A COMPANION TO GENDER HISTORY

Teresa A. Meade
Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks,
Editors

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A Companion to Gender History

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Introduction

Teresa A. Meade and
Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks

On the international stage, gender is everywhere. Political analysts and politicians pore over the "gender-gap" in attempts (sometimes futile) to design ways of pitching campaigns to win the women's vote while still holding onto the men's. One of the most significant movements of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, Islamic fundamentalism, builds its appeal in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia on the basis of an intense anti-Western rhetoric, buttressed by the imposition of severe restrictions on women's freedom. Fundamentalist movements within other world religions, including Hinduism, Judaism, and Christianity, lay out sharply distinctive paths for male and female adherents. There is today a widespread market for girls and women from many of the world's poorest countries to work as forced laborers outside their homelands, as sexual commodities for procurers from some of the richest countries, and as subjects for pornography on internet sites worldwide. Recent protests against the World Trade Organization zeroed in on the exploitative strategies of industrialists who profit from the use of primarily women and girls as sweatshop laborers in Southeast Asia, Latin America and hidden in the back alleys of European and North American cities. Finally, as we discovered when attending the international Women's World Conference in Kampala, Uganda, in 2002, feminist opposition to women's oppression is by no means centered in Europe and North America. In Uganda, not only does the main national university have a whole building devoted to "the department of women and gender studies" (while few universities in the West accord women's studies departmental status or even separate offices), but a major division of the government bureaucracy is the Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development.

The prominence of gender in historical scholarship matches its visibility on the world political stage. Almost twenty years ago Joan Wallach Scott argued in the pages of the *American Historical Review* that history was enacted on the "field of gender." Scott defined gender there as "a social category imposed on a sexed body," and stated, in a line that has since been quoted by scholars in many fields, that "gender is a primary way of signifying relations of power."[1] She was indebted, as she noted in the article's many footnotes, to the pioneering work of scholars before her who were

opening a path into the investigation of women's history, and she acknowledged that the very process of recovering the role of women in the formation of human society was still in its infancy. Scott's essay, however, gained considerable attention because it articulated the centrality of gender, not simply women, as a subject of historical inquiry, an argument that was being made by many other historians at the same time. Both of these inter-related fields of inquiry, women's history and historical gender analysis, have exploded over the last twenty years, and gender – understood as a culturally constructed, historically changing, and often unstable system of differences – has become a standard category of historical analysis for many younger historians, and a fair share of older ones as well.

What has also happened in the last twenty years is that in the same way that current gender issues have assumed a global scope, women's history and historical gender analysis have increasingly become international enterprises, both in terms of scholarship and scholars. While the footnotes in Scott's article – and most other theoretical discussions of gender from the 1980s – were numerous and wide-ranging, almost all of them referred to studies focusing on the United States or Europe. This was not the result of any narrowness of vision, but of what was available at the time. In some ways this imbalance continues, and can be seen in the fact that another volume in this series of Blackwell's Companions to History is devoted solely to American women's history, understood primarily as the history of women in the United States. For some parts of the world in some periods, we are only beginning to gain basic information about the lives of women, the relationship between males and females, and the interconnection between socially accepted masculine and feminine ideologies. However, new research has begun to challenge understandings of gender derived primarily from the western experience, and there is now enough material from all over the world to make this Companion to Gender History truly global.

This collection of essays seeks to contribute to the history of women, to study their interaction with men in a gendered world, and to posit notions of the role of gender in shaping human interaction over thousands of years. When thinking about how to organize such an enormous project, we decided that it would be useful for readers to have both thematic essays that provide conceptual overviews of the ways in which gender has intersected with other historical topics and categories of analysis, and more traditional chronological-geographic essays that explore gender in one area of the world during a specific period (though these are of necessity very broad). We assembled a group of authors that was similarly wide ranging, including scholars from most of the English-speaking world, including Canada, Britain, Australia, India, New Zealand, and the United States, as well as scholars for whom English is not their first language. We also gave the authors a relatively free hand to explore their particular topic in the way they saw fit, recognizing that investigations of some societies or pertaining to given historical epochs are only beginning to see descriptive studies about women, while others are rich in highly theorized and sophisticated analysis of gender. Rather than bemoan these differences, we see them as providing a good example for you as readers to see how a new historical field is developing and assess the ways in which insights in one area can challenge received wisdom and standard generalizations in another.

One of the key points emerging from this collection is that no generalization about gender has applied to all times or all places. Indeed, even Scott's definition of gender

as "a social category imposed on a sexed body," while acceptable twenty years ago when scholars were asserting the difference between "cultural" gender and "biological" sex, is today highly contested. Biological markers such as genitalia and chromosomes are not perfectly dichotomous, but may involve ambiguous intermediate categories; generally individuals in such situations are "assigned" a sex at birth, sometimes with the aid of surgery to remove or reconfigure the inappropriate body parts. Thus their sex is determined by the cultural notion that there are only two acceptable categories, so that in these cases gender determines sex rather than the other way around.

Historical and anthropological research from around the world has also provided evidence of societies in which gender was not based on body parts or chromosomes, but on a person's relationship to reproduction, so that adults were gendered male and female, while children and old people were regarded as different genders, and one's gender thus changed throughout one's life. Then again, in some societies gender may have been determined by one's role in production or religious rituals, with individuals who were morphologically (that is, physically) male or female regarded as the other gender, or as members of a third gender. Barbara Andaya provides examples of such a third gender when she discusses the *bissu* of Southeast Asia, and Deirdre Keenan when she notes the presence of two-spirit people among some Native American groups. Such historical instances of non-dichotomous gender systems occasionally provide examples, as Robert Nye notes, for those in contemporary society who are increasingly critical of the standard schemata of binary sex and gender roles.

Much of such criticism of the binary gender system and a further contestation of the meaning of gender has come from the transgender movement. Individuals whose external genitalia and even chromosomal and hormonal patterns mark them as male or female may mentally regard themselves as the other, and choose to live and dress as the other, a condition the medical profession calls "gender dysphoria." In the 1950s sex-change operations became available for gender-dysphoric people who could afford them, and they could become transsexuals, thus making their physical sexual identity fit more closely with their mental gender identity; by the 1980s more than forty clinics in the United States were offering such operations. (This enterprise is shaped by gender in complex ways, as the vast majority of those who undergo sex-change operations go from male to female.) But at what point in this process does a "man" become a "woman"? When he loses his penis? Gains breasts? Or is she a woman before the process begins because she self-identifies as a woman? In the 1980s some people also began to describe themselves as "transgendered," that is, as neither male nor female or both male and female, and resisted efforts to limit the possibilities to two. But should such individuals be allowed in spaces designated "women only" or "men only"? Such questions are not simply academic speculation, nor do they relate solely to public restrooms. The Michigan Womyn's Music Festival, which has been held for more than thirty years and draws about ten thousand attendees, has been deeply divided about the question of transsexuals and transgendered persons. Are "real" women – those who will be admitted – only (in the words of the festival organizers) "women-born-women"? Or is excluding transsexuals and transgendered persons an example of the very type of sexist discrimination the festival opposes?

Transsexuals and transgendered persons highlight the nebulous boundaries and permeable nature of the categories "women" and "men," and challenge us to think carefully even when using these common words. The enormous differences among men and women based on factors such as class, race, ethnicity, religion, and region have also led scholars to question whether the term "women" (and by extension "men") is a valid analytical category, or whether these differences are so great that there really is nothing that could be labeled "woman" whose meaning is self-evident and unchanging over time. Not only in the present is gender "performative," that is, a role that can be taken on or changed at will, but it was so at many points in the past, when individuals challenged existing gender roles or when, based on the individual's class or racial status, he or she was not viewed as included in category of "men" or "women." Many of the essays in the collection discuss high-status women, for example, who ruled over men despite cultural norms that decreed female inferiority and subservience, as well as low-status women who were never included in ideas about women's purity and weakness. Similarly, they discuss men whose class status allowed them to engage in behavior that would in other men be judged "effeminate," such as wearing cosmetics, or whose class or racial status kept them from being regarded as manly. Nupur Chaudhuri, for example, discusses the intertwining of gender and racial understandings in colonial India, where colonial authorities viewed Englishmen as vigorous and "manly" while Bengali men were dependent, soft, and "feminine."

Several of the essays thus provide evidence of more fluid gender roles – whether positive or negative – but others point to ways in which many types of historical developments served to rigidify existing notions of masculinity and femininity. According to Verena Stolcke, the history of European exploits abroad and of colonization schemes may not have included large numbers of women, but notions of masculinity underlay the participants' sense of conquest. Whereas conventional history has given us the positive view of the masculine legend, a gendered account might divest masculinity of its rugged individualism and, in the case of the imperial project abroad, connect masculine imagery with racism and exclusivity. Sean Redding's essay demonstrates how Europeans colonizing Africa sided with the most retrograde aspects of the colonized, and imposed male domination in ways it had not previously existed. The frontier narrative, from crossing the great plains of North America to forging into the jungles of Africa to subduing the Indian subcontinent, has been a mainstay of triumphalist historical narratives and the core of the western literary canon. Linda Kealey, Patricia Grimshaw, and Charles Sowerwine question the heroism of the American frontier mythology that credits the backwoodsman with single-handedly clearing the forest, building the roads, and, eventually, paving the way for the rise of industry and national unity at home, and neo-imperialist preeminence abroad.

As they provide evidence for both fluidity and rigidity in gender structures, the essays also provide evidence on both sides of the debate about women's agency and oppression. Merry Wiesner-Hanks and Susan Besse document the ways in which the family served simultaneously as an institution protecting and supporting patriarchy, and a location of real female power. Ursula King notes the ways in which religious doctrines and institutions were both restrictive and liberating for women, while Guity Nashat and Judith Tucker explore this in greater detail with regard to Islam. According

to Anne Walthall, Chinese women created a rich literary culture in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, despite Confucian ideas about women's inferiority. Barbara Clements highlights contradictions in Russian and Eastern European gender ideology and movements for women's "emancipation" in the twentieth century, which resulted in a double burden of paid work and housework for women, while holding out an – often illusory – promise of leadership and advancement for men.

Women's history began in some ways as a branch of social history, and many of the essays include extensive discussions of issues that matter to social historians: the family, work and leisure experiences, marriage patterns, class differences. In Africa, for example, as Marcia Wright discusses, kinship systems adapted to dramatic social and economic change and women were important as entrepreneurs. Julie Hardwick finds similar adaptation in early modern Western Europe, but notes that the impact of economic development, as well as other social and political changes, was very different for elite urban dwellers than for peasants. The same was also true in early modern Eastern Europe and Russia, where Nancy Kollman traces relations within nuclear and extended families in terms of gender ideology and actual behavior. According to Deborah Valenze, complex and conflicting gender ideologies in the modern era intersected with industrialism and urban development.

The scholarship of the last twenty years has made clear, however, that the centrality of gender is not limited to social issues, and many of the essays examine themes that have traditionally been the province of political, diplomatic, and even military historians. Though some mainstream national history – the accounts that legitimate nations and their governments – remains cut off from the interpretative richness gender analysis provides, building and ruling societies have always been carried out according to gendered principles. In societies fraught with differences – between nationalities, languages, cultures, races, and even behaviors – gendered legal statutes, court decisions, and legislation have served often as the thread through which a unified national code has emerged. As Susan Kingsley Kent observes in her review of gender and the law, legislation governing the right to vote, own property or retain an inheritance, laws determining the ownership of slaves, statutes preventing foreigners from gaining citizenship, and so forth, have always rested on the intersection of gendered assumptions of race and class. David Schoenbrun traces the multifarious ways in which gender and elite status were intertwined in pre-modern Africa, noting the prominent role of queens in dynastic development and epic histories.

As several of the essays note, such histories also need to explore and problematize the experience of men *as men* in war, and to investigate the centrality of masculine (often hyper-masculine) imagery in training and fielding an army. War, long viewed as the most masculine of historical inquiry, has a documented gendered history. For example, Barbara Molony discusses sex slavery in Asia, which came into the headlines in 1991 when Korean and Chinese women who were forced into prostitution to serve the Japanese imperial army during World War II as so-called "comfort women" came forward to demand reparations. Comfort women's memoirs thus deepen our understanding of World War II in the same way that the accounts of Holocaust survivors, refugees, and other war victims have. Because sex slavery, rape as a tool of combat, and similar practices are not, nor have ever been, unique to Japan, the history of war can be better understood when it incorporates these deeply troubling issues.

Along with tracing the actual experiences of women and men, many of the essays discuss symbolic and metaphorical uses of gender as well as other topics that have been central in the new cultural history over the last several decades. Sonya Lipsett-Rivera traces the way in which notions of honor served to gender space in colonial Latin America, with interiors characterized as feminine and the street as masculine. As Temma Kaplan explains, women were used as symbols in emerging nationalist discourses of the modern era, particularly in their role as mothers. By contrast, Pavla Miller's essay on education discusses contradictory images of the school as a household led by a wise father, an all-male army unit, or a place of nurture headed by a "mother made conscious."

As is evident, the essays range widely in terms of approach as well as chronological and geographic coverage, and also in terms of theoretical perspective, in the same way that historical scholarship as a whole does. Laura Frader and Barbara Winslow draw on Marxist feminist theory in their emphasis on the intersection of gender and class, while Nupur Chaudhuri and Deirdre Keenan develop insights drawn from post-colonial theory to explore the gendered construction of race. Mary Sheriff and Paul Halsall discuss the implications of queer theory for the fields of art history and ancient history, noting the ways in which recent works emerging as part of gay and lesbian studies have dramatically altered approaches to canonical images and texts, along with introducing new types of sources. In their explorations of societies that have left no or very few written texts, Marcia-Anne Dobres and Rosemary Joyce weave in anthropological theory, while observing that gender bias has skewed the interpretations of the material record. All the authors have what we would term a feminist perspective in their work – indeed, this book and everything else in women's and gender history would not exist without feminism – but, like gender, they all define feminism somewhat differently and vary in the level to which it emerges as an explicit theme.

Women's history is now almost four decades old, and those of us who have been involved with it for a long time sometimes become depressed at how difficult it has been to insert women – to say nothing of gender – into the traditional historical narrative. As the Latin American historian Donna Guy observed in a recent reflection on the place of women in Latin American history textbooks prior to the end of the twentieth century, "women were not subjects, women were not objects, women simply were not."[2] A number of the essays in this collection note similar omissions, absences, and invisibility, but the overall impression we hope the essays convey to you – as they did to us – is that from the earliest human cultures until today, the process of defining societies, ruling them, settling them and building them has been a gendered task, one done by both men and women, but likewise one motivated by and carried out according to gendered principles. There is no aspect of human existence – labor and leisure, family and kingroups, laws, war, diplomacy, foreign affairs, frontier settlement, imperialism, aggression, colonial policy and the resistance to it, education, science, romance and personal interaction, the construction of race and ethnicity – that is untouched by gender.

The scope of this volume is daunting, as is the coverage of each essay, for every author struggled to keep her or his essay to a manageable word limit and worried about over-generalizing. Nonetheless, these broad strokes give meaning to the social construction of gender, illuminate its variations according to time and place, and demonstrate its complexity in relation to far-reaching historical epochs. We are

indebted to our contributors for the depth and range of their efforts. In addition we would like to thank Tessa Harvey and Tamsin Smith at Blackwell for their encouragement and assistance at every stage of the process. Deanna Collins and Kathy Miller-Dillon provided useful comments and valuable editorial suggestions. Jane Earley kept track of addresses, logged in the essays, and corresponded with contributors while Maria Carrizales provided additional administrative assistance. Janey Fisher was our able and understanding desk-editor and Ann Rutter helped with the indexing and proofreading. Funds were provided by the Union College Internal Education Fund to pay for staffing and editorial assistance. Finally we would like to thank our contributors, many of whom set aside other pressing research to provide these essays in a timely way. The process has taken far longer than either of us anticipated and we are very grateful for the patience of many of our authors.

Notes

1 Joan Scott, "Gender, A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *American Historical Review 91*:5 (December 1986): 1056, 1087.

2 Donna Guy, "Engendering Politics: Latin America." Paper presented at the Berkshire Conference on the History of Women, Rochester, NY (June 4–6, 1999).

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Part I

Thematic Essays on Gender Issues in World History

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Chapter One

Sexuality

Robert A. Nye

As a field of scholarly investigation, the history of sexuality is about as old as gender history in its modern, social constructionist form, dating from the 1970s and 1980s. Unlike gender history, whose roots reach back into a variety of disciplines and scholarly fields, the history of sexuality was long regarded as at best a catalogue of anthropological curiosities and at worst a pornographic amusement for social elites. In the 1880s medically informed writers such as Iwan Bloch, Paolo Mantegazza, and Richard von Krafft-Ebing tried to fit the spectrum of human sexual expression into an evolutionary scenario, but the foundations of the field's contemporary respectability were laid in the 1920s by British-trained social anthropologists such as Bronislaw Malinowski and the American Margaret Mead, who studied sexuality in social context and speculated on its relationship to socially ascribed gender roles. Though many of the early medical and anthropological works on sex and society as well as the first academic histories were devoted to the variety of sexual behavior and values in human history, many of their authors were also sex reformers who often used this information as weapons in the long cultural struggle with traditional Western sexual ideology. Gordon Rattray Taylor, whose *Story of Society's Changing Attitudes to Sex* (1954) was one of the first serious histories of the subject, was unapologetic about his aim of undermining the vestiges of Victorian sexual beliefs. The Western scholars who have studied the historical and global varieties of sexuality are still tempted to look at the subject through a critical and relativizing lens. Historicizing a topic that has been used both as a "natural" universal to command conformity and as a radical tactic of social rebellion has proven difficult indeed.

As numerous authors have pointed out, a remarkable proportion of contemporary writings on sexuality and its history have taken body dimorphism and male/female gender difference as "givens" and explained variations as exceptions to this rule. Though historical accounts of sexuality, particularly in the West, clearly confirm the prevalence of dimorphism and gender difference, much recent work has opted in favor of far more complex schemes for understanding sexual and gendered bodies and practices in the West and elsewhere. This has resulted in an important corrective to the temptation to see sex and gender in exclusively binary terms, endlessly

reinvented as a series of polar oppositions. Third sex and third gender models and even more complicated schemata have been developed recently to account for the great diversity of body types, gender identities, and sexual practices that have thrived in the West and throughout the world.

Nonetheless, though we are increasingly critical of the old schemata, the historic persistence in most cultures of binary sex and gender categories, which have also been replicated in religion, culture, language, and science requires some explanation. It seems clear enough that the mammalian model of reproduction has served as the template for male/female dimorphism in human societies. It seems equally certain that human groups have made powerful investments in fertility in order to ensure survival in a world of conflict and competition for resources. A rich archaeological record of fertility rites and goddesses and the regular equation of planting and harvest activities with human reproduction is testimony to the urgency of these beliefs. However, there is evidence that suggests that even very ancient societies acted to limit fertility when population outstripped prospects. Since in either case the management of procreation was the key to assuring the prosperity of individuals, kinship groups, and entire societies, a high premium was placed on the procreative capacities of males and females and on the sexual practices that ensured or regulated births.

No doubt, genitalia and sexual function have always figured prominently in assessments of these capacities, but though erection and ejaculation in males and menses and pregnancy in women have been necessary features of cultural assessments of reproductive ability, they are only a part of the huge variety of ways that human societies characterize males and females as men and women and as more or less masculine or feminine versions of their gender. It might appear in this schema that sexual capacity is biologically primordial and gender is a secondary, cultural effect, but in fact the opposite is more nearly the case. Despite the many forms it has assumed in human societies, gender appears to be the stable and persistent category while sexuality has been more changeable and adaptive. The gender arrangements of most societies have dictated what is valued and permitted in the domain of sexual identity and sexual behavior and have done so for the most part within binary male/female orders that have reproduced themselves as systems of male dominance. Though they can be studied on their own terms, sexual ideologies, sexual practices, and representations of the sexualized body are deeply influenced by the gendered norms that prevail in political, cultural, and economic life. In a sense, gender makes a social virtue out of the necessity of biological sex, policing the boundaries of the sexually permissible, nourishing ideals of sexual love, and dictating norms of sexual aim and object.

The power of the procreative model of sex has been so great that we are encouraged to think of sexuality as an innate force or drive favoring heterosexual sexual relations. Religious prescription and scientific opinion alike have generally endorsed this view. However, the notorious unruliness and apparent unpredictability of sexual desire has continuously destabilized the heterosexual model, producing contrary effects: it has provoked societies to favor theories and moral regimens that channel or repress sexuality in behalf of accepted norms, but it has also made sexual freedom or emancipation a cause and justification for individual or social rebellion. However, while there is no dismissing the entrenched belief that sexual desire is a natural drive with innate aims and objects, historians of sexuality have found it far more fruitful to think of sexual desire, following the ideas of the French philosopher, Michel

Foucault, as a kind of cultural discourse implicated in the "games of power" played by competing discourses of law, religion, folk beliefs, and science. In this view sexuality is a set of negative sanctions and positive incentives enshrined in language, images, and other cultural representations that do not repress or channel desire so much as express it in the form of cultural ideals of love, family, and heterosexual propriety, and as revulsion or distaste for aberrations from these norms. Foucault's aim here is to historicize and denaturalize sex, to make us think of it not as an irresistible drive that owes its truth to an inherent quality it possesses naturally, but as a product of cultural tactics that makes it continuous with power and politics.

Foucault's strategy of thinking about sex as cultural discourse rather than universal instinct allows us to appreciate better the permutations, both subtle and dramatic, that mark the difference in sexual expression between cultures and within cultures over time. It allows historians to analyze sexuality as a form of power that operates on and through individuals, exhorting them to culturally admissible ends, but also occasionally arousing in them resistance to or rejection of mainstream norms. This way of thinking about sexuality does not dismiss the biological and material origins of sexual desire, but it does demand that we consider how individuals experience physiological events – their own and others' – through the lens of culture. One woman's pleasure might be another's pain; an experience of sexual ecstasy at one moment might be a humiliating debacle at some other time. Finally, discourse analysis reveals the connections between the deeply personal experience of sex and the public domain of state and society. It shows us how sexuality reflects changes in government, citizenship, social life, science, and technology and influences these things in turn.

Much of the evidence we have about the early history of sexuality is deduced from what we know about demography and patterns of marital fertility extending back into human prehistory. Marriage and kinship alliances are ubiquitous institutions in human societies, providing the immediate context for procreation, child rearing, and the transmission of wealth. Historical demographers are convinced that ancient peoples had sufficient understanding of birth control to shape family fertility in significant ways, limiting or spacing births when necessary, expanding family size when prospects improved. The quantity and nature of sexual relations were certainly influenced by the vicissitudes of marital fertility, and we can presume that women's sexual experience and health, in particular, were directly affected by the need to resort to abstinence, prolonged breastfeeding, abortifacients, or abortion to limit births, or by life-threatening multiple pregnancies in times of abundance. In historic times, in the ancient West and Far East alike, knowledge of contraception was widespread and presumably widely employed. Knowledge of body function circulated in official medical practice and oral culture based on theories of humoral dynamics in the West, and in the East on notions of the balance of Yin and Yang. In both East and West, medical knowledge was a precious resource for understanding methods of avoiding pregnancy or birth, ensuring fertility or the birth of a boy, and enhancing or anesthetizing sexual feeling. In ancient China and classical Greece and Rome, sexuality was aligned with profoundly patriarchal gender systems that favored viable male heirs and, with some exceptions, regarded women merely as reproductive vessels. The most prosperous Chinese, Greek, and Roman men fulfilled their conjugal duties but took their sexual pleasures elsewhere, with prostitutes or boys in Greece and Rome, or concubines in

China. Marriage was foremost an arrangement between men for producing (male) heirs and transmitting property to the next generation of patriarchs.

In ancient Greece and republican and imperial Rome, remarkably similar sex and gender systems set the foundations for all later developments in the West. The Greek and Roman male citizen exercised complete legal and material dominion over everyone else in society: women, slaves, and minors. Women were regarded as inferior beings and enjoyed little autonomy and few rights. Rigid codes of sexual conduct based on concepts of penetration and "active" or "passive" sexual practices paralleled this hierarchical gender system. An adult male was permitted to penetrate but he risked losing his personal honor if he either allowed himself to be penetrated orally or anally, or willingly assumed the passive, inferior position in intercourse. In ancient Greece an adult male could exercise his right as penetrator on slaves and with boys who did not yet possess their manly honor, especially if the man was a distinguished citizen and the boy from a good family. Scholars have argued that ancient pederasty shared nothing with our modern concept of homosexuality, in which reciprocal penetration occurs between peers, a notion that would have been unthinkable to a Roman *vir* or a citizen of a Greek city-state.

The concept of ancient pederasty and its putative difference with modern homosexuality spawned an important epistemological debate in the 1970s about the meaning and historicity of same-sex love. Historians who favored a social constructionist position, in which the meaning of sexual experience derives from the historical situation, argued it is misleading to apply the word "homosexual" to same-sex sexual relations before the nineteenth-century invention of the term (Halperin, 1990: 29–33). Men or women in such relationships would not have understood the pleasures, the dangers, or the sense of identity of modern homosexuals. "Essentialists," though they concede a host of historical variations, were willing to assume that homosexuals and homosexual love has always been pretty much the same. This debate has now moved into more subtle terrain, but it continues to inform the field by requiring historians to probe beneath the linguistic conventions of sex and situate sexual experience in historical context. This debate is different from, but often conflated with, the debate about whether individuals are genetically or otherwise predisposed to a particular sexual nature. Here the issue is the degree of determinism in biological or environmental influences that confers a sexual identity on individuals which carries corresponding rights or legal sanctions. The philosopher Ian Hacking has tried to bridge both these debates by proposing a way of thinking about individual actions, identity, and linguistic classifications that stresses reciprocal interaction and rejects caricatural voluntarist or determinist explanations (Hacking, 1995: 239).

Sexuality in the ancient world was constrained and sanctioned by social expectations and legal codes, but religion did not play an important role in shaping sexual beliefs or practices. The period in world history that followed the flowering of classical antiquity was dominated by the rise of the great world religions: Islam, Buddism, Hinduism, and Christianity. In varying degrees, and often in the absence of strong central governments, religious elites intervened forcefully to regulate sexual behavior, particularly as this related to marriage and legitimacy, but also to acceptable norms of sexual activity. On the whole the great religions undergirded patriarchal gender orders, subordinated or segregated women, devised rituals of purification surrounding menses, and proscribed sexual deviations, especially same-sex sexuality and

adultery. From the millennium through the fifteenth century, in both Chinese and Western medicine, special attention was given to women's reproductive disorders in deference to their special status as progenitors.

Holy orders in all religions attempted to seal off devotees to sexual temptation, but Latin Christianity in particular drew on classical ascetic philosophy and the Pauline tradition to nourish an ideal of sexual renunciation that sought to extinguish desire altogether and prepare the body for spiritual salvation. Marriage and procreation, in this perspective, were a reluctant concession to the laity, a way of confining and channeling sexuality so that neither the clerical nor the secular hierarchy was threatened. Ecclesiastical courts in Islam and in Latin and Byzantine Christianity accused and punished sinners, judging adulterers, fornicators, and sodomites according to the rigorous standards of Qur'an or canon law. Religious and medical authorities also attempted to specify orthodox forms of sexual intercourse that were healthful, procreative, and that positioned women on the bottom. It was not doubted that women experienced sexual pleasure, even orgasm, but medical authorities preferred to think this was not necessary for the release of "seed" and therefore for fertilization. Notwithstanding the necessary cooperation of sinful men, womenfolk were regarded as the gravest threat to the sexual order of the medieval era, tempting husbands and engaging in prostitution. Though we have evidence that non-marital sex occurred with some regularity, even in the confessional, marriage became an increasingly popular institution in the course of the Middle Ages, serving as a growing bulwark against sexual disorder.

The period from 1500 to 1800 was a great period of dynastic state building in world society. With respect to matters of sexuality, the rise of secular authority did not free sexual regulation from the thrall of religion so much as intensify it in the interest of state authority. In the new Western monarchies and in the Chinese and Ottoman empires, ruling patriarchs exercised absolute sway. Family patriarchs were regarded as virtual extensions of royal power and were given new legal instruments to control their women and children. Rebellious Protestants, meanwhile, went further still in the European and North American domains they controlled, trying and imprisoning adulterers, prostitutes, and (unmarried) fornicators, and burning sodomites at the stake for their crimes. Sodomy was a catch-all term that covered all forms of non-vaginally intermissive sex, including masturbation, bestiality, and especially anal intercourse. Hundreds of putative sodomites were executed in this way during moral panics in the Netherlands between 1690 and 1711. That this absurd word survives today in criminal indictments is testimony to the timorous reluctance of legal officers actually to specify the sex act of which defendants are accused.

The Spanish and Roman branches of the Catholic Inquisition, with the support of Catholic monarchs, were scarcely less harsh in the policing of their own congregants. In the midst of the profound political and religious upheavals of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, sexual deviance became a symptom of social rebellion. The long-term effect of these attempts to purify sexual morality in the early modern West was a deeper reinforcement of the only permissible form of sexual expression – marital, procreative intercourse – and a new interest in populations and families by nation-building political elites as key elements in the expansion of state power.

Until about the eighteenth century it could be argued that the factors that shaped human sexuality were similar in most human civilizations. Governments were mostly

too weak to influence behavior or attitudes effectively. Marriage and sexual relations were still closely linked to the business of making heirs and having children, to economic conditions and family survival, and the transmission of property. Love in its modern, companionate form did not yet exist; indeed, strong expressions of physical or emotional passion were regarded in all cultures as debilitating and disruptive forms of madness or love-sickness. In effect sexuality was more a public than a private matter, policed by communities and kin, governed by an economic logic, and divided everywhere into two great categories: procreative and non-procreative.

At some point during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries a schism appeared that would separate Western and Eastern sexualities for much of the next two centuries. In Europe and North America rapid economic development expanded and diversified prosperous elites, particularly the urban middle classes, causing rapid population growth and improved prospects throughout all levels of society. With sufficient assets couples could choose careers, marry, and plan families with greater certainty. As child and maternal mortality rates finally began to decline, couples were able to make emotional investments in one another and in their children which strengthened the affective bonds of family life. Romantic love took flower from this more stable soil, and new forms of individualism emerged that encouraged people to cultivate personal distinctiveness in feelings and attachments.

Ironically, as individual and private selves, including sexual selves, became more common, scientists and doctors were busy discovering universal laws that ordered and regulated sexual bodies. In this way too Western and Eastern societies diverged. Scholars have shown that anatomical and physiological representations of male and female bodies in Western and Eastern medicine relied on a common, androgynous body with differently positioned but homologous reproductive organs in each sex, the vagina being an inverted and internalized penis and so forth. Physiological differences were explained by relative humoral balances, heat, or measures of *yin* or *yang*. In the eighteenth century, however, Western scientists amassed evidence that women and men's bodies were decisively different, particularly in skeletal structure and in reproductive function. Women's wider hips, menstrual cycles, and weaker musculature, their changeable emotions and putatively weaker reasoning were regarded as naturally determining women's domestic and procreative functions, while men were believed better equipped for the rigors of social struggle. Male and female bodies were described as incommensurable but complementary, with physical attraction depending on the relative differences in masculine and feminine traits.

The rather sudden appearance of a "two-sex" system essentially locked men and women into a form of biological determinism that experts, and, increasingly, individuals throughout society believed to be their sexual destiny. Coincident with this materialization of gendered bodies, women and men's sexualities were held by medical specialists to be markedly different. Unless overcome by abnormal uterine furor, women were characterized as passive, inorgasmic beings, men as aggressive, opportunistic ones. These views confirmed and legitimated women's confinement to the domestic sphere at a time when greater numbers of middle-class folk could live on the husband's income alone. Though punctiliously discreet, far from repressing discourse about sexuality, middle-class people were obsessed with sexual health and hygiene, wrote manuals and tracts, and spoke endlessly about the ways that sexual excess, masturbation, or, contrarily, a misguided abstinence, could lead to weakness,

sterility and "degenerate" offspring. It is not likely that contemporaries thought of these rules as sexual in nature – the word "sexuality" itself did not circulate widely until the end of the nineteenth century – but as hygienic tactics for disciplining bodies, diet, and even desires as a way of maintaining a viable procreative economy.

Inevitably, what began as a regimen for bourgeois self and class improvement became, in the course of the nineteenth century, a set of bio-moral criteria used by the respectable classes to justify intervention in the lives of sexual "others." These "others" were initially the traditional class rivals of the bourgeoisie: vice-ridden and profligate aristocrats, drunken and disorderly proletarians, and bestial peasants. New public health and educational officials believed each class "type" could profit, in its respective way, from exposure to bourgeois values and hygiene; the earliest welfare state ventures for the poor, single mothers, and abandoned children dished out bourgeois moral precepts along with other forms of support. Sexual segregation and differentially gendered curricula became the rule in the new public schools, paralleling developments in society at large.

Additional sexual "others" were located. Chief among these were prostitutes, who had always been considered a moral scourge, but who were now accused of spreading venereal disease throughout respectable society. Some continental European states regulated and medically segregated prostitutes; even liberal Britain experimented with obligatory inspections in mid-century. Only a few outspoken women, such as Josephine Butler and Christabel Pankhurst, pointed out that there would be no prostitutes if there were no male clients for them. European Jews escaped from the ghetto into citizenship in the nineteenth century only to find that they were demonized as sexual predators with exotic erotic tastes. Indeed, ethnic minorities in all populations were presumed to be the most likely recruits for the brothel or perpetrators of violent rape. Finally, to an extent and with a zeal moderns find extraordinary, masturbators were diagnosed as mental or hereditary defectives whose habits were leading them to certain doom, and whose progeny, if they could have any at all, were certain to be born defective. Medical advice in this instance supplemented traditional religious suspicions of sensuality by fiercely indicting this solitary behavior that circumvented "normal" procreation. Doctors were known to prescribe electrified penile rings or clitoridectomies to worried parents as ultimate solutions.

One of the most sinister aspects of the construction of sexual "others" in nineteenth-century Europe was the way that notions of race and ethnicity helped constitute both the ideals of virtuous sexual self-mastery and the negative stereotypes of depravity and loss of control. Western colonialism had been supplying cultural representations from less "civilized" parts of European empires for centuries, but in the nineteenth century, coeval with the development of Darwinian and other biological notions of organic evolution and race, Europeans made racial distinctions part of their conceptions of moral and sexual respectability, selfhood, and citizenship. Ann Laura Stoler has written persuasively about the ways that ideas of sexual purity and the avoidance of external pollutions – a central feature of bourgeois moral self-discipline – were paired with binary opposites constituted by the presumed depravity and uncontrolled eroticism of colonial people of color. The long Western fascination with the harem, and the actual practice of otherwise respectable colonial officials keeping "native" mistresses, fueled the imaginations of colonizers and European administrators worried about their nationals "going native." They were

encouraged to write laws for their colonies that segregated colonizers and colonized peoples, denied citizenship to non-Europeans or people of mixed race, and prescribed family and pedagogical regimes for colonists of an archetypal "Dutchness", "Frenchness" or "Englishness" that existed nowhere in the home country, but that became, for everyone, models for comportment (Stoler, 1995: 107–11).

The materiality of race and its palpable appearance in Europeans of mixed parentage helped establish a representational benchmark in the European imagination of the virtues of purity and the consequences of pollution. When racial stereotypes were conflated together with middle-class notions of sexual self-control, competence, and citizenship, we can better understand why people of color, whom Europeans otherwise reviled as lazy and irresponsible, seemed, as sexual beings, to pose a direct threat to the sexuality of Europeans. The phobic anxieties of Europeans about race and race-mixing, and their resistance to extending full rights to native peoples over the long run of Western imperialism, was an integral aspect of the history of sexuality.

The most important conceptual revolution in the history of sexuality took place in the last decades of the nineteenth and the first decades of the twentieth centuries. We still live today with the consequences of the discovery of the "perversions," as a nomenclature of sexual variations and as identities that possess the power to encompass selfhood. The men who described and catalogued the varieties of sexual life were medical experts whose work coincided with one of the historic crests in the prestige and power of science. The vocabulary they used was the pathological terminology of the clinic, and though many of them were deeply sympathetic with their patients, believing penal sanction inappropriate for most of them, the discourse of pathology and norm they employed exerted a powerful influence over popular belief and usage.

Perverse behavior, obstinate and against the grain, is as old as humankind. Some of this has inevitably taken the form of sexual contrariness, but it was only at the end of the nineteenth century that such behavior came to be regarded as a "perversion" enacted by a "pervert," in other words a behavior that became a kind of natural identity, whether inherited or acquired. Part of the explanation for this development lies in the social history of modern cities, in the explosion of modern consumer culture, and the evolution of new forms of individualism. Tastes, knowledge, and pleasures previously reserved for elites were now available for more general consumption. But the invention of the perversions was not a banal classificationism run amok; it was a systematic effort to distinguish "normal" from abnormal beings and to police the boundaries of respectability.

In the medical schemata of the era, perversions were excesses or deficiencies of normal organic functions. Excessive heterosexual libido led to nymphomania in women, satyriasis in men. Sadism (named by the sexologist Richard von Krafft-Ebing after the Marquis de Sade) was an exaggeration of normal sexual aggression and dominance; masochism – pleasure taken in being dominated – was its contrary, passive expression. Deficiencies in what was believed to be the innate aim of sexual libido – to have intercourse with the opposite sex – produced attractions to inappropriate objects or bizarre actions that fell well short of full heterosexual intercourse. This list was long indeed, including all varieties of fetishism, exhibitionism, bestiality, and particularly inversion, which was the preferred term for an unnatural attraction to someone of the same sex. Inversion, which eventually came to be known as homosexuality, was the perversion that aroused the greatest concern among specialists and

the general public. It is not surprising that the pathologization of same-sex sexuality coincided with its criminalization almost everywhere in the West and, where Western science and medicine were admired, elsewhere as well.

There are two notable things about this classificational system. First is the fact that the desired norm against which all the perversions were measured was procreative heterosexual intercourse, which, as we already know, had an ancient religious and scientific genealogy. Second, the entire logic of the effort to identify and cure the perversions depended on the gender orthodoxies of Western societies. The pathologization of the perversions was to a great extent a response to a perceived crisis in gender roles and widespread fears that "normal" sexual drives were being deflected from their rightful ends. Women were taking jobs and entering the professions in increasing numbers, and some were even bold enough to demand equal rights and the vote. In the years leading up to World War I, some European statesmen were convinced that the growth of perversions had lowered birth rates and weakened their nation's defenses. Thus, sado-masochistic perversions that characterized women as whip-wielding dominatrix and men as groveling slaves were a direct inversion of the gender hierarchy. Inversion in either sex was by definition sterile, as was a fetishistic obsession with shoes, nails, bonnets, locks of hair, oysters, or any other object that deflected "normal" vaginal intromission and ejaculation. The entire family of fetishes violated the gender order by focusing on objects, or on the "wrong" sex, the love that a man and woman owed spouses and children.

We often hear more about women's than men's roles in challenging traditional gender boundaries at the turn of the century. But the decline in birth rates, the new attention given to homosexuality, the retreat of many young men into their clubs or colonial service rather than into marriage and family life provoked questions about the quality of masculinity and raised the specter of impotence. In an essay entitled "The Most Prevalent Form of Degradation in Erotic Life," written in 1912, Sigmund Freud offered the explanation that, ironically, men were often impotent with their wives and only virile with prostitutes or servants precisely because they and society had over-idealized women as wives and mothers and could not imagine them as objects of lust (Freud, 1953, vol. IV: 210–12). From this perspective, neither the woman who adhered closely to the traditional image of the "angel in the house" nor the one who challenged it could engage the sexual attentions of the conflicted men of the age!

By 1900 or so the entire range of what we still take to be "perversions" were integrated into clinical practice and came gradually into discursive use in the broader culture. The word "heterosexual" was also introduced at about this time as a deceivingly neutral description of "normal" sexual aim. Scholars have speculated that the fact of giving a name and symptomatology to a feeling or disposition that was only vaguely understood might have helped shape self-consciousness about personal identity, making people who engaged in homosexual behavior into homosexuals, lovers of pain into masochists, and so forth. No doubt the sexual scripts of the new medical discourse shaped, to some degree, actions and expectations in individuals, but scholars have persuasively argued for a complex way of thinking about how new socially-constructed identities and tastes interacted reciprocally with medical terminology. This reciprocity seems particularly clear in the case of homosexuality. The medical correspondence that the psychiatrist Richard von Krafft-Ebing had with his patients

reveals a range of reactions to the medicalization of homosexuality from outright resistance to grateful acknowledgement (see Oosterhuis, 2000).

In the course of the twentieth century, science had an even more important effect on our understanding of sexuality than at any earlier time, confirming existing prejudices in some cases, unsettling them in others. Evolutionary biologists sorted out the nature of genetic inheritance around the turn of the century and began to speculate that sexual reproduction and sexual dimorphism played important roles in organic evolution by ensuring natural variability and thus adaptability in the "higher" species. To some observers this confirmed the advantages of contemporary gender arrangements, though there was some disquieting evidence that female choice in courtship and reproduction was far greater throughout the natural world than once thought. On the "micro" level of scientific discovery, scientists in the 1920s and 1930s gradually pieced together the powerful role hormones played in human sexuality. Dubbed the "sex hormones" for their influence on sexual development and libido, estrogen and later testosterone were developed and manufactured in laboratories. As scholars of these developments have pointed out, it made no sense to gender testosterone "male" and estrogen "female" as we still do today, because they do not originate exclusively in the male or female gonads and, in any event, exist naturally in both sexes.

There is no doubt that the discovery of the complex chemical and genetic underpinnings of sexual desire and the sexual body have markedly weakened the gender orthodoxies inherited from the past by drawing our attention to the extraordinary variability in the anatomy and physiology of sex. We must also note, on the other hand, that in the late twentieth century, hormone therapy is used principally to reinforce the "typical" sexual characteristics of gender, and transsexual operations are permitted in individuals whom we believe to suffer from "gender dysphoria", where "true" gender does not correspond to anatomy.

Thus, despite some growing uncertainty about nature's plan for the human species, experts have continued to find evidence that confirms the natural distinctiveness of men and women and the advantages of heterosexual sexuality. Social scientists discovered child sexuality and "adolescence" in the first decades of the century, but their response was to treat the tumultuous uncertainty of youthful sexuality as a problem to be solved, disciplined, and turned to "healthy" ends. Schemata for "normal" childhood development permeated public health and hygiene activities and youth organizations such as scouting and church groups, putting adults on guard against aberrant behavior. Menarche was converted from a private family matter to a public and hygienic rite and was integrated smoothly into consumer culture.

Sexual radicalism nonetheless flourished in this more open atmosphere. Members of the literary avant-garde like H. G. Wells and the London Bloomsbury group formed serial heterosexual or homosexual attachments outside marriage, In America, Margaret Sanger became an international celebrity by combining feminism with an international crusade in favor of birth control, not least in order to allow women the opportunity to experience sexual relations without having to be concerned with the dangers of childbirth. Finally, following World War I, pioneers like the Englishwoman Marie Stopes and the Dutch sexologist Theodor Van de Velde wrote explicit self-help manuals on "married love" that broke with convention and offered visions of sexual fulfillment, pleasure, and orgasmic bliss for couples. Their advice surely brought many

husbands around to a greater consideration for their wives, but it also fetishized sexual happiness, male initiative, and the all-important orgasmic consummation, and thus almost certainly helped to popularize a set of erotic standards that were harder to attain than before.

The progressive eroticization of marriage signaled by these developments had two apparently contradictory inspirations: a libertarian desire to provide sexual alternatives to marital, procreative intercourse, and another which aimed to make marriage a more attractive site for the efficient state control of reproduction. There is more overlap in these positions than is generally appreciated. Throughout the West, state interest in the reproductive health of national populations encouraged public figures to consider eugenic measures that limited the birth rate in the lower orders and expanded it in the better-off classes. Birth control and sterilization thus went hand in hand with cultural and fiscal incentives for satisfactory marriages, greater hygienic accountability, and an active discouragement of non-procreative sex, especially homosexuality. The most extreme application of these various goals occurred in Nazi Germany, though some Scandinavian countries and American states had practiced the sterilization of "sex criminals" since the 1920s.

It was at this historical juncture that the sexual histories of the West and the East and parts of the southern hemisphere began to reconverge. The modernization process in China, Southeast Asia and throughout much of the colonized world appropriated some of the conceptual elements of Western efforts to regulate reproduction in the national interest. Intellectuals in Revolutionary China sought support for their campaigns to eliminate arranged marriages, promote maternal health and hygiene, and fight against prostitution and venereal disease. But they did much of this out of eugenic concerns for healthy births and national fitness, not simply from enlightened motives. By the time of the Communist Revolution, direct state intervention in reproduction became a brutal fact. Non-procreative sexuality was severely sanctioned and a one-child limit was put on family size in order to make the most efficient use of natural resources. Elsewhere in the developing world reproductive technologies was often summarily employed to regulate births or to end pregnancies when an undesired female fetus was discovered, sometimes in the name of individual rights, sometimes in direct opposition to them.

In Catholic countries with a Latin heritage or new nations on the rim of the Mediterranean, twentieth-century government intervention in the private sphere of family and sexuality has often taken the form of the enforcement of sexual honor. Honor cultures have traditionally prized the virginity of daughters and the marital chastity of wives. Women, in these cultures, live under an umbrella of protection assured by fathers, husbands, and brothers, for whom women are a source of dowry revenue or lucrative kinship alliance which had to be defended like any form of property. Where honor cultures have been historically strong, there has been a very close correlation between gender structures and what is permitted in the domain of sexuality. In the modern era, the states of Mediterranean Europe and North Africa, Spanish South America, and especially Brazil have forcefully intervened to bolster sexual honor. In Brazil, sexual crimes against virgins were harshly punished, as were adulterers, especially wives. Crimes of passion, on the other hand, where personal or family honor were at stake, were often excused in law or jury decisions. In some Arab

lands, law and custom support to this day the killing by brothers of a sister who has dishonored the family through premarital intercourse.

The last forty years of the twentieth century were witness to a series of changes in sexual beliefs and practices that have transformed modern societies in dramatic and permanent ways. But it is important to note that the new attitudes and new reproductive technologies that have marked this "sexual revolution" are simply more radical or more effective versions of earlier developments. The birth-control pill, introduced in 1960, made contraception foolproof for many women; it permitted a truly secure and decisive psychological separation of reproduction from sexual pleasure, freeing women to pursue jobs and careers and encouraging sexual experimentation. Forms of efficacious birth control have been in use since the rise of human civilizations, and sexual relations for the sake of pleasure have a long and celebrated past. The difference was that contraception, worry-free sex, and sexual pleasure were now available to anyone, not just a few elites or sexually experienced prostitutes and their clients. Even the female orgasm was freed from its inferior status. In their 1966 book, *The Human Sexual Response*, William Masters and Virginia Johnson demonstrated women's powerful, multi-orgasmic capacity in convincing physiological detail.

We may take all this for granted nowadays, but for those who came of age sexually on the cusp of that change – the late 1960s and 1970s – it was a brave new world. However, the drive for personal sexual emancipation that occurred in that era was inseparable, ideologically and practically, from liberationist movements for blacks, women, the poor, and from nationalist struggles throughout the world against the vestiges of colonialism. For white, middle-class college students in Europe and America, sympathy with these movements and the adoption of a defiantly "countercultural" sexual lifestyle was a logical application of the contemporary belief that "the personal is the political." Utopian communities featuring sexual experimentation sprang up throughout the 1970s, pornography and public nudity flourished as never before, and live-in couples increasingly put marriage and family on the back burner.

The last of the liberationist movements to burst on the scene was the revolt of sexual minorities. Gay and lesbian liberation exploded with dramatic force in the summer of 1969 at the Stonewall bar in New York City, when a routine police raid on a neighborhood bar provoked violent resistance from the gay clientele. Word spread quickly in urban gay communities throughout urban America and Europe, setting in motion gay liberation movements that were unafraid to threaten or use radical means for achieving the decriminalization of homosexuality and other meaningful legal reforms. Urbanites in cities with long-established gay communities, and the educated readers of Alfred Kinsey's influential publications on human sexuality in the late 1940s and early 1950s knew about the existence of homosexual minorities, but until the 1970s punitive legislation, police surveillance and widespread discrimination kept most gay men and lesbians on the defensive. The youthful explosiveness of the "coming out" process created generational splits in the gay community that have been slow to heal.

The shock that all this sexual rebelliousness administered to traditional, marital, heterosexual, and missionary-position sexuality was fatal. Alex Comfort's wildly popular and illustrated *The Joy of Sex* (1972) was pointedly non-judgmental about the legality, rarity, or dangers of the variety of sexualities it represented; the emphasis

was on pleasure for its own sake. But if the stranglehold of sexual orthodoxy was broken forever, the world of sexual liberation remained a very gendered place. Female militants from the political action of the 1960s and 1970s bitterly recall the macho sexual posturing of male radicals. Many of the women who have been front-line feminists have written that the sexual revolution was "for men," in the sense that it did less to emancipate women from sexual servitude than to complete their "sensualization" and "objectification" for the delectation of men. In practice, many women found that though sexual and reproductive autonomy were significant advantages, they did not erase the gender discrimination that persisted in the workplace, in the division of labor in the domestic sphere, or in the world of political action. Many feminists also found to their chagrin that prostitution, and pornography that degrades women, have prospered in the new era of relative decriminalization, not disappeared.

The deadly appearance of HIV/AIDS in the 1980s initially cut a terrible swath through gay communities throughout the world, raising the specter of a "gay" disease spread by homosexual sexual relations. Conservative and religious defenders of traditional moral norms seemed initially desperate to characterize the scourge as God's punishment for deviations from heterosexuality, but this proved to be an entirely rearguard defense. Later events proved that any sexual contact, or infected needles could spread the disease just as well. By the turn of the century, HIV/AIDS was making the greatest headway in sub-Saharan Africa among heterosexual populations. In the wake of the epidemic, sexual behavior has been slow to change. In the gay communities in the West that have been devastated by HIV/AIDS, some gay men have embraced monogamy or safe sex, but many others have maintained the sexual practices and dating patterns of the 1970s as a way of affirming what they have come to think of as constitutive of their identity as gay men.

The epidemic illustrates the extraordinary capacity that sexual deviance has always possessed as a symbol in moral panics and purity crusades against minorities or exotic sexual practices. In modern times, as Angus McLaren has pointed out, social upheavals or rapid changes of any kind are often *read* as sexual rebellions or as crises in sexuality (McLaren, 1990: 45). This was so with the fears of masturbation when adolescence emerged as a distinct new phase of childhood, with the challenges of both first and second-wave feminism, with the linking of communist subversion with [homo]sexual deviance in the 1950s, or the obsession with the innocence of children in our increasingly sexually explicit society that has led to the persecution of day-care workers and Sunday school teachers.

As a set of attitudes and practices, desires and inhibitions, we have been able to trace sexuality though the ages and across cultures. Sexual variations are as manifold as the variations in human societies, which reminds us of the truth that the past is indeed a foreign country. However we have also seen that within any society at some point in time there is a remarkable correlation between gender systems and the sexual cultures that shape the behavior and expectations of individuals who live within them. Sexual attitudes and practices frequently test the limits of the gender system, but are constrained by the cultural and legal barriers that have historically protected gender hierarchies, gendered work, and gendered spaces from the threat of rapid change. Sexual discourses have always possessed the power to persuade us of the possibilities of pleasure or the dangers of transgression, but historically they have followed a master script dictated by the gender arrangements of society.

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Chapter Two

Gender and Labor in World History

Laura Levine Frader

Men and women's relations in work as well as the nature of their work have varied enormously over time and geography. From prehistoric times to the present, labor has undergone revolutionary transformations from the early activities of hunters and gatherers designed to provide the materials necessary to basic survival, to the sophisticated work of modern industrial and post-industrial societies. But perhaps the most fundamental characteristic of human labor – one that has crossed both temporal and geographical boundaries – has been the fact that with the possible exception of the earliest human societies, it has virtually always been marked by "gender," – that is, by the social and historical meanings of sexual difference and the power relations that they have produced. Men and women have, much of the time – some might even say most of the time – performed different roles. But these differences were never inscribed from the beginnings of human life on the planet; they emerged through historical developments and cultural change. Nor have these historical developments proceeded in a linear fashion. At numerous points throughout history, gender differences many thought to be immutable were destabilized and disrupted by wars, revolutions, and economic developments such as the emergence of industrial capitalism in the nineteenth century. Sometimes gender differences in labor reasserted themselves and sometimes they took new forms, only to be challenged again. Paying attention to these differences is extremely important, for historically they almost always led to gender stratification, social inequality, and power differences in society overall.

This chapter reviews perspectives on the influence of gender on labor. It looks particularly at the ways that women's and men's work has been valued differently, and how that has led to the assignment of different kinds of work to women and men, from the earliest human societies to the present. In fact, even what "counts" as labor has differed for men and women. As feminist scholars have pointed out, in industrial and post-industrial societies, much of women's work has not been recognized as such either because it was not rewarded with a wage or because it tended to be hidden from view. Thus, the work that women have performed historically in providing food and in the care of children and the elderly has often been excluded from the

economic calculus of what counts as "work," even though it has concrete economic significance and adds economic value. Feminist scholars have broadened the notion of "work," to include women's unpaid activities.[1]

This chapter focuses on several major themes in the study of labor from a gender perspective. First, it examines the emergence of the gender division of labor as a historical process that began in the earliest human societies and continued in the ancient civilizations and empires of the Mediterranean and elsewhere. Second, it explores the significance of masculinity and femininity in the highly militarized, decentralized and feudal societies of Western Europe and Asia, where discourses about the desirability of a private role for women and a public role for men began to shape the gender division of labor. Third, it analyzes the emergence of industry and capitalism in the West and the articulation of gender divisions in an early stage of capitalist development and "protoindustrialization." Fourth, it looks at how the development of industrial capitalism reinforced earlier divisions of labor and ideas about gender-linked public and private roles. In this period, working-class men and women became progressively more distinct as a class from middle-class employers, and more economically oppressed by capitalism. But gender differences meant that men and women experienced economic oppression differently. Fifth, it discusses how resistance to economic injustice, war, revolution, and the state shaped gender relations and gender divisions of labor. Finally, it examines the theme of late-twentieth-century globalization and its implications for the gendered nature of work.

Overall, this chapter argues that as wage labor and capitalist market relations developed historically, gender divisions grew more sharply defined. Women and lower-class men, and men and women of color throughout the world, experienced the consequences of this development most acutely. But as capitalism developed over the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, this situation became more complex. Capitalist economies shifted the foundations of the gender division of labor, opening new sectors of the economy to women. Over time, however, those new opportunities appeared less advantageous and even served to create new inequalities between women and men. Gender inequalities are still with us right up to the present and show no sign of disappearing any time soon, even if they may now be less acute in more parts of the globe than at any time in history.

Here we use the term gender to include the meanings of masculinity as well as of femininity and stress the importance of culture and language as constitutive of masculinity and femininity, alongside institutions and material conditions of life in understanding how sexual difference influenced work. The concept "gender" is not universally accepted however, and carries different valences in different cultural contexts. The word "gender" does not exist in Chinese or Japanese or in African languages and even the concept is sometimes contested as a Western notion that is not meaningful in non-Western countries. As a result, scholars of Africa, Asia, and Latin America, especially in the domain of labor history, have focused far more on women and their material circumstances than on the cultural practices of masculinity and femininity and their relation to material life.[2] This chapter uses the term gender to refer to social relations that are not fixed and immutable but are inherently unstable, their meaning shifting as gender is influenced by race, cultural, and class difference as well as material relations.

Early Human Societies and the Emergence of the Gender Divisions

Scholars have debated whether male dominance or economic relations, especially capitalism, have been primarily responsible for gender divisions and for women's subordination within the gender division of labor. More recently, scholars have tended to think that culture and ideology, as well as structural factors and economic developments, were significant in explaining these phenomena. Moreover, they have discovered that gender divisions appeared long before modern capitalism came on the scene.[3] Contrary to earlier notions that men provided the bulk of the food supply by aggressively hunting big game in hunter-gatherer societies, new studies point to a more balanced division of labor. By carefully studying evidence from physical and social anthropology and archaeology (the analysis of tools, and human bone remains), scholars have concluded that the earliest humans did not live primarily on large game, but were mainly vegetarians and subsisted on vegetation gathered by either men or women. What meat they ate most often came from small animals that could be relatively easily trapped or caught by women as well as by men. Scholars believe that women played prominent roles in planting and farming in African and central European communities as long as 7,000 years ago. Even much more recently, in the Iroquois and Seneca groups of sixteenth century North America, women farmers who learned to plant seeds provided the bulk of their communities' food supply.[4] Some anthropologists have argued that in agricultural and foraging societies where women controlled production and distribution of food, women and men enjoyed relatively equal status.[5]

Yet even when early humans hunted big game, hunts were not the exclusive preserve of men. Evidence of diet, tools, and even cave paintings of early hunters, as well as evidence of Native American groups and anthropological observations of contemporary traditional societies in Africa, point to women's participation in game drives or hunting expeditions, wielding spears or stones alongside men. Among the Plains Indians of Western North America, for instance, women participated alongside men in the buffalo drives that were the mainstay of their economy, prior to substantial contact with European settlers and traders.[6] Finally, early human societies relied on cooperation between members of groups, not only in hunting large animals, but also in food gathering and fishing, and in the distribution of food.[7] Among some aboriginal groups such as the Agta Negritos of the Philippines, women hunted large game and fish alongside men, and enjoyed significant status in their community.[8] Some anthropologists argue that in many horticultural societies (but not all) the importance of women's economic production in agriculture or foraging has lent them relatively high status in the society over all.[9] Much research suggests that the earliest human groups did not always display clear-cut or consistent gender divisions and that social status within society was not necessarily linked to the performance of different tasks.

Gender divisions developed not as a product of "human nature," but evolved historically, alongside the emergence of "private property, social stratification, political subjugation, and institutionalized warfare with standing armies. . . ."[10] Archeological and anthropological evidence suggests that this process began some two million years ago roughly along the following lines.[11] First, the emergence of hunting tools and

weapons led to the development of skilled and experienced hunters, generally mature individuals. These hunters displaced the multi-age groups previously involved in hunting. Second, improved hunting techniques and larger animal kills led to the improvement of processing of hides and meat, necessitating the development of yet another range of skills and techniques also mastered by mature individuals. Thus, it is likely that the first divisions of labor occurred by age rather than by sex. These developments of course occurred slowly and differently over the globe. Hunters who felled mammoth in northern Europe and Asia used very different skills and techniques from Bushmen in Africa who pursued giraffe or antelope.[12] Third, improved animal kills and increased consumption of meat led to higher fertility and survival rates. Pregnant and nursing women became sedentary, took responsibility for the care of children and aged dependents, and did not participate in hunting. Over time, this practice became institutionalized as human groups developed stable settlements and as the products of hunts and eventually agriculture were used for exchange between groups.

Scholars who have studied the influence of gender on social status have suggested that in early human societies gender divisions by themselves did not mean that women occupied inferior and men superior status. More critical in determining status were women and men's relative abilities to control resources vital to the survival of the group. Accordingly, a woman's ability to control the production and distribution of food was responsible for the prestige and respect she commanded in Native American and other societies, allowing her to enjoy high status along with men. But even where men controlled production, they did not automatically dominate. In nineteenth-century Africa, among the Bemba of Zambia, male household heads and chiefs who held the authority to distribute food held more power and status than men who only produced food.[13]

How the emergence of a gender division of labor affected men and women in society constituted the next stage of a complex story that was played out over many thousands of years. Historians and anthropologists' observations of Native American societies in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century North America give us a glimpse into that process, which differed enormously from place to place. In North America, European contact and settlement, the appearance of new technologies, the growth of market relations and trade, as well as the development of the state and more advanced political systems, constituted the principal variables responsible for changes in gender divisions. Thus, among the Plains Indians of the West, the introduction of horses by the Spanish in the seventeenth century and the development of a market for buffalo hides in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were crucial: men's acquisition of horses allowed them to hunt buffalo more effectively than previously. Instead of participating in collective hunting, women stayed behind and learned the skills of tanning and processing the hides. As important as their work was to the economy of the tribe, women lost status in their communities in contrast to men, whose prowess in hunting and development of military skills on horseback lent their skills new value.[14] The emergence of state power and control had a similar effect on the emergence of different ranks alongside the gender division of labor. Among the Cherokee in the southeastern United States, women had enjoyed prominence as farmers and trappers prior to the appearance of white settlers. They found their status decline in the nineteenth century however, as men took up arms against white

settlers and eventually against state troops when the US government attempted to enforce land cession treaties. Although women had enjoyed a form of "citizenship" in the Cherokee nation prior to the formation of the United States, the 1827 Cherokee constitution excluded women from citizenship and recognized only males over twenty-four years of age as citizens.[15] Although these developments were specific to a particular period in the history of North America, the general pattern was repeated many times over the globe. That is, the development of complex market relations, trade, and systems of production, as well as bureaucratic states and empires, and armies, led to the emergence of more highly refined gender differences in work and gendered rankings in societies.

The Emergence of Complex Societies and Gender Divisions in the Ancient World

The emergence of private property, complex societies and economies, and the conduct of wars and military campaigns in the ancient Middle East several thousand years before the Christian era brought increased gender division and with it new forms of gender inequality. Those divisions and their consequences varied enormously over the region however, and did not lead automatically to the devaluation of women's labor in comparison to men's. The mere development of states, empires, and bureaucracies was not in itself enough to create gender divisions or inequalities based on those divisions, as the emergence of the highly developed Egyptian Empire (3100 BC–1000 BCE) illustrates. By the fourth century BCE Egypt comprised a complex system of independent city-states under the leadership of a pharaoh or king, linked by a common economy, trade, cultural practices, and belief systems. Although city-states often warred with each other and collectively fended off invaders, the Egyptians had no standing army until relatively late – 1500 BCE. Women and men in ancient Egypt enjoyed equal legal status although literate men were especially valued in government positions and appear to have held the dominant roles in the state bureaucracy. However, elite women served as queens, pharaohs, and priestesses in Old Kingdom Egypt. Non-elite women worked as artisans and farmers, alongside men, and often in family agricultural labor, in this society where evidence suggests that agriculture had developed as early as 8500 BCE. Despite the apparently high value placed on women's childbearing and child-rearing activities, they also maintained positions in the professions.[16] Although over time women's opportunities to hold public office declined, generally elites experienced the fewest gender divisions, and equality of men and women remained a formal characteristic of the legal, marriage, and inheritance systems. This is a curious feature of Egyptian society, since in later complex industrial societies, legal systems often reinforced social inequalities between men and women.

The conditions of relative gender equality in Egypt differed markedly from the norms of ancient Israel, Mesopotamia, and Western Asia in the regions of contemporary Iran and Iraq, some eight or nine hundred miles to the east of Egypt. Although women in ancient Sumer (3500–1200 BCE), a highly developed, urban and agricultural society in the Euphrates River valley, performed work similar to that of men as farmers, potters, spinners, weavers, and laborers, they usually worked under the direction of women.[17] There is also evidence that they earned lower wages than

men and that men's status increased as sedentary agriculture became more developed and men assumed responsibility for certain valued tasks such as clearing land, plowing, and planting. Although women did reign as queens and serve as priestesses, men's dominance in Sumeria increased along with the development of new bronze weaponry in the third and fourth millenia BCE, the emergence of a standing army, and the exclusion of women from the military.

The same phenomenon occurred in Assyria (1900–1000 BCE) where the emergence of private property and a vibrant trading economy led the Assyrians into numerous wars against their neighbors. Historians believe that the heavy dependence of Assyrians on trade, the importance of private property relations, and the Assyrians' war-like tendencies reinforced male domination and the repression of women. Assyrian women could not own property, could not inherit, and generally assumed a "private," rather than "public" role in society. Although less severe in its regulation of women than Assyria, Israel (1500–500 BCE) also illustrates a society in which a high value placed on private property and the need to develop strong military defense against hostile neighbors and conquerors led to gender inequality. Military expertise contributed to men's stronger position in society overall. Moreover, the division of labor in Hebrew society meant that although women farmed and contributed to the economic life of their families in numerous ways, only women without brothers could inherit and women were legally and economically subordinate to their husbands. In all these societies, even though they were not always articulated, ideas about what it meant to be a man or a woman influenced who could be a fighter and who could not; or whose role was primarily in child rearing and who could inherit property. Thus, women experienced a relative decline in status as these societies became more highly bureaucratized and more militarized in the ancient Middle East and Mediterranean.

At about the same time similar conditions appeared in Western Europe, China, and elsewhere. The simultaneous development of bronze tools – wheels and plows – improved the efficiency of agriculture, artisan production, and weaponry. Agriculture in China began to appear about 7500 BCE. As in Egypt, evidence from engravings and other sources suggests that agricultural tasks were very likely shared by men and women. But in increasingly complex economies and societies, women's sometimes equal participation with men in the economic life of kingdoms and clans did not dictate equality in other areas. Men in Chinese kingdoms of the Shang (1500 BCE–1200 BCE) and Zhou (1200–700 BCE) became important as warriors and as government administrators, clerks, and scribes within royal bureaucracies, and enjoyed high status from these positions. On the other hand, women in the (pre-Islamic) Bedouin societies of the Middle East prior to the seventh century played central economic roles as weavers and in caring for livestock. Women in some tribes could be traders, and within the Muslim Umayyad Empire that stretched from Spain to central Asia in the eighth and ninth centuries, women could be lawyers and traders as well. Over time, the practices of veiling and the seclusion of women in the home contributed to the decline of these occupational options for educated upper-class women. However, poor women and lower-class women continued to ply their trades as weavers, gardeners, and craftswomen within the confines of their homes. The same was true of lower-class women in Han China (second century BCE) where peasant families expected women to work in agriculture as well as to take care of domestic

duties. But economic contributions did not bring women social status equal to men's. Over time, urbanization, social stratification, and the growth of more complex economies and state bureaucracies led to the decline of opportunities for women. The same was true in third-century India, where in the highly stratified society of the Gupta age, for instance, the economic activities of virtually all women were exclusively tied to the home, whereas the opportunities available to men were differentiated by caste rather than gender.

What is remarkable in these examples is the similarity of the pattern of female subordination within the economy. Social and economic complexity, not time period or geographic location, were the most powerful factors influencing gender and labor. The negative effects of economic and political development and bureaucratization on women's position in the economy and society are thrown into relief by less highly stratified, less centralized societies. In the tribal societies of West Africa, where women controlled property and in which women's vital economic activities in agriculture and husbandry were recognized as crucial to survival, women tended to enjoy more status and, sometimes, more political prominence.

In the more highly militarized, expansionist societies of the Greco-Roman Mediterranean, women's labor, essential to the survival of communes and city-states, bought women farmers and domestic producers a certain amount of independence. In Greece, they practiced the fertility rites that farmers believed would bring abundant grain harvests.[18] Myths, Homer's epic poetry, and the paintings on clay vessels remind us that women spun wool and wove cloth. Moreover there is evidence that women owned substantial amounts of property and were active in business. Nonetheless, in legal and social terms, Greece was a highly patriarchal society. According to Aristotle, for example, men's alleged physical and intellectual superiority placed them at the pinnacle of manliness. The highly militarized Greek city-state of Sparta incorporated an extreme version of Aristotle's views by relegating women to childbearing and rewarding men's military service with higher social status.

Slavery complicated the gender division of labor in the ancient Mediterranean. Both the Greeks and the Romans, like the Egyptians and the Babylonians, enslaved prisoners of war and individuals sometimes became slaves in payment for debts. Slaves in Sparta, whether men or women, found themselves at the very bottom of the labor hierarchy. Although in some areas (such as Athens), slave men and women could become independent and earn income, they normally labored at the most arduous tasks in agriculture or mining. Interestingly, among slaves, gender difference in labor was less pronounced than among "free" laborers.

Evidence from ancient Rome suggests a similar picture. In this highly stratified and politically complex society, the transition from a republic to an empire did not signal major changes in gender relations, particularly at work. Although historians have been eager to recognize the occasionally powerful position of noble women, particularly as property owners and respected rulers, lower-class women did not benefit from the same status, despite their important economic contributions. The Roman economy and society, especially under the Empire, became heavily dependent upon slaves for everything from agricultural labor, crafts, and trades to childcare. Committed to imperial expansion, the Romans celebrated aggressive masculinity on the battlefield, in the Roman "circus," for entertainment, and institutionalized male power in most spheres of life. Women could not enlist in the Roman armies. Indeed,

one can see the emergence of a gender division between public and private labor. In its first century under Augustus, the Roman Republic rewarded women's reproductive labor by giving them legal rights as independent persons if they bore at least three children.[19] Even though middle-class women could own their own businesses such as dye works or brothels, as in other societies at this time, they could not occupy prestigious roles in public political life.

Historians have speculated that the Empire challenged the authority and power of fathers, allowing upper-class women to exercise some political and legal control. In 212, the Emperor Caracalla made all free men and women equal in terms of legal and economic rights. Some three hundred years later the Emperor Justinian incorporated this provision into his famous code of laws that also confirmed women's right to own property – laws that applied throughout the Byzantine Empire. But under the Christian Empire in the West, despite their recognition of the spiritual equality of men and women, and women's ability to hold offices in early Christian religious groups, Christian thinkers increasingly provided official sanction to already existing notions of the gender division of labor. Representing women as fundamentally inferior to men, the Church helped to create ideas about gender that later influenced women's position in society overall. These views were mitigated somewhat in Western Europe in the period of political decentralization that followed the collapse of the Roman Empire, but later resurfaced with the emergence of centralized monarchies and states.

Militarization, Decentralization, and Gender Divisions in Feudal Societies

Over time, the militarization of societies accentuated the gender division of labor as men's skills as warriors became increasingly valuable for defending territorial integrity or for maintaining trade routes. Correspondingly, ideas about the desirability of a public role for men and a private role for women came to influence the discourses and cultural practices shaping gender and labor in everyday life. In Western Europe and Asia, the progressive devaluation of women's work accompanied the gradual emergence of centralized, bureaucratic states. But this development took place slowly over a long period of several centuries.

In the decentralized conditions that prevailed in medieval Western Europe from the fall of the Roman Empire to the emergence of states in the thirteenth century, the feudal system revolved around ties of personal loyalty to leaders who won and sustained their leadership with armies of retainers. Such a system had for a long time been the rule on the plains of China and in the principalities of Japan. Lower-class men and women tilled the soil and plied their trades on estates, dependent on elite male warriors who could protect them from invaders. In Western Europe, early medieval writers and thinkers, like their counterparts several centuries later, accepted the thinking of Aristotle and that of the second century Roman physician Galen about women's weakness and vulnerability.[20] Combined with doctrines emanating from the Christian Church, these ideas promoted notions of gender difference and gender division that lasted for centuries.

Although there is evidence that some women in this period were able to control their personal property and that widows could conduct business, women's economic

activities were circumscribed. Even so, they were hardly idle. Women and men on the rural estates of feudal Europe farmed and performed hard manual labor alongside one another. Women took more responsibility for domestic tasks – including meal preparation, baking bread and brewing beer – than men, as well as textile production and garment making for household use. Muslim, North African, or Eastern European women slaves worked as servants in the households of rich nobles or as agricultural laborers on the estates of medieval Europe.[21] As they had done before, women raised sheep, processed the wool for weaving, and sewed the garments that clothed their families. All of this work involved the mastery of tremendous skills that later came to be devalued because they were exercised within the household. However, in spite of Christian doctrines emphasizing women's inferiority and weakness, and even where local codes or legal customs limited women's formal rights, or gave men more control over farms and estates, in practical terms women, like men, occupied the public urban social spaces that emerged in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, working as traders or artisans. At local markets and fairs that began to emerge with the growth of towns, women as well as men staffed market stalls selling beer, crafts, clothing, or agricultural goods.

In this decentralized society plagued by conflict and war, women often assumed responsibility for administering estates, if not entire territories, in the absence of men. A similar flexible division of labor also prevailed in Asia in the same period. In feudal Japan, men served in the military, but women prevailed in the household and held important positions in religion. This lasted until Japanese rulers attempted to centralize state authority and diminish the power of local feudal lords. To do so, they adopted Chinese cultural and political practices and law codes that embodied ideas about gender difference. From about the seventh century on these laws restricted Japanese women's activities. Thus, in many parts of the world before centralized states, urbanization, and high levels of social stratification appeared, women and men enjoyed relatively more equality than they would in societies where state centralization, advanced economic systems, and the emergence of sharply demarcated social classes were the rule.

Merchant Capitalism, Gender Ideology, and Protoindustrialization

From the fourteenth to the mid-eighteenth centuries, primarily in Western Europe, several new political and economic developments led to growing gender divisions and inequalities in labor. Centralized states and coherent systems of law emerged, while legal and religious discourse increasingly emphasized gender difference. After about the middle of the fourteenth century, merchant capitalists began to engage in small-scale production and trade in towns, hiring families for a wage to produce goods for the market. This system of domestic production in interaction with an urban economy became known as protoindustrialization, and proved to be crucial in allowing entrepreneurs to accumulate capital.[22]

The emergence of centralized states ruled by kings – Britain, France, and large sections of Germany, Italy, and Russia, for example – with coherent legal systems and structures, influenced gender divisions. Laws elaborated by centralizing monarchs distinguished more carefully between the rights of men and women. After about the

sixteenth century, women in most parts of Europe lost the ability to dispose freely of their property – a regulation that could have serious implications for women's abilities to run a business or ply a trade. As scholars have learned, enterprising women could apply for exemptions, but some laws, in France and Germany, for example, severely restricted the mobility of women, by making it illegal for unmarried women to migrate to cities. State authorities assumed that men, unlike women, could take care of themselves, and generally did not attempt to restrict male labor migration in this period.

At the same time, religious ideas about gender, especially articulated in Catholicism and Protestantism, more consistently shaped the gender meanings of labor in Western Europe. The ideologically and politically powerful Catholic Church continued to promulgate widely its views of women as essentially inferior to men, with primary responsibilities which lay in the home and family. But even after the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century challenged the foundations of Catholic doctrine and practice, Protestant thinkers reinforced ideas about different gender roles. They gave the family a central place in society, and recognized the father's position as representative of state and religious authority within the household. These thinkers saw men's work outside of the home as necessary to support the family and insisted on the importance of women's domestic role.[23]

During this period of European proto-industrialization from roughly the late fourteenth to the eighteenth century, both women and men labored in urban industry. Guilds, the powerful institutions that regulated access to trades, professional training (apprenticeships), and production standards, admitted women (usually the wives, daughters, and widows of guild members) and a handful of women's guilds existed. In addition to participating in production alongside men, women took responsibility for sales and accounting in medieval workshops. But gradually, beginning in the middle of the fifteenth century, merchant capitalists and protoindustrial capitalist production began to threaten guild control over craft production. In turn, gender divisions sharpened as guilds began to distinguish more carefully between highly paid skilled work reserved for men and unskilled work deemed acceptable for women, and even succeeded in getting cities to pass laws restricting women's access to certain kinds of work. When women continued to ply their trades in the home (linen weavers in Germany are a prime example), guilds devalued women's home-based production because it fell outside of the domain of guild control. The same was true of women's access to new machines – a phenomenon that appeared even more striking at later stages of capitalist development. Men claimed that new machines were too complicated for women to operate and that only skilled men should be allowed to work on them.

Even in professions where women dominated, such as midwifery, the period between 1400 and 1750 saw some important changes. The development of a nascent medical profession dominated by men meant that gradually men edged women out of the important work assisting at childbirth that they had practiced for centuries.[24] The same process occurred in North America, where male doctors began to compete with midwives at the very end of the eighteenth century. In a similar fashion, any activity performed in the home for the family – from caring for children and cooking to making soap and sewing clothes – gradually fell under the rubric "housewifery." It ceased to be known as "production," and became part of what observers

considered as "social reproduction" – those activities designed to sustain and reproduce life.[25] In this period as well, class differences emerged more visibly than ever, overlapping with gender differences, and accentuated beliefs about the virtues of private versus public labor for women. As middle-class merchant capitalists prospered, whether in Europe or in North America, their wives withdrew from productive work and increasingly hired lower-class women as servants, allowing middle-class women the leisure to beautify their homes or engage in charitable activities rather than produce income. Gender discourses celebrating the ideal of the woman at home contributed to the devaluation of working women's productive labor.

Even in rural areas, merchant capitalism and protoindustrialization played upon gender divisions. Goods produced for the market, rather than for domestic consumption, relied on new tools and methods of crop selection and rotation, which in turn increased the crop's value. Although for generations both men and women used small sickles to cut crops, the appearance of large scythes permitted more efficient harvesting of crops and gendered work. Men used the scythe and women used the sickle, which demanded less strength; additionally, new labor-intensive root vegetables – beets and turnips – became the responsibility of women, as did the cultivation of those plants that were used in cloth production such as hemp and flax.[26] Women took responsibility for dairy production and sold milk, eggs, butter, and cheese in local markets. From small local markets to large urban markets, women staffed stalls and sold jewelry and goods they had acquired by trade as well as the products of their own agricultural labors. Rural women spun and men wove, enabling both to supplement their farm income.

Between roughly 1400 and 1750, the evolution of merchant capitalism and protoindustrial production in concert with new technologies, tools, and crops, and new ideologies praising women's domestic non-productive labor (but devaluing their productive domestic labor) had increasingly negative consequences for women. The resulting sharpening of gender divisions of skill by definition assured that when women worked for wages, they performed less skilled work and earned less than men. The mutually reinforcing effects of these new economic systems, ideology, and the emergence of centralized states and bodies of law continued to shape gender divisions and gender inequalities in labor for centuries to come.

Although most of these developments were limited in geographical scope to Europe, gender divisions also emerged more visibly in other areas of the world, which came into contact with the merchant capitalists and adventurers of Western Europe in the period between roughly 1350 and 1750. When the first European explorers came to the city-states of Central America in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, for example, they encountered tremendously sophisticated and complex societies and economies, where men mined and worked gold into ornaments and where women wove cloth. In the rural areas of the Aztec and Inca empires and in African tribal communities, men and women farmed together, as they had for centuries. Gender divisions appeared less clearly demarcated in agricultural work than in urban craft and artisan production, which were the first to enter into the nexus of merchant capital, just as in Europe.

In many parts of the world, religion also constituted a powerful influence on the gender dynamics of labor, especially in Africa and the Middle East where Islam continued to spread. Orthodox Islam demanded seclusion for women and social

segregation from men, and could therefore severely limit women's work. But in some areas such as the Songhay Empire of West Africa in the fifteenth century, women freely circulated publicly without the veil in the presence of men in the markets and on the streets. Moreover, the Islamic toleration of polygamy facilitated the development of a family labor system in agriculture where a farmer's multiple wives could provide a source of free labor.[27] Finally, Islamic societies in Africa and elsewhere at least up to the nineteenth century often relied on slave labor. Although slavery existed in Africa before Islam and before European traders like the Spanish and the Portuguese began actively trading in slaves in the fifteenth century, it expanded along with Islam. The first slaves in Africa were men and women captured by other Africans as a result of wars and raids, but even here gender divisions prevailed: women constituted the majority of slaves. Women and child slaves performed domestic labor; men on the other hand, served in the army and occasionally as government officials.[28] Europeans' enslavement of African men and women to work as servants or agricultural laborers continued with the Crusades and later when the Spanish and Portuguese drove the Muslims from, and re-Christianized, the Iberian Peninsula in the fifteenth century. African slaves appeared in European cities during the Renaissance where in the city of Florence, for example, they were put to work as domestic servants (women) and as heavy laborers (men).

Africans were not the only groups who were enslaved. In medieval Europe, Slavic peoples (from whom the word "slave" comes) also labored as slaves on the manors of the European nobility. Slave status complicated the meanings of gender in labor: slave women were not subject to the norms of upper-class female behavior in the Middle Ages that were idealized in the songs of the troubadours or in the behavior of the wives of wealthy merchants. Contemporaries assumed that, unlike Western Europeans, they could be subject to a harsh regime of unrelenting work. The same was true of enslaved men who, like lower-class men, were clearly demarcated from "gentlemen." In practical terms this meant that gender differences at work appeared less profound than among free laborers or even serfs. From roughly 1550 to 1850 African slaves were traded in the "New World," where perceptions of "race" as well as one's status as slave or free overlapped with gender in shaping the division of labor.

Over time, with the development of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century empires, racial difference took on increasing importance as the foundation for labor systems. Africans who labored on the tobacco and eventually the cotton plantations in the southern American colonies provide one of the best examples of how race, class, and gender came together to shape the experience of men and women at work. Although African slave women (and their African-American descendents) may have performed more domestic labor than men, both men and women performed backbreaking fieldwork, just as women had in Africa centuries earlier. Gender did not necessarily differentiate agricultural workers picking cotton or harvesting tobacco, even though men and women may have worked in same-sex teams. However, perceptions of racial difference made class and gender identities more complex: not only were African-American female slaves not held to the norms of femininity to which plantation mistresses aspired, but they were sometimes not even considered "women" in legal terms. Their slave status took precedence over "womanhood." Even after slavery was abolished in the United States, African-American women were ejected from the "ladies' cars" on railways at the end of the nineteenth century on the grounds that

no African-American female could rightly be considered a "lady." The same insults were perpetrated against African-American men who were forced out of first-class railway carriages on the grounds of gender, race, and class incompatibility.[29] These forms of racial difference and racial injustice tended to be profound in the context of racialized labor systems such as those on the cotton and tobacco plantations of the southern United States from the sixteenth through the mid-nineteenth centuries.

Racial and gender divisions of labor also intersected in colonial regimes, where in India, Africa, and Indonesia, colonized men and women of color worked as servants, cooks, and housekeepers in the homes of colonial officials and administrators.[30] These systems persisted long after European countries abolished the slave trade and as scholars have shown, their effects continue to be apparent even in contemporary liberal democracies that claim to have abolished racial segregation in labor markets.[31]

Industrial Capitalism, Public and Private Labor, and Proletarianization

The development of industrial capitalism over the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had a major impact on the gender relations of labor and accentuated gender inequalities. Whereas protoindustrial production had relied on domestic labor, the hallmark of industrial capitalism was the increasing movement of production outside of the home into the factory. Now, a powerful new economic system, strong nation states, sophisticated legal systems, and ideology combined to influence the course of economic development and its consequences for gender. Beginning in England in the second half of the eighteenth century industrial capitalism spread quickly, to France, Germany, Russia, Japan, and North America. In the same period that Europe industrialized, protoindustrial economies continued to flourish in China, the Ottoman Empire, Latin America, the Caribbean, the Middle East, and sub-Saharan Africa. Some of these areas would not begin to experience major industrial development until later, but all were connected to the development of European and North American industrial capitalism through global trade networks. Cotton from Britain's North American and Indian colonies and from its Egyptian protectorate, for example, provided the raw materials and markets for Britain's pioneering textile industry. France's colonial possessions in North Africa and eventually in Indochina served similar functions. Production that had formerly taken place in proto-industrial workshops gradually gave way to the employment of men, women, and children in factories where employers could more effectively regulate the labor of both sexes. In Britain, young women and children flocked to factories in Leeds, Manchester, and Stockport, as well as to other towns of the industrial northwest. Employers thought that women and children made highly desirable machine tenders, since this kind of work required no particular skills or training. In Japan, where women made important and valued contributions to the household economy prior to the appearance of industrial capitalism, rapid industrialization in the 1870s and 1880s brought thousands of women into textile factories in part thanks to state encouragement during the Meiji period.[32]

Gender divisions that were relatively flexible under the family labor systems of protoindustrial capitalism became more rigidly defined under industrial capitalist conditions as employers sought greater efficiency in task specialization, and as

mechanization increased. Thus, women in textile production in Britain, France, Germany, and Japan tended spinning machines. It was extremely rare for women to work in supervisory positions anywhere, for this was considered men's work. All over the world, gender divisions of labor prevailed. In Argentina for example, men found jobs in railway building and in cattle ranching, whereas women made up almost 80 percent of the textile and clothing workers just before World War I. As industrial capitalism advanced, these divisions sometimes shifted in response to the introduction of new technology. In late-nineteenth-century Britain for instance, the introduction of more advanced knitting machinery displaced women frame-knitters, as men claimed "ownership" of the new machines. Ideas about the masculinity of skilled working men played an important role in the attempt to gender machines. Thus in the US printing industry at the end of the nineteenth century, men argued that only men had the skills necessary to work on the new linotype machines, and displaced women typesetters. In the textile industry of Colombia, employers increasingly hired men to tend automatic looms, even though women had tended looms up to the 1930s. Thus, ironically, while mechanization removed the need for brute force or muscular strength usually associated with work defined as "male," in many cases the introduction of new machines accentuated the division of labor.[33]

More than any previous set of economic arrangements, industrial capitalism not only rigidified gender divisions, but also crystallized gender inequalities. Factory women notoriously experienced sexual harassment at the hands of male employers, overseers, and co-workers. Gender inequality also appeared in women's low wages, illustrating vividly how gender shaped patterns of proletarianization, the process by which workers lost autonomy and became unskilled. Beliefs about masculinity and femininity played a powerful role in this process.

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, gender ideology, emphasizing and idealizing a domestic, familial role for women, developed and expanded, accentuating the structural effects of labor differentiation. Moreover, the "discourse of domesticity" for women became surprisingly widespread geographically, visible in Western Europe and the United States, Asia, and Latin America. Even though this discourse was discrepant with the actual labor-force participation of women – in often very "unfeminine" jobs in mining and industry – it had tremendous power to shape the everyday reality of work. Indeed, the power of this discourse illustrates how proletarianization as a stage in working-class formation occurred differently for women than for men. Because employers and male workers believed that women really belonged in the private domain of the home rather than in the labor force, and because skilled male workers wished to preserve their own privileged position, they excluded women from the training and education that could have enabled them to obtain highly paid skilled jobs. Some male workers, supported by middle-class advocates of a domestic role for women, especially in Western Europe, argued for a family wage that would enable men to earn enough to support their unwaged wives and children. In part, this kind of claim resulted from the threats industrial capitalist relations posed to male workers. In a classic example, the skills of male handloom weavers in early-nineteenth-century Britain were displaced by the power loom – a machine that had a mechanical advantage of seven to one when it was first introduced in British textile factories. Thousands of male weavers faced unemployment, their identities as skilled working men threatened. The combined effect of ideology and new

technologies meant that employers, eager to cut costs, took advantage of untrained and unskilled women and children of both sexes to tend the new machines and paid them less than half of what adult men earned.

The practice of paying women and children significantly less than men – sometimes for the same work – was repeated endlessly all over the globe, from Latin America to Asia, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In Osaka, Japan, just as in Manchester, England, women earned about half the male wage in textile factories. In areas of the world as distant as Japan in the 1880s, the United States in the early-nineteenth-century, and the Cevennes mountains in early-twentieth-century France, employers built dormitories to house, feed, and supervise women workers (but not men), believing that women needed special protection. But the factory was not the only site of labor under industrial capitalism.

Within individual countries, industrialization occurred unevenly – so much so, that many historians reject the term "industrial revolution" as inaccurate. Although some historians have emphasized the separation of home and work in industrialization, this emphasis has been misplaced. Alongside the emergence of factories, domestic production persisted and in some cases fed and facilitated industrial development. This unevenness sometimes rested on an already established gender division of labor and may have influenced the shape of gender inequalities. In late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Ireland, for example, women's labor spinning linen thread in their country cottages allowed the Irish linen industry to expand and to remain competitive internationally. The very profitability of women's cheap labor to protoindustrial manufacturers encouraged the persistence of gender inequality. In a similar fashion, the daughters of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century linen weavers in the Choletais region of Western France took low-paid jobs in nearby industrial towns. Their industrial labor permitted their fathers to continue to ply their trade as rural handloom weavers, in the face of competition from industrial textile producers.[34] All across Europe, Asia, and the Americas industrial homework persisted into the twentieth century, with gender and sometimes age-based divisions of labor. Women sewed shirts, bound shoes, or made artificial flowers at home; and Persian (and later Iranian) boys and girls wove and knotted carpets on small looms (their small fingers were prized for such work). Immigrant Russian Jewish men sewed suits in the garment districts of New York and Paris around the turn of the twentieth century, tailoring having been defined as a male occupation.[35] These types of home-based production (often referred to as industrial homework) have persisted into the twenty-first century in locations as diverse as the United States, Western Europe, Finland, Indonesia, Thailand, India, Iran, Brazil, and Mexico. Although women tend to make up the vast majority of home workers, men are also found sewing and weaving at home.[36]

Whereas in earlier societies, states and state institutions and structures such as the military strongly shaped the patterns of gender and labor, under capitalist society in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, economic structures and institutions took a more prominent role in shaping these relationships. The State was far from absent, however and in nineteenth-century Western Europe the State became an economic regulator, especially of women and children's labor. Thus, although in Western Europe the early stages of industrialization saw women and children working deep in mines hauling coal to the surface, protective labor legislation in the period 1842–78 eventually limited their work to sorting at the pit face. Reformers who

pioneered the first protective labor legislation in countries like England, France, Germany, and the US, ironically reinforced gender divisions. In debates over the reduction of women's working hours and bans on women's night work, reformers argued that women's weaker constitutions and their reproductive systems meant that their health needed to be more carefully protected and monitored than men's. By defining women as a separate category of worker needing special protection from the state however, reformers perpetuated already well-established gender discourses.[37]

Alongside industrial labor, whether performed in the factory or at home, domestic service increased enormously in the nineteenth century as a result of the new wealth engendered by industrial capitalism. Leisured middle-class women, especially in North America and Western Europe, sustained their leisure and their class status through the employment of working-class women who cooked, cleaned, and waited on them. In the nineteenth-century United States, for example, Irish and other immigrant women worked as servants in the homes of wealthy New England entrepreneurs. In the American South before the Civil War, African-American men and women slaves toiled as servants, cooks, and butlers in the grand residences of the southern planter aristocracy. By the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries in the United States, race exerted a powerful influence on gender at work: African-American women made up the largest proportion of domestic workers. The overwhelming predominance of African-American women in domestic service eventually changed with the immigration and migration of different ethnic groups: Latin American and Hispanic women gradually entered the ranks of domestic workers during the course of the twentieth century. In other parts of the world as well, racial difference overlapped with gender in shaping the conditions of proletarianization. Within the European colonial empires that expanded in the nineteenth century, the vast majority of domestic servants were colonial people of color, who, according to the unspoken rules of colonial domination, were even worse off than their white European counterparts.[38] Moreover, as colonial subjects migrated back to Europe in the twentieth century, racialized gender divisions of labor prevailed. In Britain, for example, former colonial subjects such as Indian women toiled as cleaners and cooks, just as Indonesians performed this kind of work in the late-twentieth-century Netherlands. Although men also entered domestic service, the numbers of women were (and still are) far greater. In North America and in Western Europe, women of color are still overwhelmingly assigned to domestic and low paid social-reproductive labor and are disproportionately represented among the ranks of house cleaners, childminders, and janitorial staff of most universities and public and private offices.[39] In Latin America, some women escape rural impoverishment by traveling to cities to work as maids in the homes of both middle-class and working-class families, for the cost of a maid is far less than the cost of childcare and electricity for washing machines. These low-paid jobs have also enabled middle-class (often white) women to take jobs in other domains of the service sector and the professions.

To be sure, capitalism offered new forms of labor, engendering the growth of new service occupations – clerical, secretarial, and sales work necessary to sustain a high level of capitalist development – that shifted the grounds of gender divisions. Over the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, schools, hospitals, and more elaborate governmental structures in modernizing capitalist societies provided

additional, expanding opportunities for both men and women. However, almost from the very beginning, these developments produced consequences for women and men not wholly dissimilar to those experienced in industrial work. The growth of the service sector showed how gender divisions moved to a new level. In Western Europe and the United States, entire fields of service work became feminized: clerical and secretarial work that had formerly been "men's work" became "women's work" in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The expansion of obligatory primary schooling in the 1870s and 1880s meant higher literacy rates for women and proved critical in creating a supply of women office workers to staff growing government and private sector bureaucracies, as well as women teachers. The introduction of the typewriter and the adding machine combined with beliefs about women's allegedly "nimble fingers" to justify the employment of women around the world in secretarial and clerical work. In the late twentieth century the same beliefs would encourage the employment of women in the semiconductor and computer industries around the world. Beginning around the middle of the nineteenth century, as hospitals expanded, the feminization of nursing occurred. Middle-class women now trained as nurses and joined the ranks of primary school teachers. In both cases, cultural discourses that promoted women's allegedly "natural" caring, nurturing, and mothering functions provided the justification for guiding women into nursing and teaching and encouraged employers to hire them. The feminization of these professions at first meant better working conditions for women and a jump in status from dirty and dangerous factory jobs. However, the gender relations of these professions proved otherwise. The very "natural" feminine and domestic qualities that observers insisted made women good nurses and schoolteachers justified paying them less; the first nurses cooked and cleaned as part of their hospital duties and their status was unquestionably lower than that of the highly trained and paid male doctors with and for whom they worked.

Resistance, War, and Revolution, and the State

Resistance to the injustices of industrial capitalism and to gender inequalities throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries constituted an unprecedented feature of the world of labor. Although workers had protested against the introduction of new machines and even fought for higher wages in the eighteenth century, new ideologies and new forms of organization in subsequent centuries made it possible for workers to mount more effective resistance. Here too, gender shaped the terms of struggle. Women participated actively in industrial and agricultural strikes in Western Europe, Russia, Japan, and Latin America throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[40] However, although the socialist thinkers and labor leaders who inspired workers to revolt against exploitation supported equality and justice for all workers, it quickly became clear that the universal "worker" to whom they appealed was most often male. Despite women's growing presence in the labor force and in labor protests, male workers systematically excluded them from unions and regularly refused to defend their right to work. There were of course, exceptions to this general pattern. In some twentieth-century trade unions women dominated in the labor movement and were more successful at defending their goals in such "feminine" occupations as textiles.[41]

Historians have debated the effect of twentieth-century wars and revolutions on the division of labor and on gender equality. Most agree that war and revolutionary movements did not substantially alter gender divisions and inequalities; some have even argued that war generated new divisions and inequalities. Although World War I required hiring large numbers of white women workers in jobs previously gendered male in Europe and America, such as armaments manufacture and metal-working, employers rationalized jobs by breaking down work into its smallest component parts. Their beliefs about women's nimble fingers and their ability to withstand routine, monotonous work led them to hire women for simplified tasks in metal-working in Britain and France, for instance. Employers resisted training women for more complex jobs on the assumption that they were incapable of doing the work.[42] Even where women performed jobs such as working as streetcar conductors or loading shell and manufacturing weapons, employers, male workers and their unions assumed that women's presence on jobs formerly defined as "male" was temporary and that women would leave these jobs once men returned from the war.[43] In many cases this occurred. In addition, new forms of gender division emerged. When employers used methods of rationalization to "modernize" the industrial workplace and increase outputs in the 1920s and 1930s, women tended to work overwhelmingly in newly created unskilled jobs.

As in earlier centuries, the State proved to be an important arbiter of gender division and gender equality, but in new ways. In socialist countries, gender divisions were somewhat masked by state supports for women's employment. The Soviet Union's need for labor following the Russian Revolution of 1917 was so acute that women were heavily recruited into the labor force, often performing the same work as unskilled men; women entered the professions (especially medicine) at a fairly high rate as well. Communist leaders celebrated women's labor as a contribution to building the new Soviet economy. The same occurred in China, where the during the Chinese Revolution of the 1920s, Communists promoted women's labor as teachers, industrial workers, and agricultural laborers. In the Eastern European socialist states that emerged after World War II, state support for women's employment and state-sponsored childcare likewise helped to promote women's participation in the labor force and decreased gender divisions of labor.

Similar developments could be seen as a result of nationalist movements in non-communist countries from the 1920s on. Women in Egypt (some of whom renounced the veil) and India entered the professions in the 1920s and women's employment in textiles became crucial to the success of Gandhi's nationalist movement. The same could be seen in many of the African nationalist movements of the post World War II period. Overall, women's increasing educational levels and hence increasing access to the professions constituted a decidedly positive development over the course of the twentieth century in both capitalist and socialist states. But these twentieth-century changes underscored the deep class and race differences that continued to reign and intersect with persistent gender inequalities.

Labor in Late Capitalism

Some of the developments noted earlier – the institutional and ideological components of gender inequality in labor – have persisted and even increased in late

capitalism, under the impact of the globalization of industrial production and markets. This has been particularly apparent in the industrializing economies of the Pacific Rim of Southeast Asia, and of the Caribbean, which rely on the cheap labor of women and children. What is new to the late-twentieth and early-twentieth-first century is the establishment of "free trade zones" or "export processing zones."[44] In these zones of capitalist production for export, states give multinational corporations tax exemptions, buildings, the promise of an available labor force, and often exemption from local labor laws. Typically, women work in garment production, textile factories, and the electronics industry in locations as diverse as the sweatshops of Malaysia and the *maquiladoras* of Mexico, where employers and the state harbor the same gendered views of men's and women's abilities. Women, especially, are seen as desirable workers for their dexterity, alleged ability to withstand monotonous, routinized work, and their supposed passivity. Young women in these industries earn wages that are ten to twenty percent lower than male wages in these sectors.[45] Women are also subject to sexual exploitation on the job to a far greater extent than in Western industrialized countries, due to the absence of state controls and labor legislation. In some cases women's wages are so low that they turn to prostitution to earn extra income. Some scholars have seen the toleration of prostitution within free trade zones as a mechanism to control the male labor force.[46]

In other settings, desperately poor rural women turn to the sex trade as a full-time means of earning income. The development of a thriving sex trade in Thailand involving the recruitment of Burmese women and girls, for example, has been seen as a product of uneven economic development and the financial woes of both countries. Although prostitution is indeed one of the oldest occupations, the commercialization and commodification of sex to an unprecedented extent is one of the new forms the gender division of labor had taken by the end of the twentieth century.[47] In these cases, under late capitalism, complex states acting in concert with capital have either been facilitators or complicit in maintaining gender inequality exploitation, and this helps to explain the tenacity of gender divisions and inequalities in developing economies. Finally, the effects of global labor markets are seen in the service sector as well, where the migration of women from Latin America, Haiti, and the Phillipines to the United States has produced a steady labor force for domestic service and nursing.[48]

Although scholars have devoted much attention to the effects of globalization of industrial production on the reproduction of gender inequalities in labor, even in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, much of the world's labor has been performed not in cities or in factories and offices, but on the land, in farming. Although, overall, increasing gender divisions of labor have been characteristic of industrial capitalism and the development of intensive, market-oriented or capitalist agriculture, gender divisions have not occurred everywhere, and when they have occurred, they have not automatically resulted in increased status for men and decreased status for women. In the north of Portugal for example, men migrate to find jobs in urban areas, and women perform most of the agricultural labor. They take much of the responsibility for the family farm, and inherit property equally with men, often bringing considerable property into their marriages. On Irish farms in the late twentieth century, where less of a gender division of labor developed, women and men shared the burdens of agricultural labor, decision-making, and

management.[49] Likewise, women in China continue to till the soil side by side with men in rural villages, where subsistence agriculture is still the rule. But there are two important caveats to this picture. First, in Africa, economists have observed that although women perform enormous amounts of agricultural labor for their families, far more men tend to work in commercial agriculture, or migrate to cities. One scholar has estimated that "African women provide three quarters of the labor required to produce food for the continent."[50] Despite this labor, however, rural African women are frequently not the recipients of development funds, which more often go to men in the commercial sector. This point leads to the second: although women have provided enormous labor in household and rural economies, it is not clear that the distribution of economic rewards within the household has either been equal or reflected the real extent of their labor. Important differences between men's and women's participation in commercial agriculture and wage earning have reproduced rather than flattened gender differences into the twenty-first century.

Despite the fact that state policies have often facilitated the persistence of striking gender inequalities in labor, it is undeniable that under late capitalism, the interventions of states and supranational bodies have also erased inequalities. Under pressure from human rights organizations, NGOs, and trade unions, some nations have responded. This has been particularly apparent in the equal pay and affirmative action labor legislation of the United States, and the gender equality labor legislation of individual European countries. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, the International Labour Organisation has sought to eliminate gender discrimination in work all over the world. More recently, the European Union has adopted gender equity legislation that has been applied in the member states and offers considerable promise of erasing some of the worst inequalities. On the other hand, the adoption of legislation does not mean enforcement. South Africa has probably the most gender-equal constitution of any nation, but enforcement of the law to ensure women's rights has been slow in coming.

Conclusion

Over the centuries, cultural perceptions of sex difference have been critical in shaping the experience of virtually all forms of labor. Indeed, striking continuities in gender divisions and gender inequalities have developed in extremely diverse parts of the world. Although both women and men have performed economic roles crucial to the survival of their families, communities, and states, men's access to certain forms of labor has been privileged and protected; women's opportunities have been far more circumscribed. Even when men and women have labored at the same work, employers have valued women's labor less than men's. How do historians explain the persistence of these divisions? The growing complexity and bureaucratization of societies, the emergence of centralized states, and the appearance of capitalist production together constituted the major structural factors that account for the historical development and persistence of the gender division of labor and gender inequality. Structural complexity by itself however, does not explain all. Gender discourses, religion, and the law as well as overlapping ideas about race and class all have played important roles in accounting for the articulation and rationalization of these divisions and their persistence from at least the sixteenth century. There have been

enormous variations geographically in precisely how these factors have affected gender difference and inequality. However, the remarkable consistency of gender's operation in different locations owes much to the ways gender has developed historically both as a product of and in the perpetuation of relations of power in the world of laboring women and men.

NOTES

1 Wiesner-Hanks (2001), 56.
2 Scott (1999).
3 Hartmann (1976); (1979).
4 Jensen (1994); Brown (1975).
5 Brettel and Sargent (2000), 250; Estioko-Griffin and Griffin (2000).
6 Klein (1983).
7 Leacock (1975); Goodale (1971).
8 Estioko-Griffin and Griffin (2000).
9 Brettel and Sargent (2000), 251.
10 Leacock (1987).
11 Liebowitz (1983).
12 Ibid.
13 Leacock (1987), 33.
14 Klein (1983).
15 Perdue (1994).
16 Lesko (1998).
17 Ibid., 28.
18 Katz (1998).
19 McNamara (1998), 83.
20 Bitel (1998), 108.
21 Stuard (1995).
22 Mendels (1972).
23 Wiesner-Hanks (1993).
24 Quataert (1985).
25 Wiesner-Hanks (1998), 226.
26 Ibid., 213.
27 *Cambridge History of Africa* (1975–86).
28 Manning (1990), 115.
29 Higginbotham (1992).
30 Gouda (1995); Stoler (1991).
31 Glenn (1992).
32 Cole and Tominaga (1976), 60.
33 Rose (1992); Baron (1989) and (1991); Farnsworth-Alvear (2000).
34 Gray (1996); Liu (1994).
35 Coffin (1996); Nancy Green (1984) and (1997); Boris and Prügl (1996); Boris (1994).
36 Boris and Prügl (1996); Prügl (1999).
37 Rose (1995); Zancarini-Fournel (1995); Stewart (1989); Canning (1996).
38 Gouda (1995); Stoler (1991).
39 Glenn (1992).
40 Tilly (1981); Frader (1991); Canning (1996); Farnsworth-Alvear (2000); French and James (1997).

41 Canning (1996).
42 Downs (1995).
43 Braibon (1981); Thébaud (1986); Grayzel (1999).
44 Stearns (1998), 177–205; Enloe (1990); Ong (1991).
45 Bradshaw and Wallace (1996), 105; Bello and Rosenfeld (1990), 260; O'Connor (1987).
46 Enloe (1990), 140ff.
47 Human Rights Watch (1993).
48 Chang (2000); Sasson (1998).
49 Brettel and Sargent (2000), 252.
50 Lele (1991), cited in Bradshaw and Wallace (1996), 65.

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Chapter Three

Structures and Meanings in a Gendered Family History

Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks

What is a family? Anyone familiar with current political and social debates in many parts of the world knows that this is an extremely controversial question. States and cities in the United States are debating whether two men or two women should be allowed to form a family in the same way that a man and a woman can; countries worried about over-population are conducting advertising campaigns trying to convince people that a couple with one child is as much a family as a couple with many; grandparents are asserting that they have rights to visit their grandchildren despite the wishes of parents because the family extends beyond the parent–child relationship; rights over children and property formerly gained only through marriage are now being claimed by those who have not been married (or cannot marry).

As can be seen from just this brief list, the most controversial issues regarding contemporary family life are intimately related to gender and sexual relations (and a common product of those relations – children). Thus one might expect that the history of the family would be cognizant of gender as a category of analysis, particularly because it began as a field of historical inquiry at about the same time that women's history did, in the early 1970s. To some degree it has, in that in contrast to many other historical fields, family history could not focus on men alone, but had to study them in relationships that either involved women or at least implied their existence. Even in studies of father–son relations one knows that there is a mother there somewhere, in contrast to traditional intellectual, political, or military history in which men emerge, come to power, pass on their skills and ideas, and eventually die in a seemingly (or sometimes actually) female-free environment. For example, few biographies of the French thinker Jean Jacques Rousseau mention that he had several children out of wedlock and put them all up for adoption, and, until the last several decades, no studies questioned how his domestic arrangements might have shaped his ideas.

Recognizing that throughout history people have played specific roles within families depending on their gender is not exactly the same as problematizing and analyzing gender, however. Perhaps because the gender of the subjects in much family history is clear from the outset, it has seemed unnecessary or even tautological to

highlight this; why spend precious space and time noting, for example, that mothers are women? Thus family history has been more explicit in investigating how race, social class, location, ethnicity, religion, fertility levels, and other factors create differences in the structures, forms, and meanings of family life, and how the family in turn shapes these factors, than it has in analyzing gender.

A downplaying of gender analysis may seem to be a shortcoming in family history, but it has also been a necessary tactic. As noted above, women's and family history began as fields at the same time (the *Journal of Family History* began publication in 1974 and *Signs* in 1975), and many more traditional historians regarded them as the same thing. In their minds, only women had families, and only within the family context were women's activities or roles important enough to warrant attention. Not only was the story of Rousseau (or any other great man) to be told without noting whether he was married or had children, but this was to be the first thing one needed to know about any woman, including Queen Elizabeth I or Susan B. Anthony. Thus both women's and family historians felt it necessary to assert that their research trajectories were different (a battle not yet won), that though their interests often overlapped, they were not identical. Family historians highlighted class, location, and race, and conversely women's historians focused on the activities of women outside the family, as workers, social activists, scholars, and leaders.

The assertion of a distinction between women's and family history is made difficult not only by the millennia-long tradition in which neither was part of "history" and their simultaneous emergence as part of historical analysis, but also by the fact that for most cultures in most periods, women's experience *has* been more closely linked than men's to family life. There are exceptions, but the vast majority of human cultures, particularly those that had written records, viewed women more in terms of their familial relationships than they did men, a view expressed in law codes, religious prescriptions, taboos, political conceptualizations, and social norms. Those relationships were not necessarily private, as we would understand that term, and the women themselves may have weighted aspects of their identity differently. Yet even in cultures in which men were also viewed primarily as part of a family group (and there are many, particularly in the pre-modern world), a woman's relation to her families, birth and marital, defined her place in that culture more than did a man's. In addition, factors relating to the family that shaped male experience were often defined primarily as relating to something else; thus a man's inheritance of a name or property was viewed as a marker of class status, not family relationships.

Women's history and family history are now more than thirty years old, so perhaps the assertion of difference can be made less forcefully, particularly given the ways each intersects with the somewhat younger field of gender history. It is clear (actually, as with so much in both women's and family history, it is self-evident) that both men and women of the past had families (however they were defined), and that their experiences as members of families shaped other aspects of their lives. It is also clear that experiences within the family group differed for boys and girls, men and women. Children learned (and continue to learn) what it means to be male or female first from the older people in their families, and their first experiences with gender differences were usually within the family. Because the family was the earliest form of social organization, and the first social organization children encountered, the lessons learned about gender within the family have been the most difficult for both sexes

to change. Gender also shaped the consequences of breaking with the accepted pattern of family life, consequences which might include social ostracism, outlawry, psychiatric counseling, imprisonment, or death.

Because of the many ways gender and the family intersect, this chapter will touch on issues that are considered in other thematic chapters in this book – those on religion, law, politics – and in all of the chronological chapters. It will examine this intersection for five specific issues: the sources of family history; the structure and function of the family; family formation and dissolution; relations within the family; and the family's relations with larger institutions.

Sources for a Gendered Family History

Family history began during a period in which historians were using computers to handle large amounts of quantitative data for the first time, and much early family history involved quantifiable sources and quantitative methods. Typical of this early work was that produced by the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure, founded by Peter Laslett and E. A. Wrigley, which explored demographic issues and other types of population trends. These studies were often based on intensive analysis of all of the available records of a single village, reconstructing the history of families by tracing individuals from birth through marriage and remarriage to death. Studies of single villages or small areas were combined with other studies to arrive at aggregate data, or their statistics extrapolated to a larger area to posit regional or even national patterns. This type of family history is thus portrayed in charts and graphs of quantitative measures such as average age at marriage, average number and frequency of children, rates of remarriage for widows and widowers, inheritance patterns, rates of divorce, and so on. Because family life usually involved producing and preparing the next generation, these measures are also linked to general demographic measures such as birth and death rates, population growth and decline, fertility rates, and life expectancy.

Quantitative family history generally differentiates between men and women, and the statistics it has produced make gender differences in the rhythms and patterns of family life very clear. Age at first marriage was often quite different for men and women, as was life expectancy, rate of remarriage after widowhood or divorce, and amount of inheritance; polygamy was much more likely to involve men with multiple wives than women with multiple husbands; kin networks involving the father's family (agnatic kin) were generally more important than those involving the mother's (morganatic kin); inheritance may have been divided among children, but if one child inherited, it was almost always a son; in some cultures, such as the Bedouin of the Middle East, only the birth of a son created a true family that was counted separately.

Quantitative sources provide much information, and can make possible certain types of comparisons over time and among cultures, particularly in the modern era when most of the world's governments collect various types of statistics. For the premodern period quantitative sources are generally available only in very specific cases – cities that took population counts during wartime, for example, or the genealogies of noble houses. They are always skewed toward the wealthy and elite, and they are also skewed by gender. In many population enumerations in various parts of the world, girls were not counted as regularly as their brothers because they would not

inherit family property and so were not considered a significant part of the family. Definitions of various population groups – those who were "working" and those "not working," for example – were based on the male experience, so that a married woman who raised chickens, did laundry and took in boarders was defined as "not working" in census records. Who was "married" and who was "not married" was dependent on the idea of marriage among those keeping the records, not the spouses themselves; thus consensual unions not officially recorded as "marriage" may well have been regarded as such by the people involved and their neighbors.

Parts of Western Europe began keeping at least rudimentary records of births, marriages, and deaths in the sixteenth century, and the patterns traced by historians based on these provide an example of the type of conclusions about family life one can draw from quantitative data. It appears that two rather distinct family patterns developed in the Middle Ages (1000–1500 CE) in Western Europe. In the south – as in eastern Europe and much of the rest of the world – marriage was between teenagers who lived with one set of parents for a long time, or between a man in his late twenties or thirties and a much younger woman, with households again containing several generations. In northwestern Europe, historians have identified a marriage pattern unique in the world before 1800, with couples waiting until their mid- or late twenties to marry, long beyond the age of sexual maturity, and then immediately setting up an independent household. Husbands were likely to be only two or three years older than their wives at first marriage, and though households often contained servants, they rarely contained more than one family member who was not a part of the nuclear family.

The northwestern European marriage pattern resulted largely from the idea that couples should be economically independent before they married, so that both spouses spent long periods as servants or workers in other households saving money and learning skills, or waited until their own parents had died and the family property was distributed. The most unusual features of this pattern were the late age of marriage for women and the fact that a significant number of people never married at all; demographers estimate that between 10 to 15 percent of the northwestern European population never married in fifteenth through the eighteenth centuries, and that in some places this figure may have been as high as 25 percent. Both late marriage for women and the large unmarried population were important checks on population growth, though they also worried contemporary religious and political leaders, who viewed marital households as the basis of society. Particularly in the sixteenth century, religious reformers urged everyone to marry (Catholic reformers excepted those who lived in religious communities, but advocated marriage for everyone else) and political leaders passed laws forbidding unmarried people to live on their own. Such laws were sometimes limited to women, but were elsewhere gender neutral, and there are a few records from Europe and the European colonies of North America of unmarried men actually being punished for living on their own. (There are more records of women being punished for, as the phrase went, "having their own smoke.") What this late age of marriage actually *meant* for women or men is more difficult to discern than the pattern itself; did it mean that women were more likely to have a voice in choosing their own spouse? Or that they felt quite desperate to marry at some point and took anyone who was available and at least marginally socially acceptable? Was the need to work on one's own viewed as liberating or

burdensome? The answers to these questions are not to be found in quantifiable data, of course, and scholars have disagreed sharply about them.

More recent statistics have provoked similar intense disputes. In Japan, China, and the Arab world, more than 95 percent of people in the twentieth century continued to marry at some point in their lives, but in other parts of the world there was a dramatic decline in marriage rates. (And at the beginning of the twenty-first century, the Japanese marriage and birth rate is also falling, to the point where the birth rate is now below replacement.) In both Western Europe and the United States couples lived together but did not marry; in 1995 there were ten times as many couples living together without marrying in Germany than there had been in 1972. Divorce rates increased significantly in developed countries – in the United States the divorce rate in the 1990s was three times what it had been in the 1920s, with one out of every two marriages ending in divorce – and were also more common elsewhere, such as the Arabic world where one out of every four marriages ended in divorce in the 1990s. Such statistics provide evidence for all sides of every debate about the contemporary family – do they signal a "decline" or a "liberation"? If the latter, is this pattern more liberating for men or women? In contrast to debates about the premodern period, every side in such debates about the recent past can also be buttressed by additional statistics: men have longer life expectancies when they are married, women when they are single; divorce increases men's standard of living and decreases women's. Each of these sets of statistics brings its own problems of interpretation, however, particularly when those collected by different groups are compared, for their questions and sampling methods vary widely.

The problems of scarce or skewed sources in family history do not disappear when we begin to use non-quantifiable materials. Written sources from (or even about) peasant families before 1800 are almost non-existent, as are written sources from before 1800 for all families in much of Africa, the Americas, Southeast Asia and the Pacific. Historians and anthropologists use a variety of means to study kinship organizations, marital patterns, living arrangements, and other aspects of family structure in these places: oral history and traditions; later written records; reports of outsiders, such as Muslim traders in Africa or Christian missionaries in America and the Pacific islands; direct interviews with living individuals; archeological remains such as houses and domestic artifacts; linguistic analysis of words denoting family and kin. All of these provide evidence about families in the past, but scholars also warn about their limitations; outsiders brought their own biases, archeological remains are difficult to interpret, and oral history (like all history) represents a specific perspective. What is described as "traditional" may often be quite new, for family patterns are not static, and may also be quite different in groups which are fairly close to one another geographically. All of these sources are also shaped by gender, both that of the person providing the information and that of the person collecting or recording it, whether this person was a missionary or an anthropologist. Until the last several decades it was most likely that both the source and the gatherer were men, so that information about family life is seen from an (often unacknowledged) male perspective and for purposes defined by men.

Even if, as in the modern period, there are mountains of numbers available for studying families, quantifiable data can only go so far, and many family historians have rejected or avoided statistics and based their research on qualitative materials,

including private written sources such as diaries, family chronicles, account books, and letters (along with all types of public documents) and visual sources such as paintings, furniture, household objects, toys, and architecture. These, particularly the written materials, are also skewed toward cultures in which written records became common quite early and toward the minority among the population that was literate. They are also skewed by gender, as men in most cultures were more likely to be taught to read and write than women, and the materials they produced regarded as valuable and retained. We have many letters from Martin Luther to his wife Katharina von Bora, for example, and none of hers to him. Thus historians treasure every shred of evidence produced by women or members of non-elite groups, which sometimes means that the few examples that have survived achieve a kind of iconic status. The reflections on family relationships in such rare sources are even fewer, and we must guard against assuming that all families were like the ones we know most about. One gentry family in fifteenth-century England, for example, the Pastons, left a huge number of letters detailing many instances of family conflict, and for a long time these were used as proof that *all* families were cold and bitter toward one another at this time, rather than that the Pastons were unusually dysfunctional.

Family Structures and Functions

It might seem, given the limitations in sources, that making any generalizations about family life in the past would be very dangerous, as what we can know is so limited and skewed, both when looking at a single culture and when making comparisons. One of the generalizations that *is* safe to make, however, is that the question which opened this essay, "What is a family?" has been answered very differently in different human groups, that the structure, function, and even the definition of "the family" have varied tremendously from culture to culture, and for different social groups within each culture. The ways in which gender intersected with these structures, functions, and meanings has also varied considerably. Some groups practiced polygamy and others monogamy; for some, the most important unit was the nuclear family of a man, a woman, and their children, while for others the extended kin network was most important; in some groups, the family was primarily a unit of reproduction, while in others it was primarily a unit of production; in some groups, married couples lived with the husband's family (patrilocality), in others they lived with the wife's (matrilocality or uxorilocality), and in others they set up their own household (neolocality); in some groups non-related individuals such as slaves or servants were considered part of the family, and in others they were not; in some groups adoption or godparentage created significant kinship-like ties (termed fictive or spiritual kinship) while in others only blood mattered; in some groups marital partners were chosen by parents or the family as a whole and in others by the individuals themselves; in some groups a woman brought goods or money to her husband or husband's family on marriage (a dowry) and in others a man gave goods or money to his wife's family (brideprice); in some groups marriage was forbidden to certain segments of the population (such as slaves) while in others nearly everyone married; in some groups divorce was easy and in others impossible; in some groups premarital sexuality was acceptable or even expected and in others it was harshly punished; in some groups the oldest son inherited everything (primogeniture) and in others all

children or at least all sons shared in inheritance (partible inheritance); in some groups marriage was early and in others it was late; in some groups, people married within their group (endogamy) and in others outside of their group (exogamy); in some groups spouses were about the same age while in others they were very different ages; in some groups contraception, abortion, and even infanticide were acceptable practices of limiting the number of children, while in others these were strictly prohibited. All of these variables interacted, and often changed over time because of internal developments or contacts with other cultures.

To give just a few examples: In both ancient Mesopotamia and ancient Egypt, marriage was generally monogamous, though men could and did have more than one wife if their economic status was high enough, especially if their first wife had not had children. Rulers of Egypt in the New Kingdom (1570 BCE–1075 CE) and rulers in Mesopotamia at roughly the same time are often described as having harems of many wives and concubines, though historians are not sure when this practice began or even if it was as extensive as later commentators thought; were the many women buried in royal tombs the king's concubines, or might they have been the queen's servants? Whatever the situation for rulers and the very wealthy, most marriages were monogamous, with the prime emphasis on procreation and maintaining the economic and social well-being of the household. Divorce was possible, but difficult.

Many of the gender patterns in family life that developed in the world's earliest civilizations carried over into the classical cultures of Eurasia (roughly 500 BCE–500 CE), though they were often made more rigid because of the expansion of written law codes and the development of religious and philosophical systems which posited clear gender distinctions. The family was generally regarded as the basis of society, and rights to political positions were often limited to men who were the heads of families. As in Mesopotamia and Egypt, most people married, though in some places certain marriages, such as those between slaves, between a slave and a free person, or between persons of different social classes, were prohibited. In these cases other legal forms, such as concubinage or the Roman slave "marriage" called *contubernia* were often established to legitimate sexual relations. These forms were gender-specific, for they never included one which allowed a higher-status woman to have legitimate sexual relations with a lower-status man; such relations were instead often punishable by death. Size of the household was often dependent on social status, with wealthier households containing more relatives, servants, and slaves; in some areas extended families lived in a large family compound, while in others most households were nuclear. Whatever a household's size or composition, everyone living within it, including adult children and servants, was under the authority of the male head of household. When he died, his widow often came under the authority of her eldest son or her husband's brother rather than acting independently. In some cultures she was expected to marry the brother of her dead husband – a practice called levirate marriage – particularly if her husband had not had a son; her sons by her new husband were legally regarded as belonging to her deceased first husband.

In the post-clssical period (500 CE–1500 CE), philosophical and religious ideals of family honor and sexual propriety led to the seclusion of elite women within their households in China, India, and much of the Islamic world. The vast majority of people in these cultures were not members of the elite, however, but peasants who

spent their days raising food. Almost all of them married, not because of Confucian principles or Hindu teachings or Islamic injunctions, but because marital couples and their children were the basic unit of agricultural production; procreation was an economic necessity and not simply a religious duty, for if rates of reproduction were too low families, villages, and even whole societies could disappear. In other parts of the world as well, peasant women were less restricted than upper-class women, and their lives were more like those of the male members of their family – made equally miserable by poverty and hard work – than was the case for wealthier women. Whether any woman would have regarded this as positive, and not traded her life for the more comfortable, though more restricted, one of an aristocratic woman, is difficult to say, for, as noted above, we have almost no sources which give us the opinions of peasant women or men about their families until the nineteenth century.

In Africa, the Americas, and the Pacific, generalizations about the structure and functions of families must be made even more carefully than for classical and post-classical Eurasia, but some patterns appear to be fairly common. The "family" was often defined as a fairly wide group of relatives, and this kin group had a voice in domestic and other matters, such as who would marry and when they would do so, who would be sent to school and how long they would attend, who would have access to land or other economic resources, whose conduct was unacceptable and worthy of censure or punishment. These decisions were arrived at through a process of negotiation and discussion within the family, with the influence of each member dependent on the situation. The opinions of older family members generally carried more weight than those of younger, the opinions of first born more than later born, and the opinions of men more than women. These two hierarchies – age and gender – interacted in complex ways dependent on the issue at hand, with older women sometimes having control of younger men on certain matters. In some cultures, older women served as matchmakers, suggesting or arranging marriages.

Polygynous marriages were common in many parts of world, but the living arrangements based on those marriages varied considerably. In Africa, families lived in house-compounds in which each wife had her own house; each wife also had her own cattle, fields, and property, for the notion that a wife's property actually belonged to her husband, while standard in Europe, was not accepted in most of Africa. In parts of the world in which women were secluded, all wives lived within the same household, often in a special part of the house constructed for them, termed the *harim* (which means "forbidden area") or *zenana*.

Many cultures in Africa, the Americas, and the Pacific were matrilineal, with property passed down through the female line. This did not necessarily mean that women were economically or legally autonomous, but that they depended on their brothers rather than their husbands. Their brothers also depended on them, however, for many of these cultures also had systems of marriage involving a brideprice, so that a man could only marry once his sister had, using the money or goods such as land or cattle that the family had received as *her* brideprice to acquire a wife. This system encouraged close life-long relations among siblings, with women relying on their birth families for support if they came into conflict with their husbands. This was particularly true in groups that were matrilocal, such as those in eastern North America, in which husbands came to live with their wives' clans and related women lived together. Relations with one's mother's kin were thus more important than those with one's father's

kin or even one's spouse, and children often regarded their mother's brothers with particular respect. In many groups living in the Andean region, lines of descent were reckoned through both sexes, with girls inheriting access to resources such as land, water, and animals through their mothers, and boys through their fathers. In other groups with bilateral inheritance, such as the Yako of Nigeria, only men inherited, but they did so from both their fathers and their mothers' brothers.

The Impact of Colonialism

In many parts of the world, the family forms that had developed before 1500 were radically altered by European exploration and colonization. Europeans brought with them not only their own religious, political, and economic structures, but also their own ideas of proper family life and the institutions designed to enforce those ideas. As in Europe, Christianity provided the official structure for family life in much of the colonial world from the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries; polygamy was abolished, divorce made more difficult, premarital sexual activity prohibited, and church courts established to handle family issues. The lives of actual families and the roles of men and women in them were often shaped more by two other factors, however. The first was the germs that Europeans brought with them, which often advanced ahead of actual colonial forces. In some cases disease wiped out entire indigenous groups, and everywhere it disrupted patterns of marriage and family life. The second was the expansion of existing ways of understanding kinship to include huge categories of people, distinguished from one another by skin tone and facial features in what came to be understood as "race."

In many cultures, "blood" was a common way of marking family, clan, and eventually class differences, with those of "noble blood" prohibited from marrying commoners and taught to be concerned about their blood lines. This has been studied most extensively in Europe, but high-status people in other parts of the world were also thought to have superior blood; in parts of Indonesia, for example, nobles were referred to as "white-blooded" and their marriages limited to others with similar blood. Blood also came to be used to describe national boundaries, with those having "French blood" distinguished from those having "German blood," "English blood," or "Spanish blood." Religious beliefs were also conceptualized as blood, with people regarded as having Jewish, Muslim, or Christian blood, and after the Reformation Protestant or Catholic blood. The most dramatic expression of this was in early modern Spain, where "purity of the blood" – having no Jewish or Muslim ancestors – became an obsession, but it was also true elsewhere. Describing differences as blood naturalized them, making them appear as if they were created by God in nature.

As Europeans developed colonial empires, these notions of blood became a way of conceptualizing race as well as religion, class, and nation. In some cases, such as Jews or Jewish converts in Spain and the Spanish empire, or Gaelic Irish in Ireland, religious and racial differences were linked, with religious traditions being viewed as signs of barbarity and racial inferiority. Religion was also initially a marker of difference in colonial areas outside Europe, where the spread of Christianity was used as a justification for conquest and enslavement. As indigenous peoples converted, however, religion became less useful as a means of differentiation, and skin color

became more important. Virginia laws regarding sexual relations, for example, distinguished between "christian" and "negroe" in 1662, but by 1691 between "white" men and women and those who were "negroe, mulatto, or Indian."

We can see the impact of both the spread of germs and new notions of race very clearly in the Spanish and Portuguese colonies of the New World. Historians estimate that the indigenous population decreased dramatically – by about 90 percent in the sixteenth century in Central America, for example – at the same time that there was large-scale immigration from Europe and the importation of huge numbers of slaves from Africa. Originally the Spanish and Portuguese Crowns hoped – at least officially – to keep all these groups apart, but the shortage of European and African women made this impossible, and there were sexual relationships across many lines. The children of these relationships challenged existing categories and the response of colonial society was to create a very complex system of socio-racial categories for persons of mixed ancestry, termed *castas*. The Catholic Church and the Spanish and Portuguese crowns defined as many as fifteen or twenty different racial categories and combinations that were in theory based on place of birth, assumed race, and status of one's mother, with a specific name for each one. In practice, whether one was a "mestizo" or "mulatto" or "caboclo" or another category was to a large extent determined by how one looked, with lighter-skinned, straighter-haired mixed-race persons accorded a higher rank than darker-skinned, curly-haired individuals, even if they were siblings. The social structure that developed in colonial Spanish and Portuguese America, including the Caribbean, was thus a system based partly on physical appearance, but intricately linked to concepts of honor and virtue as derived from class and family status. One's social status, or *calidad,* rested on a precarious balance of moral, physical, and class judgments that frequently shifted within the regional and social hierarchy. Since one's ability to marry or inherit, enter a convent or the priesthood, attend university, or hold political office relied on official determination of racial purity, individuals sought to "whiten" their social status in order to obtain privileges in society. In many areas families of property and status bought licenses to pass as descendents of Europeans, regardless of their particular racial or ethnic appearance and ancestry.

In frontier areas of Spanish America, or during times of political and social transitions, family members classifed their children as "Spanish" or "Castellano" on baptismal records, often in open defiance of the presiding religious authorities. In addition, individuals might define themselves, or be defined as, belonging to different racial categories at different points in their life, so that the racial hierarchy became increasingly confused and arbitrary.

As a result of widespread racial mixing, racial categories have spanned a continuum, with whites/Europeans holding positions of political and economic power in most societies, and those of African and indigenous ancestry making up the poorest and least powerful ranks of society. For members of the white European elite, the concern with bloodlines created a pattern of intermarriage within the extended family, with older women identifying the distant cousins that were favored as spouses. Following the southern European pattern, these marriages were often between an older man and younger woman, which limited the number of potential spouses for women, and many never married or entered convents. Rural native people also married most often within their own group, with the extended family exerting control over choice

of spouses just as it did for elite whites. For slaves, many persons of mixed race, and poor people of all types, family and property considerations did not enter into marital considerations, and in most cases people simply did not get married at all, though in many cases they did establish long-term unions regarded by their neighbors and friends as stable. Thus, despite Christian norms, families in Latin America were extremely diverse: elite men married, but they often had children by slaves or servants who were also part of their household; poor free people did not marry, but might live in stable nuclear households; slave unions were often temporary, and the children stayed with their mothers or became the property of their mother's owners.

This diversity was also found elsewhere in the colonial world, with racial hierarchies and notions of gender intersecting in complex ways to shape family life. In some areas, such as the French and British colonies of North America, Africa, and Asia, marriages or other long-term unions between Europeans and indigenous peoples were much rarer than they were in Latin America, and in many places legally prohibited; the 1691 law in Virginia forbade marriage between an "English or other white man or woman" and a "negroe, mulatto, or Indian man or woman." Though such laws were usually gender-neutral, what lawmakers were most worried about was, as the preamble to the Virginia law states: "negroes, mulattoes, and Indians intermarrying with English, or other white women" and the resultant "abominable mixture and spurious issue." Such laws were passed in all of the southern states and also in Pennsylvania and Massachusetts between 1700 and 1750; they were struck down by the US Supreme Court in 1967, but remained on the books in some states for decades after that. The last of such "miscegenation" laws was rescinded by Alabama voters in a state-wide referendum in 2000. In contrast to a hierarchy of racial categories, the British North American colonies and later the United States developed a dichotomous racial system, in which in theory one drop of "black blood" made one black, though in practice lighter-skinned mixed-race individuals may have passed over without notice into the white world.

Until the middle of the nineteenth century, of course, most African-Americans in North America were slaves, and only in New England were slave marriages legally recognized. As in Latin America, the family structures that developed in North America in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were thus class- and race-related. White families, especially in the north, tended to follow the northwestern European model, with late marriage and a high proportion of people who never married, while black families were more fluid, and often matrifocal. Government policy toward Native Americans, which removed them from their original homelands and ordered them to live on reservations, disrupted family life along with every other aspect of indigenous society, though extended kin groups retained some voice wherever they could.

The European colonies in Africa and Asia generally developed later than those in the Americas, and in many places European rule did not disrupt existing family patterns to a great extent. European men engaged in sexual relations with indigenous women, but did not regard these as marriage (though they might be viewed by local cultures as temporary marriages). Once more white women moved to the colonies, long-term interracial relationships became less common as the European communities worried about mixed-race children and what they termed "racial survival."

Family Formation and Dissolution

Approaching the family through its structure and function presents a rather static view, and in the eyes of some historians, is more like anthropology than history. They have instead used a more dynamic framework, and focused on family formation and dissolution. This has allowed them to explore formal and informal rituals of marriage, separation, and divorce, the effects of the deaths of spouses, parents, and children, and the ways in which families adapted to internal and external changes.

Historians of families in the classical period note that marriage in the ancient world not only linked two individuals but also two families, so that the choice of a spouse was much too important a matter to be left to young people to decide. Weddings were central occasions in a family's life, with spouses chosen carefully by parents, other family members, or marriage brokers, and much of a family's resources often going to pay for the ceremony and setting up the new household. Marital agreements, especially among the well-to-do, were stipulated with contracts between the families involved, a practice that continued for centuries throughout the world, and in many areas continues today. Opportunities for divorce varied in the classical world, but in many cultures it was nearly impossible, so the choice of a spouse was undertaken very carefully after much consultation with relatives and often astrologers or other types of people who predicted the future. Weddings themselves were held on days determined to be lucky or auspicious, a determination arrived at independently for each couple.

Rituals surrounding marriage became more complex in the classical period, particularly for the wealthy. In China during the Han dynasty (202 BCE–220 CE), for example, marriages included a number of prescribed steps, of which the most important was the presentation of betrothal gifts from the groom and the groom's family to the bride and the bride's family, an occasion of conspicuous consumption for the rich and sometimes near-bankruptcy for the poor. The bride's family then often countered with a dowry, sometimes of goods purchased with the money in the betrothal gift; using a betrothal gift for family financial needs rather than reserving it for the bride was viewed as dishonorable because it made it appear that the bride had been sold. A marriage with no betrothal gift or dowry was also dishonorable, with the woman often considered a concubine rather than a wife. Once all these goods had been exchanged, the bride was taken to the ancestral home of the groom, where she was expected to obey her husband and his living relatives, and to honor his ancestors. Confucian teachings required upper-class men to carry out specific rituals honoring their ancestors and clan throughout their lives, and to have sons so that these rituals could continue. Their names were inscribed on the official family list, and women's on the list of their marital families once they had a son; women who had no sons disappeared from family memory, unless they could arrange to adopt one, perhaps from a concubine or slave of their husband. Women continued to belong to their marital families even if they were widowed; if a widow's birth family wanted her to marry again, it often had to ransom her back from her deceased husband's family, and her children by her first husband stayed with his family.

