately shared so many assumptions with their British overlords that their nationalistic campaign actually “brought them into closer harmony with colonial rule.”<sup>4</sup>

However, using gendered symbols to depict the colonies did not always convey negative messages and, as Dominic David Alessio has shown, female figures used to represent the white settlement colonies were viewed favorably by potential emigrants. Nevertheless, this reinforced an imperial ethos, as emigrant women were increasingly seen as imperial agents for upholding racial and moral standards in the colonies.<sup>5</sup> Reina Lewis’s *Gendering Orientalism* (1996) similarly argues that the gendered ideology that surrounded the imperial endeavor allowed and even encouraged white women to expand their influence as cultural agents and producers, in this case through painting and writing. Another persuasive case for the close relationship between gender and imperialism is found in Anne McClintock’s *Imperial Leather* (1995), which demonstrated the relationship between feminized domesticity and imperial mastery in the nineteenth century within the context of a much broader analysis of race, gender, sexuality, and imperialism. Such views influenced and shaped relations between colonizers and colonized, and this interplay was an important element in the evolution of colonial policies.<sup>6</sup>

One important way in which ideas about imperial territories reached the home country was through travel accounts, and as recent scholarship shows, these seemingly straightforward descriptive works are often important, albeit subtle, agents of imperialism. For example, Mary Louise Pratt’s *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (1992) deftly sketches the ways in which travel writing fostered a process of “Euroimperialism,” arguing that such writings and explorations have “produced Europe’s differentiated conceptions of itself in relation to something it became possible to call ‘the rest of the world’.” However, Pratt rejects a simply binary view of colonialism (e.g. self/Other) to argue that the colonial encounter was a matter of transculturation, a “contact zone [in which] disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination.”<sup>7</sup> Similarly, in her study of Victorian women’s travel writing about Southeast Asia (*Place Matters*, 1996), Susan Morgan demonstrates the elusive and complex nature of Victorian attitudes toward the colonies. She emphasizes the fact that the gender of the viewer, as well as a host of other factors, could shape and define the colonial gaze and, like Pratt, rejects the idea that there was a uniform imperial ideology that applied to all foreign territories at all times. Further, Morgan stresses that the gender of the travel writer substantially influenced the colonial view found in travel accounts and, even when female Victorian travel writers applied patriarchal or masculine values to the colonial

scene, they did more than “mouth the party lines.” Yet at the same time, the political and social variables of each individual situation meant that these women did not create an identifiable “female imperial rhetoric,” thus emphasizing the complex and diverse nature of imperial ideology.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, Susan L. Blake and Cheryl McEwan have shown that the gender of travel writers on Africa significantly impacted the ways in which foreign territories, landscapes, and societies were presented to domestic audiences.<sup>9</sup>

A few recent works, such as the special issue of the *Journal of Women's History* (1990),<sup>10</sup> have taken a multinational approach to the study of gender within a colonial context. Some, such as the collection of essays *Nation, Empire and Colony* (ed. Ruth Roach Pierson and Nupur Chaudhuri, 1998), have examined the power relations between the colonies and their metropolises through the prism of class, race, and sexuality.<sup>11</sup> Others, while also multinational in scope, have analyzed gender relations within the specific context of a given imperial power, thereby bringing together, within an interpretive framework, the notions of gender and empire. In studies such as *Gender and Imperialism* (ed. Clare Midgely, 1998), gender is at the center of the interplay between men and women of the colonies and men and women of the imperial nation.<sup>12</sup> Yet other studies, particularly those that have appeared in special issues of scholarly journals such as *Gender and History*, have taken a more continental approach, such as analyzing gender relations within colonized nations, and demonstrating the multiplicity of layers and the complexity of power relations at play in numerous colonial contexts.<sup>13</sup> Finally, gender and gender relations have been at the center of studies examining the concepts and the historical processes of nations, nation-building, and nationalism. These studies, including *Gendered Nations* (ed. Ida Blom, Karen Hagemann, and Catherine Hall, 2000) are also multinational in approach and highlight the broad spectrum within which operate gender relations.<sup>14</sup>

The essays in the present volume, most of which were written for this volume and appear in print for the first time, also reflect a multinational approach to issues of gender and colonialism.<sup>15</sup> However, the principal focus is on the “gaze,” the lens through which the “Other” is interpreted and subsequently depicted. The representations and the composition of the interpretive lens reflect multiple layers of power relations that are more nuanced than simple relations between the colonizer and the colonized. While these representations of the “Other” at times resulted in specific and concrete colonial policies, often these policies were a reaction to power relations within the colonies, to struggles and political tensions operating on a number of levels. In this book, the concept of the “colonial” is taken more broadly than in most anthologies of colonialism and imperialism. It covers a longer time-frame and a broader geographical spectrum. The essays are therefore presented in a way that highlights these temporal and geographical locations. This work is divided into three geographical divisions – Europe, the Americas, and Asia and Africa – and within each of these parts, the essays appear in chronological

order based on their subject matter, ranging from the pre-common era to the twentieth century. A number of methodologies are reflected in this compilation, including literary representations, dissection of legal documents, examination of specific colonial policies, and historiographical analysis. The content, presentation, and methodologies used in this collection of essays therefore provide a rich tapestry of colonial experiences. They illustrate the complexity of the lens through which others are examined and depicted.

While this geographical and chronological division has been adopted for reasons of clarity, it should not be forgotten that the essays provide a comparative context for understanding the intersection of gender and colonialism as it occurred across time and over diverse regions. Thus, the following discussion of the essays serves to highlight the themes they touch upon and to provide a more comprehensive overview of the overall work. Several essays in this collection show how colonial perceptions of women were used and manipulated. According to Laura Fishman,<sup>16</sup> sixteenth-century missionaries and explorers gathered detailed information about the Tupinamba people of Brazil, but drew conclusions that actually focused on their own culture. Some praised the modesty and chastity of Tupi women – despite the fact that the culture was polygynous and matrilocal – in order to condemn the morals and manners of European women. Thus, Fishman suggests that native women were romanticized to serve a quite different agenda.

K.E. Fleming<sup>17</sup> shows how such romanticism was also used to simulate control over lands not formally colonized. She argues that Philhellenism and the Hellenic ideal embraced by intellectuals from Britain and Western Europe were forms of surrogate colonialism in which the history and ideology of Greece were annexed instead of the country itself. Yet when travelers from Britain visited Greece, which they viewed as the land of their cultural forebears, they were disappointed because they perceived the Greek people to be “ignorant peasants,” and not the heroic, idealized figures of the distant classical past. Consequently, to preserve their illusions, Westerners developed an image of Greece as a noble, heroic woman in chains, surrounded by the degradation of contemporary Greek culture, and therefore in need of a western “knight” to come to her rescue, and preserve a past which Western society viewed as actually belonging to itself rather than to contemporary Greeks.

A similar manipulation of history is the subject of Carmen Ramos-Escandón’s essay<sup>18</sup> on Concepción Gimeno de Flaquer, a late nineteenth-century Spanish feminist and author. A resident of Mexico for more than a decade, Gimeno’s speeches and writings formed a cultural link between Spain and the former colony. This is especially true in her depictions of the Aztecs, most notably in her portrayal of Malintzin, the Aztec woman who served as Hernan Cortes’s interpreter as he conquered her people. Although Gimeno argued that Aztec society gave women greater power and influence than did European society, she nevertheless endowed her heroines with European characteristics and even depicted Malintzin with classical Greek features and dress.

In addition, Gimeno describes Malintzin as a devout Catholic who was anxious to help her people by actively seeking to convert them to Christianity and the superior benefits of Western culture. Thus, while Gimeno's colonialist ethos is reflected in her portrayal of Malintzin as a willing collaborator, a feminist ideology also emerges in her depiction of Aztec women as strong-willed characters who voiced their own opinions and asserted themselves.