Certain events, especially the birth of a son or the death of a husband, thus had a tremendous impact on a woman's place in the family in classical China. Because a woman's identity was more closely tied to her husband's than a man's to his wife, a

husband's death often brought great changes in a woman's situation in many other cultures as well. She became a widow, a word for which there is no male equivalent in many ancient languages and one of the few words in English and other modern languages in which the male, widower, is derived from the female instead of the other way around. At that point she often become more active legally, buying and selling land, making loans, and making donations to religious establishments. A widow's actions were acceptable because she was often the guardian for her children and in control of the family finances, but she was also somewhat suspect because she was not under direct male control.

Though death served as the only way to end a marriage in some cultures, many also allowed spouses, and particularly husbands, to divorce. One of the earliest written law codes, that of the Babylonian king Hammurabi (1792–1750 BCE), included many provisions regarding marriage and family life; according to its provisions, a husband could divorce his wife without returning her dowry if she "made up her mind to leave in order that she may engage in business, thus neglecting her house and humiliating her husband" and could drown her if she "has been caught lying with another man." (The code does not mention punishment for a married man who had sex with a woman not his wife.) Among matrilocal groups in North America, either spouse could initiate divorce. A man who wished to divorce simply left his wife's house, while a woman put her husband's belongings outside her family's house, indicating she wished him to leave; the children in both cases stayed with the mother and her family. Among some groups divorce was frowned upon after children had been born, however, or because it would involve complicated financial transactions, such as the return of bridewealth.

Relatively easy divorce was an essential part of systems of temporary marriage that developed in some parts of Southeast Asia and the Pacific. These were cultures in which people were taught to have a strong sense of debt and obligation to their parents and family for having been given life, termed *òn* in Vietnamese and *hiya* in Tagalog, the language of part of the Philippines. This concept of debt extended beyond the family to the larger political and economic realm, so that people were enmeshed in a complex system of dependency, sometimes placing themselves or family members into slavery to another in return for support – what is often termed "debt-slavery" – or otherwise promising loyalty or service. One also gave gifts in order to have others in one's debt; gift-giving was an important way to make alliances, pacify possible enemies, and create links and networks of obligations among strangers. These gifts might include women, for exchanging women was considered the best way to transform strangers into relatives. These unions were often accompanied by a marriage ceremony and the expectation of spousal fidelity, but they were also understood to be temporary. If the spouses disagreed with one another or the man was from elsewhere and returned to his home country, the marriage ended, just as marriages between local spouses ended if there was conflict or one spouse disappeared for a year or more. Both sides gained from such temporary marriages; the man gained a sexual and domestic partner, and the woman and her family gained prestige through their contact with an outsider and their repayment of a debt. Concepts of debt also structured marriage patterns in other ways; prospective grooms frequently carried out brideservice for their future fathers-in-law, understood as paying off their obligations.

Relations within the Family

Many historians have been more interested in the emotional, economic, and power relations within families than in their structure or development, and in exploring these issues it is impossible to avoid focusing on gender differences. Emotional relations between spouses and between parents and children have been an area of great controversy. In the 1970s and 1980s, several historians examining European elites posited that before 1800 families were cold and unfeeling, with parents caring little about their children because child mortality was so high, and spouses rarely feeling or showing affection toward one another. Some of these historians extended their conclusions – generally without further research – to *all* premodern families, and saw the "modern" family, with individuals choosing their own spouses, heavy emotional investment in child rearing, expectations of love and companionship between spouses, as distinctly different from the "traditional" family, with arranged marriage, formal and hierarchical relations between spouses and between parents and children, and little expectation of emotional closeness. Researchers since then have demonstrated that such binaries or other schematic patterns of uniform changes in family life are overly simplistic. Ancient Romans viewed the model marriage as one in which husbands and wives shared interests, activities, and property, and Jewish writers in the centuries before 1800 similarly emphasized companionship and affection between spouses, describing the ideal marriage as one predestined in heaven. (Judaism did allow divorce, which was then sometimes justified on the grounds that the spouses had obviously not been predestined for each other.) Many Japanese, by contrast, see the idea that spouses will share life-long love as naive and Western. Men socialize with men and women with women; divorce is quite rare and highly stigmatized because there are few expectations of intimacy. This pattern has been changing among younger Japanese, however, as arranged marriages are becoming increasingly uncommon and romantic love between partners in marriage is gaining acceptance.

Historical investigations into the emotional life of families has revealed many examples of affection and respect between spouses, but when we turn to formal legal and economic relations the picture is quite different. In the majority of the world's societies – again, particularly those with written records – marriage put women in a position subordinate to their husbands. The same Romans who idealized spousal companionship gave husbands great power over their wives and fathers even greater power over their children. (The word "family" (*famiglia*) in ancient Rome actually meant all those under the authority of a male head of household, including non-related slaves and servants.) In England, until the nineteenth century married women had no right to their own wages, and were not considered legal persons, but were completely subsumed under the legal identity of their husbands.

This subordination of women to men in marriage was often used as a symbol of other types of subordination, providing excellent examples of the way in which gender hierarchies can represent other social and political hierarchies. In many parts of the world wealthy and powerful men married more than one wife or had several secondary wives or concubines along with a principal wife, a pattern often termed "resource polygyny." Rulers of states and villages had the most wives or other types of female dependents as a sign of status, and they used marriage as a way to make or cement alliances. Conflict between fathers and sons was exacerbated by resource

polygyny, as families had to decide whether their resources would best be spent acquiring a first wife for a son or another wife for the father. Some scholars have seen this generational conflict as a source for harsh initiation rituals which unmarried young men often had to undergo; only those who had gone through such rituals would be allowed to marry and join the ranks of fully adult men. Marriage could also be used as a symbol of military conquest; the leaders of both the Incas and the Aztecs, for example, married the daughters of rulers of the tribes they had conquered, and in seventeenth-century Virginia, the Algonkian-speaking chief Powhatan reinforced his domination of other groups by marrying women from their villages and then sending them back once they had borne him a child. Other family relationships are also used as political metaphors in a clearly gendered way, with leaders easily described as "founding fathers" or "the father of his country," but never – other than ironically – as "founding mothers."

Law codes depict an ideal situation rather than reality, of course, one that lawmakers hope to create, so it has been important for family historians to investigate actual practice as far as possible. They have generally discovered that even in the most patriarchal societies, women have opposed, subverted, and ignored restrictions; they have made more family decisions and controlled more of what went on in the household than the laws would indicate. In nineteenth-century colonial areas, for example, the growth in mining and commercial agriculture led many men to leave their families for years at a time in search of wage labor, with women at home in the villages engaged in subsistence agriculture and caring for children and the elderly. This occurred within legal structures that were often patrilineal, with formal rights to land and other property held by men who were absent; in fact, laws regarding ownership and inheritance were often *more* patrilineal under colonial rule than they had been earlier, as colonial authorities did not understand or accept existing matrilineal or bilateral systems. Thus there could be a sharp contradiction between theory and practice regarding family structure and power relationships, with men the official and legal head of the family but women actually making most of the decisions.

This contradiction between theory and practice in terms of the family was not found only in the colonies during the nineteenth century, but also in the colonizing countries – often termed the "metropole" – and in other European and European-background countries as well. The growth of industrialism brought new forms of work organization that had a significant effect on family life. Young women were often the first to be hired as factories opened, for they were viewed as more compliant, willing to take lower wages, and better able to carry out the repetitive tasks of tending machines; it was also more difficult for them to move in search of greater opportunities than for young men. Factory work removed young women from their parental households, however, and could lead to a lessening of paternal authority once the women had their own wages. Politicians and social commentators debated the merits of this, and suggested that factory owners establish dormitories for their workers and act as substitute fathers, restricting women's leisure time activities and socializing habits. They further recommended that, whenever possible, women work in sex-segregated workshops or at home, so that their (and their family's) honor was not threatened by contact with men who were not their relatives, and that women's wages stay low, so that they did not become too independent. Young women were encouraged to give most or all of their wages to their families, and married women

encouraged to avoid work outside the household and to make their homes a "haven in the heartless world" of industrialism and business. (This advice was bolstered by the fact that, as noted above, until the mid-nineteenth century, the wages of married women in European countries belonged legally to their husbands.)

Along with many instances of discrepancies between theory and practice, there were (and are) also cultures in which marriage did not put women into a subordinate position. Among the Khasi people in northwestern India and the Musuo in southwestern China, for example, women headed the households, owned businesses, and handed down property and the family name to their daughters. These matrilineal practices have continued to the present, although there is pressure to make these groups conform more closely with the rest of India and China. The irony of this is not lost on Lakyntieth Lyndoh, a Khasi businesswoman, who commented in an article in the *Chicago Tribune*, April 7, 1996: "Why should we be in such a hurry to give up our long-fought-for rights as independent women when most other women in the world are clamoring to increase theirs?"

The Family's Relations with Larger Institutions

Laws regarding marriage and property ownership are just one example of the ways in which institutions beyond the family shaped relations within it. In both the distant and the recent past, governments often intervened in family life. The most dramatic example of this from the ancient world is the Greek city-state of Sparta, in which all activity was directed toward military ends. Citizen boys left their homes at age seven in Sparta and lived in military camps until they were thirty, eating and training with boys and men their own age; they married at about eighteen to women of roughly the same age, but saw their wives only when they sneaked out of camp. Military discipline was harsh – this is the origin of the word "spartan" – but severity was viewed as necessary to prepare men both to fight external enemies such as Athens and to control the Spartan slave and unfree farmer population, which vastly outnumbered the citizens.

In this militaristic atmosphere, citizen women were remarkably free. As in all classical cultures, there was an emphasis on childbearing, but the Spartan leadership viewed maternal health as important for the bearing of healthy, strong children, and so encouraged women to participate in athletics and to eat well. With men in military service most of their lives, citizen women owned property and ran the household, and were not physically restricted or secluded. Marriage often began with a trial marriage period to make sure the couple could have children, with divorce and remarriage the normal course if they were unsuccessful. Despite the emphasis on procreation, homosexuality was widely accepted, with male same-sex relationships in particular viewed as militarily expedient, leading men to fight more fiercely in defense of their lovers and comrades.

Government intervention in family life became very common in the twentieth century, with the most extreme examples in totalitarian regimes. In Germany, Italy, and Japan in the 1930s, birth control was prohibited and large families were rewarded among groups judged to be desirable; those judged undesirable were sterilized or executed. (Sterilization of "undesirables" also occurred in the United States from the 1930s to at least the 1970s.) All three of these countries mounted propaganda

campaigns setting out their view of the ideal family, which was one in which fathers ruled and wives and children obeyed. In the Soviet Union immediately after World War II, the government encouraged population growth by limiting access to all contraception; even after the desire for more people abated, birth control pills never became widely available, so that abortion became the standard means of birth control for most women, a practice that continued in post-Soviet Russia. (Abortion is a very common form of birth control in many other parts of the world today as well, including places where it is officially prohibited, such as Brazil.)

In other parts of the world as well, governments actively intervened to limit population: in India, Puerto Rico, and elsewhere the government encouraged or condoned wide-spread sterilization, while in China families who had more than one child were penalized by fines and the loss of access to opportunities. Though governments which introduced strict population policies tried to minimize gender differences in their effects, the value put on male children was still higher than that on female, which led in some countries to selective female infanticide, abortion of female fetuses, and better care and nutrition for infant boys. Government campaigns at the end of the twentieth century in China tried to end such practices, and observers noted that girls may become more desirable in the future because selective abortion has made them scarcer than boys.

Coercive government measures provoked strong resistance in many parts of the developing world from both religious and women's organizations, and toward the end of the century aid agencies recognized that a more effective means of decreasing the birth rate was to increase the level of basic and technical education for girls and women, while providing small loans for sewing machines, farm flocks, or even cellular phones so that women could gain economic independence. Both lower birth rates and education for girls were opposed in some parts of the world for much of the twentieth century by traditional and colonial authorities, for the latter regarded women's proper role as tied to the household. At the end of the century, however, worldwide fertility had been lowered, from 4.97 births per woman in 1950 to 2.71 in 2000, with sterilization the most common form of birth control; in 2000, Spain had the lowest fertility rate (1.1) and Niger the highest (8.0).

Along with governments, religious ideas and institutions also had (and continue to have) a great effect on family life, for every religious tradition has developed norms regarding familial relationships that were clearly gendered. In India, for example, Hindu ideas about the importance of family life and having many children meant that all men and women were expected to marry, and that women in particular married very young; widows and women who had not had sons were excluded from wedding festivities. Parents, other relatives, or professional matchmakers chose one's spouse, and anything that interfered with procreation, including exclusively homosexual attachments, was frowned upon. The domestic fire had great symbolic importance; husband and wife made regular offerings in front of it. Children, particularly boys, were shown great affection and developed close attachments to their parents, especially their mothers. These mothers often continued to live in the house of their eldest son upon widowhood, creating stresses between mothers- and daughters-in-law; cruel and angry mothers-in-law were standard figures in the stories of classical India (and are still a source of complaint), reflecting what was often harsh treatment of young women in real life. (In the Mediterranean and the rest of Europe, widowed

mothers generally did not live with their married sons, so the spiteful old woman in stories is generally a stepmother rather than a mother-in-law.)

Family life in Europe during the period from the Roman Empire to Columbus was shaped to a large degree by the Christian Church. Early Christian thinkers were often hostile to the family, viewing virginity as the preferred form of existence; alternatives to family life, in which men and women lived in single-sex communities dedicated to service to God, developed in most parts of Europe. In some areas, these communities took in widows as well as never-married people, providing a safe and honorable place for women who chose not to marry or not to remarry, or whose families made this decision for them. Though there were certainly many people whose families decided when and whom and if they would marry, officially the Christian Church declared that consent of the spouses was the basis of marriage; indeed, until the sixteenth century, consent of the spouses was all that was required to have a valid marriage, though by the twelfth century many church leaders also regarded marriage as a sacrament, a ceremony that provided visible evidence of God's grace, like baptism. Because of its sacramental nature, marriage was increasingly held to be indissoluble, and sexual relations outside of marriage were viewed as illicit. Thus Christian Europe banned polygamy and divorce, and attempted to prohibit any form of sexual relationship apart from marriage, such as concubinage or premarital sex. As we saw earlier in this chapter, Christian ideas and institutions were carried by colonial powers throughout the world, and continue to have great influence on government policy regarding families as well as people's attitudes and behavior today.

The diversity in the structure and function of families in the contemporary world is less than that in the past, but, given greater immigration and better communications, that diversity is more widely and more intimately known and experienced. Family and kinship are not simply matters of genetic connections, but are culturally determined and given meaning by individuals and groups. It is clear that gender differences have been a key part of family life throughout history, which has made them more resistant to change than gender differences in other realms of life, such as the workplace or the voting booth. Thus they often survived, and continue to survive, dramatic economic or political upheavals. In Russia, for example, women did almost all the domestic work before, during, and after communism; as they have for centuries, Indian parents continue to arrange their childrens' marriages, though now this may be done over the internet or through newspaper advertisements rather than through a village marriage broker; in much of Africa, kin structures were the primary shapers of marriage during the pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial eras. Gender patterns involving the family are not as unchanging as they sometimes seem to be, but we all learned these at a very early age, and they are very difficult to shake.

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Chapter Four

Religion and Gender: Embedded Patterns, Interwoven Frameworks

Ursula King

In the early 1980s when I gave a lecture on "Mysticism and Feminism" some listeners strongly objected that mystical experience was beyond any feminist concerns. So why consider these at all? The same attitude might be taken toward the topic of religion and gender. What relevance can the contemporary interest in gender possibly have for the age-old beliefs of religion? How far does religion relate at all to the highly nuanced insights of current gender debates?

The close link between religion and gender is still overlooked in most contemporary gender studies, whether in the humanities, social sciences, or natural sciences. Many disciplines are still extraordinarily "religion-blind," just as many studies in religion continue to be profoundly "gender-blind." But religion matters, and so does gender. Both are highly contested fields, and gender especially so, as will be evident from other essays in this volume. Women historians first developed women's history, then feminist history, and now gender history, frequently without paying sufficient attention to religion as an important factor which impacts significantly on the formation and dynamics of gender. Only relatively recently has religion become recognized as a distinct element that has to be reckoned with in its own right when investigating history and gender; it cannot be fully accounted for by simply speaking about general cultural influences. The existence of this chapter on religion in a volume on gender history is part of this growing recognition, but religions are such complex realities, with histories and traditions so vast, that it would be presumptuous to expect this survey to be anything more than a rough sketch of some major research perspectives that have emerged over the last thirty years or so.

I am writing this chapter as a scholar/student of religion and gender of many years' standing, but it is not written from a distant, disengaged perspective nor from a particular religious position. In other words, I am neither offering a bird's eye view (or, as some would call it, a God's eye view) nor a church mouse's view who cannot see anything beyond what is in front of her nose. I am engaging with my topic from an open, but empathetic stance, shaped not only by formal studies of theology and religious studies in Germany, France, India, and Britain, but also by many years' travel

and observation of different religious groups in Europe, India, and South Asia, North America, South Africa, and Australia.

Gender issues are ubiquitous in religion, but also highly complex – local and particular as well as universal at the same time. Their relationship is subtle for here, probably more than anywhere else, the profound ambiguity and ambivalence of all religions becomes evident. Religions have provided myths and symbols of origin and creation; they offer narratives of redemption, healing, and salvation; they encompass "way-out" eschatological utopias, but also express the deepest human yearnings for wholeness and transcendence; they are captivated by the lure of the divine and the all-consuming, all-transforming fire of the spirit. In and through all these, religions have created and legitimated gender, enforced, oppressed, and warped it, but also subverted, transgressed, transformed, and liberated it. It is because of this complex interrelationship that the topic of religion and gender provides such a fascinating object of study.

Religion and gender are not simply two analogues, existing parallel to each other at the same level. Nor are they two independent realities simply to be conjoined, for dynamic patterns of gendering are deeply embedded throughout all religions, fused and interstructured with all religious worlds and experiences. This *embeddedness* means that gender is initially difficult to identify and separate out from other aspects of religion, until one is trained to do so through one's consciousness making the "gender-critical turn" (Warne, 2000b).

Nor is gender a comparable analytical category to those of race or class, which derive from different origins and contexts, and function rather differently from gender in a given group. The underlying, often hidden gender patterns represent depth structures of religious life which need to be historically excavated and analytically carved out by closely researching foundational texts and the history of powerful institutions with long-established lines of authority. This is a challenging intellectual task which cannot be accomplished without tremendous effort, but it can also have shattering implications.

All historical religions are shaped by patriarchal and androcentric frameworks little noticed or critiqued before the modern period, but even more clearly perceived since the arrival of postmodernism. Gender as a decisive analytical category in the study of religions has been used over the last twenty years with great gain, as is evident from new historical knowledge, new empirical data, new explanatory hypotheses, and more sophisticated theoretical frameworks for studying religions. The use of gender perspectives is a further development of women's studies in religion, which began with the first wave of feminism in the late nineteenth century, but only came into its own after the mid-twentieth century. However, neither religion nor gender is a stable, unified transhistorical category. On the contrary, the complex theoretical discussions surrounding both these terms prove that we are dealing here with definitional minefields. Both function in specific socio-historical contexts and semantic fields which have to be made clear in any specific study of religion and gender. (For a detailed discussion of the fractured concept of gender, see Warne, 2000a, 2000b.)

I will adopt a broad, inclusive usage here for both terms. "Religion" refers to the major religious traditions, often called "world religions" or "world faiths," which are the great historical religions still in existence today. However, the term "religion" is not only used in a cross-cultural sense for living religions of the entire contemporary

world, but is also applied to the beliefs and practices of ancient times, now often extinct. Furthermore, it includes recent religious phenomena, such as new religious movements, sects, and cults, as well as contemporary spiritualities. The meaning of "gender" is just as vigorously debated as that of "religion," as there is no consensus among scholars as to the significance of the historical, cultural, social, psychological, and biological constructions that this term denotes. Nonetheless, it is a most useful category referring to both women and men, their differences and similarities, and all that these entail in society, history, and culture. In quite a few studies the term "gender" is still used as a synonym for women, which is a category mistake, for it is precisely the shift from more exclusive woman-centred to more inclusive gender-focused approaches relating to both women and men, their equality and differences, which marks a step forward from earlier theoretical discussions. Despite this, gender studies are still more concerned with women than men, especially in studies of religion, not only because so much new scholarship has been published in this field, but also because maleness has not yet been problematized and theorized to the same extent as femaleness.

Over the last two decades, critical gender perspectives have made a great impact on the study of anthropology, sociology, history, literature, the arts, and other fields of academic enquiry, and the study of religions is no exception. Issues of gender – what it means to be male and female, and ultimately what it means to be human – raise doctrinal, philosophical, ethical, and practical questions in all religions. What is not always clearly grasped by those unfamiliar with religious practice and scholarship on religion is the great influence religious beliefs and practices have exercised on the formation of women's and men's identities, their image and roles, their understanding of power, authority, and agency, of body and sexuality, on all the gender relations and representations of a given society, even post-industrial Western societies, where religion has been sharply critiqued or explicitly rejected by many individuals. The very construction of gendered identities in history is inherently linked to religious teachings, norms, and values which have structured interpersonal relationships, the organization of communities and spiritual awareness, the articulation of the common good, the regulation of law and order, as well as the understanding of what transcendence means and how it is experienced.

Without the incisive, critical application of the category of gender, it is now no longer possible accurately to describe, analyze, or explain any religion. This relatively new research perspective has unearthed a range of new data in the historical study of religions past and present, and has made religion, as traditionally defined, studied, understood, or lived, problematic in a new way. In other words, the consistent application of critical gender perspectives poses new, uncomfortable questions for established religious authorities and practices, and thereby destabilizes and challenges religions as traditionally lived and practiced, as well as previous research and writing on religions as a field of historical scholarship. It is therefore not surprising that academic work in this area remains highly contentious and still provokes vociferous reactions, ranging sometimes from individual fear and derision to sharp scholarly critique and institutional opposition. Yet in spite of powerful oppositional forces among the entrenched authorities of the academy, the study of religions is progressively becoming more gendered, and this implies nothing less than a consciousness revolution in our understanding of religion as well as of the discursive boundaries of gender.

A Consciousness Revolution and Double Paradigm Shift

Until now, that is to say throughout all previous history, there has been a sharp gender asymmetry in the hierarchy of knowledge, and nowhere is this more clearly institutionalized than in religion. It is no coincidence that "patriarchy" itself, so major a focus of feminist critique, is a word of religious provenance which originally meant "the dignity, see, or jusrisdiction of an ecclesiastical patriarch," and also "the government of the church by a patriarch or patriarchs" before it came to mean "a patriarchal system of society or government by the father or the eldest male of the family; a family, a tribe, or community so organized" (Oxford English Dictionary, 2nd edition, 1989).

While the wider meaning of patriarchy relates to many theories of history and society, its immediate reference to an all-male power structure still applies to most religions today in terms of their institutional organization and official representation. Moreover, most religions were founded by men, although there exist a few women-led religions, especially among marginal, small-scale, and tribal groups (Sered, 1994). Influential traditional religious texts and teachings are almost exclusively the creation of men. Their experience has been taken as normative and universal without taking into account the experiences and thoughts of women, who are relegated to subordinate, inferior roles or, at worst, completely excluded and oppressed in many foundational religious texts. In other words, religious beliefs, thoughts, and practices are not only profoundly patriarchal, but often also thoroughly "androcentric," a word created only in the early twentieth century (by a male American sociologist), meaning that male experience has been one-sidedly equated with all human experience, and has thus been accepted as a universal norm by men and women alike, without giving full and equal space to women.

This self-sufficient male stance is in some sense comparable to the exclusive religious attitude which some people hold towards religions other than their own. A new awareness and attitude are needed to affirm the equality of others and accord their differences equal recognition and respect. To develop such an awareness requires openness, honesty, and a dialogical approach, a willingness to listen, learn from each other, and be prepared to change and be changed in the light of new experience. This applies as much to gender relations as to relations between religions. Both developments are new phenomena in world history, unprecedented until the modern period. New understandings of gender relations have their roots in modernity and the Enlightenment, but it is not always realized what contribution religion has made to these developments.

The first and second wave of the women's movement awakened an awareness of gender equity and justice in the modern world. This led to profound legal, social, and political changes, so much so that most religious institutions today still lag far behind the social developments of modern societies in terms of the full recognition and equal participation of women. For some, the rise of feminism is part of the modern process of secularization, but it can also be seen as such an immense consciousness revolution in human history that it can be called a "spiritual revolution" (Daly, 1973), for it points to new religious and spiritual developments which affirm the resacralization of the body, earth, nature, sexuality, and the celebration of community.

From a historical point of view it is important to realize that the vision of universal equality, justice, love, and peace, which inspired the first wave of the women's

movement in the West in the early nineteenth century, was not only based on Enlightenment ideas. Many of the early feminists felt empowered by the teachings of the Hebrew and Christian Bible and were fired by a strong religious commitment, whether Christian or Jewish. The religious roots of feminism are not always sufficiently acknowledged by secular feminists, although some scholars of religion and also some historians, for example Gerda Lerner (1993), have documented these historical links extensively. It was not only religious beliefs, such as being created in the image of God, that motivated nineteenth-century women pioneers; many religious women became actively engaged in social reform movements, teaching, and preaching. It has been rightly said that women spoke in public by gaining access to the pulpit before they obtained a platform for speaking in politics. In their battle for equal access to education and professional training, women also lobbied to be admitted to theological seminaries and university courses. Women's admission to theological studies, in very small numbers from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, but especially during the second half of the twentieth century, has been the most important single factor in making women theologically literate, thus enabling them to engage in and contribute to theological debates on their own terms. However, Harvard Divinity School did not admit women students until 1955, and the same or even a much later date applies probably to most other mainstream theological faculties, not only in Western societies, but all over the world.

In the USA and Europe, feminist theological studies in Christianity as well as Judaism really took off from the 1970s onwards, followed over the years by academic developments in other countries and religions around the world. A new scholarly interest in the wider topic of women in world religions, and feminist topics of enquiry in the field of religious studies, developed in parallel with feminist theology. During the late eighteenth, nineteenth, and even twentieth centuries several outstanding women scholars had studied and written on world religions, but they mostly held no official teaching positions in universities nor did they necessarily write on women and religion, nor have their earlier contributions received the acknowledgement they deserve.

In the past, male scholars sometimes made women and religion the object of their study and collected a considerable amount of historical and descriptive data in this field. But it is only with the arrival of the second wave of feminism and of feminist critical theory that more analytical studies of women, religion, and gender developed (see Constance Buchanan, "Women's Studies" in Eliade, 1987, 15: 433–40). Women and religion are now no longer primarily an object of study for male authors, but it is women themselves who have become the subject and object of their own research. Numerous women scholars are now investigating the religious lives, experiences, rites, and beliefs of women, and are critiquing what men have formerly written about women from a one-sided, and often mistaken, perspective which left much of the specificity of their religious lives and rituals out of the picture. The early collection of articles in *Unspoken Worlds: Women's Religious Lives in Non-Western Cultures* (Falk and Gross, 1980; now republished (2001) with new contributions) is a fine example of this new kind of scholarship where theoretically informed gender perspectives have produced new data. Gross produced pioneering work on methodology in women's studies on religion from the mid-1970s onwards and spoke early of a "paradigm shift" in religious studies, as did Carol Christ, Rosemary Ruether, and other scholars.

Women scholars in North America led the way, but were soon followed by women in Europe. The women students of Harvard Divinity School founded a Women's Caucus in 1970 which laid the foundation for a regular "Women's Studies in Religion" program, begun in 1973 and leading to a regular series of new publications. The American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, the foremost gathering of religion scholars in the world, included from 1974 onwards a regular section on "Women and Religion." It now also has groups specifically concerned with "Feminist Theory and Religious Reflection," "Men's Studies in Religion," "Lesbian-Feminist Issues in Religion," and "Gay Men's Religious Issues." The International Association for the History of Religions (IAHR), which meets only every five years, took longer to recognize these new developments, but gave some attention to women and religion topics from 1980 onwards. If not a whole section, at least a panel on Religion and Gender was organized for the IAHR Rome Congress of 1990 (see King, 1995), and gender topics have been included in one way or another in subsequent congresses, based on research by both women and men scholars. In Europe in 1986, women scholars from all parts of Europe founded the European Society of Women in Theological Research (ESWTR), which holds bi-annual, multi-lingual conferences in different European countries on research topics in theology and religious studies. It also sponsors a number of regular publications and provides an important support network for women scholars teaching in universities and colleges, and those holding no official academic position.

If the turn to feminist studies in religion represents a first paradigm shift, the more recent focus on gender studies in religion provides another one. This is why I speak of a "double paradigm shift" in the heading above, but this expression is perhaps still too tame for describing what is really happening. We are not dealing simply with a mere shift, but with a shaking of foundations, a radical remapping of our intellectual and academic landscape, and with a re-positioning of bodies of knowledge that relate to religion. This is why the consciousness revolution is intrinsically connected to a spiritual revolution, as mentioned earlier, even though Mary Daly (1973) dismissively speaks of gender studies as mere "blender studies." This may be so from a minority feminist separatist point of view, but the application of feminist theoretical insights to both women and men, and to the new men's studies and their deconstruction and reconstruction of masculinities in relation to women's redefined discourse on femininity and gender relations, will generally find wider resonance than separatist concerns, whether they be those of women or men.

To date, women's scholars in religion have produced an impressive range of scholarship in theology and religious studies from an explicitly feminist and/or a wider, more inclusive gender perspective. In practice, however, far more works on women and religion continue to be produced than on gender and religion, which is a more recent, newer and more inclusive approach. Apart from a few earlier publications, which have assumed the status of a "classic" in the field and therefore deserve special mention, for lack of space my discussion can only refer to a small selection of works published since 1990. These will give readers an idea of the burgeoning field of religion and gender and include bibliographical references to earlier publications not mentioned here.

A good example of the still prevailing "religion blindness" is the one-volume *Reader's Guide to Women's Studies* (Amico, 1998) which contains no separate article

on "religion." The earlier 16-volume standard reference work on religion, *The Encyclopedia of Religion* (Eliade, 1987), by contrast, is strongly marked by "gender blindness." It has no entries on gender or even patriarchy, and very little on women in religion, but it includes articles on "Androcentrism" and "Women's Studies." Its lack of concern for women's contribution to and their place in world religions has been remedied by the publication of the excellent two volume *Encyclopedia of Women and World Religion* (Young, 1999). Its "Gender Studies" article states:

> Some feminist thinkers have argued that a focus on "women" does not challenge gender roles and the inequality these roles support but rather may actually reinscribe them . . . Yet gender studies can also be appropriated to conservative ends. For example, the shift from "women" to "gender" can be used to extend androcentric bias, restoring masculinity to the center of analysis without taking on any of the feminist insights about the production and enforcement of sexual difference . . . In religious studies . . . the project of women's empowerment and agency has been crucially linked to an expanding catalogue of identity and difference: womanist, *mujerista,* lesbian, Asian, Asian-American, Native American, and so on (this list can never be completed). The American Academy of Religion now recognizes the importance of such scholarship and concerns with groups and sections like "womanist theology" and "lesbian feminist issues in religion." . . . In short, *gender studies* names part of a field that is itself a complex matrix of variously articulated, overlapping, but also contradictory parts. In the end, that no one term or name will do may be not a shortcoming but a strength. (Young, 1999, I: 363, 364)

The impact of gender discussions on the development of a Christian "theology of gender" is analyzed in detail in Elaine Graham's book *Making the Difference. Gender, Personhood and Theology* (1995). Further insights are found in Kathleen O'Grady et al. (1998). The discussion is an ongoing one, but it is clear that the feminist approach, with its pluralism of perspectives and methods, distinguishes contemporary women's studies in religion from traditional studies of both women and religion. But the complexity of gender-related religious symbols, teachings, and practices requires a gender-inclusive rather than an exclusively woman-centred analysis. The historical and systematic account of any religious phenomenon must now include at least two narratives and perspectives, not just one. As in other disciplines, the new discipline of men's studies in religion, largely supported by gay and queer theories, make use of the insights and achievements of feminist scholarship, but lacks some of the urgency of women's studies. Though more recent and not as large a field as women's studies in religion, men's studies in religion are concerned with a critical examination of religion and masculinities, but this still remains largely confined to studies of Judaism and Christianity (Boyd et al., 1996). Lesbian, gay, and queer studies perhaps more than any other field have contested the traditional gender ascriptions and arrangements normatively prescribed by past history, society, and religion.

A helpful overview and critical evaluation of the meaning of gender in the contemporary study of religions is provided by Randi Warne (2000a) who points out that although gender-critical studies of religion have become increasingly available, they remain a kind of "expertise of the margins":

> Gender as an analytical category, and gendering as a social practice, are central to religion, and the naturalization of these phenomena and their subsequent under-

> investigation have had a deleterious effect on the adequacy of the scholarship that the scientific study of religion has produced. Until the scientific study of religion becomes intentionally gender-critical in all of its operations, it will unwittingly reproduce, reify, and valorize the nineteenth-century gender ideology which marks its origins, rendering suspect any claims to the scientific generation of reliable knowledge it seeks to make. (Warne, 2000a: 153)

She also mentions that the scholarly debates about the study of religions profoundly mask their male-gender embeddedness at the level of theory construction and methodological application, with many practical effects on "the knowledge-making practices of the academy," leading to a two-tier system in the academic study of religion: "male/mainstream scholarship and the feminist scholarship of the margins," which has not yet decentred the androcentrism of the mainstream tradition (Warne, 2000b: 250).

Re-reading Religious Texts and Histories

Feminist scholars in religion have developed a sophisticated "hermeneutics of suspicion" regarding all previous scholarship. They have made great efforts to identify and eliminate the distorting "lenses of gender" which have so long discolored our reading of religious texts, events, and social practices. These distorting lenses are the hidden assumptions through which cultures categorize and evaluate males and females, constructing specific norms of masculinity and femininity. According to Sandra Lipsitz Bem (1993), these lenses consists of gender polarization, androcentrism, and biological essentialism. Instead of looking *through* these lenses at the world, we can now look *at* them for what they are, and what they do to our humanity. In the study of religions this means that we have to discern critically the hidden gendering of religious texts and histories that has been handed down to us as "tradition," prescribing normative gender identities and roles.

The modern re-reading of religious texts first began in the late nineteenth century when Elizabeth Cady Stanton realized that it was insufficient to campaign for women's political and legal equality without looking at the foundational Judaeo-Christian texts of the Bible, where the roots of women's subordinate position in society could be found. With an indomitable spirit and great courage, and with the help of other like-minded women, she created an excised version of the biblical text as *The Woman's Bible* (1895–8). Considered outrageous at the time, this is now hailed as a pioneering publication, even though it no longer meets contemporary standards of a far more differentiated critique of the androcentric language and patriarchal thought world of the Bible. The field of feminist biblical hermeneutics and critical gender analysis of biblical texts, undertaken by both Jewish and Christian authors, is vast and highly specialized. An overview is provided by Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (1993, 1994).

Feminist critical assessments of the foundational sacred texts of world religions other than Judaism and Christianity have also begun to be developed, but there is not yet a single volume which brings them all together. Cross-cultural studies of sacred literature with a strong critical gender perspective cannot be undertaken by one scholar alone, but only by a team of specialists with the necessary competence

to cover Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish, Christian, Islamic, Sikh, Jain, and Zoroastrian studies as well as Japanese, Chinese, Australian Aboriginal, and African religious traditions. Serinity Young's *Anthology of Sacred Texts By and About Women* (1994) brings together useful excerpts from a wide range of primary texts from world religions, taken from sacred scriptures, law books, creation myths, hagiographies, folklore, and tribal narratives. These texts clearly show how the image and status of women has been prescribed, and both idealized and vilified, in an often similar manner in the sacred literature of different religions. Yet this work provides us more with readings *about* women than with the voices of women themselves. Most of them are cast in a full androcentric mould, and only occasionally do we find gender-inclusive or gender-neutral passages. But even if we could gain access to more women's voices, it is highly questionable whether such texts would give us enough to reconstruct women's histories and experiences. Most of the time we are only able to discover fragments and paradoxes from the religious worlds of the women of the past.

Yet historical scholarship has been adept in retrieving a wealth of materials which bring into relief a much more nuanced and differentiated picture about women and gender relations in religion than hitherto assumed. This is true of Egyptian, Greek, and Roman religions, of women and men in ancient Judaism and the formative period of Christianity, and in medieval, premodern, and modern periods of history. Religious texts and histories have been reexamined as to the presence and absence of women, their words and silences. Lost sources and visions have been recovered and reclaimed as women's rich religious heritage.

In terms of history this has been nowhere more evident than in the study of the European Middle Ages, where great insights have been gained into women's lives, and into the religious aspirations and experiences of numerous women saints and mystics, often unknown until quite recently.(See Sue Morgan's article in Young, 1999, I: 432–5 for an overview of feminist revisions of religious history.) A whole new field of "matristics" has emerged which leads to a reconfiguration of Christian history by bringing into the present the decisive contributions made by ancient, medieval, and early modern "foremothers" to the Christian tradition (Børresen and Vogt, 1993). Women scholars have been leading the way in tracing the biblical, early Christian, and medieval "counter traditions" of women's religious participation and formative agency, not always recorded or fully acknowledged by the dominant sources and authorities.

Historical details about women's religious history and wider gender relations in different religions are now coming to light through the detailed scholarship undertaken by specialists in many fields. Rich descriptive data on individual religious traditions are found in the contributions to *The Annual Review of Women in World Religions* from 1991 onwards. Theoretically critical and constructive work on all religions is regularly published in the *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion,* founded in 1985.

A critical analysis of religious texts and histories in terms of their specific "lenses of gender" provides us with some intriguing systematic and comparative perspectives. These relate to external and internal aspects of religion, and reveal the interstructured dynamics of power, both institutional and personal, and of authority and gendered hierarchies, which have patterned religious life throughout history.

The first perspective concerns the respective roles and status which different religious traditions accord to men and women. What access do women have to equal participation in religious life, to religious authority and leadership, when compared with men? Have women formed their own religious communities and created rites of their own? Are there rites from which they are excluded? Do they have the authority to teach and interpret the foundational texts and central practices of the tradition? Comparative historical studies have shown that women generally hold higher positions in archaic, tribal, and non-institutionalized religions than in highly differentiated religious traditions, which have evolved complex structures and hierarchical organizations over a long period of time. Women magicians, shamans, healers, visionaries, prophetesses, and priestesses are found in primal and ancient religions, and in tribal and folk religions today. Detailed historical and comparative studies have also shown that, during the formative period of a religion, women often play a leading role or are closely associated with the work of a religious founder, whereas in subsequent developments they are relegated to the background and lose much of their independent agency. (See for example the women in early Buddhism, in the Jesus movement and early Christianity, or those associated with Muhammad's work, or with nineteenth-century Christian missionary movements.)

The second perspective of investigation moves from the institutional perspective to the more difficult and fluid area of religious language and thought, raising challenging questions about the entire symbolic order and the role of the imaginary in religion. How are women and men described in different sacred scriptures? Do different religious traditions project images of women which are as strong and powerful as those of men? or does their language remain exclusive and androcentric, disempowering women and emphasising their subordination? Do the different religious traditions possess the symbolic resources to support the full equality and partnership of women and men in our twenty-first century society? What is the gender pattern of their language of creation and salvation? What are the gendered symbols of the sacred? What God language is used, or what metaphors are drawn upon in speaking about ultimate reality or the disclosure of the Spirit? The gendered language of religion is equally inscribed in religious attitudes to the body, to sexuality, and to spirituality (for comparative data see Becher, 1990; for a historical study of the Christian tradition see Wiesner-Hanks, 2000a). The sacralization of virginity as well as the development of asceticism and monasticism have fueled profoundly misogynist views in the gender dynamics and teachings of different religions, but the history of their influence still remains to be written.

The narrow prison of gender symbols reflects historically and socially located human perceptions of divine immanence and transcendence. Dominant androcentric images of God have been symbols of power and oppression for many women. Now recognized as such, contemporary feminist theologians engaged with the reconstruction of the Jewish and Christian traditions have radically called them into question. Questions about a feminine Divine, about language and symbols of the Spirit can be applied with much benefit to the analysis of religious texts and teachings of the past, but they have even more significantly moved to centre stage in contemporary philosophical and theological discussions. Their special fascination arises from

the linguistic turn of postmodernism and the influence of psycholinguistics, especially in its revolutionary use by French feminist theorists (see the readings in Joy et al., 2001; Jantzen, 1998).

This is directly linked to the third, and perhaps most significant, perspective which relates less to an external than to the most internal, personal aspect of religion, that of religious experience. How far are religious experiences differently engendered? That question can be applied to both the ordinary experiences of day-to-day religious practice and to the extraordinary experiences of religious virtuosi, whether especially enlightened human beings or religious exemplars, such as saints and mystics.

What have been women's own religious experiences in the past as distinct from those of men? How far have women's experiences also been differently articulated through using distinct metaphors, concepts, and genres of their own? How far have women's thoughts and writings on religion entered at all into the official historiographies of religious institutions or contributed to the systematic articulations of faith found in theological and philosophical traditions of learning? There is also the additional question of how far different religions validate mainly the ordinary lives of women with their domestic and family duties or whether, by contrast, they encourage them also to have a spiritual space of their own and seek non-ordinary paths of spiritual devotion and perfection?

All world religions know of women saints and mystics who have provided spiritual counsel, guidance, and informal, largely non-institutionalized leadership through the ages. It comes as no surprise that such "women of spirit," possessing spiritual power or the "power out of holiness" (Eleanor McLaughlin in McLaughlin and Ruether, 1979), which are so much admired in some medieval and early modern women saints, exercise much fascination today. These outstanding religious women of the past provide strong role models in terms of female identity, autonomy, and agency, showing much inner strength in the face of much social and religious opposition. The comparative study of the writings of female and male mystics from a perspective of gender differences is only in its infancy but it raises fundamental questions, not least for contemporary religious practice and the understanding of the spirituality by both genders.

Religions are highly gendered fields charged with sacred power which, until modern times, have been the ultimate source of legitimation for all political and social power and authority. The great historical religions have established strong institutional hierarchies, which have been symbolically related to sacred spiritual hierarchies, where the male gender has always been dominant and the female subordinate. This strong gender asymmetry with its inbuilt unequal evaluation of male and female throughout history is unacceptable and morally repugnant to many contemporaries, once they have thought through the implications of democratic freedom and equal human rights for both men and women. The consciousness revolution of a critical gender awareness therefore poses an entirely new historical challenge to the established religions of the world. At present, it is still too early to predict what the future outcome of a radical rearrangement of gender constructions and gender relations might be on existing religious traditions. It may well be that the space and flexibility for constructive gender negotiations and symbolic reordering will vary widely between different religions, as well as among the various subgroups of the same religious tradition.

Reconstructing Religious Traditions and Transforming Religious Practice

From the contemporary theoretical perspective of critical gender analysis and deconstruction, and from a practically engaged position committed to the liberation of women and full gender equity, the decisive question is: Given our ever increasing historical and critical knowledge, what of past religious traditions remains viable today? What aspects of our global religious heritage help to promote, rather than hinder, the full humanity of both genders and all people? Many feminists, including post-Christian feminists, reject all religious beliefs and practices as simply oppressive and redundant, whereas others argue for the possibility of reformation, and work for the reconstruction and transformation of their specific religious tradition.

Rita Gross has long argued that feminism represents both a new academic method and a new social vision for religion (see Gross, 1993; 1996). For her, the term "feminist theology" is not restricted to Judaism and Christianity, as now widely established in general usage, but applies cross-culturally to the feminist critique and reconstruction of all religious traditions. However, reconstructive work so far has been developed most fully in Christianity and Judaism, although Gross's own *Buddhism after Patriarchy* (1993) provides a pioneering example of a contemporary reinterpretation of a non-Western religious tradition from a critical gender perspective. Examples from other religions are found in the publication *After Patriarchy: Feminist Transformations of the World Religions* (Cooey et al., 1991), and in the widely influential work on Judaism by Judith Plaskow, *Standing Again at Sinai* (1990). Systematic work on women and gender in Islam has also been steadily published since the early 1990s, with the works of Fatima Mernissi (1991) and Leila Ahmed (1992) perhaps best known. Further studies include Stowasser (1994); Mir-Hosseini (2000); and Roald (2001).

Christian feminist theology has grown into such a large specialized field that two valuable reference works have been published in English (and another in German – the first to appear, in 1991), which synthesize much that has been achieved in historical and systematic scholarship: Russell and Clarkson (1996), dedicated to "The Women's World Wide Web"; and Isherwood and McEwan (1996). A fine example of creative theological reinterpretation and reconstruction is Elizabeth A. Johnson's *She Who Is* (1993), whereas a general overview on feminist discussions about God is provided by Mary Grey (2001). More substantial studies with extensive bibliographical information are listed in Børresen (1995). Critical assessments of the achievements of Christian feminist theology are found in Chopp and Davaney (1997), and Sawyer and Collier (1999).

The cross-cultural critique of feminism as a Western, white, middle-class phenomenon has a wide impact on feminist theology. This has now produced a range of different feminist, womanist and other gender-oriented theologies which are evidence of the influence of feminist and gender thinking on religion on a global scale. The Euro-North-American hegemony in gender studies has been decentred by critical approaches to the implications of religion and gender in imperialist and orientalist discourses about the other. Examples of such critical, pluralist approaches are found in King (1997), in Fiorenza (1996), and in Fiorenza and Copeland (1996) which also contains contributions on Jewish, Muslim and Buddhist feminist approaches.

Besides feminist theology, no other field has blossomed as much as contemporary cross-cultural goddess studies, named "*thealogy*" (by Naomi Goldenberg), in distinction to traditional theology, so much concerned with God-talk in male terms. This new constructive and systematic "model-building" of ultimate reality by using female images and metaphors has largely drawn on the historical scholarship about goddesses of the ancient Mediterranean world. It has focused much less on goddesses in other cultural areas and religious traditions, such as Hinduism, although Hinduism probably manifests the most vibrant living goddess worship in the contemporary world. Hinduism also provides us with one of the historically richest traditions regarding feminine perceptions and embodiments of the Divine, whether conceptualized as the ultimate divine power or energy of *shakti* pulsating through cosmos and life, or in its myriad, celebrated goddesses, or in its awesome metaphysical concept of the Great Goddess or *Mahadevi*. The history of Hinduism possesses many inspiring symbolic resources for both genders, and its rich female symbolism can be personally and culturally empowering for women. However, today more than ever before, the uncomfortable question arises: What is the relationship between such exuberant female symbolism and the real lives of women within their concrete socio-empirical context? A religion with many goddesses does not necessarily affirm and enhance women's actual lives, as can be seen in many religions around the world.

Besides its historical aspects, the thealogical discourse on the goddess has wide ethical, ecological, and social implications, as it opens up "new religio-political possibilities" (see Raphael, 1999: 162). The goddess spirituality movement and its influential thealogy has some leading figures in Starhawk (1999) and Carol P. Christ (1998).

The greatest contribution of thealogy is probably the reaffirmation of female sacrality in seeing the life-giving powers of women's bodies linked to divine creative activity, which has led to a new "spiritual feminism" that is one of the contemporary transformations of religious practice (Raphael, 1996). Women have created their own rites and liturgies (Walker, 1990; Winter, 1991; see also "Ritual" and "Ritual Studies" in Young 1999, II, 844–6, 846–8). Much feminist spirituality or the woman-spirit movement has developed at the margins of or outside religious institutions and represents the invention of new religious traditions or the radical transformation of old ones.

Discussions on spirituality are reflected in and have been much shaped by Charlene Spretnak (1994), and the essays in *Womanspirit Rising. A Feminist Reader in Religion* (Christ and Plaskow, 1992; first published in 1979), and the more recent collection of Judith Plaskow and Carol P. Christ (1989). New approaches to spirituality from a more gender-balanced perspective are also found among Christian and Jewish groups (see "Spirituality" in Young, 1999, II, 942–4), and there is also a growing men's spirituality movement (Young, 1999, II: 648–9).

The transformation of religious practice also includes the adoption of gender-inclusive language in religious readings and prayers, and institutional changes which give women access to official religious positions, such as admission to the priesthood in many Christian churches around the world, except in Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy, or women's new opportunities to take up traditional paths of renunciation in Hinduism and become a guru in their own right.

Concluding Reflections

The mutual interaction between religion and gender can be studied at many different levels; it is not static, but is a dynamic and constantly changing relationship. Theoretical perspectives of gender studies can be brought to bear on past histories of religion, but also on the present, and the social practices of gendering linked to different religious beliefs, practices and institutions are now increasingly providing us with new objects of knowledge and study.

Religion and gender intersect in novel ways in new religious movements and groups, in the work of peace and environmental movements, in interreligious dialogue, but also in the revival of religious fundamentalisms around the world, where the language of religion and gender is politically appropriated and manipulated to create new forms of exclusion (see Hawley, 1994). Another fascinating area is the growing global conversation about equal human rights for women and men, and the extraordinary tension which arises when the right to freedom of religion and belief clashes with other human rights, especially those of women (Svensson, 2000).

The perspectives of religion, history, and gender do not only apply to the past, to the memories we hold and reconstruct. They are of even greater significance and concern to history in the making, to the transformation of persons and communities in the present. There is now a truly bewildering array of positions on religion and gender. From a participatory hermeneutic of contemporary religion and gender studies it can be argued that if religion contributed so much to the construction of gendered identities in the past, it may also possess the necessary resources for their profound transformation, and thus contribute to women's and men's liberation from the dehumanizing prison of traditional gender roles in the future.

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Chapter Five

Gender Rules: Law and Politics

Susan Kingsley Kent

Law, Freud theorized in a number of his later works, first arose when a primitive band of brothers rose up to kill their authoritarian father, who had monopolized sexual access to the women in their tribe. Out of their shame and guilt in committing parricide and in engaging in sexual intercourse with women of close relation, they produced three rules – the taboos against parricide and incest, and the proclamation of equality amongst the brothers – which established, Freud argued, the foundation of law in human society (Pateman, 1988). In yet another example of the many efforts made over the course of centuries in virtually every culture in the world to explain how human societies and polities came into existence, Freud attributed to a conflict in gender and sexual relationships the development of a legal and political system that operated to bring civilization to prehistoric peoples. His story, of course, is no more accurate or real than any of those that had gone before, but it serves as a useful example of the ways in which gender and law and politics have been inextricably intertwined in myths about the origins of human society, in theories of law and politics, and in the workings of law and politics in everyday life. It gives vivid witness to Joan Scott's pathbreaking theory that gender – what we've construed to be the sexual differences between men and women – is one of the most significant and oft-used means by which we articulate and represent relations of power (Scott, 1988).

Almost everywhere we look, whether it be ancient Greece or Rome, medieval China or Europe, Renaissance Italy, precolonial Africa, pre-contact North America, early modern England, or revolutionary America or France, political elites told themselves and their subjects and constituents stories about how their societies had first emerged and how the right to exercise power and to make law had come to rest with them. In virtually all of these cultures, whether ruled by divine-right absolute monarchs, hereditary aristocracies, or councils of citizens, law and politics depended upon a model of familial, and thus gender and sexual, relations for their conceptualization. Kinship, it appears, served as the model not only for most forms of social organization but of most forms of political ordering as well.

This may seem commonsensical, almost natural, but it is vital to remember that family, gender, and sexual arrangements are always fashioned within particular political, social, economic, and cultural circumstances. In consequence, they have differing effects for individuals according to gender; any legal and political world-view that depends upon a certain familial model will replicate those differing effects for individuals according to gender. Thus, a social order based on patriarchy, in which the law of the father over his wife and children prevails, underpins a political ordering in which authority rests with men, producing laws and relations of authority in which women and under-age males suffer disabilities. Attempts to ameliorate such political and legal disabilities necessarily have to challenge the legitimating theories or cosmologies that inform them. This situation helps to explain why eighteenth-century French revolutionaries turned to an idiom of brotherhood or fraternity to justify and narrate their toppling of their absolute monarch; and why feminists in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, looking to implement a social and political order that would recognize and value women as full citizens, sought out historical or anthropological examples of matriarchy through which they could demonstrate that a previous "natural" order of beneficent and egalitarian women-controlled and -dominated societies had been overthrown by authoritarian, inegalitarian patriarchal orders. In both instances, they sought to establish their own mythologies of law and politics that legitimated their contemporary political aims.

Patriarchy has an ancient pedigree, arising, it appears, at about the same time that ownership of property by individual households became predominant in the societies of the Near and Middle East around 3000 BCE and later in India, Asia, Mesoamerica, and the Mediterranean. The heads of households, or patriarchs (the word deriving from the Latin for father, *pater*), in the earliest societies for which we have written records, may have sought to maintain their control over property by controlling the actions of the members of their households, especially the women, thus ensuring that their legitimate offspring, and not some spurious claimant, inherited their wealth. The earliest forms of political units derived from family and kin groups in which fatherhood actually and/or figuratively served as the model for the exercise of power in larger clan, tribal, village, or state structures. The making of law and the exercise of power have thus always been gendered, and as far as the historical record can tell us, patriarchal in nature, though the actual playing out of day-to-day political operations might vary considerably, as we shall see below. In the ancient Middle East kingdoms of Mesopotamia and Egypt, and in other, more modern states like medieval China or post-revolutionary France seeking to impose or maintain patriarchal regimes, for example, rulers implemented laws that regulated women's marital, sexual, and reproductive practices, making them subjects of their husbands and fathers as well as of their kings. In sixth-century BCE Greece, for example, Solon the "lawgiver" and so-called second founder of Athens, reorganized the matrimonial system in the process of creating a new political community, the famous Athenian "democracy." In the aftermath of a civil war in which poor householders had arrayed themselves against rich ones, he instituted a political system in which landless as well as landowning men become citizens. He did so by equalizing the marriage portions, the dowries, that brides might bring to their marriages, making women a kind of placating circulating commodity. Because rich fathers could not endow their daughters with greater dowries than poor ones, rich and poor households could exchange

women in an effort to ameliorate tensions based on wealth, reduce the risk of civil war, and establish a peaceful polity (Leduc, 1992).

In the developing states of the ancient world, claims to rule and to make law often rested upon references to male divinity: Egyptian pharaohs, Mesopotamian princes, and Chinese, Japanese, or Mayan emperors recited narratives that linked their families to a single masculine deity who was credited with having created life, thus providing sacred legitimation for what was no more than the bald exercise of power by one family over all others. Within the dynasties constituted as divine, female relatives might and did stand in as rulers when male heirs failed to materialize in order to preserve the dynastic line, their claim to rule deriving from their familial relationship to the deceased king or missing successor, not to any right they enjoyed themselves as women. In Egypt, for example, queens like Nefertiti and Hatshepsut ruled in place of male pharaohs. Hatshepsut, significantly, appears bearded in all pictoral or plastic depictions of her, the beard being the emblem of Egyptian royalty, a reminder that rulership was a masculine perogative. Wu Zhao, a Tang empress who usurped the authority of the male line and ruled in her own right from 690 to 705 CE as the only female emperor in Chinese history, had to construct a kind of cosmology that legitimated her unprecedented and shocking action. She created a Chinese character for the concept of human being that foregrounded the process of birth as flowing from one woman, a function usually presented as the result of the masculine, dominant, creative *yin* drawing forth power from the feminine, properly inferior, receptive *yang*. She also fashioned a character for her first name that showed the sun and the moon moving over heaven, a depiction that suggested not simply that Wu was the Daughter of Heaven, as emperors were Sons of Heaven, but might in fact be heaven itself (Tung, 2000).

Biological women might rule as pharaohs or emperors but the gender of rule was masculine, a trait that did not always correspond to a male person. Under the Tang dynasty (618–907 CE), court ministers sometimes represented their relationship to the emperor through the hierarchical masculine and feminine principles of *yin* and *yang*, in which the male creative force of the emperor activates the receptive female power of his imperial servants. Courtiers further articulated their servile status *vis à vis* the emperor by styling themselves *minister-concubines*, a clear reference to the masculinity of the ruler and the femininity of those he ruled. One of the most effective monarchs of England, indeed of Europe, Elizabeth I, recognized the longstanding gender principle of rule when she reassured her subjects in the late sixteenth century, "I know I have the body of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart and stomach of a king." She referred to herself as a "Prince" and claimed for herself the qualities of masculinity that legitimated her royal power. In more modern times, English and American reformers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries based their claims for political participation on their "manliness," a set of conditions that not every male person possessed, and without which they should be excluded from political life. Aristocrats and working-class men, for instance, in the eyes of bourgeois English "radicals" and American patriots, lacked the requisite manliness to govern either themselves or their respective nations; the former because they seemed in thrall to women and to "effeminate" French fashions, the latter because they lacked the financial means that gave them independence. In both cases, their masculinity, though not their maleness, was in question (Colley, 1992; Clark, 1995; Kann, 1998).

Even states that eschewed monarchical rule for that of citizens, like republican Rome or "democratic" Athens, drew upon familial patriarchal models to organize political life. Romans understood their society to be a family and arranged their political and legal offices according to the principles of *patria potestas*, fatherly authority, so that magistrates, always male, behaved like *paterfamilias* and ruled in consultation with a council of other *paterfamilias*; and citizens, always male, recognized themselves as unequal to one another, just as they would be within families depending upon their age or birth order and whether their father still lived. Women enjoyed no rights to citizenship and could not hold office, just as they lacked any legal authority over their children within families, even after their husbands had died (Lacey, 1986; Thomas, 1992). Women, Romans believed, did not possess the moral or mental abilities that would enable them to enjoy legal capacity to look after the interests of anyone but themselves.

Women had no rights to citizenship in Athens, either, a situation explained and justified by Aristotle in terms that reverberated across the centuries right down to our own time. Aristotle's political theory, the stories he told to legitimate the legal and political regime of his time, explicitly constructed the realm of politics as masculine (Brown, 1988). Politics, according to Aristotle, provided men – and only men of independent wealth, at that – the sole means by which they could achieve their full human potential; the polis, he insisted, was the "higher thing," and the place where man, "by nature," was "intended to live." The "self-sufficiency" demonstrated by men who headed households based on land, or *oikos*, enabled them to subordinate their private interests to the public good, to demonstrate the virtue required to act politically.

For Aristotle and countless others across the centuries, women had no political function, for they – like men who did not enjoy independence and who were classified, in political terms, as feminine – could not, by their nature, display the self-sufficiency necessary to transcend personal concerns. Self-sufficiency meant freedom from material necessity, especially of the necessities associated with the body. Women, for the Greeks, appeared to be all body, creatures in thrall to their physical organization who could not free themselves as men could and should strive to do in order to reach the highest good, the "good life" of politics. Politics, in other words, and the criteria of those who could participate in the polis, were explicitly cast in terms antithetical to femininity. Where women for the Greeks, and for many other cultures, too, demonstrated by their weakness of mind, lack of self-control, their appetites and sexual desires an existence closer to animality than to humanness, men could show through freedom from material and bodily necessity their capacity to act politically. Because femininity seemed so close to animality in its apparent enslavement to bodily needs, and because humanity was defined by the Greeks in opposition to animality, femininity threatened men's status as human beings, their capacity for freedom and autonomy, and had to be suppressed. The polis, where men could best demonstrate their self-sufficiency, their virtue, their distance from femininity, had, in consequence, to be an exclusively masculine realm. Aristotle's thinking about politics and about the place of men and women in them was taken up by later Western political theorists with the recovery and rehabilitation of classical ancient thought during the Renaissance.

During Europe's medieval period, the centralized government and codified laws of the Roman and Carolingian empires gave way to smaller units of territorial power

presided over by local chieftains and their armed retainers. In the absence of a single ruler who could dominate over others, and in the face of almost endemic warfare, local individual families came to serve as vital sources of stability. Under the feudal system characteristic of Europe between the ninth and thirteenth centuries, political power became fragmented and personal; it rested in the hands of that landed military ruler or lord who could command the loyalty of the warriors around him, the knights who pledged their homage, a term deriving from the French word for man, *homme*. "I will be your man," they pledged their lords in return for prerogatives of wealth and behavior that set them apart from the vast majority of men and women of this period and constituted them as an aristocracy, explicitly betraying the masculine nature of the warrior societies that comprised feudal Europe. But despite the overwhelmingly male composition of the ruling duchies, principalities, and kingdoms that dotted the European countryside, the elite wives, sisters, and daughters of local rulers and knights found a great deal of scope within which they might exercise power and administer the law, mostly as the agents of their husbands, fathers, or brothers, but sometimes in their own right as well. As members of powerful families, they might enjoy power themselves.

Despite the existence of laws that prohibited women from holding political office, serving as commanders of armed men, presiding over manorial courts, or sitting on royal or municipal councils – all justified by earlier Roman beliefs that women lacked intelligence, were weak-minded (*imbecilitas sexus*), wily, and avaricious – elite women did all of these things (Shahar, 1983). The power of feudal lords derived from their ownership of the source of wealth in their societies, land. To the extent that elite women owned land, as they did increasingly during and after the reign of Charlemagne in the ninth century CE, or in place of their husbands and fathers, who were often away from the manor engaging in military campaigns, women carried out the functions of law, taxation, justice, administration, and war that attended the possession of estates. Abbesses, presiding over church lands, commanded knights to fight in battles. Queens and noblewomen drew up law codes, like the *Usages of Barcelona*, one of the first written law codes to appear after the demise of the Carolingian empire. And between 1100 and 1600, twenty queens reigned as legitimate monarchs, not as regents for their under-age sons or absent husbands or fathers (Wolf, 1993).

The regularity with which women exercised power and their great visibility in medieval times excited much comment from disapproving males. The French conjured up an ancient piece of legislation, the Salic Law, which, they said, prohibited women from ruling as queens in their own right because they lacked, inherently as women, juridical authority. The monk Liutprand of Cremona attributed the power of what he called the "pornocracy" of women to their shameful sexual proclivities and their corruption of men. How else explain that Ermengarde, Marquess of Ivrea, "held the chief authority in all Italy" except to aver that "the cause of her power, shameful though it may be even to mention it, was that she carried on carnal commerce with everyone, prince and commoner alike. . . . Ermengarde's beauty, in this corruptible flesh, roused the fiercest jealousies among men: for she would give to some the favours she refused to others" (McNamara and Wemple, 1977)? His statement reflects the widespread and deep-seated Christian understanding of women, drawn from the story of Adam and Eve, as especially carnal, lustful creatures

responsible for Original Sin and man's fall from grace, a depiction shared by and carried forward into political thought by one of the most significant theorists of his or anyone's day, Niccolo Machiavelli.

The political ideas laid out in Machiavelli's *The Prince* and other writings constitute a shift in world-view concomitant with that of the Renaissance *weltanshauung* as a whole. In medieval times, the stability of any given European society depended upon the mutual dependence of individuals and groups of people, organized into estates, upon one another. Medieval Europeans imagined their social order to be a "great chain of being," with God the Father and the angels at the top, followed by monarchs, aristocrats, and everyone else. Women held their various positions on the chain by virtue of their relationship to men as wives or daughters; as women, they were inferior and subordinate to men, as God had demonstrated in making Eve out of Adam's rib. The Renaissance introduced a different, more recognizably modern understanding of humans and human society in which autonomy, not dependence, was the goal for which men strived; freedom and self-government on the part of individuals and of political communities became positive ends. In this new society, dependence took on overtones of femininity and childishness, characteristics to be avoided by men as much as possible, as they threatened to destroy men's autonomy, their very manliness. Machiavelli expressed the concerns about masculinity felt by many of his contemporaries in his near obsession with the concept of "*virtu*."

Drawn from the Latin *vir*, which means "man," *virtu* signified the capacity of human beings to govern themselves. Whether that capacity derived from God, from nature, or from reason, as later Enlightenment thinkers would have it, the self-knowledge and self-command articulated in the ideal of *virtu* enabled "political man" to subordinate private interests to the public good. For Aristotle, as we have seen, the *oikos*, or landed household, provided the requisite material basis upon which independence and thus *virtu* and citizenship rested. Machiavelli substituted the bearing of arms for the possession of *oikos*. It was a preeminently masculine quality; indeed, the possession of virtue signalled the existence of a "real man," a man ready and able to take action on behalf of himself and the political community (Pitkin, 1984). Just as *virtu* constituted the highest form of manliness for Machiavelli, its opposite, *effeminato*, signified the despicable qualities of passivity and dependence, the qualities most closely associated with women and those that disqualified them and men who resembled them from the realm of politics.

The most troubling and difficult challenges virtuous men faced in public, political life were those thrown up by *fortuna*, or fortune. The term has a long etymology, but in Machiavelli's usage it conjures up forces – whether deriving from nature or from God – of unpredictability, caprice, mystery, and subversiveness that intrude on men's efforts to control the circumstances of their lives and of their states. For Machiavelli, fortune is quite obviously gendered: arrayed against the masculine virtue, it acts as the feminine principle that must be "mastered" if men are to prevail in their personal and public lives. In this sense, politics constitutes an arena in which sexual battle takes place, in which the sexual conquest of women serves as the requisite outcome if virtuous men, whether princes or republicans, are to succeed in furthering their political goals. Women cannot be allowed to engage in political life for they will bring chaos, violence, and upheaval to societies. As Machiavelli warned in one

chapter of his *Discourses* entitled "How a State Falls Because of Women," "women have caused much destruction, have done great harm to those who govern cities, and have occasioned many divisions in them. . . . I say, then, that absolute princes and governors of republicans are to take no small account of this matter" (Brown, 1988; Pitkin, 1984).

Machiavelli's ideas about women and politics, however modern his theories about the political behavior of states and rulers might be, offered nothing new of substance to debates about women's political participation. They closely resembled the thinking of classical Greeks, Romans, and Christian Fathers, who believed that Eve's transgressions had stained all women with her sin. Construed as insatiably lustful, with sexual appetites greater than men's, women of the early modern period were perceived to be potential agents of damnation and destruction, requiring the mastery of men to preserve their propriety and honor, and the stability of the social and political order itself. It was not for nothing that Elizabeth I placed enormous emphasis upon her status as the virgin queen. In repudiating her sexuality, at least symbolically, she could better downplay her femininity and fashion herself a masculine ruler.

Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century American Indian women enjoyed a degree of respect in political affairs not evident among their European sisters. Many North American tribes whose cosmology contained the concept of an Earth Mother who acted as the creative agent in all mundane and divine affairs traced their lineage through the female line and determined their residency on the basis of matrilocality. Elder women among the Iroquois chose the men who served as hereditary peace chiefs; they held council meetings of their own and participated in those of the men of their tribes through a selected speaker. Through the indirect means of controlling food, supplies, and the behavior of the young men of their lineage, they might exercise great influence on tribal decisions to go to war or seek peace. Although it is an exaggeration to state, as one anthropologist did in 1934, that Iroquois "women enjoy a status at least equal, if not superior to that of men. Indeed, of all the peoples of the earth, the Iroquois approach most closely to that hypothetical form of society known as the 'matriarchate,'" they did engage in political affairs of great import to their societies (Prezzano, 1997). Illiniwek women acted as chiefs in their villages and at winter hunting campsites. In 1540, De Soto encountered a woman presiding over a temple town on the Savannah River. Sister chiefs complemented their brothers among the Natchez and carried out functions Europeans associated with men, such as leading war parties and council meetings (Koehler, 1997).

Many precolonial African cosmologies, like many of their indigenous American counterparts, relied upon a model of gender relations that was dualistic in nature. That is, unlike in Western theories of origin and social order, women were not perceived to be defective or deficient men. Certainly they were regarded as lacking in certain male characteristics, but men, similarly, were understood to be lacking in certain female aspects; this situation made it necessary to combine male with female elements to ensure that the world worked as it was designed to. Within a cosmology gendered in this way, conceptions of law and authority might very well require the fusion of male and female power. Among the Yaka of what is now the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for instance, kingship rituals enacted a rebirthing of a chief that connected him with the fertility of women; indeed, his distinction from and superior position *vis à vis* his subjects depended upon the fact that he possessed both

masculine virility and feminine fecundity. Amongst the Moundang people of what is now called Chad, the king was female as well as male. Ceremonies of Yoruba royal investituture performed an interweaving of male and female power in which the power of reproduction served to undergird the political authority of the chief (Herbert, 1993).

The presence of women chiefs in many sub-Saharan African societies was not, as it was regarded in the West, an anomaly; rather, these women legitimately exercised power in their own right, responsible for promoting their sons' interests as kings, protecting them from their enemies, and looking after the interests of the State by checking, when necessary, what might be their sons' abusive exercise of power. The nature of queenly power was often lost on late-nineteenth-century European colonial officials whose Western preconceptions about gender and power caused them to regard female chiefs as exotic, freakish, even witchlike, prevented them from grasping local situations, and ultimately impeded their ability to control their colonial subjects (Hansen, 2001). Among the Asante of western Africa, for instance, one *ahemaa*, or female ruler, Yaa Akyaa, exercised her considerable powers as queen mother to resist British efforts to gain control over her people after the formal establishment of the Gold Coast colony. So successful was she that the British finally felt compelled in 1896 to remove her and her son, Prempe I, to Sierra Leone, where she died in 1917 (Manuh, 2001).

Perhaps the best known and most influential of all the tales spun out to explain and legitimate political authority is that of social-contract theory, especially that associated with the writings of Englishman John Locke. In the late seventeenth century his works justified the overthrow of an absolute king and the establishment of constitutional monarchy and parliamentary rule, ushering in the regime of what we call liberalism. Locke justified the deposition of James II in 1688 by members of parliament on the grounds that the king had failed to live up to the terms of an original social contract by means of which human beings left behind an existence in the state of nature and established a civil society. This contract, he wrote, recognized the so-called "natural" rights of men to life, liberty, and property, and bound the parties to it – the ruler and the ruled – to certain obligations, failing to live up to which could cause the contract to be voided and the ruler overthrown. Locke's ideas reverberated throughout eighteenth-century Europe and North America, providing American colonists and French revolutionaries with a powerful legitimating tool as they built their arguments for their revolutionary actions. The doctrine of liberalism that emerged from Locke's political theory also provoked the creation of a somewhat coherent argument about women sharing in its precepts and would provide nineteenth- and twentieth-century feminists throughout the world with the ammunition they would need for their battles to bring women into the world of politics and gain for them recognition and respect as political actors.

Early-seventeenth-century Britons understood the world in which they lived to be fundamentally, properly, and irrevocably hierarchical. Hierarchies of gender mirrored those of status based on landownership in rural areas and on guild structures in the towns. Just as subjects of the crown knew themselves to be subordinate to their monarch, farmers knew themselves to be fully subordinate to their landlords, and apprentices and journeymen and -women to their guild masters, so too women understood themselves to be subordinate to their fathers and their husbands.

Patriarchal rule – whether of master to man or man to woman – prevailed (Kent, 1999).

Patriarchy in state and society as well as in the family rested on the ancient presumption that the male head of household held property not simply in his land and his animals, but in his wife and his children as well. Although never legally classified as chattels – property – of men, married English, Welsh, and Scottish women faced restrictions in common law that rendered them, for all intents and purposes, the property of their husbands. At the very least, common law doctrines institutionalized the inferiority and subordination of women to men. Under the law of coverture, unique to England, married women had no legal existence apart from their husbands: they had no legal rights to property, to earnings, to freedom of movement, to conscience, to their bodies, or to their children; all belonged to their husbands. If a woman was raped, the crime was perceived as a form of theft, not from her, but from her husband or male relatives; cases of adultery were prosecuted only in those instances where the woman involved was married. Women lost their names when they married. All of these circumstances combined to suggest that women were the property of men in fact if not in law. Certainly they meant that women did not enjoy the autonomy, the independence, that was a vital prerequisite for formal political participation (and which, indeed, most men did not possess either, though not because they were excluded by law). By 1600, only in rare and exceptional cases did individual women vote for or hold public office. In the Gaelic areas of Ireland where English common law did not prevail, married women may well have enjoyed a higher legal status and greater property rights. Gaelic women, it appears, could hold property and administer it as they saw fit, independently of their husbands.

Regardless of social class, women were expected to stay within the confines of the home, the realm of "within" as opposed to the world "without." Didactic literature enjoined them to keep themselves within the private sphere of home and family where they could best cultivate and exhibit the qualities of proper women. Proper women were expected to be modest, humble, obedient, pious, temperate, patient, silent, and above all, chaste. This is not to say that they were all of these things; indeed, the very need to enjoin them to be so may suggest that they were not. Most likely, however, once these norms of femininity became accepted as part of the "natural" order, as was the case by 1600, it would be difficult for women to transgress them with impunity. To do so would be to call down upon their heads charges of immorality and unnaturalness, which most people could not have afforded. Observations that women did not enjoy the same legal, educational, or political privileges as men, such as those put forward by Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle, were likely to provoke outrage, culminating in diagnoses of insanity.

But the ideology of gender, like any other ideology, is never static. Changes taking place in politics bring about changes in ideology as well, exposing inconsistencies and contradictions. Because ideologies are always uneven and often contradictory in their applicability to or effect on various people in society, they produce possibilities for resistance to them, possibilities for change. The civil war and revolution that convulsed England, Ireland, and Scotland in the second half of the seventeenth century produced upheaval and tumult in nearly every area of life. Long-standing, traditional practices and ways of understanding came under fire from members of parliament,

lawyers, merchants, businessmen and -women, religious radicals, political radicals, wives, and children – all manner and make of person. The questioning of authority in every place, whether it be government, church, army, society, or family, created the feel, as one historian put it, of "The World Turned Upside Down" (Hill, 1975). Frequently, protagonists and antagonists cast their disputes in the language of gender, infusing their arguments with imagery drawn from contemporary understandings of masculinity and femininity, of the relationships between men and women as they understood them or sought to make them. The use of such language affected the lives of real men and women who inhabited the British Isles, some quite dramatically.

In the years leading up to 1642, for example, proponents of royal absolutism and of parliamentary supremacy in government developed a series of justifications for their respective positions. Supporters of Charles I put forward arguments based on divine right and patriarchy, but they also resorted, from time to time, to contract theory to make the case that the people of England, Scotland, and Wales had ceded all of their rights to the monarch when they made their original contract of subjection to the ruler. They compared this imaginary "social contract" with the monarch to that of the marriage contract between husband and wife, the contractual nature of which virtually all Britons accepted without question, consisted only of the consent that the parties to it to gave upon taking their vows. The marriage contract established a relationship of male governance and female obedience, and it could not be revoked. Royalists were on firm ideological ground in making such an argument about marriage; by drawing an analogy to it, they were able to insist that just as in marriage, the agreement to obey the social contract with the monarch, once entered into, was binding. Resistance to the monarch by his subjects was akin to a wife violating her marriage vows; both were a sin against God, no matter how egregious the abuse a husband might heap upon her. Just as there was a covenant "instituted by God between King and People," wrote the royalist Sir Dudley Digges in 1643, "so there is a contract between Husband and Wife, the violation of which on the man's part doth not bereave him of his dominion over the woman" (Shanley, 1979). The idea that subjects might justifiably rebel against their monarch was as absurd as the idea that a wife might end her subjection to her husband either by their mutual agreement to divorce or because he abused her.

The use of this analogy to marriage to justify royal absolutism forced parliamentarians to answer in the same idiom. Their advocacy of parliamentary and/or popular checks on the monarch's power led them to reconceptualize the traditional view of marriage as hierarchical and irrevocable. To answer the king's arguments about his power over subjects being akin to that of husbands over wives, they began to present the relationship between husbands and wives established by marriage as one in which the authority of husbands might be weakened or even broken altogether. In this they were on shaky ground, as the possibilities for divorce were extremely limited and did not permit remarriage. Some Protestants, however, were prepared to advocate that husbands and wives should be free to divorce *a vinculo*, that is, completely and freely, with the possibility of remarriage, a position forced on them by the logic of their arguments against monarchical power. John Milton, in *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*, issued first in 1643, embraced the possibility of divorce as a civic good.

Just as "a whole people" might "save not only their lives but honest liberties from unworthy bondage" to "an ill Government," so too, he argued, should an individual be permitted to extract himself from a disagreeable marriage. More than the happiness of a single person was at stake, Milton insisted; that of the whole polity would be effected. "For no effect of tyranny can sit more heavy on the Common-wealth, then this household unhappiness on the family. And farewell all hope of true Reformation in the state, while such an evill as this lies undiscern'd or unregarded in the house" (Phillips, 1988). Some reformers maintained that if husbands overstepped their authority, wives had the right to resist them and even, in cases of extreme abuse, to separate from them. As this was so for husbands and wives, so too was it for monarchs and their subjects: "if men, for whose sake women were created, shall not lay hold upon the divine right of wedlock, to the disadvantage of women," wrote Henry Parker in 1644, "much less shall Princes who were created for the peoples sake, chalange [sic] any thing from the sanctitiy of their offices, that may derogate from the people" (Shanley, 1979). Abused wives had the right to defend themselves by separating from their husbands; abused subjects had the same right to defend themselves by raising an army against their king.

The debates over monarchical authority provoked questions, then, about the relationship of men and women in marriage. Royalist supporters called upon widely and deeply accepted ideas about the power of husbands and about the irrevocable nature of the marriage contract. Those who supported resistance to Charles I posited a more advanced notion of marriage than most Britons could entertain in the 1640s. Even they, however, could only go so far in advocating changes in the marriage contract. They believed, as did their adversaries, that women's inferiority to men and wives' subjection to husbands were natural and came from God. Nevertheless, questions about the nature, the origins, and the scope of men's authority in marriage had been raised and would be raised again after 1670 in debates about the power of the restored Charles II. While such questioning would translate into transformations in the lived experience of only a very few, it established the possibility of altered relations between men and women.

The restoration of Charles II involved far more than the restoration of the monarchy, parliament, and the Church of England. It entailed the restoration of what was perceived to be the natural order of landed elites – aristocracy and gentry – ruling over subordinated middling and lower ranks, of fathers ruling over children, and of husbands ruling over wives. One way to restore the established patriarchal and hierarchical system that had nearly been shattered by two decades of civil war and revolution, it seemed to contemporaries, was to restore the familial order that seemed to undergird it. Politicians, political theorists, economists, and jurists found ways to redefine and reconstitute relationships of power between men and women: developments in ideology and in law acted to tighten those strictures that had been loosened during the chaos of civil war, to close down certain possibilities that had acted to mediate women's legal, economic, and social disabilities. In 1662, for instance, the government sought to reestablish the patriarchal basis of political and family life by ordering the republication of Richard Mocket's *God and the King*. First published during the reign of James I, Mocket's treatise compared the right of kings to rule absolutely to the "natural" right of fathers to rule their children absolutely. Few people were prepared, so recently after the ending of so much strife and uncertainty,

to contest such a declaration on the part of Charles. Indeed, even "dissenting" fathers, those who refused to conform to Anglican religious doctrines, and who had embraced ideas of companionate marriage, operated according to the precepts of patriarchal power and even sought to strengthen it. They saw no contradiction in accepting the notion that children should not be coerced into marriage while insisting that parental consent must be obtained; likewise, they advocated affection and spiritual equality between men and women in marriage, all the while asserting that wives must be subordinate to husbands. Nonconformists also insisted upon a much stricter marital discipline than did the restored Anglican church. Congregants might be expelled not only for engaging in premarital sex but also for neglecting to attain the consent of their parents to marry. During the 1660s and 1670s, a familial ideology of more stringent patriarchy predominated. Especially among the middle ranks of prosperous businessmen and farmers, marriage continued to be a function of property transmission; the individuals who owned that property, husbands and fathers, maintained and even increased their control over wives and children.

We can see this occurring legally, where alternatives to the common law such as ecclesiastical and manorial courts, which acted to soften the harshness of coverture and primogeniture in inheritance and to increase women's economic security, gradually lost ground as the competition for jurisdictional predominance shifted toward common law. The arguments of parliamentarians as they mounted their challenge to absolute monarchy throughout the course of the seventeenth century privileged the common law over all others; ecclesiastical law suffered from the disestablishment of the Anglican church during the rule of Oliver Cromwell in the middle part of the century. Parliament's victory over the monarchy in 1649 led to the increasing centralization of government affairs and ensured that the national common law and parliamentary statutes would prevail over local law, a development that did not cease with the Restoration. Although the process of rationalizing the system of law in England and Wales (Scotland retained its own system when it joined in union with England in 1707) would take another two centuries to complete, its overall effect was to restrict the legal and inheritance rights of wives, daughters, and widows even further in favor of the male head of household. Parliament contributed to the process in 1670 with the misleadingly named Act for the Better Settling of Intestates' Estates. This statute, aimed at that particular segment of the female population – widows – that enjoyed significant legal and sometimes economic independence, and which, as a consequence, engendered a great deal of anxiety in society, halved the share of goods a childless widow could inherit from her husband (Erickson, 1993). This might reduce her economic independence considerably. Other statutes passed in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century reduced women's ecclesiastical rights to "reasonable" portions of their husbands' and fathers' moveable goods.

The exclusion crisis of the late 1670s and early 1680s, during which a coalition of members of parliament organized a campaign to exclude the Catholic James from the throne, provoked the articulation of one of the most far-reaching theories touching political and familial relationships. Rehearsing the divine right of monarchs, the king's supporters evoked earlier analogies of a monarch's power and that of fathers within families, particularly those contained in Sir Robert Filmer's *Patriarcha*, reissued in 1680, to justify their assertions. In doing so, they once again forced their opponents to rethink the relative positions of men and women within the family. The

best known and most influential of the works bearing on the family, John Locke's *Two Treatises on Government*, written in 1679 but not published until a year after the Glorious Revolution of 1688, placed familial relations on the ground of contract theory based in natural law. Leaving aside his momentous development of the concept that family authority and state or civil authority are not alike and should be kept separate from one another, whose implications for relations within the private sphere of family we will take up below, Locke's belief that marriage constitutes a contract went beyond that of parliamentarian arguments of the civil war period. Where they could not entertain the idea that the act of consenting to enter into marriage extended to other forms of consent once marriage was contracted, Locke argued that the parties to the contract might also stipulate the terms of their relationship within marriage. He further insisted that because all human beings – men and women alike – are free in a state of nature, there could exist no predetermined terms or conditions bearing on the parties to marriage, except that of producing and caring for children. As long as the obligations to care for the children born to a married couple continued to be met, that couple might terminate their marriage contract if the ends to which it had been directed were completed. Moreover, husbands did not, Locke claimed, enjoy any absolute sovereign power in marriage by virtue of their sex. He could not completely shrug off societal norms of male supremacy in marriage, noting that where husband and wife disagreed about how their "common Interest and Property" should be administered, "it naturally falls to the Man's share, as the abler and stronger," to make the final determination. Nevertheless, he qualified the exercise of a husband's power to areas of common concern, and argued that these, too, might be regulated by contract. Far in advance of other thinkers of his time in regard to marriage and the relationship of husband and wife within it, Locke's work did not immediately change the way society thought about or the law regulated marriage. It did, however, in conjunction with the acceptance of contract theory that accompanied and justified the removing of James II from the throne and replacing him with William and Mary in the Glorious Revolution, open the door to possibilities of divorce (Shanley, 1979). So powerful were Locke's philosophical formulations against domestic patriarchy that the Church of England felt compelled to alter its doctrine in 1705 to acknowledge the mutual and reciprocal rights and obligations of men and women in marriage. In 1753 the Marriage Act gave parliament jurisdiction over marriage law, making possible a slow liberalization of divorce laws. In the nineteenth century, feminists and reformers called upon Locke's individualistic assumptions about human beings to effect changes in property law and marriage law that directly benefited women.

Locke's *Two Treatises of Government* both reflected and contributed to a developing split between public and private virtue in the minds of contemporaries. Its theoretical formulations separated civic or public authority on the one hand, and familial or private authority on the other, providing philosophical legitimation for closing down the possibilities women had to participate in political affairs. In rebutting earlier patriarchal arguments based on analogies of state and familial power, Locke distinguished between the state and the family as civic entities, relegating the family to a private sphere disconnected from politics. In separating the two, and in insisting that qualification for participation in the public political sphere rested on property

ownership and independence of the control or influence of others, Locke effectively excluded women from political activity. Married women, we have seen, could not own property under common law. Moreover, even if women did own property, under an equity settlement or as a *femes sole*, they were considered dependent upon men within the family and therefore disqualified from public life. Henceforth, in ideological terms, women would occupy the private sphere of home and family, where they could best display the moral and especially sexual virtue now expected of them; men would demonstrate virtuous behavior in the public sphere of work and politics. More concretely, in 1690, the jurist George Petyt produced a manual of parliamentary procedure, which, for the first time, explicitly stated that a woman, no matter how much property she might possess, would not be permitted to vote. What had long been custom necessitated rigid codification if the uncertainities about power and authority in the state were not to spill over to the family and put up for grabs power and authority between men and women.

Because of the ambiguity of Locke's formulations, he could be interpreted in at least two ways. Drawing upon his arguments for support, Elizabeth Johnson decried in 1696 the "notorious violations on the liberty of freeborn English women," while an anonymous author of *The Hardships of the English Laws*, published in 1735, castigated the government for withholding from women their constitutional rights. Mary Astell reacted differently, focusing not on the liberating elements of Locke's message but on the consequences for women in Locke's separation of power in the state and power in the family (Perry, 1990). She saw that the criteria of property-owning independence that characterizes liberalism and justifies political participation for men necessitated the concomitant narrowing of women's scope. She asked pointedly in 1700, "if absolute sovereignty be not necessary in a state, how comes it to be so in a family? . . . Is it not then partial in men to the last degree to contend for and practise that arbitrary dominion in their families which they abhor and exclaim against in the state? . . . If all men are born free, how is it that all women are born slaves?" Astell, a supporter of James II who had opposed the revolutionary settlement of 1689 that placed William and Mary on the throne in his place, sought to weaken its ideological underpinnings by demonstrating the hypocrisy of separating public from private authority; but she was no less astute about liberalism's disadvantages for all that.

Both arguments against patriarchal kings and individualistic premises about government had the potential to effect profound changes in domestic organization and in the relationships of men and women within it. As patriarchal authority and control within the family became increasingly discredited in the second half of the seventeenth century, and as liberalism's assertions that "all men were created equal" might be interpreted to include women, as they were by many women after 1688, society had to find other ways to explain and justify men's continued control of and power over women. By confining women ideologically to a separate, private sphere, by attributing to them qualities and characteristics that disqualified them from participation in the public sphere, contemporaries hit upon a way both to contain women and to allay the anxieties produced by uncertainties about the source and location of power. Ideas about gender, about the differences between men and women, could be readily mobilized as a means of legitimating or scorning a particular set of

politics because their apparent grounding in nature offered one of the few seemingly stable bodies of knowledge, one of the few known absolutes in a period of extraordinary uncertainty. With the succession of the Hanoverian king, George I, in 1714, the questions about authority raised continually throughout the seventeenth century appeared to be resolved. Constitutional monarchy governed by liberal principles of limited representative government and the rule of law seemed to be well established. Because both the concerns about power and the solutions put forward to allay them had been articulated in gendered and sexual imagery, resolution of the public political questions required a resolution within the ideological system that defined the nature of men and women and governed their relations with one another. Locke's model of separate spheres of public and private, of the political and the domestic, into which men and women could be comfortably fitted according to their "nature," made it possible for contemporaries to give order and stability to their world.

French revolutionaries also fashioned a story about family relationships in the process of overthrowing a patriarchal, absolute monarch and usurping his power, but they legitimated their actions in somewhat different familial imagery than did the English. Whereas English notions of social contract, at least in the writings of Locke, drew upon analogies to the relationship of husband and wife, French thinking about a new political ordering emphasized the relationship of fathers to sons, as the widely disseminated and powerful revolutionary slogan, "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity," suggests. As we have seen in the case of England in the seventeenth century, the vast majority of the French in the eighteenth century regarded their monarch as a father who ruled over a country depicted as a large family. In order for eighteenth-century reformers to contemplate a challenge to the theoretically unrestricted power and authority of their ruler, they would first have to imagine, consciously or unconsciously, placing restrictions on the theoretically unlimited power of fathers over their children. Indeed, as one historian has shown (Hunt, 1992), decades before the Revolution broke out in 1789, novels and paintings began to show harsh, oppressive fathers in a negative light and to highlight a new kind of fatherhood in which care, concern, and affection for children prevailed. The trend toward representations of the "good father" prepared the collective psychological ground for attacking absolute monarchical authority. Just as tyrannical fathers could not be tolerated, so too must despotic kings be eliminated.

Once the revolutionaries had curbed the power of the monarch with constitutional checks on his authority, they turned to making legislation that would limit the power of fathers over their children. They established family councils that could make decisions previously enjoyed by fathers exclusively; eliminated so-called *lettres de cachet* through which fathers could imprison children of any age; made inheritance equal among all children, girls and boys alike, ending the system of primogeniture that gave preeminence to the eldest son and future patriarch; and lowered the age of consent to 21 for women and 25 for men so that children might marry as they wished, free of their fathers' control. They also gave women equal rights to divorce, but they stopped short of acknowledging them as citizens. Women, no matter what status they might enjoy, could not vote. "Fraternity" did not embrace "sorority" when it came to participation in politics and law-making, a situation against which many women vociferously protested.

Questions about women's place in politics intensified as the Revolution became more radical after 1792 and especially in the aftermath of the execution of the king. The elimination of the father/king entirely by the "band of brothers" who ordered his death ushered in a period in which no single authority figure could be tolerated. Fathers virtually disappeared from the iconography celebrating the Revolution. French republicans, unlike their American counterparts, eschewed the mantle of "founding fathers," insisting instead upon their permanent fraternal status. But this raised the question of where women fit in and made male republicans especially anxious when women insisted on engaging in public, political activities. Seen as threatening the stability of the republic by behaving in "unnatural" ways when they ventured into the political realm, women became figures of disdain and abuse. This was especially so in the case of Marie-Antoinette, whose trial for treason against the Republic revolved around charges of sexual promiscuity and the corruption of her husband and son. Standing in for all women, the queen represented for republicans the dangers to the state of women acting politically. By putting her on trial and executing her; by repressing the societies and clubs women organized to participate in revolutionary politics; and by emphasizing the proper role of women as mothers inhabiting the domestic, private sphere of home and family, where their primary task was the education of their children in morality and virtue, the band of brothers shut down any question of "fraternity" including women and strengthened their ties to one another.

With Napoleon's rise to power, the fraternal conception of politics lost ground to a newly conceived paternal ordering. In the representations of the Napoleonic era, brothers became fathers, presiding lovingly over domesticated wives and adored children. Women became mothers, more highly valued than in pre-revolutionary iconography for the educational and moral benefits they could bestow on their children. Under the civil laws consolidated under the Napoleonic Code of 1804, which drew heavily upon the patriarchal model of ancient Rome and which were settled upon the rest of Europe by the armies of France, women became the dependents of their husbands and fathers. Men did not *own* their wives and children, as in earlier patriarchal regimes, but the marital power granted them by the code gave them administrative control over virtually all of women's legal, civic, and financial affairs. The code also regulated women's sexual activities in such a way as to criminalize female behavior that did not accord with the State's intentions that women exist exclusively as wifely, motherly, domestic, virtuous beings. Adultery and illegitimacy, for example, on the part of women – but not of men – were punished by the State, conferring upon women – but not men – a legal accountability for private sexual acts. As one historian has noted, the Napoleonic Code made women's virtue, now a sexual rather than a political quality, a matter of state control (Smith, 1989).

Liberalism explicitly denied women political citizenship. The potential contradiction between, on the one hand, a liberal ideology that had legitimated the dismantling of aristocratic power and authority and the enfranchisement of middle-class, and later working-class, men in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and, on the other, the denial of the claims of women to full citizenship was resolved by appeals to biological and characterological differences between the sexes. New definitions of femininity evolved whose qualities were antithetical to those that had warranted widespread male participation in the public sphere. Men possessed the capacity for reason,

action, aggression, independence, and self-interest. Women inhabited a separate, private, domestic sphere, one suitable for the so-called inherent qualities of femininity: emotion, passivity, submission, dependence, and selflessness. These notions had been extant in political thought for centuries, extending as far back as Aristotle, but a new explanation for women's incapacities and legal and political disabilities emerged: all derived, it was claimed insistently, from women's sexual and reproductive organization. Upon the female as a biological entity, a sexed body, nineteenth-century theorists imposed a socially and culturally constructed femininity, a gender identity derived from ideas about what roles were appropriate for women. This collapsing of sex and gender – of the physiological organism with the normative social creation – made it possible for women to be construed as at once pure and purely sexual, although paradoxical, these definitions excluded women from participation in the public sphere and rendered them subordinate to men in the private sphere as well (Kent, 1987).

Under the regime of domesticity, marriage and the family were firmly based on notions of romantic love, companionship, and a spiritual equality between men and women, but the legal and political position of women belied these ideals. Under the law of coverture, married women had no rights of existence apart from their husbands. "By marriage," wrote the English jurist Sir William Blackstone, "the very being or legal existence of a woman is suspended, or at least it is incorporated or consolidated into that of the husband, under whose wing, protection, and cover she performs everything, and she is therefore called in our law a *feme covert* . . . Her husband [is called] her *baron*, or lord." The popular aphorism "my wife and I are one and I am he" described a situation in which a married woman had no legal rights to her property, her earnings, her freedom of movement, her conscience, her body, or her children; all resided in her husband. Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries women and their male allies in feminist, revolutionary, and anti-colonial movements challenged these holdovers of aristocratic patriarchal society, insisting that rather than protecting women in the domestic sphere of home and family, these legal disabilities exposed them to the brutalities of the world at large.

The contradictions of separate-spheres ideology opened up space within which women could contest their positions of powerlessness, often utilizing the very language of women's special qualities to make their case for fundamental legal and political reform. Barbara Bodichon's *A Brief Summary in Plain Language of the Most Important Laws Concerning Women*, published in 1854, laid out in a systematic fashion the legal situation that condemned women to a position of chattel of men. The solution to these problems lay in increasing educational and employment possibilities for women and obtaining the passage of bills that gave married women the right to own property and retain their earnings, just as *femes sole* might currently do. To this end these "ladies of Langham Place," as they came to be called after the location of their office in London, founded the *English Woman's Journal* in 1858. In its pages contributors publicized "the cause" of women throughout Britain, raising issues of concern for women such as property rights and divorce laws, which gradually but steadily changed in the second half of the nineteenth century as feminist-inspired reform movements brought about legal reform.

The most radical challenge of the women's movement to patriarchal control consisted of demands for enfranchisement on the same lines as men. The campaign for

the vote was designed to eliminate the notions of separate spheres and "natural" differences between the sexes insisted upon by domestic ideology, to eliminate patriarchy, and usher in a regime of equality between men and women in private as well as public life. In the United States, a convention of women held in Seneca Falls, New York, in 1848 passed unanimously all of the resolutions calling for property rights, guardianship of children, inheritance rights, and the like. The clause demanding women's suffrage, on the other hand, barely achieved a majority of votes. Soon, however, votes for women became the mainstay of the American feminist movement, as a resolution passed at an 1856 national convention noted: "Resolved, that the main power of the woman's rights movement lies in this: that while always demanding for woman better education, better employment, and better laws, it has kept steadily in view the one cardinal demand for the right of suffrage: in a democracy, the symbol and guarantee of all other rights." Former teacher and temperance advocate Susan B. Anthony joined with Elizabeth Cady Stanton, an ardent anti-slavery activist, to spearhead the movement for women's suffrage that began after the Seneca Falls Convention and lasted for more than sixty years. A few French women led by utopian socialist Jeanne Deroin, a feminist journalist who was jailed for her opinions, demanded the vote in 1848 from the newly established Provisional Government; its demise at the hands of Louis Napoleon cut short the question of women's suffrage as well. With the creation of the Third Republic in 1871, an organized women's suffrage movement resurfaced under the leadership of republican moderates Leon Richer and Maria Desraismes. A more militant group under Hubertine Auclert, a radical republican, emerged in the late 1870s, and by the 1880s, the demand for women's suffrage had become a regular aspect of French politics (Hause and Kenney, 1984). The British women's suffrage campaign as an organized movement began in April 1866, when Barbara Bodichon, Jessie Boucherette, Emily Davies, and Elizabeth Garrett, all members of prominent Liberal families, set out on a petition drive to demand votes for women.

Although feminists identified the contradictions contained in domestic ideology and liberalism as they pertained to power relations between women and men, they were blind to the implications they had for inequalities based on class and race. Few feminists questioned their white, bourgeois status, or considered how working-class or African-American women fared under their strictures. Instead, they tended to embrace the divisions and prejudices based on class and race that informed liberalism and their societies as a whole. While feminists in the west pursued an agenda that more often than not excluded working-class women or women of color, women in other parts of the world began to address some of the same questions about equality with men that had been raised in Europe and the United States. In Egypt, for example, as the state began to modernize and make claims on the public lives of its citizens in areas like education, work, and health, officials looked to women as well as men to implement many of its goals. In so doing, it ran up against the power of long-standing religious and patriarchal traditions that restricted women's activities to the home. A number of individual feminists of the educated, urban, privileged classes challenged the strictures of religion and patriarchy, demanding a change in the practices and laws that limited women's opportunities. In 1873, the state opened a school for the daughters of governmental officials and the white female slaves of upper-class households. Drawing upon their new educations,

a number of women questioned the religious precepts that demanded their seclusion from society, their veiling of face as well as body (called in Arabic *hijab*), and other practices that constrained their lives. In 1892, journalist Hind Naufal established a women's press in Egypt with her journal, *Al Fatah* (The Young Woman), which provided an outlet for feminist discussion. By the early part of the twentieth century, women's feminist writing had begun to reach a wider and more mainstream audience, as activists like Malak Hifni Nasif, Bahithat Al Badiyan, and Nabawiyya Musa published tracts demanding education, the right to employment, and legal rights for women in books and in the newspaper of Egypt's nationalist party (Badran, 2000).

In India throughout the nineteenth century, male reformers like Ram Mohan Roy led movements designed to ameliorate some of the oppressive practices experienced by Indian women. Concerned about women's lack of education, the remarriage of widows, *purdah* (veiling and seclusion), and child-marriage, these male-led and -dominated movements sought to alleviate women's positions within the patriarchal family, not to undermine patriarchy itself. They effected changes that improved women's lives considerably, but they did not concern themselves with women's rights; demands for women's rights would have to come from women themselves. Beginning in the late nineteenth century, groups and organizations of Indian women, led by feminists who had gone abroad to be educated, sprang up. Swarna Kumali Devi's Ladies Association in 1886; Pandita Ramabai's Sharda Sudan in 1892; Ramabai Ranade's Hindu Ladies Social and Literary club in 1902 – these groups and others like them sought to raise awareness about education and employment for women and women's political and legal rights. Women's journals such as *Stree Bodh* appeared and articulated a feminist stance on such issues as *purdah*, education, employment, child marriage to adult men, women's part in the nationalist movement, and women's exploitation at the hands of men (Talwar, 1990).

By the beginning of the twentieth century, suffrage campaigns in America and Europe had attained the status of mass movements. In Britain, with the advent of militancy arising out of the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) in 1905, the whole of the feminist movement centered around suffrage as the means by which women could free themselves from servile bondage to men. As a symbol of civic and political personality, the vote would be an effective agent in eliminating the notion of women as "the Sex." As an instrument of power, feminists believed – as did their adversaries – it would transform the elevating "influence" of women into a tool with which to create a greater and truer morality among men by eliminating the distinctions between public and private spheres. They meant to use it to build a sexual culture in Britain that would reflect the needs, desires, and interests of bourgeois women. Feminists sought to eliminate the stereotypes of women – both the idealized and the feared – that rendered them inhuman and, through the weapon of the vote, to create a society that was consistent with their needs, interests, and self-defined reality. "Votes for Women, Chastity for Men," Christabel Pankhurst's summation of the demands of feminist women, reflected the deeply felt conviction that the regimes of male sexuality and female subordination called into being by separate-sphere ideology had to be transformed. The suffrage movement, she insisted, constituted "a revolt against the evil system under which women are regarded as sub-human and as the sex slaves of men" (Kent, 1987).

The outbreak of world war in August 1914 brought to a halt the efforts of European suffragists to gain votes for women. By that time, the suffrage campaign had attained the size and status of a mass movement in many countries, commanding the time, energies, and resources of thousands of men and women, and riveting the attention of the public. Finnish women had secured the right to vote in 1906, followed by their Norwegian sisters in 1913. In early 1918, parliament granted the vote to British women over the age of thirty. This measure, while welcome to feminists as a symbol of the fall of the sex barrier, failed to enfranchise some three million out of eleven million adult women. French women did not gain the vote, despite their contributions to the war effort, though German women were enfranchised in the creation of the Weimar Republic and American suffragists won their fight for votes for women in the ratification of the nineteenth amendment in 1920. In other parts of the world the war strengthened revolutionary and nationalist movements against European colonialism that contained strong feminist components. In Russia, the Bolshevik Revolution of November 1917 brought to power a government committed to the emancipation of women. Ultimately seeking the dissolution of the family as the only true means by which women could make themselves the equals of men, the communist regime introduced a new family code in 1918 that raised women's status to that of men's, made marriage a civil rather than a religious matter, gave illegitimate children identical legal rights to legitimate children, and made divorce readily available to both parties. Two years later, the government made it legal for women to obtain abortions if these were performed by a physician.

The family legislation brought more rather than less hardship to women. Easy divorce, free sexual unions, and an inability to enforce child payments on the fathers of children they bore out of marriage created distress for many, many women abandoned by husbands and sexual partners. One party member, harkening back to the slogan of the French Revolution, declared that the new laws had brought women "liberty, equality, and maternity" (Williams, 1987). Unemployment rates for women soared with the implementation of the New Economic Policy in 1921, forcing thousands of women into prostitution to survive; government bureaucrats did not always share the commitment to women's freedom that Bolshevik leaders like Lenin had espoused; and factory managers turned a blind eye to the harassment of women workers at the hands of their male comrades. Feminism might be the official policy of the communist regime, and it did help to bring about improvement in areas like women's literacy, but for many women it could mean little positive change in their everyday lives. With Stalin's rise to power in the late 1920s, the commitment to women's equality and emancipation vanished. The state resurrected the family as an official unit of society, made abortion illegal, and divorce difficult and expensive to obtain. Women had to work if their families were to survive, and the abandonment of programs designed to ease their domestic obligations ensured that they bore a double burden. Although abortion rights and easier divorce were restored to women upon Stalin's death in 1952, the weight of work and familial duties remained the same.

Elsewhere, in places such as Egypt or India, feminist campaigns could not be extricated from the anti-colonial movements of which they were a part. During the national revolution of 1919 to 1922, at which time Egypt secured its nominal independence from Great Britain, feminist and nationalist leaders organized mass

demonstrations of elite women, who left the security of their harems to make clear their hatred of colonial rule. In 1920, feminists demanded the creation of a women's section of the nationalist party, and insisted that it partake substantively in decision-making processes, making its objections loudly and publicly known when it was bypassed. With independence, nationalists' enthusiasm for women's involvement and for feminist demands such as education and employment opportunities, the right to worship in mosques, and political participation weakened appreciably. The constitution of 1923 declared that "all Egyptians are equal before the law. They enjoy civil and political rights and equally have public responsibilities without distinction of race, language, or religion." While this appeared to instantiate a regime that would fully recognize women's rights, an electoral law negated them by excluding women from the suffrage. Almost immediately, the Egyptian Feminist Union, led by Huda Sha'rawi, formed, demanding education and work for women, reform of personal status laws that restricted their movement and their comportment in public, abolition of state-sponsored prostitution, and the vote. Women won education rights and a minimum age of marriage, but their other demands were ignored. With the Arab socialist revolution of 1952, feminists like Duriyya Shafiq, head of the Daughter of the Nile Union, took the opportunity to point out the contradiction between a constitution that declared equal rights for all and an electoral system that denied women the vote. Shafiq led a hunger strike and a sit-in in parliament to draw attention to feminist demands; despite opposition from conservative and fundamentalist Muslim groups, the revolutionary government gave women the vote in 1956. At the same time, however, in a clear statement of its intentions to tolerate feminist activity, the government began to outlaw feminist organizations. By 1959, feminist groups had been shut down; in 1964, women's organizations were legally banned from forming. Organized feminism disappeared, as women were forced to retreat from public view (Badran, 2000).

The first organized Indian feminist movement appeared in 1917 with the formation of the Women's Indian Association. Subsequent groups arose in the 1920s, the most visible and influential being the All India Women's Conference, whose members sought originally to open up discussion of women's education, but quickly realized that many other issues – purdah, dowry, child marriage, the remarriage of widows, for example – were intricately connected to it, and all of them, in turn, bound up in the question of British rule. Equality and opportunity for women, they knew, were inseparable from the burning issue of Indian independence. Nationalist men supported feminists' demands for suffrage, eager to demonstrate that Indian men were far more progressive than their supposedly superior British overlords; upon gaining independence, the ruling Congress party included universal adult suffrage and sex, caste, and religious equality in the constitution. But when it came to sexual equality in the home, they were less able to show enthusiasm. In fact, when the All India Women's Conference proposed the reform of the Hindu Code in 1934, seeking to change marriage, divorce, and inheritance laws to better serve women, nationalist men objected. In 1943 and 1945, the Legislative Assembly rejected a new Hindu Code that incorporated women's equality in domestic matters. After independence in 1947, opposition to it remained high, despite the support of such influential men as Nehru. Only when Nehru made it an issue of his prestige and support after 1951 did the new code pass, and even then it took over two years. Feminists had been

clear from the start that their agenda depended upon the success of the nationalist agenda, but when the time came for nationalist men who had succeeded in throwing off foreign domination to agree to ending their own domination of women in personal affairs, they baulked (Liddle and Joshi, 1986).

What is called the second wave of feminism, known at the time as women's liberation, arose in the West in the 1960s. Inspired in part by the civil rights movements in the United States, and the New Left movements in Europe, women in Britain, France, Germany, Italy, and American began to demand freedom from the roles, portrayals, and expectations that limited, diminished, and oppressed them. In the United States, a presidential order making civil service jobs open to those who qualified "without regard to sex," the Equal Pay Act of 1963, the extension of the 1964 Title VII outlawing discrimination in employment to include "sex," and the passage of Title IX banning discrimination in education in 1972; and in Britain, the Equal Pay Acts of 1970 and 1975 and the Sex Discrimination Act of 1975 made it possible for women to gain equal treatment with men in some areas of education, training, and wage-earning. But "second wave" feminists looked for more than equality with men before the law; they sought changes in the law, the social and economic system, and the culture that would "liberate" them from current conceptions of femininity that, they argued, locked them into stifling, unfulfilling, slavish positions, and often made them vulnerable to sexual predations from men. Unlike contemporary liberal feminists and those of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, feminists seeking liberation believed that the very system in which they lived required abolition or complete overhaul.

The advent of global feminism has considerably strengthened the ability of feminists across the world to agitate for and bring about change in women's lives. As feminists in Africa, Asia, and Latin America pointed out that North American and European women enjoyed a degree of prosperity, health, safety, and political stability that most women in the world did not, it became excruciatingly clear that feminism as it had been formulated in the industrialized countries of the world had little relevance elsewhere. In pointing out the so-called "North-South" divide between women, African, Asian, and Latina feminists called attention to the fundamental needs of women in the poor nations of the world, and demonstrated how differences of class, sexuality, race, religion, culture, and ethnicity among women across the globe necessitated a broader, fuller, and more comprehensive feminist politics that could encompass and address them. Global feminism, while recognizing deep and divisive differences among women, has emphasized the importance of coalition-building among diverse feminist groups and organizations. In consequence, a significantly strengthened, internationally effective, and more just and open-minded feminist politics has emerged (Smith, 2000).

Feminist movements have helped to create enormous changes in women's – and men's – lives in the past two centuries. In the West, women have attained rights to property, earnings, education, employment, legal standing, political participation, divorce, and reproductive choice. Challenges from the religious and political Right notwithstanding, we have gained for ourselves and subsequent generations of women the opportunity to make significant choices about our lives: where and how we will live, what kinds of work we will do, how we will structure and enjoy our private, personal lives in areas ranging from leisure activities to sexual practices. As a consequence

of the questions feminists raised about gender roles and expectations, men, too, have found freedom to challenge traditional assumptions about their place in the family and society; in conjunction with their wives, mothers, sisters, and daughters, many have chosen to alter the patriarchal regimes of private life that justified those in public, political life.

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Chapter Six

Race, Gender, and Other Differences in Feminist Theory

Deirdre Keenan

Introduction to Race and Gender Theory: An International Women's Congress

In the summer of 2002, I was among over two thousand women from ninety-five countries who attended the International Interdisciplinary Women's World Congress in Uganda. The five-day conference brought together women, and men, from every academic discipline, and included health-care workers, political activists, peacemovement organizers, economists, religious and legal professionals, agriculturalists and others. Conference panels and casual gatherings registered the diversity of our private and professional lives, of our concerns and efforts to address women's issues, of the complex relationships among us as women from the East and West, Southern and Northern hemispheres, developed and developing nations, colonizer and colonized, economically privileged and depressed, straight women and lesbians, women of all races and mixed race. We spoke with each other in English – a practical (and political) consolidation of our linguistic diversity. In the evenings, women regrouped in hotels and restaurants across Kampala to continue discussions begun in sessions to sort through the disturbing and amazing web of information about women's global experience.

The premise of the International Women's Congress, entitled "Gendered Worlds: Gains and Challenges," was that we two thousand women from ninety-five countries – and all women – despite our vast diversity and complex relationships, have something in common: shared interests, concerns, or struggles that mark our lives as women. But to give more than a brief material description of the conference invokes every issue raised over the last twenty years in feminist theory, and, specifically, in work on race and gender. During that time, feminist theory has replaced the fallacy of a global sisterhood with greater attention to relationships of power among and between women. We have acknowledged the ways women are divided by categories of race, sexuality, class, and disability, as well as by culture, geography, and nation. We have acknowledged the problem of finding terms through which we can talk about women's lives, knowing that all terms signify false assumptions and simplistic

consolidations – terms such as *Western women, Third World women*, *Native American women*, *Black women*, *White women*, *Women of Color, African women, Asian women*. Even the term, *women*, disintegrates under the influence of sex-gender theories of identity formation, for we know that the body lies and that essentialist biological definitions of women are themselves constructed concepts within discourses of power and authority, such as science and medicine. The terms matter, of course, because they reflect and construct the ways we think and talk about women. They often operate to conceal or reveal hierarchies among and between women. And yet we cannot talk about women's lives without terms that acknowledge and distinguish our historical and cultural experiences. More importantly, without finding terms through which we can talk about women's lives and our differences, we cannot effect genuine social change, the ultimate purpose of all feminist endeavors.

After I returned from Uganda, I wanted somehow to express the enormity of my experience at the conference. I wanted to describe how it felt to be part of a global gathering of women committed to *women's* causes. Can I say that it was, albeit temporary, a kind of utopian space where women of all races united to reflect on the gains made through our struggles for liberation and the challenges we face in ongoing struggles against all forms of oppression? Or is this an illusory vision constructed out of a naive and/or ethnocentric perception? Did the International Congress signal a possibility of collective action by those who have already taken differences among women as a premise, or did it signal diversity and division so radical among women's situations, experiences, issues, and perspectives as to foreclose genuine coalitions across racial, cultural, national, and sexual borders?

What follows is a brief survey of the ways we are coming to understand the complexities and consequences of constructed concepts of race and gender and other differences. It is certainly partial and limited by my own cultural and historical location, which feminist theory teaches us to identify. As a teacher – and *white, Western feminist* – of world literature (specifically that termed *Postcolonial* literature) and Native American literature, initially trained in English Renaissance studies, I struggle to find ways to cross intellectual, racial, and cultural borders and to understand how hegemony makes those crossings difficult. In my own current efforts to tell the overlapping stories of my Irish immigrant ancestors and the Anishinaabeg people displaced by racist removal policies enacted to privilege white settlers – including my own ancestors – I continue to confront problems of trespassing on others' territories.

The Terms of Race

We have all used and encountered the terms of race – racial difference, racism, racial oppression and liberation, color-blindness – as though their meanings are understood. Yet there exists no coherent or stable meaning for the terms of race. Outward appearances certainly cannot account for the meanings attributed to racial difference or for the hatred and oppression scripted by racism. The terms of race in everyday language are often invoked without definition or understanding. Race theory attempts to reveal the multiplicitous meanings of race and the contexts in which those meanings are constructed.

Race theory is not a modern phenomenon. Theories of race and racial difference emerged historically in the contexts of religion, science, social science, and law. Early

Judeo-Christian traditions, for example, assumed a monogenetic view that all humans were descended from Adam and Eve and therefore represented one divinely appointed race. This religious tradition reconciled the fact of racial difference according to scripture, associating black people with Ham, Noah's cursed son, or associating different races with the children of God scattered after Babel. Native American spiritual traditions, such as those of the Anishinaabeg, for example, held the belief that a Creator made four races appointed to different lands.

Early modern science identified racial difference in the context of taxonomy, as separate and permanent species based on outward physical variations. Geographical exploration revised typological identifications of race to account for the changes of mixed race. Explanations of phenotypical variations allowed for racial variations along a continuum that still maintained permanent categories. Throughout the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries in Europe, science debated racial classifications, variously identifying four, five, or six racial categories, and suggesting that racial differences resulted from geographical adaptation. Later still, in the nineteenth century, theories of scientific evolution posited racial differences as adaptations of natural selection. Both science and religion associated behavioral differences with physical differences, the former asserting divine intervention, the latter adding the influence of nature. Not surprisingly, in the context of European domination, both religion and science produced theories of racial superiority and inferiority.

In the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, social sciences, while not dissociating outward, physical difference, shifted emphasis in race theories from the body to social conditions. Theories of scientific evolution paralleled theories of social evolution to explain racial difference, and, more importantly, to justify domination. Native Americans and Africans, for example, in the context of colonization, were seen as embryonic races or races that had failed to evolve sufficiently in the "march of civilization". Marxist theory, which dominated discussion long into the twentieth century, asserted that modern concepts of race evolved within the expansion of capitalism. And amidst all the changing and disintegrating categories, the law attempted to define and contain racial difference.

No theory of race disappeared as others developed, and all are variously invoked in current discussions of race. Whether they located racial difference in the body or in the body politic, or whether they accounted for racial difference by divine appointment or natural selection, all of these theories were created, codified, and institutionalized by men. Feminism, however, reconstructed the ways we think about race.

The Problem with Essentialist Concepts: Race and the *Universal Woman*

When it was first published in 1984, Robyn Morgan identified her book *Sisterhood is Global* as an act of rebellion against the pervasive mentality of patriarchy worldwide, where "the standard for being human is being male – and female humans *per se* become invisible" (1). The book compiled a massive and valuable collection of quantitative and qualitative research on women's lives in seventy countries contributed by women who were (but for one) natives of those countries. The research provided a cross-cultural study of women's experience in a multitude of categories

including health, labor, law, marriage, economics, and religion. Its clear implication was that women everywhere suffer the effects of male-dominated institutions, albeit to a wide-ranging degree. Its conclusion, implied in the introductory question, "Are we really so very different?" was that women worldwide are united in a sisterhood in search of self, selfhood, and self-realization (Morgan, 1984: 36). What the study did not directly confront were the ways women are so very different and the ways differences in women's experiences are not solely a function of patriarchy but also a function of relationships of power between and among women. It did not interrogate the idea of *women* as a coherent category or the meaning of the term *women*. The notion of a *global sisterhood*, in a sense, refused the category of race and other differences that separate women.

In her essay, "Under Western Eyes," a critique of Western feminist consolidations of women, Chandra Talpade Mohanty points out the problem with an essentialist use of the term *women* as an always already constituted category. Mohanty's specific concern is the discursive colonization of Third World women and their monolithic codification as *other*, which she says characterized much of early Western feminist scholarship (Mohanty, 2003: 53). Although she specifically addresses Western-produced concepts such as *Third World women, Arab women*, and *Islamic women*, Mohanty's observations apply to larger contexts because she argues that such terms wrongly assume that women constitute a "coherent group with identical interests and desires regardless of class, ethnic or racial location, or contradictions" (55). Such terms imply "a notion of gender or sexual difference, or even patriarchy, which can be applied universally and cross-culturally" (55). The problem with this essentialist thinking, Mohanty says, is that women are constituted prior to entry into specific social, cultural, and historical contexts (55). That is, the term *women* is taken to signify a category of common experience (an ontological status) that can be applied to all women, as if bonded by subordination within a gender hierarchy. According to essentialist concepts, Mohanty finds that "women are constituted as sexual-political subjects prior to entry into the arena of social relations" (59). Moreover, the false homogenization of women as a global sisterhood posits an ahistorical unity that conceals "latent ethnocentrism," evident in the Western feminist priority of issues around which "apparently all women are expected to organize" (53). Similarly, Nawal El Saadawi has pointed to the arrogance of some Western feminists who presume to mediate others' experience. Elizabeth Cook-Lynn and Karen Swisher, among others, challenge the ability of non-Natives to understand the experiences of Native American women. Sisterhood, Mohanty argues, cannot be assumed on the basis of gender because "beyond sisterhood there are still racism, colonialism, and imperialism" (68). An implicit problem with gender universals is that they set aside significant differences such as race and class, and in that displacement whiteness often operates as a concealed norm against which all *other* women are defined. In short, race competes with gender, and in the competition racial difference is subordinated to gender identification. Central to more recent feminist work on race and gender is the effort to dismantle false universals among women. According to Judith Butler (1990), "the insistence upon the coherence and unity of the category of women" refuses the "multiplicity of cultural, social, and political intersections in which the concrete array of 'women' are constructed" (14).

Constructed Concepts of Race

Recalling their experiences as women emigrating from India and the Caribbean to the United States, M. Jacqui Alexander and Chandra Mohanty write, "We were not born women of color, but became women of color here" (1997: 492). Tessie Liu, a Taiwan-born daughter of political refugees from China, recalls "an epiphanal moment" during a weeklong workshop to restructure a course in Western Civilization, when a white participant called for a perspective from the *women of color* among the group (1991: 267). "All of a sudden," Liu says, "we were *others*, strangers to each other but placed in the same group". Ruth Frankenberg writes that for her students "who grew up without peers of color," whiteness is invisible, "unmarked, and race [is] an apparently distant and abstract concept" (1997: 5). Each of these observations illustrates that race is not an essential condition based on biology, not a fixed category of already determined meaning, but a constructed concept within social contexts.

Yet, as Evelyn Higgenbotham points out, to reveal the ideological and constructed nature of race and to reject a biological-essentialist theory of racial difference "is not to deny that ideology has real effects" (1992: 254). When Alexander and Mohanty write about their experiences of immigration to the United States. and their subsequent identification as "women of color," for example, they recall that "[n]one of the racial, religious, or class/caste fractures we had experienced could have prepared us for the painful racial terrain we encountered here," or the "racism and its constricted boundaries of race" (1997: 492). Thus categorized and reconstructed within a particular racial framework, their self-determined identities, they state, were "absorbed and silenced" (592). Liu recalls that although she was among a group of feminists with a common objective, in her epiphanal moment identifying her as *other*, she was suddenly made an outsider (1991: 267). And for Ruth Frankenberg's students, unmindful of race, whiteness masquerades as universal and "white dominance is rationalized, legitimized, and made ostensibly normal and natural" (1997: 3). The effects of racial concepts, whether revealed or concealed, are often violent and always ideological in that they are constructed within and deployed through operations of power.

Race, then, like gender, "must be seen as a social construction predicated upon the recognition of difference and signifying the simultaneous distinguishing and positioning of groups vis-a-vis one another" (Higgenbotham, 1992: 253). For Mohanty, Alexander, and Liu, their constructed racial identification as *women of color* occurs within the contexts of nationalism and feminism – their *difference* established in relation to the presumed norm of whiteness. Higgenbotham asserts that "[r]ace is a highly contested representation of relations of power between social categories by which individuals are identified and identify themselves" (1992: 253). Similarly, Margaret Maynard describes race as an "unstable and 'decentered' complex of social meanings constantly transformed by political struggle" (in Bhavnani, 2001: 132). These concepts of race – like gender – acknowledge the instability of categories and their formation within relationships of power that are continuously redefined and transformed in particular historical and cultural locations.

Some recent discussions suggest that the term *race* has become, in the words of Jayne Chong-Soo Lee, so "overdetermined that it is beyond rehabilitation" (in Crenshaw, 1995: 441). They thus shift the emphasis from discussions of race to

discussions of culture, suggesting that what matters in identity formation is not an essential fact of difference but cultural identification within a group that is supposed to share a common experience. Lee acknowledges the benefits of this substitute, in dismissing historical theories of intellectual and moral racial traits asserted by late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century anthropologists and social scientists, and in emphasizing racial difference as learned, but she also acknowledges problems the substitute imposes. One problem with the culture model, she says, is that it fails to account for the centrality of race in the history of oppressed peoples.

Although interpretations of race are relative, the body continues to mark racial identity and difference. As Eva Marie Garroutte points out, for example, "blood quantum" remains "the most common tribal requirement for determining citizenship" in American Indian communities, a measure imposed by both tribal and federal authorities (2001: 224–5). However, because blood quotients differ across tribes, as Garroutte notes, the interpretation of those differences can have devastating consequences for individuals and families of mixed tribal ancestry, who may be barred from legal association, tribal benefits, or rights to occupy reservation land where they have lived for generations. So even here, where racial identity is determined biologically, it is also constructed, for there is no fixed or stable meaning for the term *blood quotient*. Moreover, individuals and groups often identify themselves racially as Native American based on family ancestry and traditions passed down through generation, regardless of authorized blood quotient, and on that basis exclude others who have maintained no cultural ties to tribal heritage. Racial *thinking*, then, according to Liu, "is a way to imagine communities that assumes a common substance that unites . . . with intent to exclude in the process of including" (1991: 271).

Difference, then, is a primary category of analysis in constructing race, but it too is problematic. For to assert difference, as Liu points out, implies the question, "Different from what or from whom?" (1991: 267–8). The answer depends on who is representing the difference and on the frame of reference against which the difference (or sameness) is constructed. Thus, according to Liu, "any discussions of difference and sameness are themselves inseparable from the power relations in which we live" (268). Margaret Maynard asserts, "It is not enough to look at difference, we must consider social relations that convert difference to oppression" (Bhavnani, 2001: 130).

The link between racial difference and oppression, however, Liu also notes, creates a "tendency to think of race only as a social category when we encounter racism as a social phenomenon," and the result, she says, is that ideologies of racism set the agenda and terms for talking about race and racial difference (Liu, 1991: 269). Liu argues the need to "move beyond the belief that racial thinking is an outgrowth of prejudice because it exoticizes racism, making racism incomprehensible to those who do not share the hatred" (270). Another problem with racial thinking as an outgrowth of prejudice is that it conceals both assumptions that place whiteness always at the center of the norm against which all others deviate and operations of power when privilege constructs the *other*. In examining whiteness and its variable invisibility, Frankenberg states, "one must recognize how continual processes of slippage, condensation, and displacement . . . continue to *unmark* white people," and how whiteness consistently marks and racializes *others* (1997: 6, emphasis added). The consequence of *invisible* whiteness is that *others* carry the burden of racial difference.

Higgenbotham says that *race* is "an unstable complex of meaning, transformed by political struggle" (1992: 252–3). Her definition suggests that if *race* often operates to convert racial difference to oppression, it can also serve as a "discursive tool" for liberation. Higgenbotham asserts the potential of this "double-voiced discourse" to "dismantle the dominant society's deployment of race" (266–7). She points to a long tradition of African-American writers since W.E.B. DuBois who have claimed the language of race and made it their own, investing it with their own meaning and intent (266). In this way, black people claim the language of the *other* and resignify race as a site of liberation, thereby dissociating it from its hegemonic signification as "biological inferiority," oppression, and powerlessness (Higgenbotham, 1992: 267–8). Similarly, Lee acknowledges that although race is often used to subordinate, it can also be deployed as an affirmative category around which people can organize to assert power (Crenshaw, 1995: 443).

That effort to rewrite race and assert power marked the literature of the Harlem Renaissance and provoked "a battle [among African-American writers] over ideal fictional modes with which to represent the Negro" (Gates in Hurston, 1990: 190). Richard Wright, for example, advocated a unified revolutionary movement of social protest literature among black writers that directly confronted white racism, capitalism, and the subhuman conditions it created for black people. In a "Blueprint for Negro Writing," Wright asserted that "when a people begin to realize a meaning in their suffering, the civilization that engenders that suffering is doomed" (Wright in Lewis, 1994: 298). In sharp contrast, Zora Neale Hurston thought Wright stood at the center of "the sobbing school of Negrohood who hold that nature somehow has given them a low down dirty deal" (Hurston, 1990: 191). Hurston, Henry Louis Gates writes in the afterword to *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, rejected the implication in work by Wright and other African-American male writers, that racism "reduced black people to mere ciphers, to beings who only react to an omnipresent racial oppression" (Gates in Hurston, 1990: 189). Instead, Hurston's literature, Alice Walker says, represents "racial health – a sense of black people as complete, complex, *undiminished* human beings" (Walker in Hurston, 1990: 190). Jean Toomer, author of *Cane*, often cited as the first important book to emerge from the black movement of the 1920s, represented another perspective. Toomer believed that, "[r]acial designations were divisive factors and should be abolished" (in McCay, 1984: 6). Yet another perspective emerged in the novel *Passing*, first published in 1929, where Nellie Larsen confronted the politically charged issue of light-skinned blacks choosing to cross the racial lines into white social identity. As her novel suggests, *passing* was empowering in providing both an escape from socially constructed racial inferiority and an appropriation of privileges and protections denied to blacks during the repressive "separate but equal" period following the *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision. In her introduction to the novel, Thadious M. Davis writes, "In Larsen's narrative, passing becomes a trope for representing black women of a particular physicality as transgressive subjects able to negotiate the ideologies compartmentalizing American life and to subvert the rigidity of color caste specifically and gender roles implicitly" (Larsen, 1997: ix–x). Larsen's depiction of passing, both outwardly dangerous and inwardly fragmenting, Davis says, emphasized an aspect of "race as performance" (xii). While the Harlem Renaissance provided no panacea for problems of representing race, those writers associated with the movement helped to outline a field of issues for rewriting race and identity politics.

In closing her article, "Negotiating the Topology of Race," Jayne Chong-Soo Lee asks how we can recognize racial difference without reinscribing stereotypes or how we trace historical constructions of race without denying individuals and groups the power to define themselves. Lee's answer calls for a discourse of race that allows for explanations as multiplicitous as the cultural and historical contexts in which race is constructed (Crenshaw, 1995: 447).

> We can refuse to adhere to the unitary, either/or framework that has constrained racial discourse. We can have both the biological and social definitions of race, we can have both essential and historical notions of race, we can have race-neutral and race-conscious remedies, we can have race and culture. Abandoning one set of definitions entirely may deprive us of useful tools in the struggle against racism.

The Inseparable Nature of Race and Gender

While early feminist work acknowledged the constructed nature of race and gender, these concepts operated as separate, although intersecting, analogous categories of analysis. But according to Higgenbotham (1992), there is no way to "bifurcate race and gender into discrete categories as if 'women' could be isolated from contexts of race, class, and sexuality" (273). Critiques of Western feminism mandated race as a necessary consideration in all gender studies, so that we could better understand relations of power not only between women and men but also between and among women. Many African-American and Native American scholars draw attention to the ways race often operated historically to unify women and men in categories that divided women. Higgenbotham notes, for example, that after emancipation, black women, regardless of class, were denied entrance to train cars designated for *women* as a safe space (1992: 261). bell hooks asserts that during the civil rights movements in the United States, race unified black men and women, dividing women along color lines as white women sought to protect their privilege and dominance over black women. In examples such as these, Maynard argues, race "does not simply make women's subordination greater; race makes it qualitatively different" (in Bhavnani, 2001: 125). Gender subordination, however, cannot be assumed in the context of Native American studies, for, as Lucy Eldersveld Murphy shows, women in traditional indigenous cultures often enjoyed gender equity not available to European women settlers in the dominant white culture who were subordinated within patriarchal hierarchies (in Shoemaker, 1995: 72–89). In each of these examples, race operates as a distinct category of analysis intersecting with gender to differentiate women's experience.

More recently, however, feminist studies have asserted the inseparable nature of race and gender, suggesting that modern concepts of race and gender originated in the single category of social standing, motivated by the privileges accorded to elites. "By understanding how race is a gendered category," Tessie Liu argues, "we can more systematically address the structural underpinnings of why women's experiences differ so radically and how these differences are relationally constituted" (1991: 269). Liu provides an historical theory of the construction of race as a "key element of social order" that long preceded European contact with people of different skin color and was not, therefore, initially based on physical characteristics (1991: 270).

In her consolidation of race and gender, Liu begins by examining early European meanings of *race*, which include ideas of "common descent," "common origin or substance," "blood ties," and "kinship," noting that the upper classes thought of themselves as "a race apart" (Liu, 1991: 273). Early definitions of race were based on blood ties or "common substance" passed from father to son. This concept of race, Liu argues, was in turn based on class differences designed to maintain patriarchal rule and patrilineal descent, and thus to protect political power and economic entitlement. Race encapsulated notions of class and operated as a "system of privileges and stigmas of birth as indelible and discriminatory as any racial system based on color" (271). At the same time, Liu notes the inconsistency of these privileged blood ties evident in concepts of legitimacy (and illegitimacy), which "did not extend to all who shared genetic material, but only those with a culturally defined 'common substance' passed on by fathers" (271). Thus "race" as viewed within this early modern European context was not a biological marker but a concept culturally constructed within hierarchies of power. Race, then, does not signify any essential difference of skin color or blood ties (although it implies a "natural order"); rather, race operates as a metaphor to include within and to exclude from a system of privilege.

Liu argues that racial principles based on boundaries of lineage are necessarily closely linked to "reproductive politics," and that "the centrality of reproduction and birth to social entitlements allows us to see the gendered dimensions of race" (1991: 271). This concept of race, Liu asserts, necessarily focuses on women and "necessitated control over women . . . not only in one's own group but in differentiating between women according to legitimate and illegitimate access and prohibition" (271). "Only in the context of colonization," when Europeans came in contact with others, Liu argues, did "skin color become the mark of common substance and differentiation" (271). Colonial rule was "contingent on the colonists' ability to construct and enforce legal and social classifications for who was *white* and who was *native*, who counted as European and by what degree, which progeny were legitimate and which were not" (272). Colonial authority and privilege, Liu concludes, was "based on racial distinction and therefore fundamentally structured on gendered terms" (272). Teresa Meade notes, however, that in colonial Latin America, racial distinctions were made extremely difficult because by 1600 so many people were *castas* (mixed race), and moved from one legally defined category to another depending on opportunity and perceived reward. Indians denied entrance into guilds or the right to live in some areas, Meade says, defined themselves as *mestizos*, and *mestizos* sometimes defined themselves as Indian to avoid paying tribute to the church or crown. Still, these slippages do not contradict Liu's association with race and gender under colonial control; rather they emphasize the difficulty of containing racial categories.

Merry Wiesner-Hanks (2001) also locates modern origins of race in the European emphasis on bloodlines that extended into concepts of nationalism (in references such as *French blood*) and religion (in purity of blood issues). Wiesner-Hanks also identifies a later connection between race and skin color to colonization, and increasingly complex racial categories with the development of mixed blood identities (40). Like Liu, Wiesner-Hanks points to the contradictory gendered concepts of race which are simultaneous with colonization, as, for example, Christianity associated native colonized cultures with sexual depravity, while sexualized metaphors represented the

"New World as a virgin never yet penetrated by strength" (2001: 93). She emphasizes, however, that these examples illustrate a colonial constructed gendered concept of race, where "sexual and racial categories were viewed as permanent moral classifications supported by unchanging religious teachings" (223). Similarly, Kim Hall (1995) associates the development of modern concepts of race – and the link between race and gender – with geographical exploration and colonization. In her literary study of tropes of lightness and darkness, *Things of Darkness*, Hall argues that the binaries between black and white pervasive in literature of the early modern period "might be called the originary language of racial difference in English culture" (2). While the binarism in tropes of light and dark certainly predates the Renaissance, Hall says, "during this period it becomes increasingly concerned with skin color, economics, and politics," which conflate race and gender (3). In the context of master/slave and property relations, Evelyn Higgenbotham, too, sees race and gender as inseparable concepts constructed within cultural contexts, arguing that "in societies where racial demarcation is endemic to their sociocultural fabric . . . gender identity is inextricably linked to and even determined by racial identity" (Higgenbotham, 1992: 254).

Higgenbotham argues that this historical link between race and gender resulted in racialized concepts of women's bodies and women's experience (258). These concepts created material consequences for women. Liu asserts, for example, that the gendered concept of race "bifurcated visions of womanhood," where European women were seen as guardians of social order and civilization. As reproducers of the ruling elite their daily activities came under group scrutiny (Liu, 1991: 272). In contrast, native or colonized women obtained an ambiguous status: not seen as women at all, for they were, "spared neither [the] labor or punishment" imposed on men as white women were, but "as reproducers of the labor force and valued property" (272). Thus, Liu argues, *native* women were simultaneously exoticized as prohibited but available (272). Wiesner-Hanks suggests that a bifurcated vision of women authorized the rape of indigenous women as a prerogative of conquest (Wiesner-Hanks, 2001: 221). And Higgenbotham points to the rape of black women with impunity that continued long after slavery, which underscores the "pervasive belief in black female promiscuity" (Higgenbotham, 1992: 264). In contrast, she notes that the "lynching of black men [accused of rape of white women], with its often attendant castration," situates white women as tropes for sexual purity (264).

Higgenbotham further argues that "categorization of class and racial groups according to culturally constituted sexual identities facilitated the subordination of black people within a stratified society and rendered them powerless against incursions of the state in their innermost private lives" (265). She points to the horrifying example of the Tuskegee experiment, where infected black men were uninformed of their condition and studied for the long-term effects of syphilis despite the discovery of penicillin, and the utter lack of concern for the women in relationships with those men (265). Similarly, Native American scholars have drawn attention to United States government policies affecting women's bodies. As Paula Gunn Allen among others has pointed out, health care workers estimate that "over 25 percent of [American] Indian women . . . have been sterilized without their consent" (Allen, 1998: 38). Birth control and sterilization experiments imposed on Puerto Rican women and the experiments carried out by the Nazis on Jewish women, which reveal

the perception and construction of women as racially inferior subjects and therefore valid objects of experimentation authorized by the state. Nancy Leys Stepan's *The Hour of Eugenics* also explores the intersection of race and gender in eugenics. Even now, legal theorist Dorothy E. Roberts signals an "alarming trend toward greater state intervention into the lives of pregnant women suspected of drug abuse, the majority of whom are poor and black" (1995: 383). These women are primary targets for punitive prosecution, Roberts states, "not because they are more likely to be guilty of fetal abuse, but *because* they are poor and black" (388, emphasis added). And in a recent speech, Eleanor Smeal identified racial overtones in the decision made by the George W. Bush administration to deny funding to organizations advocating women's reproductive rights; this decision was the very first action taken by the Bush administration after the Inauguration, and, in Smeal's opinion, contributed to the deaths of hundreds of thousands of women in developing countries. All of these examples illustrate how development and consolidation of race and gender concepts divide women, authorize control of their bodies, and continue to determine women's diverse experience within hierarchies of power.

Evelyn Higgenbotham (1992) argues that race has come to operate as a *metalanguage*, with a "powerful, all-encompassing effect on the construction and representation of other social and power relations, namely, gender, class, and sexuality" (255). In its negative totalizing effect, she asserts, race not only tends to subsume the social categories of gender and class, "it blurs and disguises, suppresses and delegates its own complex interplay with the very social relations it envelops. It precludes unity within the same gender group but often appears to solidify people of opposing economic classes" (255). The practical consequence is often artificial division of women along racial lines (an atavistic impulse toward essentialism) and reluctance among some women to cross racial borders for fear of unwelcome trespass. Higgenbotham also emphasizes that this totalizing effect of race masks power relations within racialized groups based on perceived differences such as color, status, and regional culture evident in the work of some feminist theorists who regard race as an irreconcilable division between women.

A metalanguage of race (or gender-race theory) also has larger implications for nations and for gender and race relations within nations. In her chapter, "No Longer in a Future Heaven," Anne McClintock argues that nationalisms are "constituted from the very beginning as a gendered discourse and cannot be understood without a theory of gender power" (1995: 355). McClintock examines the paradoxical treatment of women's roles in national struggles; these have been seen as central, but also subordinated to men's roles. The paradox, McClintock observes, is rooted in the family and domestic space as the primary trope of nationalism, evident in such terms as fatherland, motherland, fathers of our nation, or first family (357). The family, McClintock asserts, "acts as a 'natural' figure for sanctioning a national hierarchy" (357). While women are acknowledged as the "bearers" or "mothers" of the nation, the militancy, agency, and productivity of the *fathers* of the nation, as least historically, are recognized and remembered over the contributions of women. Consequently, as McClintock suggests, nationalisms have typically sprung from masculinized memory, masculinized humiliation, and masculinized hope. The emergent nation, then, is represented as the "repository of male hopes, male aspirations, and male privilege" and women's roles are seen as "auxiliary" (380).

Clearly operating within this gendered discourse of nationalism is a metalanguage of race. If nations, as McClintock asserts, are "contested systems of cultural representations that limit and legitimize people's access to resources of the nation-state," those limits and legitimations specifically serve interests of racial power and privilege (1995: 353). McClintock looks, for example, at the historical development of Afrikaaner identity and nationalism in South Africa. She points out that although white women were disempowered within a gender hierarchy, they were also active participants, "complicit in deploying the power of motherhood in the exercise and legitimation of white domination" (379). Thus, she concludes, "white women are both colonized and colonizers in the history of dispossession" (379). (Temma Kaplan's chapter in this volume (Chapter 9) provides numerous other examples of the way in which nationalism is both racialized and gendered.)

The metalanguage of race is also evident in early American national discourse that justified displacement and dispossession, if not genocide, of American Indians. In his examination of early negotiations between the United States government and American Indian tribes, Scott Richard Lyons (2000) outlines the shifting meanings of the term *sovereignty* as applied to Indian Nations. He shows how the term, which initially recognized tribes' authority as equal and independent nations, later came to signify a paternalistic authority over American Indians (453). In the imperialistic discourse of nation based on the assumed "natural" trope of the family, American Indians were represented as children – often called the red children of the Great White Father – and thereby dispossessed of land and authority. In *this* national discourse, American Indian women were not recognized as women at all (despite their gender equality within tribes), nor as bearers of the nation; *that* role was reserved for white women. Feminist theories that acknowledge the inseparable connection between race and gender, then, can reveal how women's identities and relationships between women are constructed within national discourses.

More than Analogous: Sexuality, Border Identities, Transgender, and Disability

If race, gender, and class are seen as inseparable, then it is also impossible to separate other categories of difference in the development of inclusive feminist theories. Sexuality, for example, is not analogous to race and gender in identity formation, but it is not a category that can be bracketed as if incidental to experience. In her speech, "Learning from the Sixties," published in *Sister Outsider*, Audre Lorde writes, "As a black lesbian mother in an interracial marriage, there was usually some part of me guaranteed to offend everybody's comfortable prejudices of who I should be" (1984: 137). "Over and over again in the 60s I was asked to justify my existence and my work, because I was a woman, because I was Lesbian, because I was not a separatist, because some piece of me was not acceptable" (143). She also recalls in the 1980s a student president at Howard University commenting on black lesbians and gay men, "The Black community has nothing to do with such filth – we will have to abandon these people" (Lorde, 1984: 460). Throughout her speech, Audre Lorde asserts the multiple dimensions of her identity that separated her from others, separated her from other blacks and women who would not tolerate her sexual difference. She notes both the necessity and difficulty of "hold[ing] on to all the parts of

me that served me, in spite of the pressure to express only one to the exclusion of others" (461).

Audre Lorde's statements illustrate how some women's identities are fragmented by others who either erase an intrinsic part of who they are, or who isolate and define them by one part – their sexuality. For lesbian women, their sexuality is often elided and/or marginalized even within much feminist discourse on race and gender. Tessie Liu (1991), for example, admits that the inseparable link between race and gender puts an emphasis on heterosexuality, and Judith Butler suggests that attempts to define a category of women "achieve stability and coherence only within the context of the heterosexual matrix" (1990: 5). Like *invisible* whiteness, heterosexuality operates as an assumed norm, and lesbians even in the company of women are made *other*. This marginalization of homosexuality is increasingly contested in works such as Deepa Mahta's film *Fire* (which was banned in India because of its portrayal of same-sex relationships), in Jeanette Winterson's novel *Written on the Body*, where ambiguous pronouns challenge a reader's apprehension of sexual identities, in Cherrie Moraga's *Loving in the War Years*, and in Winona LaDuke's *Last Standing Woman*. In discussions of race and gender, as Mary Maynard writes, the "focus on difference runs the risk of masking conditions that give some forms of difference value and power over others" (in Bhavnani, 2001: 121). Sexual difference – specifically homosexuality – is both conveniently concealed and revealed.

Gloria Anzaldua (1999) writes about the difficulty of identity formation between cultures – as a woman of mixed racial identity, Anglo, Mexican, and indigenous, she is excluded by dominant white culture on the basis of color, excluded by Mexican culture on the basis of her indigenous and white heritage, and, in both cultures, excluded on the basis of gender and sexuality. "To be a *Mestiza*," she writes, means "having no country, as lesbian – no race, as feminist – no culture" ("Preface to the First Edition": [19–20]). For Anzaldua, her identity formation occurs in the isolated territory of borderlands: a physical borderland between Mexico and the United States, a psychological borderland between racial and cultural identities, and a sexual borderland between binary sexuality. Within one fragmented identity, she explains, there are competing values and beliefs of multiple cultures – white, indigenous, Mexican, female, lesbian – and the hostile relationships in the outside world are internalized as an inner battle between oppressor and oppressed.

In Anzaldua's work, geographical borders reflect and construct figurative borders, which she defines politically and ideologically as an "unnatural boundary with a destabilizing potential" (1999: 2). Borders, she asserts, "are set up to define the places that are safe and unsafe, to distinguish *us* from *them*" (25). Consequently, borders are intended to exclude and relegate some to a borderland, "a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural border" (25). It is "not a comfortable territory to live in, this place of contradictions," she writes. "Hatred, anger, and exploitation are prominent features of this landscape" (Preface). Moreover, such a life requires continuous border crossings to negotiate the spaces that are safe and unsafe.

Women whose identities are fragmented by unnatural borders, Anzaldua asserts, must create for themselves a new territory. This difficult journey requires the development of a consciousness to break down and transcend the subject-object duality (1999: 102). The answer to the problem of fragmented identity, for Anzaldua, "lies

in healing the split that originates in the very foundation of our lives, our culture, our language, our thoughts" (102). Such a project requires a reinscription of difference, of alterity as power that transforms powerlessness. As with Audre Lorde's effort to claim all parts of her identity, it requires a willingness to claim multiple voices, to rebel against constructed borders, and to reintegrate differences. Difficult as this effort is, Anzaldua concludes, "there is also an exhilaration in being a participant in the further evolution of humankind" (Preface).

In providing a way for women who occupy borderlands to reintegrate fragmented identities, Anzaldua's work also suggests the need for feminist work to find new ways to reintegrate other differences among women into theories of race and gender. Sexuality and other differences cannot remain marginal in considerations of the category *women*. Just as race dismantles false gender homogenization, when diverse sexualities and border identities enter into these considerations, all assumptions about women and women's experience are altered.

Transgender and transsexual identities serve as the ultimate challenge to all assumptions about gendered experience and constructed borders between sexualities. In her early feminist theory, Joan Wallach Scott (1999) acknowledged the constructed nature of sex (rather than an essentialist biological difference between sexes), but suggested that sexual difference influenced the construction of gender. In contrast, Judith Butler argued, in *Gender Trouble*, that sex is not prior to gender; rather, sex "ought to be understood as an *effect*" of cultural constructions of gender (1990: 6, emphasis added). Butler's theory suggests that "rather than being the expression of sex, or the cultural production of sex . . . gender, in fact, *regulates* the notion that sex is the natural condition of the human body" (Butler, 1990: 177, emphasis added). Thus, *sex* is *made* to serve as the natural basis for subjective identity through operations of power that construct and establish meanings of both terms.

More recently, Bernice L. Hausman's work in *Changing Sex: Transsexualism, Technology, and the Idea of Gender* (1995) returns to Butler's ideas to reconsider the relationship between sex and gender. Hausman's expressed purpose is "to show how transsexuals compromise the official understanding of 'gender' as divorced from biological sex by their insistent reiteration of the idea that *physiological* intersexuality *is* the cause of their cross-sex identification" (141, emphasis added). That is, although her theory is informed by Butler's deconstruction of cultural constructions of *sex* and *gender*, Hausman returns to the body and its relation to medical technologies as being central to concepts of gender formation and the demand for sex reassignment (2–4). Hausman's study returns the body as a necessary category to feminist gender theory.

Other transgender work continues to inform and expand theories of race and gender. Leslie Feinberg's work, in *Transgender Warriors* (1996), seeks to challenge "*all* sex and gender borders" as it surveys the struggles of diverse transgender communities attempting to define themselves (xi). By examining transgender biographies, Feinberg provides a survey of the myriad performances of transgender identities historically and globally. She shows how different societies attempt to contain and suppress transgender identities through representation, and how transgendered individuals and concepts of sex and gender difference resist containment. Similarly, in *Spirit and the Flesh*, Walter Williams (1992) shows that Native American and other indigenous cultures were not always based on binary sex-gender concepts, but often acknowledged third and fourth genders – now generally termed "two-spirit people"–,

which allowed for "extreme malleability with respect to gender roles" (235). Williams notes that for many cultures the way to deal with inconsistencies in gender formation is to treat them as taboo, pollution, deviance, and abnormality. Ricki Wilchins, one of the first leaders of the transgender rights movement in the United States, notes, for example, that the particularly violent murders of transgendered people suggest an intense desire to contain and punish gender transgression. The alternative, Alzaldua points out, evident in many native or aboriginal cultures, is to sanctify them. Anzaldua shows conflicted attitudes in traditional *Chicano* culture, where perceived sex-gender deviation was both threatening and magical; "sexually different people were believed to possess supernatural powers," as the price for "an inborn extraordinary gift" (1999: 41).

Perhaps the most marginalized difference in feminist discourse is disability. In *Feminism and Disability*, Barbara Hillyer (1993) states, "I wrote this book because of the dissonance between the ideas of the feminist and disability movements" (x). As a mother of a daughter who is both physically and mentally disabled, Hillyer says that her experience as a woman "is not reflected at all in feminist literature, even though mother-daughter relationships are often discussed there" (9).

Assumed values and goals in feminist discourse, such as independence and productivity, she says, create ideal models of women that are problematic for women who are disabled and for women who are their care-givers. The feminist emphasis on independence, for example, can threaten a disabled woman's sense of identity and create problems in the relationships between women who are disabled and women who care for them. The assumed value of independence may cause "resentment of proffered help, whether it is needed or not," Hillyer points out, and "inhibit the articulation of the caregiver's own needs" (1993: 12). The assumed value of productivity creates very different pressures for disabled women than it does for women who are not disabled (11). Even the terms used to talk about the experience of disability (despite efforts to escape hegemonic dualities such as "handicapped" and "normal" or "disabled" and "able") are problematic, and often the anxiety invoked by these terms means that issues of disability simply are not addressed. The problem with terms for women with disabilities, Hillyer states, is that they are often "too inclusive. They minimize real problems, and they imply that truth is shameful" (27). The term, *differently abled*, she notes, for example, "is problematic precisely because it is intended to include everyone, to make the woman with a disability just like everyone else" (27). Such terms deny the reality of the body, and in this denial women with disabilities are often erased within feminist theories.

In providing a sensitive analysis of her relationship with her daughter and the experience of other women who live with disabilities, Hillyer shows how a wide range of assumptions about gender difference and experience apply in complex and often reverse ways. Emotional responsiveness, a value often attributed to women, for example, is often denied both to disabled women and to women care-givers who are expected to suppress their grief and anger. Or, for example, feminist discussions of women's experience within patriarchal institutions, Hillyer notes, do not address the difficulties for some women who must rely on the still predominantly male institutions of medicine and government for the support they need.

Hillyer suggests that knowledge of disability can enrich understanding and provoke reconsideration of assumptions central to feminist theory. Such knowledge,

she suggests, requires a rethinking of concepts of female strength and weakness, independence and dependence, subjective identity and the body, as well as ideas about loss and recuperation. Hillyer's reconsiderations and other disability studies might also inform the ways in which we think about interracial relationships and mutual dependence. Just as feminist work must reintegrate race, gender, and sexuality, it must also reintegrate considerations of disability if it is to speak to and for all women.

Located Knowledges: Representation and Positionality

While feminist and postmodern theories have challenged essentialist concepts, current scholarship often seems an intellectual minefield of issues about who can speak for the other. Of course, issues of representation and positionality have been justly raised to reveal hegemonic assumptions implicit in early Western feminist work and illusory universals that consolidate race, class, sexuality, gender, and culture difference. At the same time, the emphasis on experience conceals latent essentialist tendencies. At the last Berkshire Conference on the History of Women, for example, a session erupted into impassioned debate when a woman asked why a panel on Native American women was comprised only of white women. No one challenged the appropriateness of the question. Anyone familiar with American Indian studies knows the importance of self-determination for Native Americans in light of the historical and on-going appropriation and displacement of their property, rights, voices, and culture in the interest of white privilege. The undeniable and irreducible problems of non-Natives trespassing Native ground are both practical and political, involving issues of access to valuable information not available in written documents but passed down through families, sacred teachings, native languages, and symbols. In these cases, being on the outside of a culture acutely emphasizes issues of positionality and partial knowledge. At the same time, Native Americans and non-Natives have overlapping histories that have been artificially separated (usually to conceal the atrocities justified by the master narrative of Manifest Destiny). But if our histories are to be reintegrated (to understand relationships between American Indian women and white women settlers, for example), writers, whether Native or non-Native, must contend with the representation of others (and both, of course, are separated by historical location).

Still, the question about the all-white panel on Native American women provoked impassioned debate, despite the fact that the panelists were all widely recognized and highly regarded scholars in American Indian studies. The question clearly implied that experience constituted a cultural and scholarly imprimatur; in other words, a Native American woman, with the claim to authenticity, would necessarily have served better in speaking about the culture than any of the non-Native panelists. Certainly the issue of representation is important, but it conceals the way essentialism continues to circulate in global feminist theories of race and gender.

In "Women Skin Deep," Sara Suleri (1992) critiques both the authority claimed by Western feminist theorists and the privilege assumed by postcolonial theorists. The first, she says, too often elides race in discussions of women and gender; the second too often gives special status to the racialized body. Suleri observes that "while feminist discourse remains vexed by questions of identity formation" and debates about essentialism and constructivisim, in its reaction against assumptions of gender universality, it now grants "an unembarrassed privilege" to "racially encoded feminism"

(758). Here the experience of marginality is given special status, and the marginalized (read racialized) female voice, Suleri observes, is elevated to "a metaphor for 'the good'" (758–9).

Suleri's argument pivots on what she sees as the pervasive appropriation of the term *postcolonial* to act as both a "free-floating metaphor for cultural embattlement" and as "an almost obsolete signifier for the 'historicity of race'" (759–60). In this current use, she claims, the term has been emptied of its original geographical and historical specificity. In the absence of specificity, the *postcolonial woman* obtains special authority. Suleri argues that "while lived experience can hardly be discounted as a critical resource" for informing race-gender theory, "neither should it serve as an evacuating principle for both historical and theoretical contexts" (1992: 761). Suleri's argument suggests that the privileging of Western-produced concepts of women that elide race *and* the reactionary privileging of postcolonial experience, the racialized body, and the marginalized voice all rely on (although they do not pronounce) essentialist assumptions. But if race is to inform feminist theory and concepts of identity formation, she insists, "it cannot take recourse to biologism" (763). This, Suleri concludes, "is feminism skin deep in that the pigment of its imagination cannot break out of a strictly biological reading of race" (765).

Feminist theories of race and gender, whether produced in a postcolonial or Western context, that invoke lived experience as the primary site of authority and authenticity, as Suleri suggests, can be more divisive than informative. While feminist discourse certainly needs to guard against illusory assumptions of gender universals, the focus on difference which continuously separates women, Jane L. Parpart and Marianne H. Marchand argue, runs the risk of "reinforcing the power of patriarchy and reducing the chances that women can challenge the gender hierarchies and ideologies that construct and maintain women's subordination" (in Bhavnani, 2001: 529). Instead, Parpart and Marchand envision the possibility of "empathetic understanding of people's daily lives based on carefully situated and partial knowledge" (Bhavnani, 2001: 529). Alexander and Mohanty (1997) suggest that "to talk about feminist praxis in a global context" involves shifting analysis from "local, regional, and national culture to relations and processes across borders" (497).

After I returned from the international Women's Congress in Uganda, I wanted to articulate what it was like to be among over two thousand participants from ninety-five countries together addressing *women's* issues. Many times during conference sessions, I felt overwhelmed by the enormity of difference in women's experiences – women in New Delhi fighting for legal protection for female sex workers confined by poverty and abandonment, women in East Africa fighting to change early-marriage customs where girls as young as age four are given over to a husband's family. Many times during conference sessions, I was struck by a commonality in our struggles – women everywhere fighting the HIV/AIDS pandemic (where girls aged fourteen to twenty-four are the fastest-growing group of those infected, in East Africa and in the United States); women fighting to change customs that do damage to the female body (beauty standards that prompt females to starve themselves or undergo breast implant surgery, morality standards that mandate female circumcision); women fighting to gain economic and reproductive autonomy and educational opportunities for women. There is no question that each of us brought to the conference our particular historical legacies and the ongoing consequences of those legacies. I have

no doubt that the differences among us could have surfaced into hostilities, and did, perhaps, in the privacy of familiar conversations. But what struck me most was that for every conceivable border – whether racial or any of the other lines of difference traced in this chapter – women formed coalitions across them in the interest of other women. *That* spirit of united activism was no illusion.

With "war*lords* everywhere detonating weapons of destruction" (as Eleanor Smeal said in a recent speech on women's reproductive rights), and with women everywhere still targeted with violence on the basis of gender, race, sexuality, and class, it seems that theory can ill afford to fragment and divide women. Certainly we are separated by our histories, experiences, privileges, and deprivations, but those who choose may be united in a willingness to transgress the borders that divide us. If feminist theory serves only to pronounce and reify our differences, rather than provide understanding of our different experiences *and* suggest ways we might form coalitions across the real and "unnatural" borders of our lives, then we will not break down the walls that history has built to contain us, and we will continue building our own walls.

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Chapter Seven

Gender and Education Before and After Mass Schooling

Pavla Miller

> [A] woman's education must . . . be planned in relation to a man. To be pleasing in his sight, to win his respect and love, to train him in childhood, to tend him in manhood, to counsel and console, to make his life pleasant and happy, these are the duties of woman for all time, and this is what she should be taught when she is young.
>
> (Rousseau, *Emile* (1762))

Historically, accounts of education focused on men and boys – without explicitly dealing with gender or masculinities. Feminist contributions initially redressed the balance by looking at girls' experiences in and out of school, the place of literacy in women's lives, the lives of learned women. More recently, scholars have examined gender *relations*, the making of masculinities, gendered ethnicities, and whiteness. A number of theoretically informed contemporary studies, such as those published in the journals *Gender and Education* and *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, provide further methodological inspiration. So far, comparative work on gender, maternalisms, and welfare state regimes, debated in journals such as *Social Politics*, has had little influence on education history. Similarly, there is scope for integrating gender into long-standing debates regarding industrialization, modernity, governmentality, and democracy from the perspective of schools.

Such histories depend a great deal on how their focus is defined. Understood narrowly, education deals with children and teachers inside the classroom. Understood broadly, it covers lifelong learning in its full social context, a more universal and diffuse process through which one generation passes valued knowledge to the next. Different interpretations of the topic give it more or less historical and contemporary significance. Competing notions of female literacy, for example, are at the centre of current debates about fertility rates and women's empowerment in developing countries. Differences in white and black men's and women's capacity for complex thought have traditionally formed part of arguments about their respective educability and ability to govern. The educational disadvantages of boys or girls from different ethnic backgrounds loom large in debates about educational credentialing and public policy. The center of most debates about education today is formal public

schooling, particularly mass compulsory schooling which began in some parts of Europe in the eighteenth century. Thus this chapter focuses on the rise and dynamics of mass compulsory schooling. Through this lens, we can see complex issues involving gender and other categories of difference such as race and class.

To work out the gendered significance of mass schooling, we need to look both inside and outside the classroom. How did new education systems relate to what went on before? How did they colonize the education landscape? How much of it did they cover? How did they interact with more or less systematic provisions for enculturating, controlling, caring for and skilling young people in households, workplaces, neighbourhoods and churches? Did schools underpin or undermine the authority of household heads? make more work for mother? civilize parents? redefine childhood and youth? build states through pioneering and consolidating new forms of governmentality? help engender modernity? bolster or undermine the power of employers and priests? erode or enhance nuns' educational autonomy? Did schools reflect, reproduce, or subvert dominant forms of gender and ethnic relations? or help engender new ones?

Before Mass Schooling

To understand the enormous impact of mass schooling, we must first take a brief look at education in the millennia before its development. The earliest writing systems in the world were pictographic, and often used thousands of characters rather than the 20–30 letters of most modern alphabetic writing systems. Thus to learn these systems well, one had to spend years of study and practice, much of it rote memorization of symbols and phrases. Even after alphabetic systems became more common in some parts of the world, learning to read and write took a number of years. This meant that learning to read and write was generally limited to two sorts of people: members of the elite who did not have to engage in productive labor to support themselves, and those who could hope to support themselves by writing or for whom writing was required as part of their work. The first group comprised both women and men, for some elite women have been literate in almost all of the world's cultures. Initially the second group consisted of professional scribes, copiers, and record-keepers, and later it included people engaged in many other occupations. This second group was predominantly male, for until the last century or so, people who wrote professionally or who used writing in their work have almost all been men. Though women were generally not prohibited from attending schools that taught reading and writing, because they could not take positions as officials, administrators, or scribes, parents were unwilling to pay for training daughters who had no prospects of later employment and whose education would thus be wasted.

The vast majority of both men and women in the era before mass schooling had no opportunity to learn to read or write, but among the elites who did, men's access to learning was much greater than women's. Confucianism in China and the Greek philosophy of Plato and Aristotle clearly regarded women as both inferior in reason and dangerous to men's spiritual and intellectual development. Thus the schools, academies, and other institutions for training that developed were for men only. No woman attended Plato's academy, or spoke in any of the dialogues written by Plato. We know the names of a few female poets among the ancient Greeks, such as Sappho

and Erinna, but the painters, sculptors, playwrights, and philosophers whose names we know are all men. In China, the imperial university established in the Han period to train scholars and bureaucrats in the Confucian classics had perhaps as many as thirty thousand students, all of them male. In the Tang period, opportunities for positions as court officials or governors were determined by one's success in the imperial scholarly examinations; women could neither take the examination nor hold official positions. In India, men trained as professional philosophers composed the Upanishads, collections of texts dating from 700 to 500 BCE, which emphasized the importance of contemplation and personal self-control; though women appear to have taken part in early discussions of these texts, they were later barred from studying them or other sacred works. In Muslim areas schools attached to mosques trained boys to read the Qur'an, and offered training to advanced scholars in science, medicine, Islamic law and theology; by the sixteenth century there were over 150 Quranic schools in the west African city of Timbuktu, open to male students only.

There were always a few women who learned to read or write, or who even became highly learned. They generally followed one of three patterns: they were members of elite families whose fathers were open to women's education, nuns or members of religious groups that prized reading, or courtesans for whom training in music, dancing, or literature made them more attractive to powerful and wealthy men. Opportunities for women to receive an education were often linked to very specific purposes; nuns in both Christianity and Buddhism, for example, often learned to read and write in order to copy religious literature or perform other religious functions, and some women in areas where women were secluded were allowed to study medicine in order to care for female patients.

The Making of Mass Education

The promotion of mass education began in Western Europe, where there were two major waves of building educational systems. The first was associated with the widespread social conflicts of the Reformation and its aftermath in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and initially hoped to transform unruly populations into correctly worshipping Christians through household instruction. In Scandinavian countries, this form of domestic education, backed by regular parish examinations and effective ecclesiastical sanctions, produced a population with an almost universal ability to read, and a state with remarkably detailed knowledge of local conditions. Elsewhere in Europe and its colonies, greater emphasis was placed on the building of boys' (less often mixed or girls') schools. In most regions, the experiments contributed to the process of state formation and the rise of similarly structured Christian churches, but fell far short of their original aim of catechizing whole populations.

The attempts to prepare each and every soul for membership in the appropriate Christian denomination were more feasible (but not necessarily more effective) where they doubled up as child-minding or basic industrial training: removing small children and their noise out of the house for a few hours, teaching them their letters, showing girls how to sew and make lace. These formal and informal arrangements were conducted in vernacular languages; they might be held in a school, but did not count as "education." The latter began with the learning of Latin, and progressed to mastery of standard classical and religious texts, Greek and Hebrew, leavened as

required by more worldly and technical instruction. Daughters might at times acquire some aspects of such knowledge alongside their brothers from tutors or fathers, or else in convents, but schools preparing pupils for the public world of clerics, clerks, merchants, officers, attorneys and bailiffs catered only to boys.

In early modern Europe, attendance at what we would recognize as school was a minority experience, more common in some regions than others, in towns than in the country, for the wealthy than for the poor, for boys than for girls. Basic ability to read and count might get girls better positions in service, but their greater usefulness around the house tended to translate into a shorter period at school. In late-sixteenth-century England and Wales, according to one estimate, out of a population of four or five million, no girls and fewer than 20,000 boys (or one in a hundred or more males) attended grammar schools. In pre-revolutionary Paris, according to another estimate, there were school places for one in three potential girl pupils. In the diocese of Tarbes in southern France, two-thirds of all eligible boys but only one in fifty girls received any recognized schooling in 1783.

The second wave of mass education reform revolved around schools, and gathered force in the nineteenth century. Prussia legislated on compulsory schooling in 1763 and by 1826 all school teachers in Prussia were required to be certified through a state examination. One and a half million children were enrolled in denominational state-sponsored schools in 1822, double that number in 1867, and over five million, or three quarters of the five-to-fourteen age group, by the turn of the century. In Sweden, an elementary school act established a national system of schools "where possible" in 1842. By 1878, when nearly three-quarters of the five-to-fourteen age group were enrolled, the compulsory school age was set at seven to thirteen. Norway made education for at least two months in the year mandatory, between seven years of age and confirmation, in 1848. Between 1869 and 1882, most Western countries followed suit. Schooling for both sexes was made compulsory in Ontario, British Columbia and Manitoba in Canada, fourteen of the American states, four of the six Australian colonies, in New Zealand, Scotland, the Austrian Empire, in Switzerland and Italy, the remaining German states, and in England and Wales. In France, the Guizot Law of 1833 obliged all communes to maintain a boys' school and all departments to open a male teacher training college. Girls went to school too, but the majority were educated by Catholic nuns. Training for women teachers and compulsory education for both boys and girls was consolidated under state control in 1882. In Spain, school attendance from seven to ten was made compulsory in 1931 as part of widespread educational expansion initiated during the Second Republic. Many of these reforms were rescinded when the government was overthrown by Fascist forces in 1933.

In Western countries, mass education systems were built during a period of intense state formation; by the end of the nineteenth century, they could account for the largest amount of state expenditure after the army, employ the greatest number of people, and be supervised by one of the largest, gendered, bureaucracies. In this sense, the making of the education systems was also a significant part of engendering modern states. The wealthy in many regions became convinced of the need for schools as their country emerged from or just avoided revolutionary turmoil. Children of the people, they believed, could be taught docility, humility, and resignation. They could be trained to obey orders with precision, joyously, without being given

a reason, promised a reward, or threatened with punishment. Schools could destroy the habits of insubordination among industrial workers, prepare serfs for wage labor, or bring new industries to a backward region. In communities where the family or the church was thought to be in crisis, schools could rebuild both faith and the hearth. They could produce virtuous wives and little children whose godly influence would "emasculate the radicalism" of working-class men. Schools could "educate our masters" as ordinary men gained the vote, and prepare republican mothers for their sacred, some even thought professional, duty in rearing citizens. Teaching the three Rs was almost invariably seen as a *means* of training the children in meekness and morality, rather as an end in itself. Since obedience and reading were taught first, many pupils left before writing was tackled. Elsewhere, catechism, prayers, good manners, and useful skills like spinning, sewing, or knitting took precedence, especially for girls: in 1829 in Naples, of 2,000 girls attending twenty-three girls' schools, only one-fifth learned to read.

In some countries and among some social strata, obscurantism – the belief that subordinate groups should be kept ignorant so they could not challenge those in power – died hard, however. In United States, teaching literacy to white children had almost universal support, but slaves in Southern states were by law not allowed to read. In Spain and Portugal, the Catholic church remained opposed to the extension of public literacy and the general education of girls for another century. Ignorant persons, it held, should not be exposed to heretical, liberal, or socialist doctrines and so would remain in a state of grace. Sharing some of the same views about the transformative power of literacy, feminists, labor radicals, and black activists advocated new forms of education to give dignity, strength, and understanding to women, the poor, and people of color. Yet, as some French feminist historians argue, secular male activists and bureaucrats also routinely used the charge of obscurantism to undermine the legitimacy of congregational schools for girls, claiming that such schools enhanced women's supposedly irrational intellectual, political, and religious preferences.

Today, success at school is imperfectly but realistically linked to social mobility. In the past, this was rarely the case. Obscurantists and their critics usually agreed that social hierarchy must be preserved. On their part, the majority of parents were too well aware of the obstacles to social advancement to bother giving their children more than a basic education – even if they could have afforded to do so. There might be a few scholarships for needy boys, but most were allocated to sons of impoverished gentlemen. Elementary classes were conducted in the vernacular; Latin was required for entry to advanced schools. In many countries, there were quotas or even prohibitions on *boys* from modest backgrounds entering elite educational institutions. Studious daughters of well-off tradesmen and shopkeepers found entry to many ladies' academies blocked by informal rules safeguarding their "moral tone." In turn, it was considered inappropriate for *young ladies* to study Greek and more than a smattering of Latin, yet these were a prerequisite for university study. In any case, until the late nineteenth century, *women* everywhere were simply barred from admission to institutions of higher learning and most professions. Reflecting these facts, schoolbook stories of mobility through education contained men but not women as central characters. By the twentieth century, most countries developed parallel educational systems with distinct clienteles: one, leading to university, and usually charging

fees; the other catering to the vocational needs of clerks, tradesmen, nurses, and mothers.

The gender patterns in education and culture established in Europe accompanied Europeans wherever they set up colonies, with racial and ethnic hierarchies added to those of gender and class. Schools that were established for the children of colonists were often divided by gender, with higher education reserved for boys; in some areas, missionaries also ran schools for indigenous children, but those teaching more than basic reading and writing were limited to boys, who the missionaries hoped would later serve as pastors to their own people. In Catholic colonies, convents offered a small number of indigenous girls the opportunity to gain literacy, though most local girls and women lived in convents as servants or lay-sisters, not as fully professed nuns, and so were not educated to the same level as European-background women.

In many parts of the world, white colonists used schools to "civilize the natives," at times in an explicit attempt to destroy indigenous cultures. Nineteenth-century missionaries saw education as a way both to "civilize" and "Christianize" the people among whom they worked; the education they provided for girls thus included a heavy dose of domestic science. In the United States, such schooling extended to Native Americans in an attempt to compel an "evolution of the family"; as various tribes were forced off their lands and settled on reservations, officials and missionaries often removed children from their homes and sent them to boarding schools, thus disrupting family life completely. For many dialect speakers, indigenous people, and immigrants, literacy meant learning another language – and at times abandoning their mother tongue – as the price of reading and writing. For many more, a new emphasis on literacy helped undermine a vibrant oral culture with its own lines of authority.

Advocates of education for women outside of Europe often used conservative rhetoric about motherhood to achieve their aims, but they also viewed women's education as a sign of modernity and progress. In India, for example, male and female reformers advocated the opening of girls' schools along with other changes to improve the status of women, and a few schools were opened in major cities, largely to provide appropriately educated wives for Western-educated Indian men. Graduates of these schools and other women who had received an education began to publish journals for women in Hindi, Urdu, and English. There were similar developments in Egypt, Turkey, Iran, and Tunisia, where women were actively recruited as teachers so that girls could learn in an all-female environment. In Egypt, a separate school was opened for female health officers as early as the 1830s, with women trained in immunization and obstetrics as well as general medical care. It is important to recognize that the expansion of educational opportunities for women in many colonial and non-industrialized areas was limited to a tiny portion of the urban elite, in the same way that schools in general reached very few people. In the Brazilian census of 1872, for example, out of a population of roughly 10 million, roughly one million free men and half a million free women could read and write, while only about one thousand enslaved men and five hundred slave women could.

Enrollment, Attendance, and Organization

Historians need to treat evidence with caution. For those concerned with gender, commonly used terms present a particular challenge. In English, "men" can signify

both men and women but often means only males; "boys" can, but need not, refer to pupils of both sexes, while general words like children, pupils, scholars, youth, or adolescents might be but usually are not gender neutral. Difficulties in interpreting primary sources have been compounded by gender-blind scholars. Until recently, most education histories ignored such basic questions as whether girls were allowed to enrol in and actually attended the same educational institutions as boys, whether they were taught the same subjects, by the same teachers, in the same classes, from the same books and by the same methods. Neither was it possible to determine whether their attendance showed similar patterns to those of boys, whether they were examined and marked in the same way, and whether their success in examinations diverged from the pattern shown by their brothers. And if we are informed that all boys and girls of school age went to school, were "native" young people counted? Was it assumed that the nobility and the wealthy would educate their daughters and even their sons at home? In nineteenth-century South Australia, compulsory-attendance legislation did not apply to those who paid substantial school fees, on the explicit grounds that people with money, unlike the poor, knew what was best for their children. In other parts of Australia, Aboriginal children were subject to compulsory education and their parents punished for noncompliance – but they were not allowed to attend many local schools because white parents objected to their presence.

In all these instances, it is necessary to make a distinction between school enrollment and attendance. In some localities, nearly every child of "school age" enrolled in school, but most attended sporadically, if at all. The son of itinerant parents might enroll in five different schools in one year but attend for only a few days (but still be counted as five enrollments); the daughter of an established craftsman might attend every day the school was opened; a promising pupil might cut attendance to a minimum as family circumstances worsened. Elsewhere, children would move between dame schools, which did not count as schools and so were not included in statistics, and several different "real" schools. Where teachers and schools received government subsidies according to the number of pupils actually taught, there was an ever-present – and unevenly policed – temptation to falsify attendance rolls. In any case, early compulsory legislation typically mandated attendance for only two or three days a week, for three or four months a year. As a result, educational statistics would at times indicate more children under instruction than lived in a province, underestimate the number of girls (since they tended to patronize informal neighbourhood schools more than boys), and give a glowing impression of educational provisions in a locality where hardly anyone went to school.

Attendance registers are associated with the capacity and need for more detailed record keeping and surveillance. Where they exist, their statistical analysis can give historians more precise glimpses into the daily patterns of children's lives. Boys, they usually suggest, were more likely to take on continuous and occasional employment. Girls tended to depend on domestic work cycles (particularly the weekly washday) and patterns of childcare, typically staying home when a new baby was born, and often assuming substantial responsibility for the care of younger siblings. In rural areas, all participated in harvest cycles. Everywhere, the poorest children, invariably considered by reformers to be most in need of instruction, were the ones whose circumstances made school attendance least likely.

School Curricula

In writing on school curricula, educationists frequently make a three-fold distinction. What can be called the *rhetorical curriculum* concerns the official pronouncements of leading educators and reformers. Here, historians are able to examine written documents, gain a measure of understanding of their authors' way of thinking, and reproduce particularly concise, misogynist, or homophobic passages for the reader. As any teacher would know, however, such prescriptions and descriptions need to be clearly distinguished from the *curriculum-in-use*. Did the politicians and administrators actually implement the reforms they announced? Did teachers know about, understand, and carry out official instructions, regulations, and advice? Were they able to do so, given limited resources, classes averaging eighty pupils, and finite energy and ability? Did schools and school systems differ in fundamental ways even though they were described in similar words? If official regulations stipulated that only boys were subject to corporal punishment, were girls really never hit?

Such questions are further clarified if we differentiate between the *hidden* and *overt* curriculum: the things which schools, teachers, and textbooks explicitly set out to do, and those aspects of schooling which were no less powerful, but which were implicit in the texts, routines, and habitual patterns of school interaction. This distinction was employed with particular force by progressive teachers in the 1970s. Since then, its use has been complicated by the finding that different aspects of school curricula have been hidden at different times. Indeed, it is now commonplace to say that in the nineteenth century, much of what is today described as hidden curriculum was made perfectly explicit. Insistence on punctuality and daily cleanliness inspection was put up as an antidote to slothful mothering. Drill and strict adherence to routines was expected to combat the habitual laziness and insubordination of "natives" and the poor. Memorized school poetry and uplifting songs were seen as beacons of beauty and civilization in an ugly, dark, and uncivilized continent of subaltern lives.

Over the last three decades, much work has been done on social histories of curriculum-in-use. School texts, teachers' and pupils' diaries, letters and reminiscences, oral histories, punishment books, court records, attendance registers, inspectors' and medical officers' reports, visitors' comments, departmental memos, files on school-related scandals, soup-kitchen recipes, and playground rhymes have all been used to reconstruct daily life in the classroom. Supplementing these sources by architectural drawings, floor plans, paintings, photographs, physical remains of schools, school furniture, and implements, stockists' catalogues, advertisements, learned articles on school layout, and records of local disputes over smoky chimneys, smelly latrines, badly ventilated classrooms, falling masonry, and leaky roofs, other scholars have assembled detailed information on the physical environment of schooling. Both ingenuity and theoretical sophistication are necessary to read such evidence, if only because many gendered issues and processes were taken for granted to such an extent that they were rarely discussed or recorded.

Even if we manage to find out what was actually taught in particular settings, we cannot assume that it was identical to the *received curriculum*: the actual effectiveness of educational schemes, settings, and processes is an altogether more complex

issue. Were the students learning roughly what the reformers, teachers, and school architects wanted them to learn? Or what their parents, peer groups, or they themselves thought important? What could be expected given their indifferent health, the number of scholars per teacher, the age and skill of the instructor, and the physical conditions of the schoolroom? Were all girls reading one text in similar ways? Did all boys take home the same message from classroom drill? A handful of biographies, fragments of statements by anonymous parents and pupils, visitors' comments, literacy statistics, print runs, and contents of unofficial and "unstamped" newspapers, pamphlets, and books, court cases, charity records, statistical reconstructions of attendance patterns, health status, and life expectancy, evidence of domestic, industrial, and social strife, are among the sources used to answer these questions. Yet to a large extent, we will never know. In any case, historians and social theorists do not agree on what there is to tell.

In contemplating the rhetorical curriculum, most historians are struck by the bluntness of official contempt for those considered their inferiors. The conviction with which reformers wrote about the vile and disgusting character of laboring men and their unfitness to govern leaves little doubt about the existence of class conflict. The willingness of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century educationists, statesmen, and philosophers to call a spade a spade when discussing the necessity to make blacks servile, teach girls to suffer injustice with meek cheerfulness, and exclude women from higher learning, makes it easy to resort to social-control explanations. The racism and misogyny of many public spokesmen is so palpable it is tempting to see state institutions as uniformly and unremittingly white and patriarchal. Yet even contemporaries noted that the logic of school curricula was not seamless. Many educators saw frequent exams as the lynchpin of classroom discipline. Others, mindful of the fact that girls often got the best marks, maintained that girls should not be habituated to competition, and certainly not with boys. Even lads from modest backgrounds, yet others complained, might get the wrong ideas about social order if they learnt meritocracy in class.

In contrast, focus on the actual conduct of schools runs the risk of romanticizing resistance, and ignoring the bulk of the students who sat through lessons without causing a stir. Endless complaints abut the rebelliousness of some children and the sullen obstinacy of others, parents who kept children from school for trivial reasons, enraged mothers who came to blows with the teacher, willfully broken windows, even schools burnt down, are ample proof that teachers had not managed to make each and every child meek and subordinate, and all mothers deferential. Indeed, working-class memoir-writers and people of color often attributed lifelong struggle for a better social order to the profound injustices they first suffered at school. Important as it is, however, in itself such evidence is not enough to prove the existence of organized opposition to official schooling.

Finally, irrespective of whether they were effective, educators' edicts give us a valuable guide to changing fashions in (class-specific) femininity and masculinity. In English-speaking countries, for example, the tearful sensitivity of Evangelical manliness admired in the 1820s was derided as effeminate by proponents of muscular Christianity by the century's end; in France, the republican motherhood of First and Third Republics contrasted with the pious Catholic womanhood of the Second Empire.

Gendered Subjectivities

I do not think it desirable to allow individuality in the case of children.
(Inspector Stanton, South Australia, 1887)

The bluntness of educationists' pronouncements seems jarring not only because they expressed sentiments which today are couched in much more circumspect language, but because they often appear woefully unenlightened, even ignorant of the basic facts of child psychology. This tension between what appears natural or scientifically proven to us and what appeared equally certain to educated commentators in the past can itself become the focus of enquiry. Thus a number of scholars argue that schools helped produce modern psychological categories and understandings – not only as discursive artifacts in theory of whatever sort, but in the fabric of everyday life. Rather than dealing, well or badly, with children's psychology, schools can be seen as institutions which helped make young people childlike through attempts to eliminate their "precocity," "unnatural" hardness, cynicism, and "knowing" adult ways – processes undoubtedly assisted by the rapid decline of youth labor markets in the late nineteenth-century.

Similarly, categories such as schoolboy, schoolgirl, school-age child, youth, adolescent, intelligence, normal sexuality, and health were produced in part through the process of "scholarization." Sometimes demonstrably and at other times less perceptibly, schools helped make some skills, experiences, technologies of the self, and social categories more widespread. They played a significant role in teaching all inhabitants of a country the national language with its recently standardized (and usually sexist) grammar, and designating their everyday dialects inferior. Increasingly rigorous age grading, coupled with prohibitions on toddlers accompanying older children to class, sharpened perceptions of age-based differences, making it seem unnatural or effeminate for older boys to associate with younger ones. By giving children weekly, even daily, experiences of scholastic failure and success, routine exams helped prepare the ground for universal notions of measurable intelligence.

The fact that past understandings of subjectivity often seem "foreign" should alert us to the likelihood that our own are historically contingent. Today, postmodern theoreticians point out, education is believed to help "men" acquire certain purposive, critical, rigorous, self-scrutinizing habits of mind. Two centuries ago, prominent educationists argued that social order could be secured if the poor, as well as their superiors, learnt to master the self. In their emphasis on habitation to routine, rote learning, training in punctuality and neatness, drill in prompt, cheerful, and unquestioning obedience, were the educationists really thinking of (manly) Cartesian individuals? Or did they have in mind differently organized subordinate selves which we cannot recognize, bound as we are by the conditions of our own historically specific subjectivity? Did they wish to create in laboring people of both sexes an effeminate (or childlike) character driven by a spontaneous desire to do what their social superiors considered to be right? And how was this desire read in the context of the increasing manliness of workers' movements? One is reminded of the gendered distinction in character formation so clearly delineated by Rousseau. A man should achieve self-mastery in order to be free, a woman in order to be subservient to

propriety and to her husband: "she should learn early to submit to injustice and to suffer the wrongs inflicted on her by her husband without complaint." Rousseau added that "you will never bring young lads to do this; their feelings rise in revolt against injustice; nature has not fitted them to put up with it."

Enrollment

One of the most basic questions for gendered histories is whether schools were designed – and in fact catered for – boys or girls alone or together. In Catholic regions, education systems tended to be built around single-sex institutions; the Vatican only softened its opposition to co-education in the 1960s. Yet in an age when one teacher to a hundred pupils was considered adequate, most villages had only one official classroom and one teacher. In 1837, despite general consensus that girls should be taught separately, more mixed schools than ones for either girls or boys alone were enumerated in France. In English-speaking countries and most of northern and central Europe, most state elementary schools were, at least nominally, co-educational, as were most high schools in the United States. Elsewhere, separate boys' and girls' advanced schools were the rule. At times, pupils in such schools prepared for the same exams; in France and Germany, different academic courses were created, with subject matter adapted to each sex. On occasions, the virtues of one or the other system were debated; more frequently, they were assumed to be self-evident. Indeed, explicit mention of gender issues often indicates that accepted routines had come under challenge, or that a previously ignored practice – such as girls' enrollment in nominally boys' classes – attracted public attention.

The fact that a school was designated as co-educational – or mixed – is not in itself a sufficient guide to how it was run. Girls and boys could sit side by side and do the same or different lessons; they could be subject to the same or different rules and rewards. They could be segregated on opposite sides of the same room, sometimes separated by a partition, in separate rooms, on different floors of the same building, with separate starting times, entrances, playgrounds, classrooms, and teachers. Conversely, when education reports stated that, in the interests of decency and morality, boys and girls were to be strictly segregated, impoverished communities and harassed teachers did not always comply. Rural elementary schools in nineteenth-century America were supposed to provide separate entrances, toilets, and playgrounds for boys and girls, and segregate the sexes inside the school. Few did. Of surviving illustrations of one-room colonial schools, few had any formal playground or fence; four fifths had only one door. In the mid-1880s in Illinois, 1,740 schools had only one latrine, and 1,180 had none. Inside the classroom, teacher and student diaries indicate, practice departed widely from precept; separation was impracticable, and many Americans were just not that fussy about details. When opposition to co-education gathered force around 1900, the practice had been ingrained into school routines for three generations or more.

In formulating the questions to be asked and evaluating the evidence gathered, historians have drawn on long-standing feminist debates regarding women's equality or difference from men, as well as current arguments about the advantages and disadvantages of single-sex and co-educational classes and schools. Like segregated black schools, girls' schools typically received less funding per pupil and had a more

restricted curriculum than co-educational schools, or those for boys. In such conditions, did all-girl classes relegate females to second-rate education provided by badly trained teachers with fewer resources? or did they strengthen women's solidarity and allow girls to excel without aping the knowledge and styles of learning favoured by men? Were the intense emotional bonds among pupils and between pupils and teachers in some girls' schools part of an empowering lesbian continuum? Were boys' schools and classes the manufactories of hegemonic and subordinate masculinities, or the institutionalized settings of sexual abuse? Did co-educational classes provide girls and boys with living models of egalitarian gender relations where women could be in positions of authority and girls excel intellectually, or did they teach restrictive stereotypes in an atmosphere of sexual harassment and repressed violence? Were schools a haven of peace and tranquillity in a patriarchal sea, or sites of intense gender conflict, or were they a contradictory mixture of all of these, experienced differently by young people from different backgrounds, with different emotional and intellectual dispositions? Were girls told they were intellectually inferior to boys but experienced beating them in exams – as they routinely did in late-nineteenth-century American high schools? Were boys told that females were meek and nurturing but lived in fear of caning by a brutal woman teacher?

Teachers

In the early nineteenth century, men rather than women tended to be perceived as teachers; in designing new educational bureaucracies, men rather than women (let alone married women) appeared as the natural incumbents of public office. Respectable working people, in contrast, often insisted that girls attend schools staffed by women or families of teachers. Single men might well make perfect bureaucrats – but not satisfactory guardians of unmarried females in what was, in effect, public space. Besides, it soon turned out that in communities with limited resources and many children, the ambition of getting all young ones into school entailed prohibitive expense. Women, education officials often explained, could be employed at half of male rates of pay. Because little other respectable, middle-class employment was available to them, good candidates could be had cheaply. Men, by contrast, were reluctant to take on teaching when other openings offered better rewards and less stress. In most countries, it began to seem evident that women were naturally suited to teaching infants, girls, and lower grades of elementary schools; men were more properly engaged in instructing boys and older scholars, and in leading, supervising, and managing junior and female teachers.

But even granted that women teach and men manage, were schools to be patterned on the model of the *mother made conscious*, a household supervised by a wise father, or else resemble a factory, an army unit, or a monastery, with disciplines of the body to match? And if schools contained more than one model of gendered organization, where lay the lines of demarcation? between elementary and advanced classes? girls' and boys' schools or subjects? certified and temporary teachers? male and female instructors? in the minds and bodies of teachers attempting to reconcile contradictory precepts regarding their role? What were the patterns of cathexis, or emotional attachment, between peers, subordinates, and superiors in these organizations? Could the making of a teaching profession also be seen as the making of

particular forms of ethnic identities? If teachers were designated as professionals, who was allocated to do their housework? Was teaching a stage of life for particular women or men, as opposed to a lifelong profession? In France, most women continued to teach after they married. In United States in the 1930s, three out of four school districts did not hire married women teachers, and two out of three compelled women to resign on marriage. Yet in New York, female instructors won the right to marry in the early years of the twentieth century; for most, teaching was a lifelong career where work and motherhood could be made compatible. Among these teachers, Jewish women were over represented. Did gendered educational organizations in turn serve as models for other areas of governance? In Britain, women won the right to vote in national elections in 1918, yet many of the nation's locally elected school boards contained influential minorities of female members well before that time. When teachers formed associations, whose interests did they represent? Did women organize separately from, or in opposition to men? What role did such associations play in gendering of education systems? Did recurring panics about the feminization of teaching reflect fears that female authority breeds feminism? If school teaching was the dominant profession for women, what can we learn about professionalism and feminism from a systematic study of the teaching profession?

These complex questions assume new significance when considered against the background of more basic indicators. Available statistics show that educational bureaucracies contained different proportions of men and women within different hierarchical structures; the "feminization of teaching" occurred at a different pace and to a different extent in different localities. In England, women comprised the majority of elementary school teachers from the 1870s; by the beginning of the First World War, seven in ten teachers were female. Women constituted 60 percent of teachers in the United States by 1870; 80 percent by 1910. By 1920, almost all elementary school teachers were women. In most Canadian provinces, women had become the majority of elementary school teachers between 1845 and 1875. Figures on teacher training schools similarly show increasing proportions of women, but also highlight substantial differences between countries. In Belgium, women made up a quarter of all teacher trainees in 1854 and a half in 1875; in France, their proportion rose from less than a third in 1881 to a half in 1896. In Denmark, most trainees were men until 1960; in Sweden until 1949. In Italy, almost three-quarters of primary teacher trainees were women in 1870, and 93 percent by the turn of the century; in Prussia, women formed only 6 percent of teacher trainees as late as 1897. How do we account for these statistics? Do global figures hide significant differences between provinces, the organization of girls' and boys' schools, lay and religious teaching forces, or definitions of teachers? And how are these issues affected by the changing balance of power between state and church authorities, which were at times in open conflict?

Schools and Households

Compelling children to attend school cut across powerful parental prerogatives. The (male) head of household traditionally disposed of his dependents' time and labor; mothers relied on daughters' help around the home, and often were seen as the rightful owners of child earnings. Family livelihoods, authority relations, and strategies of

respectability were all challenged by requirements that children attend school rather than work for parents, or that girls attend a public institution, staffed or supervised by men, and in the company of boys. Reformers could legislate, fine parents, and punish children, but were forced to be realistic. Many realized that compulsory attendance stood awkwardly alongside school-book exhortations to obey one's elders. Schools needed to be morally acceptable; their attendance must not decimate local industry or the precarious livelihoods of the poor. Such compromises were apparent in the gradual introduction and uneven enforcement of compulsory schooling and the gendered design of schools.

Nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century autobiographers often noted, without bitterness, that they had to leave school to work, even though they showed remarkable promise. This was simply part of the hard life they all had, and the sacrifices all family members had to make to survive. But there are also discordant voices. Fathers at times squandered household earnings on drink. Mothers might demand more work or be more violent than neighbours thought reasonable. Investment in the education of a youngest son (less often a daughter) might not be accepted as just by siblings who missed out. The strict enforcement of school attendance in nineteenth-century Germany at a time when families still desperately depended on income from child labor meant that young people had to put in double days of effort, working for pay before and after school. In their recollections of growing up, bitterness about lost childhood and the harshness of parents was a dominant theme. In countries such as France, in contrast, where compulsion to attend school was less rigorous, people tended to remember mothers and fathers more fondly, blaming poverty rather than parents for early privations.

While schools constrained households, there were systematic differences in the strategies used by different social groups to negotiate their use and impact. In late-nineteenth-century United States, some immigrant groups preferred to send their children to work, others to take in boarders and lodgers, some pooled all available resources to buy a house. Most immigrants considered it obscene that mothers should have to take on paid work in addition to their other exhausting responsibilities so that big children could sit idle at school, yet some groups deliberately invested in education. Black city children, unable to find employment in factories, often stayed at school longer than whites. Immigrant parents at times had different expectations and used a different logic when allocating household responsibilities than their Americanized children; different priorities given to schooling might become the focus of explosive family strife.

As one after another group accepted prolonged school attendance, the economics of having children changed. When once the time spent at school was fitted around the demands of family time, now child labor and family life would be constrained by the rhythms of school. Mothers were no longer able to rely on children's wages and assistance. Their workload increased, and was further augmented by school demands for laborious standards of cleanliness and health. Some early-nineteenth-century reformers hoped (prematurely, as it proved), that schooling might reduce the birth rate by fostering prudential restraint among the poor. By the late nineteenth century, many historians argue, prolonged schooling helped transform domestic economies; the uneven transition from useful to priceless child was among the causes of the demographic transition[s]. For others, falling birth rates were related to women's

increased power based on their greater literacy and the empowerment which education brings.

Twentieth-century Developments

The gender issues involved in mass education which emerged first in Europe were faced more widely in the twentieth century. Most postcolonial states in Africa and Asia provided more access to education than the colonial governments did, and literacy rates slowly began to rise during the 1960s. As elsewhere in the world, however, girls generally attended school less often and for a shorter period than boys, with the widest gap in the poorest countries. Schools often charged fees for attendance, uniforms, and books, and parents were more willing to pay school fees for their sons than their daughters, for the employment opportunities for educated young men are greater than those for educated young women. Statistics collected by UNESCO since the 1960s indicate, not surprisingly, that the gender disparity is smallest in elementary education, and greatest in post-secondary education. Latin America and East Asia broke with this pattern by the 1980s, however, with female attendance at universities equaling or even slightly surpassing that of male. In these areas, the gender disparity in higher education was actually smaller than it was in Europe and the United States at the time, though in 1998 for the first time there were also more women than men attending college in the United States.

In Muslim countries, cultural and economic factors limiting women's education have been counterbalanced by the need for female professionals and, in countries such as Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, by enormous oil revenues. In the 1970s and 1980s rates of higher education for middle- and upper-class women rose dramatically; by 1987 in Kuwait, for example, 21 percent of women and only 12 percent of men of university age were enrolled in school, a gender disparity almost the exact reverse of that of Japan, where 18 percent of the university age women and 28 percent of the university age men were enrolled. Women in Muslim areas have been most active in occupations where they cater to women and girls, such as teaching and health care, but have also entered fields such as engineering and chemistry, in which they could often work in sex-segregated workplaces. The opportunities for educated women in the Muslim world declined somewhat in the 1980s and 1990s when an economic slowdown led to calls for their returning home to their "natural" vocations as wives and mothers, but only in Taliban-held Afghanistan were professional women completely forced to stop working.

Equality of educational opportunities was an explicit goal of the communist governments established around the world in the twentieth century, and in all of them the literacy rates of men and women rose significantly and slowly became more equal; in 1978, for example, girls in China made up 45 percent of the primary school enrollment and 24 percent of college and university enrollment. Nadya Krupskaya, a leading Soviet thinker and Lenin's wife, was among many who linked women's education with the advance of socialism, arguing that women should study agronomy, animal husbandry, sanitation, and technology so that the Soviet Union would not suffer from a shortage of skilled workers. Many women in the Soviet Union followed her advice, for by 1968, women made up 72 percent of the medical doctors, 35 percent of the lawyers, and 30 percent of the engineers. (Comparable statistics in that

year for the United States were 7 percent of the doctors, 3.5 percent of the lawyers and 1 percent of the engineers.) Such statistics were often cited as an indication of the superiority of communism, but they overlooked the fact that medicine and law and to some degree engineering did not have the high status and high pay that they did in the Western world; status and privileges came from Party leadership, in which there were very few women.

By the end of the twentieth century, universal literacy was the norm throughout much of the world and school attendance began to be taken for granted in even more places, but gender conflicts remained. Should girls receive the same education as boys, and women teachers be renumerated like men? Should separate provision for the sexes be made on grounds of equity or propriety? How should the balance be struck between schooling for all and prolonged, specialized education for the few? Should schools reflect, or try to ameliorate, gender relations in the wider society? And who should decide what to reform? By the end of twentieth century, young people in high-income countries expected to receive around sixteen years of schooling; in a number of regions, female participation rates were higher than male. In contrast, the youth illiteracy rate in South Asia was 23 percent for men and 41 for women; in Bangladesh, the corresponding figures were 40 and 61 percent respectively. In sub-Saharan Africa, the gender gap was smaller, but 18 percent of young men and 27 percent of women were still reported as illiterate. As in the past, the majority of children who never attend school – an estimated 90 out of 150 million – are girls, and for similar reasons: their labor is more useful around the house, scarce resources are better spent on boys, school is too far or too offensive, sheer survival takes precedence. While some reformers believe that female education can unlock a nation's prosperity – econometric studies in individual countries, they believe, show that just one extra year of female schooling reduces female fertility by 5 to 10 percent – others are more cautious. Drawing on problematics long explored by historians, they point to uneven development, diverse cultures and economies, and differently gendered schools. In understanding both the present and the past, historians of gender and education have much to contribute.

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Chapter Eight

How Images Got Their Gender: Masculinity and Femininity in the Visual Arts

Mary D. Sheriff

Art historians have long concerned themselves with images of women, at least of specific women. Among the subjects taken up in traditional iconographic studies, we find devotional icons of the Blessed Virgin Mary, portraits of queens, and mythological stories featuring Venus or Diana. Scholars have used an iconographic approach to interrogate a range of issues, including the correspondence between an image and the patron's religious affiliations, and the relation between an image and contemporaneous tenets of faith or philosophy. Such studies interpret pictures through their visual conventions and symbolic objects, drawing on historical, theological, or literary texts to account for aspects of the subject matter. Iconographers view female figures as saints, rulers, and deities, but not as positioned in the category "woman."

Formalist art historians also looked at images of women, which they treated as either an evocation of an artist's manner or part of a broader stylistic trend. Older histories of modernism, for example, focused on the nude woman in Edouard Manet's *Olympia* (1865) to recount how painters rejected illusionism. In this story, Olympia might as easily be a male nude, since the flattening of form – not the cultural construction of the sexed, racial body – was at issue.

Neither traditional iconographic studies nor formalist art histories considered how a woman's image related to conceptions of sexual difference or to notions of the proper woman's role in society. And neither did those analyses allied to the social history of art, a mode of interpretation that associated works with contemporary political or social ideologies. By using class as an analytic category, those social historians of art who drew on Marxist theory helped open the way for considerations of gender. Yet Marxism, *per se*, did not warm to gender. The intertwining of Marxist and gender analysis could only come later after feminist theory challenged what Griselda Pollock called "the paternal authority of Marxism under whose rubric sexual divisions are virtually natural and inevitable" (Pollock, 1989: 5). Before the early 1970s, interpreters – even those concerned with social issues – gave little thought to gender, to sexual difference, or to how images of women shaped and were shaped by prevailing constructions of femininity. Male figures, be they saints, heroes, or nudes, received the same treatment, and only later would scholarship acknowledge

that gender roles shaped the lives and images of men as much as they shaped those of women.

Gender studies have changed the way many scholars approach and interpret representations of both women and men, as well as images of children and allegorical figures – in sum, any representation of the human form. While the analysis of gender challenged traditional ways of thinking about visual images, it quickly became evident that, like any form of inquiry, gender analysis had its exclusions. A compelling critique of those exclusions came from scholars and critics working in African-American studies, who argued that race complicated issues of gender in fundamental ways. The writings of these scholars altered gender studies in many disciplines, not only by introducing a black subject, but also by offering new strategies of analysis. Post-colonial studies brought those working on gender to consider how Europeans imaged, and thereby gendered, the colonial or exotic "other." And queer theory posed questions of sexual identity, challenging some of the most common assumptions about the relation between art and desire.

The History of Art and the Gendering of Images

Art history's growing awareness of "gender" as a category of analysis paralleled developments in the discipline of history; as Merry Wiesner explains, the 1960s political movements reinvigorated feminism, and "students in history programs in North America and Western Europe in the late 1960s and early 1970s . . . began to focus on women, asserting that any investigation of the past had to include information on both sexes."[1] While historians decried the exclusion of women from investigations of the past, art historians found that scholars in the twentieth century had largely ignored women artists, even though earlier histories of art had included them. In 1971, Linda Nochlin posed the provocative question: "Why have there been no great women artists?" in an essay published first in *Art News* (January, 1971) and soon after in the interdisciplinary volume, *Women in Sexist Society* (Gornick, 1971). That essay helped open an entire field of inquiry.

The contemporary practices of women artists also spurred art historians to consider the exclusions of their discipline. The early 1970s saw a range of works by artists engaged in feminist inquiry: Judy Chicago, Mary Kelly, Faith Ringgold, Miriam Shapiro, and Sylvia Sleigh among them. In addition, the burgeoning interest in women's art also generated exhibitions that influenced the way critics, historians, and artists interpreted images of women. Especially influential was a show conceived in 1971 and held at the Los Angeles County Museum in 1976: "Women Artists 1550–1950" (Nochlin and Harris, 1981).

The Los Angeles exhibition went beyond bringing women's work out of storage. Through the images of women discussed in the opening essay of the exhibition catalogue, Linda Nochlin explored the dichotomy that correlated woman with nature and man with culture. She viewed this dichotomy as a sort of renewable resource, a fundamental component of modern Western thought that took different forms at different historical moments. Nochlin addressed such issues specifically in relation to women's images of women, for example, Paula Modersohn-Becker's *Self-Portrait*, 1906 (Basel: Offentliche Kunstsammlung see plate 8.1), and in this case concluded that the image represented, even embraced, a sexist ideology.

Image Not Available

8.1 Paula Modersohn-Becker, *Selbstbildnis als Halbakt Baernsteinkette II, 1906* (acc.nr 1748) Oil on canvas, 61 × 50 cm. Courtesy of Oeffentliche Kunstsammlung Basel, Kunstmuseum. Photo: Oeffentliche Kunstsammlung Basel, Martin Bühler.

The self-portrait is executed in a manner that late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century artists and critics associated with "primitive" peoples, that is peoples like the Polynesian islanders whom they viewed as closer to nature and more authentic than Europeans. In terms of iconography, the artist symbolizes her pregnancy through a flower shoot and other vegetal motifs. The self-portrait's "primitive" look and the use of natural forms to represent pregnancy led Nochlin to associate it with the view of maternity proposed by conservative Germans, especially Johann Jakob

Bachofen, author of *Mother Right* (1861), a book popularized in the 1890s. Bachofen linked maternity with a primeval stage of human development and with the animal in the human. Concerning images like that of Modersohn-Becker, Nochlin concluded: "they function as potent and vastly attractive mythic projections of essentialist notions of femininity. Such images of female sexuality were basically apolitical if not outright conservative; woman, reduced to her sexual being, conceived of as a part of Nature, was the very antithesis of historical action" (Nochlin and Harris, 1981: 66).

In her analysis, Nochlin perceives that gendered constructions, although contingent on specific historical factors, present themselves as natural, essential, and timeless. The question she asks of Paula Modersohn-Becker's self-portrait is this: To what extent does this image participate in the process of essentializing "woman," and reinforcing gendered stereotypes of female sexuality? Nochlin recognized potential danger in any image of woman – in repeating stereotypes, images could, if only inadvertently, reinforce them. Underlying this recognition is the belief that visual images are not passive reflections or "mirrors" of society; rather they work to create and enforce social ideals, including gender norms.

Nochlin and Harris's exhibition catalogue suggests that early on feminist writings about art tied the discussion of women artists to an analysis of images through the category of gender. Even if the word "gender" did not enter into the discussion, the concept was in play. Nochlin analyzed, rather than assumed, the historical circumstances that produced stereotypes of female sexuality. Feminist art historians would continue to look at images of women made by women, often in relation to contemporaneous images made by men. Their consideration of men's and women's image making took the form of critique. As Nochlin observed retrospectively in her collection of essays, *Women, Art and Power and Other Essays*: "Critique has always been at the heart of my project and remains there today. I do not conceive of a feminist art history as a positive approach to the field, a way of simply adding a token list of women painters and sculptors to the canon" (1988: xii). And neither did other feminist art historians.

In their 1981 book *Old Mistresses: Women, Art, and Ideology*, Griselda Pollock and Roziska Parker again explored stereotypes, taking their analysis in two directions. In their "history" of women artists, the authors first address the categorizations imposed on women's art. They analyze the processes through which women's art came to be separated from the category of "art" and seen as an expression of femininity. In other words, they ask how women negotiated the position of "artist" when that category was defined to exclude them. In subsequent chapters, their discussion of art, women, and ideology focuses on images of women, mainly by women artists. They pay special attention to women's self-portraits and to images of the female nude made by both men and women. And in their work, gender analysis again takes the form of critique.

For better or worse, Pollock and Parker used such analysis to evaluate works according to their overt or readable feminist content (taken as both style and iconography), holding them to standards the authors set in 1981. Self-portraits, for example, are judged in terms of their apparent adherence to or deviation from stereotypes of femininity, as are representations of the nude female body. For example, Pollock and Parker take a line on Paula Modersohn-Becker's 1906 self-portrait similar to the one Nochlin proposed. For them, Modersohn-Becker's self-representations are inflected

by her allegiance to reactionary German ideologies about the Earth, Nature, and Natural woman, and comparable to Gauguin's vision of his Polynesian Eves. "Woman was for both [artists] unchanging, elemental, natural" (1981: 121). Although admitting some conflict in Modersohn-Becker's self-portrait between what they see as the "assertiveness of the portrait head" and the imagery of the nude female body surrounded by vegetation, the authors nevertheless suggest that the work is a failure. There is no information – other than the title – to suggest it is a self-portrait, and hence that the woman represented is both essential "woman" and cultural producer. But even a self-portrait that shows the artist with brushes and palette in hand is not good enough. The 1783 self-portrait of the artist Elisabeth Vigée-Lebrun (London: National Gallery of Art) they dismiss as pandering to the stereotypes of the beautiful woman and the eternal feminine.[2]

Especially given the scope and ambition of *Old Mistresses*, judging a work as successful or unsuccessful, "feminist" or not, is problematic. In these broad surveys, no image can be thoroughly analyzed in terms of the historical circumstances of its production and reception, the language of art in which it was cast, the genre conventions it invoked, or its relation to the general type produced at a particular moment. Only a specific analysis of these imbricated features can offer a more complex understanding of how gender operates in individual works of art. Indeed, Pollock and Parker called for these more specific analyses in their discussion of the seventeenth-century Italian artist Artemisia Gentileschi:

> Gentileschi's paintings of celebrated heroines should not be seen as evidence of an individual woman's proto-feminist consciousness reflected in art, but rather as her intervention in an established and popular genre of female subjects through a contemporary and influential style. It is only against this specific background, the prevailing climate, that the particular character of Gentileschi's work can be distinguished.
>
> (Pollock and Parker, 1981: 25)

Surveys of women artists or of women and gender in the visual arts usually covered so many artists and times that the specifics were overlooked. Moreover, surveys produced in the early years of feminist art history and gender analysis had to rely on the old art history their authors' rejected for basic information that defined, for example, the "prevailing climate."

Seven years later when Griselda Pollock published *Vision and Difference*, she emphasized even further the role of "gender" in the making and interpreting of art, arguing for a "rewriting of the history of art in terms which firmly locate gender relations as a determining factor in cultural production and in signification" (Pollock, 1989: 12). Her aim was to show "how a feminist intervention exceeds a local concern with 'the woman question' and makes gender central to our terms of historical analysis (always in conjunction with the other structurations such as class and race which are mutually inflecting)" (10). By 1988, a significant number of art historians in both the United States and Western Europe were already engaged in rewriting that history and putting gender studies at the center of their work. The next decade would see gender analysis as a well-established mode of interpretation in academe. More and more specialized studies emerged, and these produced the sort of nuanced accounts of individual artists and works that were simply impossible in broad surveys. Typical

of this work, for example, is Pollock's essay, "Modernity and the spaces of femininity," published as chapter three of her *Vision and Difference* (1989).

In "Modernity and the spaces of femininity," Pollock focuses closely on both Impressionism and its women practitioners, and engages specifically with the literature on modernism. T. J. Clark's *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and his Followers* (Thames and Hudson, 1984) had already exploded most of the traditional art historical myths about Impressionist painting, offering instead an analysis based on the insights of Marxist and psychoanalytic theory. And Janet Wolff's essay, "The invisible flâneuse: Women and the literature of modernity,"[3] provided an important analysis of how the prevailing view of modernism gendered it as masculine through the figure of Baudelaire's flâneur – the modernist hero, a solitary white male allowed to walk through all parts of the modern city as an invisible and impassive observer. In this context, Pollock's specialized knowledge of Impressionism, her grasp of both Marxist and feminist theory, and her skill at visual analysis produced the sort of nuanced intervention that she and Parker called for in their earlier work.

Women, Gender, and the Arts of East Asia

In the 1970s and 1980s, scholars of European and North American art increasingly used gender analysis to write new histories. At the same time, those specializing in the arts of East Asia began to focus on women as producers, consumers, and subjects of the visual arts. Art exhibitions again were critical to these efforts, and two of the most important opened in 1988: "Jade Terrace: Chinese Women Artists 1300–1912" at the Indianapolis Museum of Art, and "Japanese Women Artists 1600–1900" at the Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas. Both exhibitions were many years in the making, and both responded to developments in the discipline at large, in particular to the reconsideration of women artists in Western Europe and the United States. Marsha Weidner comments on this interaction in the exhibition catalogue *Views from the Jade Terrace*:

> Review of the theoretical and methodological findings of our colleagues engaged in writing the history of Western women artists would take us too far from the subject at hand, but it must be acknowledged that without their work – without the legitimacy and direction they have given to the study of women in the arts – the present exhibition would scarcely have been possible.
>
> (Weidner, 1988: 27)

The catalogues for both exhibitions, however, addressed issues that also engaged those working on Western women artists, for example the question of a "woman's style." Patricia Fister takes up this issue in her essay for *Japanese Women Artists 1600–1900* (1988). She notes that Japanese scholars often said that women's art had a "peculiarly effeminate quality," and used terms "*joseiteki* (feminine) or *josei rashii* (womanlike)" to describe women's work. Fister, however, argues against such essentialist notions, pointing out that in their stylistic properties, works by Japanese women are "essentially no different than those by Japanese men working in the same school in the same era" (182).

Although similar issues might be broached in assessing women's art in East Asia and Western Europe, writing about women artists in Japan and China could present

special challenges. As Weidner pointed out, images of Chinese women brought to the West in writings of missionaries and travelers often depicted them as oppressed and ignorant, an orientalist stereotype that blinded Western scholars to women's presence in the history of Chinese art. Weidner developed this issue at greater length in her introduction to a collection of essays: *Flowering in the Shadows. Women in the History of Chinese and Japanese Painting* (1990). There she explores not only the attitudes of Western travelers and missionaries, but also the images of women produced within Chinese and Japanese culture. Classic literature, conduct books for women, and texts on women's education all depicted their subaltern status. "Early Western writings on Chinese and Japanese women converged, then, on the themes of low status and the repressive nature of female education. Against this background, the reports of women's artistic accomplishments that appeared from time to time must have seemed anomalous" (Weidner, 1990: 6). The essays that follow take up the achievements of women as artists; the gendered nature of art production; and the status of women as artists, patrons, and viewers. Julia K. Murray's essay, "Didactic Art for Women: The Ladies' Classic of Filial Piety," specifically explores how the illustrations to a woman's conduct book helped construct and enforce the feminine (and subaltern) role Confucian social systems reserved for the female sex. Although Weidner claims in her introduction that the approaches taken by the volume contributors are "largely innocent of the more extreme methodological experiments currently enlivening feminist debates in Western art historical circles" (7), many of the essays offer sophisticated analyses of gender, even if they do not use the term directly. Yet one critical difference separates these studies of East Asian women's art from the methods of those scholars who authored surveys of women artists in Europe and the United States. These first histories of East Asian women's art do not make critique central to their analysis.

Images of Women: Gender Analysis and Critique

Early histories of European and American women artists relied on critique. Parker, Pollock, and Nochlin judged images of women made by women, assessing the extent to which they seemed to reinforce cultural attitudes the authors perceived as sexist and detrimental. Yet these authors parted company when it came to recent feminist art that tried to empower women through symbolizing the female body, in particular, the female genitalia. Although Nochlin believed that women artists working in earlier centuries assimilated uncritically the problematic constructions of "woman as nature," she argued that contemporary feminist artists could use these connections self-consciously and politically.

> Paradoxically, however, in the context of today's feminist activism, such imagery has acquired potent political implications, for woman's control over her sexual destiny is now seen as a central issue in her struggle for self-determination. Nothing could better demonstrate the complexity, and the basic ambiguity of the issue of what constitutes a valid "feminist imagery" than the recent transformation of the placid iris into a fighting symbol.
>
> (Nochlin and Harris, 1981: 67)

Nochlin's comments point to the symbolic images of the female body prevalent in the early days of feminist art, for example, Judy Chicago's *The Dinner Party*

(1974–9). The work is named for a type of sociability long associated with women, and takes the form of a triangular table set for dinner. It is not the work of a single male "genius," but the collective effort of a group of women and the work relies on those practices generally relegated to the realm of "craft" or "minor arts" and often associated with women's accomplishment: needlework, porcelain painting, etc. For our purposes, however, the important point is Chicago's imaging of the women invited to her party.

Each place is reserved for a woman who made history either by her political position, e.g., the Egyptian Pharaoh Hatshepsut, or cultural production, e.g., the visionary abbess Hildegaard. Each is represented symbolically on a plate decorated with a vaginal motif that also resembles a flower, a fruit or some natural form. Chicago imparts power to women by showing that part of the female body taboo in high art representations. Wittingly or not, her work draws on cultural traditions in which a woman's actual display of her vagina is an aggressive act and one that shames the male viewer.

Unlike Nochlin, Pollock and Parker were skeptical even of feminist art that employed symbolic depictions of the female body:

> But what is the effect of these attempts to validate female experience, to reappropriate and valorize women's sexuality? . . . because meanings in art depend on how they are seen and from which ideological position they are received, such images have a very limited effectivity. They are easily retrieved and coopted by a male culture because they do not rupture radically meanings and connotation of woman in art as body, as sexual, as nature, as object for male possession."
>
> (Pollock and Parker, 1981: 130)

The issues that concerned these authors more than two decades ago demonstrate the close relation of gender, images of women, women artists, and feminist politics – as well as the lack of agreement as to what constitutes the most effective "feminist" art.

Where Nochlin allows that women (in the context of a feminist movement) can reclaim stereotypes, Pollock and Parker find this strategy dangerous. But if images are easily coopted, what prevents women from effectively taking for their own purposes those produced by the dominant culture? Why is the contemporary feminist movement the only context in which we can read women's use of conventional imagery as a subversive or affirmative strategy? Must we assume that the dominant culture is completely dominant in producing and consuming images of women, and in determining what those images mean? How do we acknowledge the dissenting voices that contest dominant assumptions?

Portraying Women: The Possibility of Subversion in a Historical Context

Early in the history of feminist art history, Mary Garrard investigated a subversive use of conventional imagery in a self-portrait by the seventeenth-century painter, Artemisia Gentileschi (*Self-Portrait as La Pittura*, London: Royal Collection, see plate 8.2).[4] In this self-portrait, Gentileschi shows herself as the allegorical figure of

Image Not Available

8.2 Artemisia Gentileschi (1593–1653/3), *Self Portrait as La Pittura*, RCIN 405551, ML 499 BP 2652. The Royal Collection © 2003, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

Painting. The image is thus a recognizable portrait of the artist as well as an allegorical figure – an idealization of a concept, an unreal woman. The allegorical use of the female figure, as historian Lynn Hunt has argued in another context, can be problematic. The female figure is often made to stand for qualities – reason or truthfulness, for example – that real women were not generally thought to possess. Despite

any problems surrounding the allegorical figure, Artemisia Gentileschi put it to good use. Garrard argues that precisely because Gentileschi is a woman, she can portray herself as both a particular painter and as Painting itself. As Garrard shows, emblem books used widely in seventeenth-century Italy prescribed that Painting was a woman – and they cast Painting as a woman even though most of the art's practitioners were men.

Inhabiting allegorical figures became a staple in portraits of notable and elite women in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Historian Londa Schiebinger has shown how women scientists used a similar strategy in their published works. She points out that Maria Cunitz (1610–1664) juxtaposed the name of the Muse Urania (muse of astronomy) with her own name on the title page of her *Urania propiti*.[5] And in relation to women's use of the allegorical tradition, especially telling is Scheibinger's argument that having a female allegorical figure for Science brought luster to women's scientific heritage, and that women scientists found an attack on the female emblem to be an attack on scientific women.

Turning to portraits of scientific women, we can see how allegory operated as a challenge to gendered presumptions. Consider an anonymous portrait of Gabrielle Emilie Le Tonnelier de Breteuil, Marquise du Châtelet (1706–49), a well-known scientist and translator of Newton. The portrait shows her with a compass and celestial globe seated at her desk, her notebooks open before her. The work presents Châtelet as Urania, muse of Astronomy, among whose attributes are the compass and celestial globe. Other allegorical elements, however, point to the intellectual nature of the sitter's enterprise. In the image, the sitter's left hand supports her cheek in a familiar pose that characterized the related figures of Study and Meditation. Yet allegory cloaks the reality of learning central to the sitter's identity; her actual position as scientist and philosopher is made acceptably "feminine" by simultaneously transforming her into the more acceptable roles of allegorical figure and muse. The portrait might easily be dismissed as reaffirming a conservative image of a "feminine" woman; or, Châtelet's consciousness of her own contradictory position as both a woman and an intellectual might be denigrated as only "partial," as was that of Artemisia Gentileschi in *Old Mistresses* (Pollock and Parker, 1981: 25). Yet in the case of Châtelet, we know from her own writings – in particular her essay on happiness – that she analyzed her position as woman intellectual quite astutely, even if that analysis does not meet the standards we today expect of a feminist scholar.

The early tendency to critique those images that appeared in some way to affirm gendered stereotypes has given way in more recent historical work to an understanding of the constraints that ruled women's life and work, and an attempt to understand how women operated within as well as outside of those constraints. In presenting images of themselves, as well as in presenting themselves, women, like men, were not completely free. There were always real social (and psychic) bounds that worked to compel obedience to norms for gender and sexuality, and real (as well as imagined) consequences and punishments for transgression. Thus sometimes images that seem to our eye traditional contain subversive elements that only emerge after considering the constraints and possibilities operative at a particular historical moment.

These issues continue to provoke both political and intellectual debates not only in reference to women from earlier historical moments, but also in relation to contemporary artists outside Western Europe and the United States. Such debates are

prominent, for example, in the essays Dinah Dysart and Hannah Fink include in the volume *Asian Women Artists*, which they introduce with this caveat: "Just as Asia is a term of convenience used to embrace many vastly different countries and cultures, so too are concepts such as feminism and women's art when applied to artforms and practices by women of very different nationalities and religious backgrounds" (Dysart and Fink, 1996: 7). The authors take varied approaches to issues of gender and feminism, as they analyze works from eleven different countries. The essays on Korean artists show a continuing engagement with two questions that have shaped gender analysis of women's art: What constitutes a properly feminist art and how effective is the subversive use of traditional imagery?

The first issue is more prominent in Kim Hong Hee's essay in *Asian Women Artists* (Dysart and Fink, 1996), "Sex and Sensibility. Women's Art and Feminism in Korea". Hee offers a history of Korean women artists from the 1920s on, and is completely sympathetic to the difficult position of women artists in Korean society, which she analyzes in some detail. From her analysis, Hee concludes that the lack of an adequate feminist consciousness cannot be separated from the particular social context. Hee's essay demonstrates from the perspective of contemporary Korean culture that women and men are subject to actual constraints and cannot always carry out the more radical critiques of gender the historian or critic might like. Hee's conclusion is in no way an apology for Korean women's art, but a recognition of the real circumstances (and limitations) that govern its production.

While Hee discusses a range of artists, James B. Lee focuses on Korean performance artist Yi Bul (Bul Lee) in his essay in *Asian Women Artists* on the aesthetics of cultural complicity and subversion. He views Yi Bul's art as "doubly encoded," a term borrowed from critic Linda Hutcheon, which he explains as the artist participating in an activity "precisely in order to destabilize its conventional function and meaning" (Dysart and Fink, 1996: 37). But Lee leaves the efficacy of Yi Bul's work in some doubt. While admitting its power to question traditional categories and assumptions, he is not sure of its effect on the viewer. As an example, he cites the photographs of her performance "Woman, the Difference and the Power" (1994), which appeared in a mass-circulation woman's magazine, *Young Lady*. The photographs show a moment in the performance when Yi Bul is nude, but wearing a dog collar around her neck, which is chained to a metal bed frame. She wields a pickax, as if to break the bounds of domesticity, submission "or whatever the audience chooses to read into the act" (Dysart and Fink, 1996: 37). Lee asks "Do these images of the artist, nude, without make up, and in a pose of defiance, function to contravene the endless variations on the 'beauty myth' taking up the bulk of the magazine's pages. . . . Or do they unwittingly become complicit in the commodity logic of mass media, deprived of their oppositional force and rendered safe for easy consumption?" (38). Refusing to give us his answer, Lee observes that Yi Bul sees these contradictions as essential to the activist aim of her aesthetics. How the audience sees them remains an open question.

Artist, Patron, Image

Thus far I have focused on images of women made by women, which were the first site of gender analysis and which remain an enduring concern. The anonymous portrait of the Marquise du Châtelet discussed in the previous section was an obvious

exception, since we do not know who made the painting. The work's anonymity raises other questions that scholars have asked when analyzing images of women and the construction of gender. Does it matter if we know that a man or a woman, or a particular artist, made an image? An analysis of Châtelet's anonymous portrayal suggests it makes no difference since we can and do interpret images apart from knowing the maker. In such cases, we attend to the conventions and visual language of the work, its iconography, and so forth in relation to contemporaneous gendered constructions. Nevertheless, there are certain questions we simply cannot pose to the anonymous image.

As the work of an individual holding a particular place in the social order, a painting or sculpture is not only image or art work, but also action or cultural performance. Knowing who is painting or sculpting may or may not make a significant difference in analyzing a portrait, but it would be important in considering, for example, a male (or even a female) nude made in the eighteenth century. At that time, European women artists were theoretically prohibited from certain practices, such as drawing after the nude model, because womanliness demanded modesty. Thus painting a nude was for a woman artist a significant action, and one that made her work especially subversive of gender norms. The work of Thai mural artist Phaptawan Suwannakudt, especially her work in Buddhist temples, also exemplifies why it is often significant to know who is painting. As Patrick D. Flores notes in the catalogue of her exhibition "Buddhist Lives" (2000):

> Phaptawan's work as an artist intimates a history of risks and chances within the protocols of Thai traditional mural painting. Learning from her father Paiboon, she proved to be a patient student and apostle of the vocation. But soon when her father fell ill, she bravely took on the challenge of carrying the torch . . . Inevitably, she secured the mantle of the mural group's leadership . . . Being a Thai woman traditional mural artist cuts against the grain; sustaining the practice as leader of a collective remakes the texture of the discourse altogether.

Certain genres of art, such as portrait painting in eighteenth-century France, have been more open to women practitioners than, say, Buddhist temple murals in twentieth-century Thailand. If in terms of the European portrait, "who is painting?" is not always a pressing question, the portrait itself complicates the notion of

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8.3 Phaptawan Suwannakudt, *Walking in the Dusk*. Courtesy of Span Gallery, Melbourne.

authorship. Is it the artist or the patron/sitter who determines the salient features of the image? Although it might be useful to discover which aspects of the work are attributable to the patron's dictates, and what was left to the artist, we do not always know how much control women had over their portraits. In individual cases, however, evidence does suggest that this control was considerable. If the portrait often speaks with a doubled voice – that of the artist and that of the patron – the same could be said for any commissioned work. Such art is often subject to the will or approval of whatever individual, or institution, is paying for it.

Art historian Kathleen Nicholson has recently reopened the question of the allegorical portrait's relation to its women patrons in the case of images that seem to conform most closely to gendered stereotypes of femininity – idealized portraits by the artist Jean-Marc Nattier (1685–1766) that show women in the guise of this or that goddess.[6] These portraits ostensibly emphasize the sitter's youth, sensuality, beauty, and grace – in sum, her femininity. They have traditionally been read as appeals to the sitter's vanity or as the artist's attempt to raise the status of his portraits through mythological references. Nicholson has offered a very different explanation, based on how elite women responded to playing the role of beautiful object that society expected of them in eighteenth-century France. As outlined in a variety of writings (medical and moral), the concept of "woman" placed real women in a double bind. Authorities simultaneously demanded that women present themselves as beautiful, pleasing objects and characterized woman as by nature vain, self-absorbed, and empty headed. Noting how anxious art critics were to demean what they saw as female pretension, Nicholson argues that for the women portrayed in allegorical disguise, portraits provided an occasion to question their given place in the social order, to enact a struggle between societal expectations and their own aspirations. Allegorical portrayals, she argues, infuse culture into the lives of the women depicted, giving the sitter a dimension beyond the limiting fact of physical beauty. They remove the subject from the confines of a prescribed gender role and place her in an intellectualized realm where she becomes someone who bears deciphering. Nicholson's analysis is based on a deep understanding of the cultural circumstances in which these images were made, as well as careful research into the lives of the women portrayed. Through this specific analysis, Nicholson moves beyond what has been the obvious reading of these images toward a more complicated understanding of their role in both enforcing and challenging gender norms.

If some portraits suggest the possibilities for subverting gender norms, how much of the play with allegory is self-conscious on the part of artist or sitter? It is not easy to answer this question; the "intention" of any historical actor is difficult if not impossible to determine as is the precise meaning of particular aspects of the visual image, which are never fixed and carry multiple possibilities at any historical moment. Yet analysis of women's self-presentations, like the self-portraits of Artemisia Gentileschi or Elisabeth Vigée-Lebrun, have shown that women did rework cultural materials to their own advantage. Especially in the case of a self-portrait that constructed a professional identity, it is problematic to assume that women artists did not know what they were doing. Yet from another point of view, neither the artist's nor the sitter's conscious "intentions" are determining factors in reading the portrait image; the iconographic and stylistic elements that the analysis engages are indeed "in" the picture and available for interpretation now, as they were when the image was created.

Image Not Available

8.4 Jean-Marc Nattier, *Madame de Caumartin as Hebe*, Samuel H. Kress Collection, Image © 2002 Board of Trustees, National Gallery of Art, Washington, 1753, oil on canvas, 1.025 × 0.815 m.

Race, Gender and the Oppositional Gaze in Contemporary Images

For the visual arts, the most compelling statement of current oppositional reading practices has come from black feminists looking at issues of black spectatorship as well as the cultural production of black artists. These critics have challenged gender

studies for ignoring or underplaying the importance of racial difference. Drawing on the insights of Stuart Hall, critics like bell hooks and Jacqueline Bobo have raised the question of black women's response to contemporary visual arts, including film and photography. In *Black Looks: Race and Representation* (1992), hooks argues that a critical black female spectatorship emerges as a site of resistance only when individual black women actively resist the imposition of dominant ways of knowing and looking. In other words, when they resist identifying with the configurations of race and gender the dominant culture, as well as the art world, packages and offers for their consumption. Their oppositional gaze both critiques negative stereotypes and creates alternative texts, images and interpretations.

Jacqueline Bobo's work on black women as "cultural readers" shows that these spectators understood Hollywood films, such as *The Color Purple*, and independent films, such as Julie Dash's *Daughters of the Dust*, in a way that addressed their experiences and empowered them as interpreters of cultural products. In *Black Women as Cultural Readers* (1995), Bobo pioneered a field of research that joined the theoretical insights of cultural studies and African-American studies with the interviewing techniques of the social sciences and a textual interpretation based on models drawn from film and literary criticism. By conducting a series of lengthy interviews, Bobo analyzed the responses of black women viewers of differing economic backgrounds and contrasted their interpretations with those of the mainstream press. Her work demonstrates empirically what we can only surmise for women in earlier historical moments. It is clear from Bobo's research that these women interpreted images from their particular position in the social order and found ways to appropriate the agency that dominant constructions of race and gender worked to deny them.

Whereas Bobo has attended most closely to film and video images, hooks has also drawn our attention to the intersection of gender and race in images drawn from the museum and gallery. About the same time, other scholars had already focused attention on the intersection of race and gender in negative stereotypes. In "Black Bodies, White Bodies," for example, Sander Gilman (1985a) examined the linking of two seemingly unrelated images in the nineteenth century: the icons of the Hottentot female and the prostitute. Gilman's work drew attention to how negative stereotypes of black women and white prostitutes inflected one another in three distinct discourses: medicine, literature, and the visual arts. hooks, on the other hand, analyzes contemporary art and artists in *Art on My Mind: Visual Politics* (1995). Her writing not only calls for a new "oppositional" imaging that does not reinforce prevailing stereotypes of black male and female bodies, it also presents art work engaged in that process.

In "Facing Difference: The Black Female Body," an essay in *Art on My Mind*, hooks interprets Lorna Simpson's 1986 photograph, *The Waterbearer*. The image shows us a black woman, seen in back view, wearing a simple white chemise. She is in the process of pouring water from two different pitchers – one metal, the other plastic – one held in each hand. In her analysis, hooks emphasizes that Simpson creates "counter hegemonic images of blackness that resist the stereotypes and challenge the artistic imagination" (hooks, 1995: 96). Her black female bodies are provocative and progressive because she calls attention to aspects of black female identity erased or overlooked. hooks argues that in *The Waterbearer*, Simpson interrogates and counters the racist and sexist construction of the black woman as

someone who cannot bear witness, who is "refused that place of authority and voice that would allow her to be a subject in history" (94). Simpson's image is intense, the woman's stance defiant. With her back to the viewer, she creates her own gaze, a space in which she can be self-defining and self-determining. The containers she holds remind hooks of how history is held and shaped, but the constant flow the photograph captures implies that it is possible to transform the self and remake history. This transformative vision is also evident in the woman's simple white sheath, which suggests the black female body as a site of inner spirituality. Although hooks' interpretation of *The Waterbearer* is based on what is "in" the image, her reading also proceeds from her particular position as a critic, acknowledged by phrases such as "When I look at images of the black female body in Simpson's work, I see" (97).

In *Art on my Mind*, hooks also takes up representations of men in the essay, "Representing the Black Male Body." She disrupts the early feminist scholarship that generalized about how patriarchy equated female with body and male with mind, pointing out that black males have been seen as more body than mind. In relation to the black male body, she emphasizes that "psychohistories of white racism have always called attention to the tension between the construction of the black male body as danger and the underlying eroticization of the threat that always then imagines that body as a location for transgressive pleasure" (hooks, 1985: 205). hooks contends that commodification of black male body diffuses the threat, and analyzes this commodification in both mass culture and the aesthetic realm. Again, hooks calls on artists to create visual images that reinvent and reappropriate the male body and cites as an example Carrie Mae Weems's photograph, *What are three things you can't give a black person?* from her *Ain't Jokin* series of 1987. Weems gives us a half-length portrait of an older black man dressed in a shirt, sports coat, and cap, seated on his front porch and looking candidly at the viewer. The title question is posed as a caption to the photograph, and in the lower register she writes the answer: "A Black Eye, a Fat Lip and a Job!" In this instance, hooks chooses her example to distance herself from the controversies surrounding identity politics, and argues that "the assumption that black males are more 'authentically' situated to create visual interventions has to be challenged" (1995: 211).

Complicating Gender in a Post-Colonial Age

The feminization of the male body is a theme that has been taken up in those studies that look at images from the viewpoint of post-colonial theory or that critique the Eurocentrism evident in visual products. The gendering of exotics and colonials as "feminine" in reference to the "masculine" northern Europeans (those who built colonial empires) marked images, both textual and visual, of "Orientals," Africans, Polynesians, Jews, Southern Italians – in fact anyone deemed "inferior." Characteristics attributed to these "feminine" peoples included excessive emotion, unbridled sexuality, a less developed capacity for reason, and a love of ornamentation.

In her studies of images produced in the wake of Cook's voyages, for example, Harriet Guest analyzes how the discourses of gender and exoticism intersect.[7] She considers English portraits of the Tahitian Omai, a tattooed Pacific islander who traveled back to London, in conjunction with those of English gentlemen, for example, Joseph Banks, the naturalist on Cook's voyage. Representations of Omai, she argues,

"can best be understood in terms of the gendered constructions of civilized and national taste in the theory of painting in the mid-1770s" (1992: 114). That theory generally describes ornament in feminized terms, but it particularly condemns a certain kind of ornament exemplified in the Tahitian practice of tattooing and the English practice of corseting women. This debased ornament represents "the immoral and exoticized femininity that marks or punctuates the gross physicality of bodies," and such ornamentation turns the body into a "pure and isolated spectacle" (111). Yet if portrayals of the Tahitian (for example, Joshua Reynolds's portrait of Omai, 1775–76; Yorkshire: Castle Howard) cast him as tattooed, ornamental spectacle, Guest also sees that these same portraits "blur or destabilize the definition of civilized masculinity" (114). In view of Omai's portraits, she asks what we make of representations, such as Benjamin West's 1773 portrait of Joseph Banks, which displays the gentleman amid his collected curiosities and wearing exotic attire? If both Omai and Banks are exotic spectacle, what is the difference between them? Her analysis goes on to suggest, on the one hand, how masculinity is "defended by its discursive opposition to a construction of the feminine and the exotic" (133), and, on the other, how different aspects of femininity, including the love of ornament, are appropriated to the masculine discourse of civic humanism.

If Guest's work highlights the permeable boundary between the "masculine" and "feminine" in separating English gentlemen from exotic others, recent work on South Asian art has shown how gendering art served both orientalist and nationalist aims. In "Engendering Indian Art," an essay in *Representing the Body: Gender Issues in Indian Art*, Annapurna Garimella analyzes writing about Indian art from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Through an analysis of colonial and orientalist texts, she demonstrates that their authors sought to "articulate and differentiate western 'vigorousness' or 'virility' by characterizing Indian art as 'effeminate' or 'enervated'" (Dehejia, 1997: 23). What is perhaps more surprising, is that nationalists also deemed Hindu art "feminine." Drawing on Partha Chatterjee's essay, "Colonialism, Nationalism and Colonized Women," Garimella presents the nationalist reconstruction project as premised on separating culture into material and spiritual spheres. In this construction, the "masculinised public sphere of the material world could be painlessly modernized with western technologies, while in the feminised private domain, the East reigned spiritually supreme" (Dehejia, 1997:33). Hindu art remained feminine and associated with women's rituals. The most eminent nationalist art historian, Ananda Coomaraswamy, however, took a different tack. After arguing that insensitive European scholars had perverted Indian philosophy into effeminacy, he tried to reverse this process by gendering Indian thought and creative work as a masculinized discourse through the tropes of "vigor" and "calmness" (Dehejia, 1997: 34). At the same time, his writing also feminizes Hinduism and its art, which he then redeems through imagining a masculine intellectual stewardship.

Recent post-colonial gender studies have also brought to our attention the work of women artists. The exhibition catalogue, *Gendered Visions: The Art of Contemporary Africana Women Artists*, edited by Salah M. Hassan, explored the work of African women artists in diaspora, many of whom – Houria Niati or Renée Cox, for example – addressed specific colonial stereotypes. Two years later another exhibition catalogue, *Dialogues of the Present*: *The Work of Eighteen Arab Women Artists*, edited by Fran Lloyd, raised similar issues, teasing out the complexity of work such as Ghada

Amer's *Untitled*, 1996, which is illustrated in the collection *Contemporary Arab Women's Art. Dialogues of the Present*. In *Untitled*, Amer depicts women engaged in sensuous acts of licking and touching one another. Yet these figures are seen only vaguely; at first the painting seems to be composed of abstract, evanescent forms. But gradually, as one looks closer, the forms take shape; in the eyes of Tina Sherwell, they seem glimpsed through the latticed windows of an Arab house. In her essay, "Bodies in Presentation," in *Contemporary Arab Women's Art* (1999), Sherwell argues that Amer's art tantalizes the voyeuristic imagination and elicits fantasies of the harem that echo orientalist imagery. Although her art, like that of Korean artist Yi Bul, might be viewed as complicitous with gendered (and in Amer's case, orientalist) stereotypes, Sherwell argues that *Untitled* both mobilizes the fear of the harem as a community of women who please one another, and challenges Egyptian taboos against women openly presenting female sexuality and desire.

Gay and Lesbian Studies

Attention to the intersection of gender with race and/or ethnicity has both challenged and enriched the study of image making. Equally influential has been the work of scholars in gay and lesbian studies. Erica Rand has put the issue concisely: the cultural prohibitions and mandates that shape visual images cannot be understood without "a theoretical model in which the relevance of hetero/homosexual configurations, historically specified, is routinely studied."[8] One of the earliest works of art history to offer such an analysis was James Saslow's *Ganymede in the Renaissance*. His goal was to analyze visual representations of the Ganymede myth – the story of Jupiter, disguised as an eagle, abducting a beautiful young shepherd boy – in light of "contemporary sources that reveal social behavior and attitudes about issues of sexuality and gender" (Saslow, 1986: 7). His study of Renaissance homosexuality and its different forms, combined analysis of the visual image, a study of cultural practices, and an interpretation of poetry, drama, and personal correspondence. Saslow demonstrated that a wide range of meanings could be invested in Ganymede's body at a time when homosexuality was widespread among various classes, and, if a matter of official concern, often tolerated and at times expected.

If Saslow considered a time when homosexuality was not necessarily opposed to masculinity, Kenneth Silver, in his "Master Bedroom, Master Narratives: Home, Homosexuality and Post-War Art," examined the issues facing gay artists when postwar American art criticism constructed the artist as hyper-masculinized, and significant art as distinct from the popular, the feminine, and the domestic – and when Jackson Pollock's action painting stood as the paradigm for significant contemporary art.[9] After discussing how critics and the media constructed Pollock's masculinity, Silver then argues that Pop artists of the next generation challenged the dogmas of Abstract Expressionism by reintroducing the popular and the domestic – those aspects of art gendered feminine – and by playing a "sissy" or "effeminate" role. He cites Andy Warhol's comment, "You had to have seen the way all the Abstract Expressionist painters carried themselves . . . to understand how shocked people were to see a painter coming on swish" (Reed, 1996: 213). Silver argues, however, that it was David Hockney, in images like *Domestic Scene, Los Angeles*, 1963, who "normalized, or perhaps 'normativized' a picture of gay domesticity" (219). *Domestic Scene, Los*

Angeles is a composite narrative of images poached from different sources (homoerotic magazines, women's magazines). We see on the left side, a sort of living room and on the right a shower stall. In the living room stands a man naked except for his athletic socks and a patterned apron tied around his waist. He appears to be washing the back of the man in the shower, whom we see to the right. Silver interprets Hockney's couple as bound together not so much by sexual attraction, as by a shared domestic space. This analysis underscores how gay artists not only challenged the image of masculinity constructed around Jackson Pollock as the "significant" American artist, but also how they presented alternatives to prevailing conceptions of art, the artist, and homosexual relations.

In addition to specialized studies like those of Saslow and Silver, broader surveys have also emerged in recent years. Harmony Hammond's *Lesbian Art in America: A Contemporary History* (2000) not only documents lesbian art, it also explores different theories of spectatorship and "attempts to initiate a critical and theoretical dialogue around the art" (7). Given the theoretical and historical work on gender and race, the scholarship on women artists and images of women, and the contributions of queer theory, Hammond can approach her subject from a multiplicity of standpoints not available in 1971 when Linda Nochlin and Ann Southerland Harris conceived an exhibition on women artists. Published by Rizzoli and copiously illustrated with color plates, Hammond's book, moreover, makes lesbian art available to a public both inside and outside the Academy.

Where Are We Going?

It is impossible to pinpoint one dominant trend in the current study of images through gender analysis. Scholars working on all time periods from antiquity to the present day have incorporated gender analysis into their work to a lesser or greater degree. The category of gender, moreover, has opened so many avenues for thinking about images and image making, that individuals have tended to go their own way rather than stick to established paths. Nevertheless, several observations about current directions can be made.

In general, the broad surveys and global theorizing that marked the 1970s and the early 1980s has given way to the more "local" studies called for in those earlier works. Scholars today are taking seriously the charge to write a new history of images and are conducting fundamental work within their own areas of specializations. Some of these studies, for example Janis Bergman-Carton's *The Woman of Ideas in French Art, 1830–1848* are thematic and focus on the image of one particular category of woman in a specific historical moment. Others, like Patricia Mathews, *Passionate Discontent: Creativity, Gender and Symbolist Art* address diverse images of women in relation to concepts of creativity. And Ewa Lajer-Burcharth in *Necklines: The Art of Jacques Louis David after the Terror* has used categories of gender to interrogate the art of a specific painter at a closely defined historical moment.

At once broadly situated and narrowly focused, is Ruth B. Phillips *Representing Woman. Sande Masquerades of the Mende of Sierra Leone* (1995). Central to this work is her analysis of *sowei*, the masquerade of the Sande, a female society into which all Mende girls are initiated at puberty. These masquerades are important symbolic forms

of Mende life, and they present a unique opportunity to analyze the representation of women and female empowerment in an African culture. As Phillips argues, "Sande masking, controlled and performed by women, is unusual – possibly unique – not just within the confines of African art, but also among world art traditions" (13). Yet, as Phillips points out, the actual power of Mende women has been a point of debate among Western feminists, especially focused on the practice of clitoridectomy. Phillips does not resolve such dilemmas. Her work is not a feminist interpretation nor a study of gender, *per se*, but a new representation of Mende art, one that deploys gender as a central category in its analysis. Most significant for this essay are the central chapters in which Phillips views Sande mask names as a form of public discourse and interprets the forms of the *sowei* mask as "icons of womanhood." She draws on gender studies and feminist analysis to explain why *sowei* mask names – which she sees as women's discourse about their art – have not been recorded: "As African art and as women's art, Sande masking is an example of the convergence of two types of marginality vis-à-vis traditional disciplinary boundaries, and interpretation has suffered doubly. The question of why *sowei* mask names have been unrecorded also has to do with the general pattern of inattention to female discourse about art" (Phillips, 1995: 99). Her subtle analysis of *sowei* masking and mask names suggests that these performances affirm not only women's right to control central aspects of their lives, but also female qualities that demand respect: beauty, attraction, assertiveness, and strength. At the same time, they honor women's essential role in Mende culture, and speak of their place in a patriarchal society.

Representing Woman also points toward the blurring of disciplinary boundaries that has marked the analysis of visual images in recent years. In this case, there is a notable overlap of art historical practices and anthropological methods. Indeed, this overlap is especially characteristic of many studies in traditional African arts, including Sarah Brett-Smith's *The Making of Bamana Sculpture. Creativity and Gender* (1994). The author conducted field work over five years in Mali, which included extensive interviews of informants – sometimes conducted with the help of an intermediary who could speak to sculptors of "secret" male matters. Her analysis approaches Bamana sculpture in terms of Bamana explanations rather than Western assumptions, and is built around the idea that "cultures may associate a gender with specific activities as an intellectual tool with which to analyze the artistic process" (22).

If the borders between art history and anthropology are often blurred in discussions of traditional African arts, the interpretation of visual images has also become interdisciplinary in other ways. Not only have individual works incorporated different objects of analysis (that is, paintings, caricatures, poetry, medical texts), but also scholars from many different disciplines are using images in their larger studies. Joan Landes's *Visualizing the Nation. Gender, Representation and Revolution in Eighteenth-Century France* falls into both categories. Through a close analysis of selected images, Landes presses three significant claims. First, although revolutionary leaders denigrated the visual arts as sensual, seductive, and dangerous (in other words, feminine) they nonetheless often relied on images to embody their ideals and fears. Second, the imaged female body was an especially powerful motif in shaping ideas of the nation, including the roles of male and female citizens, and third, imaging the

nation as a desirable female body consolidated an erotic dimension of patriotism in which eros bound private passion and public duty.

Ann Bermingham's *Learning to Draw: Studies in the Cultural History of a Polite and Useful Art* (2000) exemplifies another trend that marks gender analysis today. Although Bermingham's main "subject" is the history of drawing in England, her work makes considerations of gender (as well as social class) fundamental to that history. The work, in addition, shows the sort of boundary crossings more and more evident today. Bermingham discusses amateurs as well as professionals; the "high arts" (landscape painting, portraiture) and the "popular arts," texts as well as images. Her work is not only the history of an art, it is also an analysis of visual culture.

Interpreters of visual culture are less and less limiting themselves to critique. Some, like Carol Mavor in *Pleasures Taken* (1995) and *Becoming, The Photographs of Clementina, Viscountess Hawarden* (1999) have developed a performative approach to visual images that entwines their experiences and desires with those represented in the image. Mavor's work, as she describes it, "pinches at the prudery of ideological analysis" (1999: xxviii). Others, like Kathleen Nicholson, explore the specific historical possibilities and limitations that determined how images looked and signified. And scholars, like myself, are drawn to the subversive possibilities of interpretation, reclaiming images of women that others have given over to a phallocratic gaze.[10] I take my inspiration from theorists like Shoshona Felman, who has suggested such a practice in *What Does a Woman Want? Reading and Sexual Difference*. Felman attends to those aspects of the text that resist dominant cultural assumptions, and I have tried to extend that attention to the visual image. These points of resistance constitute the pictorial or textual dynamic as what Felman calls a "field of clashing and heterogeneous forces" characterized by a "never quite predictable element of surprise."[11] Once located, resistance and transgression can be amplified by the desire, by the intervention of a particular interpreter. This intervention opens up the field of interpretation, taken as both a unique encounter with the painted image and a pragmatic act, a particular reworking of collective or individual expectations.

Finally, since about 1995, masculinity has become an increasingly intense area of focus for gender studies, a trend that can even be perceived by so mundane a process as a subject search on Amazon.com. Abigail Solomon-Godeau's *Male Trouble. A Crisis in Representation*, which analyzes constructions of masculinity in French painting from a feminist point of view, has been one of the most controversial and influential of those books. Many studies include essays that range from antiquity, such as those in the collection edited by Natalie Boymel Kampen et al., to the present, such as those in the collections edited by Terry Smith and Thelma Golden. Other scholars, like Martin Berger in *Man Made: Thomas Eakins and the Construction of Gilded Age Manhood*, have taken up questions of masculinity in relation to the production of a particular artist.

This brief summary hardly does justice to the richness and complexity of the current field of research in gender studies, nor does it recognize all the important work going on today. If I could gather together all the books and essays that constitute the current field, I am convinced that they would fill a small library. The quality and quantity of these studies speaks to the success of gender analysis in the visual arts and shows what can happen when someone asks an impertinent question, "Why have there been no great women artists?"

NOTES

1 *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 2.
2 For a lengthy analysis of Pollock's treatment of this image, as well as a different interpretation of the work, see Mary D. Sheriff (1996), pp. 180–220.
3 In *Theory, Culture, and Society* 2 (1985).
4 Mary Garrard, "Artemisia Gentileschi's *Self Portrait as the Allegory of Painting*," *Art Bulletin* 62 (March, 1980): 97–112.
5 Londa Schiebinger *The Mind Has No Sex?* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 136.
6 Kathleen Nicholson, "The ideology of feminine 'virtue': The vestal virgin in French eighteenth-century allegorical portraiture," in Joanna Woodall (1996).
7 Harriet Guest (1992); and also, "The Great Distinction: Figures of the Exotic in the Work of William Hodges," *Oxford Art Journal* 12 (1989): 36–58.
8 Erica Rand, (1992): 516.
9 Kenneth Silver, "Master Bedroom, Master Narratives: Home, Homosexuality and Post-War Art," in Reed (1996), 206–21.
10 See, for example, "Reading Jupiter Otherwise, or Ovid's Women in Eighteenth-Century Art," in *Myth, Sexuality and Power: Images of Jupiter in Western Art*, special issue of *Archeologia Transatlantica* edited by Frances Van Keuren and published in Providence, RI and Louvain-La-Neuve, Belgium, 1998; and especially "A rebours. Le problème de l'histoire dans l'interprétation féministe," in Régis Michel (ed.) *Où en est l'interprétation de l'oeuvre d'art?* (Paris: Ecole des Beaux-Arts and Réunion des Musée Nationaux, 2000).
11 Shoshona Felman *What Does a Woman Want? Reading and Sexual Difference* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), p. 6.

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Chapter Nine

Revolution, Nationalism, and Anti-Imperialism

Temma Kaplan

Julia Alvarez's novel *In the Name of Salomé* (2001), loosely based on the life of the Dominican Republic's great nineteenth century writer, Salomé Ureña Henríquez, considers the poet's attempts to come to grips with nationalism and anti-imperialism in a country that actually invited Spain back as a ruler in the wake of political instability: "It's continuing to struggle to create the country we dream of that makes a patria out of the land under our feet," the poet explains as she automatically conceptualizes national goals in the gendered language of family.

Focusing on similar writers and thinkers, critic Benedict Anderson suggests considering nationalism as a series of *Imagined Communities*, brought into being through the use of vernacular languages by urban intellectuals able to propagate their ideas widely through the popular press. Anderson's emphasis on vernacular literature reveals the frequent use of sexual and familial metaphors and symbolic and allegorical representations of the nation state. The use of a gendered language serves a distinct political purpose: Despite the emphasis on women as symbols, metaphors, and allegories, male intellectuals and political leaders exclude flesh and blood women – and by association, ethnic and racial minorities – from exercising any political authority as full citizens of their countries. Sociologist Nira Yuval-Davis's *Gender and Nation* (1997) points out that nationalism often entails the creation of a sense of solidarity that mutes differences of class, race, religion, ethnicity, and gender beneath the linguistic fantasy of a single, unitary identity. Nationalism does not discount the importance of those differences, but rests on a continuous enactment of constantly invented traditions among a core group that claims to be homogeneous. Yuval-Davis, and a host of literary critics among whom Anne McClintock figures as an important spokeswoman, stress that nationalism uses women as symbols, especially in their role as mothers, to represent the collectivity. Serving as talismans, women's – especially mothers' – deportment, dress, and sometimes religiosity guarantees the very survival of the collectivity. Controlling women's behavior, thus, becomes a life and death issue; and real-life challenges to the nation's customs or certain women's insistence on performing as, or refusal to act as, symbols of the nation appears to threaten the survival of the country and of everyone in it.

Despite the incidence of numerous anti-imperialist wars of national liberation that attempted to break with past systems of exploitation to distribute resources more equitably, nationalism is ultimately destructive of revolutionary goals. Although most revolutions claim to represent universal values, their leaders frequently subordinate their ideals to the prosperity and survival of a single nation state. By privileging one nation over another, even allegedly revolutionary forms of nationalism ultimately promote the interests of one ethnic or racial group over another. Nationalism, in turn, invariably entails a heightened sense of masculinity that includes a willingness to kill and die for a feminized and infantilized nation, envisioned as needing protection. In fact, the shared identity that constitutes nationalism only coheres against an inside or an outside enemy; sometimes against both. By exaggerating differences between citizens (usually gendered as male) and those marked as outsiders, nationalism justifies the use of violence against people considered to be aliens. Emphasis on common – especially familial or kinship – characteristics of the national group and their allegedly collective requirements for survival buttress demands for sacrifices that they may be asked to make in the name of the nation state. Fighting for survival justifies any efforts national leaders make in pursuit of self-defined nationalist interests. Nationalist (like family) feelings may warm the heart of those waving flags or sharing holiday dinners, but recourse to values predicated as much on exclusion as on inclusion can justify any and all domestic and foreign atrocities undertaken in the name of defending the homeland.

When attacked as being insufficiently loyal to the nation, the Argentinian Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, whose children had been kidnapped and murdered by a nationalist military junta, outlined what the meaning of nationalism was to them. In the translation by Jo Fisher (1989), the Madres explained that

> what is authentically national is a population who develop[s] the wealth of this country for their own benefit; it is to receive an adequate wage, to have enough food, to have a home; it is to be able to educate our children, to have health protection, to improve our intellectual and technical capacity, to have our own culture and to have freedom of expression; it is to have armed forces to drive lorries, planes and boats which transport troops and materials to places of natural disaster, who work with the people in an efficient and rapid way; it is to have a police force which protects freedom and respects all citizens; it is to have impartial judges who guarantee justice; it is to have duties and rights which can be exercised freely; it is simply, to have the Right to life, but with dignity.

In other words, for the Madres as for Salomé Ureña, the only good nationalism was one that included democracy and social justice, the kind of society for which generations of left-wing social revolutionaries have fought.

In fact, the Left and the Right, secularists and theocrats have all engaged in nationalist, revolutionary, and anti-imperialist struggles at one time or another. The interplay between social movements, intellectuals, and political leaders shape all three kinds of mobilizations and practices; and all three have used popular customs, and claims to be defending homeland and family as justifications for their action. The way in which the dream of a country entails struggle, ideals, and discourse continues to confuse scholars and activists. Revolutions, nationalism, and anti-imperialism are processes, forged in struggles not only of intellectuals, but of ordinary men and

women of different races, classes, and ethnicities. Establishing the meaning of these terms is part of the life-and-death conflicts that activists undertake in order to change society and improve conditions of life for themselves and their children. Despite failures to achieve all that they desired, revolutionaries have altered the trajectory of history and defined future goals to which men and women may aspire. They have frequently done so in the course of anti-imperialist struggles.

These are particular kinds of revolutions and occur in three, highly gendered forms: A suppressed majority may organize to expel a dominant power that represents the authority of a different nation. That nation has reduced the subjugated men to feelings of impotence and frequently has exoticized the women, casting them as amoral and sexually available or as drones employed as sexual slaves. Or the anti-colonial movement may attempt to transform social relations entirely and achieve empowerment through revolutionary change. In this type of anti-imperialist campaign, efforts to regain masculinity and to link it with citizenship incorporate men and some women into a core group of revolutionaries. When this type of national liberation struggle occurs under religious or right-wing auspices, women frequently appear as beneficiaries of religious renewal or as instruments of moral transformation. In the third case, an anti-imperialist movement can justify replacing a national leader who, although of the same nationality, apparently represents the interests of a foreign or alien nation. In all three cases, men and women justify extraordinary acts through recourse to the language of family, nature, history, or memory, all of which are highly gendered.

Revolutions

Most revolutions use gender to legitimate the new social order to make it appear "natural" or even inevitable, though the meanings of gender in nationalist, revolutionary, and anti-imperialist projects constantly shift. Emphasizing process as well as discourse permits viewing specific ways gender contributes to the creation of national customs, and demonstrates that customs – like nations – are constantly changing. Historian Sandra McGee Deutsch (1991), for example, discusses how the Mexican revolution itself created the form of machismo some people associate with Mexican national character. She claims that Mexican nationalism was shaped in part by emphasizing the virility of peasant revolutionaries such as Emiliano Zapata rather than his commitment to social justice and land reform. But Mexico was not unique. The idealization of the masculinity of revolutionary leaders frequently de-historicizes the achievements of real men and women, minimizing the social conflicts that brought the nation into being, and masking the class, ethnic, or racial privileges that certain post-revolutionary leaders enjoy. A gendered myth and nostalgia about apocryphal times when men were men and women obeyed them sometimes appears as a substitute for revolutionary changes in social and economic priorities.

Since the end of the eighteenth century, dreams of alternative societies have launched political, social, and religious revolutions all over the globe. Long periods of social conflict may ensue before power actually changes hands. Foreign governments, aided by domestic adversaries, in hope of quashing the revolutions and of restoring old rulers, frequently attempt to invade the revolutionary country, as the Austrians supporting French Royalists invaded Revolutionary France, or as when the

Western powers, with the aid of counter-revolutionaries and Czarist supporters, mobilized against the new-born Soviet Union. While not actually absorbing the Philippines, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, or Cuba in the first part of the twentieth century, countries such as the United States nevertheless invaded them and shaped their political policies. In the latter part of the twentieth century, dominant international countries sometimes favored embargoes, such as that carried out by the US against the Castro government for over four decades after the Cuban Revolution of 1960 and imposed by the United Nations on Iraq following the Gulf War of the 1990s.

Revolutions occur in at least two stages: first, secular or religious movements against rulers and their allies erupt in war; and then consolidation provokes civil war, usually aided by outsiders. Within the country, while society is undergoing violent ruptures, women and children – usually cast as helpless dependents – represent continuity. Even though in France, Mexico, Russia, Spain, China, Nicaragua, Cuba, Algeria, Vietnam, Mozambique, South Africa, and Iran, flesh–and-blood women of all races, classes, and religions participated as combatants in wars and civil wars, and their activities often marked them as "virile," the prowess of revolutionaries and the justification for their actions invariably rested on the revolutionaries' professed desire to protect wives, mothers, sisters, and children. Since most cultures and historical periods presume continuity, change itself appears unnatural. To legitimate the use of force and the disruption of social order, male and female revolutionaries cast themselves as protectors of dependent wives and mothers. This enables revolutionaries to reestablish an historical narrative that makes previous revolutions seem inevitable, while precluding subsequent attacks on the social order.

Once established, revolutionary societies face real and imaginary threats from outside aggressors. These create a sense of national danger that intensifies existing divisions; while war, the usual accompaniment to revolution, enhances nationalism. Winning wars to save revolutions involves subordinating all aspects of femininity to preparing warriors to wage battle. Any talk of emancipation of women, workers, repressed minorities or subordinated majorities gets muffled in the rush to defend society militarily.

To consolidate the new regimes – whether of the Left or of the Right, whether religious or secular – the new government must establish authority. Authority has historically rested on recognition of the government's power, its ability to rule, and its prowess–qualities that in most cultures have, up to now, been associated with masculinity. Since revolutions disrupt what is generally viewed as the "natural order of things," establishing the legitimacy of the new government frequently entails marking gender differences and idealizing some kind of family symbolizing the new nation. Conceivably, other markers, such as commitment to an egalitarian community filled with people recognized as different from one another, might situate people in new political configurations and authority might rest on participatory democracy rather than on power viewed as domination.

Future revolutions that acknowledge difference without imputing inferiority and superiority based on race, class, religion, ethnicity, or gender, and without trying to homogenize those differences, could reverse these historical precedents. The processes by which marking gender differences entail other immutable distinctions can change. Unfortunately, a major failure of past revolutions has been the way one

group of men with masculine authority has claimed to speak for the interests of all, thus reducing the ability of masses of people to participate directly in politics. The combination of excluding organizations of peasants, workers, and women from publicly expressing their political views and intensified references to masculinity in revolutionary society has historically resulted in the anti-democratic compact that future revolutions will have to resist.

In consolidating revolutions, leaders often demobilize women, repressed minorities, workers, and peasants who contributed to victory, thus reducing the possibilities for participatory democracy. Associations of workers, peasants, or women, such as the All China Women's Federation, who organized during the revolution to express their own particular needs, lose their ability to influence the administration of the state. Similar demobilizations also took place in Russia, Cuba, Algeria, Mozambique, South Africa, and Iran, as well as in China. As Maxine Molyneux notes with reference to Nicaragua, women's history of struggle neither guarantees them positions in the new government nor brings their professed social and gender needs to the forefront of revolutionary policy. Declining attention to social issues and questions of democratic control strikes the death knell of all leftist revolutions and often indicates a shift away from any notion of radical social change. The contest over authority in revolutionary government leads to emphasis on patriarchal controls, as the history of the Chinese Revolution has unfortunately shown.

As far back as the nineteenth-century Taiping Revolution, China set the standard for revolutionary democratic possibilities, not yet fulfilled. A Christian sect, the Taiping briefly created sexual equality along with democratic, communal government of the country. Organized in cells, the Taiping formed brother-sister bonds of equals rather than hierarchies dominated by a male authorities. Though defeated, the Taiping left a residue of hope for sexual as well as political democracy in China. The 1911 Revolution overthrew the emperor and established the Chinese republic. Women, like men, were drawn to the secular religious claims of Chinese nationalism that the republic promoted as part of its political identity. According to Sheila Rowbotham (1974), over 5,000 students, including numerous women, in Beijing were outraged by the Versailles Treaty's award of Chinese territory in Shandong Province to Japan in 1919. They protested and were quickly joined by strikers in Shanghai, and demonstrators in Hunan Province. With the support of intellectuals, political activists, including the young Mao Tse-tung, and large numbers of women students, the mainly nationalist organization arranged a boycott of Japanese imports and urged Chinese businessmen to help modernize the country. From that nationalist position, the movement soon demanded that poor girls receive an education.

Symbolic of the growing audibility and visibility of young Chinese women, the May 4th Movement that began in 1919 reshaped the possibilities for revolutionary social change in China. In keeping with the image of the new woman, those who hoped to break with tradition bobbed their hair. A sign of independence, the short haircut seemed to indicate not only the refusal to defer to traditional Chinese customs, but possibly these women's refusal to symbolize the nation. Proclaiming internationalism, the communists Party, formed in 1921, incorporated many of these modern women from all classes into its ranks, and showcased the need for female emancipation among its social goals. As the conflicts between the Communist Party and the Nationalists intensified, the numerous women with bobbed hair seemed to

symbolize both women's freedom and communism. When the Nationalists under Chiang Kai-shek attempted to massacre the communists in 1927, their troops murdered any woman they found with short hair.

During the long, revolutionary struggle by the Chinese communists to resist the Nationalists; then to join with them to expel the Japanese invasion that began in 1935; then to oppose the Japanese occupation of the late thirties and first half of the forties; and then finally in the civil war with the Nationalists, the communists oversaw a vast social revolution. In some places in the countryside, communists formed locally controlled village governments called Soviets. With the men away at war, women peasants governed these communes and gained self-esteem and experience of self-government in the process. The formation of the All China Democratic Women's Federation set up in 1949 to represent the interests of a broad spectrum, at first was able to express the needs and desires of such women. Its dissolution in 1953, when the government abolished all organizations that mediated between the individual and the state, marked a turning point, indicating the unwillingness of the Chinese revolutionary leaders to permit mass organizations to develop or express independent views.

Despite the failures of the Chinese Revolution, what was remarkable was how truly revolutionary some of its insights were. Initially, revolutionaries viewed patriarchy as a social system that had to be crushed in order to create a new society. The two fundamental legal reforms of the Chinese Revolution came in the Land Reform Law of May 1950 and the Divorce Law of 1951. By separating marriage from the ability to survive through access to land, the communists potentially enabled millions of women to leave abusive relationships and still support themselves and their children. But without independent organizations to defend their collective interests, women assumed a position as subjects of government policies rather than as activists, who were able to use the resources made available to them.

One of the greatest insights of the Chinese revolutionaries was their critique of the patriarchal structure of pre-revolutionary Chinese society. Before the revolution, the war lords dominated every aspect of peasant life, including control over the labor and bodies of Chinese peasant women. According to sociologist Judith Stacey (1983), lacking other resources with which to reward male peasants, the Revolution awarded them patriarchal control over the lives and bodies of the women in their families. By democratizing Chinese patriarchy, according to Stacey, Chinese landless male peasants gained the same masculine rights of domination over women of their kinship groups that elite Chinese men had long exercised over all women. Although Chinese men could cement their bonds by granting full masculinity to male peasants, the contract was very much at the expense of Chinese women. Under communist government, women were integrated into the labor force, but they continued to lack full rights equivalent to those held by their male relatives.

While men may vie for power with each other over the figurative or real bodies of women, masculine power can sometimes overlook the role of women activists in de-stabilizing the government and providing alternative models for social change. Historian Padraic Kenney (1999) has written about the women cotton textile workers of Lodz, Poland, whose 1947 strike of 50,000 women against speed-ups in the spinning mills and for reduction of food prices marked the first wave of agitation against Soviet domination of Poland in the post-war period. According to Kenney, women's

incorporation into the paid labor force nevertheless left them as the chief providers of food for their families and enabled women to link issues of work with questions of everyday life. Instead of viewing women as symbols of Polish nationalism, Kenney shows how they assumed their places as leaders of an alternative social formation. When the shipyard workers of Gdansk rose up in 1970 and again in 1980 and formed Solidarity, a movement for democracy and Polish autonomy, the men sought legitimacy as defenders of helpless women and children. Yet, when in January 1971 Polish communist leaders appealed to the men's nationalism to go back to work following a steep increase in the price of food, the men complied. A month later in February 1971, as milk subsidies disappeared and meat prices rose in the face of declining wages, women in Lodz refused to follow the men in support of government. In fact, according to Kenney, working-class Polish women strategically portrayed themselves as helpless in order to enhance their real power. In 1971, for example, twenty-seven women staged a public fainting spell as they were being addressed by one of the Polish communist leaders. Polish or not, the women chose to defend the interests of their families and communities and made the government representatives appear as bullies. In 1980, the men of the Lenin Shipyards, striking against the government, cast their own wives and daughters as potential strike-breakers who would urge them back to work. But by the following August of 1981, during the last of Solidarity's nearly decade long push to topple Soviet authority in Poland, a striking shipbuilder who had spent almost a week in the shipyards told a reporter from *Le Monde* that he didn't dare sneak home for a nap or a bath since the women of the neighborhood would challenge his manliness if they thought he was betraying the cause. As symbols of the nation, women could exercise a moral power associated with gender. During that same summer of 1981, women workers in Lodz, dressed in their Sunday best, staged a huge march, protesting against food shortages. Under banners proclaiming that "Our Children Are Hungry," according to Kenney, the women carried out the first mass street demonstrations in modern Poland as part of a campaign for their family and their country's survival.

Gender can also come into play in legitimating certain right wing revolutions such as army coups. And politically active women can sometimes deny their own ideology and claim to represent "the people" because they are women – a category that they imply is beyond politics. When right-wing Chilean women presented themselves as defenders of the nation between 1970 and 1973 against Salvador Allende, the first legally elected socialist president of any country in the Americas, these particular women from the opposition claimed symbolic rights rather than political rights as members of right-wing political parties, according to historian Margaret Power (2002). Calling on the military to overthrow the president, they marched on the barracks in August 1973, threatened to paint them baby blue, and threw chicken feed at the troops. One of the members of the junta, General Gustav Leign, later complained self-righteously (as if he hadn't plotted with the other generals and won the support of the CIA) that the women drove the army to rebellion. "They said that we were chickens. They left corn at the doors of our houses. They said we were cowards. Whoever had been in my position on that day would have acted. There was no other way out."

Much earlier, in Great Britain, during World War I, elite women had handed out white feathers to any seemingly able-bodied man they saw in the streets and tried to

shame him into joining the army. Exercising socially constructed positions as arbiters of morality, such women have sometimes succeeded in establishing their own values as those of the nation. No matter what the political content of their campaigns, these women speak a language that masks political partisanship under the guise of righteous femininity. By substituting a language of morality for one of power, they attempt to remake the public discourse. On the Left and the Right, women acting consciously to achieve certain goals sometimes pretend to be acting simply because of ethics and morality. For example, various groups of women whose family members have been murdered by death squads or members of the armed forces frequently speak in moral terms in their struggle for human rights. Likewise, women with right-wing agendas often move from a language of power to one of morality, casting themselves not as political activists, but as mothers who are merely trying to provide for their families. Because gender is so masked and appears so "natural," even sophisticated political thinkers tend to overlook how gender structures other relations of power.

Anti-Imperialist Struggles

Gender figures strongly in all three kinds of anti-imperialist campaigns: that of merely expelling the colonial power; that of associating the nation with a revolutionary struggle; and that of throwing out what Karl Marx called the *comprador* bourgeoisie, those members of the nation who serve the interests of a foreign power. The process of colonization has led to the widespread use of gendered discourses, especially of sexual and spatial metaphors, including control of the gaze. Imperialist nations appear to be powerful and overpowering in their use of violence to achieve their sexual and political desires, as references to male and female rape readily attest. Being colonized entails viewing oneself through foreign eyes and, according to the argument of historian Mrinalini Sinha (1995), includes imagining the foreign authority as manly and the colonized as effeminate. This situation has led anti-imperialists of every political stripe to associate their campaigns with regaining their country's masculinity through defending women.

Anti-imperialist movements also frequently engage in spatial metaphors. Political theorists such as Joan Landes (1988) and Carole Pateman (1989), focusing on the relationship between the masculinization of the public sphere in eighteenth century Europe and the Americas and the creation of liberalism and democracy, have emphasized how relegating women to the domestic sphere excluded them from political power. Partha Chatterjee (1993) reverses their argument, asserting that for India, domesticity provided a space in which Indians – albeit gendered as male – could preserve their culture, especially their spirituality, away from the disparaging gaze of British imperialists. Unfortunately, as R. Radhakrishnan (1992) has argued, despite Chatterjee's membership in the group who study the subaltern, he does not recognize the price played by women everywhere when they become the means by which men acquire havens in a heartless world. But, in providing an opportunity to consider gender as a means by which the underlying population of colonized groups are able to mount resistance to imperialism, Chatterjee reveals that gender is not merely a category of repression, but a system of behavior that enables certain people to resist imperialism.

In fact, the failures of European colonialists to understand the variability of gender relations led them to ignore the power of women in certain colonies. European belief

in a gender system in which masculinity and femininity were strict opposites and men dominated politics and economics, ill equipped them to understand rural or working-class movements in their own countries and paralyzed them when they dealt with gender relations in those countries they dominated. Faced with what historians of West Africa such as Kamene Okonjo (1976) call the dual-sex system, the Europeans simply refused to believe that gender relations in their colonies could be so different from those they imagined as their own.

In an early anti-imperialist campaign in 1929, women of the Igbo-Ibibio group in southeastern Nigeria applied to imperialist representatives a local custom sometimes employed by women against men who battered members of their sex or against those who favored some wives and children at the expense of others. In a ritual called "Sitting on a Man," Judith Van Allen (1972) describes how the women of the compound would first admonish a man who did not behave according to custom. Then they would prevent his wives from cooking for him or sleeping with him. Then, if he still refused to change, they sang jeering songs, sat on his face, and burned down his hut. They attempted to apply the same techniques to the British when rumors circulated that women's property was to be taxed at a time of great economic hardship. Covered in green-leaves and singing songs insulting the honor and the masculinity of the warrant chiefs and their British masters, the women attempted to get the British to recognize that women's loss of resources would represent a threat to the existence of the Igbo-Ibibio people itself. When the British began to carry out a census of women's property, the women believed from past experience that their property would soon be taxed. They refused to speak to the census-takers and argued that taxing the women would amount to a threat to their fertility.