Such manipulation of history was not new in the nineteenth-century colonial world; as Jane Crawford<sup>19</sup> shows, imperial Roman historians approached the subject of colonial women with a variety of such agendas. Tacitus portrayed Cartimandua and Boudicca, two British queens, in radically different ways to suit different purposes. His account of Cartimandua's reign emphasized her immorality and unsavory character, which both reflected his distrust of women who engaged in politics and commented on contemporary Roman affairs. This view is echoed by Dio, another Roman historian, whose approach reflects another way observers used their perceptions of colonized women to highlight the supposedly savage – and inferior – nature of subject peoples. According to Crawford, both Tacitus and Dio suggested that it was “unnatural” for any society to have a female monarch, and the fact that the British tribes were ruled by queens was thus evidence of their barbarity. Tacitus' portrayal of another British queen, Boudicca, also served as a foil to critique Rome, but his goal in writing about her, and thus his assessment of her actions, was different. He does not praise her as a political leader, but as a wronged wife and mother who sought to protect her family. This reflected the idealized virtues of a Roman matron. Further, he initially praised her and her people for rebelling, thus recalling the virtuous citizens of the early Roman republic who threw off oppressive tyrants. Only when the victorious Britons turned to revenge-killing and looting did he condemn them as uncouth barbarians.

Centuries later, when the British themselves had become a colonial power, British travelers used descriptions of native women as a means of conveying politically significant messages about various peoples of the empire. As Nupur Chaudhuri<sup>20</sup> shows in her analysis of the writings of two British women travelers to India, the tenor of their works generally mirrored the colonial situation. Eliza Fay traveled to India in the late eighteenth century, when much of the subcontinent was still under the control of local rulers and was thus considered remote and exotic by most Britons. Yet when the anonymous female author known as “A.U.” wrote a century later, most of India was under British control, and improved transportation and communication had made Britons more familiar with Indian culture. Although both women focused on Indian culture and private life, their approaches were different. Fay portrayed Bengali women of Calcutta as the “Other” by stressing the difference between their customs and those of her readers; Indian women to her were a curiosity whose exotic nature needed to be described and explained. A century later, A.U. also portrayed the Indian women of Calcutta as the “Other,” but she viewed them

as inferior, subject peoples who needed to be guided by the British toward civilization. As in the cases described by Ramos-Escandón and Crawford, A.U. supported the ideals of imperialism through her descriptions of native women by denigrating them for their supposed failure to act in a “civilized” fashion – that is, for not acting like their conquerors.

Yet this attitude was not reserved solely for “exotic” peoples of distant colonies; as Tamara Hunt<sup>21</sup> shows, the English held strikingly similar attitudes about the Irish. By the eighteenth century, war and property confiscation had placed the vast majority of Irish Gaelic Catholic peasants under the control of a relatively small group of English and lowland Scots Protestant landlords. To maintain and justify their dominance over the Irish majority, English stereotypes of the Irish emerged, portraying them as wild, crude, and barbaric. But after Ireland joined the United Kingdom in 1801 – supposedly as an equal partner – this image changed. Just as Fleming’s essay shows that Greece was envisioned as a woman in need of a British knight to save her, so Ireland came to be depicted in the nineteenth century as a woman who needed to be controlled and guided by a civilized, masculine England.

In the colonial context, however, such views not only shaped perceptions about colonized people, they also influenced colonial policies. Hunt shows that English officials enforced the poor laws and distributed famine relief based on accepted English Victorian gender roles where men were the breadwinners and women were housewives who had no separate income, thereby ignoring the fact that most Irish peasant women made substantial monetary contributions to their family economies. Thus, when such policies failed to meet their goals, officials often attempted to change women’s behavior to suit official plans rather than adapt their strategies to meet existing needs.

Thus in Ireland, as in India, the emphasis placed on gender roles among subject peoples was used as a means of further controlling colonial societies by erecting or maintaining rigid gender, race, and class distinctions between rulers and their subjects, and this is reflected in the essays by Isabel O’Connor,<sup>22</sup> Luis Martínez-Fernández,<sup>23</sup> and Ruth Herndon<sup>24</sup> as well. O’Connor argues that in late medieval Spain, officials of ruling Christian states often failed to punish Christian men for having sexual relations with Muslim women, even though the law strictly forbade such contact and the Muslim women were supposed to be severely punished or sold into slavery. Instead, these states encouraged Muslim women to become prostitutes to service the male Christian population. This seeming paradox reflected an effort by the Spanish rulers to emphasize the inferior position of the Muslim subject population by allowing men from the ruling society to have sexual access to subject women. Thus, this legal ambiguity was more about wielding power than about maintaining sexual morality, and strict Islamic laws requiring women to be chaste and virtuous only made the insult to the Muslim community more blatant.

Controlling access to women was also a hallmark of the highly stratified colonial society of nineteenth-century Cuba. As in the case of medieval Spain,

Cuban women of color, whether slave or free, generally were more sexually accessible to men of the ruling class than were white women, but because whites made up only a tiny fraction of the Cuban population and were overwhelmingly outnumbered by slaves, the women of the ruling class became a central symbol for demarcating ruler and subject. As Martínez-Fernández shows, an extremely restrictive code of behavior emerged for Spanish women which was directly related to these class, racial, and gender imbalances and restrictions. Ladies in Cuba literally lived behind bars, and even when they ventured out to go shopping or visiting, custom forbade them from leaving their specially built, high-wheeled carriages for as much as an instant while in the streets. This rule was so rigid that shops developed an early form of drive-by shopping – the clerks brought the goods to each carriage, where they were inspected or tried on within the secluded interior.

Martínez-Fernández points out that cultures which severely restrict the behavior of ruling-class women usually emerge where the dominant class is greatly outnumbered by a large slave population, such as in the antebellum American South. But in other places in America where European settlers quickly came to outnumber and/or dominate native peoples, officials who attempted to enforce European gender roles as part of a process of “civilizing” indigenous peoples generally directed their efforts toward making native women conform to European ideals. Herndon shows that in colonial Rhode Island, Indian women who lived on the fringes of white society came to symbolize disorder because they did not conform to English notions of community and patriarchal family structure. During the eighteenth century, colonial officials used residence laws and access to public financial support as a means to control women whose lifestyles seemed to challenge colonial patriarchy, such as in cases where they and their children lived without a resident male head of household, groups of adult women lived together, or women with children had no fixed residence. Town officials tried to make such women conform in several ways: they, or their children, might be forced into indentured servitude, thereby placing them under the control of a “respectable” white man; or they might be “warned out,” whereby officials tried to get rid of them by ejecting them permanently from the town. This attempt to subordinate or banish women ultimately led to their obliteration as individuals in the public record, reducing them to anonymous “squaws” or “mustees” and ceasing to differentiate between them and black women.

Women could also become “invisible” when their people were coerced or bribed to adopt European-style economic and social customs. Verónica Vázquez García’s comparative analysis of land ownership in colonial Mexico and Canada<sup>25</sup> shows that despite the differences in the two cases, the end result of European conquest for native women was remarkably similar. In Mexico, pre-conquest inheritance customs stressed lateral ties across sibling groups rather than lineal bequests from parents to children. In this system, women regularly inherited and bequeathed land, including rights to

communal land. However, as part of the Spanish conquest, officials began enforcing a patriarchal social structure through religious and legal sanctions, which in turn emphasized lineal inheritance through the male line. This trend continued even after independence, as nineteenth-century liberals used legislation to undercut those remaining communities that had collective land ownership in order to integrate indigenous people more fully into Western society and thereby make them “useful citizens.” Yet even in the collectives that survived into the twentieth century, women ultimately lost their individual rights; legislation gave them custodial membership, holding land in trust for their children, but no inherent land rights as individuals.