The women marched to the homes of the warrant chiefs, who had appointed the census-takers, and then, in mobilizations that engaged up to 15,000 women, they descended on the capital of Aba and the towns along the Niger Delta, claiming that women were like palm trees and that they should not be mistreated. The warrant chiefs, whom the British had appointed to rule over the Igbo-Ibibio, wore hats that symbolized their high office as representatives of the British crown. The women stole the hats, then they rubbed their naked bottoms over the faces and bodies of the chiefs and their court officers, who had dispatched the census takers. The demonstrators moved on to the towns and attacked British merchants whom they held responsible for the declining price of palm products and the high costs of imported goods. When the Yoruba troops, members of an alien ethnic group, were ordered to attack the women, the women turned their backs and mooned the soldiers – challenging them to "shoot your mothers." The soldiers shot down eighteen women in a massacre that alerted the British to anti-imperialist sentiments which would increasingly intensify.

In West Africa, where women agriculturalists produced most of the food consumed by the extended family and also ran the local markets at which food and cloth were sold, women had certain economic and political power that was concretized in local customs. Senegalese film director and novelist Ousmane Sembene has shown how the French imperialists frequently underestimated the resolve of local women. For instance, during World War II, having drafted all the able-bodied men they could find, government forces put pressure on the male elders to turn over the village's

entire store of grain. But the women had grown the grain and, rather than let their own children starve, they hid the crop. Though forced to sit for days in the hot sun, they refused to reveal where the grain was stored. Defeated, the troops had to withdraw. Shortly after the end of World War II, the French railroad administrators in Senegal hoping to repress a railroad strike by African workers, cut off food supplies and credit. The women of three regions of the country were able to overcome differences of language, religion, and class to stage a hunger march to bring the issues of survival to the forefront of anti-imperialist politics, as Sembene has recounted in his novel *God's Bits of Wood*.

Whether attempting to expel an aggressor who has dominated the political, economic, and judicial organizations of the state; or to bring into being an entirely new social order, wars of national liberation became the prevailing form of anti-imperialist struggle in the last part of the nineteenth and throughout the twentieth century. These wars engendered images of women as black Amazons, confronting Spanish colonizers during the last Cuban war of independence against Spain between 1895 and 1898; and of Vietnamese mothers with rifles over their shoulders, nursing their children in the fields during the wars against the Japanese, the French, and finally against the army of the South Vietnamese government and its US ally from 1963–1975.

The degree to which opposition forces appear not only as enemies, but as alien and unnatural is the degree to which gender plays a part in certain anti-imperialist struggles. To dishonor one's enemy, it is frequently sufficient to impute his masculinity, either by viewing him as less than a man or as a monstrous woman. This is what frequently occurred in Spanish, particularly Catalan, political cartoons at the end of the nineteenth century. Although the anti-imperialist forces were made up of white and Afro-Cubans, merchants and peasants, the liberal imperialist Spanish press portrayed the Cuban rebels as black Amazons and worse. Apoplectic that Afro-Cuban generals such as Antonio Maceo could consistently beat the Spanish troops, Catalan political cartoonists such as Manuel Moliné frequently represented the Cuban forces as monstrous women rather than mixed-race adversaries who were using guerrilla tactics pioneered by the Spanish in their battles against the troops of Napoleon. Hoping to diminish any sympathy for the Cuban cause, or anti-war sentiments among Spanish working-class soldiers, for whom assignment to Cuba was tantamount to death, the Spanish cartoonists and writers attempted to denature the Cubans. This required simultaneous moves that conflated race and gender. Instead of people fighting for a more just society, as some rebels were doing; or as merchants and farmers, who wanted more control over their own business, as the Spanish merchants and landed elite did themselves, the Cubans appeared as monsters, unworthy of sympathy or support.

The Vietnamese struggle against the Japanese, the French, and finally the army of Vietnam and its US military supporters suffered from some of the same reactions experienced by the Cuban rebels in their nearly successful war against Spain. The Spanish term "guerrilla," meaning a warrior who fights skirmishes and local battles, was frequently conflated with "gorilla" in common speech in the United States. More seriously, the image of the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong woman warrior with a rifle slung over her shoulder as she nursed her child merged images that the popular

US press found repugnant. The hybridity of the woman warrior – who looms large in Vietnamese as well as Chinese folklore – is particularly upsetting to those who find comfort in a strict separation of the roles the two sexes play. Once again, portraying an enemy as particularly deviant was a way to undermine his masculinity and sense of honor and therefore the justice of his or her cause.

Veils

Western imperial powers were not the only ones to project their own values and customs on other people in efforts to radically transform society. Because no social relations are less understood than those of gender, revolutionaries frequently become obsessed with power, which as historian Joan W. Scott explained, often appears in gendered terms. In a path-breaking book entitled *The Surrogate Proletariat*, political scientist Gregory Massell (1974) discovered that when the Soviet revolutionary cadre marched into Muslim Central Asia on the southern borders of Russia, they discovered people who had practically no urban life. Looking for proletarians, they decided that women were a surrogate proletariat. In order to liberate these Muslim women, the cadres went from village to village unveiling the women. Outraged and distraught at this attack on their culture, their religion, and their power, the men massacred the women closest to them. In this particularly egregious example of women's bodies being turned into battle fields, the lengths to which almost every culture is willing to use women symbolically at the risk of destroying them physically becomes particularly evident.

Customary practices, such as the veiling and unveiling of women, played their parts on all sides of political and cultural divides. Nowhere have they been more prominent than in the third kind of anti-imperialist campaigns, the ones designed to oust national leaders thought to represent foreign interests, as with the Shah of Iran; or the civil wars in Afghanistan. The identification of Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi of Iran and his hated secret police of SAVAK with Western capitalism and the interests of the petroleum industry united revolutionaries of the Left and the Right against him. Women among all adversarial groups were active in the street demonstrations of 1978 and 1979 that helped discredit his regime. They also organized as wives and mothers of prisoners, playing on traditional gender roles to portray the Shah as un-Iranian. He himself had carried out a revolution that centered on overcoming the power of the landed elite, and on building a base of support among a new technocratic middle class associated with the oil industry. Pursuant to modernization, he set up schools, promoted the incorporation of women into the wage-labor force, and attempted to set his government up on a secular basis. With an iron hand, he tortured and crushed any group who opposed his specific methods. Trying to re-assert a sense of national identity, distinguished from the Shah's particularly brutal cultural and economic revolution, many groups mobilized to put the imprint of their ideas on the national consciousness.

When the Ayatollah Khomeini, who had been in exile, became the figurehead of opposition to the Shah and his Western supporters, many progressives believed that a war of national liberation would mute the religious qualities of the religious Right. Even some progressive women willingly took up the veil as a sign of opposition to Western capitalists. But when one of the first acts of the Ayatollah was to order

women of all classes to wear the *chador* – a veil that covers the head and body completely – hundreds of thousands of Iranian women took the opportunity of International Women's Day, March 8, 1979, to protest. Other protest marches ensued all over Iran, but officials dedicated to the extirpation of vice and youthful vigilantes pursued women who did not wear the *chador*. By 1980 the *chador* was required for all women in the public sphere. At the same time, women were reduced to second-class citizenship.

As with any symbol, the *chador* takes on different meanings depending on the context; and no nationalism is more pernicious than cultural nationalism when it goes beyond being a strategy to turn into a system of belief. The Shah represented economic improvement as being synonymous with the development of capitalism and secularism. As with others committed to universal principals, the Shah and his supporters excluded any possibility of combining the old and the new. Absolutist and centralized systems tend to mitigate against the expression of the views of women, workers, peasants, or oppressed minorities. In order to make their opinions known, they sometimes use visual weapons. Taking up the *chador* against the Shah was a way of asserting the Right to save what one wanted from the old system of beliefs–even to redefine some of the meanings of the old customs. According to Ali Akbar Mahdi, religious women, who could not take part in public life so long as the *chador* was ridiculed under the Shah, re-emerged in public under the protection of the *chador*. And, for political reasons, progressive women, as part of their own onslaught against the blind imposition of capitalism and Western styles, also wore the *chador*. But when the *chador* became a way to represent a set of moral and religious beliefs defined by Khomeini and his henchmen, who seemed less concerned with the injustices of Western capitalism than with the moral failings of the West, many independent Iranian women tried to resist. Although Khomeini had hoped to be a pan-Islamic leader, the Iraqi invasion of 1980 and the eight-year civil war led to an intensification of Iranian nationalism. As with many forms of nationalism, ideological commitments gave way to stress on the survival of one country as representative of an entire set of values. When the new authoritarianism replaced the old, one of the main battles took place over the degree to which women's bodies should be covered. As Mahdi (2003) has argued, women served as tokens of modernity, not as full citizens under the Shah. Then, women became emblems of morality and religion in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Obviously, establishing the contexts for struggles over the *chador* has more than symbolic significance. The theocratic state re-introduced draconian punishments for women who violated its presumed moral precepts. Women were stoned to death; virgin prisoners were raped so that they could be executed according to Islamic law, which prohibits executing virgins; female vigilantes shamed women who violated moral precepts as the thought police defined them. Mahdi argues that even the texture and color of the *chador*'s fabric provided opportunities for repression and sedition. The Islamic Republic of Iran, though circumscribing women's rights, continued to permit them to vote. In the early twenty-first century, they used their franchise to gain civil and political rights.

If the Islamic Republic tried to control women, the Taliban in the Emirate of Afghanistan created gender apartheid, in what seemed like a campaign to punish women for the presumed failures of the nation state. The Taliban were descended

from the Mujaheddin, whom the CIA trained in Pakistan to fight against the former Soviet Union's puppet government in Afghanistan (1979–92). Many of the Taliban grew up in refugee camps in Pakistan, where they were educated by Islamic fundamentalist preachers. Fighting a *jihad* or holy war against the communists, Afghani Muslims and their opponents together lost over a million lives during a decade of war that was ended by Geneva Accords in 1988. From 1992 on, different factions of Islamic leaders increasingly at odds with one another engaged in civil war. In 1994, the Taliban, led by the Mullah Mohammed Omar (then thirty-one years old), marched into Kabul and the southern and central provinces of the country with the strong support of the Pakistani government and its secret police, according to Physicians for Human Rights. The Taliban seized power, associated national interests with a revolutionary ideology loosely based on Islam, and sought to solidify the nation by the exclusion of women from all aspects of public life. Women were forbidden from attending school, working as professionals, or from getting medical treatment except from women doctors and nurses in the few segregated sections of hospitals reserved for them, and that only as a result of international protest. Women lost their own opportunities to work, and, with over one million killed before 1992 and tens of thousands murdered afterwards, a large proportion of women with children became widowed. If they lacked a male relative, they could not even go to public distribution centers for food.

In public, all women had to wear the *burqa*, an even more restrictive garment than the *chador*. In addition to veiling the head, shoulders, and entire body, the *burqa* included a net over the eyes and nose to prevent any possibilities of identification. The Department for the Propagation of Virtue and the Suppression of Vice carried out arrests and beatings of those who were not considered to be properly covered, and women, along with men – though spatially separated from them – were required to attend Friday meetings in the sports stadium of Kabul, where they were forced to witness public executions, amputations, and beatings. By these means, the Taliban associated the survival of the Afghani people with deferring to the use of terror. Although groups such as Physicians for Human Rights and the Feminist Majority tried to publicize the repression of Afghani women before the attacks on the World Trade Center in New York on September 11, 2001, the international political community remained silent. Following the attack, the US administration opportunistically sought to use the plight of women in Afghanistan to justify bombing the country and its search for Al Qaeda leaders, once again demonstrating the intrinsic relationship between women, nationalism, and imperialism.

Conclusion

Discussions of gender in the context of revolutions, anti-imperialist struggles, and nationalist movements, frequently emphasize the ways women appear as representations and stand at the center of allegories. But one should remember that real violence, which results in maiming and murdering millions of women around the world, and social movements of women, who are determined to build a better future, exist at the level of material reality as well as discourse. Unveiling, raping, or killing women, as in Central Asia, Bangladesh, or Bosnia as part of revolutionary nationalist move-

ments provided the means by which one group of men attempted to dominate another group of men over the bodies of women. These atrocities also provided military and political leaders with control over cities and regions that enhanced their power.

The use of gender increases claims to political power. The *patria*, or fatherland, has historically depended on masculinity defined in relationship to the desecration or defense of women. Religiosity, sometimes tied as it is to the power of the state, is simultaneously a medium of power and one of its aims. In the late eighteenth century, for example, when the Catholic, peasant women of the Vendée in southwestern France rose up against the French revolutionary state which was trying to turn their Catholic clerical sons into civil servants responsible to government authorities rather than to the Catholic hierarchy, peasant women wanted simultaneously to serve God, the Catholic church, local customs, and their children. Groups, including women in the Hindu nationalist BJP (Bhartiya Janata Party) and Muslim women in India, kill and maim opponents in the name of religion linked to their rights as mothers. Through collective action, such women and their male allies use symbolism as one weapon among many to gain their political goals through force.

As Carole Pateman (1989) implies in her arguments about participatory democracy, there can ultimately be no successful revolution for social emancipation without commitment to gender and social equality. The dreams Salomé Ureña Henríques had in the nineteenth century have turned into nightmares in which all nations have carried out unspeakable atrocities in the name of nationalism. Justice and human rights are universal, indivisible, and unqualified–or they are nothing. Whereas feminist political theorists such as Carol Pateman argue that historically universal values have implied a male subject, feminist human rights activists led by Charlotte Bunch of the Center for Women and Global Leadership began to argue in 1992 that women's rights are human rights and that battering and traffic in women are human rights abuses whether carried out by individuals or nation states.

In the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, as talk of secular revolution grew increasingly faint, and anti-imperialism entailing opposition to so-called Western values became less associated with anti-capitalism, social movements of women, fueled by the promise of social justice and human rights on a global scale, have also assumed new prominence. All over the globe, certain groups of women activists attempted to transcend nationalism in order to link issues of survival to those of justice. International women's movements linked to reproductive rights, sustainable development, education, the environment, and, most pointedly, to universal human rights set the standard for new agendas that transcended nationalism to demand access to social, political, economic, and cultural power for all. Using the platform of world conferences sponsored by the United Nations and seeking links through international non-governmental organizations, multi-cultural groups of women attempted to establish a new set of priorities in which gender and other distinctions of race, religion, caste and class lost their social stigma. International grassroots women's movements for human rights began what promises to be a long process of going beyond symbolizing universal human rights for women to movements for achieving them.

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Chapter Ten

Feminist Movements: Gender and Sexual Equality

Barbara Winslow

In the past two-and-half centuries feminism has transformed every facet of the lives of women, men, and children. It has crossed over and transcended physical, geographical, and political boundaries, religious and political beliefs, as well as traditional historical periodization. Feminist movements have changed the way in which women and men work, play, think, dress, worship, vote, reproduce, make love, and make war. Revolutions evoke images of people storming barricades, clashing armies, mass demonstrations, charismatic political leaders, organized political parties, armed conflict, seizures of power usually resulting in a clearly defined economic, political, and social transformation of society. In this feminist revolution, women were on barricades, demonstrated in the streets, even took up arms, organized and were leaders of political parties. However, millions more women organized this social revolution in the private sector, the often-ignored women's domain of schools, factories, offices, kitchens, bedrooms, hospitals, libraries, back yards, market places, community centers, and places of worship. Much of this social upheaval has been local and decentralized, many of its leaders still unknown and unnamed. While women as a group have not seized power, have not overthrown any particular government or nation state, do not control any particular national economy, or for that matter dominate any national political government, they have, nonetheless, challenged the traditional belief that women's work and lives are of lesser value. Women's lives today would be unrecognizable to those of their great-grandmothers.

Feminist Movements and Feminism

In *No Turning Back: The History of Feminism and the Future of Women*, Estelle Freedman (2002) defines feminism as "a belief that women and men are inherently of equal worth. Because most societies privilege men as a group, social movements are necessary to achieve equality between women and men, with the understanding that gender always intersects with other hierarchies."

Because feminism is a word representing a movement, its meaning and application has changed over time. There continues to be conflict, debate, and discussion

over the very usefulness or relevance of the term. Throughout history, there have been many different kinds of women's movements, some with goals to change and improve women's position within a particular society, some to conserve the existing gendered status quo, and others to undo changes made. Within these movements there have always been conflicting ideals, goals, and perspectives. Even those who champion women's rights share ambivalence about the use of the word "feminist," or "feminism," arguing that it is too narrowly focused on the West, or on the experiences of Western women.

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (1972: 1050), "feminism," meaning the advocacy of women's rights, was not used in the English language until 1895. Women and movements agitating to challenge male authority existed before the term feminism even existed. Sheila Rowbotham writes that Charles Fourier, an early-nineteenth-century French socialist, first used the word "feminist." He hoped that a "new woman," opposing the capitalist ideals of competition and profits, would help create a new society based upon communalism and cooperation. His ideas of self-emancipation combined with social emancipation influenced later generations of women. In the nineteenth century, feminism described women who sought to extend the liberal ideas of individual rights to women. Most of this was expressed in the women's movement that fought for women's suffrage and women's property rights.

There were other strands within the women's movement, which claimed that if popular sovereignty meant that people had the right to shape the society in which they lived, then women who are half the population must be included. Other arguments asserted that maternal ability entitled them to rights within society because their reproductive and socializing role contributed to the material well-being of the nation. Still another argument claimed that women's moral authority allowed them to improve the "public sphere" and create a better society. This strand of feminism emphasized the uniqueness and difference of women, without fundamentally challenging established gender roles. The development of a socialist movement in the nineteenth century contributed to new meanings of women's role as workers as well as challenging the capitalist notion of the family. By the 1920s, feminism was a term used to describe not just the campaign for suffrage, but for economic, social, and sexual rights for women.

With the resurgence of women's liberation movements in the 1960s, the word feminism took on multiple meanings. Barbara Smith notes: "Feminism is the political theory and practice that struggles to free all women: women of color, working class women, poor women, disabled women, lesbians, old-women, as well as white economically privileged heterosexual women" (Smith, 1982). The idea of global feminism culminated at the 1995 Beijing Conference with the Declaration asserting "women's rights as human rights."

Women and Rebellion

Historically men have held power over women. Almost every society values and privileges boys and men over girls and women. Theories, poems, songs, and religious tracts not only extol male virtue, but also condemn women as inherently dependent, wickedly sexual, or simply evil. The major religions buttress male authority by ordaining that men should rule over women; in the words of St. Thomas Aquinas, the most

important medieval Christian theologian, women are "defective men." The Judeo-Christian-Islamic traditions begin with the story of God the all-powerful male; the first woman, Eve, seduced the first man, Adam (hence mankind), which brought sin and corrupted humanity, thus supplying biblical authority for distinct and unequal gender relationships. In the New Testament, women were instructed to be silent in church and obey male authority because "the man is not of the woman, but the woman is of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man" (1 Timothy). The sacred Hindu text, the *Laws of Manu*, compiled sometime between the first century BCE and the third century CE, classified Indian society by caste and gender. The nature of woman is "to seduce men in this world; for that reason the wise are never unguarded in the company of females . . ." Imam Nawawi, a Syrian Muslim teacher (imam), explained in *Gardens of the Righteous* that "Allah the Exalted has said: Men are appointed guardians over women."

While women have historically been subordinate to men and dependent upon their authority, culturally demeaned, and reviled, patriarchal rule has neither been static nor universal. Prehistoric artifacts suggest that at different times and in differing regions women have shared spiritual and temporal roles and responsibilities with men. Female deities such as the Middle Eastern fertility goddess Astarte, the Sumerian deity, Innana, the Greek goddess Gaia, or the Aztec goddess Coyolxauhqui, are indications that at different periods women were looked upon as revered spiritual forces.

Women's participation in economic life has also varied. Some women, usually elite or aristocratic, wielded some formal power, as rulers, engaging in statecraft and enacting laws. In the Egyptian Old Kingdom (*c.*2686–2181 BCE) women were not necessarily restricted to their homes. Non-royal but elite women were priestesses in important cults; daughters could inherit equally with their brothers, and women were allowed to participate in marketplace activities. In pre-Hispanic Aztec civilizations, women experienced what Brenda Rosenbaum described as "gender parallelism, (where men and women played different but parallel and equivalent roles) with gender hierarchy" (Rosenbaum, 1996). Men and women could inherit property from both fathers and mothers, male and female deities were equally important, and women and men had access to priestly roles, although men assumed these roles for life. In other societies, women had greater influence in a wide range of areas. Women of the Seneca nation in North America shared child-rearing responsibilities with men. They also cultivated the land and controlled the food supply. Men could not declare war unless elder women allocated food for such purposes.

Women have historically critiqued and challenged their subordinate role. In 248 CE, a Vietnamese peasant woman, Trieu Thi Trinh, told her brother that: "My wish is to ride the tempest, tame the waves, kill the sharks. I want to drive the enemy away to save our people. I will not resign myself to the usual lot of women who bow their heads and become concubines" (Rowbotham, 1992). Women also challenged the male claim to religious authority and power. A'ishah, Muhammad's third wife, for example, battled a Khalife in 656, and afterwards created her own religious laws. In eighth-century India, women involved in the *bhakti* (a popular revolt against a form of Hinduism) broke with their families, created their own spiritual writings, and demanded that men treat them as spiritual equals. European women preachers and heretics claimed direct connection with God thus creating religious and feminist impulses. Guillemine of Bohemia, a late-thirteenth-century preacher and mystic,

challenged Catholic dogma, and created a women's church that attracted aristocratic as well as ordinary women.

One of the first persons systematically to critique gender relationships and challenge male definitions of women's nature was the French courtier, Christine de Pizan (1365–*c.*1430). In 1405 she wrote *The Book of the City of Ladies*, in which she confronted men's power to determine women's value. "There is not the slightest doubt that women belong to the people of God and the human race as much as men and are not another species of a dissimilar race, for which they should be excluded from moral teachings" (Anderson and Zinsser, 1988). Historians Bonnie Anderson and Judith Zinsser believe that the European feminist movement began with Pizan who created an ideology which united the women who embraced it in subsequent centuries. From the fifteenth through the eighteenth centuries, women followed Pizan's critique, asserting that women's virtue made them equal to men, urging greater education for women and girls, and demanding greater respect and kinder treatment from husbands.

The debate about the role and status of women in Western European society continued into the eighteenth century, a period identified as the European Enlightenment, which traditionally has been viewed as the triumph of rationality over the religious world-view of medieval Europe and the beginning of the "modern" world. Eighteenth-century Enlightenment thinkers used a secular and rational approach to women's position in society and politics. However, Enlightenment thought was both confusing and contradictory, for arguments centered on nature as well as reason. Did women have distinct and different natures? Would equal education and equal laws enable women to develop the reason necessary for involvement in political decision-making? Jean Jacques Rousseau believed that women's nature meant they should be kept out of the public sphere of politics. Their passions were such that they would overwhelm men's capacity for reason. Other radical writers such as Catherine Macauley believed that women must have access to equal education and more just laws for only then would they be able to develop reason. These debates about equality and difference had implications that continued into the twenty-first century.

The legacy of the Enlightenment is problematic in other ways as well, not just in terms of gender, but also for class and race. Some Enlightenment thinkers who saw women as closer to nature and therefore less capable of reason idealized non-Europeans as natural as well while others saw them as exotic or inferior. By the late nineteenth century, Western beliefs about equality and emancipation were imposed upon colonized women in the East as they were beginning to demand equal rights. These cultural biases of the Enlightenment have profoundly influenced contemporary feminist thought.

In England, the seventeenth-century Puritan revolution unleashed a political ferment that challenged royal hierarchies and other forms of power and domination. In 1649, "Mary Tattle-well" and "Joan Hit-him-home" wrote a pamphlet called the *Women's Sharpe Revenge*, which called for greater education for women and protested the double standard of sexual morality. In 1642, women petitioned the Long Parliament, claiming that "Women are sharers in the common calamities that accompany both Church and Commonwealth" (Rowbotham, 1992).

The radical and democratic implications of Puritanism crossed the Atlantic. Women like Anne Hutchinson, a seventeenth-century midwife, began to interpret the

scriptures and preach the Bible. "You have stepped out of your place," Puritan church fathers warned her. "You have rather been a husband than a wife and a preacher than a hearer, and a magistrate than a subject . . ." She had brought together a group of women to discuss and critique the scriptures. Hutchinson was banished from the Massachusetts Bay Colony for defying masculine authority both religious and secular.

Political ferment, direct challenges to male authority in the family, the Church and the State did not yet constitute a feminist movement. In the seventeenth century European women had not yet staked any universal claim to equal rights. Alternatives to women's subordination were largely mystical or highly individual. The idea of connecting women to a transformed world had yet to be realized.

The French Revolution (1789–95) established the most important precedents for modern democracies. Revolutionaries developed the doctrine of citizenship, human rights, and popular sovereignty. They established political parties, legislative assemblies, political clubs, the popular press, and other institutions of political involvement. Millions of French women and men were mobilized in political conflict. In the French Revolution, the feminist aspirations of the ladies of the salon met with the collective action of the women of the streets. Class and gender began to interact with the ideals of Liberty, Fraternity and Equality.

Women participated in every aspect of this upheaval. In 1789, women articulated their grievances and demands, publishing the *Petition des Femmes du Tiers-Etat au Roi* (Petition of Women of the Third Estate to the King). The anonymous writers asked the king to listen to their voices and act on their behalf. An unidentified Madame B. B. called for the representation of women only by women in the Estates General, protesting "Why does one sex have everything and the other nothing?"

Working women in Paris played a leading role in moving the Revolution forward. Enraged by the scarcity and high cost of bread, some six thousand women marched to Versailles in heavy rain to bring back the king. From then on the royal family became hostage to the Parisian crowd. Women marched through the streets and a few even dared to disrupt the proceedings of the National Assembly, vote on motions and even sit in the Speakers' chair. These women's actions were a direct attempt to intervene in a political process from which they had been excluded.

However, the revolutionary concepts of Liberty, Fraternity, Equality, and Citizenship were gendered. In August 1789 the National Assembly formulated its Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen, a doctrine based on class and gender. Active citizens were defined as men who could meet the tax qualification. In spite of their legal exclusion, women claimed citizenship through their continued participation in the revolution. Etta Palm D'Aelders, a Dutch woman active in the Revolution, called for equal rights for women in the areas of marriage, education, and entrance into civil and military life. In 1791, Olympe de Gouges, playwright and publicist, champion of the emancipation of the Jews and the abolition of slavery, drafted *The Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen*: "Women, wake up; the tocsin of reason is being heard throughout the whole universe, discover your rights . . ." The *Declaration* called for equal education, equality within marriage, and the right of women to own and inherit property, public workshops for the unemployed, a national theater for women and the right of women to legitimate their children regardless of their marital state. Women who were politically radicalized,

including laundry women, seamstresses, shop girls, and workers' wives, organized themselves into what appears to be the first exclusive female political activist group, the Society of Revolutionary Republican Women. This was not a feminist organization; its members did not speak in terms of women's specific rights, but rather of the role of mobilizing women for the Revolution. Pauline Leon, one of its members, collected a petition with more than 300 names concerning a woman's right to bear arms. They wore striped pantaloons and red liberty caps. They pressured the National Assembly to regulate prices and supplies, curb aristocratic excesses, and support the revolutionary army.

The French Revolution unleashed the power of women in the streets, political clubs and political assemblies. The men of the Revolution, while needing women's support to remove the King and to push the more radical Jacobin agenda forward, feared the power of women's organization. In the name of public order, the Jacobins outlawed the radical women's clubs and chastised their behavior as going against nature. The anti-feminist Jacobins told the women that their role in the Republic was to "be simple in your dress, work hard in your household; never attend the popular assemblies with the idea of speaking up, but rather with the idea that your presence there will sometimes encourage your children" (Offen, 2000). From 1793–5 decrees abolished women's clubs, prohibited women from attending the Convention or other political meetings, and outlawed women gathering in the streets in groups of more than five. Cross-dressing (wearing pantaloons) was abolished. The French republican regime decreed that men wore the pants, men were the citizens and all other political activity was clearly gendered male.

Amidst the chaotic promises of liberty thrown up during the French Revolution, a radical Englishwoman, Mary Wollstonecraft, wrote *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792), a 300-page instant best seller, that became the foundation for modern feminism. The *Vindication* drew from the past ideas of the Enlightenment, brilliantly described the present experience of women, and changed future thinking regarding feminism. Wollstonecraft's clarion call resonates even today; she bitterly denounced denial of education, equal work, and political rights as domestic tyranny. Women's financial dependence on men in marriage was nothing less than "legal prostitution." The *Vindication* also marks a break with the past. Understanding collective social movements, Wollstonecraft identified herself not as an individual woman, but as part of a group: "I plead for my sex – not for myself." She ushered in modern feminism by seeing the State as an agent of social reform, demanding that the nation guarantee equal education and that the enactment of legislation reversing traditions and institutions that subordinated women.

Wollstonecraft was a bridge from the eighteenth century to the nineteenth; her life and writings foreshadowed the ideals of nineteenth-century liberal or equal-rights feminists and the utopian or socialist feminists. On the one hand, the *Vindication* clearly spoke to issues of women's equal rights and equal access; Wollstonecraft's life however embodied the radical essence of social and sexual liberation, which foreshadowed the ideas of later utopian, anarchist, and socialist feminists. Wollstonecraft passionately believed in sexual freedom and social revolution. She died in childbirth in 1797 after giving birth to another Mary, the future author of the first gothic novel *Frankenstein*. In the period of reaction that followed the French revolution, Wollstonecraft's ideas on sexuality were so outrageously scandalous for the time that

her critics even questioned her own person. Wollstonecraft's life and writings remain a corner-stone of feminist thought and political activity.

The Nineteenth Century

Feminism could never have become so powerful if it had been confined to a body of ideas. New forces such as capitalism, industrial growth, and democratic and socialist movements contributed to and sustained feminism. In the West, feminism as a social movement developed alongside a number of other social reform and protest movements, especially the abolition of slavery. Feminists were looking to transform every facet of gender relations: marriage, family, work, play, dress, and sexuality. The first organized manifestation of feminism, a women's rights conference, took place in 1848. In the small but bustling upstate New York town of Seneca Falls, some 240 women and men met specifically to discuss women's rights. Lucretia Coffin Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton organized the meeting. Stanton had drafted the "Declaration of Rights and Sentiments," which began by paraphrasing the Enlightenment arguments of the Declaration of Independence, "We hold these truths to be self evident that all men and women are created equal." Introducing a litany of centuries-old grievances, the Declaration called for women's entrance into higher education, medicine, and the pulpit, and denounced the absence of married women's legal and property rights. The Declaration further demanded that women be given all the rights and privileges which belonged to all male citizens of the United States, including the right to vote. However, the suffrage resolution, introduced by the African-American abolitionist and feminist Frederick Douglass, was the only resolution not unanimously supported by the conference.

The Declaration expressed a strand of political thought within the women's movement defined as liberal or equal-rights feminism, that called for women to be granted political and legal rights equal to men. These concerns were also the concerns of those who were in a position to own or hold property or to enter the professions. The majority of the delegates were white middle-class women. When they spoke of *woman*, they spoke in universal terms. However, their vision did not include inviting to their conference members of the Lowell Female Reform Association, the first association of factory women in the United States. This organization of self-educated women workers in the Lowell Mills of Massachusetts campaigned for women's equality in the workplace, temperance, the abolition of slavery, the ten-hour working day, and the end of capital punishment. The women of Lowell knew about the Seneca Falls convention; in all probability, the women of Seneca Falls also knew about their Massachusetts sisters.

While the Declaration of Sentiments expressed the finest of the Enlightenment ideals, it also expressed problematic ideas about race and class. The third grievance in the Declaration stated that "He has withheld from her rights which are given to the most ignorant and degraded men – both native and foreigners." Here Stanton clearly articulated grievances of class, ethnicity, and race. In this period of Jacksonian "democracy" suffrage had been extended to white males, including working-class white men. Stanton, like many other women of her class resented the fact that immigrants and other working-class men could also possess an "absolute tyranny" over her. Herein lies the contradiction: as with the earlier American and French

revolutions the promise of universal rights excluded women, but at Seneca Falls the hierarchies of class and race compromised the promise of women's emancipation and universal sisterhood.

The relationships between race, gender, abolition, and women's rights in the United States were complicated and conflicting. The birthplace of North American and Western European feminism was, in part, found in the anti-slavery movement. White women's determination to speak out against slavery brought women into direct confrontation with men about women's rights. White women seemed more open to radical ideas of social equality than male white abolitionists. Free African-American women were also at the intersection of women's rights and anti-slavery. A few, like Sojourner Truth, spoke about the inseparability of race and gender. After the American Civil War, race and gender came into conflict over the passage of the Fourteenth Amendment, which defined US citizenship as male, and the Fifteenth Amendment, which enfranchized former male slaves, but did not include women (or Native American women or men). Splits developed among former abolitionist and women's rights reformers about privileging race over gender, or gender over race.

In the latter part of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, the women's suffrage movement in the US continued despite its internal conflicts. Millions of women became active in the political arena, demonstrating in words and deeds a commitment to citizenship and sisterhood. Yet at the same time, the major suffragist organizations often used racist, anti-immigrant, anti-Catholic, and anti-Semitic sentiments to bolster their demands for women's suffrage. Even though African-American women organized for women's suffrage, the major women's suffrage organizations were segregated. When women's suffrage was finally ratified in 1920, the existence of Jim Crow legislation effectively disfranchized most African-American women and men. Not until the Voting Rights Act of 1970 were African-American women and men actually able to vote in many places in the South.

Class, race, and gender conflicts were apparent in the European women's suffrage movement as well. Middle-class women were raising claims of equal rights as builders of the nation and empire and demanding the vote on the same basis as men – in other words, class- and nation-based suffrage. While the struggle for women's suffrage was a unifying issue for women internationally, and American and European suffragists sought to create international alliances, their campaign for the vote excluded colonized women. The expansion of European, and after the 1890s the United States' empires in Africa, the Middle East, Asia, and the Pacific served Western economic and strategic interests. Gender also played a key role in the justification of Western or white domination. The demand for white women's suffrage in the United States, Australia, or New Zealand, for example, was argued in part as a necessity for nation and empire building. Western women traveling and living abroad took up the "white woman's burden," defining colonized women as victims of uncivilized and brutish men, in need of rescue. Colonialists further argued that the more the colonized women's lives resembled those in Western Europe or the United States, the more 'civilized' the culture. Feminist universalism, internationalism, and equality contrasted with the class-, religion-, and race-based beliefs and actions of the women's suffrage movement in the West and in some of the colonies such as New Zealand and Australia.

Socialism and Feminism

One political response to the rise of capitalism in Europe was liberalism. Equal-rights or liberal feminism called for equal access to education, property, and the suffrage. A contrasting political movement opposed the new capitalist system. These radicals opposed private property, privately owned capital, and what they considered to be the cruel consequences of the industrial revolution. They believed that more socially and economically just societies should be based upon cooperative and communal working and living. In direct opposition to the central tenets of capitalism, they thought that workers, peasants, artisans should collectively own and control the fruits of their labor and that social class was the reason people were excluded from meaningful decision-making at work, in government, in the family, and in the community. These early-nineteenth-century radical reformers, or "utopian socialists," had an expanding vision of social equality that was changing as fast as the economic organization of Europe. Charles Fourier, the French socialist who coined the term "feminism," was the first theoretician of feminism and socialism. He believed that "the extension of privileges of women is the general principle of all social progress," connecting women's emancipation to progressive social change (quoted in Rowbotham, 1972: 51). Other utopian socialists attempted to create egalitarian societies. Robert Owen, who started out as an enlightened factory owner, built a model community in New Lanark, Scotland. No believer in egalitarianism, but rather in the belief that external conditions could foster greater personal cooperation, Owen bought land in the United States and created a community in New Harmony, Indiana. Unlike Scotland, the American Owenites were far more interested in women's rights; New Harmony inspired other utopian socialists and feminists such as Francis Wright, the British reformer. She bought land in Nashoba, Tennessee, and attempted to create a community of newly freed slaves and free whites who would live in racial, gender and economic cooperation and equality. Because of Wright's commitment to "free love," and interracial relationships, Nashoba was a target of attack and ultimately failed. To her opponents Wright symbolized immorality and sexual scandal. Dress reform, birth control, educational reform, prison reform, changes in divorce and family law were also issues that these utopian feminists embraced.

Some of the early socialist feminists anticipated the socialist theories of Karl Marx. Jeanne Deroine, a Saint-Simonian, organized for workers' and women's rights. Jailed in 1848, she re-emerged during the revolution of 1848, publishing the journal *Voix des Femmes*. Like the Jacobins a generation earlier, the revolutionary men forbade women's participation in political clubs. Arrested in 1851 with her sister Saint-Simonian and comrade Pauline Roland, prison walls could not imprison their socialist feminist internationalism, however. Sending "joyous greetings" to feminists in the United States, they wrote "Sisters of America! Your socialist sisters of France are united with you in the vindication of the rights of women to civic and political equality." Flora Tristan, an aristocrat raised in poverty, found her social consciousness awakened. She traveled to England, worked with Owenites and in 1843 published the *Workers Union*, which argued for the self-emancipation of the working class and working women as a means to social equality and liberation. These French socialist feminists laid both the intellectual and organizational framework for alliances between socialists and feminists of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, a new kind of socialism emerged, one which inspired an international, lasting political movement of workers and intellectuals. Marxist theory contained a systematic analysis of women's oppression. Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, August Bebel and V. I. Lenin, leading Marxist theorists, believed that women's subordination in society came about at the period in history that private property emerged which then led to the development of monogamous marriage and the patriarchal family. This was, as Engels argued in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, "the world historic defeat of the female sex." Another central Marxist tenet was the belief that women's emancipation would come about by bringing women into the paid labor force and into organized trade unions and other political movements, which would undermine women's dependent role within the family. Women's low wages kept them economically dependent upon their husbands as well as politically conservative. Marx and Engels further argued that in order for capitalism to accommodate women in the paid labor force, it would have to socialize the means of reproduction, that is the family, child-rearing, and housework. Given their analysis of women's subordination, Marxists believed that the destruction of private property, bourgeois monogamous marriage, and the patriarchal family would eradicate the basis for women's subordination. "Real freedom for women is possible only through socialism," wrote Lenin in 1920.

The development of mass socialist parties in nineteenth-century Europe, and the emergence of socialist movements in non-European countries such as China, for example, in the twentieth century, linked issues of class and gender in the struggle for women's emancipation. There was however, minimal attention paid to women's rights within the First International of Socialist Parties (1864–76). After the collapse of the First International, socialists' concern with women's issues increased. August Bebel published *Women Under Socialism* in 1879, Fredrich Engels *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, in 1884; both opened the way for more systematic work for women's emancipation. The Second International of Socialist Parties (1889–1914), created an International Women's Secretariat, and in Germany the Social Democratic Party (SPD) created a structure for women independent from men. This separate structure was the key to the success of the German socialist women's movement, which was the largest political movement of women of any kind on the continent. Bebel's *Women Under Socialism* supported basic feminist demands: the right to vote, entrance into the professions, and ownership of property, as well as marriage and divorce reform. Bebel also advocated the right of women to sexual satisfaction. The German socialist, Clara Zetkin, the organizational and theoretical leader of the socialist women's movement, organized the Socialist Women's International in 1907 to fight for suffrage, equal pay, and maternity insurance. Zetkin contended that women could not be emancipated without socialism, and socialist parties could not achieve their goals without the full participation of working women. Designating March 8 as International Woman's Day, this group met sporadically until 1914.

Despite these important theoretical breakthroughs and organizational achievements, Marxist theorists accepted traditional gendered beliefs about women's physical inferiority as well as the accepted ideas about the gendered division of labor within the family. The Marxist theoretical approach also failed to resolve the contradictions between women's dual role – as worker and as mother. By arguing that the "primary

contradiction" in a capitalist society was class struggle, and that struggles against other forms of oppression – racism and sexism for example – were secondary, the Marxist tradition kept women's interests secondary in the making of socialist revolutions. A tiny number of women like Sylvia Pankhurst attempted to connect socialism, feminism, and suffrage by organizing working-class women in London's largely working-class East End. But such women were few and isolated from the mainstream in both the suffrage and socialist movements. Feminists found that they had to struggle against governments and industry, which attempted to crush popular movements, as well as against their socialist comrades who often opposed feminism and their participation in the labor and socialist movements.

Socialist feminists also found that they had to struggle on a personal front. Their vision of emancipation was not necessarily confined to political power or public collective ownership of wealth, but rather a cultural transformation and a way in which people could create new egalitarian relationships. Socialist feminists raised sexual politics within the socialist movement when they focused on such issues as birth control, abortion, the structure of marriage, sexual fulfillment for women, free unions, housework, child-rearing, gender identity, and homosexuality. Yet around these issues of sexuality and personal life, there was little consistency in either theory or practice amongst socialists – individually or organizationally. There was also little relationship between political radicalism and openness to sexual radicalism.

World War I (1914–18) created an international social and political crisis that unleashed forces of revolution, anti-colonial struggle, and new international feminist political configurations. Four Western empires – the German, the Austro-Hungarian, the Russian, and the Ottoman collapsed; anti-colonial and nationalist movements in China, India, South Africa, and Egypt challenged European hegemony; the two movements of international feminism and socialism, although dominated by the West, were thrown into confusion. Prior to 1914, socialists and most feminists opposed war; however when fighting broke out, many abandoned their principles of "sisterhood" and "international working class solidarity" to support their own nation against workers and "sisters" of other nations.

There was a wide range of opinions from feminists, supporting as well as opposing the war. Some woman suffragists, most notably the Englishwomen Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst, founders of the militant suffragette organization, the Women's Social and Political Union, and the American Charlotte Perkins Gilman, supported their nations from a nationalistic point of view. Others, such as Millicent Fawcett, saw the war as a chance for women to prove themselves worthy of citizenship. There were diverging expressions of anti-war feminism. These included the views that women, as mothers, suffered the worst in wars; that mothers are inherently pacific as guardians of the race; that women should use reason, not force to solve international problems; while left-wing feminist socialists such as Sylvia Pankhurst, Clara Zetkin, and the Russian Alexandra Kollontai denounced war as only serving the interests of capital.

Anti-war feminists mobilized internationally. Clara Zetkin organized the left wing of the socialist women's movement into the Conference of International Socialist Women and Rosika Schwimmer led the formation of the International Women's Congress at The Hague in 1915. Both organizations called for peace and urged women to pressure their governments to end war, but to no avail. After World War I

political and gender differences over issues of pacifism remained as some continued to work for the League of Nations or for the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, an organization not necessarily feminist but one that worked to promote pacifism, and opposition to imperialism and fascism.

The Russian Revolution of 1917, which began on International Woman's Day, had a profound impact on feminism internationally. Socialist women such as Inessa Armand, Nadezhda Krupskaya and Alexandra Kollontai were involved with working-class women prior to the Bolshevik seizure of power. The leader of the Revolution, Vladimir Lenin, who was married to Krupskaya and a close friend of Armand, supported civil and political rights for women, but was hostile to feminism. The newly constituted Communist Party enforced statutes giving women equal pay and equal job opportunities; protective legislation enabled pregnant and nursing mothers to work in greater comfort and safety; arranged marriages were outlawed, and people were allowed to choose their partners irrespective of religion or nationality; divorce was liberalized; abortion and contraception were legalized; homosexuality was decriminalized. The Communist Party engaged in wide-ranging debates about the sexual, social, and cultural changes necessary for women's emancipation.

However, external as well as internal forces – civil war, famines, privations, the backwardness of the Russian economy, and political repression – contributed to the defeat of the early promises of the Russian Revolution. Under Stalin, women suffered equally with men through forced collectivization, imprisonment, military terror, and exile. Divorce was made more difficult, protective legislation was abandoned, and homosexuality was again criminalized. Kollontai, the only female member of the Communist Party Central Committee, was isolated and exiled, and the socialist working women's organization she founded in 1905, the Xhenodetl, was disbanded. The legacy of the Soviet Union was opposition to autonomous women's organization, and a state policy that emphasized women as producers or reproducers regardless of women's needs or wants. Under these conditions, socialist feminism was silenced for decades.

The rise of Fascism in Germany, Spain, Italy, and Portugal, the rise of Stalin's Soviet Union, and the advent of World War II halted European feminist movements. Even where there were substantial social protest movements in capitalist democracies such as England, France, and the United States, women's movements were insignificant. A few such as the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), the International Woman's Suffrage Alliance, the International Council of Women or the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom attempted to maintain international links.

Anti-Colonialism, National Independence, and Feminism

While a few movements for women's rights, most notably for women's suffrage and access to education, arose in a number of Latin American countries in the nineteenth century, feminist and women's movements did not emerge in any significant way in the African, Asian and South American continents until the first half of the twentieth century. These movements, unlike their earlier European counterparts, were connected to the struggle for national liberation, anti-colonialism, and socialism. In *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World*, Kumari Jayawardena (1986) remarked

that movements for women's liberation in Asia and the Middle East were "acted out against a background of nationalist struggles aimed at achieving political independence, asserting national identity and modernizing society." Women's and feminist movements challenged both imperialist and gender hierarchies. Nationalist and anti-imperialist movements could no longer ignore women. In order to succeed against Western imperialism, women had to be politically (and often militarily) mobilized; this meant promises of greater political, economic, and social rights, and equality. Both communists and nationalists employed the rhetoric of women's rights and women's emancipation in the anti-colonial struggle, but opposed autonomous women's organizations. Part of the justification was the concern that women's groups not under the control of a communist or nationalist party might become bourgeois, reactionary, or imperialist.

The women's movements that emerged embraced aspects of Western feminism while at the same time opposing Western domination. All were connected to nationalism, socialism, and anti-colonialism. Chinese women, many of whom had been educated by Western missionaries, joined in the struggle in the early twentieth century against the decaying Manchu dynasty and foreign imperialism. Feminist organizations sprang up in the early years of the twentieth century, and during the 1911 revolution, women began demanding the right to vote. The Chinese Suffragette Society demanded education, an end to foot binding, prohibition of concubinage and child marriages, reform of prostitution, political and civil rights within marriage and the family, and greater social services for women in industry. At the same time a radical cultural movement developed among China's intellectuals proclaiming a commitment to personal freedom; rejecting of all forms of domination including marriage; and debating birth control, free marriage, celibacy, divorce, and even Confucianism in Chinese society. Women cut their hair, wore Western clothes, and sometimes dressed in men's clothing. The Chinese Communist Party, founded by Mao Tse Tsung in 1921, linked women's emancipation to the emancipation of the working class. In the 1920s Sun Yat-Sen's nationalist Guomindang Party and the CCP worked together demanding social and economic equality. After an abortive workers' rising in Shanghai in 1927, Chiang Kai-Shek, the new leader of the Guomindang, led a savage attack on the communists, brutally slaughtering thousands of communist women. The result was that the nationalists, associating feminism with communism, abandoned any commitment to women's liberation.

By 1934, the Chinese Communist Party retreated from the more liberatory aspects of feminism and Mao disassociated the CCP from its early commitment to sexual liberation and declared that the socialist revolution came before women's emancipation. In the decade and a half of Mao's "Long March" to power, women in the CCP worked with peasant women, helped with their housework, childcare and other domestic chores. They formed groups in which the peasant women would "speak bitterness" about their gendered oppression, a form of organizing that would later influence the civil rights movement and early women's liberation consciousness-raising groups in the United States in the late 1960s. When the CCP came to power in 1948 it proclaimed social, political, and economic equality for women and outlawed the most oppressive features of Chinese society including foot binding, arranged marriages, brideprice, and concubinage. Birth control and abortion were legalized; marriage and divorce laws were liberalized, and women obtained the suffrage.

Feminism in India differed from that in China in many respects. Critiques of women's oppression appeared in India even before the emergence of a nationalist movement. Pandita Ramabi, the author of *The High Caste Hindu Woman* (1886), questioned the assumption that British imperialism had improved women's status in India, citing the economic consequences of colonialism. She campaigned for education and medical training, started a number of women's organizations, and was one of the ten women delegates at the founding conference of the nationalist Indian National Congress (INC) in 1889. In the early twentieth century, *swadeshi* – the militant movement for self-rule and support for indigenous culture – attracted women like Swarnakumari Devi, who also attended the founding meeting of the INC, as did her daughter Sarala Devi. A handful of European women committed to Indian independence also supported the emerging women's movement. The socialist and birth-control advocate, Annie Besant, and Irish feminist Margaret Cousins joined with Dorothy Jinarajadasa to form the Hindu-dominated Women's Indian Association in 1917. Muslim women mobilized as well; in 1916 the Begum of Bhopal formed the All-India Muslim Women's conference.

India differed from China in that there was no significant communist movement competing with the nationalist movement. The role and influence of Mahatma Gandhi, the leader of the Indian independence movement, was also crucial. Gandhi hoped that India would develop independently from the West. While he was critical of male domination of women both politically and personally, he rejected Western feminist ideas of individual autonomy or equality of opportunity. Gandhi's vision of women's emancipation was based upon the essentialist belief that women, who embodied humility, virtue, and sacrifice, were best suited for domestic life and child rearing. Jawaharlal Nehru, the leader of the Indian National Congress, had a more secular approach to nationalist politics, and supported political rights for women including the right to vote. As the struggle against British rule intensified, women from all strata of Indian society engaged in largely non-violent resistance, even going to jail. In the 1920s Indian women achieved local suffrage and created the All India Woman's Conference, bringing together Hindu and Muslim women. This religious cooperation was not reflected on the national scene. India won its independence from Britain in 1947 as a largely Hindu nation, at which point Pakistan became a separate, largely Muslim nation. With independence came significant political and social reforms. Nehru, India's first Prime Minister, consistently supported women's civil and political rights, but the debate over religious and state regulation of family practices and whether feminism was a Western import continued to simmer. Furthermore, the existence of constitutional rights for women has not been translated into social and economic equality in either India or Pakistan.

Like its Indian counterpart, Egyptian feminist consciousness, found in published writings in the 1870s, preceded colonial occupation and the rise of nationalism. The development of the Egyptian nationalist movement spurred on women's rights. In 1911 Egyptian feminist and nationalist Bahithat al-Badiyah called upon the Egyptian National Congress to mobilize women to help build the nation; she demanded education for women, the right to employment, and women's right to worship in mosques. In the early part of the century Badiyah and Huda Sha'arawi opposed unveiling of the face, a position held by male feminists. For these two feminists, veiling was a practical issue; unveiled women faced personal and physical attacks. In

1923 Sha'arawi founded the Egyptian Feminist Union (EFU), which marked the first explicit use of the word feminism, and was its president until 1947. The EFU demands included greater access to higher education, and reform of laws regarding prostitution, marriage, divorce, and child custody. During the national revolution from 1919 to 1922, the EFU mobilized hundreds of women to take to the streets in support of independence. During this period of nationalist militancy, the differences between women as feminists and as nationalists were minimized. However, by the 1930s, class and cultural divisions between feminist and religious fundamentalist women came to the fore. The EFU believed its programs and feminist ideology was compatible with Islam; for the women of the Muslim Women's Society, feminism was a colonial ideology, one that undermined Islam. These disagreements persist today.

Not all women's movements originated among elite educated women. In South Africa, the nationalist movement emerged in reaction to the system of white minority rule and racial segregation called apartheid. The African National Congress (ANC) was founded in 1912, and while it supported women's rights, its leadership was male and hierarchical. The ANC established the Federation of South African Women in order to involve and mobilize women in the struggle against apartheid. In 1913 grassroots women's organizations demonstrated against racist laws that forced black women to carry special passes in order to travel from place to place. The struggle was revived again in the 1950s. The anti-apartheid struggle was the only arena in which African and white women worked together. The ANC and the women's Federation called for legal equality, the vote, land redistribution, reform of marriage and divorce laws, and an end to child labor. When white rule ended in 1994 with the ANC coming to power, the South African constitution guaranteed women equality under the law.

Nationalist and anti-colonialist movements did not necessarily produce feminist movements. Some gains for women were part of programs of Westernization carried out by heads of state without any women's participation. In the 1930s Kemal Ataturk, the head of state in Turkey, opposed the Islamic family code and adopted Western standards for the education of women; polygyny was outlawed in 1926 and women got the vote in the 1930s. Similarly, in the 1930s the Shah of Iran banned women wearing the veil and extended university education. Top-down male rule did not guarantee women political equality or authority however, and neither ruler was committed to feminism. Ataturk crushed feminist movements when they challenged his rule; the Shah ordered state control over all women's organizations. In the 1970s, religious conservatives organizing the movement to overthrow the Shah and secular rule successfully branded women's rights and feminism as a Western evil. In Algeria, feminism was associated with French colonialism. Even though women participated in the anti-colonial struggle against the French, the Algerian government dismissed calls for women's emancipation as Western, imperialist, and non-Islamic.

Japan's feminism originated with Westernization, beginning in 1868 when the Meiji government abolished feudalism, introduced forms of a capitalist economy and followed a path of modernization, following models of the West. Kishida Toshiko, pioneer of Japanese feminism, was the first woman to speak publicly during the reform period of the 1870s called the Popular Rights Movement. Her ideas of feminism were somewhat similar to those of European equal rights feminists. The Popular Rights Movement believed that the right of the state (meaning patriotism/

nationalism), people's rights, and women's rights were one and the same. Inspired by Kishida, Kageyama Hideko was first drawn to the Popular Rights Movement and then to the Japanese socialist movement; she published *Sekai fujin* (Women of the World), calling upon women to "rise up and form a social movement of our own." The defeat of the Popular Rights Movement in the 1890s and the subsequent imperial constitution stripped women of all political rights while the 1890 Imperial Prescript on Education defined women's role as being "a good wife and a wise mother."

Other Western forces such as Christianity contributed to Japanese feminism. The Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) founded the Tokyo Woman's Christian Temperance Union. Protestant missionaries, concerned about temperance and social purification, opposed polygamy and state sanctioned brothels and mobilized women to oppose restrictions on their political activity. Both the WCTU and the Shin Fujin Kyokai (New Women's Group), an organization embracing conservative as well as socialist women, demanded women's suffrage. The 1925 Universal Suffrage Law excluded all women from suffrage, and in 1930 and 1931 the Japanese parliament twice turned down women's suffrage bills. With the emergence of Japanese militarism and aggression in the 1930s, the Japanese government maintained that feminism was not in the national interest. Although Japanese feminists continued to be active in local politics during the war, many supported the national cause. Only ten days after Japan's surrender, feminists such as Ichikawa Fusae and Kubushiro Ochima met with other women to organize a woman's committee to work to solve women's post-war problems. At the same time, Japanese women long ignored the plight of Korean and Filipino sex slaves who were forcibly held by the Japanese army during the war. Chizuko Ueno, a leading Japanese feminist, has criticized women for ignoring the plight of these Korean and Filipino women.

Another manifestation of nationalism and anti-colonialism was Pan-Africanism, an ideology and movement that called for the unification of all Africans into a single African state, to which those in the African diaspora could return. Pan-Africanism, originally articulated by the intellectual, activist, and supporter of women's rights, W.E.B. DuBois, connected people of the African Diaspora in a common struggle for African and Caribbean independence. From its inception in 1900, the Pan-African Congress supported women's franchise, education, and involvement in political activities.

The largest black organization in modern world history was the United Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). Founded by Marcus Garvey, the UNIA organized the participation of women. The UNIA's feminism was promoted largely through Garvey's two wives, Amy Ashwood Garvey and Amy Jacques Garvey. There were thousands of women in the general membership, and the UNIA had two specific women's sections, the Black Cross Nurses and an all-woman paramilitary group, the African Motor Corps. Special organizational positions for women assured their representation at the UNIA's highest levels. Women predominated on the central leadership bodies in a number of UNIA branches in the Caribbean. The UNIA did not specifically challenge the colonial ideology that subordinated women to the role of housewife and helpmate.

In South America, feminists chose not to challenge certain traditional cultural values, in particular gender roles defined by *machismo* (endorsing male supremacist values), and *marianismo* (the values of self-sacrifice, and non-sexual love as

embodied by the Virgin Mary) as well as the Catholic church. Many South American feminists extended these roles of domesticity, femininity, and motherhood into politics, arguing that women's role in the public sphere would create a higher moral order. After 1910 a wide range of women's organizations were founded such as the Argentinian Partido Feminista Nacional (National Feminist Party) and the Chilean Partido Civico Feminino (Women's Civic Party), the Uruguayan Partido Independiente Democratico Feminino (Women's Independent Democratic Party) or the Colombian Union Feminina de Columbia (Colombian Women's Union), the Brazilian Federação Brasiliera Pelo Progresso Feminino (Federation for the Advancement of Women). Most South American countries granted women's suffrage in the period from the 1930s through the late 1950s. However, according to historian Asuncion Lavrin (1978), even after winning the vote, "*Machismo, marianismo*, and the patriarchalism still meet to produce the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, the *co-madres* of El Salvador, the white-clad figure of Nicaraguan president Violetta Chamorro, running an election as a widow and grandmother."

In Cuba, Castro's 1959 revolution made important strides for women. Following a Leninist model, Castro was a supporter of women's rights while at the same time opposed to feminism. In spite of the US-imposed blockade, the Cuban government is able to provide a wide-ranging health and educational system for its women and children. Cuba provides childcare for working mothers and paid leave for childbirth, nursing and housework; yet there is a gendered division of labor; most childcare workers are women. The Cuban Central Committee and leading Politburo members are overwhelming male.

In the first half of the twentieth century there were attempts to bring together women's rights activists and organizations from Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean. African-American and Caribbean women organized the International Council of Women of the Darker Races in 1920, in part to oppose the racism and condescension of Western feminists. The Inter-American International Council of Women met in 1928 and the All Asian Conference in 1931. In 1935 Shareefeh Hamid Ali of India warned Western feminists that "any arrogant assumption of superiority or of patronage on the part of Europe or America" would only serve to further alienate women in Africa and Asia. These organizations gave elite, educated women a venue in which to meet and debate; they nurtured the development of feminism outside of European and US nations.

The advent of World War II (1939–1945) brought women's movements to a standstill. In the 1940s and 1950s women's organizations had to struggle for survival – feminism was all but forgotten. Even though Eleanor Roosevelt called for attention to women's issues and helped establish the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women in 1946, the UN paid little attention to women's issues in the decades after its founding in 1945.

The rebirth in the 1960s and 1970s of United States and European women's movements dramatically altered the political landscape. Created by women active in the civil rights, black liberation, anti-Vietnam war, and radical student rights movements, it challenged the status quo and charged that neither the Western political democracies nor socialist countries had emancipated women. Early radical feminists attempted to bring together the hierarchies of gender and race. Many histories of the early women's liberation movement have ignored the role of black women, wrongly

relegating them to the status of critics of white women and maintaining the myth that black women in the US rejected feminism. Yet African-American women were involved in the rebirth of the feminist movement. Between 1966 and 1970 black women founded the Black Woman's Liberation Committee of SNCC (the Student Non Violent Coordinating Committee), and its offspring, the Third World Woman's Alliance, the Harlem-based Black Women Enraged, and the Oakland (California) Black Women Organizing for Action. Critical discussions about women's liberation took place within organizations such as the Black Panther Party and the National Welfare Rights Organization. In 1973 the National Black Feminist Organization attracted over 400 women at its founding convention, making it one of the largest autonomous black feminist organization. In 1977, the Combahee River Collective, an organization of black radical feminists, who fought many oppressions at the same time – racism, homophobia, sexism, and capitalism – were able to articulate a non-racist, non-hierarchical, and non-homophobic feminism. " We might use our position at the bottom," stated the collective's manifesto, "to make a clear leap into revolutionary action. If black women were free, it would mean that everyone else would be free since our freedom would necessitate the end of all systems of oppression."

Women's liberation ideas and organizations raised a wide range of issues including rape laws, job segregation, inequality in sports, reproductive rights, dress reform, and housework. The movement also created an intellectual analysis of male domination by creating Women's Studies programs throughout academia. Radical feminists began with an internationalist vision that included opposition to the United States' war in Vietnam, support for anti-imperialist and liberation struggles in South Africa, other colonized African countries, Palestine, Mexico, and Cuba; and support for workers' struggles in France, Mexico, and Czechoslovakia in 1968. By 1970, women's liberation activists rediscovered March 8, the socialist celebration of International Woman's Day, and pressured the US Congress to declare March Women's History month.

Women activists also pressured the United Nations, a bastion of male privilege, to designate 1975 as International Women's Year, hold a World Conference on Women in Mexico City, and subsequently proclaim 1976–85 the United Nations Decade for Women. The Mexico conference revealed the strengths and weaknesses of international feminism, since 133 governments sent representatives. But many delegations were all male. Over 6,000 women attended as delegates of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), a number of which identified themselves as feminists. The final World Plan of Action only focused on the issue of colonialism refusing to mention women or sexism. Five years later at the world conference in Copenhagen, discussions around clitoridectomy (female genital cutting) and support for Palestinian rights enlightened and divided delegates.

Some progress was made. The passage of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) set national targets and strategies to involve women at all levels of government as well as in economic and social development. Nations set up women's commissions and other such organizations and began to compile data regarding women's role and status. Regional women's associations such as the Asian Women's Association influenced the international discussion, global exchanges of information and periodic world conferences

contributed to the development of international feminism, and 15,000 NGO delegates attended the Nairobi meeting in 1985. At that meeting, Western feminists confronted with their own biases as well as their own colonial history, recognized the necessity for non-Western women to lead the struggle against genital mutilation. In 1992 the Brazil Conference on Environment and Action included a chapter on women and two years later, the Cairo International Conference on Population concluded that women's education and empowerment was the key factor in controlling population. Thirty thousand women participated in the Fourth World Conference on Women at Beijing in 1995 which took up issues such as women and poverty, education and training of women, health, violence against women, women and armed conflict, the economy, power and decision making, the media, the environment and children; it declared that women's rights were human rights.

International Feminism

The impact of the UN conferences galvanized women and nations to take stock of their own laws, institutions and practices. For the past twenty-five years feminists have continued to hold regional grassroots conferences that enabled feminism to affect other issues around the world. Women's Studies is a global enterprise as feminists organize international conferences, develop feminist curricula and publications, and support and critique educational and other institutions which maintain gender discrimination. Rape warfare in the Balkans and elsewhere has been declared a war crime, the use of children and women in the international sex trade has been condemned, and there is a growing movement opposing sweated labor of women and children, all of which has met with uneven success. In the late 1990s feminists sought to raise the issue of the near-enslavement of women under the Taliban, an Islamic fundamentalist party, which governed Afghanistan until 2002. Not until the attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001, did governments join with feminists in claiming to support women's rights in Afghanistan.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, feminists still continue to demand full economic, political, social, and sexual equality and justice for women. The forces of globalization, the revolution in communications combined with the international feminist networks, NGO's, women's studies programs and other feminist organizations will no doubt continue to press women's claims. As Gertrude Mongello, secretary general of the Fourth World Conference on Women said in her concluding remarks at the Beijing conference: "a revolution has just begun, There is no going back. There will be no unraveling of commitments . . . This revolution is too just, too important, and certainly long overdue."

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Part II

Chronological and Geographical Essays

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Prehistory

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Chapter Eleven

Digging Up Gender in the Earliest Human Societies

Marcia-Anne Dobres

This essay is divided into two parts of unequal length. The first and shorter section briefly surveys what (little) archeologists can say, with accuracy and general agreement, about gender roles, relationships, ideologies, and processes contributing to the forms and transformation of the earliest human societies (those existing between approximately 40,000 and 4,000 years BP [before the present]). The second and longer section sketches out just a few of the fundamental and vexing issues swirling around the question of how archeologists can or should go about researching and modeling ancient gender practices with appeal to this archeological record. This second issue necessarily raises issues of epistemology and methodology as well as the socio-political influences and ramifications of such work. In reading this essay, therefore, it is important to keep in mind the following two intersecting issues. First, rather than studying texts, oral history and ethnography, research on the earliest gender configurations depends primarily on the material remains (artifacts) constituting the archeological record – stones, bones, sherds, trash, architectural foundations, rock art and the like. Second, because the past is a product of the present, research on and theories about ancient gender relations cannot help but reflect and give shape to the concerns, agendas, and wishful thinking of its practitioners.

Gender in Prehistory (*c.*40,000–4,000 years BP)

Neanderthals and the Middle Palaeolithic

Neanderthals were a cold-adapted "cousin" of anatomically modern humans who inhabited the breadth of glacial Europe, Russia, and Siberia between approximately 130,000 and 30,000 years BP. All evidence suggests that for as much as 60,000 years, they lived in peaceful co-existence alongside fully modern humans throughout much of western and central Europe and what is today the Middle East, though whether or not the two interbred successfully is hotly debated. While interesting points can be made about sex differences and similarities among Neanderthal populations, for a number of reasons little can be said about *gender* in Neanderthal societies. First

and most importantly, archeologists and palaeoanthroplogists do not agree about the symbolic and cognitive behaviors of Neanderthals. In many ways, Neanderthals were much like anatomically modern humans: they lived in tightly knit small-scale communities and cared for their young, old, and injured; they had an extraordinary knowledge of the natural world and had developed a variety of carefully honed skills for surviving the harsh conditions of the last Ice Age; they were technically adept at making complicated and beautifully regularized stone tools (lithics), of hafting at least some of these to spear shafts, and at successfully tracking and hunting now-extinct large land game such as mammoth, horse, and reindeer (although they do not appear to have conducted mass hunts).

In terms of gender, however, current debate centers on the potential symbolic capacities and expressive behaviors of Neanderthals. For example, there is little confirmed material evidence of what we, today, would call artistic expression. Whether or not Neanderthals buried their dead is also a highly contested issue. *If* Neanderthals were not fully symbolic in the modern sense of the word, then it is unclear if they gave any cultural significance, or symbolic value, to recognizable biological differences between females and males. That is, they most likely saw and understood basic biological (sex) differences, but it is not clear that they afforded substantive and institutionalized symbolic and cultural significance to that awareness, as do all modern humans. Indeed, physical evidence suggests there was probably little behavioral differentiation among adult Neanderthal females and males:

(1) There is practically no sexual dimorphism; that is, among biologically identified males and females there are no sex-associated differences in body size or robustness. This implies no symbolically defined and routinized divisions of labor that would, over the course of one's life, differently impact body development.
(2) The post-cranial skeletons of both sexes show equal amounts and kinds of wear, tear, and blunt trauma, again suggesting that both sexes equally engaged in the same hard labors.
(3) The Neanderthal mortality profile, especially across western, central, and eastern Europe, suggests that females and males died in equal numbers and at similar ages, again implying no favored (or harsher) lifestyle for one sex or the other.

Anatomically modern humans (AMH) of the Upper Palaeolithic/Late Stone Age

There is no doubt about the fully modern symbolic and cognitive capacities and behaviors of Upper Palaeolithic peoples (referred to in the older literature as "Cro-Magnons"), who occupied every corner of the Old World between approximately 90,000 and 10,000 years BP. Material evidence for an extraordinary corpus of artistic practices, as well as highly elaborated (and ever-changing) tool forms and food-getting behaviors, all point to fully modern cognition and symbolism. On ontological grounds, then, there is little doubt that anatomically modern humans (AMH) differentiated categories of people by "gender" (here minimally defined as a socially charged and symbolic form of sexual personae carrying with it a host of socially proscribed rules of "proper" behavior, privilege, power, and status). The difficult question for this time period is what particular gender configurations may have

been practiced by different Upper Palaeolithic cultures and how these rules and roles were constructed, negotiated, and maintained over both short and long expanses of time. It is highly likely that the gendered identities of AMH were cross-cut, indeed probably conflated, with other forms of social differentiation such as age, skill, occupation, family, tribal affinity, and so forth. What archeologists cannot say with any confidence or agreement is how many different genders may have existed in any given time or place, much less what were their particularly associated roles, values, and so forth. Given the significantly differentiated "lifestyles" and cultures practiced throughout the Old World by this period, it is probable that different cultures practiced different sorts of gender configurations – much like modern cultures. Thus it is not really possible to speak of a single "gender system" during the Ice Age.

Nor is there any evidence to indicate compulsory heterosexuality. The possibility of third, fourth, or even fifth genders is quite likely. For example, tribal leaders such as shamans and healers may well have transcended heterosexual roles and behaviors in order to harness sexual power. By approximately 14,000 years BP across western and eastern Europe, archeologists can identify incipient social inequalities, or hierarchies, within local communities. But rather than having one's social, political or economic status merely ascribed by virtue of birth or sex, individuals most likely *achieved*, or earned, their higher status and reputation by proving skills and talents. By perhaps 12,000 years ago (in some places), we finally begin to see evidence for something along the lines of formalized divisions of labor (possibly incipient craft specialization) but again based on skill – in hunting, plant gathering, food processing, tool making, and of course art and religion. But which "category" of person could or could not do certain activities, how rigid such divisions were, and whether or not they were divided along the lines of gender (rather than by age or skill, for example) is a matter of heated debate.

In the 1960s, archeologists favoring a sociobiological understanding of the human condition revived a century-old notion, that during the Ice Age there was a strict sex-based division of labor wherein men hunted and made (stone) tools while women gathered plants and tended the young and sick. While this idea still remains popular, there has never been any archeological or skeletal evidence to validate such a strict model of gender-differentiated work. In the Upper Palaeolithic, there was no universal category of Man engaging only in "hard" and important technologies such as stone tool making, while a universal category of Woman did the "soft" and therefore less important technologies such as weaving and food processing. Since the 1980s, feminist critiques of this excessively androcentric "Man the Hunter" model have demonstrated its socio-political underpinnings and links to modern gender ideologies (see the following section for more discussion). Finally, archeologists cannot say what the work of "mothering" looked like nor who did it. Fathers, brothers, uncles (and so forth) probably shared in the caring of children, for this was likely considered a highly valued and culturally important task, as it is with modern hunting and gathering cultures.

Mesolithic (post-glacial) societies

By around 10,000 BCE, post-Palaeolithic societies had broadened their food getting behaviors significantly, and some are better characterized as practicing a "fishing-

gathering-hunting" (or mixed) economy. Importantly, by this time and across the entire globe cultural lifeways were significantly variable and it is very difficult, indeed dangerous, to over-generalize economic practices and gender configurations. For example, in South Africa people living along the coast depended substantially on shellfish, and recent bone chemistry studies on unequivocally sexed individuals suggest that in some of these communities women and children ate far more seafood (and far less land game) than did men. However, it is difficult to say why this particular gendered division of subsistence was practiced as it was. Elsewhere, such as across parts of northern Europe, it appears that women were (still?) making and using their own stone tools (lithics), while newly invented small thumbnail-sized "microliths" (made for fishing and plant-cutting activities as well as the hunting of smaller land game) may have become a "signifier" of increasingly institutionalized gender differentiation. There is also increasing evidence for institutionalized status differentiation, especially in the treatment of the dead. But it is significant that of those burials carefully studied for (biological) sex identification, such as in Denmark, Ireland, and Yugoslavia, archeologists are finding that both women and men were interred with high-status material goods. Material evidence for the existence of third- (or even fourth-) gendered individuals is much stronger in the Mesolithic than in the late Palaeolithic. Indeed, where direct historical connections can be proposed for linking the practices and beliefs of living peoples to these ancestral communities (such as the Saami of Finland and northern Sweden), the transgendering of shamans, in particular, is strongly suggested. There is increasing consensus around the idea that in those Mesolithic societies with formally recognized shamans or spirit helpers, there were likely third and fourth genders enjoying high status and social power – individuals who crossed heterosexual boundaries to harness sexual energy for their work. By analogy with modern cultures practicing some form of healing magic (including many in southern Africa, Central America, northernmost Russia, and Siberia), archeologists have reason to believe that the core cosmologies and mythologies of many Mesolithic peoples centered on gender and sexual imagery. Thus while it is still unclear if there were gender-specific occupations and jobs, and how these differed from one culture to the next, by the time of the Mesolithic it is likely that gender served as a structural principle around which much of everyday life was organized.

Farming and metallurgical societies (of the Neolithic, Copper, Bronze, and Iron Ages)

The development of plant and animal domestication, as a wholly new way of life, took place at different times across the globe and came about in several different ways. While some communities domesticated cattle and goats or began to cultivate grains, for generations their neighbors continued to collect wild plants and hunt wild game. Thus even more so than in earlier times, it is impossible to make broad generalizations about economic lifeways and what these imply about gender. In some parts of the world, such as the American southwest and eastern woodlands, archeologists have recently proposed that *if* for hundreds of generations women had been the primary plant collectors (while men hunted wild game further from home), it is then likely that women would also have been the first cultivators, though it is not clear whether plant tending was a conscious innovation or the unconscious by-

product of favoring certain patches of land. But even if women were the first plant cultivators, there is precious little evidence one way or the other to suggest whether they also "owned" the land they tilled, controlled the fruits of their labors, nor what social value was given to such work. By analogy with historic period Iroquois, for example, ownership of land and its products might have been highly valued and exclusively in the hands of the workers – women. However, among the modern Merina of Madagascar, while rice cultivation is strictly women's work and serves as the economic base of the entire society, women own neither the land nor its yields nor is their work afforded any status. Similarly, some archeologists (following Engels' nineteenth-century theory for the "origins of private property"), have suggested that *if* men had been the primary hunters of wild game, they also most likely domesticated (and hence owned) animals and their secondary products (fur, milk, etc.).

In ancient Harappan society (along the Indus River in southeast Asia), where plant and animal domestication happened very early, there may be material evidence that women shifted their attention from plant cultivation and grain processing to bread-making, and from this to the invention of pottery (by virtue of using the same ovens for both activities). In much later periods in the American southwest and Mexico, there is strong material evidence that some women bore the brunt of corn processing, for we see in their in their wrists, elbows, and knee joints pathologies reflecting such specialized labor. In many parts of the New and Old World, then, by approximately 4,000 years ago (if not sooner in some regions), craft specialization was in full swing and particular categories or classes of people had become dedicated specialists. Some of this work was divided along the lines of gender, such as corn processing and beer making by women in Mexico, textile production by men in China and by women in Central America, metal working by men in central and eastern Europe, and pottery production as either a women's or men's specialty in different cultures.

By around 4000 BCE in many (but not) all parts of the world, there is strong material evidence for institutionalized divisions of labor by gender in keeping with gendered cosmologies, as well as differential access to prestige and power according to gender (though all of these were cross-cut by other social distinctions such occupation, class, family, and even "race" in later time periods). Ancient Mesopotamian cultures had a mythological pantheon of female and male deities, and some women (though perhaps more men) owned property for it was buried with them. But even here we cannot generalize about the status of "all" Mesopotamian women or men, because there were women and men slaves as well. There is also evidence, in burials as well as religious iconography, for the institutional acceptance and high status of third genders. By the time of the Copper (*c.*3500–2000 BCE), the Bronze (*c.*2500 BCE), and the Iron (*c.*1200 BCE) Ages in western and central Europe but also in Southeast Asia (especially China and Japan), there are occasional kings and queens buried with great wealth and pomp, though certainly none is more famous than the Celtic "Princess of Vix" who was buried in splendor with her chariot and horses. It is clear however, that while some men and women had gained high status and much politico-economic power, other men and women were not so fortunate. Thus it is difficult for archeologists to generalize about gender roles and relations without simultaneously considering other social, economic, and/or political categories by which the society differentiated itself.

Two final points are critical to any understanding of prehistoric gender relations and processes. First, gendered relationships and the dynamics of ancient gender processes are no longer peripheral topics in the study of prehistory. Gender was *as* salient a form of social identity and *as* fundamental an organizing principle in the "deep past" as it is to us in the modern world – though what is likely to be quite different from anything practiced today is precisely how gender was meaningful, how it organized people's relationships with each other, how many genders there might have been, and what work, values, and statuses differently gendered individuals might have enjoyed. Second, it is increasingly likely that gender played a substantial role in the several wholesale cultural transformations that took place between 40,000 and 4,000 years ago. Technological evolution throughout the Ice Age, craft specialization, plant and animal domestication, as well as the origins of the State could not have occurred without major shifts in gender configurations and gender beliefs. Whether or not some small-scale change in everyday practice or some grandiose gender ideology instigated a major socioeconomic revolution remains to be researched on a case-by-case basis, though both are most likely to help explain major technological transformations, the advent of plant and animal domestication, and the origins of the State. But no such wholesale change in the basic fabric of society could possibly have taken root without being underwritten by, and played out in terms of, gendered practices, values and beliefs.

The Socio-politics of Studying Ancient Gender: Epistemology, Methodology, and the Gendered Practice of Archeology

It is only since 1984 that a serious and systematic concern with understanding gender roles, relationships, ideologies, and gender-related processes has come to the fore in the study of the earliest human societies. This is not to say that an interest in sex has not always been on the minds of archeologists, for it most certainly has. But in the study of prehistory, it is rather new to think about gender as a fundamental organizing principle of socio-political and economic life, as a socially constructed form of individual and social identity, and therefore to think of gender as a necessary and legitimate category of analysis. Because of the relative newness of the topic coupled with more than a century of unreflective ideas about the universality and timelessness of (biological) sex roles, the study of gender is only now coming of age. An anthropologically rich appreciation of ancient gender, defined as a core principle organizing the practice of everyday life as well as fundamental to the form and transformation of society as a whole, came to archeology through the convergence of two intellectual currents: the feminist movement, and the development of a gender-rich feminist anthropology. By the early 1980s, feminist-inspired researchers were roundly criticizing the long-dominant "Man the Hunter" model (see above), pointing out that although it supposedly accounted for "99 percent of human existence" it had pretty much left out half the human species.

Paralleling earlier trends in sociocultural (i.e., ethnographic) anthropology, and to rectify the over-emphasis on men in models of human evolution, women archeologists began to pose explicit questions about women in prehistoric societies. Importantly, the earliest counter-model, known as "Woman the Gatherer," did not question most of the fundamental premises underlying the Man the Hunter model, such as

(1) a sociobiological definition of gender as *natural* and unchanging; (2) an uncontested binary division of labor along heterosexual lines; and (3) the near universality of the nuclear family (although within five years the palaeolithic "family" was being described as an extended sisterhood).

The explicit intent of archeological research on gender in the 1980s, then, was to "find" woman's place in ancient societies and, at long last, to give her the credit she deserved – for inventing digging sticks and slings to carry babies, for evolving ever more sophisticated parenting strategies, for sewing the clothes necessary for survival in glacial times, for cave art (especially Ice Age "Venus" figurines), and (by the mid-1990s) for inventing agriculture, pottery, and even the art of cooking. In many ways, then, the initial concern with finding and giving credit to women in prehistory was an intellectual movement shaped *not* by discoveries on the ground or in the laboratory, nor by fundamental challenges to the everyday practice or archeology (see below). Rather, socio-political currents taking place *outside* the discipline shaped such gynocentric questions, just as they had (earlier) shaped the androcentrism of Man the Hunter research. In all fairness, however, this early work on "finding" women in the archeological record was both conceptually more sophisticated and also more explicit in recognizing its debt to contemporary socio-political movements than was the androcentric work still being pursued by devotees of the Man the Hunter model.

In gender research, it was not until the mid-1990s that archeologists began to confront difficult issues of ontology, epistemology, and only very belatedly methodology – issues that require an understanding of feminist theory and feminist philosophy of science. The following brief discussion provides a prime example of what is called a "receding horizon" – an intellectual movement wherein initial questions which are seemingly simple and straightforward (such as "what were women doing while the men hunted?") give way to ever more weighty epistemological and philosophical issues that ultimately challenge not only the everyday practice of the discipline but also its most fundamental ontological standpoints. If fulfilled, this trajectory promises to represent the long-term impact of feminism on archeological understandings of gender in the earliest human societies as well as on archeological practice more generally. In archeology, this receding horizon has come about, in large measure, through the slow recognition that there is a vast difference between the cross-cultural fact of two (primary) biological sexes and the social arbitrariness and historical constructedness of multiple genders. Today, there are two parallel research orientations in the archeological study of gender: one continues an explicit focus on gender attribution (see below) and on finding in the archeological record direct evidence of the work and roles of women and men; the second orientation explores less empirical but perhaps more significant cultural processes in which gender is implicated, such as how the material world was employed in constructing, negotiating, and contesting gender roles and beliefs, how particular cultural values and power structures were shaped by gender principles, and about the role of gender (as a supposedly small-scale interpersonal dynamic) in shaping long-term culture change and cultural evolution.

The following discussion touches upon some (but certainly not all) of the major epistemological and methodological issues beginning to appear on this receding horizon, and briefly describes how researchers are starting to grapple with them.

Epistemology

Gender attribution vs. engendered processes

One of the earliest concerns in gender research was, and is still, known as gender attribution. Simply put, gender attribution attempts to attribute artifacts, occupations, work areas and the like to particular genders, typically characterized in terms of two – men or women. Gender attribution is concerned with identifying the empirical traces of who did what at an archeological site or in such-and-such a time period. Today, the attribution debate centers on whether or not particular items of material culture, work spaces or other empirical patterns directly and unequivocally correlate to a particular gender – though how many genders might there have been in the first place is a question such research cannot address adequately. Indeed, it is increasingly clear that for practically any time in the deep past there are few, if any, direct and clear-cut material correlates of particular genders. In later time periods (such as those discussed in other entries in this volume), one might recover spindle whorls or grinding stones and feel fairly confident these were women's tools. But for the earliest human societies, such as those under consideration here, correlations between discrete categories of artifacts, tasks or space and a particular gender are extremely tenuous, especially because it is highly unlikely that there were such clear-cut divisions of labor, tools, and spaces in the deep past.

Gender attribution tries to tell us who did what. What gender attribution cannot explain is *how* and *why* women, men and other genders came, in their time and place, to be ideologically and practically associated with certain objects, occupations and social values. Nor can gender attribution explain the *processes* by which various gendered identities were constructed, maintained and negotiated during material labors. In practice, over the past two decades, gender attribution has more often than not had the effect of (pre)confirming the very premises a research project was designed to investigate. For example, while the assumption is wholly without merit, to this day many archeologists presume that men hunted large game with stone tools and that women rarely did. As a result, where excavations recover stone tools in direct association with the remains of animals, archeologists claim that the association of men, stone tools, and hunting has been confirmed. Or has it? Has such research actually "found" men in these remains, or has circular reasoning simply confirmed the initial premise? Moreover, such a research strategy makes it impossible to ascertain if women – or other genders – were also involved in these empirically recoverable hunting and butchering activities. And even if archeologists feel confident that stone tools and butchered animals do (always) signify men's work and men's work areas, does such an attribution help us understand *how* such an association came about in the first place, or how it came to be so consistently practiced and maintained over huge expanses of time? Can gender attribution tell us anything meaningful about the value the community gave to this work or the status it afforded the people undertaking it? And how can we know, from gender attribution, whether the presumably exclusionary nature of that work was contested – and if so by whom and how?

Archeological data is static and limited to the empirical world of broken stones, bones, trash, disturbed remains of work areas, the differently preserved traces of material behaviors variously distributed across the landscape, and the like. Yet for more

than four decades researchers have recognized that dynamic cultural *processes* are not something that can be dig up. Similarly, whether or not biological sex can be determined empirically does not make it a sufficient proxy for gender, which is a *process* of socio-sexual identity making and of its ongoing negotiation and contestation. Thus archeologists are faced with an epistemological quandary in trying to understand the processual nature of ancient gender dynamics through the study of a poorly preserved but empirical archeological record. It remains unclear and increasingly debated whether or not one can *see* gender in the archeological record, and just how useful gender attribution is to developing models for ancient gender relations and dynamic processes.

Positivism vs. Interpretive/Postmodern Epistemologies

Fallout from the debate regarding gender attribution and the efficacy of searching for the material correlates of particular genders has led in several directions. One critically important and hotly debated issue turns on which system of logic and validation is best suited to gender research. Recognizing that all that archeologists have to work with are the unevenly preserved and distorted material fragments of ancient lifeways, the question is whether or not gender research should use the traditional hypothetico-deductive methods and positivist epistemology championed since the 1960s. Empirically driven and rigidly materialist epistemologies may be useful for assessing functionalist and adaptationist models concerning cross-cultural or universal processes of ecological adaptation and the like (although feminist and postmodern archeologists now challenge even this supposition). But is such an epistemology, which depends fundamentally on law-like associations of material cause and effect, appropriate for assessing models and theories about gender? Increasingly, there is an uncomfortable schism within the discipline, between those who would demand gender research conform to the rules of positivist inquiry, and those who feel that this particular human process requires a more hermeneutic, phenomenological, symbolic and constructivist form of interpretive reasoning. Clearly, this modern/postmodern debate parallels those raging across the social sciences since the early 1960s, though in typical "jet-lag" fashion they only surfaced in archeology in the later 1980s.

While many archeologists feel that the scientific validity of any model of ancient gender configurations is compromised if research does not pose empirically testable hypotheses, others have argued, quite convincingly, that a more interpretive standpoint is the only way to research and understand ancient gender processes on their own terms, rather than reconstituting them to fit a modernist hypothetico-deductive straightjacket. The jury is still out, however.

The fear of relativism and the loss of archeology's privileged status as a science

As the question of gender has come to the fore, and as archeologists have begun to understand that interpretive epistemologies may better suit their task, the specter of relativism has become a heated (and at times quite ugly) source of debate. Directly related to the appeal by many archeologists to legitimize a more interpretive epistemology is the fear, held by a vocal few, that if we embrace interpretation (and forsake

explanation) our research will lose its privileged status as a science. This fear should not be taken lightly. Arising from self-serving proclamations that archeology is the *only* true science of Man's past, since the 1960s this part of anthropology has basked in the privileges and enjoyed much of the status accorded to other (hard) sciences. As briefly mentioned above, however, rather than actually conduct research in an objective and apolitical manner (as claimed), this avowedly positivist and deductive science of Man's past has been shown to be shaped by and responsive to socio-political currents well outside the discipline. All the same, many researchers worry that archeology's privileged status as a science will be placed at risk:

(1) if we acknowledge that for much of the past gender may have been a highly contested and continually negotiated affair;
(2) if we premise gender research on the idea that for most times and places there are precious few unequivocal material correlates of particular genders; and
(3) if we cannot test resulting theories and models for particular sorts of gender configurations against stringently empirical and cross-cultural laws of human behavior.

Among the many serious issues at stake is funding. Very few scientific agencies, public or private, are willing to fund gender research if the applicant readily acknowledges that traditional (positivist) means of validating claims will be difficult, if not impossible. Statistical data regarding the "gendering of archeological practice" – of who gets funded and for what kinds of research – shows all too clearly that the surest path to grants and tenure is research conducted on typically androcentric questions, using traditional (androcentric) methodologies which are, in turn, underwritten by an unyielding positivist epistemology.

There are certain research questions for which archeology is best known and for which it is trusted and looked to for answers, among them: technological evolution; the origins of domestication; the causes and consequences of sedentism; the evolution of the State; the rise and fall of civilizations. These topics widely influence popular culture and afford the discipline significant political clout. For example, unwittingly (perhaps), Man the Hunter was and still is a theory "in the service of the State," because it helps rationalize the patriarchal *status quo* by making contemporary gender-based inequalities appear simultaneously natural and inevitable. But the question of gender, especially when pursued by researchers well versed in feminist theory, is beginning to take its toll on these traditional domains of inquiry, so long thought to be above the fray of popular culture. The likelihood is that at least some ancient gender configurations differed significantly from anything known in the modern world, and that these differences may have had much to do with the evolution of technology, the origins of domestication and sedentism, the evolution of the State, and the rise and fall of civilizations. Such possibilities are causing consternation in various segments of the research community.

The fact is, however, that when it comes to the question of gender (and before that the question of sex), archeological accounts have always been sensitive to public sentiment and wishful thinking, and under the thumb of gender ideologies that either support the *status quo* of State interests, or which are useful to revolutionary agendas. This is readily demonstrable in the case of the Man the Hunter model and its

androcentric underpinnings; but the earliest work of feminist-inspired gender researchers can be similarly criticized for its gynocentrism. On the other hand, feminist philosophers of science have ably demonstrated that empirical data can and do resist politically motivated accounts (and both the Man the Hunter and the Woman the Gatherer models have been soundly critiqued on both empirical and methodological grounds), and further, that gender research need *not* be at the mercy of political winds. In this way, allegations of rampant relativism and the abandonment of science if one studies ancient gender processes are little more than "red herrings." Archeologists interested in gender in the earliest human societies can (and some already do) pursue critical, closely reasoned, and rigorous empirical research without forsaking all that is good in science. And as the horizon continues to recede, a yet more reflexive and "better" (successor) science will be the result (see below).

Analogical reasoning and "retrodicting" the present into the past

When proposing possible parallels between past and present, archeologists must be especially careful not to "retrodict" the present into the past, for example by dressing up modern capitalists in bearskins. The study and modeling of ancient gender relations and practices is on especially touchy ground in this regard. For example, our working definition of gender stems directly from contemporary Western intellectual thought and thus may be problematic, especially with regard to its (over-) emphasis on sexuality and the body, the unquestioned integrity of the individual agent, and the problematic ties we theorize between gender and biology. As well, research on ancient gender roles tends to canvass the globe in search of appropriate-looking analogies that help prove one's point. Unfortunately, this time-honored strategy risks prefiguring the past to look too much like, or to simply set the stage for, the present, thus making modern gender configurations appear natural and inevitable – which they are not. For the deep past, the Middle and Upper Palaeolithic especially, archeologists favor analogies with either modern circumpolar or sub-Saharan foragers. The problem here is that all modern "tribal" societies have been irrevocably colonized by imperialist nation-states for well over 600 years. Thus, whether one looks to the gendered divisions of labor currently practiced by the Kalahari San (Ju'/Hoansi), the Alaskan Inuit or Nunamuit, the Saami of Scandinavia, the Cree or Dene of sub-Arctic Canada, or the Siberian Chukchee and Yukut, gender researchers often fail to admit the extent to which these are highly colonized communities with their own historical trajectories which may make them questionable proxies for AMHs much less Neanderthals.

The true promise of gender research in archeology is in identifying gender configurations *different* from anything known in the historical or modern world, in developing models of socio-political change that take gender seriously, and in promoting wholly new understandings of the past. If gender research continues to be narrowly premised on a modern Western definition of gender and on the uncritical use of analogical reasoning (to establish the material correlates of (ancient) men's and women's work, tools and activity areas), then our understanding of ancient gender systems will never look much different from the present. Worse still, we will continue to have difficulty theorizing how structural changes in gender relations and related social practices came about over extended periods of time, much less how such alternations

might have lead, for example, to the development of institutionalized inequalities and the evolution of the State.

Methodology

From periphery to center: "Add gender and stir?" or Revolutionize the practice of archeology?

The first attempts at conducting serious and sustained research on gender in the earliest human societies were peripheralized as the radical political act of a few angry feminists – as mere "girl talk" irrelevant to the cowboys of science. At the turn of the millennium, however, interest in gender is practically mainstream and it is increasingly clear that one need not be either a feminist or a woman to be interested in the topic. Surprisingly, given its political and contested origins, the "gender bandwagon" is now running neck-and-neck with the traditional "processual bandwagon" (which sees culture as a functional and eminently rational system of ecological and practical adaptation to external stimuli). For even die-hard "rock jocks" to grudgingly admit that gender is an acceptable topic of study is well and good. Indeed, graduate students today can expect to take at least one senior seminar on gender (perhaps their only introduction to the breadth of gender literature outside their specialty), and writing a dissertation on the topic will not necessarily work against them on the job market. On the other hand, what has actually happened is that the question of gender, or more narrowly the question of women (for the two are practically synonymous these days), has become just another variable among many, a mere category of identity added to the pot of traditional research questions, swimming along-side and sometimes intermingling with technology, subsistence, the environment, mobility, exchange, and the like.

However, while research questions and explanatory models are now beginning to grapple with the question of how gender relations and processes were part and parcel of cultural survival and quite possibly cultural evolution over the past 40,000 years (or longer), the analytic methods and methodologies employed in this research have remained impervious to change. Yet philosophers of science (many of them feminists) have shown time after time that one's choice of analytic methods significantly shape the construction of scientific knowledge. Analytic methods affect what counts *as* data as well as how data are to be collected, organized, and studied; they affect how lab work is organized, conducted, and by whom; methods affect how an argument is built, and how interpretations (or explanations) are tested. Thus, studying and modeling ancient gender configurations through a rigorous analysis of the archeological record means that the analytic procedures by which archeologists delineate empirical patterns and infer gender processes from them to a large extent constrain the range of likely answers. Unfortunately, this realization has yet to infiltrate most archeological research on gender, attesting to the fact that few gender researchers are familiar with feminist theory or with the philosophy of science. For the most part, gender researchers remain uncritically faithful to a nomothetic, functional, and partitive methodology developed in the mid-1960s – a methodology specifically chosen to help identify the functional and cross-cultural dimensions of ancient tool use, subsistence strategies, and the like.

For example, archeology has long favored a *clinical discourse* that conceptually and analytically divorces then privileges materialist questions of artifact physics, efficiency, practicality and function over more human-centered questions of artifice, engagement, meaning, value – and hence gender. But analytically prioritizing objects and object relations over gendered subjects and gender relations has led only to a sham of dispassionate reason. It is a sham because, as feminist philosophers have shown decisively, creating epistemological (sanitized) distance between our subjective (gendered) selves and our ancient objects of study is an androcentric exercise in epistemological power, one that is especially problematic in the social sciences. Moreover, archeologists place enormous faith in *quantitative studies* using modern capitalist macroeconomic theory. In terms of gender research, such seemingly objective studies seek to identify the cultural value of work and gender-associated objects, and by extension identify the genders themselves, for example by measuring labor input and product output. As a result, gendered divisions of labor are often explained as having been structured in terms of time-energy expenditures and universal rules of economic efficiency. This approach conveniently leaves on the sideline any of the innumerable social dimensions of gendered labor (such as contestation, negotiation, ideology, and symbolism) which are not easily converted to a formula. Especially in the study of technology, subsistence strategies and mobility patterns, archeologists encourage the formulation of *schematic feedback models* that graph the sequential nature of decision-making as it can be tracked empirically. Unfortunately, such models inevitably exclude the intersubjective and embodied negotiations necessarily involved in such inevitably gendered activities and decisions. In essence, reducing the intersubjective nature of gender and technology to an essentialized study of objects and object relations actually reconfigures the initial question (of gender) into something of an afterthought – just another variable. In sum, this time-honored methodology is poorly suited to study the intersubjective, historically particular, arbitrary, and symbolic constitution of ancient gender relations.

Last, but by no means the end of our analytic troubles, archeologists typically *partition the archeological record* into "heuristic" classes of data then subdivide the work in ways that, by their very nature, preclude a holistic understanding of gendered lifeways: stone tools and lithic debris are farmed out to one group of experts; pottery fragments to another; pollen and charcoal remains to a third; faunal remains to a fourth; iconography to a fifth; skeletal evidence to a sixth, and so on. This partitive analytic strategy thwarts comprehending the whole from the mere sum of its parts because gender roles, relationships, and ideologies materialized, were forged and glorified – but also likely contested – during the course of people's interrelationships with all of these "classes of data" simultaneously. In addition, because gendered personae overlap with other "categories" of identity (such as age, kin, class, occupation, etc.), the traditional focus on norms and averages within particular classes of material culture must be offset by a sustained exploration of *variability, diversity, and plurality* – because people differentially make and use the material world to make and remake themselves. A focus on individual classes of data and an over-emphasis on their norms impedes our ability to understand how the processes of gender played out at various times and places. In sum, unlike many other cultural "variables," gender is not a thing separable from the intersubjective and material dynamics that help constitute it. Thus the study of gender in prehistory needs to concentrate on studying

variability within wholes, and not heuristic segments to be put back together at some later time.

At yet another level of research, the specific questions archeologists often pose about the past are strongly influenced by contemporary gender interests and beliefs. For the time period under discussion here, for example, stone-tool making, hunting, and killing are favored topics, underwritten by the implicit belief that these were simultaneously men's activities and also keys to human survival and evolutionary adaptation. It is also often claimed that the remains of women's work would not have preserved as well and are thus not worth seeking out, for they would have been simple digging sticks and baby slings made of "soft" materials. But the argument goes dangerously further, by suggesting that this line of research is also not worthwhile for such activities could not have been key to survival and adaptation in the harsh Ice Age – and it is certainly not well funded. This is but one rather blatant example of how the framing of research questions, and how we go about answering them, are sensitive to unstated biases and assumptions that bring us back, irrevocably, to the present.

These are just a few issues of methodology that need to be radically overhauled in order to make the study of gender a question of dynamic processes and intersubjectivity rather than a search for material correlates. There are still headier issues of everyday practice that need to be addressed as well. Most crucial is the skewed demographic, specifically gendered (but also racial), make-up of the discipline. Archeology is without doubt the most "macho" of the social sciences and far sexier than geology or paleontology. Fieldwork and the sweaty labor of excavation has always been privileged over the "domestic" labors of cleaning, sorting, and patiently studying artifacts in the lab. A host of recent studies have empirically demonstrated, quite sadly, that the gendered division of labor within archeology – men fighting it out the public domain of field excavations, women "at home" in the lab – mirrors the "Leave it to Beaver" and "Father Knows Best" ideology underwriting gender relations since the end of World War II.

Today, women and men who want to become archeologists enter graduate school in equal numbers. But while in the last two decades women have earned 50 percent of the Ph.D.s, they still lag far behind men in landing tenure-track academic positions, in salary, in work loads, in the time it takes to be awarded tenure or a full professorship, and so forth. The numbers clearly show that women archeologists (with Ph.D.s) are far more likely to "end up" in museum-related jobs (and not by choice), which earn them far less stature, salary, access to research opportunities and grants, and also preclude their having much impact on the next generation of students. As well, in this strikingly "chilly climate" a significant disparity still obtains between the numbers and monetary amount of prestigious grants awarded to men and male graduate students for field work, and what women and female graduate students are awarded primarily for lab studies. Importantly, it is not mere coincidence that these very same divisions of labor and unequal measures of worth reappear, albeit dressed up in bear skins, in the divisions of labor suggested for so much of the human past (see above).

In sum, then, the science of Man's past is (still) a profoundly androcentric endeavor, even when pursued by women and when gender is the explicit subject of investigation. First, gender is thrown into an analytic pot with dozens of other

variables, rather than recognized as a human construct far more basic and structuring than technology, subsistence or mobility. Second, research questions, even where they concern gender, are typically framed in terms of androcentric properties and analytic categories. Third, standards of evidence and validation are "stacked" in favor of anti-humanist epistemologies, thereby straightjacketing and/or demeaning subject-oriented forms of knowledge about the past. And finally, how the discipline divides up its own labors and rewards its workers suggests an incestuous relationship between the present and the study of the past, and between modern gender systems and our models and theories about gender in the earliest human societies.

Conclusions

Several summary points help integrate the two sections of this essay, the first concerning what we know of gender configurations in the earliest human societies, and the second discussing how such knowledge is constructed.

- It may well be that without the capacity and everyday practice of fully modern cognitive and symbolic thought and action, Neanderthals did not "have" gender in the modern sense of the word. But it is also clear that models accounting for ancient gender from the Upper Palaeolithic forward must be context-specific rather than generalized for vast expanses of time and space.
- If gender processes are not taken seriously, and if gender remains narrowly defined as a relatively fixed "category" of socio-sexual identity, then accounts of wholesale cultural transformation will remain impoverished.
- Archeologists cannot dig up gender systems nor can they see engendered processes in the archeological record – the endeavor is not so simple or empirical. This is because in the past as well as in the present biological sex was and is a very poor proxy for gender.
- Work areas and the making and use of material objects may be central to materializing and negotiating gendered lifeways, but they (too) make poor proxies *for* such processes. As a result, gender attribution is insufficient for understanding the negotiated and dynamic processes underwriting ancient gender systems.
- No particular classes of archeological data are "better" than others for studying gender in the deep past. For example, stone tools and bone needles are no better than pollen spores, faunal remains, pottery sherds and/or building foundations, since to presume otherwise is to place too much faith in unsubstantiated material correlates of gender.
- The use of analogical reasoning in describing ancient gender configurations is a risky business, and researchers must be especially careful not to project the present into the past.
- Traditional positivist epistemologies thwart an adequate understanding of the dynamics underlying ancient gender processes and how they changed over time. Thus archeologists need to develop more interpretive and holistic frameworks for assessing models and theories about gender in the deep past.
- While there is no one "best" methodology for studying prehistoric remains with gender questions in mind, certain traditional analytic approaches clearly obstruct such inquiry.

- Last, but perhaps most important of all, it is essential to understand how the everyday practice of archeology, with its macho mystique and skewed gendered division of labor and reward system, directly and significantly impacts how archeologists study and make sense of the past.

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Classical and Post-Classical Societies (2000 BCE–1400 CE)

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Chapter Twelve

Women in the Middle East, 8000 BCE to 1700 CE

Guity Nashat

Until recently, a social paradigm fitted Middle Eastern women into roles concerned with motherhood and work at home and viewed men as suited to activities in the public sphere. Most Muslims and Westerners attribute this division of gender roles to the teachings of Islam. But the origins of these practices are deeply rooted in the pre-Islamic experiences of the Middle Eastern peoples. Understanding the emergence and persistence of practices that place women in the private sphere and seemingly give control over their lives to fathers, husbands, and brothers is not an easy task, as the very separateness of women's lives and their exclusion from the formal accounts leave a gap in what we typically view as history.

What we now call the Middle East is one of the oldest centers of settled life. The domestication of animals and cultivated agriculture began there around ten to twelve thousand years ago, and a dependable food supply made the growth of human population possible. Our view of the evolution of the role of women in the pre-literate Middle East must rely on sparse and fragmented archeological data from a few scattered sites. But archaeology can at best offer a bare outline of how these early humans lived. Fortunately, images of women pervade prehistoric legends, myths, epic poems, folklore, and artifacts; and from the period after the invention of writing, data such as law codes, legal contracts, religious writings, philosophical tracts, and economic records yield important facts about women. However, we must recognize that much of the available material provides information on ruling-class and elite women, and we are still less informed about women who lived in rural areas or as pastoralists.

Settled agricultural life had become the predominant mode of existence in the Middle East by 6000 BCE. Villages emerged in the next stage. These developments stimulated the exchange of goods and the rise of trade. These material conditions were prerequisite to the emergence of civilization, which appeared in the form of cities and writing sometime between 3500 and 3000 BCE in Sumer, a small area in southern Mesopotamia. Changes in social relations accompanied new material advances. As agricultural efficiency improved, economic conditions changed, and many people wanted to ensure that their wealth was transferred to their offspring.

One sure way of doing this was to control a woman's sexuality. At the same time, as agriculture became more and more a man's responsibility, women could have children at shorter intervals and would therefore have been even further removed from participating in activities outside the home.

Women in Pre-Islamic Societies

Early communities were small, and all the people knew each other. The level of wealth that could be developed in pastoralist or rural settings was limited, so we can assume that status tended to be egalitarian. But the development of urban life, and institutions that supported its survival, radically changed social circumstances. First, towns had larger populations, and people were no longer living within a tightly knit social group. As urban life expanded and new crafts and professions emerged, the division of labor between the genders grew deeper, and creation of wealth depended on the number of people communities produced. The need for greater population in turn made the contribution of women as mothers more important.

The quality of life in the urban setting did improve for women in as much as they no longer had to put in long, hard hours of labor to prepare the daily necessities. However, the change also put more limits on what they should and should not do. Moving away from "outdoor" work placed them under more efficient observation and control. It also increased the societal expectation that they would produce more children. The importance of children became embedded in every facet of society. Religion, an institution that accompanied the rise in urbanization in Sumer, further stressed the importance of children and obedience of wives to their husbands. After all, with greater wealth came a greater responsibility to protect this wealth.

The erosion of the power of women in the Sumerian period was slow and almost imperceptible and affected women differently. Elite women controlled vast wealth and occupied high positions in temples. Under them were women who served as temple servants or even prostitutes; others were scribes and merchants. Women at the bottom of the social scale were active in the urban labor force. For example, they were generally employed as tavern-keepers and in the manufacture of textiles. But women began to be pushed slowly out of active participation in society and became more confined to tasks that could be done at home.

Seclusion of women accompanied this trend, but it is difficult to determine when it began. It may have followed the emergence of urban life in Sumer, which left evidence of other kinds of restrictions. Toward the end of the Sumerian period, which lasted over one thousand years, legal works imposed penalties on men who deflowered virgins, and parents tried to insure the virginity of their daughters so that they could secure wealthier husbands. In the next two millennia the Babylonians and Assyrians brought larger entities under their rule, but the institutions and values the Sumerians had developed endured and influenced the states and eventually empires that emerged in the region.

Why did the Sumerians have such a lasting impact? The reason for the survival of their practices and institutions was that they had evolved in response to the needs of urban life. And despite the growing importance of trade within and outside the region, urban life was based on wealth that ultimately derived from the rural population and agriculture. The symbiosis between the town and hinterland remained the

most important factor in the survival of institutions that began in Sumer, and it exists in some areas with similar socioeconomic conditions to this day.

Another important question that should be addressed is how society managed to convince women to accept their treatment. Many scholars have come up with different explanations since Friedrich Engels examined this question systematically. We have moved beyond his simple notion of a time when men and women lived in egalitarian and harmonious societies before the rise of patriarchy. But most scholars to this day presume some type of direct or indirect coercion to explain why women were subordinated to men. There is another alternative, however, which does not suggest that women were helpless and docile victims who had no options but obedience to men. In order to understand the process, I rely on rational choice, which suggests that each woman made decisions that satisfied her needs at the time. Following this line of reasoning, we can assume that subordination of women occurred because in each generation women gained something in exchange for what they gave up. When child mortality was high and life extremely difficult, they believed that taking care of their children was an important task. They also looked at marriage and childbearing as options that guaranteed them survival in old age. Furthermore, they were happy not to work in the fields under the hot sun of the Middle East or toil in the marketplace. But over time, these decisions by individual women had a cumulative effect on all women.

As the opportunity for most urban women to work outside in an agrarian society was limited, not surprisingly, their home-based activities became more significant. It was not easy for urban women to combine childcare with activities outside the home, whereas in rural areas it was still possible for women to supervise children while doing lighter farm work. Women's procreative role began to assume greater importance, but confinement in the house also meant that they were more dependent on men for their subsistence. Consequently, men could put greater pressure on women and treat them as property. Because men controlled the resources of society, they could devise its moral code.

During the two millennia that followed the demise of Sumer, Mesopotamia emerged as the most formidable power in the region, but the public power of women declined in contrast to the power of men within the new states. Although women of the elite enjoyed great advantages that the wealth of the state put at their disposal, their legal status relative to men declined. For instance, in Assyria, the last of the important states of the region, a woman could not even contradict her husband for fear that he would break her teeth with a burnt brick. Assyrian men could practice polygyny, and the rulers kept their wives and concubines within harem walls. It was also in the Assyrian period that the veil made its appearance in legal works. But the veil and the permission to wear it were signs of distinction, and it was the exclusive right of women who lived in the household of a free man; even his slave had that right. Prostitutes were barred from donning the veil.

With the rise of the Achaemenids (550–330 BCE), one of the numerous Indo-European tribes who entered the region from the north, the Middle East became united into one political and cultural area. Despite a strong sense of being different from the population of the region, within a short time the new ruling dynasty had begun to adopt many of the ways of its urban subjects. The adoption of ways and customs of the urban population by newly arriving pastoralist and semi-pastoralist

groups became one of the recurrent features of the history of the region. The separation along gender lines was one of the practices adopted by these former pastoralists as they settled in urban areas.

During the Achaemenid Empire, which united the region from Anatolia to Egypt, the condition of women continued to be affected by this process of acculturation, and Achaemenid women lost much of the freedom they had enjoyed before the dynasty came to power. Many Greek authors, our main source of information on this empire, refer to the large harems that the Achaemenid kings established. To insure that the royal women were protected from the view of average men, eunuchs were introduced, and when women left the confines of the palace, they had to be veiled lest unfit male eyes see them.

Women in many urban areas that were not under Achaemenid control, such as Athens, where respectable women were secluded, shared the experience of royal women. In all these regions, men tried to develop a system that would insure that respectable women did not associate with male strangers. They believed such behavior could lead a woman to defile her husband's reputation. The moral and ethical teachings of the religions that were emerging at this time reinforced the necessity of chaste behavior for women. These included Judaism, Christianity, and Zoroastrianism, the three religions that dominated in the Middle East before the rise of Islam.

Of the Persian states that ruled the area between the Achaemenid period and the rise of Islam, the Sasanians (208–651 CE) are worth mentioning, since their impact on the treatment of Muslim women was great and is not widely discussed in the literature, which focuses mainly on the biblical antecedents of Islamic teachings.

Although two women were among a succession of twelve rulers who ascended the throne briefly in 628–32, they were merely manipulated by various rival factions within the court in the struggle for power. A closer examination of the existing sources suggests that the legal status of Sasanian women in the seventh century put them at a great disadvantage compared to men. Reproduction assumed even greater importance in this period than before, at least as reflected in the Sasanian law codes, which derived from religious teachings. From the moment of inception, a fetus was considered protected by the law, and those who caused it harm were seriously punished. Mothers who neglected or hurt their children were condemned to everlasting hellfire. Furthermore, many of the purity laws that prevailed in the official state religion, Zoroastrianism, required women to spend much of their time in following these laws rather than exercising their few rights or privileges. Social rules and religious teachings demanded absolute obedience of the woman to her husband. Women who defied these norms, by refusing, for example, to comply with their husbands' sexual demands, were threatened with eternal punishment in the next world.

A man was allowed to marry one principal and several secondary wives, but a woman could marry only one husband. If she was a secondary wife, neither she nor the children were entitled to an inheritance. A divorced woman could not remarry while her former husband lived.

The religious code that regulated sexuality described graphically the punishments that awaited errant women in hell, but men's punishment was not emphasized. Premodern society took religion seriously and undoubtedly many women internalized these views about the standards of propriety. But the mere fact that they were described in horrific detail may also indicate that some women ignored them. The

fact that customs characteristic of agrarian societies with urban centers influenced the conquering peoples is demonstrated by the Byzantine Empire, which controlled the eastern Mediterranean and Egypt. In it the condition of women was similar to that of women in the Sasanian-controlled areas.

Women under Islam

The condition of women in the Middle East was affected by a development that occurred in a peripheral area of these two empires. This was the rise of Islam. In 610 the last great monotheistic religion emerged in the Arabian peninsula. By the time its founder, Muhammad ibn Abdullah died in 632, the entire peninsula had submitted to his teachings. Within the next three decades, the heartland of the Middle East fell under the rule of his followers, the Arabian Muslims.

Even though the religion arose in an urban environment, the town of Mecca, which was the most important mercantile center in Arabia, it retained many of the values and practices that had been shaped by the nomadic lifestyle of the Arabians. Like the women of other pastoralist groups who had seized power earlier in the region, women in nomadic Arabia played a more active role in the life of the community. When men were away on raids or for trade, the two most important activities of the Bedouins, women took care of the old and the children. Because each tribe ascribed its origin to a common ancestor, veiling and seclusion were not practiced. In some Arabian communities women could choose their husbands and divorce without being socially ostracized. Occasionally, women went along on raids and rendered useful services, such as caring for the wounded, keeping water and provisions, or putting a wounded enemy to death. In the art of poetry, enormously popular with Arabians, some women attained a high degree of excellence and men took their opinions and criticism seriously. Even in the urban centers that did exist – Mecca, Ta'if, and Yathrib (later named Medina in honor of the Prophet) – women participated in public activities unknown to women in the more urbanized Sasanian and Byzantine empires.

However, women in pre-Islamic Arabia lacked a secure position in what was a patriarchal society. A tribe required fewer women than men to protect it and bring in resources from raids or trade with other groups; consequently, surplus infant girls would be left to die. To compensate for the shortage of women, some Arabian tribes practiced polyandry. However, in pre-Islamic Mecca, where wealth from trade was increasing, a woman from a respectable family married only one man, whereas her husband could marry as many wives as he wished. When a woman married, her father or male guardian received the full brideprice. Women who were divorced received no compensation, and they did not inherit from the husband. Some women did well if they married rich and generous husbands, but most women were left at the mercy of the male members of their family and tribes on their husband death.

To assess the impact of the Qur'an, which Muslims view to be the direct word of God, we must examine Muhammad's perception of his role. He believed he was sent to curtail existing abuses rather than overhaul the system. This is suggested by many statements of the Qur'an, such as, "Thou art a warner only, and for every community a Guide" (XIII, 7). Nevertheless, the Qur'anic provisions improved the position of women. By delineating women's economic, religious, and civil rights, they made

it harder for a male believer to violate those rights. The Qur'an stipulates that women have legal rights to inherit from parents, spouse, children, and siblings, and the right to own and dispose of their own property without the supervision of a husband, father, or brother. It holds the husband responsible for the wife's support. The Qur'an does not abolish polygamy, but it limits the number of wives to four, and it recommends that a man should marry only one wife if he cannot treat all his wives fairly (IV, 2–3). In addition, the stipulation of treating the wives equally makes it difficult for a pious man to have more than one wife. While a woman's right to divorce is very limited, a man has an unlimited right to divorce his wife or wives at any time, and the process seems easy: he repeats the divorce formula three separate times or all at once. But if he repeats the formula a third time, the divorce becomes irrevocable, and he cannot marry the same woman again unless she observes the *iddah*, a period of three months and ten days to establish that she is not pregnant, then she marries another man, who divorces her irrevocably, and she observes another iddah. Finally, the original husband then can marry the former wife again (II, 228). Even if the wife is found to be pregnant during her iddah, the first husband cannot marry her if he has divorced her irrevocably. However, he must support her during her pregnancy and pay her child support afterward. A husband is forbidden to take back gifts he has given to her, and he is required to return any dowry she brought to his house and her brideprice (IV, 20).

The Qur'anic law of inheritance provides women with a share of their parents', husband's, siblings', and children's estates. It stipulates, "a male child shall have the equivalent of two female children" (IV, 11). The same proportion applies to a widow's share of her husband's estate, which is one-eighth compared to his one-fourth share of her estate, if there are children. In the absence of children, she gets one-fourth and he one-half of the estate, respectively (IV, 13). In pre-Islamic Arabia some women, like Khadijah, the Prophet's first wife, were wealthy, but the source of their wealth is obscure (Watt, 1953: 376). As far as is known, women were financially dependent on their husbands' or fathers' favor. The Qur'anic provisions became an important asset to women in the later periods, when many of their other rights were circumvented.

The positive Qur'anic attitude toward women was reinforced by Muhammad's experience as the father of several girls, which made him aware of the insecurity of women's position in Arabian society. For example, he required that a woman should consent to marry a man and that the *mahr* or brideprice be given to her instead of to her father or male guardian. Muhammad forbade the exchange of two females by their male relatives instead of giving each woman her brideprice, a common pre-Islamic Arabian practice. A married woman has full control over her own property, and her husband cannot utilize her assets without her permission (Abbott, 1942).

During the first few decades, for both men and women, accepting Islam involved abandoning certain practices (such as adultery and female infanticide), accepting Allah as the sole Creator and Muhammad as his messenger, and showing gratitude to God. Becoming Muslim did not require radical changes in how most women lived, and it may have been more attractive to elite Meccan women. In addition to the emphasis that the Qur'an puts on morality, it also contains some legal injunctions. These revelations were by-products of the day-to-day needs of this community and were revealed in connection with specific situations that Muhammad or the

community was facing. For example, after Muhammad emigrated to Medina in 622, some of his poorer followers began to marry women who engaged in sex for money (Rahman, 1983). A revelation discouraged such marriages. Another example is the Qur'anic sanction of polygamy. It was revealed in Medina, following the Battle of Uhud in 625, when Muslims suffered many casualties, and was intended to resolve the problem of widows and orphaned children of men killed in battle.

Although the teachings of the Qur'an reflect the social and economic changes that had resulted from the growing wealth of Mecca during Muhammad's time, the main thrust of its teachings is moral. The efforts to strengthen family bonds and improve women's condition can be discerned in provisions concerning marriage, the maintenance of wives, and divorce. For example, men are made responsible for the support of their wives, while wives are not obligated to share their wealth with their husbands. Injunctions to treat wives equally in polygynous marriages or allocating specific shares in bequests to wives and children reflect Qur'anic efforts to strengthen family bonds. Although adultery was beginning to be considered inappropriate for respectable women in Mecca even before Islam, the Qur'an banned adultery, since it leaves paternity in doubt. It ordained that the offenders be given one hundred lashes (XXIV, 2, 3). This was mild compared to what the Shari'ah (religious law) prescribes, which is death by stoning. But concubinage was not banned even though believers were encouraged to lead a chaste life. Finally, the injunctions on divorce gave more security to Muslim women than they had had in pre-Islamic Arabia.

In their religious duties and obligations women are equal with men in the Qur'an. "Believing men," "believing women," and "Muslim men and Muslim women" are phrases used repeatedly. Men and women are reminded that God will judge them only for their piety, regardless of race, wealth, or sex (II, 414). This concern of the Qur'an with individual worth also accounts for the banning of female infanticide, which it equated with idolatry, the highest sin.

Despite treating women and men equally in religious obligations and duties, the Qur'an confirmed Arabian attitudes toward gender roles by proclaiming, "men are a degree higher than women" (II, 228). Nevertheless, the rest of this verse also reveals acceptance of Arabian sexual mores by telling a husband that one way to punish a wife is to avoid sleeping with her. Even the other two punishments, admonishing her or beating her, were mild compared to what awaited recalcitrant women outside of Arabia.

During Muhammad's lifetime, women participated in communal religious activities. Women attended the mosque for prayer and went on pilgrimage. However, we have evidence of only one woman, Umm Waraqah, whom the Prophet appointed as a leader of prayer in a group that also included a man. It is possible that as women became more confined to their houses in later Islamic society, their religious role was increasingly omitted from the sources (Abbott, 1942).

The practice of seclusion was introduced during Muhammad's time in a revelation addressed to his wives (XXXIII, 32). The community seems to have viewed this revelation as similar to the one that banned the remarriage of the Prophet's wives after his death. The circumstances surrounding this revelation confirm its private nature. Since the Prophet lived in a few rooms off the main mosque in Medina, it aimed to protect him and his household from constant interruption by his ardent followers. Contemporary women do not seem to have followed the example of his

wives. We are told by the great essayist al-Jahiz that seclusion was not mandatory for Arabian Muslim women during the first Islamic century (Abbott, 1942; Rahman, 1983; Watt, 1953).

Despite the seclusion of the Prophet's wives, many women in his family achieved great prominence. The most important for his prophetic career was his wife Khadijah, who married him when she was forty years old and he was twenty-five. It was she who assured him when he received the first revelation in 610 CE that he was indeed chosen as messenger by God and she was steadfast in her support when he faced growing hostility from skeptical fellow-Meccans after he made his mission public. Their daughter Fatimah is also universally admired and is the object of veneration, especially by Shi'ites, in whose view she occupies a position comparable to Mary's in Christianity.

The Prophet's youngest wife, A'ishah, is also an important personage in the history of early Islam. She is the one of the major sources of *hadith* (statements about sayings and actions), which along with the Qur'an are considered the two most important sources of the Shari'ah. Her involvement in the first civil war that occurred after the murder of the Caliph Uthman in 656 indicates that women were still active in public life at this time, but it also may have contributed to the later view that women's interference can lead to disaster, and that, therefore, women should not meddle in public affairs. The Prophet's granddaughter, Zaynab, became famous for her courage. In 680, during a war of succession in which eighteen of Muhammad's descendants, including Zaynab's own son, were killed, she saved her brother's only surviving son by shielding him from attackers.

The reason I have dwelt on the teachings of the Qur'an and some of the women in the Prophet's circle is to demonstrate that the seclusion of women and the restrictions that were placed on their public role emerged after the exposure of Arabian Muslims to the practices and values of the people of the older agrarian regions of the Middle East. This development occurred gradually after Muhammad's death in 632. Within a few decades, in a succession of swift campaigns, his followers defeated the Sasanian Empire and took the eastern Mediterranean and Egypt from the Byzantine Empire. During the Umayyad Caliphate (661–750), the Muslim state continued to expand into North Africa, Spain, and Central Asia. The new Arabian rulers wisely decided to leave the existing Byzantine and Persian officials in charge of running the empire, since they knew little about how to govern agrarian economies. Once the Islamic state was firmly established, Mu'awiyah (661–80) moved its capital from Medina to Damascus, a city steeped in Byzantine and Christian traditions. Damascus became the earliest channel for transmission of the habits and tastes of the conquered empires to the new rulers (Lewis, 1966: 65–80).

The exposure to the older cultures produced profound changes in Arabian culture, many of which had serious implications for Arabian Muslim women. The changes occurred slowly, and their impact was not felt until a century later, in 750, when the Abbasids came to power.

The long list of women on the registry of the Muslim treasury, which divided the enormous tax revenue from all over the empire among the Arabian conquerors, shows that women were also beneficiaries of the enormous wealth that fell into Arabian Muslim hands during the first century of the Islamic era. Women retained some of the active social roles to which they were accustomed before Islam. In addition, their

financial interests were protected by the Qur'anic regulations, which allowed them to enjoy their wealth without interference from their husbands or male members of their family. Although the wife of Mu'awiyah looked back nostalgically at her life in the desert, other Arabian women followed the footsteps of their men and adopted the lifestyle of the conquered population. The transformation of the life of the elite woman is confirmed by A'ishah, who remarked that during the Prophet's time she and other members of his household slept on straw-mats. She was astonished in old age by younger women's complaints about sable-covered beds. Gradually, however, as the Arabian Muslims began to live like the aristocracy of the conquered territories, women's freedom in public life became more restrained.

The first Umayyad ruler to attempt to seclude women was Walid (705–15). He showed a preference not only for the culture of his non-Arabian subjects but also for their women. Only three of his nineteen children were born of marriage to Umm al-Banin, his cousin; the rest were sons of his non-Arabian wives and concubines. His son from an enslaved Persian princess even ascended the throne as Yazid III, breaking the tradition of purely Arabian caliphs. During the Abbasid caliphate (750–1258), it was more the exception than the rule for the caliph's mother to be a freeborn Arabian.

A factor that may have encouraged the seclusion of women and helped spread the veil was the practice of the early Arab conquerors of treating conquered peoples as war booty. It is likely that many families of conquered peoples kept wives and young girls at home or veiled in public to keep them from being taken by the Arabians. But the exposure of Arabian Muslims to the lifestyle of their subjects, whose culture they had admired even before the conquest, was initially the reason for the spread of seclusion among the Arabian Muslim population. Even more important was the gradual conversion to the new religion of the conquered population, which brought many of its old customs unchanged to Islam. By the end of the second century of the Islamic period, seclusion and the veil had become standard practice among respectable women in urban centers, including the original Arabian Muslim women.

Given that neither the Qur'an nor the details of the life of the Prophet mandated many of the later restrictions that were imposed on Muslim women, the adoption of a lifestyle that excluded women from the public sphere may seem puzzling. Several factors may provide partial answers. The increasing conversion of non-Arabians to Islam, and the small number of Arabian Muslims compared to the converts, were important reasons. In addition, even though as a ruling class the Arabians considered themselves racially superior to their subjects, they admired many aspects of the cultures of the conquered territories. However, the most important reason was the fact the Arabian conquerors had settled in regions that had urban/agrarian cultures, which had originated in Sumer. The urban institutions that had evolved over the millennia were more suitable for urban dwellers than the Arabian lifestyle, which was more compatible with desert conditions. Not surprisingly, the rulers chose the ways of the ruled instead of retaining their pastoralist ways.

The first two centuries were also a period in which Islamic law, the Shari'ah, was being articulated. Although Muslims used the Qur'an as the primary basis for practices they were developing, they interpreted the Qur'anic passages in a way that suited the temperament of a population that was urban in its worldview. They supplemented many of the interpretations with *hadith* that purportedly related the Prophet's sayings

and actions or those of his major companions. In this way, they interpolated behavior that limited and even discouraged women's public role with attitudes and behavior that encouraged their seclusion. These theological developments readily became a part of normative teachings within Islam because they occurred in the early centuries of the Muslim era, when the law was being vigorously developed. By the beginning of the tenth century, Muslim jurists reached an unofficial consensus that the whole body of religious law, like the principles from which it emanated, was immutable. Thus, the treatment of women and the attitudes governing women's activities and role in society were also held to have been ordained by religious law.

The fact that many of the interpreters of the Qur'an and collectors of *hadith* were themselves from the conquered territories or were highly influenced by the ways of the conquered people was also significant. Although we need much more research to ascertain the influence of the older cultures on the emerging Shari'ah in the first two centuries, the differences between the school of Shari'ah, which emerged in Medina, and the Iraqi school is instructive. Whereas the Medinese Maliki school shows a much greater proclivity for women's public life and activity reminiscent of the pre-Islamic lifestyle, the Iraqi Hanafi school tends to be more suspicious of women and their judgment; it is closer to the attitude of the Sasanian society and clergy.

But despite the deep impact of the agrarian worldview on many of the theologians who developed the Shari'ah, they could not totally ignore the direct injunctions of the Qur'an on women, so in some cases they modified it. This led to a blend of laws. For example, the Qur'anic punishment for adultery – one hundred stripes – was changed to stoning of the married man or woman to death. But women's inheritance and property rights within marriage remained intact. Another important Qur'anic provision was recognition of women's sexuality and their right to sexual enjoyment, which remained and gave rise to a whole body of theological, literary, and even erotic literature that addressed women's sexuality beyond the need for procreation. The clash of the two cultural perceptions of women can be seen in the writings of the great theologian Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (d. 1111). In one of his major theological discourses he argues for complete seclusion of women to keep society from harm, since the meeting of a male stranger and a woman could lead to *fitnah*, disaster. In another work, he advises the husband to be considerate of his wife's sexual needs and not to practice *coitus interruptus* as a method of contraception. He also urges the husband not to wish for too many children, since frequent pregnancy can affect youth and beauty and lead to poverty. A later theologian, Ibn al-Hajj, who criticized women of Cairo for not observing laws of modesty adequately in the marketplace, nevertheless advised husbands to sleep with their wives in the nude in order to give the wives greater pleasure (Lutfi, 1983–4: 107). The recognition of pleasure as one of the important aims of women's sexuality led to legal sanctioning of contraceptive devices. Finally, some schools allowed a woman to appeal to the court for divorce on the basis of the husband's impotence (Bowen, 1981; Musallam, 1983).

The religious unity of the Middle East and the relative peace that the area enjoyed under the Abbasids resulted in the growth of existing towns, the rise of new ones, the expansion of crafts, increases in agricultural productivity, and the growth of trade within and outside the region from the Indus Valley to the borders of Spain. The growing prosperity of the area promoted intellectual, artistic, and scientific activity.

But while the spread of urban life brought many comforts to women, it also led to the confinement of many more women within the house. The fact that society was wealthy meant that even the average family could own one or two slaves, which relieved married Muslim woman from having to go to the market. The great wealth of society in the Abbasid period allowed the wealthy to live in comfort in their large establishments and made the harem, which only the ruler and the top aristocracy had previously been able to afford, accessible to a much larger sector of the wealthy throughout Islamdom.

The triumph of norms that made seclusion and the veil the hallmarks of women's life in Islam offset the opportunities the religion provided to women. For centuries to come these requirements led to complete separation of the worlds of men and women in Islamic society. Therefore, while there were no laws against women engaging in many activities so long as they observed the rules of propriety, the veil and seclusion impeded most women from seriously pursuing a career. But there were many exceptions, especially in education, which was an essential requirement for the practice of Islam because being a pious man or woman required the study of the Qur'an and other theological sources. Therefore, many women of ability were able to take up religious studies, and some specialized in a particular field of study in theology, Qur'anic exegesis, or mysticism. Of the 1,400 eminent individuals mentioned by Ibn Khalikan (d. 1282) in his biographical dictionary, eighty are women. Some of these women received *ijazas* (diplomas) in the study of *hadith*, which gave them permission to teach, and they attracted students and disciples from throughout Islamdom. To comply with the rules of propriety, they taught their male students from behind a screen (Smith, 1928: 153). A few women were so renowned that their students boasted about studying with them. A fourteenth-century scholar mentioned the names of nineteen women from a total of 172 scholars with whom he had studied *hadith*. Perhaps the proliferation of women, such as the Prophet's female relatives, as early transmitters drew women to this field.

The Qur'anic provisions regarding inheritance and those governing marriage and divorce provided enterprising women with some measure of control over their destiny. Inheritance was the most important source of wealth for women, and medieval *waqf* (religious endowment) documents and judicial records indicate that women of the ruling and upper classes controlled large estates and passed their possessions to their heirs and not infrequently to their slaves (Sourdel-Thomine and Sourdel, 1973). Some women actually engaged in entrepreneurial activity, and the most popular of these was dealing in real estate. Occasionally, we learn of women who invested their capital in regional and international trade or joint ventures. (Goitein, 1967: I, 127). Although commercial activity was not high on the list of women entrepreneurs, *The Arabian Nights*, which is a rich source of information about how women lived, recounts the adventures of fictional women who engage in international trade and manage to do extremely well.

These women, however, were the exception in medieval Islamic society. The effort to seclude women and to restrict them to household and child-rearing activities made it harder for urban women to utilize fully the economic rights spelled out for them in the Qur'an, even though these became embedded in Islamic law. The older urban attitudes presented marriage as the ideal state for a woman, an attitude that very likely stemmed from fear of female sexuality. The single woman was regarded as a threat

to the established order. Therefore, social mores encouraged marriage for girls when they reached puberty at the age of nine. Although not many girls were married at that age, making marriage an ideal institution set women's sights on marriage and motherhood. Furthermore, society developed positive incentives that rewarded women for marrying and raising children. Marriage represented a female rite of passage: an unmarried woman was under the authority of her father or a close male relative, but after marriage she came into her own. Although she was not equal to her husband, the rights and obligations of a married couple were more clearly drawn. The arrival of children – especially sons – further enhanced a woman's status. Even in the absence of sons, motherhood was insurance for old age. If a woman became a widow, she often acquired additional prestige and power by becoming the guardian of her husband's estate while her children were minors (Dengler, 1978: 231–2). This was even more important to women in poorer households, where a wife would usually be left without a source of income. Such a widow could find some charitable endowment to provide for her and the children (Lutfi, 1983–4). These factors made marriage the standard path for most women in the Middle East.

Marriage encouraged women to concern themselves with household activities, but other social pressures discouraged them from pursuit of work outside the home. The impropriety of dealing with male strangers made it hard for women to appear in court even though no provision in the Shari'ah barred women from participating in court proceedings. The majority of women had to cope with such problems through male agents, usually family members. Court records indicate that often women were forced to turn over the management of their wealth to their male relatives. This situation was fraught with danger, and it often led to the de facto loss of power by women and occasional loss of their assets to male relatives. (Lutfi, 1983–4).

For women the most important source of wealth was inheritance. Often the reluctance of the kin group to share its wealth and capital with those outside the familial group made it hard for women to do as they pleased with their inheritance. Families resorted to different methods to get around the Qur'anic injunction on inheritance. The effort of the paternal family to control the woman's share of the estate or buy it at a fraction of its real value was one method of dealing with this disruption of the traditional system. Another solution was cousin marriage, which was common in Islamic society. Occasionally a brave woman might appeal to the courts, but most women went along with the system.

Social norms further undermined the desire of those who may have seriously contemplated developing interests outside of caring for their children and families. Theologians and philosophers warned men against marrying a woman who was engaged in trade. The philosopher Nasir al-Din Tusi (d. 1274) argued that the wife's commercial activity could pose a danger to a husband's wealth, since Islamic law made him responsible for supporting her. This responsibility would include covering her financial losses, but he would not be entitled to any part of her profit. Tusi also discouraged men from marrying wealthy wives because, "when women own property it invites their domination and authority, and a tendency to use others and to assume superiority" (Tusi, 1964: 162, 166).

Barred from economic activity yet freed of household work by servants and slaves, wealthy women became major consumers of the luxury products for which medieval Islamic society was renowned. Some used their wealth to become patrons of religious

foundations, mosques, *madrasahs* (religious schools), and orphanages. A few even became enthusiastic builders: many of Cairo's magnificent medieval buildings are attributed to the interest of the women of the Fatimid dynasty, who ruled Egypt from 969 until 1171.

Lower-class women had greater freedom of movement, as attested by the concern of Ibn al-Hajj about the unorthodox ways of Cairo women. These women also worked as peddlers, midwives, undertakers, bath attendants, and domestic servants (Lutfi, 1983–4). Nevertheless, prevailing attitudes toward working outside the home influenced even the poorer urban women. Although our information is still elementary on this important subject, evidence from sixteenth-century Bursa suggests that poorer girls worked as domestic servants in order to provide themselves with trousseaus, as a prelude to marriage (Dengler, 1978). Other poor women worked for their sustenance at a job that could be done at home: spinning, which was commissioned by weaving workshops on a putting-out basis. For example in *The Arabian Nights*, the widowed mother of Aladdin supports herself by spinning. Women did not play an important role in the mass production of textiles, as in the large workshops in Damiatta and Tinnis in Egypt and in Iranian and Syrian cities, because men also worked in these shops (Mazaheri, 1951).