Although British authorities faced different circumstances in Canada and used a different colonial approach than the Spanish did in Mexico, Vázquez García shows that the results for native women there were similar. Neither Iroquois nor Algonkian society fitted the British model – the former was matrilineal and matrilocal, with women controlling land use and distribution, the latter were a migratory people whose men and women had complementary roles. Although the French and British did not conquer and control these peoples outright in the first centuries of European contact, they nevertheless had a significant impact on these societies, undermining women’s position through propagation of patriarchal religion and by changing the economic basis of society by placing a high economic value on fur trapping by Indian men, so undermining the economic activities of women. Once the British consolidated control, however, they adopted policies whose intent was similar to those described by Herndon in Rhode Island – forcing the Indians to adopt British customs and values. Both the Iroquois and the Algonkian peoples were urged to learn English, adopt English social customs, and take up English-style farming. It was clear that the British intended this offer to encourage a patriarchal family structure by granting land only to men and on the condition that they conformed. Further, as was the case in Mexico and Rhode Island, Indian women in Canada lost their identity under a patriarchal colonial government, for the Indian Act of 1876 defined Indians as male persons of a particular band. Women who married non-Indians ceased to be considered Indians and lost virtually all the rights guaranteed to Indians by treaty, and even those few that remained could be taken away for “immoral” behavior.

In all these instances, it is clear that colonial officials believed that controlling the behavior of native women was an important component of successful rule. By the later nineteenth century, however, the development of highly stratified gender roles in European society also began to influence colonial policy. In Britain and France in particular, society envisioned women as guardians of the home and morality, and the moral lynchpin that held civilized society together.

It is thus hardly surprising that colonial administrators came to view native women as a central element in “civilizing” indigenous society. British administrators in Swaziland clearly had this goal, as Margaret Booth<sup>26</sup> shows in her

analysis of colonial educational policy for Swazi girls. Although the general educational goal in Swaziland was to train and “civilize” workers, education for girls was clearly intended to teach them to be good wives and mothers in the Western mold, not prepare them for jobs. Moreover, educational policy documents from the first decades of the twentieth century make it clear that British administrators equated girls’ training in cooking, sewing, arts and crafts, and hygiene with civilization. Thus, missionary and colonial aims merged, as administrators sought to promote a civilized Christian culture built around women who were trained to fulfill their domestic duties – and raise their children – in accordance with Western ideals of domesticity and patriarchy.

Late nineteenth-century French administrators viewed the women in their colonies in a similar way. As Micheline Lessard<sup>27</sup> shows, educational policy in colonial Vietnam sought to transform Vietnamese women into good Frenchwomen. Educators envisioned Vietnamese mothers teaching French language and culture to their children, who would thus learn to love their French “mother” (i.e., France) from infancy. Clearly, a goal of this policy was to promote Vietnamese loyalty to France, but it also reflected fears rooted in French domestic concerns, which were in turn projected on the colonies. In France itself, officials worried about a declining domestic population and the supposed moral degeneration of the working classes, both of which, it was feared, would reduce France’s standing as a great world power. These concerns also came to figure in colonial policy toward women. Ignoring the brutal colonial economic conditions that kept most Vietnamese in poverty, colonial officials asserted that the high infant mortality rate was the result of women’s lack of an adequate education, which resulted in poor maternal skills and a failure to maintain adequate hygiene. Officials also worried about the “degenerate” nature of the Vietnamese; on the one hand, they feared it would infect Frenchmen who lived in the country for an extended period, yet on the other, they worried that the Vietnamese people would adopt the degenerate culture of the French working classes. In either case, teaching young women “proper” conduct was a major element in the remedy.

Such efforts to indoctrinate the women of a conquered country with the cultural values of the oppressor was not limited to the colonies of Western nations, as is shown in Jiweon Shin’s essay<sup>28</sup> on Korean women. Japanese aggression in Asia in the early twentieth century led Korean intellectuals to begin promoting women’s education for the first time in their history, in the belief that educated mothers would be better able to prepare the next generation for the struggles to maintain independence that lay ahead. Even greater changes occurred after Japan fully conquered Korea, and the image of the “New Woman” appeared; this further undermined traditional culture by stressing that women’s right to education and employment opportunities was as important as that given to men, and even superseded women’s traditional obligations to home and family. Yet while this movement quickly fell from

favor, new educational goals for Korean women emerged in the 1930s, when Japan demanded that Korea make greater contributions to Japanese military mobilization and instituted educational policies intended to mold Koreans into “good Japanese.” In response, Korean nationalists countered by promoting the idea of “glorified motherhood,” which stressed the need for women to learn all aspects of Korean culture in order to enable them to raise a new generation of patriotic Koreans to oppose the cultural colonialism of Japan.

Shin’s essay not only shows that women’s place in society was viewed as a crucial one in transforming colonial culture, it also clearly shows that men in this colonized country attempted to shape women’s roles to help achieve political goals. This is a major point of Karen Ray’s essay<sup>29</sup> on indentured women in colonial India. The end of slavery in the British empire in 1833 was not matched by a decline in the need for labor, so cash-crop plantations throughout the imperial territories turned to long-term indentured servitude to supply their labor needs, drawing heavily on India for labor world-wide. Conditions for indentured servants were abysmal, often mirroring those of slavery: individuals might be tricked or forced into service and sent far away from their homes to undertake backbreaking labor. Women were especially vulnerable to abuse from male overseers, and the shortage of women on the plantations, or “coolie lines,” made rape, prostitution, or forced marriage common. The initial attack on indentured servitude by male Indian nationalists focused on the image of the vulnerable and victimized Indian woman. In this ideology, these women personified the nation, suffering at the hands of the foreign oppressor, who robbed them of their dignity and identity. Since the campaign to end indentured servitude emerged at the very beginning of nationalist struggles in India, its rhetoric and ideology were incorporated into the later political struggle. This led to a view that Ray calls “victimology,” an ideology that viewed women as helpless, perpetual victims – or potential victims – as a basic component of the nationalist program. Yet as Ray points out, this image overlooked the fact that, for many Indian women, indentured service (despite its dangers and problems) offered them opportunities for employment and independence that were not readily found in caste-bound India, with its child marriages and restrictions on women. Thus, she raises questions about the nature of empowerment; can this term be applied to liberation movements that demand that women continuously live the role of victim?

Other essays in this volume touch upon this question, showing that colonized women’s images and roles are often circumscribed by their own men for their own purposes. O’Connor shows in her essay on medieval Spain that even though Muslim women were often pursued by Christian men who considered them fair game, Muslim men were less tolerant of their illicit sexual behavior and often passed sentences of stoning or whipping on women who were thought to have dishonored their families. While this emphasis on female chastity was part of Islamic beliefs, it is clear that Muslim men also saw this as a means of safeguarding their community from further subversion by the ruling

Christian community. Somewhat paradoxically, it was this aim that led Muslim men to rescue some women who had been convicted of sexual misconduct and sentenced to slavery in a Christian household. Even though the women would be outcasts in the Muslim community as punishment for their transgressions, Islamic leaders nevertheless saw this as a way of protecting their community from further abuse. In either case, women and sexual access to them were a vital part of community identity, but men, not women, determined that identity.

Women were doubly colonized – by nationality and by gender – in other colonial contexts. For example, Hunt shows in her study of Irish women, that in the late nineteenth century the male leader of Ireland’s nationalist Land League adopted English attitudes toward women in politics. After forming the Ladies’ Land League to symbolically continue the fight against unfair rents for Irish peasants while the male Land League leaders were in gaol, these same men were dismayed to discover on their release that instead of being a mere figurehead organization, the Ladies’ Land League had actively pursued their assignment and had proved to be far more efficient than the men, thus carrying on the long tradition of female involvement in public and political affairs. This was more than embarrassing for the men, since they were planning a constitutional campaign in the British Parliament to persuade England and the world that the Irish were sufficiently “civilized” to be entrusted with a greater degree of self-rule. But since the Western world equated civilization with patriarchy, women had to be removed from the political process. In consequence, male Irish politicians adopted this ideology and began telling Irish women that their patriotic duty consisted solely in being good wives, sisters, and mothers who supported their men by maintaining true Irish households that embraced Irish culture.

In a similar way, Lessard shows that male Vietnamese nationalists created for themselves the image of women as the teachers and guardians of the nation’s culture and identity. Anti-colonialists called upon women to be the “mothers of the nation” who would inculcate Vietnamese culture in their children, despite the heavy promotion of French culture by the colonial administration. Yet ironically, the French emphasis on educating women solely for a domestic role had one consequence that both Vietnamese and French leaders could agree upon; by limiting technical and academic education to men, women were unable to compete for skilled jobs. Vietnamese men approved, since they were more likely to be able to secure better-paying positions, while French leaders viewed this as a welcome means of keeping down the number of unemployed and disgruntled.