Rural women, however, played a more active role outside the home than did urban women. Agriculture and the maintenance of irrigation networks were primarily men's work, but women made important contributions to economic life outside the home in addition to their traditional role within the household. Men and draft animals prepared the ground for cultivation, since this activity required the use of the plow and was physically demanding. But women took part in planting seeds and in the harvest. They grew vegetable gardens. In rice-growing areas, women and children did as much work in fields as men. Women also milked the cows, sheep, goats, or camels. What spare time they had left they spent in spinning wool. Rural women also carried out the sericulture and silk production that were so important to the medieval Islamic economy (Mazaheri, 1951). Some rural women made rugs in their spare time at home for entrepreneurs who supplied the wool and the design to them in villages in many regions in Anatolia, Iran, and Central Asia. This was one of the important cottage industries of the Middle East in Islamic times.

A question that cannot be answered with any certainty is the extent of the prevalence of the veil and seclusion of women in rural areas. In the absence of adequate studies, we can offer only tentative suggestions. Medieval Muslim travelers such as Ibn Battuta (d. 1377) rarely encountered unveiled women in the course of their travels, even in rural areas. Most likely, in small and distant villages where the majority of the population was related or well acquainted, these practices were not observed strictly. In the larger villages and those closer to towns, where the likelihood of encountering male strangers was greater, women would have been required to veil themselves in the presence of these outside males. However, lower-class women, especially those who worked, probably did not observe the veil as strictly as those women who could afford to spend more of their time within the house (Lutfi, 1983–4).

While the social rights enjoyed by Muslim women in the first Islamic century were gradually eroded, women, like their male counterparts, did gain in the area of education. Vast numbers of letters and theological and literary writings indicate that women who had an interest in learning could pursue this interest rather freely. In

order not to upset the gender boundaries, women studied informally in the homes of religious scholars or family members but not in the *madrasahs*, the more formal schools attached to mosques, which became the favorite venue for the education of boys beginning in the twelfth century. Ruling-, upper-, and middle-class women and those from scholarly families could receive an education. A fifteenth-century biographical dictionary by al-Sakhawi contained 1,075 entries on women, of whom 411 had received some degree of education. Women were encouraged to study subjects deemed suitable for their spiritual well-being: the Qur'an and Shari'ah, particularly *hadith*. However, women could also study philosophical, literary, economic, or artistic subjects. Women were taught calligraphy, and sometimes they became teachers of this art, which was a very popular art form among Muslims. A well-known teacher of *hadith*, Fatimah bint Ali from Baghdad, was also known as an outstanding calligrapher.

Judging by popular works of literature, we learn that aside from women who pursued religious studies, other women had knowledge of reading, and some wrote excellent prose and poetry. This is confirmed by the women who fill the pages of *The Arabian Nights*, especially the main character, Shahrzad, who saved her life by the elaborate stories she related to the king. But there were also historical figures who were renowned for their literary gifts, the most famous being the Umayyad princess Walladah, whose father ruled only one year, 1025 CE (Jayyusi, 1994, vol. 2). Some women devoted themselves to theological subjects and attained great fame, and many students from across Islamdom came to hear them lecture on their particular fields. Most of these women came from an *ulama* background, had started their studies at home with a member of their family, and had then proceeded to study with great teachers of the time.

In contrast to orthodox Islam, which held that it was necessary for women to be veiled and secluded in order to keep men from being tempted by them, Sufism, another important form of Islamic piety, allowed women a much greater role in spiritual and religious life. Sufism, the generally accepted term for mysticism in Islam, can be defined as the attempt to attain intimate knowledge of "Divine Reality" through a process of purification in which the seeker tries to rid the soul of all worldly trappings imposed upon it by the "self." Although this personal and spiritual quest remained the aim of a small number, it became one of the most important forces in the culture of Islam by the end of the twelfth century. The favorable attitude of Sufism toward women came from the Prophet's sympathy for women and the veneration of his daughter, Fatimah, by Shi'ite Muslims. The high regard in which Sufis held women is attested by their choice of a woman, Rabi'ah al-Adadawiyyah (d. 801) from Basrah, as the first saint in Islam.

A small number of male Sufis were hostile to women and viewed marriage as an affliction that would lead the person away from God. But the majority accepted women as equal participants in religious life and gave credit for the hardship they suffered to attain knowledge of God. One of the greatest Sufis, Ibn al-Arabî (d. 1240), sang in praise of female beauty in his poetry as a first step to the discovery of "Divine Beauty" (Schimmel, 1975).

Sufism offered women a greater chance than orthodox Muslim tradition to participate actively in religious and social life. Some Sufi orders, such as the Bektashi order in Ottoman Anatolia, accepted women as full members, an action that

sometimes brought the charge of immorality against the order. Women could have their own Sufi organizations where they could congregate and conduct their religious services undisturbed. Some of these organizations also engaged in charitable activities by opening their doors to women who had nowhere to go. Wealthy and educated women were drawn to Sufi organizations, and some became great patrons of charity organizations and hospices for Sufis (Schimmel, 1975).

Women under the Turks, Mongols, and Ottomans

Beginning in the tenth century, a new ethnic group began to enter the Middle East. These were the pastoralist Turks, who were gradually moving westward from Eurasia. Initially, they arrived as mercenaries and converted to Islam, and some attained high positions as generals or even rulers of newly established dynasties, which ruled in the name of the Baghdad caliph. However, as they arrived in larger and larger numbers, even though the rulers acculturated, the rank and file did not: they kept to themselves and retained for a while their pastoralist way of life. Once more we witness a way of life that allows women a greater range of participation in public life than was permissible to urban women, who were hidden behind the walls of their homes. A few Turkish women even became rulers and regents, such as Shajar al-Durr, who ruled in Egypt for a few months, and the Saljukid queen Turkan Khatun, the wife of the great Seljuk ruler Malik Shah (1072–92).

The coming of the Turkic and Mongolian pastoralists did not affect the lifestyle of the settled population, and some customs passed in the other direction. Like earlier pastoralists, these women retained some of the public role they had exercised prior to moving into the region. But even those who served them were not affected by the attitude of their overlords toward women. In his monumental history of the Mongols, the historian and Mongol vizier, Rashid Rashid-Din, apologized to his readers for including a discussion of women. He justified this departure from the norm by explaining that the Mongols accord their women equal treatment. By this time even the mention of a wife's name had become tantamount to dishonoring her. Other terms used in referring to women were *za'ifeh* (the weak female) and *manzil* (home).

Neither the gradual arrival of the Turks beginning in the ninth century nor the massive invasion of the Mongols during the thirteenth century substantially changed the position of women in the central Islamic lands. On the contrary, those Turks and Mongols who settled in towns eventually adopted the lifestyle of the sedentary population. However, among those groups which continued to live as nomads and roam the large plains or the mountainous and hilly regions of the central lands, women continued to be active in communal life even after their conversion to Islam.

Involvement of women in public life can be observed among lesser Turkish dynasties that emerged in the region after the decline of the Ilkanids, a Mongol state which at its height controlled a vast area from Central Asia to Syria. For example, under the Aq Quyunlu (1435–1500) another Turkic tribal dynasty, women enjoyed great prestige, and their assistance was helpful to rival factions. The most important of these was Saray Khatun, the mother of Jahangir and Uzun Hasan, his younger and more famous brother. "Because she had a gift for diplomacy, both her reigning sons used her as a mediator, sometimes in their internecine quarrels, sometimes to plead

their cause with outsiders." She also acted as a mediator in the negotiations of her son Jahangir with the Jahanshah, the ruler of another Turkish dynasty. Another important aspect of the role of women in dynastic struggles was legitimation and the power they conferred on their relatives. For example, the brothers of Saljuqshah Begum were able to exert much influence because of her marriage to Uzun Hasan. Turkic grandees and lesser amirs also tried to form advantageous alliances through marriage. For example, Qilich Arsalan married his daughter to Musa, the son of Pir Ali, in order to secure the allegiance of an important ally (Woods, 1976).

The rise of the Safavids in 1500 ended the smaller principalities that had turned the central Islamic lands into a battleground after the decline of the Ilkhanids. The Safavids reunited much of the territory under one rule, restored political stability, and revived agriculture and commerce, but they were not able to restore fully the pre-Mongol prosperity (Petrushevsky, 1968: 483–538). The Safavids were not pastoralists, but they relied heavily on pastoralist support; consequently, women of the dynasty exercised the type of social power that pastoralist lifestyle accorded them. This tradition of activism may account for the involvement of Safavid women in court politics in the early part of their rule. Royal Safavid women played a decisive role in giving advice to the kings, as wives, daughters, and sisters. One of the notable examples of women who played an active role in the Safavid state was Parikhan Khanum, the daughter of Shah Tahmasb (1526–76), the second ruler of the dynasty. During her father's lifetime, "She was highly esteemed by her royal father and had great influence. Anyone in great difficulty referred to her for advice and took refuge in her. Her great intelligence and knowledge made her a consultant to the king." (Woods, 1976: 86, 89, 92) She played an active role in the struggles for the throne that followed her father's death, and her support for one of her brothers, Isma'il, was instrumental in his coming to power. As her influence over him waned and she discovered he was not mentally stable, she helped some courtiers to assassinate him. Her efforts to maintain her influence over the new ruler, Mohammad Khudabandeh, caused his wife to have Parikhan Khanum assassinated.

The new queen, Mahd-i Ulya, was a woman of great ability. She was made regent because of her husband's blindness and her son's minority. During the two years of her regency, her seal appeared on government decrees, and the government functioned smoothly. However, despite her great effectiveness, she was unable to heal the rift that had occurred in the Safavid Empire after Tahmasb's death; she was drawn into the struggle between various powerful tribal factions and was eventually assassinated. But her courage and strength are revealed in her response to the message from the victors when her side had lost in the contest for power. They demanded that she either hand over power to them or be killed. To save her life, her husband expressed willingness to abdicate. But she opposed such a step; instead, she declared, "As long as I live I will not change my ways and will not digress from what I pursued. If the Kizilbash [her opponents] out of impudence and lack of respect for the king, commit this crime against the wife of their sovereign and kill me, then I will defer judgment to the Almighty God. I am the mother of four young princes, and I will defer the revenge for my blood to them. (Munshi, 1955: pp. 135, 226–27, 250). When her son Abbas (1588–1629) ascended the throne, he did punish her murderers. But she was the last female member of the Safavid dynasty to play an active role in politics. Although women played an important role as benefactors of charitable

organizations and mosques, the sources do not mention them, as the Safavids also acculturated and their women withdrew behind harem walls.

The increased presence of the pastoralists was also one of the reasons for the pressure of the newly converted Turkish tribes on the Byzantine borders. Eventually this resulted in the emergence of the Ottoman state in 1300, which by 1453 had conquered Constantinople, renamed Istanbul. Despite the Ottomans' great military successes, and their administrative skills, their state was a traditional Middle Eastern empire. It lacked the growing technical skills and expanding economic base of rapidly industrializing Western Europe. Therefore, the Ottomans were not able to stop European advances when the balance of power shifted against non-industrialized states at the end of the seventeenth century.

Initially, the Ottomans controlled one of the smallest principalities in Anatolia. One of the early causes of Ottoman success was their shrewd marriage policies, which were set in motion by Orhan, the second Ottoman leader. Another example was the marriages of Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror (1451–81). Before ascending the throne, he married Sitt Hatun, the daughter of an important Turkish chieftain, to establish superiority over many of his Turkish rivals and to insure that his eastern flank would be secure while he was preparing to attack Constantinople.

When the dynasty was still close to its tribal origin, Ottoman women played a more open and active role within their territory. This is confirmed by the account of Ibn Battuta, who was entertained by one of Orhan's wives as he passed through their territory. But as they emerged as the paramount Muslim power after the conquest of Constantinople, they made an effort to win the allegiance of Muslim *ulama* by adopting the rules and values of classical Islam. One of the manifestations of this development was the seclusion of women. By the reign of Suleyman the Magnificent (1524–66), Ottoman women had withdrawn form public life (Davis, 1986: xiv; Ibn Battuta, 1977: 454).

To control the areas they conquered, the Ottomans kept detailed records of the newly conquered and older territories. These records, which are estimated to be in the millions, constitute one of the richest sources of information on the social and economic history of areas under their control, including information on women. Although these records have not been used sufficiently for the study of Middle Eastern Muslim women, the few studies that have made use of them show their great value. They reveal that despite the seclusion and the veil, which limited women's ability to become active outside the household, those who were determined were able to break the conventional mold and take advantage of the available opportunities.

The Ottoman records indicate that husbands treated their wives as equal partners in dignity. The women's marital rights were defined according to one of the four major Sunni schools of law. Knowledge of the rights that Islamic law conferred on women was widespread, even among some rural women. Women also used the judicial system when their rights were infringed. Most women relied on male relatives to represent them in court, but a minority appeared in court personally. Some women acted as legal agents, usually for female relatives, and occasionally for close male relatives. Women could be appointed guardians of their minor children, and this earned them social prestige.

The records concerning marriage and divorce suggest that, while the parents arranged their daughter's marriage, the woman entered marriage voluntarily. One of

the safeguards for women was the *mahr*, bride-wealth, and their absolute right to this settlement, which was sometimes considerable, could not be challenged or removed by anyone, including their fathers. The court records also show instances of women appealing to the judges for divorce on the basis of prenuptial agreements. Some of the reasons mentioned in the petitions as grounds for divorce were physical abuse, inadequate financial support, and desertion (Jennings, 1975: 62–84). Women of differing social backgrounds, including rural women who lived in the vicinity of towns, appealed to the courts when husbands, or even fathers, tried to make use of their property or assets without their consent. In the majority of cases, the judges upheld the women's property rights (Jennings, 1975: 62).

These records reaffirm that women enjoyed economic independence and were active in buying and selling of urban and rural real estate. Some women accumulated considerable wealth and created religious endowments. As before, only a small number participated in trade and financial activities, including money-lending, which was banned by Islamic teachings but was highly popular with men (Jennings, 1975).

Conclusion

At the dawn of the modern age many of the patterns that regulated Middle Eastern women's behavior had become enshrined in the Shari'ah, which had developed in the first three centuries of the Islamic era. Muslims viewed the injunctions of the Shari'ah as immutable, because they believed they had been ordained by the Qur'an, *hadith*, and the practices of the early Muslims, who they assumed were better informed of Islamic norms and practices than succeeding generations. But in fact, they had their origins in the very beginning of urban life in the region. They emerged to meet the needs of an agrarian society, in which urban life was rising and setting normative standards everyone strove to attain. The degree to which women adhered to these standards had depended on their social class and their lifestyle. But despite seclusion and the veil, and the variety of lives women pursued, they had been important contributors to the development of civilization in the region from its inception. Society may have forgotten the original contributions of women to the development of civilization in the region. Nevertheless, a wide body of evidence contradicts the stereotyped image of the submissive and victimized Muslim woman. By the standards of their times, they compared favorably with women living in other parts of the world. At least that was the judgement passed by Lady Elizabeth Craven when she visited the region in the eighteenth century. In writing to a friend in London, she observed, "I think I never saw a country where women may enjoy so much freedom from all reproach, as in Turkey." She added that "the Turks in their conduct towards our sex are an example to all other nations" (Jennings, 1975: 57n).

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Chapter Thirteen

Gendered Themes in Early African History

David Schoenbrun

Writing Gender into Early African History[1]

Rock art in southern Africa, some of it perhaps more than four thousand years old, depicts sexually ambiguous figures, with long, sinuous lines, often painted in red or white, emanating from between splayed legs. In the savannahs of central Africa, the notion of "kingship" fails to convey the nature of a royalty whose very essence rests on the duality of male and female. On the east African coast, groups of men and women, affiliated with each other through their mothers, controlled the inheritance of luxurious stone homes that merchant men from across the Indian Ocean hoped to use to achieve their aspirations of setting up shop in the thriving entrepôts that were Swahili cities more than a millennium ago. In the middle Nile valley state of Meroë, Queen Amanitore's portrait – full-figured and bellicose – appears on the outer wall of a temple complex whose architecture owes much to post-Pharaonic Egypt. In central Nigeria, probably female artists working in clay from as early as 700 BCE produced arresting portraits of men and women in characteristic poses and distinct sartorial style. Upriver, in and around the Middle Niger Delta, people fashioned terracotta figures of men and women which they used to ensure health and wealth. More than a thousand years ago, in the region around the Great Lakes of central Africa, men and women who had lost their children or their capacity to procreate, for social or biological reasons, invented new institutions of healing based on possession by the spirits of important, departed figures. When they were childless women, the mediums for these spirits retained a central role in social reproduction not based on biological imperatives: they helped others become parents.

Readers will recognize the gendered nature of some of these snapshots, while others of them may be hard to understand. They reflect the vast reach of gendered identities and social relations in Africa south of the Sahara. Writing these histories opens up new vistas onto the category of gender itself; not least by challenging some of the analytical grids that readers might bring to this text.

African history between 2000 BCE and 1400 CE reveals distinctive arrangements and intersections of the categories of gender, age, class, and status. Different vectors

of experience and agency shift the content of the category of gender itself, as class or age or status each constitutes situations and contexts that inflect (or actually efface entirely) a gendered meaning and experience. Histories of ancient African gender relations and of thinking about gender relations will force us to highlight one or more of these categories, sometimes to the extent that they eclipse the embodied vessels that often bear gendered thinking in the Western tradition.

The diversity of gendered experience and ideology in Africa before 1400 CE and the unconventional and uneven body of historical sources shape the texture of the narratives we can compose. A judicious mix of compressed regional histories and focused case studies of the richest sources is the best way to meet the challenge. As it is, much of importance in ancient African history falls through the cracks of an analysis privileging gender, even if this analytical lens reveals much that is new. We should leaven the necessity of thinking about gender historically with the danger and difficulty of translating ancient gender relations and placing them in a sequential narrative respectful of contingency, structure, and agency.

Ancient African gender history cannot be written in the same way as gendered histories of the West during these centuries, not only because specific cultural and material contexts differed, but because the evidentiary basis for writing such stories also differs, sometimes profoundly. Thus, historians of gender have moved beyond the limitations of literate sources and drawn on the plastic and performance arts, architecture, and archeology. All these sources exist, in some combination, for different parts of the continent at different times. In addition, historical linguistics can be a major source for a social history of gender in Africa before 1400 CE.

This chapter embraces the notion that healing practices and transitions in the life cycle were central to making gender historically. Such practices and transitions socialize bodies and locate them in a complex spatial and temporal social field. Power and property, on the other hand, were central to performing gender historically. Gendered persons used them to promote or depart from norms of gendered practice. This crude binary offers readers some leverage on the following survey of gender and early African history between roughly 2000 BCE and 1400 CE, in tropical Africa's major sub-regions. Readers interested in a particular geographic zone of the continent can move to the relevant section. Generalizations about early African gendered histories before the fifteenth century CE appear at the end of the essay.

Southern Africa

Major changes in food production developed in Africa south of the Zambezi considerably later than in the rest of the continent. Archeological evidence for domesticated livestock and farming begins to turn up around two millennia ago. In foraging societies, a major change in bodily practices seems to have unfolded across the millennium after 2000 BCE. Stable carbon isotope analyses of skeletons from this period reveal that men began to eat more marine foods while women ate more terrestrial foods. Perhaps this evidence implies a new, gendered division of work, in which men concentrated on collecting shellfish and women concentrated on collecting and processing plants. Or, perhaps, the fact that men and women ate different foods was itself a constituent of newly gendered identities. Scholars of this period have made important advances in revising the classic gender stereotypes of "man the hunter"

and "woman the gatherer" and their work continues to inform a growing sense of the variability of gendered work and consumption over time and perhaps a growing sense of doubt about attributing embodied gendered identities to any of these materials, including the copious rock art of the region.

Studies of the vast and complex corpus of rock art in greater Southern Africa have linked many of its styles to communities ancestral to today's San-speakers. Some scholars have used ethnographic studies of nineteenth and twentieth century San societies as sources to interpret the rock art by analogy. Feeling that they find compelling and complex correlations between the content of rock art and oral historiography, material culture, and social practice in recent San society, they "read" into the art a set of interpretations of diverse and changing meaning.

One scholar, Anne Solomon, has "read" the densely detailed and layered ancient gynandromorphic figures – figures that mix male and female – in the rock art of South Africa's Drakensberg Range and found in these images messages concerning creation and the social order, the symbolic order of male and female bodies, health and illness, prosperity and want, life and death, fertility and fecundity. Many of these associated messages are expressed in something called a trance dance – at once a domestic and a social performance that converts potencies in people and animals into capacities to hunt, heal, and hurt. These images elegantly attest to a joining in a single figure of male and female meanings and capacity related to health and fertility. They work to reinforce a pervasive emphasis in San oral texts on gender and sexual difference – by joining them – at the same time that they express a freedom from literal representations of physical sexual difference. Solomon reads in these images a relationship between initiated women and hunting.[2] In this light, stories told by San-speakers to ethnographers working in the nineteenth century explain that an initiated woman should only eat meat shot by her father because her saliva might neutralize the power to kill inherent in other hunters' arrow poisons. Using ethnographic analogy, this story can be read "back into" the images of emission lines running to arrows and thence to an image of an antelope. These pictures narrate the risks expressed in words and they can work together to advance claims that adult women endanger hunting and, implicitly, the prosperity of a group. Among hunters and gatherers, rock art juxtaposed aspects of differently gendered capacities.

The organization of space in farming and herding societies – especially those who built the many stone towns found on the Zimbabwe plateau and as far away as Sowa Pan, in the eastern Kalahari – introduced new elaborations on gender relations. At some of these earlier sites, such as Schroda, near the Limpopo River, in the lands below the Zimbabwe escarpment, archeologists have found numerous clay figurines of people, birds, wild, and domestic animals. Sometime in the seventh and eighth centuries CE, people broke the figures before they buried them in pits. The ones that represented people showed them with enlarged buttocks and body scarring. The meaning of the enlarged buttocks is difficult to interpret, but scarification and the "disposal" of such figurines brings to mind images of initiation rituals, during which young persons are ushered into a new phase of their lives, a phase that marked the effective beginning of living a gendered life. Scarified bodies were inflected by categories of meaning concerning gender and age and, perhaps, descent and lineage. For young girls, a puberty ritual included scarification and marked the beginning of her capacity to bear children and thus, the onset of her reproductive powers with its

promises and pitfalls. For young boys, initiation into age grades – also including scarification – marked the beginning of his capacity to join collective work groups, to accumulate wealth in things (like the skins of hunted animals), and to prepare for fatherhood.

The Zimbabwe Culture

From these and other roots, late in the thirteenth century CE, people began building stone structures and making the place we now call Great Zimbabwe. This city grew up on a southerly promontory at the edge of the plateau, more than 250 kilometers and a thousand feet higher than Schroda. People reckoned wealth and power in a number of ways at Great Zimbabwe, cattle being chief among them. Cattle were important sources of food – milk for ordinary people and milk and meat for elites. They may also have cemented ties between lineages as part of creating marriages. If so, then cattle embodied social ties, and their transfer between lineages as part of a marriage, or their use as gifts to young men in return for their allegiance and support in times of political or military crisis, meant that they could be used to mark and track the course of building webs of patronage. Ethnographic analogy informs these claims because available archeological evidence merely attests to the presence of many cattle in and around Great Zimbabwe, and suggests that elites and commoners used cattle differently. It does not tell us anything very clear about marriage patterns and patronage systems.

Scholars have recognized a pattern of towns contemporaneous with Great Zimbabwe, which they call the "Zimbabwe culture area." From the tenth century onwards, this grew into a complex and hierarchical society, resting at once on ancient systems of regional trade in cattle, foodstuffs, metals (especially gold and copper), together with ivory and other hunted products. It also rested on connections between local branches of production and transcontinental regimes of demand and supply for commodities like cloth, beads, ceramic and glassware. Great Zimbabwe sat at one of the hubs of this system and gender relations may well have formed a key axis along which goods and commodities flowed.

Some scholars implicitly argue that fertility drove the development of Great Zimbabwe and its satellites. They claim that the increased production of surplus foodstuffs, which underwrote the regional and transcontinental trading systems, could only be achieved by applying more human labor to an environmentally marginal setting for farming and herding. Technological innovations appear to have been rare, they claim, leaving population increases as the only way to bring more labor to bear in production. Scholars often promote this scenario to prepare the way for arguing the importance of environmental degradation to the decline of Great Zimbabwe in the fifteenth century CE. They rarely address the burdens placed on and challenges faced by the men and women who achieved the population increases implied in the model.

Perhaps initiation and puberty ritual were designed, in part, to produce more adults by streamlining and rationalizing the moments at which they could begin their careers as adults. Perhaps men and women called on spirit-mediums and healers to insure reproductive success and the health of children, as more and more men and women sought to have and to raise more children. The goal of achieving high

fertility might have had an impact on gender relations at a number of levels. Lineages rich in cattle could use those resources to contract more marriages for their men. Leaders in powerful lineages could draw on a wider range of client families when raising armies to defend pastures, farms, mines and trade routes. These questions in the history of gender in southern Africa before the fifteenth century CE still largely lack answers, but that could change once scholars use historical linguistics and comparative ethnography to reconstruct inheritance practices and health and healing practices and theories across the full range of Shona dialects.

Central Africa

North of the Zambezi, the central African plateau rises in subtle undulations until the gentle topographic waves peak and begin to descend toward the Upemba Depression and the headwaters of the many great rivers that feed the Congo, the greatest river by volume anywhere in Africa. Scholars have combined a rich archeological and art-historical record with comparative linguistics, historical ethnography, and even oral traditions to reveal a rich and compelling gendered social history of the Greater Congo Basin. Scholars working with archeological and historical linguistic evidence have concentrated, so far, on basic questions of regional settlement histories and branches of production. In the last two thousand years BCE, the gradual development of settled, eclectic farming life unfolded in close concert with creating new social relationships between farmers, fishers, and keepers of small-stock and their autochthonous neighbors who were hunters and foragers. We can say rather more about gendered history in the Greater Congo Basin for the period beginning after the middle of the first millennium CE and especially for the period after 1000 CE in regions where increasing political complexity – often without centralization – produced plastic and oral arts enmeshed in those very politics. Three examples are particularly rich: the development of iron-working in west-central Africa; the importance of gender systems to Luba royalty; and the historical phenomenon of the "matrilineal belt" of south central Africa.

The Inner Congo Basin: Metal, work, and style

In central Africa, and most of the rest of the continent, men have dominated smelting and smithing; such work and the social groups it creates formed key milieu for making men masculine. The widespread fact that men do this work has been taken to reflect its great antiquity. No single narrative line for the history of iron-working may be worked out in central Africa but archeological and linguistic evidence both indicate multiple centers of development concentrated on the eastern and western edges of the Basin, with much diffusion and innovation, beginning early in the last millennium BCE and becoming fully established in places like the Upemba Depression by the end of the first millennium CE. This pattern points up just how important male work was in providing key goods that induced traders to create long-distance links between different zones in the Inner Congo Basin, especially later in the first millennium CE.

One scholar, Colleen Kriger, has worked on the history of iron-working in central Africa with great results. She has argued that the smelters who made iron bloom from

ore and the smiths who took that bloom and made fungible items with it, were central to the creation of greater wealth and social complexity. From the ninth to the fifteenth centuries CE, smiths produced two classes of metal objects: ornaments and charms that people wore and implements that they used in war, farming, hunting, and craft production. In the Upemba Depression smiths also produced copper and iron currencies in various shapes. These items were fungible too, for smiths could convert a set of worn out hoes into a bar of iron currency or they could turn a bar of iron into an axe. Senior smiths were not only metallurgists; they changed currency, influenced the development of new object forms, shaped new styles for executing them, and trained the next generation of such experts.[3]

One of the key elements of the power enjoyed by smelters and smiths lay in their having joined a language of human parturition to the production of iron materials. Appropriating the grammar of the capacity and experience of reproduction to the task of smelting and smithing is widespread in central Africa. Much has been made in the scholarly literature about the significance of this ideological "move" for the promotion of masculine authority. It might seem obvious that when men decorated their furnaces with clay breasts or spoke of the bellows and tuyéres as impregnating their furnace they sought to usurp or, at least, to share in the respect brought to women when they gave birth. But the fact is that iron-working is not the only technology that is gendered, nor is it clearly connected in any way to the political control of women by men. If we see reproduction itself as a transformative process, converting fluids into persons, then whatever other ideological work the analogy might serve, we can see rather more clearly why it serves so often and compellingly as a metaphor for smelting, which converts rock and sand into metal.

Luba royalty, art, and gendered power

In and around the Upemba Depression, a remarkable sequence of archeologically attested developments began to unfold in the middle of the first millennium CE. Historical analysis of the rich material culture excavated from the complex mortuary sites in the Sanga area of this zone of the Luba heartland reveals a dramatic story of political complexity, gendered power, and monarchy. The drama of this story is heightened through the exploits and foibles of Luba's leadership as conveyed in their oral historiography.

When monarchy developed sometime between 950 and 1250 CE, it took a characteristic shape around the dualistic power of male and female leaders. After the fourteenth century CE, the archeological record reflects a radical break with this tradition and suggests the ushering in of a new conception of monarchy and a more expansionist state. But, in this later period and in the eras prior, Luba kings formed alliances with powerful women who served as ambassadors and advisors; very often they served as the linchpin in strategic marriages with chiefs who controlled territories at the fringes of the heartland. The duality of monarchical power is nowhere more powerfully expressed than in Luba art, especially the plastic arts of wood and metals.

Oral historians tell that *Ina Nombe* or *Lolo Nombe* was the founding ancestress of Luba royalty. In these stories about the genesis of Luba royalty, and echoed across a wide range of sculptural forms, the ancestress is represented as the keeper of secret royal knowledge. But Luba royalty involves the pairing, cycling, or alternating of

male and female capacities in ways that rendered royal symbolic and discursive power a most ambiguously gendered one. At the heart of this ambiguity lies a claim that kings' spirits are contained in a female spirit-medium's body. As the claim would have it, only a woman's body is "strong enough" to retain the royal spirit – to endure the danger of its presence – while it possesses her and speaks through her from the land of the dead. Women who worked as royal spirit-mediums understandably had great influence and they are remembered in oral tradition.

Contemporary Luba people describe the ubiquitous geometric patterns on so much royal art – staffs, *lukasa* (wooden memory boards used as simulacra of the royal domain), knives, and axes, among other things – as cicatrization or "scars." In the Luba Heartland today, people say that scars hide secret knowledge, the secret knowledge possessed by chiefs and royals. In the case of female figures created in wood and meant to serve as containers for the spirits of departed royals, their "skin" is busy with cicatrized patterns that allow them to be "read" as erotic and social beings, as persons in the making. Given that such figures were intended primarily for the male, chiefly gaze, their grammar says much about gender and sexuality in this fascinating monarchy. These female figures have deep ebony skin tones, elaborate hairstyles, complex patterns of scarification, and elongated labia.[4] The close interconnections between *eros*, femininity, spiritual power, and royalty reflects the fact that some women in Luba-speaking societies played extremely important roles as spirit-mediums, and that the category "woman" played an extremely important role in elaborating ideas about power and efficacy.[5]

Central Africa's matrilineal belt

In the savannah zones stretching from eastern Angola to the central East African coasts, scholars have long noted a gendered politics that embraced the power of adult women and promoted it as central to social life. They call this zone the "matrilineal belt," but that moniker places undue emphasis on the nature of lineage forms and their politics. It underplays other aspects of political power – some of which are familiar from the Luba setting and from Schroda – such as the maintenance of separate spheres of economic and political action, the importance of female puberty rituals, and the creation of a "female sexuality" that emphasizes fertility and pleasure. The central features of social life in the "matrilineal belt" probably existed prior to 1400 CE but they did not come into existence together nor did they remain unchanged from the largely nineteenth century descriptions on which scholars often draw for the ethnographic analogy. Ideologies and institutions like lineality, age-grades, and matrifocality, were tools people used to live their lives, not "hardwired" code that Central Africans reproduced blindly. None of these "traits" is unique to this zone of Central Africa, but their unique combination here lends a distinctive air to the region and raises important questions about their historical development.

The entire zone now called the "matrilineal belt" suffers from a combination of poor soil fertility and erratic rainfall regimes. These physical facts nurtured a commitment to an eclectic and shifting cultivation system by the farmers who live in these lands. Mobile settlements and changing needs for farm labor reward communities with flexible senses of membership not tied to the ownership or control of fixed property, especially landed property. This sort of flexibility is the hallmark of matrilineal

systems, in which lineages tend to be shallow, status flows from achievement rather than ascription, and outsiders are easily recruited to join a settlement.

A lot of the scholarship on matrilineality has highlighted the transmission of rights in persons and things, rights very clearly passed on from adult man to adult man, in a patrilineal setting. These rights are not so easily transmitted from man to man, in a matrilineal setting. Yet, what is a problem for men converts women who are mothers into nodes of complex, ordered, and wider social relationships. The study of matrilineal societies, especially in this part of central Africa, has been very important for undermining the view of universal male dominance. Indeed, this work has pointed out the utility of looking at gendered histories through a lens of "parallelism." It helps to think of adult men and women less as in perpetual conflict than as operating in and controlling different zones of social life.[6]

In the Lunda-speaking societies of south-central Africa, this separation takes clear and compelling form. Men seem out of place in villages, where women are busy with the quotidian tasks of organizing labor in their fields, transporting, processing, and preparing food, and making repairs on their houses, building pots, weaving baskets or mats. In the village, men would be seen sitting around talking and drinking beer, their inactivity a stark contrast to adult women's busyness. This is because men work in the forest and think of themselves as hunters. In the forest they fish, trap birds and animals, gather honey, insects and wild plant foods, and collect building materials and medicines. This gender segregation is explained by an ideology of independence that argues that adult men and women voluntarily associate with each other. Gender politics in this setting revolved around negotiating the benefits of conviviality, culinary diversity, and sex without giving up autonomy and independence. At the risk of caricature, this model does convey the sense of gender parallelism common to many societies in the "matrilineal belt."

East Africa

In the well-watered lands north and east of the central "matrilineal belt," gendered social relations and identities developed in recognizable but distinct trajectories. The basic environmental and agricultural equation was decidedly richer and more varied. Ecological diversity in a relatively confined area combined with a rather more reliable regime of rainfall meant that the potential for surplus food production was high. Surplus food formed the basis for social hierarchies.

Between the Great Lakes

Historical linguistic evidence for the growth of specialized vocabularies relating to bananas and their many different cultivars and to the patterning of colors on cattle hides and to the shape of cattle horns all attest to the progress of these specializations. As societies invested in one or the other of these branches of production, they created a growing demand for the lands best able to realize this potential for surplus production. This, in turn, drove the development of a hierarchical political culture in which gender played a key role.

Long before we can speak of the sort of imperialistic powers that later characterized the states in this region, efforts to coordinate and channel the wealth in people

and in things delivered through local agricultural abundance turned on matters of fertility. People in the Great Lakes region invented new words for the condition of an adult who died childless. What had surely been a well-known condition prior to this period now raised an alarm worthy of neologism. Oral historical evidence touches on this alarm by expanding on how to grapple with it. Some of these traditions were told at court and some were told in commoner homes, but they all discuss the invention of a new sort of spirit and its medium, called *muchwezi* (singular), who could return from the land of the departed and grant health and prosperity to its supplicant. The traditions tell us that this spirit required no special kinship connection with those whom it possessed and helped. Unlike the spirits of lineage ancestors and their mediums, the *muchwezi* could help anyone, not simply kin. The social challenges of infertility and childlessness made service to *bachwezi* (plural) spirits attractive options for both men and women because it gave them social standing and a community in which to thrive in the absence of biologically produced children.

It seems no coincidence that dynastic traditions about the region's earliest kings and queens – who ruled perhaps as early as the fifteenth century, but who surely modeled aspects of royalty with much older roots – should be so concerned with these developments. The rise of a new form of healing that lay beyond the control of particular lineage heads, the concomitant reduction in the status and efficacy of lineage spirits, and the relations between these developments and a set of emerging political centers was of the greatest moment for leaders. Royals were extremely concerned to maintain the force of their claims to represent and defend the health and prosperity of their followers and their herds and fields. These *bachwezi* mediums, priests and priestesses, represented a clear threat to that royalist claim. Indeed, portions of dynastic traditions that speak about later kings and queens, who ruled in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, dwell at some length on the threats to centralized political authority posed by powerful shrine centers, like the one at Mubende Hill, south of Bunyoro. Mediums, priests, and royals waged an ideological battle over the claim that prosperity was a condition that they could restore and protect. But they were also battling over the position of women as the source of new generations in archly patriarchal polities. When childless adult women became *bachwezi* mediums, they took important steps to speak for themselves in this struggle by serving as vessels for the spirits of the departed persons who were the first "*bachwezi*."

Swahili urban life and the gender of the house

In the eighth century CE, at the latest, an urban, mercantile world emerged on the east coast of the continent. Gendered social relationships and ideologies shaped much of Swahili history in this cosmopolitan world. Given the fact that Swahili dialects belong to the large "Bantu" group, the social history of gender might be expected to share much with other Bantu-speaking groups touched on in this essay. Yet, gendered history in Swahili societies was unique, as well, and no single pattern may be said to characterize the entire zone of Swahili-speaking societies. Gendered power on the Swahili coasts of east Africa included prominent roles for both male and female political leaders and a distinctive matrilineal source for titled leadership positions in Kilwa, perhaps the most powerful and wealthy city on the Swahili coast in the last several centuries of our period.

It is dangerous to use kinship "systems" to draw conclusions about how people actually negotiated their interpersonal and group relationships because people notoriously do not follow the rules. However, machinations for succession to Kilwa's titled positions, marriage practices which brought a man to live in his wife's family's house, and the disposition of use-rights to certain categories of land found outside of towns and villages ran through groups of persons affiliated with each other through common mothers or sets of sisters. In these settings, then, Swahili-speakers (and other speakers of Bantu languages who lived in the immediate hinterland of the coast) crafted strategies for gaining access to these political and productive resources within a universe of possibilities bounded, in part, by affiliation through women.

One of the dominant interpretations of Swahili society in the centuries immediately following the turn of the first millennium CE, argues that mercantile men from the Arabian peninsula sought to gain access to local political titles and the use-rights to land and resources that often came with them, by marrying the daughters of local rulers.[7] We are told by an oral historian of the later nineteenth century, that the first Sultan of Kilwa – a Sultan Ali – married the daughter of a coastal chief, Mrimba. They lived together peacefully, "then Sultan Ali persuaded Mrimba's daughter and said: 'tell your father, the Elder Mrimba, it is best for him to leave Kisiwani and live on the other side on the mainland. For it is not suitable for him to live in the same place as myself: it is not correct, for he is my father-in-law'."[8] It would seem that Sultan Ali, after an initial period of residence with his wife's lineage, grew intent upon founding a separate household, with Mrimba's daughter – the Sultan's nameless wife – joining him there.

By marrying into a wealthy set of matrikin, newcomer men sought to establish control over the large stone houses that have been distinctive features of Swahili towns for more than a thousand years. When properly kept up by the families and lineages, which act as trustees (*waqf ahli*), these buildings express a moral purity and grant to their owners a material form of high status.

Persons and things (like buildings) invest each other with values, especially the value of grasping Islamic theology and practice, composing, performing, and patronizing fine poetry, music, and dance, as well as achieving high competence in transformative work, such as potting, metallurgy, and carpentry. Some scholars claim a gendered distinction in the source of these "achievements." They claim that men earned and maintained these achievements largely as a function of the rank enjoyed by their family, and that women gained them primarily by their individual capacities. Beyond these ideologies of patrician "status," it is clear that many patrician women held rights to forms of material property that included slaves and trading ships.[9]

Northeast Africa and the Middle Nile: Aksum, Napata, and Meroë

The mercantile state of Aksum, whose capitals lay in the interior of the Ethiopian highlands, enjoyed its most productive period during the early centuries of the Common Era. When king Ezanas converted to Christianity, sometime very near 324 CE, Aksum was already one of classical antiquity's great cultures. Today, Ethiopian and Tigrayan Christians tell of their faith by holding that the Queen of Sheba resided – and the Ark of the Covenant now rests – at Aksum, the second Jerusalem. With

metropolises, transoceanic and other long-distance trading ties (reaching as far as the western Mediterranean and India), its own currency, and a complex relationship with its agricultural hinterland, the world of Aksum was a hierarchical and cosmopolitan setting in which gendered identities and social relationships might appear familiar to readers conversant with the Hellenistic and Arabian worlds of the last few centuries BCE and the first several centuries CE. The available historical record favors the experiences and expressions of the wealthy and the powerful. As is so often the case, we are left to speculate about the character of gendered life in Aksum's towns and countryside.[10]

Conversion to Christianity began at the top and center of Aksumite society; with the royal household. According to the well-known account of Frumentius, a Hellene from Syria (and a future Christian Bishop) Ezanas' mother was a principal conduit for Christian teachings and practice, bridging the generation between Ezanas and his father, Ousanas Ella Amida, who had welcomed Frumentius to his court in the first place. Royal men and women may have been attracted to Christian life for different reasons.[11] The dynamics of royal power might illuminate these differences and open up new dimensions to gendered experience and aspiration in ancient Aksum.

Aksumite royal dynasties sought to retain power by creating ties to powerful clans through marriage. A king's wives very likely came from among the leading clans in the countryside – their sons displayed their mother's clan name in their royal title – which cultivated rural support for royals in the metropolis. The principal evidence for deducing that Aksum's clans were matrilineal clans comes from a compound name in the royal title which, over a period of more than 250 years (ending in the middle of the sixth century CE), distinguishes clan names for each successive ruler. In the case of Ezanas' accession, his mother's capacity to organize support for him very likely moved along lines of clan loyalty and patronage. The fact that succession appears to have been patrilineal strongly suggests that these clan names refer to matrilineal clans. Perhaps Ezanas' mother moved toward Christianity in the hope that a Christian son might better manage Aksum's affairs in a world where Constantine had just converted, in Rome. In undertaking such a move, she may well have had the support of her clanmates; the very ones who would have been instrumental in supporting Ezanas' accession.

Dressing like king and queen in Napata and Meroë[12]

Just as was the case later, in Aksum, the collection of duties on trade in luxury goods provided leaders in the states of Napata and Meroë with the resources to field military forces. Kushite armies conquered and ruled in Egypt, constituting the twenty-fifth dynasty of Taharqo. More commonly, armed force was directed at neighboring Beja pastoralists who regularly threatened the steady flow of primary products – luxury and subsistence – through the middle Nile and beyond, to the Red Sea. These familiar duties and undertakings of royalty stand out in Napata and Meroë for one simple reason: they were not uncommonly organized and led by powerful queens.

Co-regents were regular features of Kushite monarchies, from at least 170 BCE until early in the Common Era. Sometime after about 50 CE, stonemasons created a famous relief of King Natakamani and Queen Amanitore on the pylon of a temple built by these two royals at Naqa, upriver from Meroë. The scene depicts each of

them holding the hair of a collection of their enemies whom they are both about to smite with great broadswords, held high above their heads. Both Amanitore and Natakamani occupy equally prominent positions, wear similar regalia, and carry out the same activity. In other depictions their equality is strikingly clear, most notably a coronation ceremony where, among other things, the queen received her royal title, Kandake, a term that appears in Acts 8:27 as a mistaken reference to an individual "Queen of the Ethiopians."

The iconography of the ruling office was gendered male and it was used to legitimate and integrate Kandakes who took the throne by means other than inheriting it from their husbands. Succession to high office is hard to pin down from the available sources, but in one important source – the Coronation Stela of Aspelta (found at Jebel Barkal, in Napata, early in the sixth century BCE) – King Aspelta claims descent from an ancestor seven generations removed from him through the maternal line. The significance of the matriline to Aspelta may reflect nothing more than the contemporary strength and worth to his rule of his maternal relatives. Indeed, other inscriptions refer to an undifferentiated group of "royal brethren" as constituting the potential pool of future kings. In the absence of a royal clan – whose leadership could direct struggles for succession – and in the presence of a powerful priesthood, such a circumstance placed great value on the ability of mothers of the "royal brethren" to marshal support and influence among the priesthood on behalf of one or another of their sons' designs on the throne. The Kandake may have referred to the woman who "made" the king, in either or all senses: biological, spiritual, and political.

The ostentatious displays of the sartorial trappings of royal power drew male and female leaders into a highly gendered pageant of luxury consumption that conveyed a clear iconography of royal standing and mixed Egyptian and Kushitic grammars of royal power. Upper and middle classes are depicted on their burial stelae where both men and women appear clad only in their jewelry. Women are more frequently depicted bare-breasted and wearing long skirts with elaborately worked fringe. Peasants are also depicted – on pottery – most often wearing nothing or only a loincloth of sheepskin. Both men and women of all statuses wore jewelry and in the earlier centuries of Kushite power – until the middle of the last millennium BCE – the styles were distinctively local.

During the joint reigns of King Netakamani and Queen Amanitore, at the time Christ was alive, some of the most impressive Kushite temples were built at Naqa. The dramatic carvings on their pylons depict the royals in a bellicose pose that combines Egyptian and Meroitic imagery to express clearly the claim that male and female ruled together as protectors and conquerors. In one particularly striking image, the Meroitic lion god Apedemak is shown touching both king and queen – with one of his two pairs of hands – at the same time that his other pair of hands grasps a bunch of plants.[13] This complex image expresses a semantic bundling of royal power to kill and protect with royal capacity to ensure prosperity. This bundle is widespread in African royal ideology; its explicit connecting of male and female is rarer, however.

As Kushite ties to the Red Sea and Mediterranean worlds grew in complexity and regularity, so too did the jewelry styles become more cosmopolitan. The royal worlds of the middle Nile and the Ethiopian highlands drew men and women into an increasingly intercommunicating and integrated world of trade and consumption where

styles traveled far and wide and where local and regional violence were essential to the "health" of the system. Not unlike today's world of global fashion, regional warfare, and imperial struggle, men and women in Saharan, Nilotic, and Ethiopian Africa before the fourteenth century CE, participated in shaping this world through their demand for particular goods, through their labor and trade, and through their political cultures of hierarchy, gender balance, and cosmopolitanism.

West Africa's Middle Niger Valley

The town of Jenne-jeno, or Old Jenne, stands as West Africa's earliest urban world, a distinctive form of city life in comparative world history. In the following millennium, Jenne-jeno grew into a booming city connected to the far corners of Africa, Europe, and Asia and home to perhaps as many as 20,000 residents. As many as another 30,000 lived in satellite towns built on tells that sat above the high water marks of the flooding Niger, within a 1 km radius from Jenne-jeno. By 800 CE, other towns and cities – built on a similar model of clustered specializations – dotted the western edges of the great Middle Niger Delta. During the next four hundred years some major changes swept the region. Increasingly, Sahelian West Africans welcomed mostly Maghrebian and Andalusian Muslims into their towns. After about 1000 CE, Muslim families moved out of these Sahelian cities and into the countryside and Africans began the long process of domesticating Islam, making it their own. In the midst of this ferment, West Africa's first imperial powers took shape, at Wagadu very late in the first millennium CE, followed by Sosso and then by Sunjata's Mali.

Statues and status at Jenne-jeno

The terracotta statuary from the Middle Niger Delta for which we have established archeological provenance was produced during the early centuries of the Maliempire which were also the last few hundred years of Jenne-jeno's existence.[14] These statues represented the ancestors of different families who dominated different quarters of Sahelian cities, like Jenne-jeno. After the fourteenth century CE, these statues gradually disappeared from urban settings, retreating into distant towns and villages. This may well have reflected the triumph of an urban West African Islam that transformed both Islam and Mande spiritual practice.

Many types of terracotta depict men as hunters and warriors. Such persons could also take other shapes, such as those of a crocodile or a snake, when their bodies had died and their life force had moved away. Many statues depict women with young babies, or women in an ecstatic trance, with bulging eyes. Scholars believe that women used such figures to resolve problems with fertility or risky pregnancy. The individuals, families, and artisan corporations who commissioned their production may have used them as recipients of sacrificial offerings designed to activate the power of the spirit and to induce it to act on the supplicant's behalf. Statues often depict women and men with bulging eyes and it is a commonplace in West Africa for divinatory objects to speak and convey spiritual power to a supplicant. If these figures represented the departed spirits of the earliest residents in the Inland Niger Delta – as many informants have claimed – then that primacy conferred an authority on those ancestors that rendered statues of them quite powerful. People used them to pursue

basic goals in life, such as becoming pregnant, delivering safely, finding a spouse, having rain, being cured of a disease, and so on.

Yet, not all such figures may be interpreted in so straightforward a manner. One statue from the Middle Niger Delta, made sometime between 1100 and 1400 CE, depicts a stern-faced female with two figures, one male and the other female, climbing up her chest. But the climbers are not infants or children – they're clad just like the woman on whom they climb and one of them even wears a beard. This figure very likely represents the spirit of a founding matriarch and shows that women who successfully navigated the challenges of motherhood could enjoy continued power and authority long after their tired bodies had ceased to live.[15] At least before the era in which Jenne-jeno was abandoned – certainly before 1400 CE – female power was strong and potent in the Middle Niger Delta.

Imperial gender Male and female, elder and junior and their quests for power, these tropes mark the regional bardic tradition about the life and times of Sogolon and Sunjata, the mother-son duo credited with founding imperial Mali. Convention places them in the thirteenth century CE. They are remembered because professional performers have told versions of Sunjata's life story for a very long time, beginning no later than the 1350s CE, perhaps some two long generations after the passing of the historical Sunjata.[16] The epic is composed of three story-cycles: the circumstances of his mother's giving birth and his childhood; his growing up and exile; and his victorious return to the Mali heartland.

Strongly gendered themes run throughout these stirring treatments of injustice reversed, heroic achievement, collective responsibility, mystical power, military prowess, and, most prominently, the career of an immensely powerful mother-son duo. Sogolon Wulen Condé is a powerful woman whose capacity flows from her long experience as a single woman. She comes to the king's compound as the younger sister of a notable woman from an ancient polity, a woman who can take the shape of a rampaging buffalo and who, in many versions of the epic, gives to Sogolon her legendary ugliness and who sacrifices herself so that Sogolon may marry and enjoy her reproductive powers. But her son Sunjata's lameness brings him ridicule until late in his childhood, when he receives a great iron rod that he uses to pull himself to his feet. In the process, he bends the iron into the shape of a bow – his first act of transformation, his first accumulation of power.[17] Hunters use bows and blacksmiths produce iron rods. These kinds of labor produce much power and the fruits of this work bear that power, too. Sunjata's lengthy childhood, like his mother's lengthy experience as a single woman, allowed him to accumulate that power.

The epic explores the gendered world of early Mali along two axes. One highlights the exploits of an innovative but potentially dangerous hero, who goes into exile from his birth home, and collects power and knowledge on this journey. Mande speakers call this *fadenya*, literally "father-childness." This broad meaning builds on the narrower meaning of rivalry between half-siblings in a generic household with one father and two or more mothers. The conflict destroys the household – brothers and sisters will have to move off to found their own households – but the new households created by these rivalries are central to the reproduction of social life. Thus, on the grand stage of the epic, *fadenya* is the socially destructive but necessary axis of Sunjata's young adult years, his years as a warrior.

The affectionate ties expected to develop between full siblings, which Mande-speakers call *badenya*, literally "mother-childness," provides a second axis on which social life and imperial history unfold. Here, mother and full siblings help each other navigate the challenges to accumulating power and wealth. *Badenya* is both the solidarity of the uterine kin-group – symbolized by the home – and the heartland of imperial Mali itself. For, having successfully accumulated power and wealth, while in exile and with the help of his mother and full siblings, Sunjata wins a series of battles against the allies of his enemy, Sumaworo of Sosso, and eventually defeats Sumaworo himself, as a prelude to his triumphant return to his birth home, to claim his title as the Lion of Manden, the founding king of Mali. His life, and the lives of his family members (both male and female) represent the ideal melding of *fadenya* and *badenya* at all levels of social life: the individual, the family, the primary polity, and the imperial system.

The drama presents profound ideological statements on gender, in part through a Mande metaphysics of power and capacity. In the stories, women appear to possess two modes of power. Some women possess great capacity to manipulate and collect the vital power that Mande-speakers understand to run through and constitute all things, whether sentient or not. This power, called *nyama*, may be accumulated through acts of transformation, such as hunting, potting, smelting and working metals, and speaking. But accumulated *nyama* is dangerous to those lacking the ability to use it. This ability accrues to individuals who can encounter *nyama* during their work without it overwhelming them. The ability is called *dalilu* and it might be translated as "occult power or secret means." *Dalilu* and *nyama* are ethically neutral and genderless, their capacities for good or evil depend utterly on how she who possesses them actually uses them. Mothers may be understood as sorcerers because they have produced new life, a miraculous power that men cannot match and that barren women lack. A hero may use the *nyama* he has accumulated to organize or to destroy, but a heroine may use hers to create new life, as well as to organize success and prosecute victory.

Men derive their power and authority by releasing and accumulating *nyama* through acts of transforming one thing into another – making a live animal dead in hunting, making a lump of metal into a fine bracelet at the smithy. Women derive their power from similar acts of transformation – turning clay into pots or turning the bodily fluids of sex into a baby. While these representational grammars may seem stereotypical to some readers, it is clear that each of these forms of labor creates power and raises questions about the authority to appropriate that power. The stories naturalize the different sorts of work that men and women do, and they exemplify the ideology of complementary relations between the fully mature genders that we have encountered in so many other parts of the continent before 1400 of the Common Era.

According to one scholar, David Conrad, the epic itself, and many other examples of what the bards call "ancient speech" or *kuma koro*, represents powerful women in two basic genres. One sort, like the hero Sunjata's mother, Sogolon Wulen Condé, is rich with *nyama*, whose legendary ugliness explains why she spent a long while as a single woman, accumulating *nyama*. She plays many active roles in ensuring the success of her son's political and military affairs. In the stories sung by bards, these women are often represented as the biological mother of the heroine or hero. Other

women are heroines in this story by dint of their personal strength and influence in zones of action defined ideologically as female. Such characters may be either the key to success or an ambiguous source of both fecundity and destruction. One iconic example of this sort is Sugulun Kutuma, Sunjata's full sister, who steals the secret of Sumaworo's *dalilu* without the benefit of her own occult powers, while a prisoner at his palace. In the grammar of the epic, both young women and mature mothers have power and capacity without which imperial Mali would not exist.

Yet we may see in this neat economy of gendered power a very real struggle between men and women. Women were the instruments of men's success. Men sought to benefit from and contain women's power, lest it overwhelm them. Male bards often cast powerful women as untrustworthy, dangerous, and seductive. Conrad has called this motif the "femme fatale" in an effort to throw open the question of male anxiety about female power.

Imperial Malian ideology – the ideologies produced and consumed by the free and high-status Malians – clearly used gender to grapple with the contradictory impulses of heroic innovation and responsible conservatism. Women (especially mothers) and men (especially young men) possessed complementary powers required for building imperial alliances, reproducing them, and expanding them. If their gendered labels – *fadenya* and *badenya* – seem familiar to us, the Epic cycles make equally clear that these impulses operated in everyone's life. So, too, did the tension between them. The well-lived life inhabited the tension between these poles. Both man and woman had to face this challenge. In the historical context of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, when imperial Mali entered the world stage, these challenges were formidable indeed. Not every member of Mande society, nor every group therein, was equally able to meet them.

Art and Gender in Ancient Nigeria

The histories of some of the most famous artistic traditions of Nigeria – Nok, Ife, and Benin – involve considerable rupture, diversity, and in some cases mutual influence. Artists in these traditions used terracotta, wood, stone, and various metals (mostly brasses and a few bronzes). Scholars who have studied the more recent plastic arts in West Africa, have noted a broadly gendered division of practice. Mothers and older women tend to work in clay and fathers and older men tend to work in wood and metals, though a person's standing within a particular kin-group, and that kin-group's standing within the larger community, may have had as much influence on who made such art as did their gender. Individual differences in skill and interest must also have played a role.

For many millennia, artists have executed commemorative heads and portraits in terracotta, often on commission. Given the complex gendered nature of work in clay, it seems beyond doubt that the tremendous corpuses of terracotta sculpture, vessels, and figurines were produced by both men and women artists. More recently, perhaps as early as the ninth century CE, in southern Nigeria, artists have worked by lost-wax casting of brasses and bronzes.[18] In these media, it seems likely that men and women may have worked together, since women may well have modeled the clay cores that men used to sculpt the figure in wax, before covering it with a clay shell and investing it with molten copper or brass.

Nok figurative sculpture

The "Nok" terracottas are complex and visually arresting traditions of figurative sculpture, created over a period of some eighteen centuries, beginning perhaps as early as the ninth century BCE, but clustering most densely between 700 BCE and about 500 CE.[19] Most of the known terracottas came from two sites, Nok and Jemaa, very near to each other and close to the geographical center of modern Nigeria. The iconography of these figures reveals a stunning sense of gendered identity and practice in early Nigerian history.

The iconography of the sculpture, though based on only a few classes of forms, reveals leaders, healers, and high-status men and women in various poses – standing, sitting, and genuflecting. Besides these distinctive poses, the great care given to rendering coiffures and jewelry and the realism applied to facial features strikes the viewer immediately. About two-thirds of the complete figures are male, wearing beards, moustaches, or penis sheaths. Female figures wear loincloths and have bare breasts. In the middle of the twentieth century, men and women living east of Nok, on the Bauchi plateau, dressed in strikingly similar fashion. Hairstyles do not correspond to biological sex; men and women may each wear any of a variety of strikingly elaborate coiffures. But poses do seem to correlate with sex. Standing figures are predominantly female, while those who genuflect or who rest their chin on a kneecap while sitting are almost entirely male. The absence of supporting sources makes deeper interpretations of the gendered meanings contained in these figures impossible.

The absence of supporting sources forestalls deeper interpretations of the gendered meanings contained in these figures, yet they seem somewhat similar to the power-laden statuary from the Middle Niger Delta that we have just examined. Without implying a simple diffusion between the two centers, it is easy to see the Nok figures as part of the healing institutions of possession and propitiation so important to an individual's and a village's life.

Ile-Ifẹ̀ Perhaps no artistic tradition in Africa has attracted more scholarly and popular attention than the lost-wax brass and bronze castings from southern and southwestern Nigeria produced since 800 CE. The combination of technical skill and aesthetic complexity, and their obvious importance in royal regalia and pageantry and, in wooden forms, in the daily life of ordinary folks, also singles them out for special attention. In and around the fabled city of Ile-Ifẹ̀ (literally "home-spread") female and male artists executed a remarkable body of these castings. Yoruba-speakers tell us that life began and spread outward from Ile-Ifẹ̀ and archeologists tell us that people have lived there since the middle of the fourth century BCE, perhaps surrounded by a "city wall."[20] Working first in terracotta and then in stone and lost-wax castings in brasses and bronze (between roughly 800 and 1500 CE), artists made increasingly naturalistic sculptures. The sculpture developed along a stylistic trajectory from minimalism, between 800 and 1000 CE, to naturalism, between 1000 and 1400 CE, to expressive and stylized forms after 1400 CE. These broad phases matched the flowering of Ile-Ifẹ̀ itself.

The terracotta items range from very small to nearly life-sized, and include heads that were freestanding, vessels bearing animal and other figures, and many other

subjects and styles. The metalwork forms a much smaller corpus of some thirty pieces with great stylistic similarity, perhaps produced by a small number of artists over a fairly brief span of time. The presence of holes in the eyes and around the head suggests that when in use they were costumed, perhaps with beaded crowns, in the case of rulers, or with feathers and other strings of beads, in the case of diviners. Several of the brasses show pronounced striations on the face, and sometimes on the lower lip, reminding us of the power of bodily-markings to socialize and fix the person in a role and a status. Most interesting of all, many of the necks had large holes – some with remains of metal nails in them – suggesting that these heads had been mounted on something else: perhaps a wooden body, perhaps a stout pole used to carry as well as to mount them.

How did these figures "live" for those who gazed upon them, knew their whereabouts, or carried them? If figures such as these were designed to "bring down" a spirit from above – to give it form down here, on earth – then how were these forms arranged in a play, a ritual drama of meaning and efficacy? Male figures depict men as hunters, warriors, doctors or diviners, drummers, kings, wild animals, and as a woman's partner. Female figures depict women as mothers, priestesses, birds, and as a man's partner. Many of the heads were found in sacred groves, dedicated to one or another of the many deities in the Yoruba pantheon. This suggests that they were containers for the spirits of their likenesses and that they enjoyed many lives as useful bearers of the power to assist their supplicants in divining the correct choices to make at key crossroads in their lives. They were buried, dug up, and reburied. Odd collections of pieces and parts and entire heads and busts have been found together. The brasses found in this grove included figures of king and queen that may have served as their doubles during annual rites of purification and renewal. These figures were both containers of the deity Olokun's capacity to bring wealth in the form of beads from overseas (or across large rivers) and they were objects of supplication intended to activate that capacity for a particular person. In the last few centuries before 1400 CE, the skill and volume of production of these items seems to have reached its height.

Of this rich tradition, perhaps no other figure represents the ideology of gender complementarity better than a paired queen and king found at Ita Yemọọ, beside the road to Ilesha, just northeast of Ifẹ. Made sometime between 1000 and 1200 CE, this complex sculpture expresses the gender parity that centered royal power and, at the same time, it copies a deeper argument about gender parity as the basis for founding communities and establishing governments. The royal pair grasp and wear the items of power, the things that symbolize their capacity to rule, their authority or *ashẹ*. Their crowns differ: hers is flanged, his is a tight cap. They are otherwise clad in virtually similar fashion. One scholar has observed of that linking male and female that it "is expressive of the cultural theme of the dependence of the sexes upon one another for the actualization of their essential natures (*iwa*)."[21] Those essential – and essentialized – natures ensured and promoted the prosperity, health, and safety of the source of all life, Ile-Ifẹ even though their complementarity could not efface individual capacities to destroy and create.

Many brass objects present males and females as equals and many myths tell how the elders who founded towns and villages either traveled with these paired figures or commissioned a brass caster to make new ones.[22] The representation of gender

parity encodes the opposition of different forms of power that may be symbolized by genitalia, which are invested with different meanings. Males and their penises may be both creative – sources of children – and destructive – weapons for killing. Women and their vaginas may be secretive and covert in their capacity to destroy and create. In story, ritual, and these paired brasses, male and female are not opposed so much as they bear complex complementarities that require each other. The emphasis on heterosexual complementarity is strikingly hegemonic.

Benin In the forest to the south and east of Ile-Ifẹ, Benin city emerged at the turn of the first millennium CE, growing from ancient roots into a leading urban center by 1200. By the fourteenth century CE, rulers in this city were raising armies and undertaking a series of alternately expansionist and defensive moves. In a few hundred years Edo rulers expanded the gendered language of authority to include organized warfare. The largely ritualized capacity of rulers to take life – by sacrifice – was now supplemented by a form of social violence much harder to contain and control. The historical development of warfare is expressed clearly in the many brass and ivory plaques and sculpture from Benin.

The Edo-speakers who built Benin City, shared a deep past with their Yoruba and Igbo speaking neighbors and the phenomenology of Edo art shares some key concepts with its Yoruba-speaking neighbors. The concept of the head as the embodiment of a person's individual destiny and the notion of ase as the power to make things happen are common to the two societies. Important parts of the pantheon are shared as well, like many of the deities (orisha), such as Olokun. Edo artists focused strongly on the nature of power and capacity. Gender figured prominently in these representations, nowhere more so than in court art.

In their sculpture, Edo artists expressed gender differences through clothing, hairstyles, and, especially, tattoos.[23] With a few exceptions, such as the figures dedicated to Olokun, the giver of children, vernacular arts mute the depiction of sexual difference. Genitalia are not represented and the depiction of breasts does not always indicate sex. In Edo royal symbolism, beads figured prominently, but the richest beads were made from red coral, not from glass or stone. These striking red coral beads were used for everything from royal veils to full-length royal cassocks. They were held to contain power – *ase* – to transform things, to effect outcomes. Brass, ivory, and red coral beads were rare in Benin and only certain individuals could work with these media. Their restricted use expressed power and high standing.[24]

Two sorts of altars – to the head and to the hand – and their furnishings convey core elements of a theory of action shared by commoner and royal alike. The "altar to the head" is the place where one makes offerings at annual ceremonies that are designed to help the head grasp an individual's destiny. The head is the seat of reason and a person's reason shapes a person's capacity to live out her life's core questions, to realize her potential. The "altar to the hand," the right hand, is where one offers words and sacrifices designed to help secure the outcome of one's actions. The hand gets one the wealth and prestige one desires. Edo-speakers combine a notion of destiny with a theory of self-aware individual effort to advance a larger argument about the centrality of competition, self-reliance, and stamina to a healthy social body. Ordinary men and women, no less than royal men and women, could through a combination of destiny and deeds, enter historical memory by being enshrined in

local cults or recalled in masquerades and oral traditions. These successes could be gendered in ambiguous ways.

Commemorating queen-mothers in Benin royal art is a fine example of this. In the century just after 1400, according to published traditions, the *Oba* ("ruler") of Benin, Esigie (r. 1504–50), introduced an innovation in the titled structure of Edo royalty. He created the title of queen-mother, *Iyoba* (*Iya-Oba*, "mother-ruler"), bestowed it on his own mother, recalled as Idia, and built her a palace. Every ruler since that time has done the same. Idia became an icon of royal female power – a woman who went to war, a woman who used the power she had accumulated in her life to assist her son in becoming ruler of Benin, a woman who possessed enormous skill and knowledge in the healing arts. Any *Iyoba* had successfully competed with all the other royal wives – *iloi* – to bear the first son to a ruler. People understood that a combination of destiny and her individual effort had delivered this success to the *Iyoba*.

Idia's position in official and popular Edo history coincided with the moment when Benin came into contact with Portuguese traders, who fought as paid mercenaries in Benin's armies and introduced new arms and new forms of wealth to Benin, from the 1480s CE onwards. Her commemorative art often includes representations of these mercenaries. Idia is also represented as a priestess to her ancestral shrine. She thus bears the burden of conveying the deepest traditions of royal female power, which drift back into the days of the founding of Ile-Ifẹ, and she stands as a figure most energetically engaged with the first phases of the historical era that ended, some might say, when a British force destroyed and looted the royal palace in 1897. She is not depicted as the female counterpart to her son, the Oba. Instead, she is shown wearing the clothing and headdresses of high-ranking chiefs. In the grammar of royal court art, the Iyoba's power and standing are, in important ways, separate from her son's. This may represent the fact that her achievement in bearing the Oba reflects both her destiny to do so and her own individual effort and success in bringing that off.

These associations and representations of the Iyoba express an idealized image of a woman and her life cycle. She moved from being a daughter and a sister through the stage of being a wife and a mother to arrive at widowhood. She lived in a competitive relationship with other wives in a polygynous household, where among other things, she sought to conceive the husband's first son. Body image was important: a slender, well-proportioned and smooth-skinned look was the ideal. Manner was important, too: a restrained intelligence combined with a faithful submissiveness were ideals. This complex bundle of stereotypes expressed the terms and conditions under which women like the Iyoba could achieve political power and a degree of social immortality embodied in their sculpted forms. Yet, later historical records and oral traditions tell us about "troublesome" women, "runaway wives" and others, who were "envious" of their sisters or "quarreled" with their husbands. We will not see women like this in such media as royal court art even though the established path to female power, never easy to tread, was not for everyone.

Some Gendered Themes in Early African History

Gendered histories of ancient Africa rest on an overlapping set of categories that highlight significant common characteristics across much of the continent's history prior

to the fifteenth century CE. These categories include the practices and theories of health and healing, notions of property and knowledge, and modes of power and capacity. Together, these features of ancient African gendered history paint a vivid picture of complexity and innovation.

Health and healing was a field of great social importance, bringing together the making of gendered persons and knowledge about the core issues of living: relating body and spirit, keeping the circle of life intact through children, and mediating the corrosive or otherwise dangerous effects of centralized, instrumental power held by leaders – whether a priest of Amun or the head of a homestead. Knowledge of healing was shared, but not all fields of expertise were open to both men and women. Marking young bodies at the moment that their reproductive capacities emerged made them gendered persons, but initiation also propelled young people to a new point in the cycle of life. Facing the daunting challenges and potential rewards of motherhood and fatherhood, each person would have to draw on a number of pools of support to succeed as an adult: his or her individual capacity; membership in a lineage, a clan, a village, and other social or artisan groups; the capacity of departed relatives or illustrious leaders; complex theories of action and ethics expressed in relations between persons and gods. Further research into the historical development of health and healing and of capacities transferred or denied to people as they moved through the life cycle will enhance our understanding of how early Africans made gender.

Gendered forms of controlling property in Africa intersected historically with other categories, such as class, mode of subsistence, and life cycle. Women farmers controlled their granaries and the economics of labor allocation and seed distribution, but where men farmed, they controlled these things. Almost universally, women controlled food preparation, but upper-class women, including royal women, did no such work. Almost universally, men controlled metallurgical activities, including the making of weapons and jewelry, but in many settings, particular lineages or casted groups controlled this knowledge and royal women were often associated closely with warfare.

The conventional claim that women's power flows from motherhood would sound very familiar to many in Africa before 1400 CE, but the category of mother and motherhood was never limited to biological and social reproduction alone. Queen-mothers, common in African royalty, were powerful alliance-builders and kingmakers, skilled and knowledgeable healers, and often makers of war. These women were often post-menopausal, a condition which both blurred and defined gendered boundaries.

Similarly, the conventional claim that adult men possessed power as a result of their facility with destruction – as warriors and hunters – would be unexceptional to many residents in Africa before 1400 CE. But these categories were never limited to physical destruction alone. Older men and older women often had access to and wielded different modes of very similar powers to destroy and create.

Much remains to be done in writing the gendered histories of ancient Africa, but we have come a long way from the view that African history before the 1500s, if it could be written at all, was the history of trade and statecraft alone. As this chapter has made clear, we can now say something of value about the social life of ordinary men and women as well as rulers (even if we know little about earlier and later stages in their life-cycles); and about the philosophies of social justice and the ideologies of

social agency that both imbued gender with power and authority and marked off gender *per se* as of only limited importance in social life.

NOTES

1 This chapter will not deal with Islam in Africa, nor will it deal with Madagascar, and it will have very little to say on Saharan societies.
2 Solomon (1994), 346.
3 Colleen Kriger, *Pride of Men: Iron-working in Ninth Century West Central Africa* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1999), chapters 1 and 2.
4 The practice of elongating a young woman's labia – often as part of a longer period of transition to puberty – is common in Bantu-speaking Africa. It is understood to promote sexual pleasure for parties to sexual encounters.
5 Mary H. Nooter, "Fragments of Forsaken Glory: Luba Royal Culture Invented and Represented (1883–1992) (Zaire)," in Beumers and Koloss (1992), 79–89.
6 See James Pritchett *The Lunda-Ndembu: Style, Change, and Social Transformation in South Central Africa* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2001).
7 Nurse and Spear (1985), 73–9. For the history of Kilwa, interpreted thus by Nurse and Spear, see (anonymous) "The Ancient History of Kilwa Kisiwani," in G. S. P. Freeman-Grenville (ed.) *The East African Coast: Select Documents from the first to the earlier nineteenth century* (London: Rex Collings, 1975), 221–6.
8 Anonymous, "Ancient History of Kilwa," 221.
9 From the later eighteenth century, with the growth of a plantation economy based on sugar, patrician women held rights in this sort of land.
10 Though part of the ancient world, Aksum's capital retained a distinctively Ethiopian layout, with elite buildings and burials in its center and lower-status, agricultural, and craft-making activities confined to outlying areas, separated from the center by open land. There were no defensive walls though its boundaries to the north and east were clearly marked with bilingual stone inscription.
11 The account comes from a contemporary Latin writer, Rufinus. He received it from Aedesius of Tyre who had been with Frumentius in the royal household at Aksum as a prisoner and servant. A full translation appears in Munro-Hay (1991), 202–4.
12 Kush refers to the lands up the Nile from Wawat, a territory immediately to the south of Egypt's traditional border at Aswan. Napata was the name of the region around a major religious complex of Jebel Barkal, just down stream from the fourth cataract. Today this entire region is more commonly known as Nubia after the Noba or Nuba-speaking peoples who moved into the region after the collapse of Kush. In Aksum, the place and the people were called Kasu or Kashta. Sometimes the territory of Meroë is included in the territory named Kush.
13 Pomerantseva (1994), 166, 168.
14 Looting has erased the archeological provenience of the majority of these pieces, making it very difficult to read them historically.
15 Herbert M. Cole, *Icons: Ideals and Power in the Art of Africa* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989), 74.
16 Ivor Wilks, "The History of the Sunjata Epic: A Review of the Evidence," in Austen (1999), 44–9.
17 David C. Conrad, "Mooning Armies and Mothering Heroes: Female Power in Mande Epic Tradition," in Austen (1999), 189–229.

18 Specialists using the lost-wax technique for casting metal objects apply wax to a blank core, sculpt the wax into the image they desire to create, then cover the sculpted wax surface with clay, heat the entire thing, pour out the molten wax and replace it with molten metal. Thus "lost wax" or *cire perdue*, in French.
19 The new chronology rests on recalibrated carbon-14 dates from carbonized material from different sites bearing Nok sculptures. Thermoluminescence dates from the terracotta itself together with another set of carbon-14 dates from carbonized internal wooden structures inside some of the larger sculptures, push the dates back to 1000 BCE; see de Grunne (1998), 18–20.
20 See Henry J. Drewal, "Ife: Origins of Art and Civilization," in Drewal, Pemberton, and Abiọdun (1989), 45–76.
21 Ibid., 71.
22 Ibid., 66–71.
23 Only non-royal women tattoo their faces.
24 Amos and Girshick (1995); Flora Edouwaye S. Kaplan, "Images of the Queen Mother in Benin Court Art," *African Arts* 26, 3 (1993), 55–63, 86–87; *idem*, "Iyoba, The Queen Mother of Benin: Images and Ambiguity in Gender and Sex Roles in Court Art," in Kaplan (1997), 73–102.

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Chapter Fourteen

Confucian Complexities: China, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam

Vivian-Lee Nyitray

Overview

With a view of itself much like the pole star around which the various constellations move and reconfigure, China was for centuries truly "the Middle Kingdom." Its various ideologies – political, economic, social, aesthetic, religio-philosophical, and sex-gender – exerted enormous influence on its neighbors, creating "Sino-Japanese," "Sino-Korean," "Sino-Vietnamese," and "Sino-Khmer" cultural forms that endure to the present. However, each of these cultures managed to retain distinctive social mores that tempered the influence of Chinese notions about family structure, governance, and ethics, and of the interlocking sex-gender system that developed in tandem with the rise of the expansionist Chinese Han dynasty at the turn of the first millennium. In Japan, matrifocality was only gradually displaced by Confucian patriarchal structures; in Korea, legislation regarding widow chastity and widow remarriage was more pervasive and severe than had ever been the case in China. Certain practices, such as foot-binding, never spread beyond China. Other customs developed in China but were differently interpreted, encouraged, or enforced when adopted elsewhere within the sphere of Chinese cultural influence.

Even within China, there was never a monolithic "Chinese" culture. Class and clan identities always mitigated social practice, as did the distinctive demands of urban vs. rural life, or cultural center vs. periphery. Certain historical periods were more or less "Confucian" or "Taoist" or "Buddhist" in overall orientation. Nonetheless, China was remarkably homogeneous when viewed on a grand, bureaucratic scale, and it was indisputably the dominant cultural entity in East Asia and parts of Southeast Asia until the modern era; for these reasons, much of this chapter will concentrate on foundational notions of gender in China, with reference to distinctive patterns elsewhere as applicable. Finally, it should be borne in mind that the volume of studies of women's history relative to China, Japan, Korea, and Southeast Asia is far less than is available for Western Europe and North America, and thus much remains to be discovered about the details of women's lives at every social level in every time and in every place.

Origins of Gender Hierarchy

Historian Du Fangqin suggests that a combination of early divination and classification systems deriving from the *Book of Changes* (the *Zhouyi*, also known as the *Yijing*) and *Book of Documents* (*Shangshu* or, later, the *Shujing*), respectively, was the source for the hierarchical and gendered notions of Heaven and Earth that ultimately came to encompass all binary relationships cosmic and earthly (Du, 1995). At least by the time of the Western Zhou dynasty (1045–771 BCE), the *Book of Changes* had already established binary oppositional concepts such as inner and outer, principal and subordinate, noble and humble, and ruler and minister. During the Eastern Zhou (770–221 BCE), the complementary concepts of *yang* and *yin* were correlated to Heaven and Earth, and also to the divinatory trigrams that represented them: *qian* (Heaven) and *kun* (Earth). The Zhou rulers expanded these correlative relationships and asserted a natural order among Heaven, Earth, and humankind, thereby constructing a model for human hierarchy and an ideology of dominance. The ultimate conflation of all these doctrines yielded patterns of correspondence in which men were likened to the dominant forces of Heaven, the sun, and the ruler, and women were the subordinate partners – Earth, moon, and ministers of state. Such hierarchical correlations continued to multiply throughout the Zhou, among the earliest of which was the assignment of "vigor" to *yang* and "tenderness" to *yin* (Du, 1995: esp. 144ff.). In this way, the inexorable conflation of sex and gender in Chinese correlative cosmological thinking was established.

The Confucian tradition has borne the blame for the segregation and silencing of women throughout China's history, but it is important to note that patrilocality and patrilinealism predated Confucianism by centuries. Moreover, pre-existent patrilineal values and practical kinship demands mitigated later patriarchal hierarchies to some degree. Monogamy served to protect the integrity of patrilineal property by restricting inheritance to division among legitimate sons; while concubinage was tolerated for those able to afford it, social and legal concerns were accorded solely to the wife. And although a woman's value was almost entirely determined by her role as wife and producer of heirs, mothers were held in high esteem; the historical records celebrate filial sons who sacrificed themselves on behalf of their mothers' welfare, thereby protecting patrilineal interests (Hinsch, 2002: 11).

An interesting balancing act between patriarchal and patrilineal property notions may be found in the relative importance of brideprice (indicative of the woman's status as property) and dowry (indicative of the woman's role in carrying her natal family's property to her in-laws). During the Han, records indicate dowries of significant size relative to brideprice. Early imperial law implicitly recognized dowries as the property of the wife and under her control; in the case of her divorce, it was to be returned to her. Ownership of property gave women some rights, but more importantly, gave her some leverage in her status as wife. One other means whereby a woman could exercise power under the terms of the patrilineal system stemmed from her multiple responsibilities to support her husband's endeavors, to care for her in-laws, and to nurture her children: if a man was incapacitated and unable to provide for the household, a woman might rightfully step in and manage "the household," including familial business and property affairs.

Under normal circumstances, women managed the domestic affairs of cooking, cleaning, childcare, and ritual preparations. Elite women would have had help in these matters, and non-elite women would share these duties among the various female members of the extended family. Beyond these tasks was textile production – ranging from the cultivation of cotton, hemp, mulberry trees, and silkworms, to spinning, weaving, dying, and finishing – all of which were considered the province of women. Elite women might embroider rather than tend silkworms, but all were involved in some aspect of this highly gendered and crucially important work. In some areas, women banded together into cooperatives, spinning together in order to economize on light and fuel costs. Cloth could be used to pay taxes, making women's work extremely valuable.

Pre-Confucian texts such as the *Book of Odes* provide some documentation of women's lives in their homes and out in the fields; many of these songs or poems, doubtless authored by women, are written in their voice and display an often surprising degree of sometimes fiercely independent thought and action. During the Zhou dynasty and on into the Han (206 BCE–220 CE), several political and philosophical-religious ideologies vied for acceptance. With regard to Confucianism, there is nothing in the early texts of the tradition to suggest that women are inherently inferior. Confucius himself had remarkably little to say about women, noting only that, like "petty men," they are "difficult to deal with" – presumably because of their lack of education (*Analects* 17.25). Of the early Confucian interpreters, Mengzi (371–289 BCE) in particular acknowledged the predominant social view of women as subordinate to men but did not advocate their isolation or oppression. Confucianism gained ascendancy in the Han when it was decreed the established tradition, and texts such as the *Book of Odes* formed the basis for education toward civil service. Unfortunately, a longstanding tradition of anachronistic political allegories in what were now the Confucian "classics" made it increasingly difficult to see or hear accurately the women of those earlier texts and times. Real women – rather than the inherently inferior and disruptive essentialized woman – became increasingly difficult to find in the emergent Confucian canon (Nyitray, 2000).

What happened in the Han dynasty to cause this essentialist shift? Following on centuries of civil warfare, the early Han was a period of great optimism and stability. The imperial court was naturally desirous of maintaining this state of affairs and it embarked on an ambitious policy of discerning the ways in which the emperor and his ministers might conduct themselves in accord with the natural workings of Heaven, thus hoping to ensure the auspicious outcome of their actions. Popular cosmological speculations of all kinds, and of *yin-yang* theories in particular, were melded with Confucian ideas of rulership and the hierarchy of human relationships. *Yin-yang* qualities and relationships were exhaustively catalogued so that every possible facet of human biological and social behavior and concern was included, from body parts, familial relationships, and emotions to musical notes, colors, tastes, and military ranks.

It was the Confucian syncretist Dong Zhongshu (*c.*195–105 BCE) who asserted the primacy of *yang* over *yin* in the service of constructing a model of rulership. This association of the ruler with *yang* and the ruled with *yin* confirmed the necessary dominance of *yang* – associated with strength, growth, light, and life – in all of the now-gendered hierarchies that proliferated. Although Confucians stressed that every

person harbored both *yang*-rationality and *yin*-emotionality, the latter was seen as prone to cause confusion and error. In this way, *yang*-related qualities and those possessing them came to be accorded a morally superior status.

The Han preoccupation with appropriate and auspicious behavior spurred the development of a new literary genre, the "arranged biography" (*liezhuan*), in which lives were displayed to illustrate exemplary behaviors (or lack thereof). With regard to women, the most famous collection is that of Liu Xiang (77–6 BCE), whose *Biographies of Exemplary Women* (*Lienü zhuan*) offered cameo portraits of wise mothers and virtuous wives who exemplify core Confucian values such as filiality and loyalty. Significantly, the female subjects of these biographies are not passive in the fulfillment of their subordinate role: they remonstrate with husbands, sons, and even their rulers – urging all to fulfill their own responsibilities to family and state. As attested by the *Biographies of Exemplary Women*, women were not devoid of the capacity for virtue or talent, but their deepening association with *yin* worked to undercut perceptions of their abilities, particularly in terms of intellect and rationality (Raphals, 1998). A later redaction of the text included a cautionary section on disruptive and dangerous women, as if to underscore the true nature of most women.

This rising sense of women's innate capacity to disturb order and harmony is evident in a series of didactic books for women that began to circulate in the late Han, beginning with Ban Zhao's (*c.*48–*c.*120 CE) *Instructions for Women* (*Nüjie*). Ban Zhao was herself an imperial tutor who advocated women's education, but this did not stem from the belief that women had capacities equal to those of men. Rather, she saw a woman's education as necessary in order to ensure that she be properly submissive to her husband and his family, and effective in her performance of family ancestral rites. A woman's goal was to be diligent in establishing a private household atmosphere in which men would be supported in their public endeavors.

Throughout the ensuing centuries, didactic texts for women and for children multiplied, and in addition to translations of the most popular Chinese texts such as the eighth-century *Classic of Filial Piety for Women* (*Nü xiaojing*), new texts were developed for local women as Confucianism spread to neighboring countries. Two phrases summarize the framework these didactic texts provide for women's experience. The first phrase, "men go out, women stay in" (*nan wei nü nei*), reinforced the notion of public vs. private as separate spheres of action and authority for men and women. The elite bias of this dictum is obvious; farmers, herdspeople, and small shopkeepers and artisans could hardly afford to lose the labor of half their households. In the case of the separation of the sexes, general socioeconomic status and the particular dictates of climate and topography on a household's core occupation often necessitated the honoring of this dictate more in the breach than in the practice. There were even a few rare points in the early imperial period when women as well as men were conscripted by the government for *corvée* labor.

The second phrase refers to "thrice-following" (*san cong*), a complex and historically misunderstood (and misapplied) concept. Originating in the *Book of Rites* (*Liji*), the diktat clarified women's roles as "following" father, husband, and son in matters of ritual dress and protocol – all of which were determined by social rank. The intention of the text was to confirm the fact that a household's status was dependent upon the social level of the male head of household. Later interpretations expanded the

scope of "following" into a notion of submission to male authority, explaining the usual interpretation of the phrase as "three obediences."

Thrice-following would seem to leave no room for the dissolution of marriage but divorce was possible, if unevenly available. Men could divorce their wives on the basis of any of seven conditions ranging from the failure to produce a son, failure to serve her in-laws, promiscuity, theft, and disease, to loquacity and jealousy. Women could defend themselves on the following three grounds:

(1) if she had mourned her parents-in-law, she was now linked to them permanently;
(2) if she had been the wife of youth and poverty, i.e., if she facilitated her husband's rise, she now could not be dismissed; and
(3) she could not be divorced if it would render her homeless and devoid of support.

Women could sue for divorce for a variety of reasons, but the potential consequences were severe. Patrilineal demands meant that a divorced woman could have no claim on her husband's family, including her own children. Unless her natal family would agree to take her back or unless she had grown sons who would support her, an elite woman contemplating divorce would be consigning herself to a life of poverty and social isolation. The cost of maintaining an unmarried woman for decades was significant, and thus a widow from the lower socioeconomic ranks might well be married out again as soon as ritually and practically possible. In all cases, sons were ritually proscribed from mourning a divorced mother after her death.

For all its sway, however, Confucianism was never the only ideological force in early and early imperial China. Alongside the literary-bureaucratic-familial model of Confucianism were other traditions; with regard to women and gender, Taoism and the constellation of folk traditions, especially shamanism, are of particular interest. Local shamanic cults afforded some women avenues to spiritual and communal authority that the intellectual-philosophical traditions did not; moreover, these traditions predated the "literary" traditions by centuries and thus represent the oldest evidence of autonomous female authority.

Shamans, or *wu*, were ecstatic healers, exorcists, and diviners whose power derived from either possession by and/or association with various tutelary deities. Many of these ritual specialists were female, and scholarly speculation is that the profession originally may have been the province of women. During the Shang Dynasty (*c.*1766–1027 BCE), female *wu* served as chief officiants at rites of supplication and propitiation directed at deities of heaven, earth, rivers, and other natural entities. An important duty was that of summoning the rain to ensure crop growth and a favorable harvest. Shamans also functioned as diviners, but they shared this duty with astrologers; it is not clear whether they performed small-scale or domestic healing rituals during this era. In the Zhou period, however, and even as late as the Han, historical records indicate that accomplished *wu* were highly sought-after as personal physicians and fortune-tellers to the privileged classes.

The Taoist tradition has been long misunderstood by Western scholars, who only recently have begun to differentiate it from a vast conglomeration of local sectarian cults and traditions. For the purposes of this chapter, classical Taoism is the form of

the tradition that flourished from the fourth century BCE through the first century CE. Liturgical Taoism refers to the tradition as it evolved from the second century onward, by which point many of the functions of the earlier *wu* traditions had been assumed by local sectarian Taoist priests or ritual specialists, or else had been coopted into the broadly syncretistic "folk" tradition, wherein shamans served as adjuncts to local temples of all sorts.

Western commentators have long tended to valorize the text of the *Tao Te Ching* (*Daodejing*), citing the prominence of female and "feminine" imagery. The sustaining cosmic principle, the Tao, is referred to as "mother," and the ideal practitioner is enjoined to mimic the "valley spirit" in its non-aggression and passive acceptance of whatever changes time might bring. In contrast to the Confucian "gentleman," the Taoist sage played the yielding *yin* role, eschewing social prominence and active engagement in affairs of the world. Often overlooked in this romanticized view was the reality that the text's intended audience was the literate male population of the feudal courts of the time, whose dominant interests were rhetoric and politics. Thus for all the "feminine" imagery of the *Tao Te Ching*, the early literary-philosophical tradition held little relevance to women.

It is with the development of liturgical Taoism that women played active, public roles of influence and authority, often on a par with men. The Celestial Masters sect, founded in the late Han, admitted women as well as men to the priesthood. During the Six Dynasties era (222–589 CE), roles for women proliferated: there were celebrated Taoist priests, nuns, lay adepts, recluses, and warrior heroes. By the end of this period, women's and men's spiritual practices and achievements differed only slightly (Cahill, 1990). Some sectarian traditions recognized women as receivers of cosmic truth, e.g., the Chingwei tradition was founded in 900 CE by a woman who had received celestial instruction in "thunder rites," whereby a priest harnesses the spiritual power of thunder and then uses that internalized force to heal others. The renaissance of Confucianism in the twelfth century marginalized Taoism. Moreover, the broad social diffusion of Confucian concepts such as "men go out, women stay in," "thrice-following," and the ideal of "wise wife and good mother" led to the general diminution of women's visibility within Taoist traditions, even as individual exemplary adepts and teachers continued to distinguish themselves down to the present.

Finally, although much might be made of the prominence of "Taoist" female deities and Buddhist celestial beings in the general Chinese "folk" pantheon, the prevalence of divine females does not necessarily have any positive effects on the lives of human women. Although women were (and are) the most frequent worshippers of divine female figures, pollution fears surrounding menstruation and childbirth historically made temple precincts periodically off-limits to women of childbearing age. Financial and spiritual authority thus tended to be vested in men. Not until a woman was post-menopausal might she freely and daily participate in temple business.

To return to the consideration of state ideology, it happened that following the dissolution of the Han dynasty in 220 CE, China fell into an extended period of disunion. During this period, which witnessed the rise of both liturgical Taoism and Buddhism, the ambivalence with which women were regarded, and the strictures placed upon their activities, varied significantly by locale, dynastic authority, and socioeconomic class. Exemplary biographies and didactic works continued to be produced throughout this period, but there was also some relaxation of customs isolating

women from their natal families. In fact, the Tang dynasty (618–907) legal code recognized even a married-out daughter's right to inherit property in certain cases.

The Song dynasty (960–1279) was a watershed period in Chinese history in every way. During this period, the population doubled to nearly one hundred million; there were mass migrations of that population to the south, typically to avoid war; commercial expansion fueled the growth of urbanism; the invention of printing began to expand the range of literacy downward through the population; the establishment of the civil service examination system created a new class of lower-level scholar bureaucrats of at least modest means; and interregional trade and contact increased greatly. Most crucially for women, Confucianism enjoyed a renaissance in the form of neo-Confucianism, a blending of classical Confucian moralism and political structures with interior spiritual techniques borrowed from Buddhism and Taoism. The emphasis was on introspection and meditative reading, the elimination of distraction, and the quieting of passion. As men in pursuit of moral and spiritual advancement were unable to rid themselves of temptations of the flesh, women were increasingly identified as the locus of distraction and thus in need of regulation. Consequently, the Song witnessed the significant diminution of women's status in Chinese society.

The gendered association of erotic dominance and submission/dependence also deepened, and it was in the Song that footbinding began to spread beyond the courtesan community to the homes of the elite. Scholars disagree as to the reasons behind the diffusion of this crippling practice, but Patricia Ebrey has offered the following:

> Footbinding was an alteration of the body that changed everything about a woman's physical being. Because the ideal upper-class man was by Song times a relatively subdued and refined figure, he might seem effeminate unless women could be made even more delicate, reticent, and stationary. What better than tiny feet to accomplish this?
>
> (1993: 41)

Whatever the origins and rationale, a trend toward ever-tinier feet continued, and modern debate over this instance of women's participation in their own mutilation is far from settled.

At the same time as footbinding increasingly restricted women's movements, however, legal records confirm that women's property rights expanded. As in the much earlier Han dynasty, women's dowries typically were deemed their own property; the difference in the Song was that this property could have enormous value, and its disposition enormous consequences. In at least some cases, this development marked an increase in women's status, at least potentially within the eyes of prospective and actual in-laws. Additionally, as women controlled the production of textiles – an industry that was rapidly commercializing – women had a significant opportunity for greater wealth.

Yet the economic expansion that brought these positive changes was accompanied by other socioeconomics shifts that turned out less favorably for a great many women – those who met the rising market demand for maids, concubines, slaves, courtesans, and prostitutes. The buying and selling of women threatened kinship lines, a fact not lost on "Confucian" literati, who struggled to maintain a sense of clear kinship and social roles and associated moral-ritual requirements. In recognition of women's role as primary transmitters of culture, Confucian scholars since the Han had advocated

at least a rudimentary education for women, if for no other reason than to enable them to initiate the education of their sons properly. In the Song, the rising lower-rank literati class often strongly advocated the education of daughters for the same reason, even as its members were troubled about the other uses to which women might put their literacy, such as poetry. In short, during the Song, evidence suggests a society struggling with contradictory opinions with regard to women (Ebrey, 1993). The full force of gender ambivalence, however, was not manifest until neo-Confucianism was established as state orthodoxy in the later Yuan and Ming dynasties (1280–1368 CE; 1368–1644 CE), at which time the cults of filiality, widow chastity, and erotic (dis)regard for women reached their apogee.

Korea

The development of Korean culture clearly owes much to the influence of China: its classical writing system, its educational system, its political institutions, its major art forms, and so on. What is sometimes overlooked is the extent of Korean cultural uniqueness and its independence from Chinese influence. Owing to a degree of geographic isolation from major Chinese cultural centers, and to its linguistic isolation (its Altaic language is distinct from Chinese and much closer to Japanese), Korea managed, despite its peninsular location and occasional subordination to Chinese rule, to cultivate and maintain a significant sense of its own identity. The historical interplay between native identity and Chinese influence dramatically affected the scope of social roles available to women.

The position of women in early Korean society is the subject of some debate, particularly in terms of whether women always dominated shamanic traditions as they do today. The argument against the prehistoric primacy of female shamanic authority holds that these traditions were originally male-dominated, becoming feminized only once social change elevated men to superior positions. In this view, once women became marginalized and deprived, they were ripe for claiming surrogate authority through the mechanism of spirit possession. While an interesting argument, its claims are weakened by long-standing, documented traditions of female shamanism in neighboring cultures. The Korean shamaness, or *mudang* (same character as Chinese *wu* and Japanese *miko*) acted not only on behalf of individuals, but also on behalf of entire communities to ward off dangerous influences and to ensure health and general welfare. A *mudang*'s abilities, endowed by the ancestors as well as independent deities, rendered her a significant local figure. It is true, however, that the authority exercised by shamans was (and is) gendered, i.e., they purify households and villages, exorcise illness-causing spirits, and ease the passage of the souls of the deceased – all of which are extensions of traditional "wifely" duties of cleaning, caring, and comforting.

During the fourth century, the vitality of outpost Chinese colonies on the Korean peninsula waned, and Korea's disparate clans united into three kingdoms – the Koguryŏ in the north, Paekche in the southwest, and Silla in the southeast. All three kingdoms welcomed Buddhism, and nunneries housed women of singular ability. In the Paekche, a nun by the name of Pŏpmyŏng traveled to Japan and achieved a reputation as a powerful healer. Historical works such as *Samgukchidongijŏn* or *Susŏgoguyŏjŏn* suggest that relations between the sexes in Koguryŏ were quite free, with men and women gathering in groups together to sing and dance. Love matches

were valued by members of both higher and lower social classes – a custom the Chinese deemed wanton.

From the late seventh century through the tenth century, Korea was unified under the Silla dynasty, and the liberality of relationship continued. In the succeeding Koryŏ dynasty, despite the increasing influence of a revitalizing Chinese Confucianism, women were still relatively free. Indeed, Chinese ambassadors reported seeing nude bathers of both sexes swimming together. Approximately 70 percent of extant collections of Koryŏ songs have been identified as works of women expressing their thoughts and emotions.

Gradually, however, the ideals of silence, submission, and chastity grew in importance. With the founding of the Yi dynasty (1392–1910) came profound social change, occasioned in great measure by the suppression of Buddhism and the adoption of Confucianism as state ideology. The state apparatus of civil control chipped away at women's historical rights and privileges of inheritance, of mobility and action outside the home, and of their legal status as wives and mothers. Consideration of the Yi dynasty is beyond the purview of this essay, but it is arguable that over time, Korean strictures on women – and particularly on widows – eventually surpassed even those of the most stringent periods of Chinese orthodoxy.

Southeast Asia: Vietnam

Evidence exists that trading routes ran between India and China through Southeast Asia from at least the third century BCE, a situation which marked the history of Vietnam as both crossroads and battleground. The southern portion of the peninsula was dominated by Indian influence, while Chinese influences held sway in the north. During the expansionist campaigns of the early Han dynasty in the second century BCE, the existing Au Lac kingdom in northern Vietnam was invaded and annexed. It was not until the tenth century CE that the Vietnamese gained independence and established their own state of Dai Viet.

Despite Chinese domination in the north, Vietnamese culture was more similar to the cultures of its Southeast Asian neighbors than to China. Women enjoyed relatively higher social status and held property and inheritance rights. Water-rice agriculture was the economic mainstay, and it led quite naturally to cults of nature deities, a great many of whom were female and worshipped in their maternal forms.

Indian monks traveled the trade routes, bringing with them the texts and traditions of early Theravada Buddhism. In its early years, Theravada combined with indigenous traditions to surprising effect. A characteristic unique to Vietnamese Buddhism is a tendency, despite the popular Theravadin assertion of female karmic inferiority, to revere *yin* or feminine qualities. In an agricultural and deltaic culture, appreciation for *yin*-associated elements such as earth and water is not surprising. What is significant is evidence from some ancient pagodas in ethnic minority areas indicating that the deities worshipped were designated as "male Buddha" (*But duc*) and "female Buddha" (*But cai*) – a linguistic convention in defiance of Theravadin doctrine that only males can achieve Buddhahood.

Mahayana Buddhism entered the country in the fourth century CE and was bolstered by the many Chinese monks who fled persecution and took refuge far from the centers of political power in the north. Mahayana's more egalitarian view of

gender and lay spiritual authority found ready acceptance among the Vietnamese. After Vietnam gained a degree of independence from China in 938, Buddhism in both its Theravada and Mahayana forms flourished until the founding of the Later Le dynasty in 1428. At this time, Confucianism grew to be the state religion and its more restrictive view of gender roles, both secular and sacred, was adopted.

The process of Confucianization had begun far earlier in the north due to Chinese control of the north. During the Ly Dynasty (1010–1225) and Tran Dynasty (1226–1428), northern Vietnamese sought to displace their own less-patriarchal customs and rituals with those observed in the Chinese courts, leading to a circumscription of women's roles that persisted until the modern postcolonial era. However, in much the same fashion as in China, textile production provided women with their own means of livelihood and a modicum of social power. Although the Chinese attributed the origins of sericulture to an ancient Chinese culture goddess, the Vietnamese asserted their own cultural origins for the manufacturing process, tying it to a Vietnamese princess.

Japan

Unlike Korea and Vietnam, Japan never suffered invasion by the Chinese. Chinese influences were consequently slower in coming and selectively adopted. Geographic and social isolation gave rise to a greater consciousness of native identity and its value relative to foreign cultural imports, along with a willingness to adaptively absorb new ideas and traditions. For all these reasons, Japan's gender history is a complex mix of indigenization of Chinese mores, and of resistance to them.

The earliest written documentation of Japanese culture is found in Chinese travel records from the third and fourth centuries CE. These records speak of an unmarried Queen Himiko or Pimiko of Yamatai, who ruled the western "countries" for much of the third century along with her brother. Himiko ("sun princess") was the priestess or ritual specialist; her brother assisted her with civil rule. Of the other "countries," some were ruled by queens and others by kings. What is noteworthy is that throughout Japanese history, a strong tradition of female spiritual authority remains evident, perhaps underscored by devotion to Amaterasu, the sun *kami* ancestress of the Japanese imperial house and, by extension, the entire Japanese people.

This tradition of female authority, at least in spiritual matters, is reflected in the fact that the first ordained Japanese Buddhist was the nun Zenshin-ni. Along with two other nuns, she traveled to Korea in 588 to study traditional monastic discipline; upon their return, lay supporters constructed the first Japanese Buddhist monastic temple complex, a nunnery called Sakurai-ji. The history of women in Japanese Buddhism is a mixed record of traditional male Buddhist monastic ambivalence toward women coupled with recognition of individual women's authority and accomplishments. Monastic-temple complexes were often refuges for widows, but as happened elsewhere in the Buddhist world, the presence of these women occasioned sexual anxiety among the monks. During the Heian era (794–1185), the concern over women's propensity to awaken monastic lust, along with a new emphasis on women's blood impurity due to menstruation and childbirth, ultimately led to the banishment of women from important Buddhist study and practice centers. Quasi-monastic and lay Buddhist movements remained more egalitarian. With the rise of Pure Land

Buddhism in the twelfth century, and with the popularity of various Nichiren-based ethnocentric schools of Buddhism from the thirteenth century onward, women as well as men were assured salvation in return for devotional practice.

In the secular realm, under the influence of Chinese Confucian practices, the official view of female authority narrowed over time. Particularly during the mid- to late Heian era (ninth to twelfth centuries), the sphere of women's influence was reduced to the domestic realm and to accessory ritual roles. Coincidentally, however, the development of the *kana* syllabaries greatly facilitated literacy, and court ladies were responsible for a torrent of elegant literary works (in contrast to their male contemporaries, whose Chinese-language works are less distinguished). Keen observers of the intrigues and intricacies of life around them, women such as Lady Sei Shōnagon, author of the *Pillow Book*, and Lady Murasaki Shikibu produced diaries and novels of great wit, compassion, and insight. Murasaki's *Tale of Genji* (*Genji monogatari*) – the tale of the "shining" Prince Genji and his many loves – is one of the world's literary masterpieces; its influence on later Japanese culture is incalculable. It must be noted as well that on the popular or unofficial level, the tradition of female authority or male-female dual authority did not disappear entirely. Village "headmen" might well be female, and in outlying precincts, a male "mountain ascetic" might well work together with a female shaman to meet local divinatory, exorcistic, and thus community-maintenance needs.

This sense of shared or dual responsibility continued through the subsequent Kamakura period (1185–1333) and the rise of feudal and samurai warrior culture. Women retained the right to inherit property and titles, and, in a new appreciation of the concept of "thrice following," they were expected to manifest the same ideals of courage, loyalty, sacrifice, and stoicism as their fathers, husbands, and sons.

Summary Reflections

The historical record relative to sex-gender issues in East and Southeast Asia is marked by the dichotomies familiar to feminist historians: a domestic-public divide that relegates women's roles to those of wife and mother; dominant-subordinate patterns of authority; an emotional-rational split organized along sex-gender lines; and the nature-culture separation that defines woman in essentialist terms.

In each of the societies briefly covered here, pre-Confucian social norms and mores occasionally complicated the overall picture, as did considerations of class, regional custom, and historical era. In China, permutations of *yin-yang* theory enabled age and position to take precedence over gender within the home, thereby imbuing mothers with the potential for wielding significant authority over even her adult children. In Korea, Buddhist monasticism and traditional shamanism maintained images of female autonomy and, through adoption of the roles of either traditional *mudang* or Buddhist nun, individual women found avenues of escape from Confucian patriarchal confines. In pre-modern Japan, even after the influx of Chinese ideals, women were accorded a notable degree of autonomy and were expected to fulfill roles of significant responsibility. In Vietnam, despite the imposition and adoption of numerous foreign influences, women were appreciated (at least in theory) as having value and potential nearer to men than did their sisters in the larger Sinocentric world.

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Chapter Fifteen

Early Western Civilization under the Sign of Gender: Europe and the Mediterranean

Paul Halsall

Gender and Western Civilization

Let us begin with the story of Gilgamesh, King of Uruk in ancient Sumer, and hero of the oldest of epic stories. The central narrative concerns the intense friendship of Gilgamesh and Enkidu, a wild man who is tamed and brought into the human community after having weeklong sex with a harlot. We might read the story as a male account of the loss of freedom brought by settled society, or of the power of women's sexuality over men who are physically and socially stronger. But then we read Gilgamesh's mother's assessment of a dream he has had about his friendship:

> The mother of Gilgamesh, the wise, all-knowing, said to her son;
> Rimat-Ninsun, the wise, all-knowing, said to Gilgamesh:
> "The axe that you saw is a man.
> ". . . that you love him and embrace as a wife.
> (*Epic of Gilgamesh*, Tablet 1, trans. Maureen Gallery Kovac. Stanford: Stanford University Press)

Suddenly we realize that his mother sees Gilgamesh and Enkidu as more than friends, indeed as physical lovers, like a husband and wife. In a text that stands first in many history survey courses, we find that questions about sex, gender, and sexuality are not peripheral, but central to our understanding of the text and the culture that produced it. This chapter focuses on Europe and the Mediterranean from 4000 BCE to 1400 CE – an area and a period in which a series of quite distinct cultures, states, and societies came into and went out of existence. What unites these cultures is nothing intrinsic, but the part they play in our construct of "western civilization." For good or ill, the cultures of Europe and the Mediterranean basin are seen as precursors, and in some cases models, for modern Western culture. What an awareness of gender – the social significance given to sexual difference – brings to our understanding of these cultures is precisely what it brings to our reading of *Gilgamesh*, an almost epiphanic, or revelatory, new way of seeing the past. Just as we can no longer read *Gilgamesh* as simply a text on kingship, or as a precursor to the biblical story of

Noah, but must consider what it says about masculinity, femininity, and relations between the sexes, anyone who brings an analysis of gender into a consideration of early Western civilization cannot be content with traditional categories of analysis such as politics, elite thought, or economics. This is not because there is anything wrong with these categories, but because once we have brought gender into play we see that to ignore the ways in which gender operated in texts and society is to limit and distort what we can know about the past. What we seek in this chapter then, is nothing less than to see Western civilization under the sign of gender.

Early Civilizations: the Origin of Patriarchy

The oldest human cultures complex enough to be called "civilizations" emerged in ancient Iraq and Turkey and in Egypt at the start of our period. The basic historical distinction between the areas is that Egypt had a more or less continuous "national" history from the earliest pharaohs until the rise of Islam, while Iraq, Syria, and Anatolia, being much more geographically exposed, were homes to successive and not entirely continuous cultures – Sumer, Akkad, Hattutsas, Babylon, Assyria, Persia, Seleucia, to name only a few. Bringing gender into our account of these cultures allows us to understand better the nature of their economies, the origins of their legal systems, and the nature of social relations within them.

The extent and duration of these cultures, along with extremely patchy surviving evidence, means that we can only consider them at the most general level. Traditional accounts, in an effort to place these cultures in the tradition of "Western civilization," focus on the nature of kingship in Mesopotamia, pharaonic power in Egypt, the development of legal and religious traditions, or on technological contributions to later societies. Scholars with an interest in gender relations have instead focused upon the nature and operation of patriarchy in these cultures. Because of some basic similarities (agricultural economies in irrigated river valleys), the way the different cultures varied has allowed some discussion about the circumstances under which the universal oppression of women may have been alleviated, or the position of men most elevated. Although few scholars today would locate in these cultures a specific "origin of patriarchy," because they form the cultural background to the attitudes of biblical writers, the organization of gender relations did have some impact on later Western culture.

The agricultural revolution of the Neolithic period first occurred in the Near East some thousands of years before the earliest civilizations. Nevertheless, the demands and strictures of agriculture provided the material bases for the operation of gender throughout the period of the first civilizations, and one could argue until well into the modern period. Agriculture provided its earliest practitioners with immense rewards in terms of reliable food, but there were huge costs. Farming required enormous and almost continuous manual labor, and the process of working land brought forth the issues of ownership and property that have been crucial to all later cultures. As the basis of an economic system, agriculture changed human beings just as much as they in their turn transformed the wild precursors of domestic plants and animals.

Labor and property worked together to divide the lives of women from the lives of men as a result of the fundamental ability of women to bear children. Children could perform useful farm labor from a quite young age, and were perhaps less a

burden than they had been in pre-agricultural societies. The need for children as workers, combined with high rates of infant mortality, led women to spend far more time in pregnancy and in rearing children. Because certain types of farm labor (animal feeding, vegetable gardening, precise fabrication) are compatible with childcare, while others require greater upper body strength and continual application, the types of work performed by men and women diverged. Although it is clear that there was rarely an absolute division of labor between men and women, archeology and the texts produce by the earliest societies do reveal a real division between the agricultural activities performed by men, and those performed by women. The type of labor one performed varied by social class, and geographical location, as well as by gender.

Class also operated as a factor when we consider property. In a very real sense, agriculture created property. In any agricultural economy, the ownership and transference of real property are always central concerns. Landed property, however, in non-monetary cultures is worth far more than usual exchange methods can manage. It can be transferred by gift, but it was much more commonly passed on via inheritance or wedding gift (brideprice or dowry). Women then, as producers of heirs, and as the means of property transfer through marriage, came to function as economic objects in a way that men did not.

These basic observations reflect the most general impact of the agricultural revolution on early societies. When the earliest civilizations developed cities, urban populations usually kept a direct connection with the surrounding agricultural region and its mores. With few exceptions, everywhere in the ancient and medieval periods farmers constituted the vast majority of the population and the gender expectations of the countryside affected the patterns of behavior of the urban population.

Despite aspects common to the operation of gender of early cultures, our sources indicate that there were variations in the gender systems of different cultures, and over time within each culture. Scholars have been especially interested in documenting cases where women were able to exercise more agency, for instance through rights to dowries, property rights when widowed, and in making contracts. A major part of our evidence here comes from surviving law codes, which, while not always the best guides to social actuality, do give us some solid evidence.

Various scholars have sought the key to understanding societies that offer greater social status for women. In *The Goddesses and Gods of Old Europe*, Marija Gimbutas proposed that cultures with powerful female divinities (religions focused on a "Great Mother" for example) reflected societies in which women's status was high. While not implausible, closer examination of individual cultures, and cross-cultural comparisons, indicates that this line of argument does not work. The powerful Mesopotamian goddess Ishtar/Astarte reflects no elevated status for women, and if we take the later example of Athens as one of the most oppressive of all ancient cultures, we need only note that the city was presided over by a most powerful goddess.

A better case can be made that the prominence of violence and warfare correlates more closely with female social status. In a constantly warring culture, the status of men is often elevated as martial prowess becomes the basis for a self-aggrandizing conception of masculinity and consequent diminution of typically female activities. Because of its geographical isolation, propensity for centralized government, and natural barriers to invasion, Egypt was among the most peaceable regions of the ancient world. We find that for much of its history free women there seem to have

had the same legal rights as free men, with the ability to make contracts, divorce, and go to court. Mesopotamia, on the other hand, was far more subject to violence, invasion, and warfare than Egypt, although there were long periods of peace. Texts such as the Code of Hammurabi indicates that while free women had some rights, for example to initiate divorce in case of cruelty, women's status was lower than in Egypt, and was fundamentally tied to property rights held over them by fathers or husbands. In the case of Greece (examined in detail later) near-constant warfare resulted in an almost total legal disempowerment of women in some cities. Of special interest for later Western cultures was the situation of ancient Israel, where the geographical situation of Canaan/Palestine resulted in frequent warfare. The impact of this on the biblical stance with regard to the relations of men and women was to have long-term consequences because of the Bible's role as a normative document through the ages.

The People of Israel: Writing the Book

The people of Israel emerged clearly into the ancient Near Eastern world in the twelfth century BCE, and was always a minor player among the great political and economic powers. Israel's continuing cultural impact on later cultures, above all through the Hebrew Bible (known to Christians as the Old Testament), entirely justifies the intense interest in its history.

As its name implies, the Bible is a collection of books with many themes rather than a unified text. Scholars have shown that its composition took place over an extended period, and it cannot be said to reflect any one social situation. Given this, and given that external evidence for the history of early Israel is minimal, historians interested in gender are perhaps more interested in how the Bible has functioned as the creator of gender expectations rather than as evidence of the societies that produced it. Because of its status in Judaism and Christianity as "revelation," the Bible has functioned as the normative text, and is still invoked as a moral guide.

The people of Israel – their relationship with God and their survival – serves as a focus of each of the main genres of biblical literature – the law, the prophets, and the histories. It is hard for modern people to grasp just how uncertain the survival of an ancient people was, but the ideological importance of Israel's survival underlies the way the Bible both views and prescribes relations between men and women. Here lies the great insight offered by a gendered approach to the biblical texts. When we understand that behind the great themes of redemption and salvation lies the urgency of physical survival, we perceive that this survival ultimately depended on ordering relations between men and women.

For the compositors of the Hebrew Scriptures, the survival of the people depended on the reproduction of children, and the maintenance of as many family lineages as possible. The Bible never considers marriage and its regulation in terms of personal emotional relationships but as the exclusive institution through which Israel's posterity will be preserved. As in Mesopotamian law codes, rape and adultery function in this worldview less as sins than as infractions on the family structure. All Israelite men were expected to marry, and might marry as many times as was necessary to produce children. To preserve lineages, sexual activity outside regular marriage is explicitly commanded, for example when men are required to marry and impregnate

the wives of a dead brother in order to ensure progeny "that his name will not be blotted out from Israel" (Deut. 25:5–10). It is worth considering this institution, known as "levirate marriage," in a little more detail so that we grasp the central concern of biblical regulation with survival rather than with any abstract moral norms. The law shows no concern at all for the personal feelings of either brother, the widow, nor any other wives of the surviving brother. Along with other considerations, especially those of a religious purity code, the same concern to promote reproduction is apparent in the condemnation of homosexual activity between men (Lev. 18:22) and the ban on sex during menstruation (Lev. 18:19).

Just as foregrounding gender in analysis of biblical texts underscores reproduction as a core value, reproduction itself framed the only significant sexual minority – eunuchs, a distinct group in many ancient cultures. The Bible knows nothing of sexual orientation and assumes a universal family norm based on children. But its writers knew and worried about the significant minority of men who had been castrated, and wanted no Israelite man to lose the ability to reproduce. As a result castration, even of animals (Lev. 22:24), was forbidden in law, and eunuchs were excluded from the House of the Lord. These included foreigners, as well as Israelites who had been forcibly castrated (compare II Kings 20:18 with Dan. 1). Once again the concern was not abstract morality, but the survival of the people.

Even though efforts to enforce Biblical norms regarding reproduction had great impact on later societies, it would be unfair to reduce a gendered reading of the Bible to its regulation of reproduction. In books such as the *Song of Songs*, biblical literature is quite capable of celebrating human emotion and sexual attraction. The stories of Ruth and Naomi, and David and Jonathan feature well-developed characters for whom emotional attachment is a force driving events. And of all the literatures of the ancient Near East, the Bible highlights a series of powerful female leaders – prophets such as Miriam and Huldah, and more martial figures such as Deborah. Prophetic literature was even capable of transcending any concern for reproduction, as when Isaiah endorses the salvation of barren women and eunuchs (Is. 56). While this variety allows modern readers to find supportive readings in a text that retains its power, they do not displace the insight that national survival through reproduction is the basis of biblical attitudes to relations between men and women.

Greece: Democratic Masculinity and the Exclusion of Women

While Israel stands out as the ancient culture with most impact on the later religious imagination, classical Greece, especially Athens in the fifth and fourth century BCE, remains the most admired of all the secular cultures that contributed to Western civilization. The rapid and novel cultural developments in art, architecture, literature, historiography, philosophy, and political theory have been matched by no other culture in so short a period. The fact that Athens proclaimed itself a "democracy" and claimed to fight for liberty has only added to its allure. In no other society, then, is the transformative insight given by an analysis of gender relations so startling.

Greek democracy as exemplified in Athens and later in numerous other cities was indeed something new. Because of relatively small spreads in wealth distribution, and constant wars between the various Greek city-states (*polis*, pl. *poleis*), a substantial part of the male population of the *poleis* was both able to supply themselves with

weapons necessary for war, and to make demands that their voice, the voice of the people (the *demos*) be considered in government. Not only did the *poleis* eventually acquiesce to these demands, but a constant public discussion about political theory analyzed the process as it was happening. After 461 BCE, government in Athens functioned as a direct democracy in which all adult male citizens could participate in decisions of state.

In the famous "Funeral Oration" Thucydides puts in the mouth of the democratic leader Pericles (*Peloponnesian War* 2.34–46, trans R. Crawley), Athens' constitution is celebrated for creating a society in which free men can live together in peace, and reach mutually acceptable decisions through rational deliberation. The speech is still taught as perhaps the greatest oratorical monument to the moral value of democracy as a social system. On closer inspection, we find that the text is as much about gender as freedom. Pericles notes that other city-states, especially Sparta "by a painful discipline seek after manliness" but that Athens' system creates a better and braver manliness. And he is careful to argue that while Athens' intellectual life is flourishing, the *polis* "cultivate(s) refinement without extravagance and knowledge without effeminacy." In sum Pericles doubts "if the world can produce a man who, where he has only himself to depend upon, is equal to so many emergencies, and graced by so happy a versatility, as the Athenian." Only at the end does he turn to "female excellence," and all Pericles has to say is that "Great will be your glory in not falling short of your natural character; and greatest will be hers who is least talked of among the men, whether for good or for bad."

Pericles' speech reveals the truth: Athens, the ancient society in which citizen males were most free and most equal, marginalized women from all aspects of its public life, and seems to have actively sought the erasure of any social presence on the part of respectable women. Although rural women in the region surrounding Athens must have worked outside in the course of farming, and the streets of the city would have seen the presence of poor, slave, and foreign women, female citizens in Athens by convention and common practice were compelled to remain indoors, precluded from any public and economic role, and prevented from meeting any males other than relatives. In legal activity women always needed a male guardian, and as a result of isolation marriages were always arranged.

The same situation did not prevail throughout the Greek world. In Greek states with monarchies it was occasionally possible for a royal woman to exercise political power, and few other cities seem as oppressive as Athens. Most notably Sparta – Athens' great military rival – was famed for the relative social liberty its female citizens enjoyed. Spartan society as a whole was organized as a militaristic regime designed to allow the city to keep its hold on a vast number of Helot (enslaved) subjects. Within that regime, however, women citizens were allowed far more public activity and agency than in Athens or anywhere else in Greece. We thus face one of the great truths revealed by gender studies: social and political systems which seem admirable and desirable when looked at from a man's perspective can be oppressive and destructive for women. The contrast between women's social experience and men's political experience is seen again in Greek history in the period after Alexander the Great. Alexander's conquests marginalized the city-states as centers of political power, and after him most of the Greek-speaking world lived under monarchies. Subjects of monarchies would seem to be in a less desirable position that the citizens

of democracies; increasing papyrological evidence, especially from Hellenistic Egypt, has demonstrated, however, that within the monarchies a much larger number of women were able to manage their own affairs than in the old democracies. Among royal elites, the centrality of the ruling family in the various monarchies enabled some women to wield effective political power. In reducing all subjects to a subordinate position, and thereby deflating the elevation of masculinity in democracies, it does seem that monarchies created greater social possibilities for women to exercise agency. The power available to royal women, however, is not always a good indicator of the wider social status of women.

Relations between men and women are not the only aspect of Greek society that have come under the sign of gender. Plentiful literary and artistic evidence makes classical Athens the first ancient society where scholars have been able to analyze male homosexual behavior and speculate about underlying mentalities. (There is far less evidence about female homosexuality despite the fame of the early lyric poet Sappho.) As in every other society, the requirements and expectations of the underlying agricultural economy demanded that almost all people marry, and this expectation remained in urban environments such as Athens. The age of marriage, however, was dramatically different for males and females. Girls typically married in their early teens, as soon as they could produce children, while the men they married were usually aged around thirty, the age at which an Athenian male citizen could be expected to have political and economic independence. In combination with complete social separation of men and women, the result was the creation of a series of exclusively male public recreational spaces, prominent among them the gymnasia in which men trained their bodies for participation in warfare, and the institution of the drinking party (*symposia*). Men might marry at thirty, but overwhelming evidence demonstrates that until that time their sexual outlets were restricted to prostitutes, or if they desired an emotional relationship with a social equal, to sex with other men.

For modern Western gay people, the prominence and openness of homosexual activity in ancient Greek sources, and those sources' privileged status as the foundation of Western culture, resulted in its portrayal as a homosexual Arcadia. Early scholarship, working on a contagion model of homosexuality, tended to look for the "origin" of Greek homosexuality as if it were a new type of game, and to argue that, since Greek literature depicts homosexual *eros* ("erotic desire") among the fifth-century aristocracy, it functioned as sort of fashion among that group for a restricted period. Such approaches ignored non-literary evidence such as the extent and persistence of distinctly non-aristocratic male brothels until Christian emperors closed them.

Since the 1970s, however, a more sophisticated approach has come to dominate discussion of Greek homosexuality. Building on theories of sexuality suggested by the French social thinker Michel Foucault, and rejecting both the desire of gay people to find "gay" heroes in the past and contagion theories, scholars such as David Halperin have sought to demonstrate that Greek sexual behavior cannot be understood under the modern heading of "sexual orientation." They note that when we have evidence we can see that homosexual behaviors exist in most societies, but that in ancient and medieval societies until about 1700, contemporary sources never discuss homosexual behavior as a function of object choice (i.e. sexual orientation.) Rather, at least for men, we can see two main patterns. One pattern is based on

age-dissonant sexual dominance; an older man will take a conventionally "male" role in a sexual relationship with a younger male, but will not, in doing so, be regarded as any different from other men in general society. The second pattern is based on gender-dissonant sexual dominance, where some men are seen to function as "non-males" and a male-identified individual loses no status through engaging in sex with them. Although there were some efforts to argue that Greek (and indeed Roman) homosexual behavior occurred entirely in the age-dissonant model, it is now generally acknowledged that both patterns can be documented. With both these models, some scholars argue that term "homosexual" is inappropriate to discussions of Greek sexual worlds. Rather they stress the age dissonance in literary homoerotic ideals, the contempt directed at effeminate men, and the importance of "active" and "passive" roles. As a result, current orthodox opinion now understands the Greek (and equally the Roman) sexual protocol as a function of an ideology of masculinity that defined any man with high social status as an "impenetrable penetrator" rather than in relation to modern constructs of homosexuality.

This orthodoxy may have gone too far. Social historians such as Amy Richlin have argued that "modern concepts of homosexuality" cannot be reduced to "sexual orientation" and that there is considerable evidence that some ancient cities did contain sexually deviant subcultures that resemble modern experience. More impressively, the New Testament scholar, Bernadette Brooten, using Greek and Roman astrological texts, medical discussions, and Christian apocalyptic, has demonstrated that a concept of sexual identity – referring to a type of person, not to a set of practices – was available to ancient authors. While ferocious argument still wages around these theoretical debates, a consensus is emerging that at least some writers in ancient world did indeed have a concept comparable to our "homosexuality," but that the discourse of masculinity, and its distinction between the penetrator and the penetrated pattern, was of vital social significance in the elite texts which survive.

The considerable theoretical discussion of Greek homosexual behavior has led to recent and enlightening consideration of non-sexual human relationships under the sign of gender. We do not usually think of friendship as a gendered relationship, but modern readers of ancient and medieval discussions of friendship, as well as the extraordinarily emotional letters and poems men in the past wrote to each other, soon become aware that the words we translate as "friendship" were embedded in social expectations of relations between the sexes. For Greek and Roman writers on friendship the crucial point was that friendship was defined as "a relationship between equals." Since male Greek writers considered women inferior to men in both body and soul, friendship between males and females was not a possibility. Given that, in Athens at least, men and women from different families did not meet socially before marriage, and marriage custom led to adult men marrying teenage girls, it may indeed have been difficult for males and females ever to meet as intellectual equals. (The great exception was that some men did form long-standing relationships with adult courtesans, who, even as they lost social status, might acquire significant educations. Aspasia, Pericles' lover, is the most famous example.) The standard Greek description of friends, taken up by philosophers such as Aristotle, was that they had "one soul in two bodies," a description and sensibility that passed into Roman and medieval usage. Rather surprisingly then, we find that perhaps the oddest result of Greek understandings of gender lies not in patterns of age-dissonant marriage or acceptance

of homosexual activity, where in both cases we can find modern analogues, but, as David Konstan and Stephen Jaeger have suggested, that the Greek language of friendship is utterly foreign and would make more sense to us as an ideal for marriage.

Rome: Social Change and Legal Formulation

Rome's lengthy political history competes with Greece's cultural achievements and Israel's religious ideals in standard accounts of Western civilization. Indeed our use of Roman political vocabulary ("senate," "veto," "referendum," and so on), and the formative impact of Roman legal concepts ("corporate persons," "contracts," "inquests") in later juridical and economic structures more than justifies this interest. At first sight, the operation of gender in Rome seems a marginal concern: the social structures are so particular that we can easily see them as anthropologically "other" rather than having the direct historical impact of Roman government and legislation. But once again, a serious consideration of the history of gender is revelatory: Roman regulation of gender had a direct impact on those central political institutions, and especially in law a continuing relevance to current legal frameworks.

In some respects the early Roman Republic, after 509 BCE, resembled a Greek *polis*. It was a city with a comparatively narrow spread of wealth, where the less wealthy – the plebeians – were able to acquire political influence because of their importance to the State as soldiers. The Roman conception of the city varied from the Greek in one vital respect. For the Greeks, the citizens of a *polis* were, ideologically if not in reality, part of a single family or clan. This principle provided an important focus of unity, but limited the *polis*' constitutional development: it was difficult or impossible to admit newcomers into the citizen body, or to create higher-level political structures. The advent of Hellenistic monarchies proved to be the only way around this impasse. Romans, however, conceived of an absolute division between the State, called *res publica* (literally, "public matters" or "commonwealth"), and family life, which was seen as *res privitata* (literally "private matters" or things of no interest to the State). This fundamental difference in Greek and Roman conceptions of states, which was a function of distinct operations of gender/family systems, accounts for the very different political histories of the two cultures. Rome was able to incorporate larger and larger numbers of people, at first its allies in Italy, and eventually the entire population of the Mediterranean basin, within its concept of the State, while few Greek political formations could handle change and growth so well.

For early Rome, it is the principle of the *res privitata* and *familia* that looks so odd. Practice and law gave absolute power over the family to the *paterfamilias*, the father or head of the family. His public masculinity was defined by his ownership of property and roles as a soldier, and he alone was a full citizen. His private masculinity derived from his right to rule over his wife, children, and slaves (the so-called "power of the father" or *patria potestas*). Theoretically a father owned anything belonging to his household and even had the right to kill his children, wife, and slaves without any interference from the public sphere (in practice there are few documented examples). The power to act in either sphere was the very definition of being fully male. In practice the absolute power of the father was limited in a number of ways. All values, even ones that endorse private power, are socially derived, and it would be usual for a father to take notice of the opinions of neighbors; in practice

children and even some slaves were allowed to acquire property; and most importantly early average ages of death meant that few children would remain under a father's authority after the age of thirty. Moreover, the exalted ideology of the family stimulated a cult of the Roman matron, a woman who produced brave sons and inculcated Roman values in them: by conforming to such expectations individual women could acquire a certain unofficial public authority. Such authority was possible because, unlike Greek women, Roman women were not secluded, but participated in meals and public events.

A major transformation in the traditional family system took place as Rome acquired an empire, and as the Republic gave way to a monarchy. For citizen women in particular, new social roles became available and they acquired much greater public agency. Once again we face a case where an apparent decrease in the political freedom of males is matched by an enhancement in women's control of their own lives. Reasons for the change include the impact on Roman elites of the great wealth from the empire; the dissolution of old Roman social structures as the city itself became a vast multicultural metropolis; and erosion of the separation of private life as emperors issued laws aimed at moral regulation. The greatest change was in marriage practice. The details are quite complicated, but under the older Roman system marriage was essentially an agreement between two families where a woman left the household of her father and came under the control of her husband, who acquired *manus* (power of control) over her. By the last century of the Republic such marriages had been replaced by a system where a woman, although she became the man's wife, returned to live under her father's roof once a year, and thereby preserved her legal independence in matters of property. This change does not seem to have occurred out of any social desire to liberate women, but out of a concern by the male's family to limit the inheritance rights the traditional marriage *per manus* gave to a woman. Whatever the motive, the result was that women of the propertied classes in the imperial era were able to act with almost complete liberty in matters of marriage and property.

As the Roman jurists and legal scholars of the imperial period came to address marriage law, they had to consider both older Roman traditions and the social reality of their time. The result was two concepts which, when incorporated in the *Corpus Iuris Civilis* (the Body of Civil Law, a codification of Roman law by the Emperor Justinian that served as the source for all later iterations of Roman legal concepts) permanently reworked Western models of marriage. The first, articulated by the jurist Modestinus, was that marriage was defined as the "union of a man and a woman in communion of life, and in participation together in the divine and human law." The second, by the jurist Ulpian, was that "marriage is made by consent, not by intercourse." Together these principles, adopted without change into later Church law, set the parameters for later ideals of Western marriage.

The foregoing discussion comes with one major caveat: it is focused on the organization of gender in the legal and social worlds of propertied citizens in and near the city of Rome. (In a similar fashion, our discussion of Greece stressed the propertied classes of Athens and Sparta.) Since it is the literary and political output of the metropolitan elites that most impacted later culture, there is a certain justification in this focus. The study of gender, however, cannot be allowed to exclude awareness of geography and social class.

As Rome expanded its empire, it generally allowed conquered regions to retain local personal law. In some areas, notably Roman Egypt, where Hellenistic, native Egyptian, and Roman traditions subsisted together, we are able to study local variations in the operation of gender. Other regions have barely been touched.

With social class, the situation is more urgent. In Rome itself, the marriage customs and laws discussed above applied only to free Roman citizens. We know, however, that in the late Republic up to a third of the population were slaves, and that in the imperial period, the urban population included huge numbers of non-citizen immigrants as well as slaves. Few of these people could get married in Roman law, and the notion that poor and enslaved women had agency because they could manage property is irrelevant to women who had none. (Similar statements could be made about the poor, the immigrants, and the enslaved in Athens.) General principles of cultural formation would suggest that a set of cultural assumptions about gender could not have been created and maintained by the elite without reference to the mass of the population, and that this would especially be the case in the later Roman world where there was intense social mobility. Feminist scholars with a political awareness of social class have made efforts to discuss the opportunities for non-elites. It seems clear, for example, that casual prostitution was forced on many women in order to survive. But because non-elites left no texts to document their experience, and the law was uninterested in them, a great hole remains in our grasp of Roman actuality. In scholarship on Roman homosexual practices, the situation is, if anything, even worse. Without the same commitment as feminist scholars to consider non-elites, recent writers on Roman homosexuality such as Craig Williams have stressed only elite literature and normative legal relics. In all areas of gender studies in ancient cultures, integrating the experience of the majority of the population into our accounts of gender remains a job still to be done.

Christianity: The Gender of Holiness

The customary transition from "ancient" to "medieval" civilization reflects a series of quite dramatic political and cultural shifts. Between 395 and 640 the united civilization encompassed by the Roman Empire dissolved into three distinct world civilizations. In the Balkans and Anatolia late ancient civilization continued without interruption in that mélange of Greek culture, Roman government, and Christian faith we call the Byzantine Empire (although its citizens always called themselves "Romans"). In Syria, Egypt, and North Africa, Arab conquests led to the birth of the Islamic world. Finally in the northwestern remainder of the empire, by far the poorest part, remnants of Roman culture merged very gradually with the customs of largely Germanic elites to create "Latin Christendom" – the direct precursor of the modern West. In this division of the Roman world, language, invasion, and geography all played a role. But under the sign of gender, the greatest changes were brought about by the advent of two great religious traditions, Christianity and Islam.

Historians of Christianity often focus on the development of the Church as organization, or on the series of theological disputes that have preoccupied Christian elites. Over the past three decades there has been an intense examination of the relationship of Christianity to conceptions of gender and the social roles of men and women. Because, like Islam, Christianity is an integrative religion – one that

consciously tries to enfold all aspects of society – it is now clear that its impact on gender roles was both dramatic and contradictory.

Jesus, the founder of Christianity, by having female friends and denying the necessity of marriage (Matt. 19) directly challenged the prevailing gender expectations of his time. Paul, his most important successor in the formation of Christianity, celebrated his own emancipation from marriage and proclaimed a revolutionary equality of men and women. Both depended on the aid of women in their ministries. The Church they produced, however, while maintaining a memory of these teachings, also manifested a tradition of rhetorical misogyny, and at times came to equate holiness itself with masculinity.

It is helpful to begin with the basic Christian idea of God. There is now increasing exploration of gender as an important metaphor in Christian discourse, and gender turns out to be a crux in the Christian imagination. In most, if not all, societies, men wield public power and hence images of powerful divinity are frequently masculine. On the other hand, in personal and family life, mothers commonly wield actual power. The private power of females is mediated in personal contact and can be seen as loving and open to appeal, while rules and law sustain the public power of males. Christian teaching identified a single God who was all-powerful but also loving and forgiving. While the Jewish Scriptures presented God exclusively in male metaphors, the Christian view of Jesus as God was far more complex. Christ was a forgiving deity, who bled in order to nourish, and whose body was quite literally penetrated on the cross. Christian writers often ended up describing him in a variety of "queer" ways: as a mother hen, as a eunuch, as a lover. In early Christian art distinctly feminine representations of Christ can be found over a wide area from the fourth to sixth centuries. In some cases, Christ is represented with long hair, pronounced breasts, and a soft naked body even while other male figures are presented in conventional masculine terms. And it is now well known that in the later western Middle Ages Christ was often typified by female metaphors, addressed as "mother" and even pictured in feminine form. Later images of Christ in art emphasized more masculine aspects of Christ's complex role; for instance, his image as ruler of the universe (*Pantokrator*) usually presented him as unambiguously male. We cannot escape the fact that with the central cult figure of Christian worship, the Christian imagination played right at the edge of the culture's gender boundaries.

My own studies of Christian discourses about saints, the heroes of Christianity, show the centrality of gender. When Christian writers discuss female sanctity, they repeatedly end up by transgendering the woman in question: there is no higher praise for a female saint than that she has a "male soul in a female body," an image that has persisted since the earliest accounts of martyrdom to the present. And when Christian authors tried to make sense of males in love with a male God, they end up asserting that the male soul is feminine (as indeed it is grammatically in both Greek and Latin), and that it is penetrated by God to bring forth the "child of salvation." Perhaps the most dramatic aspect of Christianity's willingness to transcend, or at least play with, ancient dichotomies of gender is manifested in the ability of some Christian women to write and to have their writings preserved. In direct contrast to Greece, Rome, and Israel, where few women ever wrote and where only minute snippets of

female writing survive (by Sappho and Sulpicia), both Greek and (especially) Latin Christianity produced a series of women writers who both felt empowered to write and whose works were preserved.

If Christianity really contested older parameters of gender in a cultural sense, is it fair to ask why do we not see in its later history the emancipation of women in Christian societies? Perhaps the answer is that we can see such emancipation if we look closely. Despite a comparatively open beginning, the Church came to entrench certain patterns of male power, but it still maintained a standing challenge to all secular efforts to treat women as economic objects, it adopted and came to insist upon the necessity of consent in marriage, and by rejecting the compulsory nature of marriage, it permitted at least some women in Christian societies a life-choice available in few other pre-modern cultures. In short, while from a modern perspective Christian society did oppress women, women in Christian society probably had more opportunities than in any other society to take action in their lives (a basic definition of freedom). This was because Christian marriage was based on mutual consent (even if the reality was often different), and because religious life offered them an opportunity to live more or less without male interference. The real question is why the greater equality of the sexes in early Christianity did not continue?

There is little doubt that the aid offered by women powerfully contributed to the success of Christianity, and part of the attraction of Christianity for many women was the comparatively high social role it offered to them. Women had roles as deacons and prophets in the earliest local churches, and even when episcopal control became the norm, they could preside over local congregations as widows. What changed here, and left monasticism as the main location of female agency within Christianity, seems to have been the success of the Church and its move into the public sphere in the mid-third century. As long as early Christians constituted small groups meeting in private houses, the constraints of Jewish, Greek, and Roman cultures on the public exercise of power by women were irrelevant to Christians. By the mid-third century, however, congregations became large enough that churches came to be public buildings. (Contrary to common belief, Christianity was not under constant attack before the time of Emperor Constantine, and most Christians could worship in safety for most of the time.) It was this move into the public sphere that seems to have led to the diminution in the leadership role of women in the Church, and the eventual complete dominance by men. A secondary factor was the conversion of men well educated in Greek and Latin literature. Misogynistic diatribes had a long classical tradition, as well as biblical precedent, and this soon found its way into the writings of the Church Fathers.

While the impact of Christianity on the roles of men and women is complicated, there is no area of discussion more contentious than the relationship of Christianity and homosexuality. There is no doubt that Christian writers in every century have voiced criticism, sometimes virulent and obscene criticism, of homosexual activity, of "homosexuals," and of other gender-transgressive groups. As with women, the hostile voices are not the end of the story. A religion that played so oddly with the gender of God turns out to have offered a place for men and women who did not conform to the demands of secular society. We will look at this in the context of Byzantium, which, until at least 1200, remained the most powerful of all Christian societies.

Byzantium: Fictive Kinship and Human Relationships

Byzantium is the name given to both the state and the culture of the Eastern Roman Empire in the Middle Ages. Until the seventh century, it preserved the basic structures of Late Roman Mediterranean civic culture: a large multi-ethnic Christian state, based on a network of urban centers, and defended by a mobile specialized army. After the Arab/Muslim conquest of Egypt and Syria, the nature of the state and culture was transformed. Byzantium became much more a Greek state, most of the cities except Constantinople faded away to small, fortified centers, and the military organization of the empire came to be based on a series of local armies. Under the Macedonian dynasty (867–1056), Byzantium's political power reached its apogee as former territories were incorporated in the empire, and an element of multi-ethnicity was restored. This period is also significant as the time in which Byzantine culture was spread among the Slavs and other Balkan peoples. Following massive Turkish attacks in the late eleventh century, the empire was able to maintain a lesser but still significant political and military power under the Comnenian dynasty: the cost was a social transformation which exalted a powerful military aristocracy, and gradually enserfed the previously free peasantry. In 1204, internal Byzantine politics and the resurgent West effectively ended the imperial pretensions of the Byzantine state. The Fourth Crusade (1204) succeeded in conquering Constantinople and making it a Latin principality for half a century. The Greek political leadership, under the Palaeologan dynasty, regained Constantinople in 1261, but the "empire" was just one state among many in the area for the final 200 years of its existence. Byzantine studies, reflecting their classical heritage, are still much more dominated by philological and art-historical concerns than Western medieval history, and only very recently has the history of women or the study of concepts of masculinity come to the fore. As yet, analyses of gender have not transformed our understanding of Byzantine society in the way we have seen with earlier cultures.

In one crucial area of gender-related research, Byzantium has been the focus of recent scholarship that transforms our perception of both past and present – the existence and functioning of "fictive kinship." Modern Westerners tend to assume that human relationships fall into categories of "kin" (family) or "voluntary" (friendship). In 1994 the historian John Boswell ignited a firestorm by claiming the Byzantines had celebrated liturgical unions for members of the same sex. Boswell's claims derived from his rediscovery of a ceremony called *adelphopoiia* (literally "brother-making") and his interpretation that this functioned as a kind of homosexual marriage. Critics were quick to point out that Roman law, with its clear definition of marriage (as a "union of male and female"), prevailed in Byzantium. Moreover, from the time of Justinian, perhaps earlier, sodomy was illegal in Roman, and hence Byzantine, law. There could not have been, they concluded, any such "same-sex union" in a Roman and Christian state. Normative legislation is not, however, a good guide to social reality, and Christian invective was usually directed at pederasty rather than the equal relationships suggested by the *adelphopoiia* liturgies. Boswell's claims could not be sustained in full, but he had clearly brought to light something that did not fit into modern social categories.

There was without a doubt a ceremony called *adelphopoiia* in Greek, which was also known to have parallels in Slavic countries, and among Greek-speaking Catholics

in Italy, which celebrated the "uniting" of two men as brothers. This ceremony was usually conducted in church as a blessing. Most surviving texts seem to envision it as taking place between two men, although there are indications that it could occasionally involve two women, or more than two people. In Slavic countries it might also have been used between men and women. Many commentators, even those hostile to Boswell, acknowledge that the ceremony may have been used by homosexual couples but without any official Church sanction of sexual activity.

In a careful review of the subject, Claudia Rapp (1997) took a look at Boswell's claims and investigated other sources he had not considered in order to attempt a "history of *adelphopoiesis*" – an examination of how the ritual developed and changed over time. She was able to show that *adelphopoiesis* was first evident in saints' lives, was later used by the imperial family to create bonds with supporters, and eventually acquired a use in wider society where it was discussed as a rights-creating relationship by legal commentators. The rite created a lifelong bond, almost always between two people (usually two men), and the wider society considered this bond as a form of kinship. No evidence persists, however, that affirms the ceremony conferred status on a sexual relationship. Rather than a form of marriage, Rapp notes that there were other Byzantine rituals and roles which created other forms of fictive kinship, for instance the institution of co-godparenthood (*synteknia*). She thinks that *adelphopoiesis* functioned as a form of "fictive kinship" and that in the range of fictive kinships in Byzantium it functioned more like *synteknia* than marriage.

Rapp's view of *adelphpoiesis* is that it was an essentially cold, contractual, unemotional form of social bonding of much less weight than marriage. The problem here is that the number of liturgical manuscripts clearly suggests a much broader user of the ceremony, at least after the tenth century, than among the imperial and aristocratic elites she documents. If, for instance, we were to discuss marriage among these groups, we might come to the same conclusions. In a text overlooked by Boswell and Rapp, we do find a much warmer evaluation of the ceremony. Writing in his Life of St. Cyril of Philea (twelfth century) Nicholas Kataskepenus presents *adelphopoiesis* as the height of human connection:

> Cyril teaches: There are seven manners and seven kinds of prayers, as says the Abbot Anastasios. Three of them exist under the rule of fear and chastisement; the four others are used by those who are assured of their salvation and have a share in the kingdom of God. When a man is plunged into voluptuousness he holds to a prayer as a man condemned and without confidence, as a man touched by the pain of death; in the second manner, a man takes himself before God and speaks to him as a debtor; the third manner differs from the two preceding, for one presents oneself to the master as a slave, but a slave remains under the rule of fear and the fear of blows; in the fourth, the man carries himself in regard to God as a freed servant, freed from servitude and waiting to receive a recompense because of the mercy of God; in the fifth manner, better than the first four, one holds oneself before God and speaks to him as a friend; in the sixth manner, superior to that, the man speaks to God in all confidence as a son "for I have said that you are of the gods, you are of the son of the Most High", you all who want it; in the seventh manner, which marks a progress and which is the best of all, one prays among those who have undergone *adelphopoiia* with Christ. . . .
>
> (Nicholas Kataskepenos, *La Vie de Saint Cyriulle le Philéote, moine byzantin (+1110)*, ed. and trans. Etienne Sargologos, Brussells; *Société des Bollandistes*, 1964; this English version by Paul Halsall)

The concept of "fictive kinship" plays an important role in Rapp's analysis. This is an essentially anthropological term, although useful. Because of her close attention to the texts, Rapp avoids almost entirely any discussion of *adelphopoiesis* in terms of sexuality, though she notes that *adelphopoiesis* was associated with a relationship of equality between the participants. Now there is little question that "equality" was not a defining characteristic of the predominant classical discourse on same-sex sexual relationships. There the defining language was that of pederasty, an age-differentiated relationship between a penetrator and a penetrated – sometimes valorized, at other times condemned. And it was within such an understanding that condemnations of homosexual sex took place – especially with the Greek Christian notice of the "abuse of boys." But such a range of discourse clearly had no contact with what little we can grasp of the realities of *adelphopoiesis*. There is little doubt, I think, that at some stages in its history *adelphopoiesis* was used by men who were sexually active with one another.

With its varieties of "fictive kinship," Byzantine society, so often overlooked in the history of Western civilization, affords us an opportunity to probe gendered relationships distinct from marriage, sex, and genetics and yet also to gain insight into those associations. Byzantium is an example of a society where affective bonds between members of the same sex, treated as unregulated friendship in many other cultures, were brought within the kinship system. While it is a commonplace of standard anthropology that kinship boundaries vary from culture to culture, some degree of blood connection is usually at issue. Byzantium shows that this need not be the case, and indeed since the uproar surrounding Boswell's work, scholars such as Alan Bray (forthcoming) have begun to explore the ways other cultures incorporated same sex affectivity within socially-acknowledged kinship conventions.

The Medieval West

An ideology of marriage and love

As we have seen, throughout Western history marriage has been the dominant institution that structured the lives of men and women. Since in many cultures women had limited public roles, marriage determined the shape of their lives even more than that of males. The economic link between marriage and the agricultural economy meant that marriage had only a little to do with lust, very little to do with love, and everything to do with sex, children, and property. It was not usually expected that husbands and wives would be friends or companions, although there are many examples of emotionally significant marriages. At first Christianity accepted whatever forms of marriage existed in the societies in which it spread. Eventually marriage acquired a specifically Christian form, one that demoted the economic aspect and initiated the emotional definition so important in the modern world.

As in all agricultural societies, marriage was the norm for the vast majority of medieval people of all classes in all periods. From its beginnings, the Church had been concerned about marriage, but marriage was an institution of the secular world rather than a religious rite. The move to church control of marriage first took place in Byzantium. From the end of the tenth century, we see a concerted effort by the Church, building on the support of the emperors, to bring marriage under its legal

control. In Novel 89, Leo VI (886–912) required that all marriages of free people take place in a liturgical ceremony. Alexius I Comnenus (1081–1118) extended the requirement to marriages of slaves in his Novel 24 (1084). In the West, the process took place 150 years later, as the reformed papacy began to worry about the use of marriage and divorce by aristocratic elites and successfully sought to bring marriage cases into Church courts.

At the same time as marriage moved under the control of ecclesiastical courts, the liturgy of the marriage blessing also became more central. From the fourth century some sort of blessing in church, after the civil ceremony and during the Eucharist, had gradually became a norm, but there was no separate service, and it was not required. Once again, Byzantium led the way, and Leo VI was the first to impose the legal obligation of a church blessing. In the West, the process was slower, but church authorities came to realize that they could not regulate marriage without controlling its occurrence. The Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 required that henceforth all marriages take place "in the face of the Church." The central claim of the Church by the thirteenth century, after a certain amount of confusion, came to be that its liturgical blessing was required for the legality of any marriage. By any measure, this amounted to a dramatic change.

What were the results of these developments in law and liturgy on the Christian theology and ideology of marriage? Typically, the Church fathers had accepted marriage, but with severe reservations: marriage was a good, but only because it prevented fornication and permitted the procreation of children. While medieval churchmen at no time placed marriage on an equal footing with monastic life, there is some evidence that as marriage became central to its courts and required in its liturgy, there were a few efforts to present a loftier assessment. The problem was that churchmen continued to be disturbed by the bodily aspect of marriage, which they considered defiling. One solution was to argue that marriage was not intrinsically connected with sex, and on this point the sexless marriage of the Virgin Mary was always cited. Canon lawyers, who needed some way of dealing with marriage in the courts, were keen on a more practical argument that consummation was required. By the thirteenth century a compromise was reached: the Church taught that marriages were made by the consent of the couple, but a marriage was only indissoluble after consummation.

Just as the Church sorted out its theology of marriage, Love made an appearance. Now, I do not intend to suggest here that love was an invention of the Middle Ages, but in the literature of the mid-eleventh century the old Latin *amor* (erotic love) was made the center of a literary ideology of human desire. Initially this literature, drawing from themes in Ovid and possibly Iberian culture, took the form of letters and poems addressed by male clerics to each other. It soon became a theme of secular writers, and addressed the loves of men and women. There is still unresolved controversy as to whether the literature of "courtly love" represented any social practice, but there is little question that the literature itself was widely read. The problem for the Church was that this all-powerful literary "love" almost never applied to relations between husbands and wives. Marriage was a practical matter; love was something else. In response, especially in sermon literature, we find churchmen begin to connect love and marriage, to address affectivity between husbands and wives, and, in some cases at least, begin the move towards the ideology of companionate

marriage that is sometimes associated with the Protestant Reformation. Given that marriage practices varied by region and social class, it would be going too far to argue that medieval practice was anything like modern norms, but in the interaction of theology, canon law, and the secular literature of love, we can see the creation of a recognizably modern ideology of marriage.

Men and women in a dynamic economy

While the medieval ideology of marriage developed in continuity with early Christian marriage practices and classical literary tropes, the economy of the West in the Middle Ages represented a radically new departure. Ancient economies had a tendency to stagnate, but from around 1050 onwards, the economy of Western Europe began an expansion that, with the exception of a major dip before and after the Black Death, has continued ever since. From the eleventh to thirteenth century accelerating economic activity transformed how people lived. By around 1250, even though most people continued to live in the countryside, urban commerce had become the motor of Western economic life.

Since the mid-1970s scholars have devoted much energy to uncovering the interaction of a dynamic economy and the social roles of men and women. At all levels of society they have made significant discoveries. The roles of aristocratic women, for example, changed when a more monetized economy allowed the sale and acquisition of land through means other than marriage and inheritance. The family lives of peasants changed by region and by decade as landlords sought to enhance wealth by collecting rents rather than through labor (common in the twelfth century), or by engaging in cash crops (more common in the thirteenth). In towns, eventually, family dynamics quite distinct from those of agricultural life began to establish themselves. In some places women were able to function as independent, although usually low-status, tradespeople. In others, women were acknowledged in the running of a family workshop. Economic dynamism encouraged occupational specialists, and some occupations were dominated by women (notably brewing until men took it over). So much data is now available in these areas that even a summary is not feasible here.

We can, however, make some comparisons with earlier cultures. By the central Middle Ages, although subordinate to men, women were able to exercise public power in a way not seen in comparable world cultures. Their nominally equal status in marriage meant that, when husbands were absent or had died, they could act in law. In commerce, there were no requirements for women to be veiled or secluded. In religion, convents allow for the possibility of women to enter female self-governing worlds. And in literature, there were women writers, though the opportunities for women to gain an education or formalized training of all types were much less than those available to men.

Conclusion

Much work remains to be done, but one thing is clear about the operation of gender systems in premodern Europe and the Mediterranean: when considered under the sign of gender, all of the various cultures that contribute to later Western civilization had more or less rigid codes of sex and gender that constricted and directed agency

for individuals. There was a wide variation in particulars, but underlying the differences were some structural features that repeatedly come up in the analysis of any given culture. The impulse of narrative in our account of Western civilization leads us to contrast periods of relative tightness and looseness in gender codes (for instance, intense oppression of women under Athenian democracy and relatively more female agency in the Hellenistic period). There is some justification for this approach: the situation was not always the same. Nevertheless, as Judith Bennett has argued in "Confronting Continuity" (1997) for the most part these are minor variations in gender systems that always oppressed women, valorized masculinity, and made marriage the fulcrum of social and economic organization.

The most important factor was an agricultural economy that formed the basis of all societies from the origins of agriculture in the Neolithic period until the industrial revolution. The vast majority of human work and effort was connected to the raising of crops and animals. Gender systems evolved out of the demands of this economy. Next in importance was the constant need to defend settled societies from external attacks, and the privilege and prestige that warfare created for the mostly male warriors. Only when these fundamentals changed would gender systems begin to shift. But because we see the cultures discussed in this chapter as formative in our moral and cultural life, the precedents created over seven thousand years ago will continue to affect how we think and act for some time to come.

Gilgamesh, king of Uruk, with whom we began this chapter, sought the secret of immortality after the death of his friend Enkidu. He thought he had found it at one point, but it slipped out of his hand. Our search for the impact of a gendered approach to early Western civilization might seem similarly fruitless. After all our excursions, there is no one thing we can conclude. But just as Gilgamesh's search led him to see the world in which he lived in a new light, we too find that under the sign of gender what was once familiar about the past becomes strange, and what once we thought needed no explanation now calls for ever-deeper probing.

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Chapter Sixteen

Gender in the Ancient Americas: From Earliest Villages to European Colonization

Rosemary A. Joyce

Societies that developed in the Americas prior to European colonization in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries CE promise the possibility of exploring issues of gender in a context entirely independent from the interconnected histories of Europe, Africa, and Asia. The pursuit of this goal is made more complex by the lack of interpretable written texts for much of the area. This has inspired scholars interested in gender in the Americas to develop novel ways of employing other lines of evidence, including visual representations and the material traces of everyday life that are recovered archeologically. Scholars of gender history in the Americas contribute to the development of methods, relevant to the history of other areas, to give voice to those excluded from texts, and to interrogate contradictions between texts and other source materials.

Accounts of the pre-European history of the Americas have always been gendered, but until relatively recently, this was through largely unexamined projection of universalist assumptions about gender relations and gendered divisions of labor. Research on gender history in the Americas began as a search for the female past. Women's history continues to predominate, although recent research has begun to explore broader topics in gender history, especially sexuality, masculinity, alternative genders, and embodiment. Scholars from diverse academic disciplines, especially anthropological archeology and art history, have contributed to this field. Research continues to be pursued along highly diverse theoretical and methodological lines, not artificially unified here. Most work has been in the form of articles, published at a rate that defies any ability to maintain a complete bibliography. The sources cited in this chapter include edited volumes devoted exclusively to this area, as well as collections including some of the most widely cited articles, and the few monographs on the topic published through October 2001.

A few of the societies of Central America produced written texts prior to European contact. Of the texts that have survived, some, notably from Maya societies, are now partly understood. Most of the primary texts used in historical investigation of the indigenous societies of the Americas, however, come from the period of colonization itself and consist of documents in European and Native American

languages, written using the Roman alphabet. These ethno-historic documents, products of a process of cultural contact, have to be treated critically, and are most useful as sources about late pre-contact societies. Their use as sources of interpretation of much earlier societies has been widely criticized as leading to reproduction of static images of changeless native peoples. This has a special impact on gender studies, since not only do these documents record a dialogue with Europeans, mainly clerics, but also most of the native contributors were male members of the ruling classes of highly centralized states. It is consequently very likely that these texts present an exclusionary view of gender relations, promulgating specific gender ideologies of interest to those classes and states.

The analysis of material traces of pre-contact societies, including visual representations, house sites, civic and religious architecture, burials, and refuse, provides more direct lines of approach to understanding the history of earlier societies for which no contemporary texts exist. Among the material traces that have received particular attention in the gender history of the Americas, the study of human remains occupies a unique position. Because human remains can be categorized in terms of sex, they have been privileged as sources for the study of gender difference. This approach may reify dichotomous sex as a universal characteristic of human social systems. Researchers treat sex categories as primary without considering the possibility that other dimensions of difference may have been more significant for individual experience. Study of human remains demonstrates the potential for recovery of a fine-grained knowledge of the life experiences of individual persons, but critique of the apparent clarity of these inferences illustrates the complexity of applying knowledge of individual life-experiences to our understanding of social categories.

The period covered in this chapter begins with the first evidence of sedentary communities and runs to the sixteenth century, when the first European colonization of the Americas began. The dates of known early villages vary from region to region, ranging between 3500 BCE in northern South America and 1000 BCE in North America. Because early sites were subject to destruction and burial by later settlements and by geologic processes, the differences in the known dates of early villages should not be taken as evidence for developmental delays. Throughout the Americas, most of the population lived in permanent settlements throughout the period under discussion, with cultivation of plants as a major economic activity, affecting even non-agricultural societies through exchange. While at the beginning of this period there is no evidence of centralized political structures or of marked economic stratification, by the sixteenth century BCE politically centralized and economically stratified societies were present in North, Central, and South America.

Many archeologists have approached the history of gender relations over this long period from the perspective of social evolution, using universal models of correlations of gendered divisions of labor and gender hierarchies with specific economic and political structures. Much of this work assumes that human populations always move toward greater degrees of social stratification, through a regular sequence of development from kinship-based bands, tribal societies, and chiefdoms to class-based states. With the exception of a few explicitly Marxist analyses, the conceptualization of class stratification in pre-Columbian states has not been explicit. Even the largest states, those of the Aztec and Inca, were pre-industrial, with agriculture dominating the economy, trade embedded in social relations, and labor, not capital, the central

economic resource. Most scholars view social relations (kinship and clientage) and religion as the primary forces binding pre-Columbian societies. Gendered ideologies played crucial roles in religion, and gender was central to social relations.

Scholarship on North, Central, and South America has traditionally been pursued by distinct groups of researchers; thus it is conventional to discuss these areas separately. Moreover, because the themes of gender history cross-cut these regional divisions, this chapter is organized historically. The emphasis is not on providing a synthetic gender history (see Bruhns and Stothert, 1999), rather it is on highlighting specific research in which gender is an explicit concern and on examining the implications that can be drawn from those studies.

Early Village Life

Evidence for the earliest settlements in the Americas takes the form of remains of houses of perishable construction, sometimes with associated burials, and the refuse discarded by the residents of those houses. Included in the trash deposited by residents of early communities are products of complex crafts, including stone tools, pottery vessels, and where the environment allows, as in coastal Peru, textiles. Also typical of early villages are broken and discarded figurines made of fired clay, the earliest examples of human representation in the hemisphere. Early villagers in many regions cultivated a wide range of plants, but the degree to which they were dependent on agriculture is less certain. Some of the earliest settlements, for example along the coast of South America, were likely supported by intensive exploitation of marine resources. In some areas agricultural plants may have been cultivated for uses other than as food. For example, cotton is present as a domesticated plant in the earliest villages of coastal Peru, where it was worked into both fishing implements and complex textiles.

Models of gender relations in these early village settlements have been based on analogies with ethnographies of modern small-scale societies practicing some cultivation of plants. A division of labor by sex is often assumed, with males hunting and carrying out labor-intensive agricultural tasks, and women caring for gardens and less-intensively farmed fields. These models often assume craft specialization by sex, with women credited as makers of textiles, pottery vessels, and figurines, while men have traditionally been treated as the probable stone workers. Needless to say, all of these are questionable inferences, based as they are on the assumption that some modern societies are unchanged examples of types more common in the past, rather than having their own complex histories, and being as distant historically from early villages as are modern states.

Research that explicitly considers gender as actively constituted through social action has questioned most aspects of this default model. Beginning from explicit assumptions of a gendered division of labor in early villages, some researchers argue that women were likely to have actively domesticated plants in eastern North America. Women's botanical knowledge, gained from gathering undomesticated plants, would have placed them in a unique position to observe and encourage valued plants. Changes in basic subsistence activities caused by greater reliance on cultivating plants would have necessitated reorganization of people's daily and annual schedules (see Watson and Kennedy in Gero and Conkey, 1991).

In shell-mound Archaic societies of the southeast US, dating to 3500–1000 BCE, people harvested large amounts of shellfish, forming substantial mounds from their discarded shells. Men, women, and children were buried in these shell mounds. Artifacts that suggest ritual activity are found with adult females and adult males. While skeletal analyses do not show differences in the general health of males and females, burial treatments differ. Children and men were buried with artifacts not normally found with women. Adult women's burials were often distinguished by the addition of red pigment, a practice that suggests differential symbolic or religious significance. A marked category of adult women can be identified in this way, and contrasted with a category of men and children. It has been suggested that women deliberately created shell mounds at sites whose special symbolic significance to women was based on their regular return to these places for scheduled seasonal gathering and drying of shellfish meat. As cultivated plant foods grew in importance later in the Archaic period, women shifted their labor to other tasks, shell fishing became less central to their identity, and they transformed the religious practices they had formerly focused on shell mounds (Claassen in Gero and Conkey, 1991).

These studies do argue for a gendered division of labor, in which women gathered plants and shellfish. But they do so based not on general analogy, but on specific aspects of the archaeological evidence for the region. Other researchers have questioned the attribution of specific tasks to one sex. Drawing on both ethnographic analogies and arguments concerning production needs, archaeologists have proposed that stone tool manufacture in early communities was likely a task carried out by everyone, to provide tools for a diverse range of tasks. These studies highlight the assumption that formal stone tools are specifically related to hunting, assumed to be a task monopolized by men. They suggest that if the association between men, hunting, and the creation of formal tools is correct, such tools should be viewed as media for the development of ideologies of masculinity (compare Gero in Gero and Conkey, 1991 with Sassamon in Hays-Gilpin and Whitley, 1998).

Studies of human skeletal remains promise the possibility of identifying primary evidence for divisions of labor by sex, because repetitive activities leave diagnostic traces in the form of bone mass, sexual dimorphism, muscle attachments, asymmetric development, and patterns of nutrition, disease, and injury. It is therefore interesting that strong evidence for a gendered division of labor is found only with the intensification of agriculture, particularly the labor-intensive cultivation of maize (Cohen and Bennett in Hays-Gilpin and Whitley, 1998). One study that did document biological differences between males and females in early settlements found that during the interval from 3500–1200 BCE, in hunting and gathering societies in the Chumash region of what is now southern California, men consumed more protein than women (Holliman in Walde and Willows, 1991). With the adoption of acorn-processing after 1200 BCE, women's health improved in comparison to men's, with women showing less severe disease and fewer traumas than men, who presumably were exposed to greater risks by a changed gendered division of labor.

Gender in Early Stratified Societies

The existence and nature of a gendered division of labor is central to discussions of the development of political centralization in early villages, although this is not always

explicit. Political centralization in early societies of the Americas is identified indirectly, through the appearance of monumental architecture and art. Economic stratification, which may occur at the same time or separately, is identified through the presence of residences with distinctive architecture requiring more labor to construct, with trash and burials containing rare objects and a wide variety of goods, proxies for wealth. In South America by 1800 BCE monumental construction is found on the Peruvian coast, and with the development of Chavín-style monumental art after 1200 BCE some degree of political centralization can be inferred. In Central America, the Olmec of the Gulf Coast of Mexico developed centralized, stratified societies between 1600 and 900 BCE, with monumental art and architecture after 1200 BCE. Other societies as far south as Honduras and El Salvador were linked to the Gulf Coast Olmec, and by 900 BCE these had developed their own monumental architecture and art.

The situation appears somewhat different in North America, where economic stratification was never as pronounced as in Central and South America, and where the degree of political centralization in areas such as the US southwest and southeast is hotly debated. Nonetheless, large-scale construction projects that would have required cooperative efforts, the ball courts and platform mounds of the Hohokam, and the massive buildings and road systems of the Anasazi, were undertaken in the US southwest as early as 500 to 900 CE. In the southeast US, mounds created during the Woodland period, beginning around 1000 BCE, were the sites of burials, most commonly adult males, provided with examples of luxury craft products.

Early stratified societies must have had complex divisions of labor that allowed the accumulation of agricultural surplus to support community construction projects. Craft specialization was also required for the production of luxury goods such as those seen in burials, which studies of refuse show were not equally available to all households in these communities. New cooking and food-serving techniques implied by the creation of pottery vessels have been related to patronage of feasts through which necessary labor could have been mobilized, laborers rewarded, and the products of their labor displayed to their neighbors and to visitors from other areas.

Archeological models for the new economic arrangements that facilitated the production of an agricultural surplus, the formation of social ties between patrons of monumental works and their clients, and the conversion of such patronage into differential social status, traditionally have been mute on the subject of gender. Some recent models posit that exclusively male "aggrandizers" in pursuit of social distinction would have been motivated to lead the social transformations necessary to produce the new features seen in these settlements. Some of these models assert categorically that prestigious craft production would have been the task of male specialists, and that products of female craft work, if valued, would have been appropriated by male heads of households who would have coopted all credit for these works. In contrast, some feminist researchers have emphasized the ways that participation in the feasts and social negotiations characteristic of emergent stratified societies would have affected both men and women. Based on careful analysis of spatial patterning of fragments of pottery vessels, spindle whorls, and women's garment pins, Joan Gero constructs a scenario for the Early Intermediate Period (200 BCE–600 CE) Andean site Queyash Alto in which women participated in such events (2001).

Women, assumed in traditional models to be solely responsible for the cooking of foods, would necessarily have been affected by new demands for increased productivity to support labor forces working on community projects and specialized craft production. Where new methods of food preparation developed, as suggested by changes in pottery vessels and other cooking technology, the women presumed responsible for this task would have been intimately affected by the new social order. It has even been suggested that management of new labor demands in the US southwest provided motivation for women to develop the first pottery vessels for use in preparing weaning foods, thereby freeing women from time conflicts between nursing and other tasks (Crown, 2001).

Some studies of early stratified societies avoid the assumption of an innate division of labor by sex and the presumption of inherent ranking of dichotomous male and female genders. Building on arguments that complex production like that of pottery is often organized as a project of a cooperative group, alternative approaches begin analysis with the probable nature of corporate groups in early stratified societies (compare Joyce, 2001 and Wright, 1991). Based on the mobilization of labor along lines of kinship and co-residence, cooperative groups, rather than individual aggrandizers, would have been the actors responsible for new, massive construction projects. For such groups to maximize production, they might have supported members of the group based on ability, age, and achievement, rather than on *a priori* classification by sex. Taking the issue of specialization by sex as an empirical question to be explored, these analyses draw attention to the way that certain kinds of activity were given prominence as stereotypical of different genders.

Visual representations are crucial to our understanding of the way activities become stereotypes of gender. These representations serve as the media for the formation of ideologies and, in the absence of texts, our only evidence for the discursive production of gender in the ancient Americas. Early stratified societies of the Americas typically produced solid, hand-modeled anthropomorphic figurines. Figurines present idealized images that are selective in terms both of the range of human persons depicted and in terms of which characteristics of those persons they treat. Not all figurines from early stratified societies in the Americas can be assigned unambiguously to one of two dichotomous gendered categories. This may imply that these societies conceived of more fluid possibilities of gender than a male/female dichotomy, including sexual dualisms and a gender-neutral status (see Goldstein, 1988; Marcos and Manrique, 1988; Roosevelt, 1988; Joyce, 2001). The majority of figurines in early stratified societies can be identified as female representations, sometimes by quite explicit depiction of genitalia. While the details of depiction are quite varied, these figurines commonly depict nude or almost nude bodies. When most figurines represent females, distinctions in age are foregrounded, rather than distinctions in sex. This has moved scholars to suggest a link between these representations and a societal interest in women's life cycles, with greater production of such figurines during periods when pro-natal ideologies were being promoted in order to increase available labor (Roosevelt, 1988).

Detailed studies of early Mesoamerican figurines document great diversity between different village communities, suggesting that no single explanation can be proposed for all. Figurines from the Pacific Coast of Mexico dating between 1400 and 1000 BCE contrast seated males and females marked with signs of age, wearing ritual costumes and

insignia, with standing young females, possibly objectified in relation to inter-family marriage exchanges mediated by elders (Lesure, 1997). Most figurines from early communities in Honduras dated between 900 and 400 BCE depict females, including infants and seated elderly women (Joyce, 2001). The majority show women whose hair was in elaborate shaved, beaded, braided styles, neither the simple style of infants nor the cropped style of elderly women, perhaps commemorating life-cycle transitions between infancy and old age. Figurines from Chalcatzingo, Mexico, made between 700 and 500 BCE, also apparently represent stages in the life cycle of women, with particularly explicit imagery of physical changes in pregnancy (Guillén in Hays-Gilpin and Whitley, 1998). An absence of figurines of elderly individuals at Chalcatzingo suggests a social emphasis on those life stages associated with fertility and pregnancy.

Burials provide an opportunity to evaluate the validity of visual representations as a source of information about the lives of men and women in early stratified societies. Statistical analysis of burials at Tlatilco, a village in Central Mexico occupied between 1100 and 900 BCE, demonstrated that sex determined relatively few of the differences in burial treatment (Joyce, 2001). Instead, age-specific patterns were evident within the burial population. Without respect to sex, the burials of young adults were most lavish, and included the most exotic, expensive personal ornaments, polished iron-ore mirrors. Slightly older adults were buried with other ornaments. The burials of the oldest individuals had the most idiosyncratic materials, and were generally relatively modest. These patterns suggest a society stratified by age, within which gender is less of a categorical dimension. Figurines from Tlatilco include a majority considered to represent young standing females, along with others identified as young men, shown standing and seated. The lack of figurines that can be identified as representations of the category of older adults defined in the burials makes clear that visual representations in these early societies were partial records emphasizing selected aspects of social reality.

Such studies demonstrate that human representations in early stratified societies of the Americas were created in socially dynamic situations, and they cast doubt on arguments treating all women in these societies as a single group. They suggest that age and seniority may have been as important variables in social life as sex. If the arguments that have been made for the use of figurines in socially significant ceremonies associated with the life course are credible, then what this diversity suggests is that early communities varied in the degree to which concern with the fertility or maturation of daughters was an issue. Rather than reflecting generalized gender ideologies advocating reproduction, the deployment of figurines may relate more closely to differences in strategies of social affiliation commemorated by the creation of visual representations. The apparently more common tendency to objectify young women as sexual objects in this medium does suggest that an important dynamic in early stratified societies in the Americas was contestation of control of reproduction. This makes sense if the central institutions in these societies were corporate groups linked by kinship, whose prosperity would be closely tied to having sufficient available labor. It may be significant that Chalcatzingo, the community with explicit emphasis on pregnancy, also had abundant evidence for institutionalized social hierarchy, in the form of distinctive residences, burials, and monumental architecture and art.

Monumental art provides a second body of representation that can be treated as a form of visual discourse. Monumental art was not accessible to all, while figurines

were widely available. Monumental visual representations are less common numerically in early stratified sites, and are found in more restricted areas within sites, but are often more consistent across wide areas. In Central America, for example, the style of monumental art that developed in the Gulf Coast Olmec sites between 1200 and 900 BCE, while not employing a full writing system, incorporated stylized symbols that include apparent identifiers of persons, groups, statuses, or places. Most subjects are identified as male through analysis of their costume and ornamentation, and all are youthful. Based on the almost exclusive depiction of young adult males in monumental art, it has been assumed that early political authorities were all males. But there are exceptions, such as a monument from Chalcatzingo, widely accepted as a noblewoman who linked the site through marriage to a contemporary community elsewhere. While the public exercise of power was stereotypically presented as the action of young males, privileged families included men and women, young and old. Viewed in the context of patterns of visual representation in more abundant contemporary figurines, Olmec monumental art continued an emphasis on age as a form of social categorization, singling out one age grade for commemoration. The youthful age status that was the focus of art also appears to be the age class within which distinctions in gender were most strongly marked in later native societies of the Americas.

Late Stratified and State Societies

The majority of the societies in place when the first Europeans entered the Americas were characterized by limited social stratification, with multiple institutions whose hierarchies overlapped featuring kinship relations as important organizing principles. By no means changeless from the earliest stratified societies, late stratified societies are testimony to the potential flexibility of such social formations under a variety of pressures that can be documented, ranging from extreme environmental change to internal social upheaval and external political and military pressure. Gender relations were significant variables in such transformations, although not always explicitly foregrounded in early studies. Recent scholarship on gender in the US southwest has exemplified the ways in which gendered divisions of labor changed under the new conditions of the southwest after 1000 CE, when agricultural villages were faced with conditions of extreme drought (Crown, 2001). It is likely that attention to other dynamic late stratified societies would illustrate equally strong impacts on, and influences of, gender relations. Studies of the Iroquois confederacy in the northeast US provide another example, where expansive militarism that took men as warriors away from agricultural villages affected both the division of labor and of political authority in society (Prezzano, 1997).

In a few places, early stratified societies were transformed, through the simplification of complex overlapping institutions into uniform hierarchies, into early states with hereditary ruling families and at least nominal closed noble and commoner strata. Such societies typified late pre-Columbian Mesoamerican Central America and Andean South America. By the sixteenth century, these included institutionalized bureaucratic states with incipient classes and hereditary occupational groups not unlike castes. The most expansive of these bureaucratic states, the Aztec and Inca "empires," were territorially extensive, multi-ethnic, militaristic conquest states with

complex extractive economies. Much of the study of gender in the Americas has focused on states, especially the most stratified late states for which not only indigenous records but also European accounts are available.

In these late societies warfare, when and where it becomes a facet of institutional power, the supervision of children's education by supra-kinship institutions, and state demands on kinship-based groups for tribute, profoundly affected men and women's participation in politics and the economy. Bioarcheological studies lend support to other lines of argument for increases in gender differentiation with greater social stratification and political centralization. These studies also simultaneously document that men and women of economically privileged classes share more of their experiences than do women or men across lines of social status. Consequently, while it may be reasonable to explore the ways that gender difference is produced and reproduced in these societies, we cannot assume that gender was the most important characteristic determining the circumstances of the lives of these ancient people.

A contrast in biological evidence of stress and health in the eastern United States, between late Archaic (3500–1000 BCE) communities with mixed economies and limited social stratification, and Mississippian towns (dating after 900 CE) with more intensive dependence on farming and varied levels of social stratification, is well documented. While there is a general tendency for evidence of heavy workloads to increase, and for stature and other indications of good nutrition to decline, there is no uniform set of findings with regard to *differences* between men's and women's tasks, degree of labor, or health.

Comparison of late Archaic populations in present-day Kentucky with those of the later Fort Ancient site showed a decline in male life expectancy and a rise in female life expectancy with the adoption of agriculture. The infection rate for males increased, suggesting greater sedentism allowed more exposure to the diseases of village life. Findings from other parts of the US southeast and midwest also document differential negative impact on males with the transition to intensive agriculture. At the Dickson Mound site in Illinois, evidence of work stress increases between 950 and 1300 CE, with greater increases for males, suggesting they experienced a higher workload with the adoption of intensive agriculture. In the Mississippian (1275–1400) Averbach site, males had higher rates of arthritis and back injuries.

But other sites in the same area showed a contrary pattern of differential impact of increased workloads on women. Women in Georgia experienced increased infection, suggesting greater sedentism with the adoption of intensive agriculture around 1150, while changes in diet led to increases in tooth decay for these women. In Alabama, an increase in the robustness of female skeletons is taken as an indication of increased work. In Kentucky, a study comparing the Archaic Indian Knoll site (dated 2500 BCE) and the Mississippian Hardin village (occupied *c.*1550) documented a reduced workload for males, while females apparently carried the same or an increased workload. In a study of populations in Illinois, more arthritis in the same joints was documented for women, while men showed the same level of arthritis but in different joints. This is interpreted as evidence for women carrying on the same kinds of tasks (primarily seed-processing) at a higher level of intensity, while men took on different tasks but without increasing their workload. And while the effects of the adoption of agriculture on the infection rate and life expectancy of men at

Fort Ancient were particularly evident, women in the community experienced increased levels of anemia with reliance on maize agriculture.

While contrasts in biological indicators of health and workloads between the sexes are most evident in societies dependent on intensive agriculture, even here the evidence is not unambiguous. At the Mississippian (1325–65) Turner site, adult life expectancy for males and females was the same, suggesting equal health risks in this agricultural setting. The potential of social segregation by gender is highlighted in this case. The proportion of females in the cemetery was inordinately high, and it is likely that some males had privileged access to burial in another location, such as a monumental earthen platform at the site (Wilson, 1997). The possibility exists that these unstudied elite males enjoyed better health and life expectancy than either the majority of women, or the males in the common cemetery.

The biological studies available at present are most abundant for North America. They show unambiguously that in stratified societies complex divisions of labor developed in which men and women quite commonly played distinct roles, under more or less formal administration by political authorities, accompanied by the development and reinforcement of ideologies of gender difference. These implications are underlined by studies of other late states in which distinct lines of evidence are available.

Developing in Guatemala and the Yucatan peninsula between 200 BCE and 1000 CE, Classic Maya society was composed of a number of independent city-states linked together through intermarriage, trade, military alliance, and warfare. Classic Maya city-states shared a common writing system, and while the texts preserved are limited to carved stone monuments and inscriptions on luxury pottery and personal ornaments, they provide biographical information on a large number of men and women of the ruling families (Proskouriakoff, 1993; Martin and Grube, 2000). Texts commonly accompany visual images that supplement the information about individual action by these people, particularly in respect to religion and political ceremony. Given differences in literacy, visual images would have communicated more general meanings to non-literate viewers separately from the specificity of text. Other visual representations in the form of abundant figurines and paintings on pottery vessels depict a wider range of action carried out by largely anonymous figures. Maya visual representations thus served as a medium for reproducing social stereotypes, including gender stereotypes (Joyce, 2001 and 1992; Wright, 1996; Klein, 2001). Textual and visual representations can be juxtaposed to the archaeological traces of activity in residential, civic, and religious settings to create complex models of gender relations in Classic Maya society.

Monumental art and inscriptions suggest that among the Classic Maya, dynastic considerations sometimes led to women assuming ruling power. Researchers have generally assumed that transmission of the right to rule passed patrilineally, so that any succession by women would have been a social crisis permitted only under great pressure. Researchers also assumed that all persons mentioned in texts were male unless they were explicitly marked as women, despite the absence of gender marking in the Maya languages used to guide explication of the texts. Women were identified only when specific signs, now glossed as marking "noblewoman," were found in texts, or when specific costumes were depicted (Proskouriakoff, 1993; Bruhns, 1988). As progress in understanding Maya texts continued, the identification of female

characters through distinctive dress was questioned. Some persons who by dress would have been identified as women were named in texts either as known male characters, or without the signs otherwise determinative of women's names. This led to a series of studies suggesting possible rationales for cross-dressing among the political elite in Classic Maya society. These images may depict ritual impersonation by male and female nobles of a primordial being encompassing maleness and femaleness. This debate moved discussion of Maya gender from a search for identifiable historical women to a consideration of the nature of Maya concepts of gendered identity.

Other research on the Classic Maya explored gendered dimensions of everyday life. Julia Hendon pioneered gendered analysis of Classic Maya residential settlements, examining the distribution of refuse from different activities at Classic Maya Copan as a means to evaluate the participation of men and women in everyday life (in Claassen and Joyce, 1997). Visual representations from the same time period were used as a basis to argue that certain forms of labor (spinning, weaving, corn grinding, and food preparation and serving) were stereotypically gendered female. Evidence for women's work was pervasive, contradicting arguments for spatial segregation of women. Hendon critiqued the projection of the Western public/private dichotomy in analyses of Maya sites, arguing that the labor of women in residential settings was itself political action (compare Tate, 1999; Sweely, 1999).

Representation of women at work, in the form of figurines produced in the residential compounds of non-ruling nobles, has been used as evidence of the social significance of labor to groups patronizing the creation of these Classic Maya images, engaged in negotiating social position in centralizing political systems (Joyce, 2001). Similar analysis of stereotyped representations of male and female action in other stratified societies of the Americas has documented unique characteristics in the representation of normative male and female genders, demonstrating how such representational media can be productively treated as forms of discourse. Joan Gero shows that Recuay pottery effigies of the Early Intermediate Period (200 BCE–600 CE) Andes present distinct male and female images, both represented as high-status, with independent scopes of action related to production, ritual, and politics (in Klein, 2001). Juxtaposing her discussion of these images with her more tightly dated analysis of archeological remains from the Early Intermediate Period Queyash Alto site, Gero showed that the social position of men and women was under negotiation in everyday life and representation, paralleling research on Classic Maya society.

Analysis of Classic Maya representation of women drew attention to the homosociality, if not homosexuality, of Classic Maya men (Joyce, 2000; 2001). This is part of a recent move to explore sexuality and the construction of masculinities and femininities in the Americas, including the study of alternative genders (see McCafferty and McCafferty, 1999; Holliman, 2000; Prine, 2000; Dean, 2001). Classic Maya representations of groups of young men engaged in physical activity, including warfare, underline other evidence that young men were segregated and subjected to special training in warfare, creating a supra-kinship institution like that described as "young men's houses" by sixteenth-century European chroniclers.

In Classic Maya society, intensification of warfare marked the period around 800–1000 CE during which small kingdoms were consolidated into larger confederacies, the lineal predecessors of the states described by early Spanish witnesses. Institutionalized training of cohorts of young men had effects like those noted in studies

of the Iroquois. Segregating men and women's activities in different spheres, allowing different political importance to be given to those activities, and privileging distinctions on the basis of sex over those on the basis of kinship group, neighborhood, occupation, or other variables produced and reproduced particular forms of masculinity. The possibility that the intensified warfare characteristic of many late pre-Columbian societies of the Americas had differential effects on women has been explored in a number of regions.

At the late Woodland period (800–1100) Libben site, no sex differences were noted in patterns of bone fractures, but mortality was higher for young adult males, an unexpected pattern in pre-industrial societies where young women are usually at higher risk of death due to complications of childbirth. In the Mississippian period (1275–1400) Averbach site, fractures that apparently resulted from violence differed by both age and sex. The partly contemporary Dickson Mounds site (950–1300) showed an increase in fractures over time, with a greater increase for adult males. A similar increase in traumas was documented for Fort Ancient beginning around 1000. These patterns have been attributed to risks associated with warfare in these politically centralizing societies. A unique report of more intensive evidence of violence toward women in the Anasazi culture of the US southwest, in the form of head trauma, along with much higher rates of disease and low life expectancy, has been interpreted as evidence of women taken captive in warfare. While increased conflict between communities clearly is a factor in late societies of the US southwest, it does not generally affect males and females categorically as appears to be the case in the southeast US.

Women's health declined even in late societies where evidence for systematic warfare is not present, however, implying that a variety of stresses were at issue in more centralized, economically and socially stratified settings. Holliman reported that after 1150, Chumash women suffered from poor nutrition beginning in childhood, contributing to higher disease rates than men (1997). They also showed evidence of more skeletal trauma. What may be common is that in stratified and state societies, women and men are often treated as groups with respect to specific activities (such as warfare) or statuses (such as agricultural workers). While varying in each time and place, an overarching effect of greater stratification is to subject gendered groups to similar treatment, reflected in regularities in the health status of individuals.

The clearest evidence for gendered effects of political violence is furnished by the most centralized societies in the Americas, the Inca empire and Aztec (Mexica) tributary state. Beginning with influential articles by June Nash, studies of Mexica art emphasized the violence shown to female supernaturals depicted decapitated and dismembered, with monstrous features, and/or as defeated warriors. This has been taken as evidence of a misogynistic state ideology that glorified male warriors and denigrated women. More nuanced work by Cecelia Klein (ed., 1988) suggests that the conquered females were proxies for the victims of conquest, part of a gendered ideology in which a hyper-masculine Mexica state treated other conquered states as defeated women, with negative implications for the status of women in the Mexica capital, Tenochtitlan. Arguing against a hegemonic reading of Mexica art, Geoffrey and Sharisse McCafferty (1991) have suggested that Mexica women symbolically participated in the status inherent in military conquest, through rhetorical equation of their activities, particularly in textile production and childbirth, with the labor of warriors. Susan Gillespie (1989) demonstrated that Mexica histories represented female

ancestors as sources of legitimacy and authority, also suggesting the need for more nuanced interpretation of these artworks.

Most scholars today agree that Mexica women were engaged in a militarist ideology through parallel rhetoric (Brumfiel, 1991, 1996 and 2001; Burkhart, 1997; Joyce, 2001). Images of decapitated and dismembered women may represent conquests by the Mexica state as encounters of gendered violence, but were simultaneously statements of Mexica defeat of non-Mexica people, to which Mexica women contributed. Gender ideologies in states may have been absolute, but practices in these societies are more complex. Political reorganization in the late Andes under the Inca included both the imposition of an ideology of gender hierarchy, and the persistence away from the center of Inca power of pre-existing political systems in which women of specific status groups were as eligible to wield power as men (Silverblatt, 1987).

Analyses of Mexica gender relations draw on the most abundant ethno-historic materials of any indigenous society of the Americas. Access to material remains was initially more limited, since modern Mexico City covers the Mexica capital, Tenochtitlan. Study of the Mexica profited from the least temporal displacement between the society of interest and the time and place of creation of ethno historic texts. Nonetheless, recent research has identified gender biases even in early texts, requiring a more rigorous textual critique (Miller, 1988; Schroeder et al., 1997). Attention to diversity between different cities in the Mexica state demonstrates different effects of incorporation into the tribute system experienced by men and women.

The persistence of claims to status by powerful women in the Mexica state, who practiced publicly recognized roles as healers, ritual leaders, and traders, is based on an ideology of gender complementarity (McCafferty and McCafferty, 1991). Ideologies of gender complementarity pervade societies of the Americas, a significant difference this region offers for comparative research on gender. In societies in the Americas where gender complementarity has been noted, there is usually an emphasis on a cosmological or mythological state of gender androgyny, expressed as a single, dual gendered or ambiguously gendered being, or an indissoluble pair, who carry out creative action. Ritual re-enactment often requires gender duality, which can be represented by a male, such as the Mexica Cihuacoatl, a female-gendered male functionary (Klein, 2001). Not simply a claim for separate spheres within which male and female hierarchies exist, ideologies of gender complementarity propose that effective ritual action (and often political and social action) require the cooperation of male and female gendered beings. The "domestic" work of sweeping that women performed in Tenochtitlan was rhetorically presented as a necessary complement of male participation in military campaigns (Burkhart, 1997). Parallel male and female young adult genders were produced from dual-gendered Mexica infants through rhetorical and material practices throughout childhood (Joyce, 2001).

Andean ideologies of gender complementarity are equally evident. In Inca society, femininity and masculinity were conceived of as developing through the life span, waxing and waning, against a more comprehensive androgyny typical of the beginning and end of individual lives (Dean, 2001). Susan Niles (1988) shows that paired male and female deities were crucial in ritual in the Andes as early as the Early Intermediate Period (200 BCE–600 CE). Silverblatt argued that such fundamental parallel male and female complementarity, subverted into a hierarchy by the Inca state, persisted in administered provinces as well as in daily practices.

The exploration of the gendered lives of men and women in the pre-Columbian Americas is facilitated by the archaeological recovery of evidence of everyday practices. Because of limits on the ability to excavate remains of ancient Tenochtitlan, for the Mexica most of this kind of work is based on studies of the countryside or colonized societies. This has introduced an important emphasis on diversity in gendered experience in these large bureaucratic states. Elizabeth Brumfiel has pioneered an exploration of the actual effects of Mexica colonization on conquered women, drawing on meticulous regional survey and using statistical methods to test creative hypotheses based on implications of conventional understandings of Mexica gender dynamics (Gero and Conkey, 1991; Wright, 1996; Klein, 2001). She has paid special attention to changes in the evidence for cloth production (also a factor in the Inca empire). Based on ethno-historic texts and representations, spinning and weaving were stereotypic women's work among the Mexica. These tasks constituted proper womanly behavior, at least in normative texts provided by noble informants. Since cloth served as one of the standards of economic value for the Mexica tribute state, textile production was integral to that political system. Brumfiel has been able to document changes in the frequencies of spindle whorls in provincial sites following conquest by the Mexica. She has related the evidence for increase in textile production to parallel evidence of changes in food production, which would have been necessary if women reoriented their labor from provisioning their group to cloth production for the state. For the Inca state, Christine Hastorf has documented impacts on gender in a study of the incorporation of independent stratified societies in the Upper Mantaro valley (Hastorf, 1991). Through an analysis of evidence for plant-processing, food preparation, and consumption, she demonstrates that the diets of men and women diverged with incorporation into the Inca state, and suggests changes in the location and intensity of gendered labor. Men's participation in work gangs away from home communities compensated with corn-based foods, and produced gender differences in diet, experience, and participation in public life.

Attention to differences in experience among men and women and to wider issues of gender and sexuality promise to be major topics of future studies. Evidence for alternative sexualities and multiple genders in North America and Central America is already strong (McCafferty and McCafferty, 1999; Holliman, 2000; Prine, 2000; Holliman, 1997; Claassen and Joyce, 1997). Existing studies suggest age, sexual activity, and seniority were more significant determinants of life chances than biological sex alone. The assumption that ethno-historic documents provide an "ethnographic" view of late societies has been replaced by exploration of the role of colonial authorities. These men elicited, edited, and shaped information to support their own understandings of inherent gender hierarchy as through legal and administrative means they transformed members of diverse indigenous societies into normative patrilineal subjects (Silverblatt, 1987; Gillespie, 1989; Kellogg, 1995; Schroeder et al., 1997).

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Chapter Seventeen

Gender History, Southeast Asia, and the "World Regions" Framework

Barbara Watson Andaya

World Regions and Gender History

Though well entrenched in academia, the division of the non-European world into "macrocultural zones" is currently a contentious topic. Not only do such categorizations reflect assumptions of Euro-American hegemony; they also convey the impression of homogenous cultures existing within a defined field. Needless to say, this can be highly misleading. Contemporary "Southeast Asia," for example, consists of eleven countries (Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia, Vietnam, Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, and East Timor). While one can certainly map congeries of cultural similarity, differences in religions, languages, and historical experiences render the region as a whole extremely diverse. To a varying extent, similar remarks could be made regarding the three other "zones" that border Southeast Asia – South Asia, East Asia, and the Pacific (including Australia and New Zealand). Although India has fifteen official languages, hundreds of others can be found across South Asia (which includes Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, and the Maldives). Scholars working with China's numerous ethnic minorities likewise caution against implicit assumptions that "culture" somehow equates with modern political boundaries. It is worth remembering that there were around two hundred languages in Aboriginal Australia, and lifestyles could differ quite markedly between the coast, the tropical north, and more arid inland areas.

Nor are the politically based divisions of the "world region" system sympathetic to the transitional cultures of border areas. Sri Lanka, which exists on the margins of South Asian scholarship, is historically connected with Myanmar and Thailand through their shared Theravada Buddhism. Were it included in "Southeast Asia" (as was the case during initial post-war area-studies formulations) Sri Lanka would almost certainly assume a more central position. Similarly, Taiwan is assigned to "East Asia" but the island was linguistically and culturally linked to eastern Indonesia and the Philippines until it was drawn into the Chinese ambit during the seventeenth century.

Notwithstanding obvious shortcomings, the area studies framework has been fundamental in shaping academic research on Asia and the Pacific, including work on

gender. Disciplinary and linguistic specialization, however, has tended to discourage cross-cultural work, especially in fields such as history where generalizations are always subject to challenge. Even in the relatively homogenous society of Tokugawa Japan, for example, an informed discussion must acknowledge the wide range of different geographic and economic environments in which rural women operated. Yet these admittedly crude "world region" divisions do serve a purpose because they facilitate broad-brushed comparisons across a swathe of geographically disparate and culturally diverse societies.

As any overview will show, the study of gender in East Asia has been privileged because of the abundance of documents generated by well-established writing systems, the spread of literacy and the development of printing. The kind of material available is evident in Anne Walthall's contribution to this volume (chapter 24), which reflects the virtual explosion of publications on Ming and early Qing China (fourteenth to eighteenth centuries) since the mid-1980s. Research on women and gender in Japan during the Tokugawa Shogunate (1600–1868) and on Korea under the Chosen dynasty (1392–1910) has also grown markedly. Scholars of East Asia are additionally fortunate because the relationship between men and women was central to the neo-Confucianism of fifteenth-century China, which was a persuasive model for Korea and Vietnam, and exerted considerable influence on intellectual thought in Japan. According to the teachings of Confucius (551–479 BCE), the maintenance of correct human relationships, particularly between parents and children and husband and wife, was vital for the community's well-being. Although the effects of Confucian-based government were most evident among the elite, the community at large was also the target of laws and exhortations aimed at promoting "righteous" behavior. Moralizing tracts and biographies of "virtuous women," for instance, helped disseminate images of the ideal woman as submissive, chaste, hard-working, and obedient to her parents, husband, and senior relatives.

While most written sources discuss gender in reference to the middle class and nobility, the corpus of female writing – poetry, memoirs, diaries, and commentaries – adds another dimension to male-dominated debates. In addition, documentation like cadastral surveys, petitions, deeds, and promissory notes can also yield insights into the ways in which ordinary men and women interacted. This wide range of sources enables historians working on premodern East Asia to consider gender in a variety of social and economic contexts.

At the same time, recent work points up inherent difficulties in "East Asian" generalizations. In China, older practices were maintained among ethnic minorities and among Hakka women, who did not bind their feet, who worked beside men in the fields and "unashamedly" frequented the marketplace. Despite the influence of the Confucian paradigm, Japanese constructs of gender also maintained their own dynamics. The prominence of women in pre-Tokugawa commercial and religious life may have faded as a male-oriented samurai culture took hold, but the segregation of the sexes was less evident than in China and Korea because of the influence of Buddhism, Shinto, and other indigenous beliefs. Future research will undoubtedly further refine such "East Asian" comparisons.

In South Asian studies over the last decade the extensive documentation generated by colonialism has initiated new discussions of the intersections between gender, race, and class. The concentration on British India, however, highlights the

problematic nature of the inclusive term "South Asia," while the focus on the nineteenth century draws attention to the relative lack of gender research during the so-called Mughul period from 1526. The picture is also ill-balanced because pre-colonial scholarship tends to focus on elite society. This has certainly helped to identify a number of noblewomen and courtesans who were astute and sophisticated commentators on contemporary events. It has also demonstrated the influence well-born women could exercise, even when the custom of *purdah* theoretically excluded them from public life. However, historiographical divisions between "pre-colonial" and "colonial" mean that continuities in gender constructions often go unrecognized, with debates and challenges to such constructions presented largely as a nineteenth-century preserve.

It is within the religious framework that research on gender in pre-colonial South Asia has been most vigorously pursued. While relevant work on Islam is limited, and male–female relations in Sri Lanka's Buddhist environment awaits a historical study, the ambiguous place of women in Hinduism has generated greater interest. As wives and mothers women were honored as sources of support and benevolence, yet as symbols of sexual desire they were denigrated as obstacles in a man's path to salvation. Cultural perceptions of menstruation and childbirth as polluting also made women threatening to male ritual purity. In their desire to preserve descent lines and protect inheritance, the higher castes stressed female chastity and wifely fidelity, with Brahmanical prohibitions against remarriage extending to *sati*, the ritual immolation of a widow on her husband's funeral pyre.

Historians have pointed out that it is quite possible to track a counter-story, especially in villages where economic realities often meant greater female freedoms. The independent thinking of some women is especially evident among followers of the devotional stream known as *bhakti*, which often cut across Hindu–Muslim divisions. Moving songs of religious praise composed by ordinary women in Hindi and other languages such as Bengali, Gujarati, Marathi, and Telegu not only identify talented individuals but suggest the kinds of social issues with which they were concerned. For example, a poem written by Chandrabati (*c.*1550–1600), a poet from contemporary Bangladesh, registers her protest against unjust laws that imprisoned women when a family was unable to pay taxes. The anthology of women's writing by Tharu and Lalita (1991) draws attention to India's vigorous tradition of folk songs through which non-literate women recalled the sorrows and joys of ordinary life.

Because orally transmitted material often changes in response to shifting societal concerns, it is not easily linked to any specific historical context. In non-literate societies, however, this may be the only access historians have to the distant past. It is certainly encouraging to see that cooperation between historians and anthropologists is developing methodologies which approach oral traditions on their own terms. Nevertheless, the dearth of documentation before European settlement has presented a major impediment to any historical reconstruction in the Pacific Islands (conventionally but anachronistically divided between Micronesia and Melanesia in the west and Polynesia in the east), Australia and New Zealand.

Since indigenous societies ranged in size from nomadic tribes of Australia to small villages in Melanesia and the larger and more cohesive kingdoms of Polynesia, it has been difficult to incorporate scholarly exchanges under an inclusive "Pacific" umbrella. During the 1970s, however, ethno-historians working on this region

became caught up in a larger debate regarding the alleged "universal subordination" of women. Although some critics have since argued that female inferiority has been exaggerated, it is clear that gender constituted an important division in most Pacific societies. One much-discussed topic concerns women and pollution, and whether the *tapu* (sacred, forbidden) system of Polynesia, with its restrictions on male–female interaction, connoted female inferiority or power. In recent years detailed analyses have presented a more holistic picture of gender relations by exploring the ways in which women operated in a male-dominated society. Furthermore, although male–female relationships were polarized in many parts of Melanesia, previous views of gender antagonism have been refined. For example, groups in New Guinea's eastern and central highlands considered semen to be as dangerous and powerful as menstrual blood and vaginal fluids. Other Melanesian societies, like the Solomons and Vanuatu, manifested much less fear of women's bodies, and research has shown that older women could play important ritual roles.

Anthropologists such as Margaret Jolly have seen the expansion of case studies as an opportunity for more comparative work through collaboration with specialists on Asia (Ram and Jolly, 1998). It is impossible to supply historical depth to the Pacific component of these discussions, however, because almost all relevant ethnographic data was collected over the last two hundred years. Early European sources can also be problematic in exploring questions of gender because "eye witness" accounts are often infused by racial arrogance and cultural ignorance. Furthermore, since changes came so quickly after European settlement in the nineteenth century, one must also be cautious about reading back from later material. In New Guinea, for instance, it is thought that female status may have been higher before the advent of steel axes in the 1930s, when men were more involved in subsistence agriculture and spent less time in exclusively male activities.

Specialists on "Southeast Asia," which lies at the intersections of these convenient if simplistic world zones, have long debated the question of regional coherence. Although local populations share many similarities in appearance and lifestyle, there are still over a thousand Southeast Asian languages, and this intrinsic diversity was accentuated by the infusion of outside influences. At the beginning of the fifteenth century Theravada Buddhism was well established in contemporary Thailand, Myanmar, Cambodia, and Laos, but the Vietnamese court became an energetic promoter of Confucianism. Islam had affirmed its beach-heads in Sumatra, the Malay Peninsula, and the north coast of Java, although its greatest spread came in the sixteenth century. This may have been a partial response to the challenge of Christianity, which the missionizing zeal of Spanish colonizers brought to the northern Philippines. Christian pockets also developed in Indonesia under the aegis of the Portuguese and Dutch. Economic shifts resulting from the European presence further emphasized differences between "island" and "mainland" Southeast Asia. The Spanish established their capital at Manila in 1571, and from 1619 the archipelago-wide activities of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) were coordinated from its base at Batavia (modern Jakarta) on the island of Java.

While the formulation of historical generalizations remains extremely problematic, one characteristic almost invariably invoked by proponents of the region's underlying unity is the prominence of women in local economies, indigenous rituals, and kinship patterns. Indeed, scholars such as Anthony Reid (1988) have even alleged

that the complementary relationship between male and female and the relatively "high status" of women is part of a distinctive Southeast Asian social pattern. Despite this continuing (albeit debatable) endorsement, gender has not provided a scholarly lodestone for the conceptualization and formulation of historical research on Southeast Asia as it has done in anthropology. "Southeast Asian" studies began to develop in the aftermath of World War II, when the region's erstwhile colonies were rejoicing in their new-found independence, and the hegemony of nationalist historiography is only slowly providing space for research on gender. From the 1980s, however, there has been a growing interest in peoples and communities normally omitted from the nation's metanarrative. As in India, the gender/race juxtaposition has provided a focus for an exploration of nineteenth- and twentieth-century colonial sources, but for the most part work on women and gender concentrates on contemporary times.

Notwithstanding the lack of research, the potential for exploring contentious issues such as women's "high status" and "gender complementarity" in the early modern period is high. The arrival of Europeans in the sixteenth century meant an exponential increase in written material, particularly that produced by the Spanish missionaries and the Dutch East India Company. These records remain a unique and invaluable source on which historians of island Southeast Asia depend heavily, despite the racial stereotypes and misogyny that surface so frequently. The production and preservation of local documents during this period also rose markedly. We should remember that such sources are difficult to use, for many are written in arcane scripts and are larded with obsolete words. The historian also faces the question of the extent to which literary images mirror the realities of gender relations. Yet in the interstices of court chronicles, population registers, sermons, literature, and village stories the skilled historian can find revealing and significant details on male–female interaction in many different environments. As yet no anthology of women's writing has been compiled for Southeast Asia, but there is certainly potential for doing so.

One must still sound a note of caution, since written sources are not equitably distributed, and there is a real danger of allowing conclusions drawn from better-documented areas such as Java and the Philippines to speak for the entire region. More particularly, the production of texts was always an elite activity. The pasts of populations that were largely non- or semi-literate may be preserved only in oral traditions, with all their attendant methodological problems. At this stage, when gender research in premodern Southeast Asia is in its infancy, the great need is for context-rich case studies which can supply a bank of detailed data on specific issues while facilitating informed generalizations and comparative commentary. Towards this end, a number of scholars mentioned in this chapter have contributed to a collection essays edited by Barbara Watson Andaya, *Other Pasts: Women, Gender and History in Early Modern Southeast Asia* (2000).

Gender Constructions and "Localization" in Southeast Asia

Tracking the ways in which imported beliefs and practices were both adopted by local societies and adapted to indigenous customs is a well-established theme in Southeast Asian history. This process, which the field has termed "localization," is clearly evident in regard to gender, and is a salutary reminder that "traditional" life was constantly evolving. While we should avoid the tendency to idealize earlier male–female

relations, there is no doubt that the penetration of the world religions and rising state authority did combine to promote a more pronounced gender hierarchy in Southeast Asian societies. On the other hand, it is also apparent that these outside influences underwent considerable modification. One reason for this was undoubtedly the influential position of women in ritual, in the economy, and in the domestic sphere.

Ritual

Throughout Southeast Asia indigenous belief systems were centered on rituals intended to ensure the community's well-being, whether these concerned the birth of healthy children, freedom from disease, success in warfare, or a bountiful harvest. Only certain people, however, had the requisite powers to solicit the assistance of non-human agencies. Although in many areas the most high-ranking indigenous priests were male, this was by no means invariably so. Using evidence from Borneo and Sulawesi (Indonesia), Leonard Andaya (in Andaya, 2000) has argued that despite the conception of two genders and two sexes, a belief that the union of men and women made a sacred whole meant that in some societies transvestite figures assumed the dominant religious role. Little historical research has been undertaken on this topic, although we know that other groups, like those in the Philippines, accorded the same ritual prominence to individuals who combined male and female elements. The "men in the garb of women" and the women wearing male accoutrements described by early Europeans were thus highly respected spirit-mediums and guardians of sacred objects who acted as conduits to the supernatural world.

In all societies older women whose reproductive days were past and who had thus become more "male" could also assume important positions as ritual leaders. As Carolyn Brewer shows (in Andaya, 2000; Brewer, 2001), the importance of females as priestesses and spirit-mediums is best documented in the detailed reports submitted by Spanish missionaries working in the Philippines. Mention of similar practices appears in other parts of the island world, and in pre-Chinese Taiwan VOC officials described female shamans who were credited with powers such as the ability to control wind and the coming of rain. Although the evidence is more scattered and often involves inference from later anthropological data, it seems that women may have assumed comparable roles in mainland Southeast Asia. In northern Thailand, for instance, older women acted as lineage elders in matrilineal ancestor cults and in propitiation ceremonies held at harvest times. Even today among the Akha (a hill tribe group that straddles the borders of China, Thailand, and Myanmar), the most senior woman in a family is eligible to wear a white skirt, indicating that she can perform certain rice ceremonies and carry out ancestral rites normally restricted to males.

The ritual interaction of male and female was especially evident in those societies where the taking of heads was considered a prerequisite for marriage. Although the Iban of Borneo have attracted most contemporary attention, a corresponding picture can be drawn in other headhunting societies, including those in the highland areas between modern India and Myanmar. Participation in raiding and the taking of a head was essential as part of the induction into manhood and as a statement of readiness for marriage. It was appropriate, therefore, that young women should goad their suitors to go out on the warpath, and an eighteenth-century Malay manuscript

describes how village maidens in southern Sumatra joyfully greeted triumphant raiders as they returned with their trophy skulls.

The role of women as mediators between the community and the spirit world extended into other contexts, especially that of negotiators. While this was probably most common in brokering marriage agreements, female liaison was also commonly used to reach compromises between contending parties, whether in commercial dealings or interstate relations. Older women, especially those of high birth, were especially effective because they commanded respect as maternal figures and because refusal of a mother's plea was culturally difficult. So accepted was this practice that even the VOC at times used senior women to make contact with leaders of opposing native forces.

Economic roles

From the sixteenth century, when increasing numbers of Europeans and Chinese men began arriving in the area, this traditional position as mediators between competing males gave women a special place. However, a more important factor was female prominence in economic life, still a feature of Southeast Asian societies in contemporary times. European traders found that court ladies could be effective and knowledgeable patrons, since many had amassed substantial fortunes from their appanages, from royal gifts of land and jewelry, and from their investments in trading enterprises. Even women of lower rank who had been taken into a royal household could take advantage of special access to commercial privileges and accumulate their own fortune.

It is at the village level, however, that female economic activities are most evident. The antiquity of beliefs attached to an agricultural goddess has been tracked in many societies, but it is especially apparent in the rice-growing areas of Southeast Asia. Everywhere, it seems, the earth was personified as a woman and the agricultural cycle of planting and harvesting equated with human conception, pregnancy, and birth. The idea that the rice seed is a baby which should be lovingly nurtured is captured in one Malay manuscript, which relates how the royal midwife herself plants the community's first seeds. Similar perceptions can still be found today; Akha groups in contemporary Thailand, for example, compare the irrigation ditch of their rice field to the birth canal. Comparative research in India and China has concluded that communities that grow rice rather than wheat value women's agricultural labor more highly, and this certainly appears to apply in Southeast Asia. The transplanting and harvesting that were primarily women's work were intimately connected with female-dominated fertility rituals, and there was an implicit understanding that the community would go hungry without women's involvement.

The close links between women and agriculture help us understand why land and houses were so often inherited through the female line. Among anthropologists the most studied of such societies is the matrilineal Minangkabau of central Sumatra, where adult males were expected to leave home for extended periods as workers and traders. The idea of the "mobile" male and the "immobile" female, however, can be found through much of the region. As soldiers, raiders, sailors, hunters, fishermen, and traders men could be absent for days or even months at a time, with the result that women assumed very broad responsibilities over household management and

income. Recent historical work indicates that female inheritance, ownership, and control of land may also have been more widespread than previously thought. A seventeenth-century text from southern Thailand, for example, mentions a group of mothers and daughters who dedicated their lands to a local Buddhist temple. In Vietnam few early village registers have survived, but a study of the Red River Delta during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries shows that nearly a quarter of the landowners were women, although their holdings were usually smaller than those of men. Vietnamese historians have used these records to demonstrate that even low born women could become wealthy by buying land with money obtained from rice sales.

As today, village markets in Southeast Asia were largely a female domain, and women's earnings as producers and retailers were probably the mainstay of the domestic economy. An eighteenth-century biographical work thus describes now a Minangkabau pepper trader, finding himself in straitened circumstances far from home, sends a message back to his wife to request funds so that he can purchase a boat and cargo to continue his voyage. Market relationships and female-led work groups would also have given women experience in leadership and organization. Thai and Burmese sources show that governments appointed women as tax collectors in local markets and as their agents in "female" occupations like weaving and dyeing.

The fact that all facets of cloth production remained completely in female hands was highly significant because textiles in Southeast Asia were far more than simple clothing or decoration. Textiles remained basic to local economies, since they served as an exchange item in barter, and could even operate in the same way as a currency. In parts of Indonesia, for instance, small rectangles of rough cloth were used in place of money. Weaving skills were therefore of considerable economic value, and in mainland Southeast Asia hundreds of weavers were sometimes captured as prisoners of war. At the same time, the production of cloth was an integral part of the community's ritual life. Ethnographic material on Southeast Asian textiles has mushroomed over the past twenty years, and although this has been undertaken largely by anthropologists, it does provide glimpses of the ritual authority cloth-producers wielded in earlier times. Weaving, said the Ibans, was a woman's warpath, and it was skills associated with textiles that established her status within the community. The highest honor was paid to those who had mastered the designs used in the huge ceremonial cloths that received severed heads, with the hands of a great weaver tattooed as a public statement of her achievements.

Marriage and childbearing

Because of the value of women in the ritual and economy of Southeast Asian communities, the birth of a girl was rarely a disappointment. The apparent prevalence of infanticide in the Philippines may reflect Spanish preoccupations rather than reality, but in any event it does not seem that the baby's sex was a factor. While betrothal and marriage patterns varied across the region, a daughter's worth was acknowledged in the common practice whereby a groom and his relatives paid a brideprice to her family. In many areas it was also customary for a young man to live in his betrothed's household for two or three years prior to marriage, "buying" his wife by his own labor. The birth of a daughter was also an insurance for old age, since the widespread

custom of matrilocal residence meant that she would care for her elderly parents. As an English observer in west Sumatra remarked, "the more females in a planter's family, the richer he is esteemed.'

Since marriage and childbearing were so important to the family, a girl's first menstruation was often ritually marked because it was an affirmation of her adulthood. At the same time, menstruation was a reminder that a woman embodied powerful forces of fertility over which she had no direct control and had the potential to negate male virility. European men had little understanding of the complexity of such attitudes, but the accounts they left convey some sense of the ambiguity of indigenous attitudes towards female sexuality. In seventeenth-century Ambon (eastern Indonesia) for example, a community feast was held and the girl was ritually bathed and dressed in ceremonial clothes. In the Philippines, however, a Tagalog girl was sequestered apart from the community and was not permitted to talk to anybody except the spirit-medium performing the ceremonies. In these and other village societies, Europeans were shocked to discover that premarital sex was condoned, although a well-born girl was expected to remain virgin until her wedding. Helen Creese (in Andaya, 2000; Creese, 2001a; 2001b) has provided us with graphic examples from Balinese literature that depict the marriage bed as a battlefield and the deflowering of a girl as a male victory.

While emerging class distinctions introduced differing notions of what "adultery" entailed, at the village level extra-marital sexual relations was considered a heinous crime, even though divorce was relatively common. The idea that marriage was a partnership between men and women is illustrated in the customs surrounding pregnancy and childbirth. In most places prospective fathers were required to observe certain taboos because of beliefs that their actions could inadvertently offend the spirits and thus affect the welfare of both mother and unborn child. Men were also accorded specific tasks considered necessary to facilitate an easy birth and ensure a healthy child. These could range from the performance of rituals intended to drive evil forces away from a house where a woman was in labor to pounding bark for bandages to bind her abdomen after delivery. Unlike many South Asian societies, childbirth was not considered contaminating and in classical Malay manuscripts the king is commonly present when his consort delivered. Later descriptions of other Indonesian societies indicate that a father's attendance was not uncommon. As always, however, one must be cautious about generalizing too broadly. Childbirth customs among tribal groups in eastern Indonesia, for instance, resembled practices of New Guinea, with "polluting" women giving birth by themselves in forest huts.

One must also be careful to avoid depicting premodern Southeast Asia as a kind of "golden age" for women, for inequalities and gender hierarchies are evident even in relatively cohesive small scale communities. Despite the vaunted influence of bilateral kinship patterns, men were invariably politically dominant and male achievements always more celebrated. In small tribal communities women were often the prime targets of warfare and internecine raiding because the capture and control of females was a mark of male virility. The same pattern applied in larger kingdoms, and many a court chronicle relates the triumph of some great ruler who abducted the daughter or wife of his enemy and installed her in his court. Less visible in the sources are the village women, who could be forcibly taken for a vast range of royal services, including concubinage. In places where possession of misshapen individuals was interpreted as a sign

of special powers they might even be deliberately crippled. In religious life the porous boundaries between the female body and the spirit world could bring a woman considerable prestige, but could also redound to her disadvantage. In most communities a woman who died in childbirth became a voracious, predatory, and unsatisfied spirit, preying on men, women, and children alike, while beliefs that women had access to love-charms and spells that caused impotence fed incipient ideas of witchcraft as the preserve of elderly females. Matrilocal residence may have provided many girls with the support of family and kin, but there were certainly cultures where young brides left their community to live among relative strangers. The folk songs of the Miao in highland Vietnam thus lament a girl's sadness as she leaves her relatives and village, likening her to a forest bird that will henceforth be shut up in a cage. Historians have generally regarded this type of oral material as problematic but in many ways songs, poetry, proverbs, and legends may remain our richest source for an understanding of gender relations outside the literate world of the courts and port cities.

Religions, States, and Changing Gender Regimes

Confucianism

From the fifteenth century the alliance between the world religions and strengthening state structures meant that ruling elites in Southeast Asia became deeply committed to "gender regimes" that clearly advantaged men. Nevertheless, such influences were always tempered by indigenous imperatives, such as the preoccupation with rank and the respect accorded age. This localization process has probably been most closely studied in Vietnam because China controlled Vietnam for a thousand years prior to the eleventh century, and even after independence Vietnamese rulers acknowledged their subordinate status. Over the centuries the ambiguous China–Vietnam relationship has been a major theme in scholarly discourse, and the differing status of Vietnamese women is often seen as emblematic of cultural distinctiveness. The female contribution towards preserving the Vietnamese heritage is suggested by the fact that although Chinese was the literary language, educated women usually wrote in *nom* – Vietnamese written with Chinese characters.

Despite the long history of Chinese influence, the Confucian model was most closely emulated after Vietnam gained its final independence in 1427. John Whitmore (in Andaya, 2000) and Insun Yu (1990) are among the historians who have argued that the "traditional" subordination of women can in fact be ascribed to this period as Vietnamese rulers attempted to enforce ideas of Confucian morality and virtue. Official edicts, for example, prohibited the custom whereby young men lived in the house of their bride's parents, while other rulings forbade marriage with the matrilineal Cham of central Vietnam, since inheritance should descend from father to son. As in China and Korea, the cult of "chaste widows" sought to discourage female remarriage. Some literate men and women, like their Chinese counterparts, registered a quiet protest against this gender hierarchy. Poems composed by educated females might well exhort girls to honor Confucian precepts, but others are bitter indictments of the plight of discarded concubines and aging widows.

Yet for a number of reasons the influence of Confucianism in Vietnam was always limited. The civil wars which broke out in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries

redirected state priorities, and the revival of Buddhism and the entry of Christianity attracted numerous followers, especially among court women. Incorporating aspects of Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism, popular religion promoted the cult of Mother Goddesses, whose statues are often located near Buddhist monasteries and temples. The effectiveness of court edicts was also restricted because of a strong tradition of village autonomy. Unlike China, legal matters were normally handled at the village rather than the district level, which allowed for recognition of women's customary rights in marriage and inheritance. Even among the nobility, however, Vietnamese law permitted women to manage ancestral property and perform rites in the absence of a male heir. Chinese influences became more diluted as Vietnam's control spread southwards into territory occupied by Chams, Khmers, and non-Vietnamese hill tribes. Northern officials railed unsuccessfully against the "immoral" betrothal and marriage customs they observed in the south, where women chose their own husbands and young men lived with their wife's parents. Indeed, the tenacity of such practices prompted one seventeenth-century Chinese visitor to remark that Vietnamese were better pleased with the birth of a daughter than of a son.

Theravada Buddhism

Gender has been a popular topic in Vietnamese historiography because it feeds into the nationalist preoccupation with resistance to Chinese dominance. A similar interest is less evident elsewhere in mainland Southeast Asia, where the hegemony of the political narrative has allowed social history little space. Yet because debates on women in early Buddhism have concentrated almost exclusively on India and Sri Lanka, the religious past of Thailand, Cambodia, Myanmar, and Laos is ripe for a reevaluation. From a gendered perspective the appeal of Theravada Buddhism in these areas merits some explanation, since there is a general consensus that this school is relatively conservative in condemning female attachment to this world and affirming that a woman needs to be reborn as a man to become a Buddha. Sexually ambiguous individuals similarly occupy a lower status in the cosmic order.

Sanctioned by Buddhist teachings, state affirmation of gender hierarchies had far-reaching implications in societies that conceived of the ruler as a "father" to his people. One must remember, of course, that the law codes issued by Buddhist kings do not depict the lived experiences of men and women, especially as they often incorporated sections from ancient Indian texts. Regardless of the ways in which relations between men and women were negotiated, however, a father's superior position in the household was legally incontestable. The laws of Ayutthaya, the dominant Thai kingdom, reflect the emphasis on male-female hierarchy. A principal wife was worth half the *sakdina* grade (the "worth" of an individual measured in theoretical rice fields) of a man in the same social rank and laws regarding marital fidelity always emphasized female obligations. A Mon text from Myanmar, for example, specifies the amount of time a wife should wait for a husband before remarrying, but the right of a man to take a second wife is not questioned. Whatever the value of daughters in practice, the same text notes that a wife who gives birth to girls only can legally be "put away." And though Buddhism is usually regarded as relatively tolerant, some kings tried to prohibit the spirit propitiation where women were so prominent.

Religious texts even recount the agonies of spirit-mediums condemned to hell, and threaten those who believe their claims with hideous rebirths.

The patronage of male rulers, who gained enhanced status and the prospect of future Buddhahood, has been generally regarded as sufficient explanation for the spread of Buddhism in earlier times. Unlike anthropologists, historians have given little attention to the question of the different ways in which Buddhism might have appealed to men and to women. Although Thai feminists have been strongly critical of the suppressive nature of Buddhism, it is worth noting that women in Theravada Buddhist societies have greater property and inheritance rights than in India, and that divorce is permitted. In Southeast Asia it is possible to trace the localization of imported beliefs still further. Whereas in Sri Lanka a monk who left the order was the target of criticism, in Southeast Asia it became customary for young men to enter the monastery for a few months as an initiation into adulthood and as a prerequisite to marriage. Furthermore, in Sri Lanka the belief that women were a weaker spiritual vessel led to the disappearance of nuns, but sources from Myanmar and Thailand indicate that well-born women were still ordained in the seventeenth century and were accorded honors similar to those of monks. As in Sri Lanka, Southeast Asian women shouldered the responsibility of supporting the monkhood through merit-making donations of food and clothing, but their activities assumed a particularly local flavor. For example, the community's presentation of monastic robes at the end of the rainy season was transformed into an entertaining contest, when village women worked together to spin, weave, dye, cut, and sew the cloth in the span of a few days and thus magnify their collective merit.

The relegation of females to an inferior spiritual status was also countered by the religious endorsement of the lay devotee who demonstrated her piety by making merit, especially by "gifting" a son to the monastery. In recognizing this maternal sacrifice, the Buddhist ceremonies that marked a boy's novitiate endorsed preexisting images of unselfish motherhood projected in village "texts" – agricultural rituals, myths, stories, courting songs. At the upper levels of society royal women became prime exponents of piety and generosity, and inscriptions and chronicles frequently refer to royal mothers, aunts and wives who sponsored texts, donated religious buildings, and nurtured the monkhood. Well-born women also assumed prominent positions in public life. Dowager queens were often directly involved in government, and in several small Thai kingdoms it was the queen mother who took control when the throne was vacant, or when a ruler had unexpectedly died. Chronicles from northern Thailand even affirm joint rule by mother and son as an accepted political pattern. Even in the eighteenth century Burmese law codes still lay down that the chief queen is expected to help her son in administration should the ruler be away from the capital.

Islam

Although the first evidence of Islam in Southeast Asia dates from the thirteenth century, it did not gather pace until two centuries later as it began to displace the Hindu-Buddhism of Javanese courts. By the beginning of the seventeenth century Islam had been adopted by rulers in all the major Malay–Indonesian ports, and was already established in the southern Philippines. Several factors account for this

development. While Mughal India and Ottoman Turkey were persuasive exemplars, conversion to Islam would also attract Muslim traders. Another reason was the appeal of mystical Islam or Sufism, which was an important stream for the transmission of Muslim teaching. Although historical discussions of Southeast Asian Islam rarely address gender, we know that in India and elsewhere Sufism was sympathetic to female devotionalism. It is likely that this also applied in Southeast Asia, for Sufi poetry often employed images that spoke directly to female experiences. One Javanese composition, for example, compares Allah to a woman painting batik designs on cloth, while others use the metaphor of married love to depict the relationship between Allah and the Sufi devotee. It is noteworthy that Islam condoned both divorce and remarriage, and that a Muslim widow did not immolate herself on her husband's pyre as occurred among high-ranking nobles of Bali, where Hinduism survived.

Despite Islam's intense interest in regulating male–female relations, "being Muslim" in Southeast Asia could differ widely between places and across time. Although Islam was unequivocal in its view that "good" women should be chaste before marriage and completely faithful afterwards, religious prescriptions were most obvious among the new Islamic elite whose status partly derived from their claims to greater piety. Although it was already customary for well-born men to have more than one wife, greater emphasis was now placed on female seclusion as an indication of social standing. In the words of a sixteenth-century Islamic treatise from Java, "A free woman who does not stay in her house is like a slave." Not surprisingly, the female rulers so obvious in seventeenth-century sources rapidly disappear as contact with the Islamic heartlands increased. According to the chronicles of Aceh (northern Sumatra), in 1699, after four queens had reigned successively, an envoy arrived from Mecca with the message that female rule was against the law of Allah. Yet one can always locate exceptions: several Islamic kingdoms in Sulawesi, for instance, were ruled by queens well into the nineteenth century.

Only recently have historians begun to consider the ways in which such high-ranking women operated successfully as Muslims. Ann Kumar's translation of the diary of a female guard at the central Javanese court of Surakarta is a revealing commentary on upper-class life (Kumar, 1980). Like their counterparts in mainland Southeast Asia, court women could be influential religious sponsors, themselves responsible for writing or commissioning texts on Muslim subjects. Kumar (in Andaya, 2000) has also suggested that literary treatments of male–female relations provide some insight into gender relations in ordinary life. For example, heroines of Javanese texts can appear as formidable Islamic scholars who can hold their own in learned discussions with men and for whom marriage is a meeting of minds.

Outside the courts the effects of Islam are far less apparent, and in eastern Indonesia Gerrit Knaap (in Andaya, 2000) has argued that Islamic views of male-female relations were more compatible with indigenous customs than Christian attitudes. Initially, ordinary people were probably most affected by mundane matters such as clothing and food. In areas where pork was the major ritual food and the care of pigs was a female occupation, Islamic prohibitions required major adjustments in the household economy. The demand that women cover their breasts was another burden in societies where the production of textiles was a time-consuming process. There were other subtle changes in male-female relations. Taking a second wife was often

socially expected of Muslim men; Islamic prayers offered by males assumed a prominent place in "female" rituals associated with birth, marriage, and death; men learned in Islam became more visible as negotiators and healers. Circumcision, already practiced in some areas, was elevated into a rite of passage for young Muslim males.

Despite periodic reformist waves that swept through the Malay-Indonesian archipelago, the ability of Islam to adapt to existing customs is often striking. For instance, some of the foremost Muslim scholars came from Minangkabau, where houses and land were still inherited by women. At times, Islamic teachings and local practice were in agreement, as in their opposition to adultery; in other matters, such as premarital sex, there was room for compromise. As one Malay text puts it, "It is a great offence for a girl to be pregnant with an unknown father. By religious law she is taken to the mosque on a Friday and forty people spit on her, but according to custom she is free of offence when the child is born." Another intriguing feature is the persistence of indigenous transvestite priests, despite Islam's abhorrence of such practices. The court of Banten in west Java was famed for its devout Muslim environment, but in 1661 "men in women's clothes" danced during ceremonies when the ruler's son set foot on the earth for the first time.

Christianity

Christianity was the last of the world religions to reach Southeast Asia, and missionary concern to eliminate "devil worship," promote premarital virginity and enforce monogamy means that the sources are rich in detail relating to gender. Carolyn Brewer (in Andaya, 2000; Brewer, 2001) is highly critical of Spanish policy in the Philippines, especially the persecution of indigenous priestesses; it is hardly surprising that such women were frequently involved in anti-Spanish rebellions. Protestants could be equally misogynist, and in Taiwan the VOC mounted a campaign against spirit propitiation, exiling old women to a remote village to undergo religious instruction. Ever ready to see evidence of witchcraft and "black magic," the Dutch commonly meted out punishments such as strangulation or drowning in a barrel when women were accused of using love potions and poison. Nor was the insistence that converts should be monogamous necessarily advantageous for women. In Vietnam, where Catholic missionaries persevered despite periodic persecution, the strongest opponents of Christianity were often concubines who feared expulsion from a newly converted household.

At the same time, it is not difficult to understand why many women became fervent supporters of the new faith. In an environment where child mortality was high and where every pregnancy could be a death sentence, holy water, rosaries, and religious icons all seemed to offer protection against powerful spirits. In cultures well accustomed to stories of miraculous births a major attraction was undoubtedly the Virgin herself, and in some Filipino villages it became customary for women to carry her image during church celebrations. But because the lives of most men were also fraught with danger the Virgin assumed a special role as the archetypal mother, wise, caring, and sympathetic. In Vietnam, for example, this veneration was especially pronounced among fishermen, who apparently equated her with an indigenous goddess of the oceans. From a historical standpoint it is possible to see that the coupling of religion and education provided new opportunities for girls, even though Christian

schools also aimed to cultivate "feminine qualities." While convents in the European style never developed in the Catholic Philippines, Filipino women were able to establish religious foundations, often with schools attached. In Vietnam older women organized their own congregations, combining their trading profits and expending them in charitable works.

Class considerations

Helen Creese (in Andaya, 2000; Creese, 2001a; 2001b) has argued that the picture of women's "autonomy" and sexual freedom projected in Anthony Reid's work is not applicable to upper classes in Bali. With some qualifications, one could also make similar comments across Southeast Asia. Despite the lack of comparative historical work, by the middle of the eighteenth century a historian of gender can identify significant parallels at the elite level. Polygamy, for instance, was the norm. Since a man's prestige was measured by the females who surrounded him, the palaces of great rulers could include hundreds, even thousands, of women. Lower down the scale men might well maintain two or three wives and female retainers, and even some Christians had concubines. As Junko Koizumi has pointed out (in Andaya, 2000), this type of household makes the use of the term "family" especially problematic. The ideas projected in religious teachings and endorsed by state ideology were also remarkably similar across the region. A well-born female should obey her parents and husband, occupy herself indoors with "female" pursuits and cultivate the virtues of chastity, modesty, and fidelity. Yet within these cultural confines many women still exercised real authority, and throughout the region elderly princesses and court ladies were regarded as the ultimate guardians of ancient ritual and custom.

Geographic inaccessibility, mobile populations, and traditions of local autonomy limited a deeper penetration of the gender priorities promoted by state-religion alliances. In consequence, premarital sex, monogamy, easy divorce, and economic independence were all more evident at the village level. Even when change is apparent, outside influences were reinterpreted to make them more amenable to existing cultural patterns. Nonetheless, the argument that this represents some kind of special "Southeast Asianness" is almost certainly over-drawn. It is highly likely that collaborative work across "world region" divisions would reveal much in common with rural women in other parts of Asia and the Pacific. At this early stage of cross-cultural research, one might cautiously suggest that if there is a single area in which "Southeast Asia" throws up distinctive characteristics, it may be the extent to which women were involved in the region's economic life.

Gender, Global Trade and Urbanization

From the fifteenth century the Southeast Asian region was drawn into a global commercial system as a prime source of spices, pepper, tin, and exotic products from the jungles and seas. Studies of contemporary non-European societies have tended to see "globalization" as an alien force that has worked to women's disadvantage. While this bleak picture always requires qualification, the expansion of long-distance trade, the development of cash-cropping, the growth of port cities and the arrival of large numbers of foreign men as traders and colonizers certainly affected the indigenous

economies in which women were so important. This point is well illustrated by an examination of pepper-growing in Sumatra.

Introduced from India, pepper was initially planted as one of several crops which female farmers cultivated in household plots. As international demand rose, local rulers pressed their subjects to expand production. This had far-reaching implications for women, since the supervision of large holdings, often worked by imported slaves, was rarely compatible with domestic tasks. Increasingly, the more lucrative aspects of the pepper trade fell into male hands, both local and foreign, with women relegated to tasks such as weeding, sifting, and bagging. In English-controlled areas along Sumatra's west coast the European view of the male as primary cultivator and landowner was problematic because land rights here traditionally passed through the female line. In addition, the English introduced new methods of cultivation that required the ground be kept free of undergrowth. This demand was particularly onerous for women because weeding was traditionally a female task. Periodic shortages of rice, vegetables, and market produce suggest the extent to which they were forced to neglect their fields and gardens. A fall in pepper prices was added reason to move to cotton- and tobacco-growing in defiance of the authorities. Indigenous pepper cultivation in most of Sumatra gradually reverted to older horticultural patterns, with women tending a few pepper vines to supplement the household income. When another pepper boom developed at the end of the eighteenth century, plantation labor was largely supplied by men who migrated to pepper-producing districts.

Overall, however, the economic changes in our period were particularly visible in the port towns that were proliferating all along Southeast Asia's coastlines. The data is most detailed for centers controlled by Europeans, especially Batavia, where a sizeable portion of the urban population was comprised of single Chinese males who arrived as traders and artisans. Appreciating the commercial acumen that most women displayed, Chinese men were quick to negotiate a local marriage or purchase slaves as "wives." At first sight this might appear to be a continuation of long-established customs that encouraged foreign traders, including Europeans, to enter into legitimate if short-lived marriages with local women who acted as assistants, agents, and interpreters. Women willingly entered into such arrangements because they gained access to foreign goods, acquired valuable language skills, and enhanced their chances of remarriage. However, these egalitarian relationships were now being fundamentally reshaped as men set up households with slave-wives, or entered into liaisons with poor women, often former slaves, who lacked family support. Not only were such women likely to be mistreated; they had no legitimate rights and could easily be sold or confiscated as a part of a trader's assets.

As always, there is an alternative picture, for some women were well equipped to assume the role of cultural brokers between foreign men and local societies. Dhiravat na Pombejra (in Andaya, 2000) has reconstructed the career of one of these individuals, Osoet Pegua, a Mon woman in the Thai capital of Ayutthaya who "married" a succession of VOC employees. With her strong connections to the court and an extensive trading network, she became a principal VOC agent. In other ports, like Hoi An in central Vietnam, temple donation lists show how women who married foreign traders were able to gift land or property and thus affirm their social standing. In European-controlled towns, upward mobility was especially evident among female slaves who accepted Christianity. Commonly manumitted after their owner's

death, they became potential brides for the growing pool of Christian men, both European and Eurasian. Jean Taylor (1983) has graphically depicted the "Asian" nature of family life in Batavia's creolized society, where even Calvinist Dutchmen maintained one or more concubines and where their wives were attended by a retinue of female slaves.

While large numbers of female domestic slaves became a feature of domestic life in the fast-growing and status-conscious port cities, an owner's income was often insufficient to support so many dependents. In consequence, such women were required to contribute to household finances by producing and selling cloth, food, and other items, or even by prostitution. In Batavia, Hendrik Niemeijer (in Andaya, 2000) has shown how an increase in manumitted slaves led to a feminization of poverty as poor women without kinfolk sought to maintain themselves and their children. Some moved out to newly opened lands on the outskirts of the city, where they developed their own farms. They might also reenter the life they knew best, selling slaves or procuring new bodies for an insatiable market by abducting free women. Concubinage and debt slavery (borrowing money in return for labor) provided another recourse for poor women, although VOC court records reveal a grim picture of domestic violence fed by poverty and the absence of family support. While ineffective, European efforts to criminalize prostitution could also hit poor women hard. For elderly women the situation was especially bleak, and it is not surprising that female membership in the Protestant congregation swelled as former slaves sought to take advantage of the alms and charity offered by the Reformed Church.

One ongoing debate in Southeast Asian history has been the extent to which the eighteenth century was a period of general economic decline. While mainland Southeast Asian economies appear more vibrant, it also seems that indebtedness among ordinary people was steadily increasing. For many, the sale of daughters to some trader or wealthy household became a possible solution to penury. In eighteenth-century Vietnam, which had experienced years of warfare and disruption to agriculture, mothers often helped negotiate sexual liaisons for their daughters in the hope of immediate and future benefits. It is noteworthy that local rulers were themselves concerned at these trends; in Vietnam, for example, such sales were only permitted if a girl was over fifteen. There is no evidence, however, that such rulings were effective. Royal edicts in Myanmar prohibited parents from selling their children, but at the end of the eighteenth century the prostitutes of Yangon (Rangoon) were often girls who had been mortgaged for their father's debts and subsequently sold by creditors.

Again, there are alternative stories. As in the Pacific, commodification may have fundamentally altered the "sex as welcoming gift" concept, but in other areas the idea that kinship obligations infused all commercial arrangements helps explain a continuing tendency to see the workplace as an extension of the family. The position of the wet-nurse provides a useful point of comparison in Muslim societies because the only Koranic reference to female wage labor concerns lactation. Although Islamic texts formalized emotional linkages (for example, those who had shared the same foster-mother were regarded as kin), religious law regarded a wet-nurse as an employee. However, she did not exercise independent rights over her milk, since she could only nurse with her husband's permission. In Islamic Southeast Asia, however, legal views of this contractual relationship were always muted because of long-

standing beliefs that a wet-nurse should be treated with the same respect as the birth mother. Early Portuguese observers noted that in Tidore (eastern Indonesia) high-ranking women customarily took turns in nursing the heir to the throne in order to strengthen the king's ties with noble families.

When their labor was more subject to commercialization, Southeast Asian women were under greater pressure. One example concerns cloth manufacture. While males were the principal weavers in India, and were often silk weavers in Japan and China, textile production in Southeast Asia remained in the "female" realm. This meant women were a valuable source of royal revenue, since the thread they spun and the cloth they wove formed part of a ruler's dues, while taxes were also levied on dyes and household looms. However, the expansion of global trade and shipping flooded local markets with Indian and Chinese textiles, ranging from cheap rough cottons to exquisite and expensive silks. The novelty, variety, and sheer volume of these imports presented a real threat to Southeast Asia's indigenous and largely cottage industry. In 1690 the ruler of Siam, deciding that the purchase of fine textiles from overseas was draining the royal treasury, even imported male dyers, painters, and weavers from India to encourage local production. The influx of Chinese also worked to the disadvantage of female cloth-traders, who were less able to offer credit or carry debts. European companies always preferred to "trust out" piece goods to Chinese men, who became ever more visible in the peddling trade. In some areas local authorities and entrepreneurs responded by attempting to undercut imports, and palace- and Chinese-owned workshops were established where large numbers of women worked at waxing and painting batik cloth.

Women were not, of course, helpless victims of impersonal economic forces. Indeed, when Javanese batik or cheap foreign textiles were available they often abandoned the arduous tasks of spinning, weaving, and dyeing in favor of more lucrative occupations, to return to their looms in times of economic downturn. In other areas they competed with imports by developing new techniques and designs. Some types of locally produced cloth, for example, could now be washed without shrinking; successful experimentation produced more color-fast dyes; in Myanmar, women perfected a new weaving technique better suited to making sarongs. Fundamental in such adjustments was the fact that a skilled weaver was still honored, whether at the court or among ordinary people, and that her achievements were a source of pride for both herself and her family. In Palembang in Sumatra, famed for its magnificent gold and silk sarongs, one elaborate pattern carried the name of its designer, an eighteenth-century princess.

In Southeast Asian history periodization has always been problematic, and the term "early modern", while convenient, still makes some historians uneasy. However, the end of the eighteenth century is commonly seen as a dividing line, in part because of the rise of new dynasties, in part because the outlines of modern states are more identifiable, in part because of the expanding European presence. It is also possible to argue that this period marks the beginning of a new phase in gender history. In Europe the seeds of the colonial project, planted during the Enlightenment, provided a "scientific" basis for white superiority, and helped reify categories such as "the native woman." From the 1780s a harbinger of future economic changes could be seen in the Philippines, where the Spanish colonial regime began to recruit "nimble-fingered" women as cigar-makers in government tobacco factories. Faced by new

political and economic pressures, many Southeast Asian leaders called for moral rejuvenation. In this context the fundamentalist revival in the Middle East struck a responsive chord in local Islam, with reformists demanding more rigorous compliance with Muslim law in regard to female dress and conduct. A stricter application of Confucian precepts was also evident in Vietnam, where the founder of a new dynasty in 1802 ordered the rewriting of law codes which more closely resembled the Chinese model. Yet despite an enormous capacity to redefine gender and regulate sexuality, the alliance between patriarchal state structures and male-dominated religions was far from invincible. By the beginning of the twentieth century outsiders were still commenting on the differences between Southeast Asian societies and those of India and East Asia. Two leading Western suffragettes who toured Southeast Asia in 1911, impressed by the sense of self-worth and independence they encountered among ordinary women, frankly admitted that their assumptions of European superiority were unjustified.

Concluding Remarks

The essays in this volume attempt to synthesize the ways in which historians working on different areas of the world have thought about gender. By placing Southeast Asia in a comparative framework, it is possible to see the practical and methodological problems that have impeded the development of gender history, despite the male–female complementarity that purportedly characterizes the region. Unfortunately, the concentration of research on contemporary societies has fostered an implicit assumption that change, adjustment, and the socialization process are only characteristic of recent times. A strong historical base is obviously vital if we are to explain satisfactorily the diverse ways in which gender in Southeast Asia has evolved. Although there is great potential for expansion, a fuller history of relationships between women and men in the early modern period can only be written with more detailed case studies. From this base we can then move to more collaborative and comparative work both within and beyond the region. While many questions will probably remain permanently unanswered, this generation has witnessed the birth of a new historical field in Southeast Asian studies. Its future growth is an exciting prospect.

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Chapter Eighteen

Did Gender Have a Renaissance? Exclusions and Traditions in Early Modern Western Europe

Julie Hardwick

Twenty-five years ago, Joan Kelly Gadol posed a stark, simple question: did women have a Renaissance? (Kelly Gadol, 1977). Historians' answers to her interrogatory have varied – yes, no, depends on whether you look at political or economic life, elite women may have shared with elite men exposure to higher education that neither working men or women enjoyed, and so on. The spectrum of responses that the query generated does, however, illuminate the imperative need for historians to examine the possibility that historical processes and their implications were different for women than men.

The years between 1400 and 1750 saw many kinds of transformations that brought broad and extraordinary consequences in Western Europe. Europeans established colonies across the globe. Political systems evolved as highly centralized monarchies replaced the fragmented political authority characteristic of feudalism. The economies of European countries saw large-scale changes as merchant capitalism expanded to become the dominant form of economic organization, manufacturing grew both within the urban guild system and in new rural zones of domestic industry. Populations slowly recovered to the levels reached before the Black Death of 1348–53 and, from the late fifteenth century began to grow to unprecedented levels. More and more people lived in towns and cities. Elites sought to redefine and relegitimize their positions as courtiers, judges, and financiers as the new technologies of warfare undermined the grip of knights on battlefield success. Scientists and writers created a vibrant intellectual community whose debates and discoveries broke away from the traditions founded 2000 years earlier by the Greeks and provided the foundations of modern culture. The Catholic Church's centuries-old claim to a monopoly on Christian orthodoxy was finally and irrevocably undermined with the emergence of numerous Protestant denominations after Martin Luther's break with Rome in 1517. Both Catholic and Protestant Reformations reshaped spiritual life and organization for clergy and laity alike. These myriad changes provide some of the markers of the development of modern society, and historians have learnt to ask who exactly participated in these processes and how gender (as well as factors such as religion, class, place of residence) shaped their impact.

Renaissance Italy

Some key patterns distinguished Renaissance Italy from other early modern European countries. Italy was more highly urbanized than its peers. Its elites were drawn from merchant families rather than aristocratic ones. Trade and manufacturing rather than land provided the main sources of wealth. Its best-known regions (like Florence and Venice) were independent self-governing "city-states" whose long experiments with republicanism contrasted with the monarchies that prevailed elsewhere. Italian cities nourished a fertile cultural and intellectual climate that fostered humanism and a variety of arts and sciences.

For Italian men and women, life in Renaissance cities had some striking features. Marriage patterns were distinctive, with most men marrying in their late twenties or later and women in their late teens. Studies of Florence and Venice have shown that with men spending years as adults before marrying, prostitution was common and homosexual relations were a widely accepted phase of life for men. Italian elites were careful to safeguard the safety and chastity of women of their own class, but had little regard for elite men's exploitation of lower-class women whether through rape or casual fornication.

Inheritance practices in Italy strengthened ties between male kin and placed women in ambiguous positions between their own birth families and those of their husbands. In Florence and Venice, patrilineal ties (where kinship was figured through the male line) were very strong. The most striking institutionalization of this dynamic came in the form of the Venetian *fraterna*, a legal device which gave sons equal and joint shares of their fathers' estates while excluding daughters who had rights only to dowries. In Florence, broadly similar inheritance practices prevailed. New elite families of merchants and bankers reinforced patrilineal tendencies when they emulated traditional aristocratic practices by transmitting a family name through male heirs. Families used dowries to fulfill but at the same time limit their obligation to daughters while sons shared in equal (and usually larger) shares of all remaining property. The close ties between brothers that resulted were evident, for example, in the establishment of fraternal communities where all brothers and their families lived together in the same large household. Even when these groups broke up and siblings established their own households, they often lived in very close proximity building complex webs of kinship ties that underpinned political activity.

The consequences of these patterns for women, at least those in elite families, are still contested among historians. Most historians believe that wide age differences between spouses were reflected in inequalities of power and cool relations between partners who had little in common. The inheritance system with its constant reiterations of the ties between men may have been key to the marginalization of women, with sisters and wives left in limbo, regarded as only temporary members of either their birth families or the families of their husbands. Yet it is also clear that, at least in Venice, elite women's dowry rights were strongly protected and they were crucial links in the kinship networks that underlay political and economic success. Persistent dowry inflation through the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries made daughters ever more expensive. While some families responded by coercing their girls to pursue the cheaper course of becoming nuns in convents, other families called on a wide group of kin to raise money to meet their obligation to dower daughters at whatever cost.

Women were clearly excluded from many of the processes that defined the Renaissance in Italy. The experiments with republicanism offered political participation to many men, but no women. Humanism transformed the education of men, but most families had grave reservations about educating their daughters. Although the vibrant commercial economy that lay behind Italy's rise to preeminence in Europe and funded the cultural explosion we associate with the Renaissance depended to a substantial degree on the capital provided by women's dowries and on the ties of kinship with wives' families which were offered to their husbands, it is unclear whether men valued their wives for all they brought. In addition, women's own activities were limited in many ways.

Yet women were not universally or uniquely disenfranchised in these regards. By the fourteenth century, the republics of Florence and Venice had narrowed the basis of participation in politics dramatically and republicanism was abandoned altogether in most smaller cities, so that effectively only a small minority of men had the opportunity to take active political roles. Most men were not from elites, and their education was also very limited. A few women, like the Venetian courtesan Veronica Franco and the Bolognese painter Artemisia Gentileschi, succeeded in making the most of their opportunities to become major cultural figures in their own right. Christine de Pizan, the daughter of a Venetian official who spent most of her life in Paris, wrote *City of Ladies*, which became one of the most important texts in one of the primary humanist subjects, the debate over women's abilities and disabilities.

Work and Family

Even during the height of the Renaissance, the majority of Italians were not members of urban elites, but peasants who lived in rural areas. The same was true, of course, across all of western Europe, and the fundamental aspects of daily life for most families had more in common than national, religious, or geographic differences might suggest.

Other European men and women tended to marry at different times than Italians did, but in other regards work and family dynamics may have been similar. Outside of aristocracies, men and women both usually married in their mid- to late twenties after a long period of work, giving rise to what historians term the Northwest European marriage pattern. Women brought dowries that were either gifts from their parents or the accumulated savings of their own earnings, especially as domestic servants. These dowries included both cash sums and the essential goods needed to set up a new household – a bed, some linen, some pots and pans. Men's labor and skills were thought to be sufficient contribution for them – as if women did not have skills and labor to contribute too!

Women and men were more pragmatic about choosing their partners than their modern descendants would be. Women spoke about choosing men as husbands in the hope that they would be "hard workers and good managers." Our contemporary romanticized expectations that equate marriage with love and intimacy were largely absent but, although parents could certainly exercise vetos, marriages were not arranged as a rule outside of elite families. Many people must have grown to appreciate with affection the efforts their spouse made on behalf of the household.

Early modern marriages were practical partnerships in which both men and women worked hard to supply the basic needs of their households in what historian Olwyn Hufton (1996) has characterized as a "family economy." Women's contributions were varied but absolutely essential. If husbands had a particular craft and ran their own workshops, wives often worked in the workshop, taking care of selling the goods, keeping the accounts, and taking care of apprentices. If husbands worked elsewhere as employees or day laborers, women worked independently in any of the myriad tasks that were female monopolies – laundry, marketing, carrying water, selling secondhand clothes and household goods, or running taverns.

Nothing shows the value of women's contribution to the family economy more than the speed with which widowed men remarried – usually within a matter of months. This practice was less tied to a lack of affection between spouses than to the reality that husbands absolutely could not manage without the labor of a wife, both to look after children and to provide income.

Managing motherhood was another feature of most women's lives and integral to a successful family economy. Households needed the labor that children provided – but not too much of it, and the balancing of labor needs and availability shaped family life in important ways. Most women had repeated pregnancies and rates of mortality were very high both for children and mothers in childbirth. Urban working families very often employed wet-nurses to look after their infants: infants were sent to live with rural women who nursed them in return for pay. This practice, too, says less about a lack of affection between parents and children than about a set of priorities that required both spouses give their full attention to securing family subsistence.

Early modern women had no effective techniques of controlling their fertility, but all evidence suggests that they still were committed to trying. Popular contraceptive remedies included herbal potions of various kinds to avoid conception. Abortions were legal before the baby quickened (around sixteen to twenty weeks), even if women's desires to terminate their pregnancies were greater than their abilities. Women who breastfed their children may have received some contraceptive benefit. Late marriage was itself in part a strategy to limit fertility.

Spouses jointly managed the labor in their households over the course of their lives. As children grew, they provided help with myriad tasks, but by the time they were teenagers or earlier, children's lives were shaped in large part by labor demands. In the household of a baker, for instance, the husband did the baking while his wife sold bread and did innumerable other jobs, and a couple of sons might be taken on as apprentices. Daughters, however, could usually not be formally apprenticed, and they would be sent off to work as domestic servants in other households. If the husband worked as a weaver, on the other hand, his wife would also apply herself to essential tasks in the workshop including spinning, a quintessential female task. It took many spinners to supply a single weaver, so all daughters would probably stay at home spinning. In this case, it would be sons who found their labor extraneous to family needs, and thus went off to learn occupations in other households.

This balancing of labor needs combined with high mortality rates to make complex and blended families one of the most striking and common realities of early modern life. Frequent early deaths meant spouses often remarried, often to previously married people who already had children of their own. Many people had the experience of

marrying more than once, of having step-parents, step-siblings, and half-siblings. Labor needs played a large role in determining when members would be added to a household, like a relative or an extra apprentice, or when household size had to be reduced by sending children off to work elsewhere. Families simply could not afford to support "too many" children, and in the last resort might even have to abandon them. The records of foundling hospitals and orphanages where parents left children often indicate that only desperate straits had motivated their actions and that they hoped that a return of better economic times would allow them to return to reclaim their family members.

Women's working lives experienced some important shifts over the course of the early modern centuries, with most historians agreeing that women had fewer opportunities by 1700 than they had in 1400. Household production prevailed throughout the period. Very little large-scale manufacturing outside of households took place of the kind that would later come to characterize industrialization. Traditionally, most production took place in small workshops that were often part of or adjacent to a residence, the early modern equivalents of small family businesses. In urban areas, guilds regulated many aspects of this workshop production. They were organized around specific crafts (such as bakers or silversmiths) and oversaw pricing, quality, and quantity as well as many non-economic issues that affected the lives of guild members such as marriage and behavior. Most guilds restricted formal membership to men, although a few admitted wives or widows, and a handful of all-female guilds existed. Yet wives and daughters played important, if informal, roles in many workshops.

Changes in the organization of the economy had different consequences for urban and rural women. As long-distance trade increased from the late fifteenth century, merchants sought to increase the scale and diversity of manufacturing and grew increasingly frustrated with guild controls on production. Although historians have recently shown that merchants had some success in manipulating guilds to allow greater flexibility within towns, merchants also vigorously pursued an alternative that largely allowed them to circumvent opposition by drawing rural areas into manufacturing. The expansion of production into rural areas is variously known as cottage industry, protoindustrialization, the putting-out system, or the domestic industrial process. Merchants organized many households into a web that allowed them to increase production while maintaining flexibility. A merchant who wanted to have more textiles, for example, might buy a large supply of wool, distribute it among many households to be spun, pick up the spun wool, and take that to various weavers to be made into cloth. The manufacturing process was still household-based, but the merchant gained great flexibility. Workers were paid on a piecework basis and could be hired or laid off at short notice; different qualities as well as quantities of cloth could be produced; the merchant could sell it for whatever price he could get.

This reorganization had important consequences for urban families. In towns, many guilds felt their monopolies were threatened and responded with protectionist measures to safeguard their market and their members' jobs. Primary among those was the exclusion of women from guild workplaces. Over the course of the sixteenth century, many guilds introduced restrictions that effectively ended women's opportunities to work in skilled workshops even informally.

Rural families experienced these same changes in different although also highly gendered ways. Putting-out work was largely done by women, in part because they (like urban women) traditionally did whatever they could to contribute to the family economy rather than working full time in one occupation as men did (whether as a peasant working the land or a tanner producing leather). Rural families were usually highly cash-poor, meaning that the money women's work provided – whether selling eggs and dairy produce or serving as wet-nurses for the babies of urban families – was enormously valuable. For these families, the work provided by putting-out was a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it significantly increased women's opportunities to earn cash. On the other, rural pieceworkers often worked the most when families needed income least: when good harvests ensured low food prices that in turn freed money for goods like textiles. Yet when harvests failed and food prices soared, rural families who looked to putting-out work to fill the gap discovered that merchants responded to the drop in demand that occurred simultaneously by reducing work assignments.

Again some caveats are necessary when we consider the general pattern of a reduction in women's work opportunities. Guilds did not empower all men equally, with masters, and particular factions of masters often dominating decisions to favor their own interests. By the late seventeenth century, some all-female guilds were being formed, especially in the sewing trades. The restrictions on women's work may also have been region-specific, with women in Tuscany and Portugal, for example, finding expanding opportunities.

Moreover, in terms of both work and family, continuities were just as important as change in many regards. Historian Judith Bennett (1996) has forcefully argued that the persistence of a pattern that channeled women into low-pay and low-status work regardless of the particular task is more striking than any narrowing of women's opportunities. With no ability to control fertility on the horizon, pregnancy and motherhood still dominated most adult women's lives – and deaths.

Protestant and Catholic Reformations

The Protestant and Catholic Reformations had transforming potential for women's and men's experiences of Christianity. The centuries between 1450 and 1700 saw titanic struggles over religious belief and practice. Growing dissatisfaction with the spiritual life and clerical leadership of the medieval Catholic Church at both the local and top levels produced a variety of calls for reform. Martin Luther's break with Rome in 1517 was only the most dramatic of many broad-based calls for change, which eventually had a fundamental impact on those who remained Catholics as well as those who followed Luther into the establishment of new Protestant denominations. Despite the intensity of conflicts over religion that cost thousands of people their lives during this period, historians have identified some key similarities between reformed Protestant and Catholic regions. The consequences for women were ambiguous in both cases, with problematic conceptualizations accompanying some positive changes.

Protestant reformers like Luther and John Calvin articulated a version of Christian faith and practice that seemed initially to offer women more opportunities and status than the medieval Catholic Church had. They idealized marriage as the

appropriate lifestyle for Christians, rejecting medieval Catholicism's valorization of celibacy as a superior state. They emphasized too that men and women were spiritual equals who should be companionate partners for each other as spouses. Protestant reliance on the Bible as the guide to Christian faith stimulated the education of women as well as men. Both sexes were drawn into a new relationship to worship as Protestants emphasized the active participation of congregations in church services whether singing hymns or reading the Bible. Working women as well as men were ardent supporters of the new faith, especially in urban areas. They demonstrated their commitment and propagated the new beliefs in a variety of ways, from smashing statues to refusing to observe Catholic saints' days to hosting church services in their homes. Clearly, the emphasis of Protestantism both on individual relationships to God and on literacy and biblical authority were hugely important to women.

Yet the Protestant emphasis on household and family ruled out other options for women. Protestants for example closed the convents that had historically offered an (admittedly not always freely chosen) alternative to marriage. Nuns' responses indicated some of the ambiguities of the situation. Some women, perhaps those who had been coerced into taking vows to protect their family property, were quick to embrace Protestantism and the lay life it offered, including marriage and motherhood. Most famously of all, Katherine von Bora appealed to Luther for help in escaping from her unhappy convent seclusion, and ended up marrying him and having many children. Yet other women resisted all efforts to close their communities, displaying appreciation for a vocational commitment to religious life that Protestantism denied.

Catholics too gave a new emphasis to domestic life, holding up the "holy family" as a model for lay Christians, and in both cases definitions of "good wives" were drawn increasingly tightly and were policed more rigorously. For Catholics and Protestants, wives in the Christian households that emerged as new foci for reformed faiths were partners, but obedient and submissive ones. Husbands and fathers were the leaders and teachers. Protestants almost universally (with the exception of the Quakers) limited preaching and official roles in church life to men, just as Catholics did.

Secularization of matters that had previously been areas of church oversight occurred under both regimes, as the domestication of the Reformation in Protestant areas was paralleled by a sacralization of lay life (to use historian James Farr's phrase) in many Catholic ones with very similar dynamics, as the examples of marriage and morality indicate. While Protestant countries permitted divorce in theory, the dissolution of marriage remained difficult in practice. Meanwhile, secular courts in Catholic countries – while observing the concept of marriage as a sacrament that could not be overturned – did offer women in difficult marriages some remedy, either through the provision of separate property or through separations of property and person that were similar to divorces in every way except that spouses could not remarry. Lay courts in both Catholic and Protestant regions became increasingly concerned with the surveillance of morality, and in both cases their anxieties were gender-specific. Female sexual morality was ever more closely interrogated as prosecutions of women for prostitution, infanticide, and fornication increased. Men were prosecuted at higher rates too, but for disruptions of public order such as drunkenness or brawling.

At the meetings known as the Council of Trent (1545–63) the Catholic Church reiterated its commitment to most of the basic tenets of Catholicism, but the surging

popularity of Catholicism with women in the subsequent two hundred years is striking. Catholic leaders did little to counter what were supposed to be the attractions of Protestantism for women. They continued to valorize celibacy for example and to forbid the marriage of clergy. These prohibitions seemed to demean wives and to signify quite clearly that women were not thought worthy of being the temporal partners of priests. In other areas, Catholic determination to bring women more closely under men's supervision increased. The Trent meetings determined, for example, that women religious were to be strictly enclosed, a response to the accusations of corruption that had bedeviled convents. Yet women also saw reformed Catholicism as affording them new opportunities, and consequently female religious participation was reinvigorated in the Catholic Church.

The impact of the determination to enforce enclosure is one of the most interesting examples of the ambiguous effects of religious reformation. Many late-medieval convents had permitted nuns to enjoy significant social and material freedom, in part perhaps in response to the realization that many young women entered convents to satisfy family imperatives rather than out of their own religious commitment. Nuns might come and go more or less as they pleased, have visitors, maintain comfortable suites of rooms within the convent, and form gossipy cliques of friends much taken with making judgments about others. Recurring scandals linked nuns with male lovers and illegitimate children.

The Catholic Church determined at Trent to reassert its control over convents and ensure their unquestionable morality by requiring convents to observe enclosure. The Church argued that a cloistered nun was the most worthy in the eyes of God. Cloistered women were to be "as if they were dead," to use the Church's phrase, in terms of separation from the world. No enclosed woman was to leave her convent for any reason without a bishop's permission: the only legitimate excuses for leaving were the threats of fire, leprosy, or contagious diseases. Walls were to be high enough to exclude all from public view. Nuns' only form of contact with outsiders was through a narrow mesh grille in the convent parlor. Lay women and men were excluded from visiting enclosed convents.

The shortcomings of a form of religious life for women that restricted them to enclosed orders seem obvious to modern observers, and the direction contrasted sharply with the new emphasis for male religious that committed them to lives of active evangelism. The Jesuits, for example, embodied the reformed model for monks as soldiers of Christ, combating the challenge of Protestantism and striving for a Church Universal in a worldwide effort that stretched beyond Europe from the Americas to India to Japan by the end of the sixteenth century.

Yet some early modern women clearly found enclosure offered a powerful and attractive model of a way to commit their lives to the church. The actions of perhaps the most famous nun of the period, Teresa de Jesus (known as St Teresa of Avila after her canonization in 1622), highlight this understanding of enclosure. Teresa grew up in Avila, a town in central Spain, and entered a Carmelite convent as a girl. She found the worldly materialism and backstabbing that characterized her community increasingly distasteful and also met a number of local Catholic reform leaders. Teresa decided to create an alternative order (the Reformed Carmelites) that explicitly rejected the shortcomings of her own experience and embraced enclosure. Her new order required vows of poverty, allowed only communal property, insisted on

the virtues of labor, and severed family ties. All nuns were to wear identical habits and to address each other by religious names or as sister.

For Teresa and other nuns who embraced enclosure, the liberation from normal expectations about gender roles seems to have been more important than the constrictive hierarchy that seems so striking at first glance today. Many women religious found that cloistered life offered opportunities that a lay life committed to the responsibilities of marriage and motherhood could not. They experienced autonomy in separation rather than restriction. Teresa herself described enclosed women as "more free" than others. She saw them as having a very active function in supporting reformed Catholicism, albeit one that they met through prayer and penitence rather than global evangelism. Cloistered women also might become highly educated and write extensively, opportunities very few lay women could enjoy. They also embraced an egalitarian and meritocratic value system that was antithetical to the hierarchical and hereditary orientation of much of lay early modern society.

Catholic lay women also reengaged with their church in large numbers and in new ways from the later sixteenth century, again given new openings by the process of reforming Catholic practice. Trent had maintained Catholic commitment to a doctrine of good works that offered its followers the chance to improve their odds of salvation by the actions they took on earth. (This continued emphasis rejected Protestant reliance on the faith of the believer and the grace of God – the doctrines of faith alone and grace alone – as the only keys to salvation.) Reformed Catholicism displayed a reinvigorated social conscience that had many causes and benefits. Humanist concerns and changing socioeconomic conditions that saw many cities facing the issue of far larger numbers of urban poor also gave impetus to a renewed theology of good works. The new engagement with problems of charity and poor relief provided a stamp for a revitalized church, allowed benefactors to fulfill good works, and encouraged recipients to be morally uplifted and to be sympathetic to Catholicism.

Many lay women as well as men joined philanthropic efforts to support a variety of institutions through charitable activities in a new pattern of much higher female participation in the institutional life of the church. In the later medieval period, many women had expressed their dissatisfaction with the institutions of Catholicism by drifting into private and individual observations of their faith at home. Now women were drawn into new church-sponsored lay associations committed to social activism. They founded and funded hospitals, schools, and orphanages across Europe. In Italy, asylums for women at risk (whether from prostitution, marital difficulty, widowhood, or poverty) were established that combined practical help in offering shelter and teaching basic skills with large doses of religious and moral education.

Some lay women committed themselves to lives of charity and service by founding new groups. Angela Merici, for example, founded the Company of St Ursula in Italy. Lay single women and widows earned their own living through teaching or weaving and dedicated themselves to serving the poor, ill, orphans, and war victims. Merici received papal approval in 1535, and by the later sixteenth century her group, the Ursulines, transformed themselves from lay to religious communities who lived communally but were not cloistered. The Ursulines were immensely successful and quickly spread throughout Europe.

Other lay women (known as *beatas* or beguines) chose to focus on individual efforts to live more spiritually satisfying lives. These women were quite independent:

they lived alone in poverty, wore simple clothing, did not follow any particular rule, and enjoyed considerable autonomy. Their simplicity and devotion to God was widely admired in many communities, and some *beatas* used the opportunities of their circumstances to do charitable work or teach. Catalina de Jesus, for example, lived in Seville in southern Spain in the early seventeenth century. She claimed to have a special mission from God to save souls, and recounted visions in which God told her how Christians should pray, eat, and dress. Many people of Seville and the surrounding villages venerated her and several hundreds followed her directives.

For Catalina, however, as for other lay women, lack of Church supervision produced perils as well as opportunities. The Inquisition investigated Catalina and many other *beatas* before the late seventeenth century when the Catholic church made a concerted effort to enclose them and place them firmly under institutional control. The very success of the Ursulines began to cause unease, and eventually the papacy required that they too accept enclosure, even though they were permitted to continue teaching on their own premises.

For Christian women of all denominations, the process of reforming faith and practice had a two-fold and somewhat contradictory effect. Large numbers of women were attracted both to Protestantism and to reformed Catholicism, indicating that each had positive attractions. Yet an emphasis on women as wives and mothers and as the subjects of male supervision whose behavior was ever more closely regulated narrowed these promises of opportunity and recognition.

Science

Issues of gender were also central to revolutions in intellectual life. From scientists like Galileo in the sixteenth century to Enlightenment writers like Diderot in the eighteenth, early modern society experienced the start of a transforming shift in epistemologies. Gradually, the orthodoxies that had persisted for two thousand or so years since the great period of classical Greek intellectual life were challenged and reconfigured as Europeans began to seek to explain the world around them in physical, material terms based on experimentation and reason. Europeans made many false starts during this transition, but generally its consequences were profound.

A new understanding of biology became integral to changing social and political formulations of gender roles. Aristotle, the Greek philosopher, had explained the obvious differences between men and women by claiming that biologically speaking the two were identical, except that women were, in his notorious phrase, "mutilated men." This "one sex" model largely prevailed into the Renaissance with some important consequences. Notably women were thought to be dominated by their sexuality because their genitals were internal. Such assessments of biological perfection (male) and imperfection (female) legitimized pervasive gender hierarchies.

As anatomical experiments became more common from the Renaissance onwards, however, competing constructions of biology began to challenge the Aristotelian model. The experimental method that became associated with the scientific revolution showed, for instance, that men and women both contributed to conception rather than men alone being responsible. Gradually, scientists began to acknowledge the reality of biological differences, and a view first espoused by another classical

scientist, Galen, that men and women were biologically discrete (that is that there were two distinct sexes) began to prevail.

A new correlation between men and women's different biologies and their "naturally" different roles and abilities replaced the old correlation between a biological and gender hierarchy. By the end of the early modern period, the French intellectual Jean-Jacques Rousseau was using these biological differences to justify new family forms that he linked to new democratic politics – where men were not women's rulers, but where each took up responsibility for the tasks public and political or domestic and private that nature as well as education best fitted them to.

Gender, Power, and Politics

People living in early modern Europe saw gender and family patterns as integral elements of authority structures of all kinds, and of political relations in particular. Increasingly, gender became a key determinant of power generally, and of political and civil rights in particular. Daughters and wives were legal minors, whose fathers and husbands controlled their property and represented the family in legal and public matters of all kinds. While this sense of paternal and conjugal power was age old, rooted in religion and science as well as law, it was given new weight and force in a variety of ways in the early modern period. Ideas about household patriarchy were articulated increasingly explicitly as templates for family life and used to justify the growing power of early modern states.

In its simplest form, household patriarchy was equated with one head for each household and one ruler for each realm. Household status therefore determined civil and legal rights. A widely circulated seventeenth-century marriage manual said for instance, "All must be subject to one head. Just as the world cannot have two suns, so the family cannot have two masters. If sovereign power were divided, the division would engender the jealousy which is the ruin of all governments." The link between head-of-household status and full civic and legal adulthood meant that sons, apprentices, and clerks living in households of other men were dependents just as wives and daughters were. Moreover widows who became heads of households gained many legal rights, such as the ability to appear in court, to sign contracts, and to manage property.

Yet arrangements of authority in early modern households were also profoundly gendered. For most men, household dependency was a temporary stage before they became husbands and fathers heading their own households. Women might spend their entire lives as dependents, first as daughters and then as wives. Many widows found that both economic and cultural obstacles imposed practical limits on the promise of that autonomy that head-of-household status seemed to offer. They could neither afford to live alone without being part of a family economy, nor could they easily negotiate the suspicions that communities were quick to raise about the morals of women living alone.

The template of household patriarchy also provided an important justification for political centralization. It domesticated and naturalized the absolutist claims of monarchies across Europe. The English writer Robert Filmer, for example, writing in 1680, explicitly argued that just as parents were "natural magistrates" and children "natural subjects," so kings simply acted within the "natural law of a Father" in making claims to enhanced powers. He continued: "the subordination of children

is the foundation of all royal authority." This family politics naturalized the inevitability of government.

The early modern convergence of political discourse on issues about household and family was rooted in several impetuses. The Protestant Reformation, as we have seen, idealized marriage but reinscribed women within family in many ways. Indeed matrimony was the only respectable role for women as convents closed. As the political centralization of European states proceeded, absolutist-inclined monarchs and subjects seized on the analogy between a family headed by a father and a kingdom ruled by a king because each seemed to reinforce the claims of the other. So we find a pattern in which rulers sought to justify and legitimize their increased power by making these associations between familial and political order.

A politics of the family that explicitly equated masculinity with authority had particularly interesting consequences for the possibilities of women as early rulers. The single most famous – and notorious – articulation of this dilemma came from a Calvinist Scotsman John Knox who in 1558 faced the prospect of queens on thrones of England and Scotland (Elizabeth I and Mary Stuart), and with a queen-mother ruling as regent of France (Catherine de Medici). Knox responded in a pamphlet, *The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women*: "A woman promoted to sit in the seat of God, that is to teach, to judge or to reign above man is a monster in nature, contunely to God, and a thing most repugnant to his will and ordinance." Knox went on to say that a woman ruler "defiled, polluted and profaned the throne of God" because "nature hath in all beasts printed a certain mark of domination in the male and a certain subjection in the female which they keep inviolate." For Knox and some of his peers, being female was a condition that could not be overcome and therefore an inherent disqualification for rulership. In France, rules determining inheritance of the throne evolved in the late medieval period to include a "Salic law" that literally forbade women from being rulers of France.

Despite these reservations, accidents of inheritance made many women rulers in early modern Europe. They either ruled as monarchs like Queen Christina of Sweden (1633–54) or as regents for minor children, like Catherine de Medici, Marie de Medici and Anne of Austria whose husbands' premature deaths left them, ironically in view of Salic Law, to dominate much of French politics in the century between 1558 and 1661. Indeed probably the best-known monarch of the entire early modern period was a woman, Elizabeth I of England, who ruled from 1558 until 1603. As queens or regents, each faced the same challenge, that is how to present herself as authoritative and dominant, capable of eliciting the same loyalty and obedience as kings.

Elizabeth I's experience provides an illuminating case study in how royal women sought to negotiate the imperatives of rulership. First, an appropriate upbringing often helped. Like other female rulers, Elizabeth received an exceptional education, as rigorous as any prince's, and her learning was widely recognized. Second, queens were careful to cultivate images of authority and control. Elizabeth refused to marry despite intense pressure from her advisors and the English parliament in order to keep herself independent of a husband's authority and free of the hazards of childbirth. Yet she used the possibility of her marriage as a key diplomatic tool. She recruited able advisors, but made clear her intention to "rule her own house," as it were, and not let any one person have too much sway with her. Her single

state and clear leadership were critical in maintaining her own authority and independence. The comment made to her about marriage by a Scottish ambassador clearly indicated the significance of her stand at a time when household patriarchy shaped political and familial relations: "You think that if you were married, you would be queen of England, but now you are king and queen both. You do not suffer a commander."