A similar unity of colonial and indigenous purpose was evident in the educational policies of Swaziland, but in this case, the colonial administration accommodated local concerns as part of Britain’s policy of indirect rule. Pre-colonial Swazi education had been age- and gender-specific; consequently, the idea of giving women equal access to education and employment met with resistance from Swazi leaders. They claimed that this taught women to despise Swazi customs; while educated women did not have as many employment

opportunities as men, they nevertheless became more independent. This view came to dominate post-World War II British educational policies, not only because the nineteenth-century colonial goal of educating women to “civilize” their households still lingered, but also because the British administration wanted to secure the friendship of the Swazi monarchy, through which it intended to rule the country indirectly. Thus, even though some administrators expressed a desire to advance women’s economic opportunities, neither the colonial administration nor the local power hierarchy saw this as beneficial to Swazi men, and the policies instead reproduced the patriarchy which supported the political goals of men.

Clearly, material benefits for men in colonial territories could motivate them to adopt the ideology of their rulers at the expense of women, and this has had consequences that linger to the present day. Nowhere was this indicated more clearly than in the case of land ownership as described by Vázquez García. Although the Mexican revolution of the early twentieth century was a popular uprising that united rural and urban poor with the rising class of capitalists, the land reforms that followed it clearly embraced the lineal, patriarchal views of land ownership first promoted by Spanish overlords centuries before. An Act of 1927, which defined landholders of communal property as male, gave widows only custodial rights to land, holding it in trust for her late husband’s (male) minor children. By the time women were given individual right to communal land in 1971, most of the land had been distributed and, with the passive contrivance of the Mexican government, local leaders simply ignored women’s claims. In 1992, new legislation stripped widows and children of their limited inheritance rights, declaring that land could be willed away at the discretion of the male owner, without provision for his wife or children.

Similarly, Canadian governments encouraged patriarchy by giving land to men who conformed to English customs, and women’s identity as Indians was gutted by the Indian Act of 1876 which declared that if an Indian woman married a non-Indian, she ceased to be an Indian. Indian activism in the first half of the twentieth century brought about renewed discussion of the status of native Americans, but the restrictions on women who married outside the Indian community were strengthened in 1951, subjecting them to involuntary eviction from reserves and loss of their rights as Indians. Although world pressure in the 1980s forced Canada to dramatically change these laws and reclassify women as Indians who had been summarily stripped of their identity, the male-dominated leadership of local bands resisted attempts to grant band membership to these women and their children. Since only band members have a right to live on reserves, participate in its politics, and share the resources, this resistance is as much a matter of economics as it is of identity. Nevertheless, men – whether Indians or whites – determined a native woman’s identity and place in the social structure.

Even scholars could be guilty of attempting to create identities for non-Western women in order to fit established anthropological or cultural models,

as shown in the essays by Laura Fishman and Timothy and Anna Fernyhough.<sup>30</sup> Although Fishman examines the Tupinamba of Brazil and the Fernyhoughs study Ethiopian women, both note that twentieth-century scholarship has reflected the West's patriarchal society, as anthropologists have projected the gender patterns of their own culture onto that of their subjects. Fishman also points out that native peoples were persuaded or forced over time to adopt European social structures, which in turn may have obscured the existence of a more egalitarian or even matriarchal pre-colonial society. Some scholars even preferred to see such altered societies as evidence for the universal nature of patriarchy. These views have led scholars to give more weight to men's activities, often assuming that native women's work was never highly valued or that it was confined solely to domestic affairs.