Third, Elizabeth controlled public representations in ways that illustrate how she experimented creatively with solutions to the early modern gender conundrum. Early in her reign, she tended to present herself very androgynously to try to circumvent the gender problem, and portraits showed her dressed very similarly to young princes. Elizabeth could create her own version of a warrior leader too if needed, especially in times of crisis. Most famously, as England sought to rebuff a threatened Spanish invasion by the Spanish Armada in 1588, she addressed her troops from horseback wearing an armored breastplate. Elizabeth acknowledged that she had a "weak and feeble" female body, but continued defiantly that she had "the heart and stomach of a king and of a king of England too." She promised: "I will myself take up arms, I myself will be your general, judge, and rewarder of every one of your virtues in the field." Yet Elizabeth's use of imagery evolved, moving towards an iconic vision of herself as a magnificent virgin queen whose sumptuous dress and make-up emphasized her chastity, isolation, and superior and privileged place between subjects and god. This positioning allowed her to draw on the familial, natural, and religious allusions used by early modern kings to reinforce her own authority "Do not upbraid me with miserable lack of children for everyone of you, and as many as are Englishmen, are children and kinsmen to me."

In a society where political power was domesticated and familial, gender issues were of paramount importance, and nowhere was this dynamic clearer than in the prosecution of witches. Gender provided early modern Europeans with a means to signify and stabilize varied relations of power in a society experiencing high levels of political, economic, and religious tensions. Between about 1550 and 1690, tens of thousands of women were executed as witches and many thousands more drawn into prosecutions as suspects or witnesses.

Early modern witchcraft prosecutions had distinctive characteristics. While medieval witches had been about half-and-half men and women, over 80 percent of early modern people accused of witchcraft were women, and many of the men drawn in were identified because of their associations with female witches. Medieval society had regarded witches (or wizards) as people who practiced good or bad magic, whereas early modern understandings of witchcraft emphasized that witches not only sought to use unnatural means for evil ends, but that they did so as servants of the devil. Sexual relations between Satan and his followers sealed a diabolical pact, which was commemorated with a mark on the witch's body or with the presence of an animal (often a cat or rat) that embodied the devil.

The innovation of the diabolical pact as a central element of witchcraft was in large part responsible for the distinctive patterns of early modern witchcraft. Because women were thought to be dominated by their sexuality and weaker intellectually, they were seen as the likely accomplices of the devil. Moreover involvement with the devil made witchcraft far more threatening, to churches, to communities, and to the State, creating a danger so great it justified widespread executions.

Historians have engaged in an extensive and intense debate over the last thirty years about the causes of witchcraft. Women accused of witchcraft were often older, poorer, unmarried, and unconventional in terms of religious practice, courteous sociability, or sexuality. The economic, political, and religious tensions in which early modern Europe was embroiled were embedded in the patterns of witchcraft accusations.

The case of Joan, Elizabeth, and Margaret Flowers, a mother and two daughters accused of witchcraft in England in 1627 illustrates a few of the early modern faultlines that converged in such prosecutions. They lived together in a masterless household without the supervision of a husband or father to protect or discipline them. They were poor working women whose lack of deference contributed to their elite employers firing them. This rupture both increased their economic hardship and created a clear grievance of which both they and their employers were aware. Their household seemed disorderly in a variety of ways: they stayed up late, allowed men to visit at odd hours, used curse words, and were "atheists." They openly admitted trying to use magic to get what they wanted, having buried a glove in a field to win the affections of one young man. Their former employers' family started to experience unexpected difficulties, such as illness, death, and various misfortunes, that were difficult to explain. Their peers could find only one obvious cause: that the Flowers women, whose behavior suspiciously contravened early modern religious, social, and gender orthodoxies in so many respects, must have bewitched their former employers. Mother and daughters were interrogated and executed.

The idea of a social and political order premised on household patriarchy did not go unchallenged in early modern Europe. The English political writer, John Locke, for instance, in the mid-seventeenth century posed a provocative and in the long term immensely influential alternative conceptualization. He emphasized natural rights as the key to human relations, governmental and familial. Locke argued that contracts were the basis of human society, and that marriage was a voluntary compact that could be terminated if specific expectations were not met.

Locke offered an important alternative in the way gender relations could be understood and justified. Although he used contractual language to explain that relationships between rulers and ruled were also subject to consent, he separated familial from political society. Instead of basing civil power on familial household position, he based it on ideas about property ownership and contract. Others quickly built on his mobilization of the idea of individual universal rights to highlight the unequal positions of men and women. The English writer Mary Astell, in her *Some Reflections on Marriage*, asked as early as 1706: "If all men are born free, how is it that all women are born slaves?"

Yet like many other early modern gender patterns, household patriarchy as a template for social and political order still had tremendous power through the eighteenth century. Although the late-eighteenth-century revolutions in France and America brought into the mainstream the emphasis on individual universal rights, new democratic regimes reordered social and political arrangements in large part by reframing understandings of how families worked. Family politics remained a staple of understandings about how Western communities worked. The new emphasis on scientific rationalism became another form of gendered exclusion. A broad-based gender Renaissance that remade political, social, economic, and cultural opportunities for women as well as men was to be long in the making.

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Chapter Nineteen

Self, Society and Gender in Early Modern Russia and Eastern Europe

Nancy Shields Kollmann

At the beginning of the early modern period (about 1500), the lands of Eastern Europe and Russia were exceedingly diverse in social and cultural patterns. But by the end of the eighteenth century, under West European cultural influence, gender discourses and practices, at least for the elites, had converged in much of this area. Examining the evolution of gender relations in Eastern Europe and Russia, then, shows how powerful an engine of change were early modern concepts and practices of self, society, and gender.

What we today call "Eastern Europe" in the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries encompassed the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (containing Ukraine and Belarus), eastern Prussia, the Czech lands, Hungary and numerous Balkan states under Hapsburg or Turkish control. Russia, based in Moscow, was expanding its empire east to Siberia and the Far East. These lands shared much in common: an agrarian economy; a peasant population that was being juridically enserfed; sparsely settled population; few large urban centers; primarily "small towns," regional market centers numbering less than 5,000 in population. Socially in Eastern Europe and Russia nobilities and military elites dominated society, while urban classes were relatively weak. Linguistically the majority of the populace was Slavic, and religiously it was Christian – Catholic in the Polish, Hungarian, and Czech lands, and Orthodox in the Ukrainian, Belarus, and Russian lands. There were, in addition, numerous ethnic and religious minority communities. These common economic and cultural structures allowed for some similarities in gender attitudes and roles, particularly for peasants, but more significant than the commonalities are the differences.

Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth

Since the medieval era, Eastern Europe's predominantly Catholic areas – the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (including Orthodox Ukrainians and Belarusians), the Czech lands and Hungary – had engaged in the cultural, social, and political trends of Western Europe. These Catholic lands, today often called "East Central Europe," experienced the Renaissance, Reformation and Enlightenment contemporaneously

with their West European counterparts. Their political contacts with the Holy Roman Empire, the Vatican and points west shaped political structures – parliamentary institutions, rule by law, corporate privileges for nobles and townsmen. Their trade orientations towards the Baltic Sea, Italy and the German territories stimulated a dense network of small towns and intense cultural interchange. East Central Europe, then, participated organically in the fundamental developments of Western Europe, while Russia and the Balkans followed separate paths. Thus, to show the complexity of gender history in the early modern period, we will contrast an Eastern European case (the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth) with Russia.[1]

Polish historians have come late to gender history – the 1990s witnessed an energetic surge in research. But much important work had already been done. Despite Soviet rule, Polish historiography of the early modern period stayed abreast of Western historical trends, particularly influenced by the *Annales* school. Postwar Polish historiography is rich in demography, studies of marriage and inheritance patterns, economic, family, and material history and explorations of mentality, rituals, and custom. Led by the dean of Polish social historians, Maria Bogucka, Polish scholars have recently turned to gender history. For Ukraine and Belarus, gender studies are less well developed, since for most of the twentieth century relevant archives were under Soviet control and official Soviet historiography paid scant attention to such issues. Post-Soviet Ukrainian and Belarusian historians now privilege political history, but Ukrainian scholars in Lviv and Kiev are beginning to mine local records for social history.

The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth experienced many of the forces formative of gender relations in early modern Western Europe: in culture – the Renaissance, Reformation, Counter Reformation, the printing revolution and Enlightenment; in the economy – rapid social change spurred by a booming export grain trade through Baltic ports and overland as well. Although the nobility excluded urban classes from large-scale trade and parliamentary politics, strata of patrician and middling merchant classes in towns and rich peasant families in villages arose. Not until the economic stagnation of the mid-seventeenth century did social change slow and the characteristics that distinguished East Central Europe from Western Europe (enserfment, minimal urbanization, dominant nobility, conservative ideology) became more prominent. Nevertheless, although Polish scholars are quick to point out those differences, fundamentally Poland paralleled the European experience. For example, the famed Renaissance debates about the nature of women took place in Poland as well. Sixteenth-century Reformation polemics, domestic handbooks, and the like argued in favor of women's education and equality with men. Anti-feminist, even misogynistic, opinion also circulated, but Maria Bogucka argues (1998) that Polish opinion on women, literary or folk, was more tolerant and satirical than its European counterparts through the eighteenth century.

Systematic education was not readily available to women until the eighteenth century, when convent and private schools expanded for magnate and wealthy burgher girls. But limited practical literacy was continually expanding for men and women earlier. The Reformation played a key role in promoting literacy and education for men and women in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: literacy rates were higher among Protestants than among Catholics. Polish literacy rates do not match those of major centers in Western Europe, but they were the highest in Eastern Europe.

Even the most progressive thinkers regarded gender roles in the traditional, European-wide framework of patriarchy. The ideal woman, educated or not, was obedient and pious, primarily a housewife and mother. An early-seventeenth-century epigraph typically memorializes a noblewoman as "steadfast in the holy Catholic faith, diligent and religious in the upbringing of her children, she was a woman of great piety, modesty, kindness, exceptional love for everybody, kindness to her servants, magnanimity to the poor."[2] The ideal marriage was depicted as companionate; Polish scholars liken it to prevailing models in England and Bohemia, not the harsher patriarchal model of contemporaneous Germany. Rare, but striking, examples of romantic love can be found in seventeenth-century Poland, and by the eighteenth century the expectation that marriage involved an erotic attachment was common in Poland's magnate elite.

Polish historians actively dispute Philippe Ariès' model of early modern emotional life, arguing that affective love in marriage and between parents and children can be readily documented. Female children, for example, were frequent objects of tender gravestone portraits and epigraphs, memoirists such as Mikołaj Rej and Jan Chrzyzostom Pasek fondly recall playing with their children, and Jan Kochanowski's poem cycle, *Laments*, on the death of his nearly-three-year-old daughter, is heartbreaking in its depth of affection.

Polish scholars have also explored the reality of married life. The traditional Catholic emphasis on marriage was heightened by Calvinism's stress on the superiority of the married state. Bogucka agrees with the argument of Lyndal Roper that the Reformation was in sum detrimental to women since it deprived Protestant women of the convent as an alternative lifestyle and placed women under an even more domineering patriarchal control.

Propertied women in the nobility received a dowry which could include up to one-fourth of their father's immoveable property. One scholar argues that women were better served than men by this inheritance practice, since male heirs could be forced to wait many years to receive their inheritance, while daughters received their inheritance at marriage. Women were at liberty to dispose of their dowry property, often leaving more to daughters than sons. In legal status, women were not officially considered legal subjects, but in practice women appeared in court, engaged in land transfers and acted independently.

Townswomen enjoyed a less advantageous legal position than did noble women, since they were governed by municipal law (mainly the Magdeburg and Chełmno codes) which could be more detrimental for women. The Chełmno code, for example, regarded conjugal property as community property, meaning that women's dowry could be dispersed by profligate husbands or claimed by husbands' debtors. Major towns in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries supported dowry funds (often based on charitable donations) that provided dowry for first marriages for poor servant girls. In peasant families girls were entitled to a share of their father's property, usually movables, but most peasants out of economic necessity sent their daughters to serve in rural and urban households instead.

Marriages were short-lived in early modern Poland-Lithuania, due to high mortality in childbirth; Bogucka suggests eight to ten years for the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, while in eighteenth-century Warsaw the average marriage was calculated at 15 years. Widowers remarried readily; while propertied widows could

afford to remain single and often enjoyed economic and cultural influence. Poor widows, if they were too old to remarry, had the most difficult lot.

Marriage age was late in urban, noble, and peasant families in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, averaging 29 for men and 23 for women in a study of early-eighteenth-century peasant families. This age for women is slightly younger than the norm in the so-called "European marriage pattern" but otherwise Polish data conform to this model. As in the European pattern, most Polish households had two generations – 80–85 percent in one study of peasant households in the mid-seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Households were slightly larger than contemporary European ones, but still nuclear, ranging from about four in the poorest peasant families to about seven in the richest. Little evidence was found of the so-called "East European" pattern of large multi-generational families, but research has generally not included enserfed peasant families in Belarus' and Ukraine, where this might be found. In addition to late marriage, social practices helped to keep households small. Young people in lesser classes were sent out as servant girls and apprentices in their early teens, while old people often relinquished the role of head of household and lived as boarders with non-kin. Further paralleling the European model, a significant minority of the population did not marry; as many as 30–50 percent of townspeople were single women – servant girls, widows, single mothers. There was also a relatively high incidence of illegitimate births, and as a corollary infanticide increased during these centuries.

Much interesting work is being done on gender differences in the early modern economy. Women could manage their own property, propertied widows often took over their husband's property, and wives in noble families enjoyed broad authority over the upbringing of children, household management, and estate administration, because their husbands were frequently absent – at war, attending parliamentary sessions, or traveling. Middling and lesser urban and peasant women were, however, most directly involved in the economy. In towns, women were generally excluded, by guild ordinance, by lack of education, by tradition, from large-scale domestic and international trade, banking, and manufacture. But women dominated in petty trade and service jobs – in 1640 in Warsaw 83 percent of petty tradesmen were women. Andrzej Karpiński (1996) estimates that one-sixth to one-fourth of the urban population were servants, and that four/fifths of that number were girls and women.

Peasant women had responsibility for domestic management (cooking, housekeeping, raising children) and production (diary, poultry, cattle, vegetable garden), maintaining a relative equilibrium with men in labor value. By contrast, scholars of early modern Western Europe argue that in these same centuries women lost relative economic power by being drawn away from farming into less independent manufacturing roles. Peasant girls also regularly worked as paid farm labor in the years before marriage (ages 15–25 on average). Women's wages lagged significantly behind men, leading to the paradoxical situation where domestic handbooks advised noblemen to hire female estate managers because they were competent and cheaper!

With so many females at work in lowly positions, it is not surprising that poor urban women are readily encountered in crime. Andrzej Karpiński's study of criminality in Lviv in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries shows that women accounted for approximately one-fifth of all accused criminals. While men dominated in crimes against property (theft, banditry, professional criminal bands) and physical well-being

(murder and assault), women dominated in infanticide (primarily single servant girls), morals offenses (adultery, prostitution, procuring) and petty theft. Women tended to be punished more leniently than men, rarely meriting the death penalty.

When witchcraft accusations were made, women were generally the targets, but as a rule the Polish-Lithuanian lands escaped the large-scale witchcraft scares of early modern Western Europe. Recent scholarship significantly revises downward estimates of Polish witchcraft accusations and executions: practically no such incidents are recorded until the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Bogucka argues that this late and relatively mild experience of witchcraft resulted from Poland's lesser development of demonology and the special place of the cult of the Virgin Mary.

Of particular relevance for gender studies is the broad-based study of "everyday life." Maria Bogucka leads the way with her book on custom (1996) where she argues that in the absence of characteristic European engines of early modern change (a strong state and bureaucracy and legal reform), in Poland the nobility and church ensured their dominance and social stability by promoting a pervasive conservative ideology. Called Sarmatism, it idealized the noble agrarian life, myopically postulated the ideal noble as unengaged in intellectual achievement or international affairs, and for women enshrined patriarchy and submission. Men's dress by the seventeenth century flaunted Turkish fashions to distinguish Poland from Europe, even while women's fashions followed European modes. The Sarmatian ethic was seductive to urban elites who did not generate a counter, more bourgeois, ideology.

How gender relations played out in practice is illuminated by work on daily life. There is a growing literature on rituals of the life cycle, such as weddings, funerals, and attitudes towards death, as there is on attitudes towards children and practices of upbringing. Recent work has also focused on daily life in convents and the history of gesture. Scholars are exploring the influence of Enlightenment values and economic resurgence on mentality and social practices. Kuklo (1990) observes, for example, that contraceptive practices observed in this century reflect not only an economic desire for betterment, but also new perceptions of marriage as an erotic, not primarily procreative, relationship. Similarly, Enlightenment attitudes towards public service, education, and civil equality broadened educational opportunities for women and men in all social classes (save the peasantry). Paralleling Enlightenment France to a lesser degree, Polish women played an important role in literary and civic discourse in eighteenth-century Poland.

In sum, in early modern Poland-Lithuania, gender relations paralleled European developments. Research in this area is rich. It is likely, however, that it is incomplete, from a geographical and ethnic point of view. New developments in gender relations profiled here – broader literacy and education, the European family type, affective ties in marriage and family – may well not have been uniformly distributed in the Commonwealth, particularly in the eastern borderlands. Further research should include the non-Polish ethnic lands of Ukraine and Belarus' more consistently, which would also stimulate needed research on peasant communities. Research should also explore minority ethnic communities (Jews, Armenians, Orthodox Russians) on their own terms and identify the degree to which the Commonwealth integrated them into a single multinational culture. Chronologically, current research focuses on the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, while the eighteenth century remains dominated by the political issues of partition; this imbalance should be rectified.

Russia

Before Russia encountered these heady models of gender relations in the eighteenth century, its society and gender relations differed greatly from Poland-Lithuania. Russia did not enjoy the thriving economy that Poland did in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Profits from export trade were monopolized by the State and managed by an elite cadre of merchants. The peasant economy was at subsistence level, and market development was hindered by serfdom. Thus, there was little social diversity or mobility. Russian society was by and large divided between the privileged elites (military and clergy, who paid no taxes, but did not enjoy corporate estate rights) and the urban and rural taxpayers, with some semi-privileged military groups in the middle.

If the simplicity of this social structure recalls medieval Europe, so also does Muscovite culture. Cultural expression was non-secular, shaped by the idioms of Russian Orthodoxy. Muscovy took no part in the Renaissance or Reformation. Literacy was limited to a tiny clerical and scribal elite, there were no universities, seminaries, secondary schools, or professions. The printing revolution bypassed Russia; when printing was initiated from the mid-seventeenth century, it was controlled by Church and State. By the late seventeenth century, however, cultural life was undergoing profound transformations, stimulated by indigenous social and economic change and by cultural influences from Poland via Ukraine and Belarus, which in turn stimulated change in gender relations.

Russian historiography on women and gender is less diverse than that for Poland. European and American scholars of Russia have been studying women's history and gender relations since the 1980s, but in Soviet Russia approaches to social history were primarily political or ethnographic, with little trace until after the collapse of the Soviet Union of the cultural or *Annales*-type fields popular in the West. Now Russian historians are experimenting with a range of approaches and establishing new institutions. The journal "Social History" (*Sotsial'naia istoriia*), founded in 1997, prominently features gender issues, and gender history is being taught in major universities and summer programs. Most research has focused on women's history in the imperial and Soviet periods, while for the early modern period Natalia Pushkareva has almost singlehandedly blazed the trail.

Sources for social history are not as rich as the Polish-Lithuanian material. Sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Muscovy did not produce at all, or at least in significant number, promising sources such as memoirs, personal correspondence, family archives, polemics, disquisitions on the women question, village court records, secular literature, and tax records. Those sources which do exist – wills and property litigations, chronicles, moralistic and prescriptive literature, cadastres and censuses, litigations and other judicial records – incline scholars to a somewhat narrow range of questions and have limited scholarship by and large to the ethnically East Slavic, Orthodox populace.

Gender relations in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were profoundly shaped by the social and economic policies of the Muscovite state. Muscovy was a society of mobilization. Its grand princes and tsars (the title was in use after 1547) from the mid-fifteenth century worked single-mindedly to mobilize human and material resources to benefit military expansion, territorial aggrandizement, and the

enrichment of the ruling elite. These policies affected women and gender relations, most visibly in property relations, and this has been a primary focus on recent research. Traditionally, propertied Muscovite families practiced partible inheritance; all members of the family, women as well as men, shared in the family property through dowry or bequest. These practices were threatened in the late fifteenth century when the State created a system of service-tenure land grants (*pomest'e*) to support an expanded cavalry army. The market in land was significantly constrained, and property rights accordingly shifted both for men and women. Landownership was limited to military servitors (and the clergy); because *pomest'e* land was linked to service, families were not free to dispose of it. Furthermore, in the mid-sixteenth century the State made all land – *pomest'e* or privately held patrimonial land (*votchina*) – subject to military service, and forbade the transfer of most patrimonial land to women or to church institutions. Thus, by the end of the sixteenth century women's access to land was considerably restrained. Many scholars (Natalia Pushkareva, Eve Levin, Ann Kleimola) argue thereby for a general decline of women's status, while others, such as George Weickhardt, Daniel Kaiser and Sandra Levy, point out that women were active nevertheless in the ownership and management of property. More recently Valerie Kivelson (1996) has shifted the terms of the debate to show how families circumvented the laws to achieve family goals.

In the seventeenth century the tension between the State's interest in extracting service from land and families' interest in supporting family members equally was resolved de facto in favor of families. In the 1620s–40s the state restored to women rights of inheritance of some types of patrimonial land, shifted the burden of dowry and widow's portions to *pomest'e* land, and at the same time decreased the service obligation of the gentry. In essence *pomest'e* was converging with patrimonial land (it was abolished in 1714) and the net result was that elite women's access to land was improved. In the eighteenth century these trends culminated in the affirmation of broad property rights for noblewomen. As Michele Marrese (2002) has shown, Russian noblewomen in the eighteenth century had wider property rights than their European counterparts. This trend was not so much linked to gender as to class: since property ownership was limited to the nobility, affirming noblewomen's possession of land maintained the nobility's social dominance.

In addition to property rights, social values, mentality, and prescriptions about women and gender relations in Muscovy have captured the bulk of historians' attention. Sources do not allow one to penetrate deep into lived experience; they are primarily prescriptive and religious (sermons, hagiography, penitentials, protocols of church councils) or literary (folk customs, proverbs, secular tales). It has been traditional to emphasize patriarchy and misogyny in Muscovy by treating one source as emblematic; this is a sixteenth-century handbook for domestic life called "the Domostroi."

The Domostroi was new in genre, but traditional in content. It is infused by misogyny, distrust of women's sexuality, and patriarchy. Its image of gender relations is essentially non-gendered; it treats human ethics in the context of the individual's direct relationship with God. Men and women were held to an ideal of piety, humility, charity, and the pursuit of salvation. Thus the Domostroi says little about many of the issues that animated domestic handbooks in the West at this time. Civility and etiquette, education and learning are ignored as irrelevant to salvation.

Ideals of masculinity or femininity were also not formulated. Betraying its roots in Western domestic handbooks, the Domostroi defined a generous sphere of women's de facto responsibility in housekeeping and domestic management, producing a dual imagery of woman as controlled by patriarchy and yet empowered in her own sphere.

Historians are accordingly now looking beyond the Domostroi to question the image of oppression that is transmitted both by the Domostroi and by the voluminous foreign travel literature that sensationalized violence and crudity. Natalia Pushkareva (1997) has found in other didactic sources and in secular tales and proverbs an antidote to a Domostroi vision of oppression. She notes, for example, that Orthodox prescriptions about marriage encouraged men to love their wives and criticized men for resorting to physical violence. Physical abuse was common, but families were also active in defense of women in abusive relationships. Even though marriages were arranged, Pushkareva argues that spouses often had a say in the choice, particularly in non-elite classes. Eve Levin (1989; 1993) has explored sexuality, particularly the Russian Orthodox church's rigorous controls on sexual relations. It advocated chastity, even in marriage. But popular attitudes towards sexuality, particularly among the peasants, were less inhibited. Legal sources testify to adultery and illicit love, and in folk culture there was a plethora of charms intended to kindle affection. Thus from folk and secular literary sources one sees more affective and complex gender relations than postulated in didactic text, and historians have not yet fully grappled with the problem of integrating these viewpoints.

As for relations between parents and children, historians are beginning to explore this issue, but sources are very scarce and conclusions necessarily tentative. Using hagiography, iconography and personal correspondence, Pushkareva argues that mothers' relationships with children became increasingly affectionate by the seventeenth century, while the Domostroi and lawcodes advocated harsh discipline for children and accord childhood no special place. Despite Pushkareva's welcome revisionist perspective, it is still clear that Muscovite society, as compared to the Polish example, lacked self-conscious examination of issues of the self and family and that individuals enjoyed a much more limited opportunity to construct personal life given the strictures of serfdom, traditional economy and minimal social mobility.

Scholars have recently also explored spirituality in Muscovy, particularly its gendered nature, and this is a promising field of research. On the basis of miracle cycles, Isolde Thyrêt (2001) has shown that women's religious experience differed from men's in shaping local cults of saints and religious observances. Other historians have used convent documentary records to explore how women found an interstitial sphere of autonomy in convent life, or used church investigations and didactic writings of seventeenth-century Old Believers to demonstrate that women took a strong leadership role in the early stages of the schism. Bequests and death rituals provide evidence of spirituality and family connections, suggesting that women were more attentive to spiritual needs in their bequests than men.

As in early modern Polish scholarship, scholars of Muscovy have begun to explore marriage and family patterns. Sources – primarily censuses from the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, but also including monastic commemorative books, genealogies, and other sources – present a mixed picture. It is generally assumed that marriage was early (early teens for girls, mid-teens for boys) and universal for all

classes, and although hard data is difficult to come by. The universality of marriage was probably related to the relative lack of economic opportunity for individuals to make their way outside a family network. This parallels the "East European" family pattern, but there is also strong evidence of small, nuclear families, an aspect of the postulated "European" pattern. Noblemen maintained consciousness of large, extended clans, but bequeathed their property to the immediate family. By the end of the seventeenth century, the small nuclear family prevailed in towns in all classes, and among the poor and enslaved in urban and rural settings. Peasant families were large and multigenerational as in the "East European" family model. Thus Muscovite data show elements of both European and East European patterns, supporting scholars' increasing sense that the bipolar and teleological model needs to be revised.

Historians of Russia have paid significant attention to elite women, particularly to the institution of seclusion. Elite women in the very highest families, that is, tsars' and boyars' wives and daughters resident in Moscow (particularly evident from the seventeenth century), lived in separate quarters, rode abroad in closed carriages and did not appear in social occasions with men. While this regimen was strict, women by no means suffered the more extreme practices witnessed elsewhere (legal disenfranchisement, immolation of widows, genital mutilation, and so on). And seclusion was socially narrow, practiced only by the highest political elite. Its origins and goals were functional: seclusion protected a women's value in the marriage market of elite court politics, where marriage ties were a path to political advancement.

Provincial gentry, urban, and peasant classes had neither the political incentive nor the economic means to allow women to be secluded. Relatively little work has been done on women's role in the Muscovite economy. Peasant women bore the same sorts of responsibilities as their Polish, Ukrainian, and Belarusian counterparts, and urban women most likely engaged in trade, to judge by scattered comments in foreign travelers' accounts. Daniel Kaiser (1998) has found that women outnumbered men among the poor in towns at the turn of the eighteenth century; often they were widows with minor children and no kin. Richard Hellie (1983) has studied slavery, a status taken up by perhaps as much as 10 percent of the population as a way to escape poverty. About a third of the population Hellie studied were women. He argues that slavery of women was not used for sexual purposes – prices were higher for older women with domestic skills than for young girls. This finding suggests that Muscovite misogyny was moderated by Orthodox teachings. More work should be done on the gendered division of work and poverty.

While seclusion was a luxury that most women could not afford, all Muscovite women mimicked the goals of seclusion by modest dress and public behavior, and by supporting a highly articulated system of honor. In Muscovy honor was a social value that accrued to all men and women, regardless of social rank or free or slave status. The insults against which Muscovites complained centered on a wide array of social attributes, such as honesty, social status, piety, and sexual probity; there is a clear gender division. For women most insults involved sexual slander or physical assault on a dress, headdress, hair, or person. A wife's honor was compensated at twice her husband's, and an unmarried daughter's honor at four times that of her father – clear indications that a woman's honor was a tangible value whose loss no family could take lightly.

Scholars are beginning to investigate the gendered experience of the law in Muscovy. Ethnic groups in the Russian empire maintained traditional law codes, but research has not addressed this in the early modern period as yet; non-Russians were often engaged in the tsar's courts as well, depending upon the crime. According to Muscovite law, all men and women except slaves were legal actors, able to bear witness in court, to bring suit, to own and dispose of certain kinds of property, to engage in contracts. Recent work shows this in practice. Women were treated by and large equally in the law, although one significant exception is that women convicted of killing their husbands were subject to an unusual punishment of burial alive. In practice, norms of conflict resolution were traditional and verdicts were often moderated (or exacerbated) by community opinion.

There were few specifically female crimes; infanticide was associated with women, but Muscovite laws did not prosecute it in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as vigorously as in the West. Witchcraft is interesting in Muscovy, as it was in Poland-Lithuania. In most of the early modern period in Muscovy witchcraft was not linked with diabolic possession but with folk healing and magic. This may account for the fact that the majority of accused witches in Muscovy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were men, men who were socially marginal or healers perceived as having crossed the line from good to black magic.

Finally, historians have been calling into question the utility of distinctions between public and private, given that private social values writ large structured politics in Muscovy. In Muscovy women had no "public" place. Excluded from court politics, Muscovite royal and elite women did not have the opportunity enjoyed by their Polish peers to carve out a sphere of influence in salons and cultural patronage. But Isolde Thyrêt (2001) has sensitively examined this issue. Using the correspondence of Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich and his wife and sisters, Thyrêt argues that women were integral parts of the Muscovite political order. Their responsibility to pray for the tsar, to give him pious advice and to intercede for mercy fulfilled the traditional expectation that the tsar be pious, just and receptive to advice. Thyrêt argues that women in the ruling family, embedded in the "private sphere," were nonetheless elemental to the "public" political order, and thus she sheds new perspectives on the concepts of public, private, and women's "power."

These patterns began to change with the economic, social, and particularly cultural transformations of the generation before Peter the Great. Muscovite Orthodoxy was absorbing Italian Renaissance values of virtue and civic engagement through the intermediary of Jesuit-educated clerics from Kiev, Polotsk, and Vilnius. Peter the Great (ruled 1682–1725) accelerated these changes radically. Following the model of the "well-ordered police state," he imported European ideologies, cultural practices, and social structures to transform military and urban elites into self-conscious corporate classes who would better serve the state. Peter mandated that Muscovites adopt European dress and education, and cultural and artistic expression. His goal was political, but the results were deeply cultural and social.

By the end of the eighteenth century, Muscovy's old military elite (less so the urban strata) had been transformed into a European-style nobility; historians are actively examining these changes. Russian noblemen and women exhibited European standards of civility and were educated in European languages and literature; they dressed in European clothes and had internalized a sense of the private self. They

expected love, affection, and emotion in marriage; they developed their sense of self through portraiture, memoirs, and personal correspondence. In the eighteenth century intellectuals raised the Renaissance question of women's elemental nature, arguing generally for the traditional view that women's proper role was mother and housewife.

Family patterns changed under the influence of ideas and economic growth, despite serfdom. By the end of the eighteenth century age at marriage among the nobility rose to the mid-twenties and the tendency towards nuclear families became even more pronounced in all but peasant families. Similarly, contraceptive practices are evident in all social classes. But, conversely, patriarchal values remained strong, especially in peasant families, and marriage continued to be nearly universal, reflecting continued limited economic opportunity. The Church was reforming its laws on divorce and marriage in response to social change and European models. On the eve of the modern era, elite Russian society had converged with European patterns of family and mentality, although Russia's continued enserfment and ethnic and religious diversity ensured the parallel existence of other cultural patterns.

Historiography about women and gender relations in early modern Russia has focused on issues such as property rights, patriarchy, mentality, and Europeanization. In further work the range of research should be expanded and deepened. To the extent that the sources will allow, scholars should apply quantitative methods to address questions of economic and family patterns. Scholars should plumb legal records to test women's engagement in crime, the judicial system and property-holding; they should focus more on non-Russian ethnic communities. The interaction of Russian law, administration, and culture on native social customs among Tatars on the Volga and indigenous peoples in Siberia might be explored, for example. Finally, historians of Russia should continue their laudable efforts to normalize the study of women and gender in Russian history, and to see Russia in a broad comparative framework with Europe, East Central Europe and other comparable societies.

NOTES

1 The Polish-Lithuanian case is particularly accessible because Polish historians regularly present current work in western languages in *Acta Poloniae Historica* (*Acta Polonia Acta Polonia Historica*) (Warsaw). A note on terminology: in 1385 the Polish Kingdom or "Crown" and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, including Ukraine and Belarus, joined in a dynastic union; in 1569 they formed the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

2 Wyrobisz (1995), p. 81.

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Chapter Twenty

A New World Engendered: The Making of the Iberian Transatlantic Empires

Verena Stolcke

In 1752 a Dr. Tembra of Mexico issued the following opinion on whether an unequal marriage could be celebrated without parental consent:

> If the maiden seduced under promise of marriage is inferior in status, so that she would cause greater dishonor to his lineage if he married her than the one that would fall on her by remaining seduced (as when for instance a Duke, Count, Marquis or Gentleman of known nobility were to seduce a mulatto girl, a china, a coyota or the daughter of a hangman, a butcher, a tanner) he must (not) marry her because the injury to himself and his entire lineage would be greater than that incurred by the maiden by remaining unredeemed, and at any rate one must choose the lesser evil . . . for the latter is an offence of an individual and does no harm to the Republic, while the former is an offence of such gravity that it will denigrate an entire family, dishonor a person of pre-eminence, defame and stain an entire noble lineage and destroy a thing which gives splendour and honor to the Republic. But if the seduced maiden is of only slightly inferior status, of not very marked inequality, so that her inferiority does not cause marked dishonor to the family, then if the seducer does not wish to endow her, or she justly rejects compensation in the form of endowment, he must be compelled to marry her; because in this case her injury would prevail over the offence inflicted upon the seducer's family for they would not suffer grave damage through the marriage whereas she would were she not to marry.
>
> (quoted in Martinez-Alier, 1974: 101)

This is a most eloquent illustration of the close association that developed in the Spanish colonial empire between gender relations, conceptions of women's sexuality, family honor and the order of the State. In colonial society the sexed body became so important as to structure the entire socio-cultural and ethnic fabric engendered by the Spanish and Portuguese conquest and subsequent colonization of the New World. Until recently scholars have in general paid little attention, however, to the crucial role that constraints on women's sexuality exercised by the State, the Church and men played in forging colonial society. In this chapter I will focus on the multiple ways in which social, juridical, and religious norms about sexual morality and

gender relations interacted with socio-political inequality as colonial society became structured politically, and conceptualized symbolically, from the onset of the Spanish and Portuguese conquest up to the nineteenth century. Gender is not about women as such, but about the socio-political construction of women in their relations with men as sexually identified human beings. The Iberian colonial experience allows us to transcend the conventional litany of class, race, and gender. It provides an especially clear example of how gender/sex, ethnicity/race and class interacted with the new systems of social identification, classification, and discrimination that emerged in the New World, and of the consequences that the prevailing sexual morality and gender stereotypes had for women's experiences in all spheres of life.

The Portuguese and Spanish pioneered European expansion into Africa and America, an event described by Adam Smith as the most significant in human history. Their empires survived, more homogeneous than diverse, into the nineteenth century, when their successors, the British and French empires, were scarcely acquiring their definitive physiognomy. Until 1815 Spain and Portugal not only dominated in overseas expansion, but they taught the Old World how to conquer and colonize huge territories in the New World and make their vast natural and human resources profitable. The Spanish colonies in Mexico and Peru were the first "mixed" colonies in which a minority of Iberian settlers created an entirely new, hitherto unknown type of society composed of a whole range of unfamiliar categories of peoples which resulted from the subjugation of the indigenous population and the exploitation of huge contingents of slaves imported from Africa.

The conventional historical practice has been to explore American colonial societies in isolation. But the contrasts between the colonial projects and experiences of the Spaniards and the Portuguese and those of the English and the French, are more marked than were their more obvious similarities (Canny and Pagden, 1987; Pagden, 1995). In Brazil, Portugal created the first "plantation" colony worked by the largest contingent of African slaves ever transported to the Americas, under the control of a small minority of European colonizers who endeavoured, as did the Spaniards in their "mixed" colonies, to impose their metropolitan civilization, institutions, and cosmology. In spite of the difficulties of communication and control due to the enormous distances that separated the colonial settlements from their metropolis, Spain and Portugal enforced a tight system of direct administration, which contrasted with the much looser British colonial government (Fieldhouse, 1982).

The foremost aim of the colonial enterprise was no doubt personal profit and national wealth. Nonetheless, in a time when religion was inseparable from politics, the Catholic Church played as important a role as the crown in shaping Spanish and Portuguese American colonial policy. The Church and State colluded in their treatment of and interrelationship with, the hitherto only fleetingly encountered, or entirely unknown. indigenous peoples and the rapidly growing contingent of African slaves. Only a transatlantic perspective allows us to comprehend and account for the socio-political ordering of these new "kinds" of people. Moreover, by looking at both sides of the Atlantic world, we can understand the economic and political project of colonization and the exploitation of human and natural resources in the new territories in the centuries that followed the conquest. This pattern was the outcome of the dynamic interplay between metropolitan administrative principles, spiritual-religious and social values regarding honor and hierarchy, and the gendered ideals

regarding sexual morality and marriage. The Catholic Church's universalist moral code, which the Counter-Reformation reinforced, explicitly linked virginity and chastity of women, family honor and social preeminence in accordance with the religious doctrine of *limpieza de sangre* (purity of blood). The doctrine of *limpieza de sangre* structured social identities and hierarchies politically, morally, and symbolically, as well as the manner of their reproduction, but it also posed new political and conceptual dilemmas in the emerging colonial society. Since the American conquest owed much to the Iberian colonizers' own cultural and social background, colonial gender relations and stereotypes cannot be dissociated from the broader socio-political and conceptual environment in which they had developed in the Old World.

The Sex of Conquest

In the early years of the conquest, Iberian settlers, crown officials, and the clergy appropriated indigenous lands, coerced the local population into forced labor in the mines and into personal services of various kinds, and ultimately endeavored to colonize the minds of those they had conquered. In addition, they subjected indigenous women to all manner of sexual abuses at a huge human and social cost. One consequence was the massive displacement and the dramatic decline of the indigenous population, due to military conquest, starvation, and the spread of disease introduced by the settlers, thereby undermining the local socioeconomic organization. Another almost immediate consequence of the conquest was *mestizaje*,[1] the outcome of the European colonizers' sexual exploits. In his unique chronicle, *Nueva crónica y buen gobierno*, written in the early seventeenth century to draw King Phillip's attention to his administrators' brutality and mismanagement, the Andean ethnographer Guaman Poma de Ayala, of Spanish descent on his father's side and of matrilineal descent from Inca nobility, provides a detailed description of the social, economic, and political organization of the Andes as he denounces the destruction that Spanish *encomenderos*, miners, administrators, and the clergy were inflicting on the indigenous population. The four hundred drawings that illustrate the chronicle portray striking scenes of forced labor and the sexual abuse of indigenous women at the hands of crown officials, settlers, and missionaries (Guaman Poma de Ayala, 1980).

By the seventeenth century it was clear that the crown's early project to establish two separate republics of Indians and Spaniards had failed. The close contacts that resulted from the labor exploitation, personal services, and especially the sexual abuses of the indigenous and African women by the European settlers, gave rise to growing numbers of *mestizos* (mixed-race Indian and European) and *mulattos* (mixed-race African and European). Spanish colonial society soon became a human mosaic of socioeconomic and legal inequalities as well as perceived ethnic differences.

By contrast with Spanish America, Brazil was settled only sparsely until the late sixteenth century, when sugar plantations, at first in the northeast of the territory, absorbed growing numbers of African slaves. The sexual exploitation of initially fewer female slaves by their owners ensued almost immediately. The captaincy (province) of Bahia, the broad region circling the northeastern Bay of All Saints dominated by the city of Salvador, capital of the Brazilian colony from 1549 to 1763, became the earliest and most important slaveholding region in the Americas. By the mid-sixteenth century the expanding sugar plantations of the Recôncavo in the area

around Bahia Bay had become a major terminus of the Atlantic slave trade. The shift from Indian to African slave labor was due to economic as well as geopolitical and cultural reasons. African slaves proved to be a more productive labor force, because they were available in abundance and could be subjected to harsh discipline, while the relatively small indigenous population too easily retreated into the vast hinterlands. Not only male slaves but also female slaves worked in the sugar mills and the fields always under male overseers. Females who provided domestic services in the big house were most prey to their owner's sexual overtures (Schwartz, 1985). Gilberto Freyre's influential description of slaveholders' patriarchal benevolence toward their slaves, which portrayed Portuguese settlers' sexual exploits of their female slaves as evidence of a unique lack of prejudice that distinguished Brazil from Spanish colonial America, has proven to be a fallacy (Freyre, 1933; Schwartz, 1985). In Brazil, as in Spanish America, the rapidly growing population of *mulattos* were mostly the offspring of sugar planters who impregnated their domestic female slaves, but they were only rarely legitimated through marriage. As Roger Bastide has pointed out, "race" implies "sex." When *mestizaje* takes place within marriage it can indeed indicate the absence of prejudice. But in the way *mestizaje* occurred in Brazil it transformed a whole race into prostitutes (Bastide, 1959: 10–11).

Metropolitan Antecedents

The discovery of the New World coincided with the fall of Muslim Granada and the expulsion or compulsory conversion of Jews and Muslims that completed the Christian conquest and the political-religious unification of Spain. A century later (1609–14), the *moriscos* (Muslim converts) were expelled as well.

Ethnic mixtures were no novelty for the Spanish and Portuguese colonizers. The unfamiliar socio-ethnic categories that arose from the colonial encounter stood in contradiction, however, with late-medieval metropolitan ideals of bounded corporate social honors, notions of preeminence and discrimination. The cultural–moral difference of the indigenous people of the New World challenged contemporary theological and colonial administrators' cosmological certainties, while the settlers' mixed offspring posed new legal, political, and religious dilemmas. At first, the colonizers drew on familiar metropolitan cultural notions to make sense of the American reality. With time the unprecedented social dynamics of colonial society transformed metropolitan notions of nobility, social honors and hierarchy, the family, and sexual morality (Schwartz and Salomon, 1999; Pastor, 1999).

Limpieza de sangre – gendered "blood"

Central among metropolitan socio-cultural values was the theological doctrine of *limpieza de sangre* ("purity of blood") that structured late-medieval Iberian society. The notion of *limpieza de sangre* was informed by a genealogical ideology which rooted social honors and status in legitimate birth as proof of pure "blood," which was predicated on men's control over women's sexual purity to ensure their virginity before marriage and chastity thereafter. The language of *limpieza de sangre* prevailed in Spanish and Portuguese colonial America well into the nineteenth century although its symbolic meaning in colonial society began to shift by the mid-

eighteenth century. Much has been written about the enforcement of the statutes of purity of blood by the Spanish Inquisition and the atmosphere of distrust and apprehension that genealogical investigations provoked on the Iberian peninsula (Sicroff, 1979; Canessa de Sanguinetti, 2000: p.106; Zúñiga, 1999). Less is known, however, about the origins and symbolic meaning of *limpieza de sangre*. The Iberian doctrine of *limpieza de sangre* was unique in late-medieval Europe as a legal and symbolic normative system that underwrote the pursuit of those who committed crimes against Christianity (principal among them Judaism and Islam), which was introduced on the peninsula at the dawn of modernity. Purity of blood was understood as the quality of having no ancestor who was a Moor, Jew, heretic, or *penitenciado* (someone condemned by the Inquisition). Iberian late-medieval attitudes, justifications, and policies of social inclusion and exclusion were framed in the religious-cultural terms not only of canon law but of God's divine will, pure blood testifying genuine and unwavering Christian faith. The opposition between purity and impurity, which allowed for no gradation of spiritual purity, referred to moral qualities. Impure blood was understood as that which bore the indelible stain of descent from the Jews who killed Jesus Christ and the Muslims who refused to acknowledge Jesus Christ as the son of God. Blood was thus conceived as a vehicle of purity of faith according to which religious-moral vices and virtues were transmitted from generation to generation. (Zúñiga, 1999: 429–34). Blood purity was assessed by means of genealogical investigations that sought to determine religious faith in a context in which Catholicism as the only true faith was conceived as the ultimate source of meaning and knowledge about order in society and the universe. A veritable obsession with genealogy as proof of descent from Christian ancestors through the generations placed a special onus on Christian women's sexual conduct as warranty of legitimate and pure origin.

The Spanish Inquisition as the sole court with jurisdiction over *limpieza de sangre,* mediated between theorists of exclusion and the people, and popularized the idea that all converts were suspect. A bull promulgated by Pope Sixtus IV in 1478 authorizing Catholic monarchs to nominate ecclesiastics to investigate and punish heretics, especially the converts suspect of the clandestine practice of Judaism, had created the Inquisition (Kamen, 1985; Boxer, 1978).

In 1348, the Spanish *Las Siete Partidas* laws had already declared Jews a "foreign" nation. Various laws that revealed the growing animosity toward Jews, as all over Europe, followed this stigmatization. Until the fourteenth century Jews as well as Muslims had lived peacefully on the Iberian peninsula, often in close association with the Court and the nobility. But then a wave of attacks against the *juderías* (Jewish quarters) and bloody massacres of the Jews spread through Castile, Aragon, Catalonia, Valencia, and Seville in the midst of new political tensions between nobles and courtiers. To escape persecution, loss of property or even death, Jews felt compelled either to convert to Christianity or seek refuge in neighbouring Portugal where a less repressive atmosphere toward Jews prevailed. In 1449, the Council of Toledo adopted, following a renewed popular revolt, the first statute of purity of blood. This time popular wrath was directed against wealthy "new Christians" (Jewish converts) whose properties were confiscated. This revolt is said to have been triggered by a heavy new tax imposed by the crown, allegedly instigated by an influential convert merchant. In 1536 a Portuguese branch of the Inquisition was founded which persecuted Jewish converts to Christianity.

"Blood proofs" began to be demanded which reserved civil, ecclesiastical, and military offices of social distinction for "Old Christians." Marriage alliances between Old and New Christians had been a means for the latter to acquire social status by disguising their origins. The statutes of *limpieza de sangre* also required Christians to present blood proof for marriage. The Inquisition could, however, withhold marriage authorizations when the pure background of the families involved was open to doubt. As a result, anyone born out of wedlock became suspect of impurity (Tucci Carneiro, 1988: 99).

In accordance with Christian precepts, conversion to Catholicism, interpreted as the only true faith, could redeem the stain that was attached to non-believers. Through baptism Jews and Muslims could become like *gentiles* (Diaz de Montalvo, quoted in Kamen, 1985: 158). *Gentiles* as distinct from pagans were genuine neophytes because they had been ignorant of God's laws before conversion.

The *limpieza de sangre* statutes did not go uncontested. Disputes among officials of the Inquisition and among the elites were intense over the enforcement of the statutes because the nobility no less than the common people had earlier intermarried with Muslims and Jews, and genuine Old Christians therefore turned out to be very rare. By the seventeenth century, the disastrous effects of these purity of blood investigations for the political-religious-national unity of the Spanish Empire were increasingly evident to many contemporary thinkers. Opponents warned of the statutes' disastrous economic and demographic consequences as large numbers of converts fled the peninsula. They condemned the statutes of *limpieza de sangre* for being contrary to canon or civil law and biblical tradition because they denied converts the benefit of redemption through the purification of baptism. And opinions clashed over whether blood purity was a matter of religious practice or referred to some sort of essential, inborn trait. Despite these dissensions it proved impossible, nonetheless, to rid Spain of what had become an obsessive anxiety over social honors and distinction, all of which in turn heightened concern over marriage, legitimacy, and the control of women's bodies (Sicroff, 1979: 259–342).

The Spanish Inquisition was at its zenith in the seventeenth century. In Portugal the Holy Office was dissolved in the mid-eighteenth century, the distinction between Old and New Christians having been abolished in 1773 by the Pombalian reforms. In Bourbon Spain the Inquisition survived until the early nineteenth century when blood proofs also ceased to be demanded for marriage.

Old Ideas in the New World

The repercussions of metropolitan ideas of blood purity in the colonial world are better documented for the Spanish colonies than for Brazil, although the concern with *limpieza de sangre* formed part of everyday life in both colonial empires. Even so, the Portuguese Inquisition never established a tribunal in its colony but only sent occasional visiting commissioners (Boxer, 1978: 85). From the beginning, neither Spain nor Portugal permitted "Moors, Jews, their children, Gypsies, nor anyone not reconciled with the Church . . ." to make the passage to the West Indies although an unknown number of New Christians did make their way to America. They went in particular to Brazil where they encountered legal rather than practical discrimination, and had better chances to pass as Old Christians and rise in the social hierarchy (Tucci Carneiro, 1988: 195ff).

In the Iberian colonies the doctrine of *limpieza de sangre* continued to refer to a cultural-religious quality until the eighteenth century. Students of Spanish and Portuguese American colonial society have, nonetheless, tended to interpret *limpieza de sangre* as an ideology of racial purity and exclusion from the beginning, with concepts of race, ethnicity, and ethnic identity employed interchangeably in much of the literature of empire.[2] In Spanish America the obsession with blood purity was at its apogee in the eighteenth century, when it finally underwent a significant change in meaning, just as it was losing force in the metropolis, where the growth of royal power, rationalism, and anticlerical policies in Madrid and Lisbon combined after 1750 to reduce the power and influence of the Inquisition (Boxer, 1978: 92).

In their analyses of systems of social classification and stratification in developing colonial society and its implications for gender, scholars have privileged either race or social class as the dominant structuring principles – sometimes both. Revealing in this respect is Ann Twinam's (1999) study of the dynamics of social honors, marriage, legitimacy, and gender in colonial Spanish America based on the study of eighteenth-century petitions for legitimation submitted to the colonial administration. Persons of illegitimate birth suffered social discrimination on account of the uncertainties that surrounded their *limpieza de sangre* as proof of social purity. Twinam is exceptional in that she pays attention to metropolitan precedents of colonial notions of social honor and identification, asserting that "By the eighteenth century the link between *limpieza*, legitimacy, and honor was fully institutionalized, for the discriminatory traditions in Spanish history had merged" (Twinam, 1999: 47). But she is much less clear about what meaning "blood" had at this point in colonial society. She uses the notions of race and *limpieza de sangre* indistinctly, as when she affirms that the statutes of blood purity "kept the *racially mixed* and illegitimates from holding office" as early as the late-medieval period in Spain (Twinam, 1999: 47, my emphasis). Patricia Seed (1988), by contrast, shows that in the Viceroyalty of Mexico during the first two centuries after conquest, parental prenuptial opposition occurred predominantly between proximate socioeconomic groups of Spaniards and Creoles for motives of wealth, whereas *limpieza de sangre* was not an issue in a society structured by the principle of race. By the late eighteenth century when royal legislation explicitly demanded proof of *limpieza de sangre* for parental opposition to marriage to succeed, the reasons for dissent were racial disparity, however. In a further controversy over colonial social structure that developed in the 1980s, advocates of the traditional view that ethnic identity conditioned an individual's social placement in late colonial society, critiqued those historians who, like Seed, maintained that social class had by then become as important as or more important than race (Garavaglia and Grosso, 1994: 39–42; Arrom, 1985).

Notable exceptions to this general tendency to conflate *limpieza de sangre* with race are Schwartz and Salomon and Zúñiga, who have insisted that the early colonial usage of a genealogical language of "birth" and "blood" to define social boundaries needs to be distinguished from modern racism, which made its appearance only in the eighteenth century (Schwartz and Salomon, 1999: 443–78; Schwartz, 1995; Zúñiga, 1999).

It is all but trivial to ascertain the symbolic meanings of the categories of social placement that developed in Iberian colonial society against the background of their metropolitan precedents for a number of reasons. First, historical analysis runs the risk of anachronism when applying present cultural meanings to past times. The

categories of social placement I have examined not only underwrote the identification and treatment of the indigenous population and of the African slaves together with their mixed offspring, and curtailed their chances for social improvement in particular ways, but they had immediate consequences for gender relations. To argue, as I will do hereafter for Iberian colonial society, that the doctrine of *limpieza de sangre* during the first two centuries after conquest represented a cultural-religious social placement and form of discrimination, makes the early social hierarchy of honors neither better nor worse morally than modern racism, only set in a specific historical context. Even when scholars use the controversial term *race* in a descriptive rather than analytic sense, this is historically misleading because it sidesteps the fundamental question of how American peoples understood social identity and exclusion in their own times.

Second, because the modes of social classification and identification that structure a society shape the way in which its social reproduction is organized, the symbolic meaning with which *limpieza de sangre* was endowed determined the manner in which conceptions and relationships between women and men were forged sociopolitically. As I will show below, whenever social status was predicated on "birth" or "blood" (read descent), rather than on individual socioeconomic achievement or merits, women and the control of their sexuality became decisive for men in their competition for social honors. Only women, after all, could certify that the birth was legitimate. As the old adage goes, *mater semper certa est*. Finally, to interpret any ideology that bases social quality and status in birth, genealogy, lineage, or descent as racialist would ultimately lead to the untenable conclusion that all premodern societies, including those traditionally studied by anthropologists, were organized along racial lines (Nirenberg, 2000: 42; Schwartz, 1995: 189).

The New Peoples of America

Iberian ideas and ideals of social placement were, however, almost immediately challenged in the New World. In contrast to the Iberian peninsula, in the American colonies the interplay between the metaphysics of blood and socioeconomic functions engendered a many layered gradation of social positions instead of the strict polarity between pure and impure social status.

Indigenous peoples did not fit easily into the cultural-religious classificatory scheme of *limpieza de sangre* and even less so the settlers' mixed offspring. Indians were formally considered vassals of the crown but they differed from Spanish conquerors and settlers in their moral conduct and their belief systems, which were in conflict with Christian religious-moral precepts. Already in the sixteenth century the Church and both Iberian governments prohibited the enslavement of *Indians*, a new category for the indigenous people invented by the colonizers. Since Indians had been ignorant of the sacred scriptures, the colonizers regarded them as dependent minors similar to women who depended on the protection and guidance – that is, the control – of their men. Indians' *almas pequeñas* (little souls) needed the tutelage of the crown and the Church who were responsible for instructing them in the only true Christian faith (Pagden, 1982; Gusdorf, 1972).

In formal legal terms, then, Spanish America's original peoples and their descendents enjoyed the quality of *gentiles* bestowed on them by the crown. As a Spanish

royal decree established in 1697, their "purity of blood . . . without mixture of infection or another repudiated sect" entitled them to all prerogatives, dignities and honors which those possessing pure blood enjoyed in Spain. "Schools ought to be established to teach them the Castilian language and they ought to be evangelised" (Konetzke, 1962, III (1): 66–9, 217).[3] Only those Indians who refused to convert to Christianity could therefore be enslaved.

In Brazil the formal status of the indigenous population is less clear in available scholarship. In Portuguese Brazil, Indians did not appear to have received the same attention as their brethren in Spanish colonial America, presumably because with the growth of the slave trade their economic importance as a potential source of labor declined relative to African slaves. The crown and Church protected them initially from enslavement but in time they became an obstacle to the expansion of the agro-pastoral frontier, which doomed them to extermination. In Brazil, the prejudice of blood applied to "Jews, mulattos, Negroes and moors." The inquisitors did not bother to investigate the antecedents of Indian and *caboclo* (those of mixed Indian and Portuguese) because they were regarded as an utterly primitive, feeble, and child-like people. The concern over "black blood" was intense, however (Tucci Carneiro, 1988: 216, 220; Schwartz, 1996: 21).

In practice, the indigenous population and the substantial intermediary group of *mestizos* in Spanish colonial America were, nonetheless, disadvantaged economically and discriminated against socially. Their formal equality with Spaniards did not protect them from brutal dispossession of their lands and their concentration in Indian towns (*pueblos de indios*), the better to discipline and exploit them as forced labor. Even so, they were free people. After initial misgivings the crown had favored marriages among Indians and had also approved of Spaniards and their descendents marrying Indians and *mestizos,* not least to overcome the dramatic decline of the indigenous population (Rípodas Ardanaz, 1977: 230–6). Nonetheless, *mestizaje* resulted predominantly from casual sex or extramarital unions of Spanish men who were generally disinclined to marry indigenous women. As a Colombian proverb has it, "*la palabra de mestizo se entiende de ilegítimo*" – the term *mestizo* means illegitimate birth (Dueñas Vargas, 1996: 54). Even though *mestizos* "stemmed from two pure and *castiza* nations" they were distrusted and disdained, being progressively made ineligible for the priesthood and public offices of honor (Méchoulan, 1981: 58).

The politico-cultural status of African slaves in colonial society drew equally on metropolitan precedents. In contrast to the Indians, the enslavement of Africans was deemed perfectly legitimate. The Africans introduced in the New World as slaves and their descendents were regarded as genuinely impure and "infectious" because they bore "the taint of the ugly stain of the very vile birth as *zambos*, *mulattos* and other worse castes with whom men of the middling sphere feel ashamed to intermingle" (Konetzke, 1962, III (1): 185, 107).[4] Whereas Spanish blood was thought to prevail over Indian blood after three generations of *mestizaje*, the stain of black blood was deemed indelible (Katzew, 1996: 11–12).

In colonial Spanish America, the principle of *limpieza de sangre* identified and set apart from the rest of the population black slaves and all those suspected of descending from them. According to this racially proscribed argument, black "blood" meant impure blood that stood for the indelible contamination by slavery of those Africans

who, according to ideas Europeans took over from Aristotle, were beyond the pale of civilization because they descended from the barbarous Africans from Guinea. A black or mulatto physiognomy was the visible sign of this barbarous genealogical background.

Although this is little known, slavery formed part of sixteenth-century Spanish society, especially in Andalusia (Martín Casares, 2000). Contemporary thinkers, politicians, and the Church in Spain and Portugal felt no moral qualms about the enslavement of black Africans, no one disputing the Aristotelian justification of their "natural slavery," as distinct from the heated controversy elicited on the peninsula by the slavery of Indians peninsula.

The Portuguese had dominated the slave trade to the Iberian peninsula. The first slave cargoes arrived in the mid-fifteenth century. The majority of the slaves imported into Granada during the first half of the sixteenth century, for instance, came from the region then known as Guinea which comprised what are now Senegal, Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Guinea Conakry, part of Mali, and Burkina Faso. There were also Berber slaves of Muslim faith captured by Spanish pirates in northern Africa. And when *moriscos* (converted Muslims) rebelled on Christmas Eve 1568, seventy years after the Christian conquest of Granada, they also became liable to be enslaved because, as the Nuncio of Madrid wrote at the time, "even if baptized, they are more Muslim than their North African brethren" (Martin Casares, 2000: 176). In the sixteenth century slavery reached its peak, with slaves, the majority of them women employed in domestic service, making up about 14 percent of Granada's population. Masters exploited their female slaves sexually but to a lesser degree than was common in the American colonies. In the eyes of contemporaries there existed no lowlier caste than that of blacks and slaves proceeding from Guinea. Portuguese slave traders in Luanda, for example, thought of African slaves as "brutes without intelligent understanding" and "almost, if one may say so, irrational beings" (quoted in Boxer, 1963: 29). North African slaves enjoyed the doubtful benefit of belonging to the somewhat superior, if still despised, Muslim culture. Manumitted black slaves, freeborn blacks or mulattoes bore the stain of their descent from barbarous slaves. In popular opinion their dark skin color betrayed this blemished cultural quality. The number of slaves in Granada declined only by the eighteenth century, the time when African slaves were becoming ever more numerous on the plantations in the Caribbean colonies, in New Spain, the coast of Peru and Colombia, as their economic importance grew and the modern category of race was in place.

The Sexual Morality of Social Honor and Marriage

The system of social identification and classification that developed in colonial society marked gender relations and the experience of women. I have insisted that during the first two centuries after conquest *limpieza de sangre* referred to cultural-religious rather than racial qualities, the modern category of race being adopted only in the eighteenth century. What both principles of social classification had in common, however, was that both rooted socio-political status in genealogy. Social hierarchy was based on lines of descent; though what was thought to be transmitted by blood changed from redeemable moral-religious conduct to innate social distinctions due to indelible stains.

Because social position was thought to be determined first and foremost by genealogical origin, the reproductive norm in Iberian colonial society was endogamous marriage between equals in social status. In their zeal to safeguard their social honors *cum* blood purity, the colonial elites aspired to marry among themselves to assure social purity conditioned on the legitimate birth of their offspring. Under these circumstances, the lower orders could hardly marry otherwise. Sexual intercourse between partners of unequal social status, which was not infrequent, usually occurred out of wedlock. The illegitimate offspring were excluded from the social honors of the better-placed progenitor, who was usually the father, and raised in households headed by their low-status mothers. The colonial elites reproduced the metropolitan honor code which made their pursuit of purity dependent on a sexual morality in which the virginity and chastity of women stood out as a paramount value, adapting it to the new colonial environment. This link between social purity and female sexual virtue was manifest in a gender ideology, which endowed men with the right and responsibility to control their women's bodies and sexuality. This was so precisely because an individual's social value, rather than being acquired through actions or behaviour, depended primordially on his/her genealogical antecedents. Men could gain social honors through heroic deeds, but they needed to follow the honor code so as not to lose them later, whereas women could only lose their honor/virtue.

The Iberian and colonial American kinship system was bilateral, with children tracing their descent through both parents, and understood as related to the consanguineous kin of both parents in the same way. Because genealogical origin was traced bilaterally, marriage between social equals played the central role in perpetuating social honors. In the case of offspring of mixed unions it was, nonetheless, always the socially inferior parent, regardless of sex, who determined the child's status. As I will show below, because of the importance attributed to women's sexual virtue with regard to family honor, it was inconceivable for an elite woman to marry, and even worse, to entertain a sexual union with a man of lesser social purity for this would have "contaminated" her entire family. Hence, mixed sexual encounters were usually hypergamous (between an upper-class man and a woman of lower status).

It needs to be emphasized, however, that in spite of the social weight of genealogy in determining social status, colonial society was never a closed, impermeable hierarchical order. By the eighteenth century, Spanish and Portuguese colonial society exhibited a complex and fluid gradation of inequalities – the result by now of the interplay between a modern criteria of class and race. The striking increase in petitions for official legitimation, in particular in the Caribbean territories and in northern South America, reflects the elites' intense concern with blood purity and genealogy especially in those regions where the number of African slaves was still on the increase in the late eighteenth century. Legitimate marriage and birth were not only proof of the moral quality of the progenitors; purity of blood had acquired new prominence because the mixed offspring of sporadic sexual unions and concubinage of Europeans and Creoles with Indian or *mestizo* women, as well as those of African background, had by now blurred visible group boundaries. Their aspirations of upward social mobility were felt by the elites to threaten their own social preeminence and privileges. More than ever, illegitimate birth was the sign of "infamy, stain and defect," as a 1780 royal decree of legitimation declared (Konetzke, 1962, III (2): 173).

The *cuadros de castas* (*casta* paintings) produced in the 1870s in New Spain as well as in Quito, Lima, and New Granada by genre painters, are symptomatic of the acute social sensibilities which three centuries of *mestizaje* had only served to intensify. These paintings usually come in sets of sixteen, each of them portraying a couple with different skin color and physiognomy, accompanied by a mixed offspring. The paintings thus depict meticulously the remarkable range of hue, hair texture, dress, and even moral conduct which contemporaries perceived amongst the large numbers of mixed-race peoples, and they also suggest the growing social instability of colonial society on account of its socio-racial fluidity (Katzew, 1996; Schwartz and Salomon, 1999: 493). It is in this context of social fluidity and instability that the language of *limpieza de sangre* gained new relevance, losing its earlier religious–moral connotation and acquiring instead a racial meaning.

To account for the shift in the symbolic meaning of blood purity to from religion to race and the growing fluidity of colonial society, we have to look once again to Europe. In Europe the spread of modern individualism, which accompanied the decline of monarchy, brought about new theories of how "individuals might be linked together by their natural character" (Guillaumin quoted in Stoler, 1995: 37). The advent in late-seventeenth-century Europe of experimental natural philosophy sought to discover the natural laws governing the human condition, and abandoned the earlier theological ontology. After the publication of the works by William Petty, Edward Tyson, and Carl Linnaeus on order in nature, humankind was no longer a perfect divinely created whole, but was split into two, three, if not more potential "grades" of human beings – in other words, races. The naturalists' concern was with human beings as physical creatures and as members of organized societies. The emphasis was no longer on human unity but on physical and cultural differences. This interest in plural kinds of human beings was to resonate down the generations in treatises and tomes on racial and social theory (Hodgen, 1964: 418ff.).

An anonymous article published in France in the *Journal des Savants* of 1684 sees one of the first uses of the concept of *race* in a sense that comes close to its modern meaning. Its author distinguished "four or five species or races of men" which he differentiated by their anthropological traits, central among them skin color and geographical habitat, although he hesitated to conceive of American Indians as a race apart. The *Journal de Savants* was among the principal European journals. The article was a sign of the times (Gusdorf, 1972: 362–3). Incidentally, this new notion of race developed parallel to the new bisexual model, which held that the uterus naturally disposes women toward maternity and domesticity (Laqueur, 1990: 155). It is difficult to tell when exactly this new notion of race made its passage to the New World, but there is no doubt that it did, not least due to colonial elites' heightened anxiety over their genealogical purity. Despite its new racial meaning, the language of the less tangible quality of blood purity persisted in the Iberian colonies because phenotype had by the eighteenth century become a rather unreliable sign of a person's genealogical background (Martinez-Alier, 1974).

The Church was, of course, not indifferent to marriage and sexual mores. Until the late eighteenth century the Church held exclusive jurisdiction over marriages. Its marriage policy only served to intensify colonial elites' concern over social status. Although the Inquisition had been opposed to Old and New Christians contracting marriage in the metropolis, the doctrinal principle that governed ecclesiastical

practice in the colonies was freedom of marriage, which upheld young people's right to choose their spouses freely and rejected parental opposition to marriage for reasons of blood purity. From the sixteenth century onward, however, instances are documented where parents tried to impede the marriages of their children for reasons of social inequality in the interest of family purity (Seed, 1988: 75–91). But even though canonical moral doctrine, by privileging sexual virtue over social honors, challenged social hierarchy, the Church was liberal in appearance only. It ignored social inequalities but imposed the strictest sexual control on women in particular. For the Church, female sexual virtue – virginity before marriage and chastity thereafter – was the highest good. The consequence of the Church's concern with protecting moral virtue was thus sexual control: the salvation of the soul depended upon the submission of the body to religious–moral precepts. Even so, the Church never succeeded in eradicating the sexual exploitation of women who were held to be of low social and "blood" rank, and ecclesiastics, notorious for their own sexual abuses in the colonies, did not strictly comply with these precepts. Despite isolated attempts at marrying couples "living in sin," socially unequal unions were mostly consensual – as they were euphemistically called at the time. This had further consequences. It is by now well established that women's opportunities and experiences differ in accordance to the social rank accorded them in society. In exalting sexual virtue, the Church fomented discrimination between different kinds of women in sexual terms: between women sexually abused by men who because of their high social status would not marry them (those women held to be of inferior status and, in addition, penalized because they therefore lived in mortal sin) and virtuous women (women from respectable families) whose sexuality was severely controlled by their men for the sake of family and social purity.

By the mid-eighteenth century the Church found itself threatened on two fronts, however. It faced the State, which was cutting back traditional ecclesiastical powers and economic privileges, and also clashed with the crown on the subject of jurisdiction over the civil effects of marriages deemed unequal. The Iberian crowns passed new marital legislation that reflected their concern with young people freely choosing their marriage partners, the Church encountering increasing difficulties in defending freedom of marriage against prenuptial parental opposition. A Portuguese law of 1775 enhanced a decree of 1603, which had entitled parents to disinherit a daughter who married without their consent, by extending the requirement of parental consent to sons. In Spain, Charles III promulgated the Pragmatic Sanction of 1776, which likewise aimed at preventing the "abuse" of sons and daughters contracting unequal marriages. These laws suppressed free choice in marriage, as the State assumed jurisdiction. Henceforth, marriage could only be performed with paternal consent under the threat of being disinherited according to the consecrated principle "patrimony through matrimony" (Martinez-Alier, 1974; Nazzari, 1991: 130ff).

It may be paradoxical that the Portuguese and the Spanish crowns should have simultaneously introduced severe controls over marriage at a time of political reform and modernization, when the genealogical status principle of *limpieza de sangre*, moreover, lost validity on the Iberian peninsula. Yet, it is not at all atypical for liberal secularizing reforms to be accompanied by new social controls. It is therefore plausible to see in these marriage laws an attempt by the State to contain the potential

social consequences of the reforms in a political climate that all over Europe was threatening established social hierarchies.

In Spanish America, as noted above, the principle of *limpieza de sangre* underwent a late revival. In 1778, the King extended the Pragmatic Sanction to the colonies,

> bearing in mind that the same or more harmful effects are caused by this abuse (of unequal marriages) in my Realms and Dominions of the Indies on account of their size, diversity of the classes and castes of its inhabitants . . . and the serious harm that has been experienced in the absolute and disorderly freedom with which marriage is contracted by impassioned and unfit youths of one and the other sex.

Excluded from the Pragmatic were "mulattoes, Negroes, *coyotes* (offspring of Africans and Indians), and individuals of castes and races held and publicly reputed as such" who presumably had no honor worth protecting (Konetzke, 1962, III (1): 438–42). Brazil followed the Portuguese marital law of 1775 which was incorporated into the colonial empire's Criminal Code of 1831 once the Portuguese crown had sought refuge in Brazil (Nazzari, 1991: 132).

In eighteenth-century Brazil judges had still been concerned with equality of marriage partners but, as Murial Nazzari (1991) has shown for São Paulo, this concern shifted by the nineteenth century to the husband's competence in supporting his wife, as the idea of equality of the spouses had lost the importance it had had in preceding centuries. Little information is available unfortunately for Brazil, by contrast with nineteenth-century Cuba, on the effects of socio-racial inequality on marriage, nor does there seem to have existed a legal prohibition on interracial marriage.

The implementation of the Spanish Pragmatic Sanction met with considerable difficulties in the Spanish colonies. Several additional royal decrees concerning unequal marriage followed the one of 1778 to solve disagreements over marriage policy between the crown and colonial authorities. The crucial problem was by then interracial marriage. It was not initially clear whether only persons of legal age *and* known nobility or pure blood in general were required to apply for official authorization of marriage with "members of the castes." A decree of 1805 resolved this uncertainty by requiring "all those persons of known nobility *and* known *limpieza de sangre* who, having attained their majority, intend to marry a member of the said castes (Blacks, mulattoes and others)" to apply to the colonial civil authorities who might grant or deny the corresponding license whereas "Indians and pure *mestizos* (were) free to marry whites or Spaniards" (Konetzke, 1962, III (2): 826) This was not only equivalent to a virtual prohibition of marriage by white Spaniards or Creoles with Blacks and their descendents: interracial marriage had become a matter of State. Not only were family interests at stake, so was the stability of the social order.

Cuba was the most valuable to Spain among the few of her remaining colonies in the nineteenth century. At its economic peak as a sugar producer, it exploited a rapidly growing slave population and became the privileged site for the application of this marriage legislation even though the severity of colonial authorities in prohibiting interracial marriages varied. Particularly in the first half of the century, dissenting parents frequently argued in terms of *limpieza de sangre*. Time and again they talked of the "absolute inequality" of the couple, of their own "known purity of blood," and of the "remarkable and transcendental stain" on their reputation, of the "degra-

dation of the offspring," and of the "disgrace and discontent" the marriage would bring to the family. In the Spanish colonies, social stability meant the preservation of social hierarchy now founded on the interplay between condition with regard to slavery, racial quality, and female sexual virtue (Martinez-Alier, 1974:15).

By the nineteenth century, blood purity was used in the modern racial sense to differentiate people of African/slave from those of European/free origin. Free "colored" people – the Cuban euphemism for people of African descent – were nonetheless discriminated against as well. However, in the case of freeborn *pardos* (mulattoes) the prohibition of interracial marriage was enforced with greater leniency because of their greater removal from "black colour and slavery" (Martinez-Alier, 1974: 76). In addition, skin color and class combined in determining a person's social status. Light skin color and socioeconomic success could offset the genealogical stain of slave descent to a certain degree. Marriages among white men and women of color were infrequent as opposed to concubinage but the authorities permitted white men of scarce means to do so if they wished to marry for love or in order to legitimate a premarital sexual relation and its offspring.

As indicated earlier, colonial society was not an impermeable hierarchical order. The legal matrimonial paraphernalia were necessary precisely because, in spite of the concern over *limpieza de sangre*, there were always white women and men ready to defy the politico-racial order and its social and moral values by marrying against the grain. There were limits, nevertheless, to the compensation of racial status by economic achievement in regard to marriage. Socio-racial endogamy was the officially and socially preferred form of marriage among whites and people of color in nineteenth-century Cuba. Most marriages conformed to this pattern. But when a young couple decided to disregard established norms, they could either appeal to the civil authorities for a supplementary marriage license, thereby overruling parental dissent, or, more dramatically, they could elope. Once the families and society had been presented with the *fait accompli* of the women's loss of sexual virtue, parents would presumably find it much harder to uphold their initial objections. But when the couple was deemed to be of a different "race," the dissenting white parents often preferred to put up with a dishonored daughter rather than allow their lineage to be polluted. Thus one white parent argued:

> [The suitor has had] the inconceivable audacity to seduce, carry off and perhaps even rape a respectable white girl . . . and has thus been guilty before the law of an extremely grave offence, an offence of a kind that demands that it be brought before the courts of the Island of Cuba at all costs. This is a country where, because of its exceptional circumstances [i.e. slavery], it is necessary that the dividing line between the white and the African races be very marked, for any tolerance that might be praiseworthy in some cases will bring dishonour to the white families, upheaval and disorder to the country, if not extermination to its inhabitants; [he] will never approve of a marriage of their daughter to a mulatto, for this would be covering one stain with another much greater and indelible one; on the contrary, they rather swallow their pain and shame in silence than authorize it publicly.
>
> (Martinez-Alier, 1974: 113)

Such challenges of the social status quo indicate that side by side with the norm of socio-racial hierarchy typical of a slave society, an ideal of individual freedom and choice existed. It was this ideal of individual freedom, rooted in the notion of the

basic equality of all humans, dating back to the European Renaissance, which was the *raison d'être* of the ideology of *limpieza de sangre* both in its early religious-cultural and later racial sense and which served to account for and justify real social inequality. Despite regional differences, roughly until the eighteenth century the universalist Christian ethos, according to which all humans were equal before God, was dominant in Western society. Thereafter the European Enlightenment brought about a conceptual shift that progressively substituted the secular ideal – according to which all humans are born free and equal before the law – for the earlier theological ontology. Both egalitarian concepts of humankind were, nevertheless, constantly contradicted by the reality of social inequalities. According to the genealogical principle of *limpieza de sangre* in its changing historical meanings, social inequality, rather than being the outcome of unequal access to economic resources and power, was thus said to run in the "blood." In this way, the ideology of *limpieza de sangre* disqualified potential challenges of the unequal social order, which the egalitarian political-moral values made possible in the first place. Further, it neutralized any political opposition by attributing social hierarchy either to divine law or to "natural" physical *cum* racial differences. It was this egalitarian ideological element that also provided the framework for those couples who in the face of parental opposition to their marriage resorted to elopement to achieve it. Although group endogamy was the prescribed norm to perpetuate the hierarchical status quo, interracial marriage, though frowned upon, did exceptionally occur, precisely because consensus with regard to the legitimacy of the social order and strict racial endogamy was absent.

What consequences did these genealogical conceptions of social purity and status have for women and gender relations? At this point the general lines of my argument may be restated. Whenever social placement in a hierarchical society is attributed to birth and descent, and as long as sex cannot be dissociated from pregnancy, it is essential for elite men to control their women's sexuality in order to assure the appropriate reproduction of their social status through an adequate marriage. In colonial society by the eighteenth century, intraracial marriage appeared as the ideal form of marriage according to the norm that "there cannot be marriage if there is no equality of lineage" (Martinez-Alier, 1974: 134). Men's sexual exploits, though very damaging for the women involved, were literally of no consequence for their family honor. By reinforcing the metaphysical notion of blood as a vehicle of family prestige, and as an ideological tool to safeguard social hierarchy, the State, in alliance with the families who claimed pure blood, subjected women to tight supervision of their sexual conduct while their sons took pleasure from those women regarded as being "without quality" (*sin calidad*) without thereby incurring any responsibility. The disdainful image of the *mulata* (the mulatto woman), conceived of as at once irresistibly seductive and morally depraved, exempted white men from any liability. Moreover, the culture blamed the woman instead. The nineteenth-century Cuban saying, *no hay tamarindo dulce ni mulata señorita* (there is no sweet tamarind fruit, nor a virgin mulatto girl) is a deplorable instance of this skewed gender logic. The special moral value attached to women's sexual virtue was not due, however, to their specific biological sexual characteristics. Female sexuality had become so valuable because prevailing socio-ideological circumstances endowed women with the crucial role of transmitting family attributes from generation to generation. Men, as the guardians of the family's women, fulfilled the function of seeing to the socially satisfactory

transfer of these attributes through strict control of women. Women's domestic confinement and general subordination in other social spheres were consequences of their reproductive centrality. This was because, as a nineteenth-century Spanish jurist rightly argued, only women could introduce bastards into the marriage. A bastard was understood to be an illegitimate child born of illicit sexual intercourse between partners who according to social norms were not allowed to mix.

NOTES

1 It is inappropriate to use the term *miscegenation* for sexual intercourse between European settlers and the indigenous population during the first two centuries following the conquest because, as I will show below, the modern category of "race" and hence the idea of "racial" mixture to which miscegenation refers, were only introduced in the early eighteenth century.

2 Kamen has suggested similarly for the Iberian peninsula that what started out as religious and cultural discrimination was transformed around the middle of the sixteenth century into "a racist doctrine of original sin of the most repulsive kind" (Kamen, 1985: 158).

3 In 1734 the crown insisted again that "all distinctions and honours (be they ecclesiastical or secular) accorded to noble Castilians will be accorded to all *caciques* and their descendants; and to all less illustrious Indians or their descendants, who are *limpios de sangre* without mixture or of a condemned sect . . . by which royal determinations they are found to be qualified by Your Mercy for any honorific employ" (Konetzke, 1962, III (1): 217).

4 The word *casta* (caste) which is now associated with the Indian caste system, was introduced into South Asia as an Iberian concept referring to people defined by "blood". In Spanish America "casta" initially signalled the bounded nature of inequalities of power and status amongst Spanish colonizers, the Indians and the African slaves. But in time *caste* was transformed into a generic term that referred to the large cohort of "mixed" people instead (Schwartz and Salomon, 1999: 444).

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Gender and the Modern World
(1750–1920)

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Chapter Twenty-one

Rescued from Obscurity: Contributions and Challenges in Writing the History of Gender in the Middle East and North Africa

Judith Tucker

The study of gender in the period between 1750 and World War I, which incorporates elements of both the early modern and modern in terms of Middle East periodization, has made some significant strides in the past few decades. Only twenty-five years ago there were virtually no monographs available that focused on any aspect of gender history in this period: the literature in the field was still comprised of a handful of scholarly articles. In the course of the later 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, however, a number of historians of the early modern and modern Middle East, particularly those in the fields of social and cultural history, have turned their attention to the subject of women and gender so that now we have some solid contributions that have integrated the study of gender, and women in particular, into some of the main areas of inquiry in the field of Middle East history.

Initially, in the later 1970s and 1980s, a social history agenda stimulated and delineated the approach to women and gender topics. Social historians worked primarily from an impulse to fill in the picture of social and economic life in the early modern Middle East by tracing the participation of women in social and economic activities of the day. Although this project began as an exercise in "herstory" with the goal of expanding the narrative to include hitherto invisible females, it naturally enough evolved into studies of the ways in which social and economic life were gendered in a wider sense. As we shall see below, the intersections of economic and social power, and its implications for the politics of the period, were of special interest to several historians who put the study of elite women, and their menfolk, on the map. There has been rather less attention paid to women and gender in rural and working-class contexts although some historians of labor have attempted to integrate the experience of female workers. Most social and economic historians availed themselves of the records of the Islamic court system which are in abundant supply for this period and deal with a host of quotidian economic and social activities. After an initial period of somewhat uncritical study of these records, historians expanded their work with

these sources to include an examination of the legal system and legal discourse itself with regard to gender. By the 1990s, legal sources were being treated less as raw data for social and economic history and more as a form of discursive practice that was key to the gendering of identities and access to both social and economic power.

Similar concerns and trajectories can be found in the study of the coming of the "modern" in the nineteenth century. Historians of women and gender have tackled the defining developments of the period including nationalism and popular movements with an eye to their impact on women, gender relations, and the family. Again we can discern two phases in the approach to these topics. First, historians undertook the critical work of establishing the extent and nature of women's participation in the popular movements of the period in the spirit of compensatory herstory. Once this groundwork had been laid, others could problematize the impact of the modern. Were the rise of the modern state and the achievements of popular movements necessarily progressive and liberating as far as women were concerned? Many of the older assumptions about the linear impact of the modern on gender relations, women's opportunities, and even the structure of the family have been subject to reinterpretation and revision in recent literature.

Property and Power

As far as the historical record goes, the lives of elite women in the Middle East and North Africa were, for a long time, a study in absences. The indigenous sources displayed considerable reticence when it came to any discussion of privileged women. The rich chronicle literature of the period, detailing the political events of a tumultuous time of change during which the composition of the ruling elite, its culture, and its hold on power underwent profound transformation, rarely mentioned women. While a female may have a cameo role upon occasion, usually as the wife or daughter of the protagonist, the authors of the chronicles of the period wrote their historical narratives as though women played no real part in the politics or economics of the time. Biographical dictionaries, another major source for information on key historical personages, were likewise silent on the subject of women. Indeed, although some older dictionaries (from the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries) did include entries on prominent women, the key works of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries typically excluded women almost entirely. Al-Muradi's 1791 compilation of the biographies of notable people, primarily from the Syrian region, included only one woman out of 753 entries, while al-Jabarti, the famous Egyptian historian, did not include a single woman among the 546 people he profiled in his 1821 dictionary (Roded, 1994). And throughout the literature of the time, elite women are lauded for these qualities of absence, designated as the "pride of the inviolate," or "the veiled and secluded." All these conventions contributed to the image of elite women as contained in the world of the harem, effectively cut off from any real access to power or even basic visibility in their society. Following the lead of these sources and under the influence of orientalist assumptions, historians long assumed that elite women were marginal to the structures of power and property in society and that the respect they were accorded, as signified by their grand titles and elaborate tombs, was respect being paid to their male relatives.

Research on the Ottoman imperial harem by Leslie Peirce, however, has since revealed the extent to which elite women could acquire power and wealth in their own right (Peirce, 1993). In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the wives, concubines, daughters, and above all the mother of the Ottoman Sultan came to control major resources. As the beneficiaries of gifts and imperial salaries, many of these women amassed considerable wealth and then embarked on programs of public building and other forms of charity. Hurrem, the favorite concubine and then wife of Sultan Suleyman (1520–66), had a number of public buildings constructed in her honor by her husband. She personally sponsored the building of a major complex in Jerusalem devoted primarily to services for the poor. The women of the royal household continued to use their personal resources to construct public buildings throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Besm-i Alem, *valide* or mother of the Sultan Abdulmecit in the mid-nineteenth century, sponsored and supervised the building of hospitals, mosques, fountains, and even a major bridge. In many cases it seems clear that the royal women also exerted a powerful influence on policy. Many of their projects in the nineteenth century, for example, supported the empire's various programs of military and educational reform through the building of new schools to train both soldiers and civilians using western-based curricula (Davis, 1986).

The key to the wealth and power of these women lay in the household base of political life. Their attachment to the ruling dynasty enriched them as they shared in the Sultan's entitlements to revenues generated in his empire. Their residence in the Sultan's palace at the center of power made them privy to affairs of state, many of which continued to be conducted from the personal quarters of the Sultan. In their very person, they embodied and represented the dynastic claims of the House of Osman: their elaborate dress and processions, sumptuous palaces, and largesse when it came to public works helped to keep the ruling dynasty in the public eye. Although most of the women of the imperial harem usually lived in seclusion, the Sultan's mother often appeared in public on official occasions, and others (concubines, daughters, etc.) did travel through the capital with their entourages, albeit with covered faces but lots of pomp and circumstance.

The system of household politics shaped the lives of elite women outside the imperial harem as well. We have the most information on Egypt in the eighteenth century (still under the suzerainty of the Ottoman Empire), when political life was organized around factions in Mamluk households, large residential units which housed many retainers sworn to fealty as well as wives, concubines, and servants in the harem. As an elite group of slave origin, the Mamluks held themselves apart from the local population, engaging in often fierce internecine struggles for preeminence. Particularly in the latter part of the eighteenth century, when internal conflicts were followed by the French invasion in 1798, life for many of the male members of this elite was short as they established and retained their dominance primarily through force of arms. As historians have recently demonstrated, women came to play an important role in ensuring the prosperity and continuity of the household under these circumstances. When the head of a Mamluk household was killed, for example, it was common practice for his widow to marry his successor. Indeed, one Mamluk woman, Hanim bint Ivaz, married three husbands of the Ivaz household in succession, one after the other as they were killed off. Her role in ensuring the continuity of the household

was reflected in the fact that her later husbands took the sobriquet "husband of Hanim." The importance of these women as representatives of the household was duly recognized by the French invaders in their dealings with Sitt Nafisa, the wife of the Mamluk Murad Bey, who represented her husband in Cairo during his period of opposition to the French in upper Egypt. Although some historians have suggested that these women could be viewed as passive "heritable property" that got passed along regardless of their own wishes, such an idea is belied by the very active part they played in the politics of the time. A woman like Nafisa drew on her political experience and vast connections, in the absence of her husband, to maneuver against the French, walking a tight rope of cooperation and resistance (Hathaway, 1997).

Mamluk and other elite women owed their clout, in part, to the considerable amounts of property they possessed. Although most women did not receive handsome salaries like those of the imperial harem, they did amass wealth through inheritance, marriage gifts, and income-producing properties. In an age when the property of state officials was liable for confiscation if they fell foul of the ruler, many elite families saw the virtue of passing family property to women who did not hold official positions and were therefore not in danger of losing it if they fell out of favor. Families were greatly assisted in these attempts to protect their property by the legal instrument of the *waqf*, or religious endowment. By founding a *waqf*, an individual could convert his or her private property into a trust, the income of which could be assigned to whomever the founder chose, as long as the ultimate purpose was to benefit (even after the passage of many generations) a religious or charitable cause. A significant proportion of property in many cities of the region came to be tied up in *waqf* deeds, which once established could not, at least in theory, be revoked. Some of these deeds named religious or charitable causes as immediate beneficiaries of *waqf* income, but many others named family members or other individuals as beneficiaries with the charitable cause as a residual beneficiary when the family line was extinguished. Historians of women and gender in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have focused on the *waqf* as a critical aspect of gendered distribution of property.

In eighteenth-century Cairo, for example, women founded one-quarter of the 496 new *waqf*s in the city by converting many kinds of property they owned – shops, warehouses, apartments, coffee houses, public baths, etc. – into *waqf*s (Fay, 1997). In nineteenth-century Aleppo, women founded some 30 to 40% of the new *waqf*s (Meriwether, 1997). Clearly, the establishment of these *waqf*s reflected deep female involvement in the urban real-estate market as well as the ability of women to dispose of their property as they wished. Historians have debated, however, the larger impact on gendered access to property. Were elite women able to employ the *waqf* institution to consolidate their hold on valuable assets? Or rather, did conversion to *waqf* gradually dissipate women's hold on property? The latter position was taken by Gabriel Baer in the first study of the question, published in 1983, in which he argued, based on a study of Istanbul, that most *waqf* property benefited male family members and religious institutions controlled by men (Göcek and Baer, 1997). Men were more likely to select male beneficiaries, and even when female descendents were included, the tendency for families to die out meant that the benefits of the *waqf* soon were transferred from family members to institutions. In fact, women's activities not withstanding, *waqf* endowments actually served as a way to shift control of property from women who had inherited it and to turn it over to men, thus

vitiating the natural play of Islamic inheritance law that gave women rights to family property. In their research on Cairo and Aleppo respectively, Mary Ann Fay and Margaret Meriwether questioned this conclusion, noting that women often appointed themselves as administrators of *waqf* property, designated many female beneficiaries, and were commonly named as beneficiaries by men who established *waqf*s (in Zilfi, 1997). Over the longer term as well, women seemed to profit from *waqf* endowments: male and female relatives were often assigned equal shares in the benefits over the generations, a distinct advantage for women over the Islamic rules of inheritance that assigned them one-half the share of parallel male relations, and many women served as administrators of family *waqf*s of various kinds. Elite women did not endow as many *waqf*s as did men, nor were they as likely to be administrators of *waqf* property, but their high level of activity in this important aspect of urban real estate in the period suggests that their rights and abilities to acquire and manage property were well-recognized in this period.

Outside elite circles, women's access to remunerated activities was also largely invisible. Although women were very active in craft production, particularly in textiles, in both rural and urban areas throughout the region, most accounts of craft activity give us little hard information about the numbers of women involved or the conditions under which they worked. Many craftswomen worked part time in a domestic setting, so that their work was camouflaged by other household duties. In addition, most crafts guilds did not admit women, so that female workers were deprived of both the recognition and the protection such guilds provided. Historians of gender have managed to explore, at least in part, this realm of female labor primarily through their use of the records of the Islamic courts in various towns and cities in the region. There, in the records of business transactions and inheritance, we have ample evidence that rural and urban women did make significant contributions to the production of silk and cotton cloth, often as spinners using either wheel or distaff. Other more distinctly urban occupations also drew women into service work of various kinds, including peddling, the cooking of prepared food, the operation of public baths, and musical entertainment. Unlike their counterparts in elite circles, these working women did not aspire to a secluded lifestyle: such occupations required female mobility, and these women frequently came and went in their neighborhoods and appeared in court to pursue their interests (Meriwether, 1999; Tucker, 1998).

As the nineteenth century went on, both elite and working women's access to property and power felt the impact of deep transformations in local economies and politics. The expansion of the European economy into the region led to some dramatic restructuring of local production, while a rationalization of local political power entailed the rise of a modern bureaucratic middle class. The latter development accelerated the erosion of household politics as a reformed state bureaucracy took control. Political life increasingly came to be organized around autocratic rulers, emerging political parties, and state officials based in offices, not households. As historians have noted with some irony, these "modern" developments threatened the established avenues for elite women's political and economic participation. As centralized states put an end to the rule by local political households in the Ottoman Empire and Egypt, and even marginalized the Sultan's palace as an independent seat of power, elite women lost both economic and political ground. Across the region, wealthy

women participated in fewer large commercial transactions and stopped building the religious institutions and palaces that formerly signaled their wealth and position in society. The extent to which other developments, such as the expansion of formal education for elite women and the emergence of a women's press and movement that gave them new voice, compensated for the loss of traditional forms of access to property and power remains a hotly debated topic to which we will return below.

Nineteenth-century changes also had disparate effects on working women in both rural and urban areas. Some of the craft production and service activities that had most engaged women, such as the production of local twists and dyes for textile weavers, were virtually eliminated by European competition. On the other hand, European demand for some products boosted production dramatically: the high demand for raw silk, for example, drove an explosion of production and a shift to factories. In Bursa (Anatolia), the Lebanon mountain region, and other centers of silk production, the new silk-spinning factories dealt with labor scarcity by employing young women drawn in large numbers from the countryside. Factory wages equipped these women with independent means, although many of them worked only until marriage. The volatile nature of the silk industry, however, particularly in the later part of the century when European demand fluctuated wildly, meant that this particular form of employment became increasingly insecure as spinning factories often shut down, at least temporarily, when demand slackened. Many women had been introduced to factory labor and an independent wage, but most of these factories did not survive the century.

Certain "traditional" craft industries proved to have more staying power. Carpet-making, including the spinning and dyeing of wool and the knotting of rugs, flourished in the late nineteenth century in response to worldwide demand. In Anatolia and Iran, many women were employed as spinners, dyers, and knotters in a craft that tended to adhere to a strict gendered division of labor. While the precise assignment of tasks might differ from one locale to another – in one area men might be the dyers or spinners while in another these tasks might be given to women – carpet-making in general was a heavily feminized craft, and one that expanded the opportunities for female labor in particular (Quataert, 1991).

The study of gendered access to property and power in this period has been a focus of significant historical research. Much of this work has been compensatory, in the sense that the economic activities of women have been uncovered and added to what we already knew about patterns of property-holding and labor in the period. The impetus here was to write women into this history. In some respects, however, the emphasis on women has refocused our attention. The importance of the household as key to property and power, the signal role of *waqf* in the management of elite property, and the very diverse effects of nineteenth-century developments on labor patterns are all insights contributed to the field by historians of women and gender.

Legal Discourse

The Islamic court records from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have not only provided new information about women's economic activities, they also have led historians to problematize prior understandings of Islamic law and its role in the

setting up of an Islamic gender system. The field of Islamic legal studies had long held that Islamic legal doctrines ceased to develop at the end of the ninth century, and that subsequently a static and strongly patriarchal set of laws had shaped gender arrangements in Muslim communities. But the court records demonstrated convincingly that women were exercising their property rights through their activities in the real-estate market and their ability to receive their inheritance portions. In many other areas of the law as well – for example marriage and divorce and child custody – women appeared to have well-defined rights that they defended with some success. Given the importance of law in Islamic communities at the time – most of the leading intellectuals in the eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth centuries were jurists and many people, at least in urban areas, routinely took their business affairs and problems of all kinds to the court for oversight and judgment – the ability of women to know and utilize the legal system was a critical factor in their lives. A number of historians have focused on this theme of female agency as women pursued their rights in court.

In eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Cairo, Aleppo, Damascus, and Istanbul, women frequently came to court to press various claims. They collected dower payments (*mahr)* owed to them by husbands who had repudiated them; they initiated divorce themselves in the form of *khul*', a divorce that allowed them to ransom themselves from an unwanted marriage; they complained that their husbands were not supporting them properly and asked the judge to impose support payments on their husbands; they alleged that they had been cheated out of their inheritance. Women also appeared in court to conduct business on their own behalf and on the behalf of minor children for whom they acted as guardians. Most of these women, with the exception of those from the upper class, came to the court in person and, in keeping with the standard practice of the court, spoke directly to the judge about their cases. The presence of these women in court, and their active advocacy of their own interests, definitively shattered the old image of passivity and seclusion (Göcek and Baer, 1997; Meriwether, 1996; Tucker, 1985, 1998).

Court practice was only one part of the legal equation. Affairs in court and in the larger society were also influenced by the legal discourse of the time, by publicly articulated discussions of male and female rights and relations. *Fatwa*s, or legal opinions delivered by prominent jurists in response to queries they received from officials, judges, or just ordinary people, supplied a forum for ongoing evolution of legal doctrine. Through the *fatwa*, a jurist could address a social concern of the day, such as whether it was appropriate under Islamic law to "test" a bride's virginity, and issue an opinion that, while not binding in a legal sense, would carry great weight in both court and community. Indeed, by taking positions against the "testing" of brides on their wedding nights or any other coercive practices in marriage arrangements, Muslim jurists established parameters for marriage that enabled women and their supporters to claim strong legal sanction for women's rights in the all-important area of marital relations.

Historians who have studied the *fatwa* literature agree that these jurists certainly thought in terms of gender difference when it came to social relations, but they were careful in their discussions of gendered rights and duties to stress reciprocity between men and women. In marriage, for example, the jurists took the man's duty to support his wife very seriously, but tied it to the woman's duty to obey her husband: a woman

could lose her right to marital maintenance if she defied legitimate orders from her husband. Explorations of this juristic discourse have highlighted the subtleties of the Islamic gender system in its more intellectualized legal form as well as its ongoing evolution, as discussions of marital rights and duties, responsibilities towards children and parents, and proper social behavior in general continued throughout the period. Through their interest in Islamic law as a dynamic force both shaping and reflecting gender relations, historians of gender have come to play an important role in the revisionist school in Islamic legal studies that focuses on the interplay of law and society and the dynamism of the legal tradition (Imber, 1997; Tucker, 1998).

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, Islamic law in both theory and practice was increasingly marginalized by legal codes of European inspiration, at least as far as commercial, criminal, and administrative matters were concerned, in most parts of the region. European powers pressured Middle Eastern states to institute Western commercial law in order to accommodate European merchants, and indigenous reform-minded bureaucrats saw Western criminal and administrative law as conducive to the rationalization of state power. As these aspects of the law were removed from the sway of Islamic jurisprudence and placed under the control of new codes and courts of Western design, the body of law governing what came to be called matters of personal status remained largely untouched by reforming states. Indeed, the preservation of Islamic law in the sphere of family relations was an easy way for a state to demonstrate its adherence to Islamic principles: issues of marriage, divorce, children, and other gendered relations were left under the jurisdiction of a shrinking religious establishment under indirect state control. States in the region were not to implement any formal reform in this area of family law until after World War I.

Still, a lively discussion of the virtues of legal reform of personal status law ensued. Muslim intellectuals engaged in much public discussion of the ways in which Islam could be reformed to meet the challenges of a modern world. Men like Muhammad Abduh and Muhammad Rashid Rida, writing at the turn of the century, thought that Islamic personal status law could and should be reformed to meet the challenges of the age. Through a return to the sources, the Qur'an, and *hadith* (the accounts of what the Prophet Muhammad said and did during his lifetime), and the development of new interpretations based on this material, they were confident that Islamic law had within itself the seeds of a more egalitarian gender system. Abduh, for example, argued against the legal permission of polygyny by citing the Qur'anic injunction that a man only take multiple wives if he could treat them all equally, a logical impossibility according to Abduh where emotional attachment is concerned. Similar discussions could be found in the pages of women's journals and magazines of the time, many of which sprang up in the later part of the nineteenth century.

Did these debates prepare the ground for progressive state-sponsored reform of personal status law after World War I? Historians are no longer so sure. The earlier tendency to write about reform of personal status law as a positive development, as a key element in the improvement of women's position in the family and greater society, has recently been subjected to scrutiny. Legal reform was by definition a state-sponsored affair that would entail the development of binding legal codes; the codification of what had formerly been a vast set of legal discussions and opinions invariably entailed the choice of a single interpretation. Reform thus signaled a fundamental change in the character of the law: jurists were required to apply a formal

rule under state auspices rather than offer a personal interpretation to fit the particulars of the case. Reform thus would limit the flexibility of the law and the prerogatives of the jurists, and allow the state to pursue social agendas of its own through the law. Although women's rights might be expanded with reform, they also might suffer from new kinds of definition. Many of the post-independence states of the twentieth century, for example, have extended the period of a mother's custody of her children after a divorce. But, at the same time, the theoretical maximum duration of a pregnancy during which legitimate paternity can be claimed has been reduced: under classical Islamic law a woman who had been divorced for as long as five years could still claim child support and recognition of paternity from her husband; after reform, this window was reduced to a year or less. All of these reforms, however, belong to a later period than the one we are discussing here: the first codification of Islamic family law, The Ottoman Law of Family Rights, was not implemented until 1917 (Moors, 1999; Sonbol, 1996). Although reform was discussed and debated in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, "traditional" Islamic law was still arbitrating personal status and family relations.

The "New Woman"

Various intellectuals and publications of the later nineteenth century began to debate a broad range of other issues concerning women and the challenge of the modern. Historians have become increasingly interested in a discourse on the "new" or "modern" woman that emerged towards the end of the nineteenth century and came to dominate much of the discussion of women and gender in the region well into the twentieth century. In brief, this discourse defined the attributes of the "new" woman who could help her society and nation succeed in the modern world in contradistinction to a "traditional" woman who was mired in customary notions and antiquated practices. The "new" woman should be able to run a modern household complete with modern conveniences, socialize and educate her children to be modern citizens, and serve as her husband's partner and confidant. Magazines touted the virtues of a range of new consumer products, introducing women to pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, household fixtures, and even bicycles, all of which could assist her in these tasks. All these activities and products were valued primarily because they contributed to the major tasks at hand, the construction of a modern society and nation.

There has been an interesting debate among historians about the extent to which the concept of the new woman opened up new opportunities. To play the roles of mother as tutor and wife as companion, a woman had to be fairly well educated. But the education of females could no longer be left to the haphazard approaches of early mosque education or individual tutoring at home as in the old system, and thus the cause of women's higher education came to be championed in diverse parts of the region. Afsaneh Najmabadi has discussed how both male and female writers placed a high priority on female education in turn-of-the-century Iran, and the largely female founders of the many new girls' schools justified their activities in terms of educating "learned ladies" who would bring cleanliness, order, and harmony to their households, essential for national progress (Najmabadi, 1998). Similarly in Egypt, when Qasim Amin called for the education of women in his book *The Liberation of Women*

(published in 1899), he couched his demands in the context of the necessity of educating women so that they could raise their children – materially, intellectually, and morally – to be men in the service of the development of the Egyptian nation (Shakry in Abu-Lughod, 1998). Class considerations also informed notions of appropriate education for females: Egyptian texts of the period addressed the upper and middle classes somewhat differently. Females of the upper-class elite should follow a curriculum that stressed home economics, but also included foreign languages, fine arts, and perhaps the religious sciences, French or piano lessons. The curriculum for middle-class girls was rather more conservative, focused almost exclusively on new ways of cooking, cleaning, and caring for children (Russell, 1997). In all cases, however, the domesticity of the new woman required new forms and levels of education, resulting in the significant expansion of female educational opportunities. The female curriculum at the turn of the century, focused as it was on the development of the skills of housewifery and maternity, may strike us today as very limited and discriminatory, but historians agree that it served as a Trojan Horse for the longer-term prospects for women's education. Once the door was opened for women to be educated for their roles as housewives, the ground was laid for the later (1920s and 1930s onwards) expansion of women's education into most professional arenas.

Some historians argue, however, that the New Woman discourse placed some significant and lasting restrictions on women. In keeping with the postmodernist critique of the discourses and technologies of the modern state, it is possible to make the case that the New Woman was a disciplined subject of the State, assigned a highly restrictive role. Even in cases when women were brought into seemingly novel arenas, such as was the case with the creation of a school for training women doctors in Egypt under Muhammad Ali, all was not as liberating as it seemed. The Egyptian state established the School for Midwives, as it was called, in order to train women who could enforce the State's public health programs, geared to the control of epidemic disease and regulation of the population in the interests of improving the numbers and health of the Egyptian military. Female graduates took their places as servants of the State whose duties included delivering babies, registering births, conducting postmortem examinations on women to determine cause of death, overseeing vaccination programs, and enforcing quarantine orders. Women were often recruited to the school by force and their lives were strictly controlled by the State, to the extent of assigning them to posts without any consultation and even arranging their marriages. A historian like Khalid Fahmy, who has studied the School for Midwives, stresses the paradoxical character of this and other projects of modernity: women were being given new opportunities while at the same time being subject to ever more powerful forms of state and social control. They also were expanding their own spheres of action while they helped the State limit the freedom of other women to act as they liked when it came to matters of health and procreation (Fahmy, 1998).

The double-edged sword of modernity was equally an issue in the creation of the modern housewife as described above. A movement for the scientification of housewifery in turn-of-the-century Iran championed the cause of female education as key to the creation of a housewife who could organize and nurture a modern family. The literature of the time describes the educated woman as capable of providing a happy and orderly environment for her husband and children by virtue of her efficient and capable focus on their needs. But, as Najmabadi points out, the modern housewife

paid a fairly heavy price for the higher valuation of her social roles. The relaxed atmosphere of the women's quarters of the traditional harem, with its focus on female visiting, storytelling, and even ribald joking, gives way to a new model home in which the housewife is a busy bee thoroughly occupied by her tasks of cooking, sewing, and budgeting. Between her many household tasks and the need to be available to her husband and children upon their return each evening, she certainly could not expect to do much socializing with other women. Indeed, the rich homosocial world of women, with its distinct forms of music, storytelling, and proverbs, as well as the social freedoms it afforded women when they could interact without reference to their menfolk, was threatened by the rise of the modern household. Of course, the process of rendering the large female-centered household an anachronism was both partial and gradual. Nowhere was the triumph of the modern complete. Still, some historians argue, the creation of the modern woman and her modern household could entail a real impoverishment of a women's culture that had developed in the region and depended on the separation and autonomy of women's spaces in the household.

We thus find that the phenomenon of the "new woman" was rather complex. Women, at least those of the middle class, were being empowered – educated and respected – as agents critical to the creation of the modern household, in turn the linchpin of the modern nation. But they could also be mired in this new form of domesticity, caught in an elaborate, internalized, regimen of discipline that harnessed them to the service of their husbands, children, and nation at the expense of their own leisure, pleasure, and ultimately freedom. Still, some of these changes in the prospects for women contributed to a perceived awakening of female consciousness, another major theme in the historiography of women and gender in this period.

Women's Movements

The latter part of the nineteenth century has also been identified as a period in which women themselves began publicly to raise questions, less and less muted as time went by, about the roles of women and men in their societies. The "new woman" discourse, focusing as it did on the need to involve women in the building of a modern family, invited reflection on how women could improve themselves. In many of the major urban centers of the region – Cairo, Istanbul, and Tehran, for example – women writers began to contribute articles on women's issues to the mainstream periodical press. By the 1890s, a number of women's periodicals, dedicated to "women's issues" and dependent in the main on female contributors, had been founded in various urban centers. The women who wrote for these publications thought of themselves as the vanguard of a regional women's "awakening," a phrase that recurs with regularity in their articles. Beth Baron, who did a close study of women's periodicals of this period in Egypt, notes that they covered a wide range of topics pertaining to women's issues (Baron, 1994). While many of the articles dealt exclusively with the domestic – household management and child rearing in particular – others ventured into more contested territory. Women wrote in favor of the expansion of female education, against the practice of child labor, and in favor of legal reform, specifically the imposition of a minimum marriage age to deter child marriage. Elsewhere, women writers might take on the male perpetrators of the "new woman" paradigm: Bibi Khanum, in her 1896 article on "The Vices of Men," called

on menfolk in Iran to stop advising women about what they should do for their nation and to look at their own shortcomings instead. And during the second constitutional period in Turkey (1908–19), the women's press attacked male political leaders for reneging on their promises to recognize women's rights once they took power (Fleischmann, 1999).

As women writers made their case for women's rights, they couched their discussions, according to Baron, within three distinct although overlapping frameworks: the secularist, the reformist, and the Islamist. The secularists, many of whom were Christians, tended to stress the needs of the nation for changes in female domesticity and education, arguments that sidestepped the issue of religion in public life. The reformist group argued consciously within an Islamic framework, calling for reform in Islamic laws of marriage and divorce, for example, but stressing fundamental adherence to an Islamic way of life. The Islamists adopted the position that Islamic law provided ample rights for women, and the task at hand was to help women know and demand the rights that had always been theirs under Islam. The writings of all three groups converged in significant ways: the major thrust of their arguments for the expansion of female education and women's power in the family proved to be very similar despite the differences in their points of departure.

The proliferation of women's periodicals should not blind us to the no-doubt limited nature of their readership. The editor of a woman's magazine in turn-of-the-century Cairo, for example, one of the larger urban markets, would be pleased with a circulation that topped 1,000. It was a small group of young educated women that were the main readers (and contributors as well) of these publications. But in the homosocial worlds of the elite and the emerging middle class, we must also allow for the presence of many listeners: some illiterate women might have access to the articles in these periodicals by way of their relatives or employers. It is also unwise to measure the impact of these publications in purely numerical terms: the women who used them to explore and communicate ideas were among the most influential in their respective societies in terms of their family connections and their public activities. Still, high rates of illiteracy among women in this period and the fact that the majority of women still lived in rural areas removed from the urban centers that spawned these publications suggest only a limited diffusion of the ideas promoted in them.

The impulse to improve the situation of women, however, did bear some real fruit with the development of various women's associations. As we have seen above, elite women in the region were part of a tradition that stressed charitable and religious works as an obligation of the privileged. Elite women had long availed themselves of the legal instrument of the *waqf* to endow a range of charitable institutions, from orphanages and hospices to dowries for needy girls. In the second half of the nineteenth century, this tradition merged with newfound concerns about women's rights and position in society to propel many privileged women into public activities on behalf of the less fortunate. Such activities took on a novel organizational form: upper-class women established a number of groups to pool their charitable efforts: the Sisters of Love in Lebanon, established in 1847, supported a girls' school and a home for wayward girls; the Orthodox Aid Society for the Poor, established in Palestine in 1903, undertook to provide trousseau items for needy girls; the Mabarrat Muhammad Ali opened a dispensary for poor women and children in Egypt

in 1909. In Turkey, women's charitable organizations sprang up in the context of the political ferment of the second constitutional period (1908–1919): the Red Crescent Women's Club (founded in 1912), for example, organized a hospital and helped war refugees (Fleischmann, 1999). Throughout the region, women's charitable organizations, under the control of middle- and upper-class women, proliferated in the period just before World War I.

The largely charitable nature of these organizations should not prevent us from recognizing the significant role they played in developing women's consciousness and abilities. Many historians have pointed out the extent to which the experience of activism in the service of charity brought these women out of the home and opened their eyes to the depth of their societies' problems. As they organized to help poorer women, middle- and upper-class women also grew more confident in their own abilities and more comfortable in the public eye. They began to examine their own situation in a more systematic fashion through discussions and lectures sponsored by a burgeoning number of literary clubs and societies: by the eve of World War I, most major urban centers boasted several ladies' societies founded for the purpose of self-education.

Their involvement in charitable activities and exploration of both social and political issues in numerous societies and salons positioned these women to play a role in early nationalist movements. In Iran, the 1891 tobacco boycott in opposition to British monopolies attracted broad and effective female support: women's positions as the organizers of household consumption allowed them to lend their full weight to the boycott from within their homes. In the period of the Constitutional Revolution (1906–11), Iranian women took more public positions, first founding the Patriotic Women's League to organize support for the nationalist cause. As the constitutionalist crisis loomed, women joined demonstrations against the Shah, stoned troops from the rooftops, and participated in the occupation of the British legation. Historians have noted similar levels of participation in the various nationalist struggles that mark the close of the period under discussion. Egyptian women maintained a high profile in the 1919 Revolution: women, veiled and segregated, marched in the massive street demonstrations that drove home the depth of popular opposition to the British presence. In the Turkish national liberation struggle just after World War I, a few women like Halide Edib and Nakiye Elgun actually delivered public speeches in support of the nationalist movement. Palestinian women also began to appear in the anti-Zionist demonstrations in the 1920s.

Nationalist movements did promote the participation of women in politics: the exigencies of the nationalist struggle reworked the rules that had gendered public space and public politics. Struggles for independence drew upper-class women out of their homes and legitimized them as political actors. Although they might retain some customary restrictions in the form of covered faces and sexually segregated actions, their right and indeed responsibility to come to the aid of the nation was rarely questioned. Historians agree that this early nationalist period was to be critical for later developments. The proliferation of women's organizations after World War I focused on expanding women's rights, and systematic campaigns around issues of female higher education, voting rights, and legal reform were the direct legacies of a female activism first mobilized in support of national independence. Overall, the tone of the times was a hopeful one; the disappointments of the later independence

period, at least as far as women and gender issues were concerned, were far in the future. Elite women, newly arrived on the stage of public politics, expected their power to expand along with that of their nation.

Religious Thought and Movements

Religious life had long provided another rather more traditional forum for female activity. For most of the early modern and modern periods under discussion, women's devotional life took place largely apart from that of men: in most parts of the Middle East region, women worshiped at home or in segregated areas of the mosque. Other forms of religious practice, including the popular rituals of Sufi orders, the chants and dances performed to induce states of religious trance, were most often restricted to all-male or all-female venues. Certain forms of religious devotion appeared to have been particularly gendered. Women were far more likely than men, for example, to make pilgrimages to the tombs of holy persons in their search for divine intervention to solve personal problems. But these male/female barriers were also permeable: when Islamic reformers raised their voices in the late nineteenth century in criticism of what they considered to be corrupt or ignorant religious practices, they singled out the fraternization of men and women in popular religious festivals and rituals such as cemetery visiting for special condemnation. Although we do find many women involved in public religious devotions, women were far less likely than men to become religious leaders.

Indeed, one of the puzzles of the Ottoman period lies in the dearth of women, at least as far as the records show, in religious scholarly circles. Ruth Roded's (1994) work on the Islamic biographical tradition highlights the many women whose scholarly careers were featured in Islamic biographical works: women attained prominence particularly as *hadith* scholars and mystics from the rise of Islam up to the sixteenth century. From the sixteenth century on, however, women scholars fade from view in the biographical collections, coming to be virtually absent from accounts of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, only to emerge slowly back into view in the twentieth century. Are we dealing here with some kind of shift in what was considered appropriate for women, or perhaps new barriers to scholarly careers raised by the increased bureaucratization of the Ottoman Empire? Or did the sources simply become more reticent about recording women's scholarly activities, a change in convention that did not necessarily reflect a dramatic transformation in female access to religious education? We cannot be sure to what extent women were excluded from the religiously oriented teaching and learning that was so central to intellectual life in the period.

We do have some information on individual religious women that lends nuance to this picture of absence. Julia Clancy-Smith's portrait of Lalla Zaynab (*c.*1850–1904), the daughter of a Sufi shaykh who headed an important *zawiya* (Sufi center) in nineteenth-century Algeria, suggests that women could have access to religious education and even aspire to religious leadership (Clancy-Smith, 1994). Lalla Zaynab was raised in her father's house as a resident of the women's quarters or *harim*. Her father took a personal interest in her education, and she acquired a high level of erudition in the religious sciences including theology and law, as well as in more practical areas such as accounting. Upon the death of her father, she

asserted her claim to leadership of the *zawiya* on the basis of her understanding of her father's wishes and her own entitlements in the form of learning and piety. Her accession was strenuously opposed by the French colonial government that sponsored her male cousin for the post as a more pliable alternative. Despite French opposition and some defections within the ranks of her father's followers, Zaynab was able to take control of the *zawiya* and retain it for seven years until her own death. As head of the *zawiya*, she not only functioned as spiritual leader in a major Sufi order, but also as the director of the school, mosque, inn, student lodgings, and lands that formed the institution's holdings. And under her direction, the *zawiya* flourished, by all accounts, in both its spiritual reputation and its material well being. Zaynab could play this role at least in part by muting her gender identity: she never married and followed a regimen of asceticism and extreme piety. She was very clearly however, a person whose achievements in the field of Islamic education and leadership demonstrate the kinds of mobility and power an exceptional female could gain in the religious sphere.

The ability of a woman like Zaynab to find acceptance for a leading religious role can also be understood in the context of discussions of the late nineteenth century. A number of Muslim reformers, like Muhammad Abduh in Egypt and Mirza Aqa Khan Kirmani in Iran, were broaching the question of a rereading/reform of Islam in keeping with the demands of the modern age and the modern nation. Islam was to be retained as the primary framework for political and social life, but it was to be a reformed Islam that captured the true meaning of the religion for contemporary times. Some gender issues were featured in these calls for reform. Abduh, for example, argued that the cause of true Islamic marriage could best be served by allowing Muslim men and women to meet before marriage, by banning polygyny except in extenuating circumstances, and by limiting a man's ability to divorce his wife on impulse. Most Muslim reformers were also enthusiastic about the expansion of educational opportunities for females, stressing the many ways in which society in general would be strengthened and improved by the increased (but not equal) participation of women.

More radical religious reformers might expand the boundaries of reform even further. Juan Cole's study of the origins of the Baha'i religion in the context of late-nineteenth-century modernity traces the evolution of Baha'i positions on gender issues (Cole, 1998). Baha'i leaders such as Baha'u'llah (1817–92) and Abdul-Baha (1844–1921) treated gender roles as a serious issue. Baha'u'llah, supported early on in his assertions of prophethood by a number of notable women, not only promoted female education and greater participation in the society, but also took the position that traits traditionally associated with men and women were artifacts of custom: a woman could be braver or more spiritual than a man – such attributes were not linked to gender. Abdul-Baha further elaborated the practical implications of such a position: he advocated female suffrage and held it proper for women to enter every sphere of public life on an equal footing with men. The evolving Baha'i position on the importance of collapsing gender roles did represent something of an extreme in the debates on patriarchy of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. But it was also very much in keeping with a general trend in Islamic thought of the time to question received interpretations of gender issues in light of demands for the modernization of society.

Family

A final area of growing interest to historians of gender is the family. Despite the fact that most historians assume that the family was a critical unit of society, certainly as far as gender roles were concerned, there has been surprisingly little research done on the historical development of marriage practices, fertility, and household and family structure in the early modern period. Here, we do contend with the limitations of the sources. The standard sources for the history of the family in Europe – manorial roles, parish records, and plentiful diaries and letters – are not available for the Middle East. The rich resources of the Ottoman state archives have not yet yielded much material relevant to intensive study of the family. We do, however, have the records of the *shari'ah* court which contain marriage contracts, divorce documents, child support arrangements, inheritance shares, and other legal actions and agreements that reflected and shaped family life. As historians have begun to tap this material for the purposes of understanding family dynamics, it has proven much easier to trace the families of the elite. Although people of all urban classes went to court to solve marriage problems or register inheritance documents that listed their heirs, only the more affluent families had family names in this period: it is very difficult to follow non-elite families over time in the court records because their members are identified only by a given name and the given name of their father. We have even less information for families in the rural areas where most people did not make their way to a court for family matters. As a result, the few studies we now have on family structure and dynamics focus on the more prosperous urban families.

The study of these families through the court records has lent nuance to the standard sketch of the "typical" Middle Eastern patriarchal family of the period. As Margaret Meriwether points out, the patriarchal family characterized by a large joint household (sons with their wives and children residing with the powerful father-patriarch), joint ownership and management of resources, and tight control of the property and mobility of all members, especially women, was an ideal rarely achieved in practice. In her study of elite families in Aleppo in the 1770–1840 period, Meriwether found a fluid situation in which families waxed and waned in rhythm with marriage and mortality (Meriwether, 1999). Elite families might be large joint families for a brief period, only to be dismantled by the death of the father. Wives might begin their married lives with little power or influence in the household only to gain wealth and clout over time as their property and children multiplied. Despite the fact that Islamic law facilitated male-initiated divorce and permitted polygyny, most elite families practiced monogamous and permanent marriage, as a result no doubt of the high rates of endogamous (mainly first cousin) marriage aimed at the conservation of family property. In brief, elite families tended on the whole to be smaller than the ideal and to allow for considerable internal diffusion of power, among women as well as men. In his study of merchant families in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Nablus, Beshara Doumani notes a similar tension between the ideal of an extended family household that worked together to preserve family resources and a strong male line, and the centrifugal forces of inheritance and marriage that weakened family ties and even dissolved extended households (Doumani, 1995).

If elite families in the urban areas experienced only mixed success in their efforts to establish and maintain large joint families – key to the preservation of family property and the family name – families in some rural areas appear to have managed somewhat better. Kenneth Cuno's study of wealthy landholding families in nineteenth-century Egypt concludes that joint-family household formation was the prevalent system in rural areas, certainly among the more prosperous (Cuno, 1995). It was common for members of landholding families to continue to live together in households of brothers, uncles, and nephews, or even cousins, avoiding the partition of family land through inheritance by postponing any division of inheritance for many years following the death of a male heir. Because agricultural land was state land, not "owned" in the full legal sense, members of the family held rights to the usufruct only: it was relatively easy to prevent females from asserting any rights to shares in land that they might claim under Islamic law since only private property was heritable according to Islamic principles. Wealthy landholding families, motivated by the drive to keep the family holdings intact, were thus able to insure that male members inherited all rights to the land through a system of customary rather than Islamic practices and that they continued to live in a joint household for the good of the group. We have little idea as to whether this pattern of large joint families was at all common in other rural areas since we lack other studies during the period. And we have even less firm information about non-elite families, both urban and rural. There is some evidence to suggest that poorer families had higher rates of divorce reflecting the more fluid family arrangements we might expect to find in the absence of significant patrimony (Tucker, 1991). In general, however, historians are only beginning to reconstruct the family patterns of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The one systematic and quantitatively oriented study that we have of family structure in the period, the work of Alan Duben and Cen Behar on families in Istanbul from 1880 to 1940, found a strikingly "modern" family to be prevalent even before 1914 (Duben and Behar, 1991). A relatively high marriage age (twenty for women, thirty for men), a low fertility rate (under four children per family), very limited polygyny (some 2% of marriages), and a small household composed of a single conjugal unit, with perhaps a widowed mother in addition, characterized the Istanbul family as reflected in the census of 1907. Using supplementary sources such as magazine articles and interviews, Duben and Behar point to the shift to companionate marriage, the use of birth control, and a heightened focus on the health and education of both women and children as part of sweeping attitudinal changes of the later nineteenth century that underpinned a transformation in family structure. Although the results of this study clearly point to the prevalence of small nuclear households in Istanbul by the early twentieth century, we can be less sure about when, exactly, such a trend commenced and, indeed, whether it constitutes a dramatic break with the past. We also lack comparative data that could tell us whether we have similar patterns in other cities of the region. Beth Baron's work on Egypt suggests that the idea, at least, of companionate marriage was also gaining currency in Cairo in the late nineteenth century but we do not yet have detailed quantitative information on changes in family structure (Baron, 1994). In brief, the history of the family in the Middle East region remains an underdeveloped field with enormous gaps that can be filled only by some basic research on family patterns in the early modern period.

Conclusion

Overall, historians have done an admirable job of tracking down the participation of women in the economic activities and political movements of this period. The story of women's contributions to economic and social life, and their critical role in early nationalist and women's movements has been rescued from almost total obscurity. We are now able to trace some of the contours of gendered societies in this period, that is, the ways in which the roles and characteristics of the female and the male structured economics, politics, and social interaction. This story has not been told evenly across the board, however. Some parts of the region have been better served by researchers than others: we have much more information on women and gender in Cairo, Istanbul, Damascus, and Aleppo, for example, than in most other urban areas, and we still know little about women and gender in the countryside. We have fairly full accounts of how women participated in popular movements in Egypt, Iran, and Palestine but almost no information on Iraq or Syria, for example. Although this compensatory history is clearly not a completed project, the tendency to focus on herstory has given way, in many cases, to a broader exploration of gender history. Historians have turned their attention to the wider issues of the construction of gender through legal discourse and how such constructions of gender intersected with the rise of the modern state and local nationalisms. We now have a much better sense of the role gender has played in contending definitions of modernity in the region, from the "new woman" construct of early nationalism to religiously based movements of reform and revival.

There are at least two areas that appear to be high on present and future research agendas.

First, historians are moving beyond legal discourse to tackle the construction of gender in other discursive areas. Medical discourses, for example, are an area of current interest and promise to help us understand the interplay of indigenous and imported ideas about female and male bodies and minds. Literary discourse is another area that is yet to be well integrated into the study of women and gender in this period: one new study of biography demonstrates some of the exciting possibilities in other discursive fields (Booth, 2001). Second, family history is an area of critical need. It is difficult to pursue the study of women and gender while we lack the most rudimentary knowledge about family structures in the period. Historians are beginning to address this problem by researching not only the discursive ideal of family, but also the historical experience of family life including marriage practices, fertility rates, family size, and the broad area of gender relations within the family. As we come to know more about women and gender in this early modern/modern period, we will be much better able to understand the forces and developments that served as the springboard into our contemporary era.

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Chapter Twenty-two

Gender, Women, and Power in Africa, 1750–1914

Marcia Wright

Generalizations about gender in Africa before colonialism are bound to founder in the face of local variations and the extreme forces of change that affected virtually every corner of the sub-Saharan area in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. For all the additions to our understanding of women in the period before World War I, early evidence of consciousness and intention is extremely rare, and when it begins to become available in the 1890s and after, it is fraught with problems of mediation.

Western-framed inquiry has seemed problematic in light of the actual history of Africa. African feminists, and not they alone, have insisted that such an approach obscures the ways in which colonialism and imperialism have welded women and men into a community of the oppressed. All agree, however, that inquiry ought to be advanced on at least a descriptive plain, permitting the rich variety of gender relations and women's statuses to be brought to light, and given an historically dynamic treatment. Bolanle Awe has called for

> the discovery of new records and the development of an aptitude for asking the right questions even of conventional records. Apart from the conventional sources, there are other sources which have been untapped and overlooked. For non-literate societies of Africa, the oral traditions . . . are expressed in many forms; they are to be found in mythologies, folktales, proverbs, praise poems, oral and written literature, and so on. (Awe, 1991: 214)

Feminist scholars of women and gender history must be critical materialists if they are to gain "aptitude for asking the right questions." In other words, in approaching the African experience, it is necessary to build awareness of actual conditions and consciousness. In working toward such an understanding, the inquirer must resist becoming mired in fascinating, multifarious local conditions. The present strategy is to draw attention to the types of power to be found in sub-Saharan Africa and of the dynamics of its accumulation and dispersal. A textured understanding of gender must explore, for example, not only the specific conditions that served to reify patriarchal culture during this period but also the ways in which this hegemony remained partial and contested.

This chapter draws illustrations from divergent geographical settings as it treats successive themes that overlap chronologically but move generally from earlier to later times: class and conjugality, slavery and women's work, the changing fortunes of women of authority and of women as traders, and finally the cross-currents of the early colonial period when the stage was being set for the relative privileging of men and patriarchal authority.

Class and Conjugality

Class proves to be a highly fluid social phenomenon, though relatively easy to track historically. Of particular importance in the period covered by this essay was the political challenge mounted by incoming and rising merchant classes. Muslim traders comprised one important set, furthering their economic interests by supplanting older authorities and, through the extension of Islamic law and jurisprudence, drawing upon religion to legitimate ideas of property, inheritance, and sexual propriety. But other upstart trading elites in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries also manipulated and radically changed modes of social control and ownership of rights in persons. Household economies and affinal relations became reconfigured in the context of export slave trade, increased internal servility, militarization, and aggressive entrepreneurship. African economic and social change had enormous dynamism, particularly at the point of colonial intrusion. Any account of gender in sub-Saharan Africa, therefore, must strive to be historically dynamic and take into account successive phases of social change, dissolution, and reconstruction.

Taking fresh views of gender relations requires rethinking many commonly held assumptions, for example kinship and its extension ethnicity, which so frequently feature as the quintessential marshaling points of African collective life. The presumption that a kinship system referred to regular and deep, time- and change-defying structures, however, now seems chimerical. Ethnography, a record of close observation of lived experience and operative norms, has proven to be an invaluable source of local detail for the nineteenth century. In a cogent, if distilled summary of what this historically situated kind of documentary affords, Brigit O'Laughlin underscores how it exposes the flexibility against which prescriptive lineage ideologies must be read:

> What the ethnographic literature on Africa describes, for patrilineal as well as matrilineal societies, for West Africa as well as for central, eastern and southern Africa [is that] lineages tend to be shallow, each extended family is potentially a new lineage segment, long ancestral lines are identified with political power, social ties of kinship are forged bilaterally, people are often tied to more than one descent group in irregular (i.e. not kinship based) ways. In other words, African kinship systems provide a flexible language for forging social ties, not the fixed organic language imposed by the structural-functionalism of descent theory. (O'Laughlin, 1995: 41)

For O'Laughlin, there is a value in focusing upon the conjugal relationship as an arena of cooperation and conflict, and this relationship may indeed be a sensitive register of gender relations.

Ethnography and oral memory form the cornerstones of one study of conjugal relations among male-dominant nomadic pastoralist societies. In building a model of

precapitalist social relations among the northern Somali clans, Lidwien Kapteijns (1995) treats kinship ideology in relation to means of production, political power, and gender ideology. She describes how Somali men had a primary bond with their kinsmen and age mates with whom they herded their camels, cattle and small stock, and joined in skirmishes with rival clans. Kapteijns illuminates the precarious situation of the young couple, whose interests tugged against one another, the wife's eventual security being assured only if she could accumulate livestock for her sons and for her own "community of birth." Kapteijn's subtle analysis produces a process model, reinforced by oral sources that dramatize the socialization of girls to docile obedience to men, and of boys to aggressive deeds of manhood, demonstrating that a study of conjugality may be even more revealing when that conjugality is institutionally weak and conflicted. One upshot is that men remained in their rural, pastoral milieu, while with the advance of merchant capital and unequal exchange, divorced women and children numbered disproportionately among the urban poor from the turn of the century onward.

Certainly the parameters of conjugality have varied according to economic and political conditions, but it is worthwhile to see how marriage has entailed negotiations between the conjugal partners and not merely the imposition of a contractual set of obligations dictated by the families in the exchange. Known for their ritual age-grade system, Maasai pastoralists have been treated, even in recent scholarship, as obsessively male-dominant and patriarchal. Dorothy Hodgson's review of writings about the Maasai (1999), based on observations in the 1880s through the turn of the twentieth century, challenges this androcentricism and unexamined acceptance of the post-World War I consensus arrived at by Maasai elders and the British colonial authorities to see the Maasai exclusively as warriors and patriarchs. She underscores the complementarity and mutual respect demonstrated by husbands and wives, women's care of small stock and rights to milk and other animal products, and above all, their support for the specialized pastoral way of life by means of trading animal products for grain grown by neighbors. Conjugal exchange was not without hierarchy: polygynous Maasai men did not negotiate with each wife, since the first or head wife assumed responsibilities for the management of junior wives. This illuminating model and critique must be followed up with a consideration of the extraordinary crisis in Maasai life brought on by cattle diseases from the 1880s to the end of the century. Women's trading arguably contributed to the means of herd reconstruction, and it may well be that Maasai women's status peaked as a consequence.

A number of African societies whose traditional livelihoods were in horticulture and fishing have been identified as matrilineal. Matrilineality has sometimes, mistakenly, been linked with matriarchy, which is a type of rule, not of a type of kinship. Matrilineal societies are superficially alike in reckoning descent, inheritance, and social control through the female line. It was to his mother's brother rather than to his father, therefore, that a male youth turned for support and eventual inheritance. This authority figure, however, also enjoyed a certain ownership which when perverted might even entail pawning his sister's children in order to raise capital for some venture or to resolve indebtedness. On the other hand, a woman had a potentially strong hand within matrilineal societies. Barring being made a slave or pawn, she never lost her own clan status. Her sons, when they gravitated toward her brother's compound or village to follow their inheritance, provided a bridge back to their natal

families for women who had moved to their husband's family home in their early marriage. In an overlapping or alternative practice, young men took up residence in their wives' villages, where they sometimes remained for a lengthy period of time, giving their labor in an extended process of marriage-making. Brideservice was typical of precapitalist matrilineal cultures and quite prevalent in those accounted as patrilineal as well. Entailing as it did a personal investment, rather than a transfer of wealth between lineages, this form of marriage tended to be more easily dissolved at the initiative of a wife than when cattle or other large values had been given to her kin and would have to be returned in the event of a divorce. Brideservice constituted an important labor source lost to women as the colonial labor system drew young men into waged labor and provided them with alternative means of acquiring a wife.

Slavery and Women's Work

The theme of slavery and women's work contains some of the most difficult but central matters, such as the demographic and practical ramifications of the era of export slave trade. The publication of *Women and Slavery in Africa*, edited by Claire Robertson and Martin Klein, announced the arrival of women in a domain, the history of slavery, that had formerly been dominated by men, very often in quantification studies and preoccupied with the Atlantic trade in which males predominated. The book presented women as multi-faceted subjects, not only subordinate in ideological and practical ways but also commercially active as brokers and owners of property and slaves in their own right. Since this landmark 1983 volume, research and publication on slaves within Africa has grown exponentially. In the 1990s, it was well-established that women formed the majority of those reduced to slavery during the height of the Atlantic trade culminating around 1800, and also in the internal slave trade. This remained true for the internal slave trade which remained unremitting even as the Atlantic trade became constricted by antislavery measures at sea – measures which were finally effective in the middle of the nineteenth century. As historians examined the means by which labor was secured for the production of export commodities and regional trade and transport after the end of the Atlantic trade, they necessarily came back to the role of the slave labor. Once colonial authorities began to extend their control in coastal enclaves and then into the interior, they sought to end slave trading and ameliorate slavery.