Studies that made such assumptions could present a seriously flawed view of women's role and status, as the Fernyhoughs reveal in their essay on Ethiopian women. Even though Ethiopia was never successfully colonized by a Western power, its history and scholarly views of its women in particular have undergone a type of historiographical and anthropological colonization by scholars in the first wave of African studies in the mid-twentieth century. In some ways, this is comparable to the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century travelers to Greece described in Fleming's study (Chapter 3), for the Fernyhoughs show that many Western scholars approached Ethiopian history with established models of how women fit into that history. Thus, Ethiopian women often were viewed with a scholarly, yet nevertheless colonial, gaze. For example, in the 1960s, male scholars applied unilineal inheritance models developed by such major anthropological figures as E. Evans-Pritchard and A.R. Radcliffe-Brown to describe the various cultures of Ethiopia, even though more broadly-based descent groups were found among the Amhara, one of the major ethnic groups. In some respects, this recalls the ideology in colonial Mexico highlighted by Vázquez-García, in which colonial administrators sought to replace sibling inheritance with strict lineal descent. Although scholars were not literally imposing such social structures on the Amhara, applying such a model to Ethiopian women inherently undervalued their historic role in society since unilineal descent groups tend to emphasize men's claims to land, status, and power.

In a related context, the Fernyhoughs note that such an emphasis on unilineal descent exacerbates the tendency of male scholars to view Ethiopian society from a patriarchal perspective – that is, they view women solely in terms of their relationships to men, as mothers, wives, and daughters. This approach is misleading, as the Fernyhoughs show through an examination of recent scholarship on Ethiopian women's history. Aristocratic women could be powerful rulers and landowners in their own right, and some individual rights were enjoyed by all free women, including the commonly used right to seek a divorce and receive a half-share of the household possessions. However, all this took place within the context of a male social framework, and men frequently denigrated women in surviving documents. The Fernyhoughs rightly

caution against taking these male views as representing the society as a whole, but they also warn against over-emphasizing women's role to compensate for any potential misogyny in the sources.

This essay on Ethiopian women serves as a reminder of the potential difficulties that exist in the union of gender and colonial history. For instance, it is very easy to view women as passive actors in colonial affairs, subject solely to the whims of men. However, a number of the essays in this collection remind us that women sometimes took affairs into their own hands. For example, Herdon shows that some Indian women were able to maintain their independence by using the English system to their advantage. In a similar way, Hunt shows that Irish women manipulated the English poor laws as part of a larger survival strategy. Vázquez Garcia shows that in the twentieth century, both Mexican women and Canadian women joined groups who agitated for the return of their identities as citizens and landowners, while Shin shows that in the 1920s, Korean women openly campaigned for greater individual freedoms as part of the "New Woman" ideology.

Sources, too, need to be examined with great care. Fishman and the Fernyhoughs point out that even eminent scholars can be guilty of unintentional bias so substantial as to create a false view of the past. In the case of ancient Roman historians, Crawford shows that such distortion was intentional, although Fleming's essay on eighteenth-century Greece shows that scholars could also be self-delusional. Women as well as men could espouse a gendered imperial ethos, as shown by Chaudhuri's essay on British women's writings on India and Ramos-Escandón's study of Concepción Gimeno's views of the Aztecs. Gimeno's use of the media to propagate her interpretation of Aztec history serves as a reminder that newspapers and journals could often be made to serve the aims of empire, especially when it came to promoting a particular type of identity for women, as Shin shows was also the case in Korea. Such publications, as well as diaries, letters, and even official reports, show that native men could also take up the gendered attitudes of their rulers, as shown in Hunt's essay on Ireland, Lessard's study of Vietnam, and Booth's analysis of education in Swaziland. Vázquez Garcia's comparative approach to Mexico and Canada reflects a similar situation, and it suggests that laws could reflect gendered views of society, a point also made by O'Connor's analysis of medieval Spain and Herdon's study of colonial Rhode Island.

In sum, colonial perceptions of gender – and, more specifically, of women's social, political, and economic role – were such an important element of colonial ideology, actions, and policy that colonial studies and women's studies both need to examine this issue in greater detail in order to develop a more complete understanding of the nature of the colonial ethos. This collection, through its broad geographical and chronological scope, attempts to reflect the pervasive and enduring nature of the gendered colonial gaze, and is an effort to contribute to our understanding of the complexities and interrelationships of gender and colonialism in their many guises.

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