For the history of gender it is necessary to regard the practice of transferring rights in persons through pawnship as a transaction with precedents in earlier social relations but also, in the face of pressure for the end of slavery, one susceptible to abuse as a muted continuation of slave trade. Economic historians have discovered a "feminization of pawnship" amidst the crosscurrents of credit-seeking and debt-relief at the end of the nineteenth century (Austin, 1994: 137). Before accepting that pawns became more disproportionately female, we need to ask whether they were not always so. An important-seeming correspondence in the nineteenth and early twentieth century may nevertheless be noted: the status of women as slaves, rightless and subject to intimidation by threat of sale, tended to yield to a form of inferior marriage. Pawns who were not redeemed tended also to be placed in second-class marriages with onerous and virtually inescapable obligations.

With the establishment of colonial administrations mandated to "liberate" Africans from slavery and the gathering of evidence through court proceedings as well as data on which to build a new colonial political economy, the possibilities grew that the number and conditions of slave women might become better known. Studies of the price of female in comparison to male slaves have generally concluded that there was a preference for women and have supported the generalization that the continental market for women slaves was strong and resilient from the eighteenth through the nineteenth century. Martin Klein suggested that in West Africa, women enslaved in the time of military build-up in the late eighteenth to early nineteenth centuries were likely to be given as rewards to slave warriors, to deepen their allegiance. The same pattern was quietly continued by the French in rewarding their ex-slave military forces. In West African savanna societies, where slavery had a long history with well-institutionalized strata, a new picture has emerged from the songs and traditions of slave women. While their male counterparts were more likely to be sold away, or carried out tasks that required them to be herdsmen or to travel, these women tended to remain in stable, densely settled communities. Through oral history and performance they created a specific slave subculture, one quite separate from their position as wives. They claimed higher status if they were the slaves of royalty, superior to slaves owned by merchants and other commoners. The first-generation slave here, as in other settings, was no one, and under great pressure to assimilate.

The variability of women's work and the character of their dependence during and after the great outflow of men as exported slaves remains a matter of extreme, yet too rarely illuminated importance. The well-known areas of civil war, hardening commercialization, and social turmoil included the decayed Bakongo Kingdom in west-central Africa, spreading from northern Angola northward across the Congo river. The implications of the loss of men in the daily lives of free and unfree women during the hemorrhage phase remain obscure; slavery-dominant social relations only beginning to come into view following the stoppage of exports and the retention of men during the commodity boom and accelerated trade in the mid-nineteenth century. A general trend has nevertheless been proposed: while male slaves were often exported from the strife-torn Bakongo area in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, female slaves became highly exploitable wives, stripped of the leverage of recourse to kin groups. Susan Broadhead (1997) argues that as noblemen became merchants, noble women (their sisters) lost class, and were more and more defined by the status of wife, which in turn became conflated with slave.

A historically dynamic account of the same period and parallel circumstances has been given by Robert Harms in his (1997) analysis of the changing allegiances of slaves and entrepreneurs in the Middle Zaire River around the mid-nineteenth century. Following social relations carried over from the previous decades of large-scale slave exports, slaves continued to be bought in order to staff "firms" of people engaged in a common business enterprise. Slave women specialized in producing and processing cassava to supply the slave men, up to sixty of whom paddled each of the great trade canoes. In the second half of the century, the steady rise of the export price for ivory stimulated deeper and deeper penetration along the Zaire River, just as it propelled caravans overland from Benguela to the south and from the Zanzibar-dominated Indian Ocean ports. The enterprising spirit extended to male and female slaves who received incentives from their masters and not infrequently became

slaveowners, or in the case of women, custodians of female slaves. Slave men achieved autonomy as traders and sometimes inherited from their masters, while kin were left out. Class was blurred as, within their separate functions, slave men and women alike accumulated. From the standpoint of gender, slavery, and women's work, the capstone of this remarkable case is that slave women controlled their fertility, limiting childbearing especially through abortion. They thus refused to give unrequited services in rearing offspring to be added to their owner's human assets.

A study of Merina women in highland Madagascar recounts a dramatic change in gender-associated work. In the Merina Kingdom, enslavement of men for export became endemic in the last decades of the eighteenth century. Before this, women worked at weaving and men tended to the agriculture. Forty or fifty years later, women exclusively grew the staple rice and had little time for weaving. A study of the consequences for free women of the late slave era in West Africa lays stress upon the consequences in the build-up of productive activities among the Maraka of Mali. Once again, indigenously produced textiles stood at the hinge of the tale. For the Maraka weaving was the work of men and spinning thread that of women. Women conventionally owned the indigo crop grown in the domestic fields, an ingredient in dyeing, their gendered monopoly. Affluent free women in the later nineteenth century controlled the production and sale of high value, indigo cloth which was dyed in their households by female slaves. As more slaves were acquired, husbands tended to own the males, whom they set to cultivating indigo for the market, and women's control became compromised. The final blow to the women's market position followed upon the flight of slaves around 1905. Abandoning their masters and mistresses, the slaves used their skills in agriculture, weaving, and dyeing to become competitors. Finally, high-status women were economically sidelined, confined to narrower and less autonomous domestic activities.

Such glimpses of changing production, women's tasks, and loss of chances to profit from extra-agricultural artisanal production and exchange remind us how important it is for a history of women and gender not to project backward the simplistic notions of "female farming" which for a time in the 1970s seemed a hallmark of deep cultural history in Africa. Accepting greater complexity and interdependence, different questions arise. Granted, the numerous slave wives, enlarged polygynous households, and changing command of unfree labor by women had the potential to lead to heightened exploitation, but by whom? Barbara Cooper leaves no doubt that in urban Maradi, Niger, aristocratic women made up for the loss of overt slave labor by encouraging female servitude "as concubines and junior wives, women whose labor they controlled . . . as senior wives and mothers-in-law" (Cooper, 1997: 9). Before feeding grand generalizations about gender, we have much to learn about how the more powerful, as well as the slaves and ex-slaves, coped. For the time being, it is probably safe to say that for slave women, manumission and liberation were indeed often a "mirage," the term used by Dennis Cordell (1998) in his discussion of slave women suing for their freedom in the French Sahara in the second part of the nineteenth century.

Political Power Wielded by Women

Compared with other parts of the world in the nineteenth century, sub-Saharan African women were conspicuous in public affairs. High-ranking women exercised

authority, above all in dynastic states. Royal status acquired by birth, marriage, or adoption sometimes anticipated that women would share in the rule or under certain conditions assume sole charge. Some princesses, to be sure, could be subject to very special and limiting conditions of life, but others enjoyed and wielded feudal authority over lands and subjects. The position of a queen-mother requires consideration both as a state institution and as a springboard for active rule. The regency of some queen-mothers could be quite lengthy and active, extending beyond the minority of the heir whose immaturity had activated it. In a few instances, monarchies elevated slave and dependent women to high status, flying in the face of common norms and thereby demonstrating the male ruler's transcendent power and legitimacy.

In 1988, reviewing the scholarship of the previous fifteen years, Margaret Jean Hay observed that by the late 1970s, the literature on African "queens" passed its zenith and research attention had turned to women as "victims": prostitutes, domestic workers, and slaves. A reawakening to the significance and behavior of high-status women of authority occurred in the 1990s; interest was displayed in the history of royal women's offices and the ways in which women accumulated privilege, and even agency, as dependents of kings.

Certain precolonial African states have become well-known sites for the study of royal women, both those who were dynastically related and royal by birth and those who were made royal by proximity to the king, whether as wife, concubine, nominated female officeholder, or dependents (slaves and girls given to the ruler in anticipation of patronage). Four famous examples are Dahomey and Asante in West Africa, Buganda in East Africa, and the Zulu kingdom in southeast Africa. All were militarized and to a degree possessed empires in or before the early nineteenth century. Asante and Buganda bear comparison, especially for the existence of co-rule by monarch, queen-mother, and other women of symbolic and practical political influence. Dahomey and the Zulu kingdom are especially interesting for the ways in which a large number of women dependents served to underscore the king's exceptional power, notably to place women above men.

Escalated status and power derived from women's proximity to the king has been commented upon in the kingdom of Dahomey and the Zulu kingdom of southeastern Africa. Of these two, Dahomey is better known for its women warriors, and the Zulu monarchy for its male warriors, usually associated with the rule of Shaka. When royal power in Dahomey expanded during the era of the slave trade in the eighteenth century, women were brought in from newly conquered territories. As court women, they served to foster the relationships with these new additions. Individual women formed alliances with competing princes. If successful, the princes appointed his sponsor *Kpojito* or queen-mother and co-ruler, although there was no biological relationship. During the nineteenth century, dynastic kin increasingly replaced the palace women in significant positions and at mid-century, the office of *Kpojito* was allowed to remain vacant. Meanwhile, the king expanded his contingents of female slave warriors, who were known for their discipline, fierceness, and desire for advancement.

Only recently has a fresh treatment been given to the Zulu kingdom, making it comparable with Dahomey. The State mushroomed under Shaka in the two decades before his assassination in 1828. At the king's residences and at regimental towns, an enclosure of royal women, the *isigodlo*, lay at the spatial and symbolic core. Sean Hanretta (1998) sets forth the ways in which the sisters of kings and the widows of

former kings were given charge not only of the concentrations of women but also, at times, the active command of regiments and political affairs at their royal outposts. A most original finding in this study, however, concerns not such dynastic women but rather the large number of girls who were gifted voluntarily and involuntarily to the king. These remained strictly sequestered in the *isigodlo* until they were married off, at very high bridewealth, to important chiefs. Two things are of interest in the upward mobility of such women: first, that while still the king's women, they could speak disparagingly to common men, inverting norms of subservience, and second, once married, they assumed the highest rank among their new husband's wives.

Female royalty retreated from the political stage during the rise and consolidation of Muslim merchant power, the religious canons of which disqualified women from public activities. Elsewhere, they were by no means inconsequential in many places at the time that colonial authority sought to impose itself. Before imperial power had been fully secured, colonial male authorities occasionally played the role of chief court councilor where queens were well ensconced. New overlords sometimes faced resistance mobilized by dynastic women and female religious leaders or spirit-mediums who drew upon images of an uncorrupted rule and called for the restoration of right relations with the ancestors and other supernatural forces. Almost invariably, however, colonial administrative bureaucracies preferred to isolate and coopt male rulers and, where possible, withdraw recognition from females as anomalous.

In Sudanic Africa, well before the area was subordinated and regularized by colonial domination, some dynastic states had been eclipsed by Muslim leaders capable of imposing theocratic precepts and legal tenets. Nominally Muslim dynastic states and ruling families faced reformist rivals capable of pursuing their cause by holy war, *jihad*. From place to place and time to time, these movements have been interpreted as socially benevolent or as blatantly advancing merchant class interests with predation against "pagans" or compromised Muslims. The Sokoto Caliphate, spreading over a wide area of the west-central Sudan, came closest to achieving an enduring theocratic state. The daughters and descendants of the founder, Usman dan Fodio, became learned and promoted the ideals of a just Muslim society, encouraging educated women to circulate among other women to promote literacy and understanding that their obligation to and rights under Allah transcended their duties to their husbands. Of course Muslim decorum and purdah were also precepts in this movement to meet Muslim standards.

The Sokoto Caliphate and other theocracies in the western Sudan invite comparison with the Omani-derived Sultanate of Zanzibar in East Africa. The sultanate was an empire based on trade and commerce, not conquest, and the regime was necessarily less religiously ambitious, as their Shiite form of Islam remained exclusive to themselves, necessitating tolerance toward the Sunni traditions of the underlying Muslim population. As commercial prosperity grew, wealthy men in towns added wives, concubines, and slave servants to their households. By the late nineteenth century, there was a remarkable development of female associations, bridging the slave/free, mistress/servant divides. The roots of the marked class consciousness of Afro-Arab men and their idealized view that civilization was masculine demands more attention when the history of gender among and between Swahili, Afro-Arab, and Arab strata advances further.

The interpretation of women's leadership over other women or evaluation of the office of a titled woman as representative of women cannot be settled readily. What should be included in the set? How explicitly political must the activity be? Or, as with women in ritual positions, should the potential for political outbursts and mobilization suffice? The questions hinge in part on whether women's groups are seats of strength or refuges from weakness. A beginning for West Africa was made by Awe (1977) in her discussion of the political office of *iyalode*, which among the Yoruba was an elected chief, with regalia of her own, jurisdiction over women, and duties to represent them in the councils of city-states. This office, Awe suggests, reflected a principle widespread in West Africa "that every major interest is given some representation in the conduct of government" (1977: 144). The formidable, wealthy women who held the position of *iyalode* in Abeokuta in the second half of the nineteenth century suggest that women's "interests" and individual power may be effectively contextualized.

Women and Trade: Issues of Autonomy and Agency

In the middle and late nineteenth century, commercial expansion, diversification of export commodity crops, and intensified demands along ever-extending lines of caravan transport meant that slave and free women and men became engaged in more tightly coordinated work. Women contributed in new ways to family economic enterprises in an era of decentralized opportunity. At the same time, West African women famously dominated marketing in West African coastal and forest regions. The implications for gender history cannot be understood in a single narrative following an archetypical set of brokers or market women. But it will be fruitful to address similar questions to several leading examples and to explore the less-known, yet highly pervasive instances of women-led activity in surplus food production and circulation. These questions include how the institutionalized complementarity between men and women anticipated women trading with a degree of autonomy, what the sources of trade goods and availability of credit were, and what made for an ability to command the labor necessary to a trading enterprise and its supporting household production.

The *signares* of St. Louis in Senegal in the late eighteenth century provide a well-documented point of departure. The *signares* were specifically French-connected women whose precedents went back for two hundred years to the earliest sojourning European men, then Portuguese, who established partnerships and constituted families with African women, who were sometimes acquired as slave concubine-housekeepers. Leading *signares* lived in gracious stone houses with residential quarters above a ground level of storage and other trade-related space. Their business was symbiotic, avoiding the explicit French monopolies and specializing in regional trade goods such as sea salt as well as imported goods to prosecute an interior trade up the Senegal River through retainers, who often returned with gold. *Signares* also leased labor to the French company, whose officers they married. Both parties were bound to strict monogamy. While the Roman Catholic Church figured in the communal life of this Afro-Atlantic community and gave a Christian inflection to its cosmopolitan class culture, new recruits into the ranks of *signares*, other than their daughters and protégées, had their marriage contracts sealed not in the church but by nearby African relatives.

The complementarity between men and women in this case emerged from strong mutual interests, including salubrious accommodation and stylish entertainment for the European men, and access to trade goods and chances to serve as brokers for the women entrepreneurs. It has been suggested (though not yet fully demonstrated) that affiliations of kinship and alliance with matrilineal societies on the coasts opposite the island of St. Louis entailed ideas about inheritance that took for granted mother-to-daughter succession. Finally, *signares* owned slave servants whose reliability was assured by their membership in the household and security from the fate of "trade slaves" consigned by the company for export. This co-prosperity dwindled with the ending of French monopoly trading at the end of the eighteenth century. Its legacies in the formation of a creole class have persisted in the Four Communes of Senegal, where after 1848 male subjects became enfranchised French citizens.

At other outposts of Atlantic trade in West Africa, Afro-European families reflected similar arrangements and commitments. It appears that where European fathers provided for their children, they saw to it that sons became skilled in the conduct of business while daughters were more likely to be endowed with houses. Occasionally daughters were among the Africans sent to the Liverpool area to acquire knowledge of English commercial practices, but it was more likely that women of this background fit into the incipient middle-class culture of the coastal enclaves and environs in West Africa, where a creole culture became self-reproducing.

Enterprising women abounded in early-nineteenth-century West Africa. Widows and daughters of foreign traders were among the women who pursued opportunities, including those in the clandestine trade that flourished in the face of British naval enforcement of antislave trade treaties. The outstanding example of extended trade by West African women, however, did not entail smuggling. The Sierra Leonean creole women traders indeed flourished precisely because of their position at the very heart of British naval power in West Africa, the port-city of Freetown.

The evolution of this category of women traders began from the provisioning trade on the Freetown peninsula. A mixture of a few white outcasts had made the original settlement and many Africans returned from the diaspora – from Nova Scotia, Jamaica, and England – whose experience had imbued them with an extra-African set of values. The Freetown settlement was heavily missionized by several Protestant denominations and consciously cultivated as a place where "progress" would be modeled. For the entrepreneurial women traders, a key asset was the supply of apprentices, people released from the slave vessels intercepted by the British squadron. Distributed among the settler population to be socialized, this infusion of not-quite-free labor supported women in their domestic and extra-domestic activities.

In terms of the sustainability of female commercial enterprise, it is evident that the beginnings of women's trade came from individual, not particularly culturally authorized, initiatives. Although the accession of people newly enslaved in West African areas such as Yorubaland added to the Sierra Leone colony a population for whom autonomous women's trading was entirely normal, it is important to trace the success of creole women traders in the area beyond the circumscribed Sierra Leone colony also to the protection they enjoyed as colonial subjects and to the readiness of importers to extend credit in trade goods. Just as the *signares* drew some of their strength from regional trade, so too did the creole women, whose extended

activities flourished owing to the profitability of trading *kola*, a nut grown in the woodland and used widely in the arid lands, savannas, and densely populated forest areas of western Africa as a stimulant and in rituals of hospitality. The eclipse of the fortunes of Sierra Leonean women as long-distance traders followed the extension of British authority to the hinterland to control a declared "Protectorate." Women faced a withdrawal of colonial patronage as administrators cultivated relations with chiefs and appeased their resentment and jealousy of the traders. Lines of credit dried up as the risks increased and then as Lebanese-Syrian traders established their own networks at the end of the century. Even as women brokers and long-distance traders became a phenomenon of the past, Freetown women continued to be vigorous marketers and a recognized political constituency.

In the flush of mid-century commercial prosperity, many women in other parts of West Africa engaged in the pioneering and development of family estates producing vegetable crops for export. What were the incentives? Did women to some degree share in control over the proceeds of the marketed commodity? In other words, did women share in the ownership of palm oil, rubber, or in later years cocoa? Recent studies, such as those of Robin Law (1995), suggest no consistent answer, but provide glimpses of some possibilities.

The nearly all-pervasive provisioning trade of women in the nineteenth century warrants far more attention than it has to date received. Too often diminished as "petty trade," this extension of women's domestic command was critical to any war effort or specialized economic activity entailing deficits in staple food that had to be made up by resort to markets. Trading across ecological zones in complementary crops and manufactures was time-honored and persistent. More novel was the intensification of women's production and exchange, especially when it took place at the same time and under the same circumstances that drew off men's labor first into long-distance porterage or other transport work, and later into oscillating migrant labor. In hindsight, the specialization looks inauspicious, for women in colonial times confronted diminishing returns on their rural labor in many areas that became labor reserves. Expanded production in the period 1860–90, continuing in some places through the turn of the century, did nevertheless bring returns to the households and to the women engaged.

The onset of colonialism coincided with increasingly adverse conditions of trade and a mounting sense of domestic exploitation, especially as young men escaped their generational labor obligations and joined slaves who made good their escape to places of wage employment or perceived freedom. The realignment of power between the sexes and between generations shook and brought on restatement of lineage norms and ideologies of marriage and arguably contributed to certain prophetic manifestations, protests, and demonstrations by women, several of which are mentioned below.

Repairing the social fabric of African life became a self-assumed task of colonial regimes and missionary agencies. The promotion of key male subalterns and the shoring up of masculinity did not, however, prevent African women from devising and extending associations of cross-class solidarity which displayed impressive resilience and capacity to cushion women's vulnerability. By 1914, however, it must be conceded that the economic marginalization and political exclusion of women had become more uniform across the regions and the classes.

Gender, Colonial Capitalism, and Initial Colonial Conditions

The constraints increasingly faced by women, their incapacity to improve or even maintain their household resources, and their dependence upon the remittances of migrant sons and husbands had profound ramifications in terms of gender relations. The demand for labor and provisions quickened fastest in southern Africa after 1870, brought on by the discovery of diamonds and then gold and the influx of speculative capital. As Patrick Harries (1994) notes, groups of men who traveled, worked, and lived together as migrants developed a social consciousness and collective identities only nominally related to their places of origin, however much the elders sought to attach the proceeds of their labor by raising the price of marriage. In East Africa, although the colonial intrusion was at first hardly distinguishable from the foregoing years of active exploration and missionary colonization, by the first decade of the twentieth century men were increasingly absent from homesteads, employed in colonial public and private enterprises. The requirement to work on communal cotton plots in German East Africa (Tanzania) exacerbated the situation for women trying to keep up production of food for subsistence and sale. Drought, famine, and the encroachment of vermin, epitomized by wild pigs, led the women of Uzaramo, near Dar es Salaam, to engage in rain-making ceremonies, dressed as men and brandishing guns. The message was that they had now assumed the masculine roles abandoned by men. The women and elders of Mijikenda areas on the Kenya coast endured without immediate protest the loss of young men, as well as many young women as well, who gravitated to Mombasa and redefined themselves as Swahili.

Given the racial ordering undertaken by the colonial state and the targeting of African men as colonial subjects owing cheap labor to the capitalist economy, to write of the empowerment of African men in the colonial situation may seem deeply ironic. But subalterns in the colonial apparatus often saw themselves as gainers. Western-educated clerks and teachers forming the bulk of the new class optimistically embraced the idea of progress. In South Africa, a propertied black male population had been voters in Cape Colony and then in Cape Province. The promotion of domesticity for their wives went together with a general neglect of women's education, since there was no anticipated employment for them except as domestic servants. In West Africa, salaried workers and businessmen in Lagos married under the Christian Marriage Ordinance were expected to support their wives and families, although in the experience of many wives, this support was increasingly unreliable and likely to be siphoned off to side-wives and their children. After the turn of the century, the advantages of leaving bourgeois seclusion and returning to the older tradition of women's trading on their own account became attractive. Other women, Kristin Mann (1991) discovers through court records, had to be watchful lest their title deeds to property be purloined by men to secure loans for themselves.

The formal ambitions of colonial states mounted dramatically after the turn of the century. In post-Boer War South Africa, the several separate colonies were readied for a union in which racial segregation would become uniform. British colonies of settlement elsewhere made political concessions to a white male electorate and carried through territorial separation into white-owned private property and African-occupied communal lands. Economic dualism was backed up by legal dualism, distinguishing customary African and civil law and jurisprudence. Not only in colonies

of settlement, but also where Africans comprised the overwhelming mass of subjects, the colonial apparatus existed at least as a constitutional blueprint. Before 1914, however, its reach still exceeded its grasp. The reasons were several, the two most important being incapacity to move beyond a few well-controlled areas and the high degree of social dislocation attending economic transformation. Before indirect rule and canonical "native law" prevailed, early colonial courts responded positively to women petitioners and the records reveal much of their existential situation.

Sexuality, Masculinity, and Control of Women

Issues of sexual orientation, masculinities, and sexual morality surfaced in early colonial sources. It may not be unexpected that South African historiography, with its deep documentary resources, vigorous historical scholarship, and waves of revision, has provided a ripe opportunity for a hard-hitting call for awareness of sexuality in history. Helen Bradford has been particularly effective in demanding that sexuality must figure in analyses of men's behavior and that it should be placed in larger contexts that may define the volition of women. Bradford attacks androcentric biases: "When scholars use mental maps in which woman and man are one, and that one was man, they frequently misdirect readers" (Bradford, 1999: 353). To correct such biases she requires analysts to treat men and women in the same terms, to regard men as sexualized fathers and lovers and women as agents not exclusively defined by their capacities as wives mothers or sex-objects.

Her demonstrations of how events may be reinterpreted entail going back to the primary documents and taking an equal interest in all the persons. The first of the two cases in point entails a review of the evidence for the causes of an alleged slave revolt in 1823, in which the key leader, Galant, may well have been enraged by his master's appropriation of the sexual services of the slave woman whom he considered his wife, and the sufferings of his other wife who had worked as a wet-nurse, one of whose children was fatally beaten by the master. Bradford contends that when Galant (seen as a husband and a father) and the key women as actors on their own terms are given their due, the events take on a different meaning.

The second illustration addresses the motivations of Nongqawuse, the visionary fifteen-year-old young woman who in 1856–57 called upon the Xhosa people to cleanse themselves and turn back the colonialists by not cultivating and by killing their cattle, many of which were in any event already fatally infected with bovine pleuro-pneumonia. Bradford suggests that in a time of impoverishment, subsistence, and social crisis, when marriages were postponed for lack of cattle to exchange as bridewealth, sexual improprieties abounded. Generalized women's grievances against male sexual coercion contributed to the readiness of women to forgo planting. The gendered analysis of Nongqawuse's response to a moral crisis as proposed by Bradford has a number of potential resonances with other instances of women's protest which also came out of the conjuncture of turmoil over marriage-making, new freedoms for men, subsistence crises, heightened religious consciousness, and apprehensions about the disruptions attending the preemption of judicial and executive power by incoming colonial authorities.

Same-sex relations among males were apparently quite open in late-nineteenth-century Zanzibar. For Southern Rhodesia before World War I, the early court records

yielded numerous instances, overwhelmingly among Africans, often of an older man and a boy or youth. Comparing their timing with the incidence of rape of women, Marc Epprecht (1998) suggests that economic hard times led to male sexual violence against women, not other men. On the mine compounds, "mine marriages" entailed neophytes, male teenagers, entering a relationship with senior men who became their protectors and for whom they provided service and comfort, including the sex without penetration allowed to young unmarried heterosexual couples. That this institution made women's roles more despised is presently only a suggestion, but one worth pursuing. For young men, it was a phase of life with compensations, one that did not predict enduring homosexuality.

The fantasy of interracial sex between black men and white women fed into outbreaks of hysteria in white colonies of settlement about alleged rape by black men, the "Black Peril." In a treatment of the press campaigns of 1912 in South Africa, Tim Keegan (2001) concludes that what was at issue was the threatened masculinity of white men, whose aim above all was to discipline white women who might encourage black lovers. Sol Plaatje, an articulate African journalist and nationalist and a stout Christian, appealed for moral awareness of the "White Peril," the presumption that black women could be used sexually by white men with impunity.

African women had always been mobile, even if the colonial order and new vigilance on the part of elders sought to pin them to a fixed rural place. As they exercised the options widened by the nascent urban, polyethnic commercial and mining towns, colonial administrators and rural elders made common cause in attempting, unsuccessfully, to limit the time women spent in town. Stereotypes of unattached women in commercial centers became focused by alarms over the spread of venereal disease, which indeed thrived in the milieu of military and economic colonialism. To regulate white prostitutes, health authorities in the Cape Colony at the turn of the century persuaded the legislature to adopt a Contagious Diseases Act modeled on one that had been revoked in Britain. More comprehensive attention to women as vectors of venereal disease followed its rapid spread owing to the ceaseless movement of colonial forces from place to place and the construction of railway lines by gangs of workers brought from a distance. The famous *Lancet* article of 1908 by the military doctor Col. Lambkin predicted the depopulation of Uganda if wholesale treatment of men did not take place. Missionaries preferred a social purity campaign aimed at women. Between 1904 and 1914, in many parts of equatorial East, Central and West Africa, low levels of fertility led to dire predictions. Women had to be turned into more effective reproducers, for the sake of securing the future workforce. The biological stress upon maternity failed to address the causes that in fact were part of the colonial project, the social mobility of labor and the poverty of the underpaid and unemployed, both of which led to a heightened risk of contracting venereal disease.

Conclusions Without Closure

This chapter has pressed questions, invited further investigations, offered illustrations that have been highly selective, and eschewed broad generalizations. The variations in relations and status for women among themselves and in relation to men have been exemplified by reference to the unfolding history of social and economic life of

women and men since 1750. Looking back from the terminus of the period covered, the outbreak of World War I, one can isolate two salient shifts. First, women in the middle to late nineteenth century were vital to the commercial acceleration of the time, sometimes benefiting from the resulting wealth, but sometimes being the exploited source of value. The colonial economy curtailed their capacity to accumulate and licensed their exploitation. Second, the early colonial situation favored an elaboration of male patriarchy and the creation of a new class of African functionaries with cultural, political, and material aspirations derived from the colonial arbiters of power in church, mosque, and state. The confinement of women to domesticity entailed in this patriarchal program was contested in a host of ways, but always in an adverse environment of regulation. There is more to learn about such regulation and the challenges to it.

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Chapter Twenty-three

Clash of Cultures: Gender and Colonialism in South and Southeast Asia

Nupur Chaudhuri

During the period from 1750 to 1914, Europeans gradually strengthened their control over South Asia, Southeast Asia, Australia, and New Zealand. They introduced capitalist colonialism, which made Europeans different from other colonizers. European domination led to a complex relationship between the Europeans and the indigenous population. In this colonized world, women on both sides of the colonial divide defined the intrinsic preserve of race, culture, and nation. Covering a broad geographical area, this narrative deals with experiences of women who were subjected to, but not necessarily overcome by, colonial rule, and who expressed their resentments against exploitations. This essay analyzes gender in the light of colonialism, highlighting multiple and complex layers of relationship between gender and colonialism. In *Culture and Imperialism*, Edward Said suggested that India makes modern England as much as England makes modern India (1993: 133).

South Asia

It may be instructive to provide some historical background about the colonial framework in British India. The year 1757 produced a monumental change for India. In that year the British East India Company, a chartered trading company with its own army, defeated the Nawab of Bengal at the Battle of Plassey. Throughout the latter half of the eighteenth century, the British under the auspices of the British East India Company continued to extend their territorial control in the Indian subcontinent until the middle of the nineteenth century. In 1857, after the first national rebellion, formerly called the Sepoy Mutiny, the British crown took over administrative power from the East India Company. India became the "crown jewel" of the British Empire and remained the major component of British political and economic prominence in the world until 1947 when India gained its independence. Injecting a moral tone in its control over India, the British nation emphasized its duty to modernize the Indian society, especially the lives of women, as a justification for continued domination. Men and women in British society always saw Indian women as oppressed in their own society and also cast them in a position greatly inferior to that of British women.

Indian women's education was a focal point in the British drive to bring change in Indian society. Prior to the mid-nineteenth century, only a handful of upper-caste Indian women received some education at home, provided by members of the family. The process of schooling for many of these women began to change as the women started to take advantage of *zenana* education (education of small groups of girls at home in the women's quarters or *zenana*) or formal schooling. In 1849, a member of the governor-general's council established Bethune College, the first women's college, in Calcutta. British Christian missionaries also aided Indian women to fulfill their dreams about receiving education. They pioneered *zenana* education in which a female missionary periodically visited a small group of girls, usually relatives or friends from the surrounding neighborhood, in the women's quarters of the home of an upper-class Hindu family or provided public schooling for lower-caste women. This education consisted of reading, writing, simple arithmetic, and embroidery, but it also included compulsory Bible stories.

British women took a central role in the educational mission, but they operated under certain constraints within the patriarchal structure of the churches and missionary societies that oversaw their work. For example, the Ladies Association for the Promotion of Female Education Among the Heathen, established in 1866, had to convince its male colleagues that *zenana* education was important and that women themselves could organize, teach, and pay for it. Isabella Thoburn, an American Methodist, established a school for Indian Christian girls in Lucknow which later became the first Christian college for women in India. When Thoburn began missionary work in Lucknow, there were three girls' schools and eight Bengali homes open to *zenana* teaching.

Through the efforts of both women and men, many Christian colleges and schools were established in major population centers in India. The emergence of these institutions unsettled some groups within Indian society. Many Indian men were concerned about the threat of conversion of students to Christianity in these schools. Indian social reform associations felt it necessary to establish their own institutions. In the 1870s, the Brahmo Samaj in Calcutta supported the Victorian Institution and the Brahmo Girls' School; in Jullandhar, Punjab Arya Samaj established Kanya Mahavidyalay. Schools for Muslim girls were established at Aligarh in 1906, at Calcutta in 1911, Lucknow in 1912, and Jullundher in 1926.

Some prominent upper-class British women in India also took an active interest in improving the social conditions of Indian women. Lady Harriot Dufferin, wife of the Indian Viceroy, established a Fund for Female Medical Aid in August 1885. The Dufferin Fund was closely associated with the National Indian Association, originally founded by Mary Carpenter to promote Indian female education in the 1870s. The Dufferin Fund had been created specifically to provide female medical aid to Indian women because social custom prevented them from being treated by male doctors.

In the 1890s British female missionary doctors began to come to India. Dr. Edith Brown, who eventually stayed more than thirty years, founded the North Indian School of Medicine for Christian Women to train Christian women as nurses and assistants. Dr. Ellen Farer established a hospital near Delhi. The idea was to employ British and Indian women physicians and nurses. Not all doctors who came to India were part of the *zenana* missionary movement, however, for some female British doctors came to India to avoid discrimination at home.

Many Indians were interested in western medical treatment, but women were restricted by *purdah* to consulting female physicians. A few Westernized middle-class Indians responded to this need by educating their daughters to become doctors. The Madras Medical College was the first to admit (four) women in 1875, who graduated in 1878. By 1890 women had secured admission to medical colleges or schools (the latter offering a less prestigious degree than the former) in Agra, Bombay, Calcutta, and Lahore. Indian women dominated the field of obstetrics and gynecology, in contrast to the West, where male gynecologists were increasingly taking over the practice from midwives during this period. Treatment by female physicians educated at a medical school was reserved to the elite, however, while the vast majority of Indian women continued to use the services of midwives.

Indian women physicians and nurses were always posted to smaller hospitals and had lower pay scales as compared to their Western counterparts in India, reflecting racial discrimination. Furthermore, in nineteenth-century India, European women, especially British women, displaced educated indigenous women and men in employment. The practice of *purdah* in India restricted women from active participation in the public sphere, but it also provided the foundation for some professional work among upper- and middle-class Indian women; the two major areas were education and medicine. Gradually Indian women became teachers as schools expanded. But salaried work was not considered suitable for either single or married Indian women until much later in the twentieth century. Not much is known in detail about Indian women's working lives during this period. Women were employed in some manufacturing jobs, most notably jute, match-making, and textiles. The vast majority of non-elite women were employed in the agricultural sector. The most visible agricultural laborers worked on tea and coffee plantations. In many areas they processed food, such as cleaning or grinding grain within the *zenana*, or worked in the fields on a regular basis.

Prostitution became a regular or part-time occupation for some women. Colonial dictates of limiting military expenditures discouraged the members of the non-commissioned British troops from bringing their wives to India, which in turn created a strong market for prostitution.

Educated Bengali middle-class men, many of whom had some Western education, conceived of an Indian domestic ideology molded by modesty, humility, and self-sacrifice, qualities that were part of British Victorian ideas about the roles of women. Indian reformers emphasized secular education for girls, designed to prepare them to be wives ideally suited to Western-educated Indian men and also to be responsible mothers with some voice in public life. Several reformers sought help from British feminists in achieving their goals. The circle of British feminists responded in various ways. Margaret Noble adopted Indian culture in order to teach Hindu women effectively. Noble established a school for Hindu girls in 1898 and joined the neo-traditional monastic community of Swami Vivekananda. While being active in a wide range of religious and welfare work, she also participated in Indian nationalist politics in India and Britain. She returned to Britain in 1907 to escape arrest in India. At times the feminism of these British reformers collided with indigenous culture. Annette Ackroyd Beveridge came to India in 1872, drawn by the personality and teaching of Keshub Chandra Sen, the leader of the Brahmo Samaj, a more progressive Hindu group. Breaking with Sen because of his rather conventionally Victorian

notions of education for women, she founded a girls' school in Calcutta in 1873. The curriculum of the school slanted heavily toward British culture. Because of her insensitivity to Bengali culture, although she knew the language, her attempts to educate Bengali girls were not successful.

In an effort to free Indian women from oppressive social barriers, educated Indian male social reformers, many of whom were Western-educated, joined the reform efforts of Christian missionaries and British officials. Their goals were many, and included education for girls, a later age for marriage, prohibition of *sati* (a widow's self-immolation on her husband's funeral pyre), the allowance of widow remarriage, eradication of female infanticide, and relaxation of *purdah* restrictions, allowing greater spatial and social mobility for women.

At the beginning reformers wanted to protect the lives of women through legal means. They wanted to forbid the practice of *sati* and female infanticide. In 1813, the British East India Company allowed the practice of *sati* if women undertook it voluntarily (Mani, 1998). Ram Mohan Roy (1774–1833), the distinguished Bengali reformer and founder of the rationalist Hindu reform society of the Brahmo Samaj in Calcutta in 1828, his followers, evangelical missionaries, and Indian reformers, all argued that the practice of *sati* was not strictly imposed by Hindu scriptures. Lata Mani has cogently argued that the British proponents and Indian defenders and critics of legislation prohibiting *sati*, put too great an emphasis on the edicts of Hindu scriptures. Few reformers spoke about women as the subjects of *sati* who might be exercising their own will. After extensive lobbying, Lord Bentick, the governor-general, prohibited *sati* in 1829 regardless of whether it was voluntary or involuntary. Implementation of legislation prohibiting female infanticide did not occur until 1870. Along with these measures, reformers further advocated legislation to change the degraded status of daughters and widows.

By reforming marriage laws the social reformers hoped to give Indian women voices in both their private and public lives. Widow remarriage, another test of domestic ideology promoted by Indian reformers, was intended to give widowed women the opportunity to continue their lives as wives and to avoid becoming financial burdens on their own families or those of their deceased husbands. The imperial power in India created a legislative framework for the social improvements of Indian women. In 1856, the Widow Remarriage Act of 1856 was passed, which allowed Hindu widows to remarry though they forfeited their rights to their deceased husbands' estates. But its impact was at best limited and in some cases negative. Lower-caste widows who by customary law had previously been able to marry without loss of property would now, according to the terms of the Act, lose their rights to their deceased husbands' property upon remarriage. The British selectively upheld customary law, such as that practiced by the Hindi-speaking population in Haryana in Punjab. This permitted a widow to marry a close relative (often a younger brother) of her deceased husband to prevent the division or loss of landed property. In these instances, the British tried to regulate and formalize customary law in order to reinforce their political control. Indian women themselves, including those in the reform movement, had little to do with the implementation of the Widow Remarriage Act and other reform legislation, in part because Indian reformers failed to mobilize them. And since the British failed to enforce their legislation, these reforms had minimal effect on the lives of Indian women. Sometimes the reforms also had a

negative effect. For example, the Civil Procedure Code of 1859 asserted that a husband could sue his wife for restitution of conjugal rights if she left him. (A wife's leaving her husband had been permitted under Hindu tradition, though this was rare and was only done at great cost to the woman's reputation.)

The Age of Consent Act of 1891, which raised the age of consent (for sexual relations) for married and unmarried girls from ten to twelve and thereby provided a statutory foundation for later marriage, was also ineffectual. British officials and Indian nationalists, both reformers and traditionalists, joined forces to limit the terms of the Act and its implementation. Although a marital rape clause had been included in the Act, it was never enforced. Male control over female sexuality prevailed, as Indian men opposed to changes in women's status were successful in drawing British officials to their side; as a result, reforms enacted by the British had little impact. The imperial power failed to affect Indian gender relations substantially, and its reform impulses, which were never wholehearted or unequivocal, lost force in the face of indigenous anti-reform pressures. Attempts to improve women's lot or modernize their lives through legislation under the British empire failed. Indian women themselves became objects rather than initiators and active participants.

Many Indian women held meetings and submitted petitions to support the Age of Consent legislation. In an analysis of Indian women's protest against child marriage during the 1880s, Padma Anagol-McGinn notes the difference between women's criticisms and those of men. The women argued that early marriages psychologically crippled women by denying them education and freedom of expression, leading to an unhappy life because of age and status differences between husbands and wives. Men argued that early marriages led to poverty and physical decline. Thus women developed a gendered evaluation of the impact of early marriages on themselves and asked for important changes such as adult marriages, while men expressed concerns about the economic and medical impacts. Men were least concerned about the impact of early marriage on women.

Realizing that child marriage could not be prevented by legislative action, some Indian women put the issue into the context of the larger social reform movement. Pandita Ramabai (1858–1923), an educated widow from western India and Krishnobhabini Das (1864–1919), a self-educated middle-class reformer and writer, established homes for widowed women and worked towards extending education to women and children. Krishnobhabini Das contributed regularly to various Bengali journals, airing her views on education, child marriage, and prostitution.

Beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, Bengali periodicals often contained articles written by women emphasizing women's access to broader education and expressing their opinion regarding patriarchy, oppression of women, and nationalism. In Bengal, women like Krishnobhabini Das, Sarala Devi, Swarna Kumai Devi, and others published in *Bramabhodini Patrika*, which Brahmo reformists started in 1863 and continued until the 1920s as a forum for women's issues. In 1898, Bengali women founded *Antahpur* (which means the women's section of a house). In the Hindi-speaking area of the United Provinces, *Stree Darpan* began publication in 1909. The writers of *Antahpur* and *Stree Darpan* constantly spoke to women readers about women-related issues. Women's periodicals from other regions were also active in focusing on issues related to women. Two Muslim women were very prominent in this regard: Muhammadi Begum (*c.*1878–1908), in Lahore, and Waheed Jahan Begam (1886–1939), in Aligarh. Their journals were in Urdu, which was used by

upper- and upper-middle-class Muslims throughout India. Unfortunately, most of these writings, whether in Hindi, Bengali, or Urdu, have not been translated into English and thus have remain inaccessible to a broad section of scholars. Consequently, intellectual history incorporating these sources remains to be written.

In the late nineteenth century Indian women began to form separate associations on their own initiative. The groups met only occasionally, conducted their meetings in Indian languages, and have left few documents on the group activities. The available records indicate that Indian women were acquiring the organizational skill needed to call meetings, formulate and debate resolutions, and then forward these resolutions to the appropriate authorities. The difficulty in sustaining these associations reflects the fact that their organizers still maintained their primary commitments to their roles as mothers and wives. In Bengal, the first women's organizations were linked to the factions within the Brahmo Samaj religious reform movement. They generally emphasized the need for "improvement" of the condition rather than the emancipation of women. The emphasis was on women becoming more responsible wives and mothers and gradually supporting appropriate charitable activities outside the home. Women not associated with the Brahmo Samaj were also involved in similar activities. Most scholarly accounts of Indian women's organizations focus on the twentieth century, especially the activities of the All-India Muslim Ladies Conference (AIMLC), the Women's India Association (WIA), the National Council of Women in India (NCWI) and All India Women's Conference (AIWC). The activities of all these organizations reveal that the groups had a consciousness of interconnections between social reform, education for women, and nationalistic politics, but they also reflected the specific orientations of their founders.

The founding of the Indian National Congress in 1885 is frequently seen as inaugurating the nationalist movement in India, although political protest against British rule began far earlier. Because of physical seclusion, the elite Indian women most likely to be involved in the Congress had little contact with the colonial administrative structure except through the experience of their husbands and male relatives. Women began to attend the Congress as observers and became delegates as early as 1889 although they did not participate in debates. By 1900 women in Bengal and western India were becoming more vocal. The protest against the 1905 partition of Bengal by the British in defiance of Bengali opposition mobilized many new groups. Women became particularly involved in the *swadeshi* movement, which urged the use of indigenous instead of foreign products. As a consumer group, women were at the front of the *swadeshi* movement. From the 1920s Indian women became more and more visible in nationalist movements.

During the last few decades, research on Indian women has focused on the impact of partition on women and women's role in the nationalist movement. More recently, scholars have begun studying regional women's history. However, more attention has been given to social history and the activism of women in subordinate groups than to the history of ideas propounded by women.

Southeast Asia

Present-day Southeast Asia broadly includes Myanmar (Burma), Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Singapore. The main Southeast Asian states were formed between the eighth and fourteenth

centuries CE, and European powers entered into the area beginning in the sixteenth century, eventually establishing colonies and creating major urban centers like Malacca (1511), Manila (1571), and Batavia (1619). Over the centuries they brought changes in the economy of Southeast Asia which impacted on gender relations and the social lives of the people. They created a plantation economy for exports. More and more men concentrated in urban centers, which increased poverty and domestic slavery, and created greater disparities in the sex ratio in the urban areas.

For the last fifty years, scholars of women's studies, development studies, anthropology and literature in Southeast Asia have focused mostly on present-day policy issues dealing with employment, child and maternal mortality, tourist industries, and the growth of prostitution. Consequently, historical information on many women's issues in this region during the colonial period is inadequate and a coherent general history of women during this period has not yet been written.

One of the topics that has been studied is the level and shape of contacts between Europeans and indigenous peoples. It is clear, for example, that the Portuguese encouraged some intermarriage of their officials with indigenous women and that the French in Indochina frequently maintained sexual contact with Khmer women. In 1898, Governor-General Doumer attempted to strengthen colonial control over Indochina and forbid such relationships, but they continued.

There is more information available on Filipino and Indonesian women. When European traders first arrived in Southeast Asia, Burmese and Filipino societies had long permitted local women to cohabit with foreign traders in "temporary" marriages in which both partners had rights and benefits. When the trader-spouses departed, the relationship ended, though there were gifts and support for any offspring produced by the relationship. The offspring generally stayed with their mothers, who were free to enter other such marriages or sexual relationships without loss of social status.

During the seventeenth century, as the numbers of European and especially Chinese men increased in the Philippines and the economies became more cash-oriented, temporary marriages became sexual services for cash. Wives became mistresses and then changed into prostitutes, with fewer rights and increasingly degraded status. European and Chinese traders increasingly sought sexual services from female slaves who were without familial support and desperately in need of economic subsistence. In some instances these women sold their sexual services in order to provide support for their impoverished families. European and Chinese men at times maintained several slave-concubines who earned money for their owners through their sexual work or were sold to raise cash. Over time, European economic demands, along with definite ideas of female modesty, caused the economic marginalization of many women. If modernization is linked to Westernization, then modernization decreased the social and economic status of Southeast Asian women.

Until the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Spanish advocated intermarriage between lower-ranking Spanish officials and Filipinas. The introduction of Spanish law curtailed the legal rights of local women regarding children, property, and divorce. Catholic concepts of premarital and marital sexual mores reduced the sexual freedom of Filipino women. Older women who acted as shamans or priestesses were called idolators and witches by Spanish missionaries, who encouraged

converted young men to destroy their ritual instruments and idols. Spanish hospitals assumed the shamans' roles as midwives, healers, and specialists dealing with death.

Information on women's economic situation in the Philippines during the colonial period is scant. In Manila, during the nineteenth century, women worked as cigar-makers in government-owned tobacco factories, as teachers in schools established by the Spanish colonial government, and in traditional occupations such as vendors, shopkeepers, seamstresses, embroiderers, prostitutes, and midwives. The Spanish government established a school for midwives in 1879, and Superior Normal School for teachers in 1892. With the arrival of the Americans in the early twentieth century, co-education was introduced and professional education for medicine and law was opened to upper- and middle-class women. The spread of Islam and Christianity into Southeast Asia put further restrictions on female sexual and economic autonomy, but with Western imperialism came modern (Western) education for women.

The Dutch in Indonesia created the most substantial Eurasian community in Southeast Asia. Sexual relationships between a Dutch man and an Indonesian woman, his *nyai* or housekeeper, had been a part of colonial practice since the very beginning. Until the early twentieth century it was practiced by the Dutch military and young planters on Sumatra's east coast, who were not yet allowed by their companies to marry. In the nineteenth century *nyai* derived some status and economic power from their relationship with European men and were also respected by their own community because of their knowledge. Ann Stoler has written that official Dutch support for concubinage "revealed how deeply the conduct of private life, and the sexual proclivities which individuals expressed were tied to corporate profits and to the security of the colonial states" (Stoler, 1989).

From the mid-seventeenth century to the 1920s, Dutch officials permitted marriages between Dutch men and Javanese women provided the latter converted to Christianity. These marriages produced children for employment and marriage within the Dutch enclaves, because senior Dutch officials married the Eurasian daughters of these marriages. Consequently in Indonesia, in contrast to South Asia, the category "European" included Eurasian children. Thus the boundaries between the public and private spheres were flexible because this advanced colonial political and economic interests. These interests changed in the 1920s, and in order to maintain cultural boundaries and national incursions, Dutch colonial policy tried to replace concubinage and marriage between Dutch officials and Eurasian and Indonesian women with marriage among "full-blooded" Europeans, combined with sexual relations with non-European prostitutes. This effort was only partly successful, as of 1927 about 27.5 percent of the Europeans in Indonesia still married either indigenous or "mixed blood" women.

In Indonesia, Dutch men made Dutch women responsible for helping to nurture and sustain white dominance. Frances Gouda has argued that Dutch men "mobilized their wives and daughters to shoulder the task of upholding the internal hierarchy and moral dignity of the white community, but were quick to blame women for any reputed loss of white status" (1993: 320). The Dutch viewed any sexual foibles by Dutch women as a threat to their power and manliness, so Dutch women were forced to remain in their homes having contact only with the indigenous domestics. Because of the societal restrictions the Dutch women remained aloof from the indigenous

society and the colonial society blamed them as racist for their intolerance towards indigenous culture.

Nationalist movements in Southeast Asia started at the end of the nineteenth century. Raden Ajeng Kartini (1879–1904) was a leading female advocate of women's and national liberation in Indonesia. In 1899, she began to write to Dutch and Indonesian friends arguing that through education women would be able to escape from arranged marriages and polygyny, and prepare for motherhood. Dutch reformers sympathetic to Kartini's ideas on education formed the Kartini Foundation in 1913 to establish basic schools in which middle-class daughters could be educated as better housewives and mothers while retaining traditional Javanese values. They used the press as a vehicle for changes in social attitudes. To promote women's education and participation in the public sphere, Indonesians formed associations such as the Putri Mardika (Independent Woman) in 1912 and published a weekly journal focusing on arranged marriages, child marriages, and polygyny. Several other women's organizations were formed in the 1910s, and they also published periodicals. The Union of Sumatra Women was formed in 1911. Women of the upper and middle classes were members of these organizations. Indonesian nationalist and religious organizations created female sections that had greater appeal to middle- and lower-middle-class women than did suffrage associations.

Over the centuries, Indonesians and other Malay people synthesized customary law, which preserved local traditions, and Qur'anic law into a system in which neither was superior. One of the Muslim female organizations tried to extend Islamic practices, prescribing a headdress for its members that left the face bare but covered the head and the neck. This partial veiling was introduced in the early part of the twentieth century in a culture where most Muslim women previously did not cover their heads. Religious reform for women thus brought some restrictions on their legal rights and dress, but it also created more opportunities for education and participation in religious activities, as in women's mosques.

Australia and New Zealand

In 1788, 736 convicts, of whom 188 were women, were exiled to Australia. They were the first permanent British settlers in Australia. For the next few decades Australian penal colonies grew slowly and had very limited contact with the indigenous population, whom they called Aborigines. However, the discovery of gold in 1851 attracted free European settlers and some Chinese which ended the penal colonies. After 1850 tens of thousands of British settlers received government-subsidized passages "down under" on the improved sailing ships of that era, although the voyage still took more than three months. By 1860 the settler population had reached one million and it doubled in the next fifteen years. In 1901 Australia emerged from the federation of the separate colonies of New South Wales, Tasmania, South Australia, Victoria, Queensland, and Western Australia. An 1897 Australian law segregated the remaining Aborigines onto reservations, where they lacked the rights of Australian citizenship.

New Zealand was less attractive to the Europeans. Some of the first to arrive were temporary residents along the coast who slaughtered seals and exported seal pelts to Western countries. Originally administered as part of New South Wales, New Zealand

became a separate colony in 1840 and a self-governing dominion in 1907. Military defeat of the Maoris, a brief gold rush, and the availability of faster ships and subsidized passages attracted more British immigrants after 1860. The colony especially courted women immigrants to offset the preponderance of single men. By the early 1880s, the fertile agricultural lands of this farthest frontier of the British Empire had a settler population of 500,000. Because of Maori adoption of Christianity and Maori capacity for military defense against the Europeans, four seats in the lower house of the legislature were reserved for Maoris from 1867.

New Zealand and Australia were also among the first states in the world to grant women the right to vote, beginning in 1893. The governments of Australia and New Zealand supported reforms in divorce and child custody legislation, secondary and tertiary education for women, the entry of women to the professions, and married women's rights to hold property, which were some of the goals of the first wave of feminism.

Patricia Grimshaw has pointed out that a very real anxiety about the future of Australia led the colonial politicians to extend suffrage to the white women. White politicians wanted to keep their country white, so they denied voting rights not only to the Aborigines but also to the Asians – especially the Chinese. In New Zealand the Electoral Act of 1893 introduced universal adult female suffrage for both Maori and white settler women. Settlers' fear of Maori men encouraged white politicians of New Zealand to give votes to the Maori women while fear of the Aborigines and other non-whites led the Australian colonial politicians to deny votes to Aboriginal women. Thus race played a role in the franchise of women in Australia and New Zealand.

Marilyn Lake has asserted that Australian feminism from the 1880s to the 1940s was crucially shaped by the historical context of the frontier. When the six British colonies federated in 1901 to form the new nation-state – the commonwealth of Australia – indigenous people were not part of it. They were segregated on reserves and missions in the interior of the country, far away from the vast majority of white Australians who lived along the eastern seaboard. The same federal legislation that gave white women the vote denied it to the majority of the Aborigines, following parliamentary debates that routinely invoked distinctions between "women" and "lubras" (the derogatory term for Aboriginal women).

According to Anne Summers (1975), Australian women were classified either as "damned whores," descendants of convict forebears, or "God's Police," the good middle-class women who would rescue Australian from its unsavory heritage. Female suffrage, she contends, succeeded relatively early in Australia because the suffragists belonged to the second category. The request for the ballot was portrayed simply as a means of increasing woman's efficiency in imposing good, moral values upon society.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Australian feminists perceived themselves as different from European feminists. In a colonial setting white European women were regarded as the bearers of culture, morality, and order in a non-Christian, hence in a primitive, society. This concept led Australian feminists to believe that their identity as white women in the Australian outpost of the British Empire made them unlike both European women and Australian aborigine women. They believed that, as white women, they had accepted a special authority in Australian settlement as agents of civilization and guardians of the race. In

masculine Australian society feminists emphasized the reform of masculine behaviors, such as drinking, gambling, and predatory sexuality, which they perceived as contrary to civilization and women's and children's welfare. Being aware of women's special vulnerability in this type of society, Australian feminists campaigned to provide "protection," rather than "emancipation," for women and girls. Feminists initiated public campaigns to outlaw drinking and to restrict men's sexual access to women and girls. Temperance reform assumed a particularly important place in the politics of frontier feminism. While in nineteenth-century England surplus women or redundant women were considered as a major social problem, in Australia there was a surplus of men who were not conceived as redundant or superfluous.

According to Marilyn Lake (1998a), the sexual imbalance in Queensland, considered "the most Australian" of all the colonies, was especially conspicuous. At the turn of the century there were 171 males for every 100 females. The preponderance of men led to a very high marriage rate for women. In all the Australian colonies marriage was the common condition of women over a certain age, and the nature of marriage and the condition of married women became major concerns of Australian feminists. Lake argues that white man's systematic sexual abuse of Aboriginal and unprotected white women and girls in a male-dominated and homosocial society encouraged late nineteenth and early twentieth century Australian feminists to perceive sexuality as essentially degrading for women. Consequently, feminists believed that the marital relationship was not based on an equal partnership and for several decades feminists in Australia tried to elevate the marriage relationship from a sort of prostitution to a "sweet companionship" and, by the twentieth century, tried to end the "sex slavery" of the wife through the introduction of a motherhood endowment.

Nineteenth-century feminists in Australia believed that men had failed in their appointed role as protectors. Consequently, women had to protect themselves, and they were charged to do this by their status as mothers. In a male-dominated society, white men systematically abused Aboriginal and white women and girls, which convinced early-twentieth-century Australian feminists that sexuality was obviously demeaning for women. This concept promoted the identity of mother and at the same time diminished the importance of the role of wife, who was increasingly conceptualized as an exploited creature of sex. In Australia feminists found their voice as mothers: motherhood was conceptualized as women's common condition and the source of their political authority. Motherhood also provided a potential affinity between women of different classes and races. For example, opposing the racially discriminatory clause of the Maternity Allowance of 1912, the feminist journal *Woman Voter* wrote "it is the White Australia policy gone mad. Maternity is maternity whatever the race" (Lake, 1998a: 130). The protection of women and girls emphasized temperance, raising the age of consent, opposition to contagious-diseases legislation, custody rights for mothers, and the appointment of women to a range of public offices – as jail-warders, doctors, factory inspectors, police officers – so that men would not be in a position to control women physically.

Most English emigrants to Australia came from urban areas, while the Irish and Scottish emigrants to Australia came from rural areas. However, the population was largely drawn from the lower social strata. Marriage rates were high, and the number of married women in the labor force was low. Women were more involved with their

families. Patricia Grimshaw (1979) asserts that by the end of the nineteenth century social ideologies stressed the values of home and domesticity, of companionate marriage based on partnership and mutual love, and of the importance of the child as a focal point of family life.

The early movement toward a nuclear family structure at the end of the nineteenth century established the important ideologies of domesticity, the dominant place of children in the home and of motherhood. As urbanization rapidly increased, the working classes acquired individual, private homes and the concept of the "family wage" was accepted; the demarcation of male and female roles, into man the bread winner and his wife the keeper of the hearth, became established.

Grimshaw has acknowledged that these ideologies created a climate of opinion hostile to women who wanted, or needed, to move outside of feminine stereotypes, but in the nineteenth century, such women were in a distinct minority. Most women, especially most middle-class women who joined suffrage societies, found clearly demarcated gender roles satisfying and comfortable. They saw no reason in that situation to question the restrictions of nuclear family life, which only became obvious with the greater opportunities in the new century.

However, life was rather hard for Australian women in rural areas. Agrarian policy in Australia determined that Aboriginal people had not "progressed to the stage of cultivating and farming their land" (Hunter, 1997: 60). Thus non-Aboriginal people (i.e. Europeans) were allowed to appropriate those lands. Kate Hunter argues that agrarianism was used to justify Aboriginal dispossession and to delineate appropriate possession of land by non-Aboriginal people, defining not only appropriate use of land, but who was to have possession and to be able to invest labor in it. Providing examples from the province of Victoria, she shows that often farm women were described as poor, lonely, and having a hard life; they were not part of the domestic ideal of femininity, defined as the leisured, indoor life of urban women. The 1881 census counted women from farming families under the occupational category of their menfolk, so that women were listed as farmers. In 1891, the collation method was altered, according to Victorian sensibilities, to avoid "giving the impression that women in Australia worked in the fields, as they do in the older countries of the world but certainly not in Australia" and the women were listed as not working (Hunter, 1997: 62).

The lives of single and married women in rural areas were fluid. Being in charge of the domestic sphere extended spatially beyond the confines of the house, so women worked in the garden as well as feeding the hens and collecting the eggs, and feeding the cows and horses. Prescriptions regarding agrarian femininity were supposed to confine rural women to the house and the immediate surroundings, but in reality this did not happen.

Conclusion

In these regions, the cultures, languages, religions, and social mores are disparate, yet European rule created some commonalities. An important element of these was the emergence of embryonic nationalism. The British introduced Western education and various other social reforms for South Asian women which impacted on indigenous women's lives and consequently promoted incipient nationalism among women.

Similar consequence emerged from the Europeans' efforts to introduce education for women in Southeast Asia. An atmosphere of nascent nationalism emerged there, especially in Indonesia.

Interracial sexual relationships became prevalent both in Southeast and South Asia, as colonial frontiers offered Europeans the possibility of transgressing their rigid sexual mores. These liaisons were less common in Australia and New Zealand where there were relatively more white women. Like the white women in South and Southeast Asia, the white settler women in Australia and New Zealand perceived themselves as the bearers of culture and guardians of the race. As this chapter has shown, relationships between European and indigenous women of these areas, and ideas of gender in which they were embedded, were complex, multiple, and shifting.

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Chapter Twenty-four

From Private to Public Patriarchy: Women, Labor and the State in East Asia, 1600–1919

Anne Walthall

The relationships between men and women in China, Korea, and Japan changed profoundly between 1600 and 1919. From the seventeenth to the late nineteenth century, these societies were characterized by the practice of concubinage, at least within elite families, plus a complex interplay of varying degrees of status inequality and sex segregation. The confrontation with Western imperialism which led to the painful disintegration of the Qing imperial state in China, the creation of the centralized Meiji state out of the ruins of the Tokugawa shogunate in Japan, and Japan's colonization of Korea formalized in 1910 brought concubinage into disrepute, accelerated the process of replacing status-based inequality with economically determined classes, and eroded sex segregation in education if not politics.

I emphasize status because wealth was not the crucial determinant of societal ranking before the twentieth century. The Chinese model of the social order rested on a quadripartite structure of gentlemen-scholars, superior to all others because they worked with their minds, not their hands, followed by peasants, artisans, and merchants. One mark of distinction became women's unbound feet. In Tokugawa Japan (1600–1867) and Choson Korea (1392–1910), a hereditary ruling class of *samurai* on the one hand and *yangban* on the other saw themselves as the functional equivalent of the gentlemen-scholars. In addition, the Manchus who ruled China from 1644 to 1911 strove to maintain a sense of ethnic identity, as did various minorities in the south. In Korea slaves served the *yangban* and the court, yet they were still considered to be ethnically Korean. At that time neither Okinawa nor Hokkaido constituted part of Japan proper. To mark the bottom level of society, the Japanese created special categories of outcasts, the *hinin* (non-persons) and *kawata* (polluted).

"Boys and girls should not sit or eat together after the age of seven" (Confucian precept). Nonetheless, the division between inner female space and outer male space did not mark the distinct domains conjured in the Western categories of domestic and public but rather signified a boundary that shifted depending on the circumstances. Chinese men worked outside the house; women worked inside, to the extent that family enterprises permitted, and the more respectable the woman, the less she

ventured outside her own gate. Chinese houses were built around courtyards. In some regions men had separate quarters to the left of the ancestral altar while women lived to the right. In others, the women's quarters were situated behind the men's. The Korean *yangban* lived in equally segregated dwellings: first came the front courtyard, then the men's quarters then another courtyard and finally the women's quarters. Japan's military ruling class and merchants followed this same model, the latter using walls instead of courtyards to divide male and female space in crowded urban areas. Japanese farmers, on the other hand, rich or poor, had but one hearth around which the family gathered. Although the civil-service examination system made social mobility possible in China whereas Japan and Korea had a hereditary ruling class, in all three societies, wealthy and elite women had a greater stake in maintaining the status and gender hierarchies than did their servants or the wives of poor men, and they had more prestige, political power, and access to education than did non-elite men.

Starting in the 1850s and 1860s, new forms of communication and transportation; reforms that stressed education in the service of national self-strengthening; the transformation of the economy driven by foreign trade and industrialization; and political turmoil all had an impact on the relations between men and women. Newspapers trumpeted the threat to sovereignty posed by imperialism as well as notions of democracy and equality associated with the West while the telegraph spread news of opposition movements. Steamships, trains, and macadamized roads improved the circulation of goods and brought workers from the countryside to the cities and from the interior to the coast. By the late nineteenth century, women joined men at political rallies. Decades of political action culminated in mass demonstrations in all three countries at the end of World War I. Whereas in Japan men and women had rioted over the price of rice in 1918, in China they marched in support of national self-determination and democracy, and in Korea they demonstrated against Japanese imperialism. It must not be forgotten, however, that while the arrival of modernity brought new opportunities in some spheres of life for some women, all women continued to be excluded from making the policies that impinged directly on their lives. Furthermore, the dark underside to the rise of modern cities may be found in the transformation of, and increase in, prostitution.

Status Inequality and Sex Segregation

In patriarchal, patrilineal societies, sons are valued over daughters. Demographers studying China have demonstrated repeatedly that families must have practiced some degree of female infanticide and neglect; no other explanation fits the skewed sex ratios found in village after village in the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries. Japanese village data reveal surprisingly low birth rates for both male and female children, leading some scholars to suggest that Japanese farmers practiced a crude form of family planning to limit their offspring to two, one of each sex in order to better their family's economic prospects. On the other hand, Laurel Cornell (1996) argues that a host of other factors limiting fertility must be taken into effect, including late age of marriage and the common practice of working outside one's village for long periods of time. It is also possible that women simply did not make it onto the census registers. One village in north China counted 300 fewer women

than men in 1774; by 1873, the difference had risen to 800. Regardless of whether these numbers reflect an actual increase in women's mortality, the undeniable sex imbalance meant that whereas every woman of sound mind and body could expect to get married, between 20 and 30 percent of men never did.

Marriage practices varied considerably in these societies. Since in China all sons could expect to inherit their father's estate, so long as they married in accordance with birth order all had an approximately equal opportunity to bring in a bride. The chief constraints on poor men were the practice of hypergamy in which women married into families of higher economic and social status than their own and the prevalence of concubinage that removed even more women from the marriage pool. Widows, and even women whose fiancés had died, faced such social opprobrium if they remarried that those without children might choose suicide rather than suffer a lifetime of ill treatment by in-laws. Neither Korea nor Japan practiced hypergamy or partible inheritance. Korean men sought brides of equal status because descent was reckoned bilaterally. No matter how high a father's rank, if a mother came from a commoner family or worse, the son could not inherit his father's position. Secondary wives were generally of lower status; their sons faced discrimination both within and without the family. Starting in the seventeenth century, the imposition of Confucian-derived social norms fell with special severity on widows, officially forbidden to remarry. The status system imposed on Japanese society by the Tokugawa shoguns promised draconian reprisals against anyone who married outside his or her own group (these threats were often ignored). On the other hand, concubines might come from any background except *hinin* or *kawata* without their children suffering social impediment. The sixth shogun's mother was the daughter of a greengrocer.

All three societies promoted the notion that women owed obedience to their fathers, their husbands, and their sons. All three also placed great emphasis on filial piety. Many are the tales of the extreme sacrifices expected of women in service to their parents-in-law. On the other hand, in China and Korea, the pursuit of this virtue led emperors and kings to humble themselves before their mothers. When rulers had two mothers, their birth mother and their father's official wife, they treated both with affection and respect because political policy required public displays of correct moral behavior. In Japan, an adopted son was expected to cherish his adoptive mother just as he would his own.

Within the family, women and men participated in a yearly round of seasonal observances designed to keep the household in tune with the gods and ancestors. While some rites were gender-specific – such as the coming-of-age ceremonies for boys that had only a pale counterpart for girls – others involved the entire household, as in the New Year celebrations, for example. Particularly notable are the ancestral rites. The elaboration of ritual in China meant that the ancestors received a visit from the ritual head of the household once each day. Twice a month the family as a whole served the ancestors, with the presiding wife playing a role analogous to her husband's. Concubines and servants took no part in these rites, nor could they expect to become ancestors. Korean families too performed ancestral rites in line with Chinese models. Japanese people relied more heavily on Buddhist than Confucian rituals and paid more attention to death anniversaries. In them as well the official wife held an unassailable position.

Because respectability was so closely associated with remaining secluded indoors, Chinese and Korean women who wished to make pilgrimages to temples and shrines or enjoy festivals risked a grave loss of reputation. In China even the scholar-gentlemen tended to stay away from such low-class pastimes fit only for the ignorant. The Korean *yangban* officially viewed Buddhism and native shamanistic practices as superstition and a threat to the integrity of the social order. Yet women believed that the welfare of their children and household depended on propitiating the gods and Buddhas (privately, men did too). Despite official disapprobation, Chinese women invited various female practitioners to come into their houses and offer prayers on their behalf. Korean women patronized the *mudang* or shamans, women marginalized by polite society who had the power to communicate with the spirits. In both countries, women who had passed childbearing age had an easier time justifying temple visits than younger more sexually vulnerable women.

Although the Tokugawa government officially forbade women younger than forty to make pilgrimages and urged them to avoid festivals and areas where crowds were wont to gather, Japanese practices were generally more permissive than in China and Korea. Women from lower classes went to pray at local shrines or to hear rousing sermons at nearby temples, and Japanese festivals were notoriously lascivious, especially in the countryside where the emphasis was on fertility, not propriety. Even in the shogun's capital, women and men thronged the markets leading to famous religious establishments, not only to pray but also to enjoy the many spectacles offered for their enjoyment. While many fewer women than men had the wherewithal to make long-distance pilgrimages, and they tended to be older when they set out on their journeys, once on the road they enjoyed many of the same pastimes, staying up all night at temples, chatting with fellow travelers, stopping at hot springs, even hiring female performers for an evening of dancing and song.

The division of work replicated spatial divisions within the household. Depending on their status, men generally worked either outside the house, in governmental administration or agriculture, or at the front of the house, selling goods, for example. Even when they had to travel on business, they preferred to leave their shops in the hands of a male manager rather than a wife. The few women who managed to make a reputation for themselves in business were always an exception to the rule. Japanese and Korean women were more likely than Chinese women to end up spending long hours in the fields, although even Chinese women with bound feet were known to work outside the house when the exigencies of the agricultural cycle demanded it. In contrast to Chinese practice, Japanese women invariably transplanted rice; their delicate touch being more suited to this backbreaking work that the coarser hands of men, or so it was said. In some regions of Japan, women did so much agricultural work in the company of men that observers claimed the sexes could not be told apart.

In all three countries, women were traditionally in charge of making textiles, from raising silkworms to spinning either cotton or silk, weaving cloth, and sewing. Francesca Bray (1997) has argued that this proves women were not simply dependent on men; instead they made an essential contribution to their household's productive capacity. In the lower Yangtze delta by the end of the eighteenth century, however, rapid economic development had taken the lucrative and skilled work of weaving out of women's hands, leaving them only the less technically demanding and

marginally productive work of reeling and spinning. Except for subsistence needs, cloth came to be produced by skilled male artisans in the towns. Since it was a *sine qua non* that respectable women worked with their hands, women continued to sew and practice elaborate embroidery. Nevertheless, their importance as economic actors may have been sadly diminished in comparison with earlier times. In Japan men in Kyoto wove the finest silks and brocades. Sericulture and spinning remained dominated by women as did the production of cotton cloth despite the commercialization of the eighteenth century. Japanese women were more actively engaged in marketing their products than were women in China. This combined with their greater opportunities to travel in search of work and a growing economy that still relied largely on cottage industries meant that Japanese women remained more visibly a part of productive processes than did women in China down through the nineteenth century.

Sex segregation meant that Chinese, Korean, and Japanese women played a much less public role in social protest than did their European counterparts. In China sectarian rebellions that promised social equality and a radical redefinition of gender roles under the auspices of the Maitreya, the Buddha of the future, sometimes gave women space to act openly, especially when minority ethnic groups provided much of the momentum. Food riots and uprisings against governmental policies, even when these involved the taxation of products made by women, have generally been seen as arenas for action by men. In the case of Japan, however, when villages united against the ruling authority, every household head had to sign a bond to this effect, even if she were a woman. Tokugawa Japan was a litigious society, and some women launched their own suits against village authorities or neighbors. Women acted as catalysts for rice riots, and when their menfolk had been arrested for unlawful acts, they petitioned for their release. I have argued that women operated out of a different time frame than did men; for them protest began sooner and lasted longer.

Segregated from men and indeed from any kind of social life outside the home, women in late-imperial China led seemingly oppressed lives regardless of their material circumstances. Not so, argue Dorothy Ko (1994) and Susan Mann (1997). While remembering that women's culture is always partial, always constructed in relation to men's, they point out that at least in the lower Yangtze delta, women in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries created a rich literary culture that provided them with avenues of self-fulfillment and social networks. Neither subjugated nor silenced, they actively contributed to a new definition of womanhood that required women to be educated for the sake of the family. In some areas of south China women delayed marriage to form "sworn sisterhoods." In a practice that flies in the face of Confucian orthodoxy, they spent their evenings in their own special house, singing and telling stories.

The seventeenth century saw the beginning of greater access to literacy for women in all three societies. Nevertheless, women in Korea and Japan were educated to different standards than men. Not for them was the exacting memorization of thousands of Chinese characters. Instead they studied indigenous writing systems and only a few hundred characters. Despite such disabilities, Lady Hyegyong (1735–1815) produced an extraordinary set of memoirs in Korea between 1795 and 1805 that describes in intimate and sometimes terrifying detail life at the court of King Yongjo. It is particularly notable for documenting her continuing attachment to her natal

family years after her marriage, childbirth, and the tragic death of her husband. The song genre *p'ansori* and instruction manuals for women by women echo this theme. Most Korean women never had the chance to become literate. Only women associated with the court or trained as courtesans (*kisaeng*) left any writings at all, and these tended to focus on their relations with men.

Scholars have long studied male writers and thinkers from Tokugawa Japan; women have been more easily overlooked. Yet women wrote in all the genres commonly associated with men, including Chinese poetry, novels, and diaries. While seventeenth-century women writers tended to be high-born, by the nineteenth century even farm women might aspire to craft a literary record. The female *samurai* Tadano Makuzu (1763–1825) wrote "Solitary Thoughts" (*Hitori kangae*), in which she argued that men were superior to women because their bodies had a surplus whereas women's bodies had a lack. Because emotions arise in the genitals, women and men responded differently to various stimuli. Nonetheless, physical differences did not necessarily mean that women were intellectually inferior. In her view, all social relationships were characterized by antagonism and conflict, a vision of the world that horrified her male readers.

Makuzu is a rare example of a woman who wrote specifically about the sexual relations between men and women. In his book on male–male sexuality in Japan, Gregory Pflugfelder (2000) reminds us that men dominated the discourse on sexuality. Men wrote the texts and drew the pictures that showed men taking their pleasure of women and boys; men patronized brothels staffed by women and boys, and men always took the active role in sexual encounters. Even the Chinese vernacular novels that portrayed capable and active women who dominated the male characters by virtue of their literary talent, intelligence, and moral fiber were written by men. In the sexual discourse of the time, women and boys existed only as sex objects; their desires were deemed relevant only insofar as they reflected and enhanced those of men. In Japan this discourse recognized women's sexual needs; when no man was available, masturbation was considered perfectly appropriate. Mediated by a tool that could stand in for a penis, same-sex relations between women were always considered a poor substitute for sex with a man.

Medical texts constitute another lens through which to view conceptions of the body. In traditional Chinese and Japanese medicine, the relative presence of *yin* and *yang* and other internal differences in male and female bodies were more significant than externally visible genitalia. (This perception of the body helps explain the popularity of cross-dressing in Chinese vernacular novels and the similarity of skin textures in erotic prints.) For this reason, the right set of practices and incantations might just change the sex of the child in the womb. In both countries female reproductive powers were fraught with danger epitomized in the polluting power of blood, and in some regions of each country, women might be forced to live apart from their families when menstruating and giving birth. In eighteenth-century Japan, a spirit of practical experimentation buttressed by the importation of Western medical texts led to new conceptions of fetal maturation as well as interventionist techniques of managing childbirth, at least in urban areas. Monopolized by male physicians, these techniques enabled men to intrude into an area of experience previously reserved for women.

The chief controversy in Chinese women's history concerns footbinding; why it was done, who benefited, and what was in it for women. Begun in Song times among

elite households, by the Qing period the tendency for women to marry into higher-status families meant that the practice had spread down even to the lowest levels, although laboring women started binding their feet only at puberty and might relax the bonds after marriage. That Chinese men found them erotic goes without saying, but they also helped accentuate the sexual differences between men and women and demarcate social respectability. Because mothers did it to their daughters, Dorothy Ko (1994) argues that binding the feet constituted a rite of passage and a form of female bonding. For illiterate women, binding the feet and preparing delicately hand-sewn shoes became their chief form of bodily inscription. Even educated women took pride in their dainty feet and wrote poetry to that effect. Susan Mann (2000) reminds us that binding the feet was excruciatingly painful and crippled its victim. She claims that this thousand-year-old practice had only shallow cultural roots, as evidenced by how quickly it disappeared at the beginning of the twentieth century.

It would seem that Japan practiced less extreme forms of sex segregation than did China and Korea, at least among the lower statuses. Whereas the necessity for earning a living might mean that a Chinese peasant woman would not be able to remain in seclusion to the same extent as a gentry woman, she still conformed to the norm in her demeanor so as not to shame her relatives. Since any woman seen talking to a man not part of her immediate family was presumed guilty of adultery, it behooved a woman to be discreet. Whereas the Tokugawa shoguns issued injunctions to women to stay at home in the interest of maintaining the social order, these had little bearing on practice. Status made a difference; when highborn women traveled, they secluded themselves in palanquins whereas their social inferiors walked. Seeing Japanese women on the road, in the market and bathing in hot springs shocked European observers in both the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Crises and Reforms in the Nineteenth Century

The combination of internal dislocations and foreign threats that erupted during the course of the nineteenth century had a massive impact on both men and women in China, Japan, and Korea. Because the circumstances differed for each country, the role of women, both as symbols and as actors, took different forms as well. One way to understand the particular difficulties faced by each country is to examine how women figured in their definition as well as their solution and the various venues where they experienced change.

The economic turmoil and political crisis caused by the opening of treaty ports to foreign trade in the 1840s and population pressure in southeastern China are often cited as leading factors in the rise of the new religion known as the Taiping or "great peace." The Taiping ideology promised to redefine status and gender relations in realizing a 'Heavenly Kingdom' on earth. Having banned even conjugal sexual intercourse until the Taiping capital was established at Nanjing, it thereafter promoted marriages based on mutual attraction rather than the family's interests. In the massive Taiping rebellion that swept through central China from 1850 to 1864, women from China's ethnic minorities who enjoyed the advantage of unbound feet fought as soldiers alongside men and commanded troops. On the other hand, most women who joined the movement found that liberation from the inner quarters meant hard manual labor. The Taiping offered a radical challenge to the existing structure

of society, and nowhere was this challenge more evident than in what it meant for women.

A series of religious movements in late-nineteenth-century China promised men and women a new and better society. More often than not, these aimed at eradicating Christianity. Anti-missionary activity culminated in the Boxer Uprising of 1900 in which thousands of peasants, craftsmen, and transport workers who had lost their lands and their livelihood under the impact of Western imperialism and natural disasters tried to harness supernatural powers in their efforts to expel the foreigners from Chinese soil. Like the Taiping before them, the Boxers preached simplicity, frugality, and sexual abstinence. Women warriors organized into same-sex battalions nursed the wounded and served as lookouts. They waved swords to ward off bullets and fans to set fires. The foreigners gave themselves full credit for suppressing the Boxers without acknowledging the role played by members of the Chinese elite who opposed the Boxers as they had the Taiping because both threatened to dissolve the relations between men and women viewed as the core of the social order.

In Korea as well, the mid-nineteenth century saw the rise of a new religion that aimed at reconstructing Korean society and resisting Western imperialism. The Tonghak (Eastern Learning) movement preached social equality through the saving power of a universal god. To this end, it tried to abolish the status hierarchy and the patriarchal family system. In an ironic bow to the Confucian principle that saw the family as the basis for society, Tonghak argued that there had to be harmony between husband and wife based on egalitarian principles in order for society to function properly. The government executed the founder and suppressed the movement in 1864, only to have it reappear in the 1890s when it erupted into armed rebellion. Among its demands for reform was permission for widows to remarry. In this way women's issues played a major role in defining the difference between state-sponsored orthodoxy and Tonghak heterodoxy.

Religious movements in Japan faced less severe repression, perhaps because they did not involve foreigners so directly nor did they challenge the existing social order so strikingly. Following the devastating famines of the 1830s, a number of new religions appeared, some founded by women who became vessels for the gods, others welcoming women as practitioners and teachers. They offered the downtrodden the promise of world renewal and the elimination of disparities in wealth. At the end of the nineteenth century, Deguchi Nao (1837–1918) rejected capitalism and the legitimacy of the State. She told her followers that the god who spoke through her would destroy the current evil world and usher in a divine paradise. Perhaps because she had no stake in the status quo, Nao managed to seize on the time-honored role of the female shaman to articulate a radical renunciation of her society. She found herself in prison more than once, but her movement continued to flourish even after her death. While Deguchi and other female founders usurped the male prerogative of speaking openly in public, the fact that they did so using a religious medium muted their challenge to societal norms.

Government leaders and intellectuals debated the need for change apart from a religious context. Once it had become evident that the invaders from the West were not to be expelled nor could internal distress be mitigated through time-honored means, the calls for reform became increasingly strident. In all three countries, elite men dominated this discourse. Chinese scholar-officials first hoped that Western

military technology could be grafted on to existing structures of thought and society; any change that touched on women's lives had been thoroughly discredited by association with the despised Taiping ideology. The desire to preserve the core of Chinese culture at all costs meant that reform came comparatively late to China.

Not until the 1890s, following a series of military defeats and widespread social disintegration, did Chinese reformers argue the need for fundamental changes that required rethinking the relationships between men and women. Liang Qichao (1873–1929) blamed China's woes in part on the lack of education, occupational opportunities, and prenatal care for its women. To make it possible for women to participate with men in society, they had to unbind their feet. Some seventeenth- and eighteenth-century writers had called for the abolition of footbinding; with the perceived need to unite the energies of every Chinese to compete with the West, the anti-footbinding movement gained new urgency. From its origin in Shanghai in 1897 it attracted widespread support, at least in urban areas. By the 1920s the practice had all but died out, marking the first step in the erosion of the sex segregation that had characterized Chinese society since the Song dynasty.

In the first two decades of the twentieth century, China experienced precisely the kind of revolutionary turmoil and social confusion that allow women unexpected and unprecedented opportunities to act in public. When the Qing court joined the hated foreigners in suppressing the Boxers, it lost much of its remaining legitimacy. The Shanghai region, long the country's most economically advanced, became a hotbed of anti-Manchu sentiment and revolutionary ideas that included economic, social, and emotional independence for women. One of the most articulate activists was Qiu Jin (1875–1907) who while in exile in Japan dressed like a man to demonstrate her resolve to make her mind as strong as a man's. In passionate speeches and inflammatory prose she urged the liberation of China from the Manchus and the liberation of women from the control of men. Within a year after her return to China, she was executed by the Qing government for her plans to overthrow the government, making her the first Chinese heroine of the twentieth century.

The fall of the Qing dynasty in 1911 ushered in further turmoil. Women demanded the right to vote in the fledgling republic; they demanded equal rights and better educational facilities, better employment opportunities and a ban on concubines. Within a year, this brief window of opportunity had closed. Having carved up China, the warlords' determination to restore order hit activist women with particular severity because, in the warlords' eyes, such women epitomized the dangers of social upheaval. Forced out of the political arena, educated women and men drew on Western and indigenous women's history to craft unprecedented roles and identities. This era saw the creation of the term "new woman," not "new man," because women more than men emerged as a new social category with the rise of nationalism. This nationalism found vibrant expression in the May Fourth movement of 1919 that swept the Chinese cities following the refusal of the Versailles Peace Conference to condemn Japanese imperialism in China. Thereafter nationalism was inextricably bound up with demands for domestic reform, in particular reform of the family system that oppressed women even more than men.

Reformers in Japan seized more quickly on the need to involve women in strengthening the nation to withstand the foreign threat. They started writing on women's issues in the 1870s, in a chorus of newspaper and magazine articles that decried

Japan's backwardness in the eyes of the West. Japan needed to become civilized in the Western mode as quickly as possible; a chief stumbling block was the oppression of women. The social critic Fukuzawa Yukichi (1835–1901) called for an end to concubinage, the abolition of prostitution, education for women, employment opportunities for women, and equality of men and women in property ownership, marriage, and divorce. He encouraged women to become independent and self-reliant and for men to respect their abilities and achievements. His writings had a tremendous impact and continued to be reprinted well into the twentieth century. Yet he did not send his daughters to public schools, and he insisted that they marry the men he had chosen for them.

Male reformers in Japan seldom strayed far from the "good wife, wise mother" ideology that defined the appropriate roles for women in the modern state, and they exported it to Korea. By placing the emphasis on the conjugal relationship rather than on the filial piety owed to in-laws and insisting that women had to be educated in order to raise children worthy of the new Japan, this ideology broke with the past. In its state-supported guise, it encouraged women to work hard, promote frugality within the household, and be productive. At the same time, it defined women solely in terms of their relationships with other members of their households. The 1898 Civil Code subordinated women to men by requiring a husband's consent to a wife's entering into a legal contract. Husbands could divorce an adulterous wife and subject her to criminal prosecution; the adulterous husband did not exist in law. Women became citizens of the nation only through their men; they themselves were to remain aloof from the dirty world of politics.

Not all women fully accepted this definition of their role. As early as the 1880s, they started criticizing state and society for not allowing them to reach their full potential as human beings and for making it impossible for them to contribute to the modern state because they were barred from public space. Taking advantage of the movement for freedom and popular rights, propertied women demanded the right to vote (at that time, even the male franchise was limited to a small percentage of the population). More radical still, Kishida Toshiko (1863–1901) and other women began to talk politics in public. Kishida went on a two-month lecture tour in the spring of 1882, drawing standing-room-only crowds to hear her message that women must be given the same rights and responsibilities as men if they were to contribute to the task of nation-building. She preached equality between men and women, arguing that the prevailing attitude of "respecting men and denigrating women" was unethical and uncivilized.

The Japanese government soon made it impossible for Kishida and other women to speak in public. It suppressed the popular rights movement and passed a series of public security laws designed to keep women off the public platform. After the inauguration of the Diet, Japan's first national representative body, in 1890, any woman who tried to organize or join a political association or attend a meeting at which politics was discussed was subject to fine or imprisonment. Women were not even allowed to observe Diet sessions. A number of well-educated women formed the "Bluestocking Society" to talk about women's issues in a way that did not appear to threaten the State. Bedeviled by censorship, their magazine that had published their debates on abortion, prostitution, and the proper definition of motherhood folded within five years. The prohibition against "dangerous thought" was even more

draconian, driving men and women who advocated nihilism, anarchism, or socialism to the fringes of society. There they published short-lived magazines criticizing the growing gap between rich and poor, the worsening labor conditions brought by industrialization, and Japan's emulation of Western imperialism. The government responded with fines, prison terms, and torture. In 1911 it arrested twenty-six individuals accused of having plotted to assassinate Emperor Meiji. Among the twelve convicted and hanged was Kanno Suga (b. 1881) who thus achieved the distinction of being the first woman to be executed for political reasons in modern Japan.

The Korean monarchy tolerated little foreign contact and few proposals for domestic reform through the 1880s. Diplomats who traveled to Japan in the 1870s returned with tales of Japan's assimilation to Western culture, including public education for women. Young progressive intellectuals launched the Enlightenment Movement (Kaehwadang) only to find themselves accused of treason in 1884. Writing from Japan, Pak Yong-hyo (1861–1939) urged the king to modernize and strengthen Korea and insisted that elevating the status of women was essential to such efforts. He wanted to prohibit spousal abuse, child marriages, and concubinage. Women should be educated by the State, widows should be allowed to remarry, and marriage should be permitted between people of different statuses. Many of his ideas were officially put into practice only after Japan's victory in the Sino-Japanese war of 1894–5 enabled Japan to force the Korean court to make reforms according to what Japan saw as essential to the modern state.

Proposals for domestic reform in Korea always took place in the context of Japanese imperialism. Among the initiatives permitted by the 1894 reform was the founding of an independent newspaper using the Hangul script in order to reach the broadest possible audience, one that included women. As in China and Japan, the oppression of women through the patriarchal family system was seen as a major obstacle to building a strong nation-state. The newspaper launched crusades to improve women's education, eliminate arranged marriages, and create a new family system based on mutual trust and respect between husband and wife. The publicity it gave to women's issues led directly to the founding of the first Korean women's organization in 1898. This organization tried to pressure the government to establish a girl's school, even holding a demonstration at the royal palace gate. When these efforts failed, it collected private funds to start its own school. In the early twentieth century women's organizations did everything from promoting better family hygiene to publishing the first women's magazine. Women's issues always had to take second place to national problems, however, as in the campaign to repay the national debt owed to Japan in which women took the lead in organizing a grassroots effort to raise money. Following Japan's colonization of Korea in 1910, women's political organizations, like those of men, had to go underground until March 1, 1919, when Korean students, men and women, launched nation-wide demonstrations against the failure of the Versailles Peace Conference to condemn Japanese imperialism. Among the many martyrs to the cause of national liberation was Yu Kwan-sun, tortured and killed by the Japanese police at the age of sixteen.

Even before male reformers identified changing women's roles with building the nation, women had started taking advantage of new opportunities for education. Christian missionaries established the first girls' school in China in 1844, soon followed by others. Their students came largely from the families of believers or the

poor; respectable women continued to be educated at home until the 1890s. The first Chinese-run girl's school opened its doors during the Hundred Day Reform movement in 1898. When the movement failed, the school closed without having produced a single graduate. One government minister even proclaimed that public education for women ran contrary to Chinese culture because it threatened to destroy women's virtue. Not until 1907 did the Qing government establish elementary and secondary normal schools for women. Women who wished to seek higher education had to travel either to the West or to Japan. The few who managed this feat received a degree of recognition and public acceptance that they could never have gained had they stayed at home.

In contrast to China where demands for women's public education came from the bottom up, the Japanese government took the lead in requiring public education for both men and women beginning in 1872. Most people never went beyond the compulsory four years, extended to six in 1907. Women enjoyed many fewer opportunities than men to gain higher education; only missionary schools, the government-sponsored normal schools for primary school teachers and midwives, and a few private colleges offered courses in subjects deemed suitable for women's roles as the mothers and teachers of the modern citizen. Women educators such as Miwata Masako (1843–1927) argued that women needed education to raise men to serve the state. Only within these limits was it appropriate for them to interest themselves in national affairs.

In Korea as in China, Christian missionaries opened the first schools for girls. Founded in 1886, Ewha Haktang attracted only one student its first year, a concubine belonging to a high court official. Despite strong resistance to allowing women to go out of the house and the custom of early marriages that took many girls from school before graduation, its enrollments gradually increased. One reason why Christianity had a much greater impact on Korean society than it did in either China or Japan lies in the major role Christians played in the education of women. The government did not establish a public school for women until 1908. Men and women were to be educated separately, and it was considered improper for girls to have male teachers. Under the Japanese regime, Koreans were taught to be loyal subjects to the Japanese emperor. No provision was made for compulsory education; instead most private schools, seen as hotbeds of nationalism, were suppressed. Few Koreans went to school at all and of these only one-tenth were girls.

Industrialization had similar effects on the men and women of China and Japan to a much greater extent than did government or education, but in Korea the industrial sector remained minuscule until the Japanese started building textile factories there after 1910. The introduction of machine-made textiles in China beginning in the 1840s devastated the spinning industry that had employed women and the weaving industry that had provided jobs for men while the opening of the treaty ports increased the demand for porters and prostitutes. By the end of the nineteenth century, foreigners had built textile factories along the coast in central and south China that provided employment for thousands of young women; in the early twentieth century, these were joined by Chinese-owned enterprises. North China mills employed many fewer women, perhaps because women there faced more opposition to working outside the home. Japan managed to keep foreign capital out of its factories. In the early twentieth century, 40 percent of export revenues came from the

sale of silk thread produced by women. Not until the end of World War I did the heavy industry that employed men begin to match the textile industry's contribution to the GNP.

The thread mills did little to change gender relations, and they worsened the conditions under which women worked. Supervisors and managers were always men. With few exceptions, salaries ended up not in women's pockets but in their parents'. Because these women were seen as simply helping their families, they were paid less than a living wage, nor were they encouraged to pursue factory work as a career. In one of the ironies of industrialization, opportunities to work in factories spurred an increase in prostitution. Squeezed by rising taxes at the same time that cottage industries became less viable, working families scrambled to survive in a world that had become stratified by class, not status. Daughters who could not find factory jobs had no choice but to become prostitutes, servicing the floating population of urban day laborers. While a tiny minority of elite men continued to patronize the refined entertainments provided by courtesans, a raw sex trade dominated the nightlife of modernizing cities.

Dealing with the Western definition of civilization required more bodily changes for men than for women. The *samurai* and *yangban* topknots and the Chinese braided plait (or queue) looked ridiculous in Western eyes; worse, high-ranking men in all three societies wore skirts and waved fans, behavior that reinforced Western stereotypes of the feminine orient. By the 1870s some Japanese men had started to wear Western hairstyles and incorporate trousers into their formal wear. The Japanese-sponsored Korean reform of 1894 ordered men to bob their hair. Some Korean men who had traveled abroad took to wearing Western-style clothes and had their wives dress similarly. One conservative opposition leader called them no better than savages. Resistance to parting with the queue and wearing Western garb persisted in China to the fall of the Qing dynasty in 1911. Liberated from bound feet, urban women discovered the *cheongsam*, a long, form-fitting dress with a high collar and a slit up the side. Japanese women happily gave up blackening their teeth and shaving their eyebrows after the empress showed her new face to the public in 1873, and they adapted quickly to corsets and bustles worn at the balls and dinner parties held to prove to the West that Japan was civilized. Following the reaction against Westernization in the 1890s, they were excluded from dinner parties as they had been excluded from politics. Their exclusion signaled that the more Japanese society had to change in order to become civilized, the more women were to become repositories of the past.

The changing discourse on sexuality that paralleled changes in society and culture has come to the attention of scholars only in the last few years. Pflugfelder (2000) points out that male-male sexuality became increasingly stigmatized in Meiji Japan, partly in response to Western views of what constituted civilized behavior; partly in response to the changing social structure and government intervention. This was also the first time that female–female sexuality became an issue. In the new way of thinking about sexuality, sexual orientation became a more permanent feature of the personality than had heretofore been the case. By the early twentieth century, the government had begun to document and regulate the sex lives of the Japanese people in order to maintain the state and improve the race.

An issue that perplexes all historians of women, and in fact led to the theorizing of gender as a historically useful concept, is to what extent claims can be made for

the importance of including women in the study of history more generally. Even though few women led public lives before the twentieth century, they felt the impact of the changes that swept their societies throughout the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, they participated in social and economic, even political movements, and they appeared in writings by men that argued for change. Even the recent work on sexuality shows, however, that the Chinese, Japanese, and Korean societies were arranged entirely for the convenience of men, and ruling-class men at that. Reformers such as Liang Qichao, Pak Yong-hyo, and Fukuzawa Yukichi chiefly practiced and wrote for men on topics related to men's experiences. Women's issues were always secondary when they figured at all. It is thus dangerous to assert that women were central to historical change. Sometimes they were, but often they were not. Historians of China, Korea, and Japan wrestle with the need to make sure that women are not ignored in attempts to understand the changes that have taken place while at the same time taking care not to overstate the reasons why women and the relations between men and women should always be included.

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Chapter Twenty-five

Gender in the Formation of European Power, 1750–1914

Deborah Valenze

Gender and the Emergence of European Power

The years between 1750 and 1914 marked a signal age for the women and men inhabiting the collection of states at the western tip of the Eurasian continent. This dynamic period yielded unprecedented economic growth along with important new forms of political and social life. Within a relatively short space of time, Europeans consolidated strong nation-states and achieved levels of material comfort destined to affect every other continent. Industrial capitalism and liberal modes of governance developed unevenly across an expanse as varied as was Europe. Peasant economies and absolutist states in Mediterranean countries, Eastern Europe, and Russia followed a different path from those in Western Europe, though their few urban centers would provide similar sources of dynamism in the later part of the nineteenth century. Notwithstanding this diversity, Europe witnessed the formation of contemporary gender relations: the emergence of a modern heterosexual nuclear family, the development of greater parity between women and men, and the construction of biological and psychological models of sexual difference. These patterns, laden with contradictions, present central problems for analysis in gender history.

The most obvious lesson of this endeavor is the imperfect way in which relations founded on gender correspond to changes in political and economic life. Political and economic narratives of European history often rely upon an implicit model of progress, whereas no such neat story exists in European gender history. Attention to topics of gender history, such as sexuality, marriage, reproduction, and birth control, teaches us important lessons about resistances to change and the uneven distribution of power in society. I have attempted to sketch out major lines of development related to two important engines of change in this period, the French Revolution and industrialization, a strategy which, by definition, focuses on political and economic innovation. My ultimate intention is to point up the volatility of the European context, even with regard to rigid social conventions (such as domesticity) and in places where progress acquired a prescriptive aspect (such as liberal England). Though this may result in understating the degree of continuity throughout this period, the

point remains that modern Europe was a scene of unprecedented dynamism and change.

Eighteenth-century European institutions of Church, State, and family rested on patriarchal assumptions subordinating women to men. Though the use of scriptural justification for male authority was waning by the eighteenth century, most social relations between women and men remained determined by conventions of male dominance. New political arguments, moreover, substituted civil authority for the Church, naming men as legal representatives of all other members of families. In towns and throughout the countryside, the majority of European women spent their entire lives, as daughters, sisters, servants, or wives, within the confines of households governed by men. Married women lacked the right to own or administer property, defend themselves in court, and seek legal remedy for physical abuse. The sexual division of labor insured that their reproductive and working lives would be adapted to household status and needs. Marriage was often as much a decision about work arrangements as sexual preference; autonomy was a concept of little relevance. People without property often lacked the freedom to change occupations and residence. In eastern Europe and Russia, serfdom continued to restrict the lives of all except a small minority of the population. Within households and families, the question of authority was seldom raised, overlaid as it was by custom, popular wisdom, and unvarnished material need.

In the next century and a half, Europeans would question the authority of fathers, kings, and aristocrats; cultural changes would slowly undermine religious dogma and time-honored customs. Though undeveloped peasant economies and absolutist governments followed a different path to the twentieth century, they could not resist registering the impact of population change, the spread of epidemic disease, and the arrival of new technologies of power and transport. Such forces hastened alterations of social relations and, in turn, the constructions of gender in each nation.

Dominant Paradigms: The Rise of the Rights-Bearing Individual

Certain demographic features distinguish Europe from other parts of the world. As early as the seventeenth century, northwestern Europeans demonstrated a unique tendency to marry relatively late (averaging at age twenty-three or older for women, and over twenty-six for men) and to exhibit significant numbers of unmarried people (as high as 20 percent in some instances). These practices suggest that Europeans were interested in and capable of conserving resources, for the strategy resulted in limited fertility and, in some cases, the accumulation of valuable assets. In places where marriage rates and fertility remained high into the eighteenth century, such as Italy and Spain, we find the persistence of traditional hierarchical social relations in populations dominated by aristocratic prerogatives and relatively undeveloped peasant households. When the rate of population growth increased across Europe sometime in the middle decades of the eighteenth century, the proportion of women remaining single increased. This aspect of demography calls attention to the migration and warfare that affected great numbers of men and played a part in shaping the social experience of Europeans. Households without male wage-earners set a pattern for poverty in Europe and posed problems for states and religious institutions working out strategies of relief.

Perhaps the most significant sign of social change during this period was the rise in the number of children born out of wedlock. A rise in bastardy rates in England, for example, from 6 percent to 20 percent of all births, indicates that more people were engaging in pre-marital sex. Similarly, in Germany at the beginning of the nineteenth century, a significant growth in the illegitimacy rate prompted legal debates over questions of state support for unwed mothers and the problem of verifying paternity. The reasons for this trend are difficult to determine, but some historians have posited the argument that rising illegitimate births constituted evidence of failed promises to marry. During periodic economic crises, couples would forgo marriage in order to secure what was needed to establish a household; as prospects for financial security waned, some attachments simply eroded. Others have stressed the rise of a new determination to seek individual satisfaction, both emotionally and materially, that brought about more autonomous romantic and sexual activity. Coupled with a decline in the practice of "living in" among servants in England and a diminution of available land in France, more young people migrated from their birthplaces in order to obtain employment. Supervision of courtship thus seemed to be less prevalent.

Over the next century, European states rendered individuals, rather than corporate bodies, responsible for matters pertaining to sex and personal life. Rules regulating courtship, marriage, and childbirth out of wedlock came under scrutiny across the continent. In some cases, efforts were made to avoid the cost of supporting people outside traditional household structures; in other instances, enlightened rulers aimed to release citizens from the stifling grip of conservative authority. In German states, citizens objected to or simply evaded absolutist laws punishing infanticide and fornication with death, until reformist princes liberalized penalties for such behavior. New laws formally recognized the natural aspects of human character that led people to engage in proscribed sexual relations; this, in itself, constituted a significant shift in outlook.

Young people across Europe evaded parental authority so frequently that governments increased efforts to regulate marriage and courtship. In England, repeated elopements of couples led to the passage of Lord Hardwicke's Marriage Act in 1753, which required the involvement of an Anglican clergyman in legitimating the union of a couple and subsequent transferral of property. A rise in the number of cases of *rapt*, or abduction, prompted the Parlement of Paris to enact a series of similar laws from 1556, when a statute first prohibited persons from marrying without parental consent on pain of disinheritance. Through the first half of the seventeenth century, civil jurisdiction gradually overshadowed the authority of the Church with regard to marriage. Couples of any age required parental consent in order to marry in the church; this included even widows of twenty-five years of age. Fathers were known to commit offending daughters to convents, and young men could be arrested and sentenced to death for abduction. Codification of the law thus enforced male jurisdiction over households and property, backed by the authority of Church and State.

Historians have detected a significant shift in the place of homosexuality in eighteenth-century society, as states identified sodomy as criminal and wayward and thus worked to suppress alternatives to heterosexuality. Whereas in previous years, many Europeans tolerated a wide range of sexual activity, including same-sex relations, attitudes hardened in the eighteenth century. Sodomy was punishable by death in most

European countries until the 1780s, except in England, where the law remained in place until 1861. (In 1806, more English people were executed for sodomy than for murder.) In London, moral reform movements of the 1720s mobilized public opinion against those who deviated from exclusively heterosexual behavior. Homosexuals began to congregate in particular areas, sharing gestures and dress associated with a distinct subculture, developing what can be seen as true homosexual identity. Yet evidence suggests that men from different social classes and occupations at times participated in the subculture of homosexuality without identifying completely with it. Lesbian activity, though difficult to trace, may have been associated with the considerable number of women who cross-dressed in the worlds of theater and the military forces at this time. While homosexual contact between men fulfilled an expectation of men's immanent sexuality, common assumptions about the relative absence of sexual desire among women meant that lesbian relationships often went unpunished or simply unrecognized.

The codification of law governing marriage exposes the fundamental project of this period in European history, the construction of a modern civil society based on the ideal of the rights-bearing individual. Though couched in gender-neutral terms by proponents such as John Locke and Montesquieu, the model for this potentially revolutionary agent was ultimately conceived as male, particularly because of his crucial connection to the ownership of property. But because each citizen depended upon the legal apparatus of the State, rather than divine will, for his claim to power, traditional patriarchal defenses no longer applied. Women saw in this shift an opportunity to stake a claim to individual rights. "[I]f absolute sovereignty be not necessary in a state, how comes it to be so in a family?" asked Mary Astell in 1706; proceeding to the next logical step, she demanded, "If all men are born free, how is it that all women are born slaves as [sic] they must be if the being subjected to the inconstant, uncertain, unknown, arbitrary Will of Men, be the perfect Condition of Slavery?"[1]

Energetic debate over the relative capacities of women and men was part of an explosion of intellectual activity in print in Enlightenment Europe. Though literate elites constituted a small percentage of the overall European population, their appetite for information gave rise to an expanding marketplace of ideas. Literacy rates varied, from as high as 85 percent of urban middle classes in England to much lower rates in France, for example, where roughly 21 percent of the population was literate. People of the middling ranks supplied an avid readership for an expanding print culture that included advice manuals, scientific and practical treatises, works of fiction and poetry, and political pamphlets and satires. Alongside the works of Lockean psychology, which suggested to readers that the human mind took its shape from external influences, readers might think twice about gender relations as a result of reading Montesquieu's *Persian Letters* (1721), an eye-opening expose of the sexual politics of eastern cultures. On a more mundane level, the poetic musings of a humble Englishwoman, Mary Barber (*c.*1690–1757), reflected on her son's first pair of breeches,[2] while Mary Collier (?1690–*c.*1762), a washerwoman, rebutted the blatant sexism of Stephen Duck's account of women harvesters. As authorship increased in diversity, so, too, did the range of viewpoints. By the late eighteenth century, Europeans not only questioned authority, but also broadened their recognition of the realm of human experience.

Enlightenment principles of individualism, though proclaimed for all people, failed to eclipse a contradictory view of female identity, that of the exalted and exceptionally sensitive creature, who was passive and dependent on men. Jean-Jacques Rousseau's enormously popular novels, *La Nouvelle Heloise* (1761) and *Emile* (1762), offered up dramatic renderings of the prototypes. Emile's chosen companion, Sophie, stood as both the prescription ("made for man's delight") and, in her weakness for the temptations of luxury, a cautionary example. Rousseau sounded a clarion call to the next century's debate: "where sex is concerned woman and man are both complementary and different." The response to *Emile* was immediate and impassioned. English feminists Catharine Macaulay-Graham and Mary Wollstonecraft asserted the equal capabilities of women as reasonable beings.[3] Advocating education of an equal sort (Macaulay-Graham insisted on physical as well as intellectual exercise), they strove to free women from the restrictions of custom and law. In a passage from *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), Wollstonecraft captured the many paradoxes lodged within feminist discourse when she proclaimed, "Would men but generously snap our chains, and be content with rational fellowship instead of slavish obedience, they would find us more observant daughters, more affectionate sisters, more faithful wives, more reasonable mothers – in a word, better citizens." In a single testament, she combined the affective lives and political identities of women in an era hard at work constructing exclusive realms of public and private existence.

A feminist insistence upon equality and "sameness" confronted a formidable opponent in the form of medical discourse. The eighteenth century witnessed the development of a modern medical view of sexual difference based on the perceived nature of reproductive organs. According to older views, which posited sexual difference according to a hierarchy of four basic bodily fluids, male strength and intelligence could be explained by the "hotter" and "drier" humoral composition of male bodies. The brains of women, conversely, suffered from softness and their bodies, owing to an insufficient supply of heat, were incapable of rigorous activity. Despite the inferior place of women in the social and sexual hierarchy, however, the two sexes were biologically homologous: their sexual organs, though manifesting themselves differently, were understood to be inversions of one another. With the advent of new classifications in the eighteenth century, medical theory came to see male and female bodies as incommensurable. Lacking knowledge of hormones and many other details of modern sexual biology, such claims for incommensurability overwhelmed arguments for a one-sex model of human bodies.

Norms of gendered behavior changed as polite sociability became the hallmark of culture in the latter half of the eighteenth century. Masculinity and femininity were polarized according to new definitions of civilized behavior. Among educated elites, enlightened masculinity replaced old-style manhood; thoughtfulness, compassion, and delicacy replaced boorishness and brutality. Polite opinion came to look down upon wife-beating, though how far this affected wives' experiences is difficult to tell. Ideals of womanhood responded to material developments, including the expansion of luxury enjoyments entrusted to their supervision. The burgeoning romantic movement in literature and the arts celebrated the cultivation of interiority by both sexes. An increasing number of literary publications found eager subscribers in the burgeoning number of urban professionals. Influenced most of all by the magnetism of growing urban centers, women and men discovered new forms of entertainment at

pleasure gardens, musical and dramatic performances, and dignified sporting events. Literary societies, dinner clubs, and philanthropic gatherings created occasions for patronage and polite conversation; these elements provided opportunities for forging beneficial social alliances and marriage liaisons. In numerous instances, women emerged at the head of Enlightenment salons, leading discussions of new ideas and works of art and literature. Popular especially in Paris and Berlin, women found these settings a congenial arena for power. Leading lights of Berlin included Rahel Varnhagen and Henriette Herz, whose gender and Jewish identity afforded evidence of the enlightened tolerance of the age.

Gender and the "Dual Revolutions"

The major economic and political changes of the eighteenth and nineteeth century are often codified as two "revolutions," the industrial revolution and the French Revolution and its aftermath. In terms of the industrial revolution, more careful attention to the category of gender in economic life during this period proves how customary historical terminology misleads as much as it instructs. Historians thus have qualified the familiar "industrial revolution," turning instead to words like "industrious" and "process" to steer clear of the sense of uniformity suggested by the textbook expression. The old term, based on the British experience, drew from an evolutionary model that relied upon technological innovation (the substitution of machines for human labor) and the rational schemes of heroic entrepreneurs. Shorthand for women's experiences followed suit: women's work moved out of the home, so went the story, and into the factory, obtaining wages that led to expendable income for consumer items and personal independence. The rise of the male breadwinner wage eventually eclipsed this scenario, however, replacing the wage-earning female with a dependent woman who devoted her primary attention to home and family. Though blatantly simplistic, this picture of modernization has proven resolutely durable, not least because it celebrates a consensual approach to the gendered nature of the division of labor under capitalism.

The story of triumphant factory industry in fact obscures the considerable conflict between different ways of working, a conflict that resulted in the assignment of skill, authority, and higher rates of pay to male workers. In England, the rapid expansion of textile production brought many more women into wage labor, in both cottage and factory settings, but at rates of pay lower than those paid to male labor, and in some cases, below subsistence levels. A strict hierarchy of labor followed gender divisions: men occupied higher-paid positions as supervisors and workers assigned to skilled or "heavy" machine work (in the new spinning mills, for example), while women found jobs in weaving and particular forms of "light" industry (such as silk-throwing). Most women factory workers were young, many of them under twenty-one years of age, and unmarried. Factory owners viewed them as docile and malleable. By comparison, male workers organized successful unions in order to have some say over job assignments, maintenance of machines, and the exclusion of female workers. Excluded from most unions, particularly during the first half of the nineteenth century, women often worked sporadically in positions that lacked opportunities for advancement.

Though the path of textile industrialization in continental countries differed from that of England, women's work maintained a similar association with low pay, long

hours, and an absence of unionization. In German towns, for example, women formed the bulk of the workforce that ultimately broke the monopoly of guilds over the production of cloth in the eighteenth century. Laboring in workshops and paid by the piece, German women thus undermined male workers by accepting lower rates of pay. Not until late in the century, when the newly consolidated German state initiated large-scale industrial development, did women enter unions in large numbers and find a voice in industrial action. In France, as well as in Germany, greater percentages of women (46 percent and 59.5 percent, respectively) were employed in agriculture than in manufacturing (22.2 percent and 23.4 percent) as late as the 1880s. Though offering women an alternative to domestic service, industrial employment was stigmatized by posing a threat to female virtue and male breadwinning.

Factory employment never completely displaced putting-out industries in the nineteenth century. Many articles of consumption, as well as some textiles, continued to be produced partly or wholly in domestic settings, and women dominated these forms of production. Often confined to households owing to their role as mothers and wives, women seemed eager to find ways of earning wages to augment family income. This was particularly true for regions remote from factory settings and stymied by limited local economies, where male earnings were irregular and insufficient. Regions of every nation became noted for persistent cottage employments and by-industries, such as lacemaking, which were dominated by women. Though some settings reveal women to be the mainstay of household economies, these arrangements did not change the fact that workers in the putting-out industries exercised no power over the circumstances of their labor or their hopelessly low rates of pay.

Rural industry reminds us of the important fact that until 1890, most Europeans resided in the countryside. Eastern and Central Europe, Scandinavia, the Balkans, Ireland, the Iberian peninsula, and large areas of France and Italy were dominated by large agricultural regions. The estates of eastern Prussia employed newly emancipated peasants, women as well as men, from the early nineteenth century. Even when peasants owned their own farms, they found it necessary to work for wages on larger estates. In such cases, women usually worked at labor-intensive seasonal jobs, such as hoeing and weeding. Peasant farms were slow to modernize, since few families had the capital or incentive to invest in improvements. In such cases, relentless labor of both women and men kept families clinging to subsistence. In some areas of Sicily, sharecropping evolved alongside commercialized agriculture; with the decline of cottage textile production, women worked for wages in the fields, making up nearly 40 percent of the agricultural work force in 1881. In regions of France, seasonal work in vineyards drew male labor from surrounding regions, leaving women in charge of other forms of household production. It would be inaccurate to say that these vast areas remained untouched by developments in modernizing centers of Europe, as they responded in idiosyncratic ways to the incursion of commercial developments. With rural entrepreneurialism came a reorganization of labor, and some areas witnessed a decline in the proportion of female field labor. Decisive innovation would come after World War I, as improved roads and railways, communications, and schools brought urban mentalities to remote regions. In many cases, this meant a reinforcement of male authority within the family and a withdrawal of women from wage work.

Turn from economic to political change: through the events of French Revolution, which began in the spring of 1789, Europeans almost everywhere came to

understand what was at stake in the struggle against established authority. Provoked by a financial crisis within an unreformed monarchy, the revolt grew out of Louis XVI's hapless search for additional revenue. Deliberations soon spread outward into a broad political nation intent on forging its own strategies and agenda. Coinciding with an economic crisis of significant proportions, a series of administrative changes generated political demonstrations on the streets of Paris. As revolutionaries brought down the Church, proclaimed war against the monarchies of Europe, and beheaded the king, the outline of a wholly different form of governance emerged. The ideals of "liberty," "equality," and "fraternity" provided the vocabulary for the next century of political struggle, and, just as significant, the techniques of constructing a new form of political culture.

The democratic spirit of protest enlisted women from every rank of society. From across the country, women contributed to the lists of grievances assembled in the *cahiers des doleances* at the start of the Revolution. Women participated in the spontaneous politics of the streets, actively bringing down the Bastille and the tollgates surrounding Paris. Their momentous march to Versailles of October 5, 1789, provided a turning point for the early days of the Revolution. Seven thousand women, some of them armed with pikes and other weaponry, made their way to the royal chateau in the driving rain in order to demand written assurances of bread. Their actions contributed to a new sense of popular sovereignty that attended to the basic needs of all people. The National Assembly determined otherwise: by 1791, members hammered out a more limited polity, defining "active" and "passive" citizenship that excluded women and those without sufficient means. Only men who paid direct taxes equivalent to three days' labor qualified as voters in the new Republic. The divorce law of 1792, which enabled either party to initiate proceedings, answered the needs of many women, but the gender divisions imposed on political life added a dissonant theme to political life for the next century and a half. The eloquent response of Olympe de Gouges (1748–93) in *Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Citizen* (1791) stood as a testimonial to the frustrated aspirations of actual women. Framed against the female symbolism of liberty, the jettisoning of true equality was one of many ironies embodied by the Napoleonic regime that followed.

The Ideology of Difference and its Discontents

The Napoleonic Code, a set of laws instituted in 1804 by the self-appointed emperor and his administrators, became the cornerstone of nineteenth-century conservative values. The Code applied specifically to France and its imperial holdings, including considerable areas in the German and Italian states, but as an influence on the cultural life of all of Europe, it symbolized much more. By reinstating the unqualified authority of fathers and husbands, the laws enshrined a gendered division of public and private spheres. Deprived of power over property and earnings, decisions concerning domicile, and authority over children, married women lost their civil and legal status. Marital infidelity of women warranted severe punishment; that of men, with some exceptions, received none. Summed up by Louis de Bonald in his treatise against divorce, "In domestic society, or the family, man holds the power, and that power is indivisible; and in that public or general society, called the state, men should hold the power, always indivisible, in spite of appearances to the contrary." (His cam-

paign against divorce was rewarded when royalists abolished it, with few exceptions, in 1816.) Napoleon's social and legal design for society was reinforced by the power of the restored Catholic Church, which decried the former era of rationalism.

Though religious institutions exerted a conservative influence on European society in the early nineteenth century, religion paradoxically became the province of women. To paraphrase an historian of nineteenth-century America, Ann Douglas, religion became "feminized," not just within Protestantism, but across denominations and the general culture, for several reasons.[4] Within its own, somewhat cyclical history, theology moved away from rational bases of belief to a greater reliance on feeling and emotion at the end of the eighteenth century. Charismatic leaders such as John Wesley (1703–91) and Friedrich Daniel Schleiermacher (1768–1834) gave voice to a yearning for a "religion of the heart" that emphasized compassion and spiritual inspiration. This movement within religion corresponded to a counter-movement within political culture shaped by Enlightenment values: while religious belief emphasized the importance of family and community, formal political citizenship demanded rationalism and individual autonomy. The duality of religion and politics, female and male, created a gendered division of social labor. Coinciding with the evident social problems of urbanization and industrial developments, nineteenth-century women staked out their role as philanthropic volunteers and defenders of compassion and community.

By appealing directly to women for support, religious leaders stimulated voluntary activities that opened up avenues of service for women. Through the formal orders of nuns, cloistered and uncloistered, hundreds of thousands of Catholic women, such as the Sisters of Charity, worked in schools and hospitals. In Protestant nations, evangelical religion challenged the traditional gender hierarchy that characterized established religions. In the German states, overwhelmed by Napoleon from 1806 to 1813, religion acted as a vehicle for national revival and resistance. Schleiermacher urged women to free themselves from ignorance and seek renewal through religiously inspired activity, from tending the wounded on the battlefield to visiting the sick. In England, an evangelical revival affected the Church of England as well as the chapels of dissenting sects, stirring passions among women of all social classes. Many rose to positions of leadership and eminence. Hannah More (1745–1833) became a best-selling author of moral tracts and an advocate of Sunday School education for the poor. By exhorting women of the middle ranks to take up their duty as social custodians, she made charity work an acceptable sphere of female activity. Religious fervor also took on a more plebeian character within Methodism at the turn of the century, when women evangelicals moved into roles as local and travelling preachers. Hundreds of working-class women joined the ranks of Primitive Methodist preachers, offering a distinctive brand of cottage religion to adherents in villages and towns across England (including Cornwall) and Wales. Their work as public leaders, though phased out by the middle of the nineteenth century, represented a unique development in female ministry.

While governments and religious institutions sought to restore order in the wake of the French Revolution, Europeans continued to pose new solutions to the questions raised by political and economic change. How was citizenship to be constituted in an age of new opportunities? As Europeans produced more wealth, they reflected on issues of available resources and the organization of society. Not all people were

as pessimistic as Thomas Robert Malthus (1766–1834), who prophesied that population would outstrip the food supply if the current rate of growth were to continue. While liberal theorists advocated economic freedoms and an ideology of individualism, another stream of thinkers, the Utopian Socialists, countered these claims these with messages of harmony and collectivism. Uniting the rationalism of the Enlightenment with the sensibility of the Romantic movement, this diverse collection of ideas and reform movements promised to reopen the debate over the sexes in which the earlier century had so passionately engaged.

The ideas of Claude-Henri de Saint-Simon (1760–1825), Charles Fourier (1772–1837), and Robert Owen (1771–1858) found eager audiences across Europe and America, where societies founded in their names became pioneers in reorganizing society along new lines. Saint-Simonians promoted programs for a technocratic society that placed property in a public trust and valued the work of all, including the proletariat, as part of a collective effort. Primary among their goals was a revolution in gender relations. Issuing propaganda in favor of the emancipation of women, they argued that only by ending subordination and the brute force used to dominate others could true social harmony be achieved. Women, representing sentiment, peace, and love, acted as valued members of a collectivist vision. In the Revolution of 1830, when workers once again took to the streets of Paris, Saint-Simonian ideas enjoyed considerable popularity. Claire Bazard emerged as a leader within the mainly middle-class following of a movement for cooperative workshops and living arrangements. Their more radical demands, such as the end of mothering as a lifetime occupation of women and advocacy of free sexual relations, met with less enthusiasm. In later years, many Saint-Simonians transferred their allegiance to the Fourierist movement, where they were able to find yet another alternative to the bourgeois values of contemporary Europe.

Arguing that all women and men shared the same needs and rights, Utopian Socialists gave birth to two terms calculated to revolutionize the world: "socialism" and "feminism." (It is well known that when Marx and Engels composed *The Communist Manifesto* (1848), they felt it was necessary to search for another term – communism – to describe their revolutionary doctrine.) Thousands of Europeans gained familiarity with notions of egalitarianism, including gender equality, through the progressive activism growing out of these ideas, most notably, that of Scottish industrialist Robert Owen. Embarking on the construction of a "new view of society" (the title of his bold program statement, published in 1814), Owen launched an attack on the underpinnings of modern industrial society: the competitive individual, the nuclear family, and established religions. All three, he argued, fostered the selfishness and antagonism that riddled nineteenth-century society. His premise, that human nature took its character from its social environment, lent a measure of optimism to a wholesale critique of capitalism. Radicals like Emma Martin proposed reworking gender relations in Owen's "new moral world," though women were too often assigned a stereotypic responsibility of embodying generosity, love, and charity. Nevertheless, the movement generated outspoken criticism of romantic love, monogamous marriage, and private property – all hallmarks of the constraints of bourgeois private life.

In the era of reform ushered in by the 1830s, greater middle-class participation reinforced the gender hierarchies still apparent in political life. In Great Britain, the

Reform Act of 1832 created a parliament more representative of an increasingly commercial and industrial nation, though with considerable exclusion of the lower middle class and working class and, obviously, women of all classes. The participation of women was limited to extra-parliamentary activity, such as anti-slavery agitation in the 1820s and 1830s. Women proved exceptionally good at moral reform; it was their influence, for example, which pushed male leadership to adopt an abolitionist stance, rather than a gradualist approach, in the anti-slavery campaign. In France, the installation of a "bourgeois monarch," Louis Philippe, following the Revolution of 1830 inaugurated an era of modernizing efforts, though with less voluntary activity of women than in Protestant nations. Urban elites addressed new concerns, such as sanitation reform, prostitution, child labor, and education. In England, a series of factory acts, sanitation reform, and reorganization of the poor law generated intense interest in treating social problems through bureaucratic reform. France succeeded in passing laws mandating primary education. As factory industry spread across Europe, reforms in Prussia, Bavaria, Baden, Piedmont, Russia, and Zurich similarly attempted to curb abuses relating to child labor.

None of these changes sufficiently addressed the chasm separating the working classes of Europe from the benefits of industrialism, and it was through activism aimed at class conflict that radical ideas regarding gender relations could be found. Poverty of a new order advanced across the continent, particularly in cities like Paris, London, Manchester, Vienna, and Berlin. Migration of surplus population into cities and towns created unprecedented overcrowding, heightening the misery generated by inadequate housing and sanitation. Flora Tristan (1803–44) exhorted workers across France to organize, and in England, Chartists gave voice to both political and economic dissatisfactions among workers. In parts of Central and Eastern Europe, nationalist sentiments helped to stoke middle-class political ambitions. Combining with restive energies of skilled workers, who were displaced or underpaid owing to technological innovation, these forces mushroomed into revolt throughout Europe. The years 1846 and 1847 witnessed the worst subsistence crisis of the century, a potato blight, which destroyed crops in every nation and forced the price of food beyond the reach of the working poor and impoverished masses. Political instability and social unrest led to revolution; spreading from city to city, Europeans mounted what were, in effect, a succession of civil wars.

The era of revolution forced people everywhere to take stock of the problem of inequality, which Europeans understood primarily as an issue of social class and political agency. Radical uprisings sought economic justice and political reforms, often marginalizing the demands for a revision of gender relations. Radical reformers like Pauline Roland (1805–52) in France, Louise Otto-Peters (1819–95) in Germany, and female Chartists in England spoke out against the subordination of women, but they ultimately advocated better living conditions within the context of a traditional family order. Women participated at every level of action: women rioters made the price of bread a central issue in political struggles, while female journalists were outspoken critics of political regimes in cities like Frankfurt and Paris. In Sicily, women joined revolutionary armies in large numbers. Some appealed for wider educational opportunities for women, or better working conditions. A few dissonant voices, such as that of George Sand (1804–76) and Louise Aston (1814–71), demonstrated dissatisfaction with traditional female roles by adopting male clothing and styles of

behavior. Yet the forces of reaction that restored order in France and in the German and Italian states proved too powerful for such fissiparous energies. With the eclipse of these challenges and the rise of an era of carefully defined social norms, the 1850s marked the true beginning of what has been called "the bourgeois century."

Historians have used "separate spheres" to describe the organization of gender roles within this period. The term has come under relentless criticism for both its specificity ("separate spheres" evolved long before the nineteenth century) and its imprecision (neither sex occupied a realm unaffected by the existence or actions of the other). Yet the expression persists in common historical parlance because of its usefulness in underscoring an emphatic cultural preoccupation with sexual difference and its manifestations in the physical environment in the nineteenth century. At the heart of the division lay the heterosexual couple and the family, embodying the domesticated virtue and material success requisite for well-being. The age glorified courtship, marriage, children, and domestic comforts. Victorian art, literature, and popular music displayed the highly prescriptive nature of these values in their explorations of romance, infidelity, and archetypes of virtue and vice. Such polarized gender roles encouraged attendant social ills, most notably prostitution. The British Contagious Diseases Acts of 1867 and 1868, which attempted to regulate the health of prostitutes through forced examinations and hospitalization, resulted in official sanction of a double standard of sexual behavior. The reform movement that led to the repeal of the Acts galvanized men and women across class boundaries, offering abundant evidence of the degree to which Victorians analyzed the dynamics of power invested in sexual relations.

Middle-class men and women still constituted a relatively small part of the European population; in England, where their numbers were greatest, they comprised only one-sixth of the nation. Yet their influence during the bourgeois century was disproportionate to their numbers. The considerable expansion of professional, administrative, and service positions meant that more people gained a certain amount of the prestige and social influence associated with such occupations, along with access to material wealth. Urban dwellings came to reflect a demand for privacy and comfort, and a long list of belongings – the parlor piano, ornate draperies, fine china service – entered the realm of necessity for successful families. A "woman's touch" rendered the domestic realm a haven of sentiment and delight, while masculine prerogative took the shape of the *flâneur*, a perpetual observer of modern life who sampled the sensations and sexuality available to men. New public spaces, epitomized by the renovation of Paris under Haussmann, enabled the prestigious classes, as well as the masses, to see and be seen in a carefully designed, pleasing environment.

For some bourgeois women, the domestic setting provided a foundation, rather than an impediment, for further agency. The problems of urban poverty and disease in Hamburg led Amalie Sieveking (1794–1859) to venture into the male province of philanthropy. Inspired by the work of the Catholic Sisters of Charity, but determined to avoid the authoritarian strain of the religious orders, Sieveking founded the Female Association for the Care of the Poor and the Sick in 1832. As Sieveking observed, "[I]n a great many cases, namely those of the upper classes, household and other domestic responsibilities do not offer the female side of the family a sufficient arena for the sum of their energies."[5] Volunteers visited needy households and reported back to the Association, devising ways of teaching poor women how

to earn, save, and maintain their homes in a manner like that of their middle-class counterparts.

Lay women in Catholic countries also responded to the need for social action, either by joining existing societies aimed at helping the poor, such as those founded earlier by St. Vincent de Paul, or by organizing their own societies. Mme. Louis Josson, the wife of a government official in the 1840s, founded the Confraternity of Christian Mothers for women who needed to rescue their husbands and sons from unbelief. Spanish philanthropist Concepcion Arenal (1820–93), while urging women of means to use encounters with the poor as a vehicle for further reflection on their own meekness and contrition, actively lobbied to improve conditions in prisons. Protestant women in Britain most often turned their efforts towards institutional reforms and professional social service. Perhaps the most famous British woman of this era was Florence Nightingale (1820–1910), known for her reform of hospital conditions and the nursing profession. Mary Carpenter (1807–77) established schools to rehabilitate juvenile offenders and Louisa Twining's efforts brought about the improvement of poorhouses. By an Act of Parliament in 1875, women were enabled to assume appointments as poorhouse guardians. Over the course of the century, such volunteer work paved the way for government-sponsored social work.

The central notion of "woman's mission" in nineteenth-century history cannot be understood without mention of the importance of the anti-slavery movement for European, particularly British, women. From the eighteenth century, the campaign to end the slave trade and, eventually, slavery itself inspired humanitarian efforts to halt the traffic in Africans to the Americas. British women reformers and writers, including poets, found grounds for identification with the oppressed, attempting to reach across the barrier of race on the basis of gender, in order to decry violations of correct family relations and female modesty in the treatment of slaves in America. Anti-slavery activism in the 1820s taught women reformers the basics of grassroots mobilization; pamphlet-writing, petitioning, fundraising bazaars, door-to-door canvassing, consumer boycotts, and financial management of burgeoning funds catapulted northern women like Elizabeth Heyrick, a Quaker of Leicester and later Birmingham, into positions of prominence. By mid-century, the movement had promoted close relations between American and British organizations, which brought about exchange visits and public testimonials by former slaves themselves. Though often self-celebrating and Eurocentric in outlook, the movement alerted many Europeans to the problematic development of racial categories.

Built into the French and industrial revolutions was an expansionist ideology: the logic of their own cultural and material achievement led Europeans into other parts of the world, searching for commercial opportunities, resources, or simply adventure. By the nineteenth century, involvement in Africa and Asia grew into more explicit relationships of political and cultural domination. Historical debate over the various aspects of imperialism has emerged as an important component within cultural studies. Generalizations are difficult, given the differences among European nations and the timing and degree of their involvements. Many studies have focused on British imperialism, generalizing from what was actually a culturally specific and at times anomalous project. In recent years, historians have focused more attention on the dynamics of the relationship between colonizer and the colonized, particularly with regard to gender and race.

The European empire was, above all, a peculiarly male-defined world, a population of administrators and military personnel superimposed on the colonized nation through a mixture of force, ritual, and persuasion. Given these parameters, a peculiar paradox emerged: subordinated as female, European women felt they could identify with the oppressed condition of colonial subjects; yet as colonial people, they were complicit in imposing Western ideology, including Western patriarchy, upon an indigenous population. European missionary work could prompt interactions contrary to the intentions of Western domination, for example by prompting assertive behavior on the part of indigenous women or by destabilizing households and villages that missionaries meant to reinforce. While extending education and Western welfare measures to the colonized, Europeans inevitably divided populations against each other. Unconscious of their own role in provoking conflict, Europeans persisted in attempting to root out practices at odds with their own values. Some of the most fraught issues stemming from these conflicts related to gender relations. The practices of *sati* (the self-sacrifice of a widow on her husband's funeral pyre) in India and clitoridectomy in areas of Africa represented to Westerners the "excesses" of indigenous belief systems. Yet disentangling such practices from their context of social relations, religion, and ideology proved impossible.

The natural sciences, including the rapidly developing field of medicine, were implicated in this same reformulation of gender in the mid-nineteenth century. Darwin's discoveries, using physical evidence to show the importance of sexual difference in nature, impinged upon social theory. Victorian anatomists asserted that the sex differences found in men and women offered evidence of unequal abilities, including mental capabilities. Liberal arguments, such as John Stuart Mill's call for the gradual eradication of the subordination of women, came into direct conflict with biological theories. Polarized sexual identities for men and women proliferated as part of the growing body of popular knowledge in the latter part of the nineteenth century. The fledgling profession of psychoanalysis entered into the debate, building psychological theories of sexuality and the drive towards procreation on social ideas of gender hierarchies and the complementarity of the sexes. German psychiatrist Richard von Krafft-Ebing (1840–1902) and the English physician Havelock Ellis (1859–1939) attempted to reduce the varieties of sexual behavior to knowable patterns and laws, such as Ellis's emphasis on the female destiny of reproduction. "Woman breeds and tends; man provides; it remains so even when the spheres tend to overlap." Compared to these theories, Sigmund Freud's contributions proposed more variability, arguing that mental inclinations, affected by accidents of individual experience, formed the basis of sexual identity. Yet heterosexuality constituted the social norm around which theorists organized their ideas, and within that norm, conventionally defined masculinity represented the apex of social behavior. Only theories of pathology could explain homosexuality, which became defined explicitly as deviance by the turn of the century.[6]

Reorienting the Dual Revolutions: The Rise of Socialism and Feminism

The rise of socialism as a powerful social theory and a political movement marked the last third of the nineteenth century. As a rational, totalistic explanation for the

development of capitalism, socialism offered yet another convincing evolutionary model of historical change. Like Darwinism, it appealed to notions of scientific thinking based on careful observation and analysis. Its theories of the impending collapse of capitalism spoke to the unease generated by a long economic downturn known to European historians as the "Great Depression," which stretched from 1873 to the early 1890s. Most apparent in Great Britain, the slackening of growth in heavy industry and agriculture led to widespread business failures and mass unemployment. Competition among nations, including newly industrialized Germany, brought about a leveling of prices, including the cost of food. Yet workers were more aware of hard times than cheaper provisions, magnified by technological innovations associated with the "second industrial revolution." Inspired by charismatic leaders like Rosa Luxemburg (1870–1919) and Jean Jaures (1859–1914), thousands joined new mass political parties and trade unions. Capitalizing on improved methods of communication and organization, including cheap newsprint and mass demonstrations, these groups alerted all of society to political and social inequalities and economic injustice.

A significant rise in feminist agitation contributed to the new political climate, particularly as mass political parties and the push towards democratic systems of governance raised the awareness of greater numbers of Europeans. Some movements persisted in pressing for rights associated with liberal reform, above all, the rights of women to vote, own property, and claim equal protection under the law. Demands for higher education and wider opportunities for employment for women preoccupied liberal reformers from the middle of the century. After 1870, feminism drew from a wider spectrum of social constituencies, galvanizing working-class participants as well as middle-class women active in philanthropy, religion, and socialism. The result was a complex set of efforts, not without contradictions: the reform of property and divorce laws; the dissemination of information about birth control; the reform of laws relating to prostitution; cultural expressions of female independence; state-funded services for mothers and infants; and the extension of the vote for women.

Feminism thrived within the charged atmosphere of *fin de siècle* Europe, historians have argued, as part of a larger challenge to the ideological and cultural certainties of the nineteenth century, including norms of gender. With the erosion of an ideology of self-help came a related erosion of old ideas about masculinity. The decline of craft industry, replaced by more widespread mechanization, resulted in a decline in autonomy for an important segment of the male workforce. Male workers faced a rapidly changing configuration of forces in the world of work. Underscoring their displacement was the entrance of over two million more women into new forms of employment created by the expansion of the tertiary sector of the economy: in clerical positions, especially in expanding insurance companies and banks, in shops and department stores, and as telephone and telegraph operators. The expansion in municipal institutions drew large numbers of middle-class women into waged employment, as teachers, librarians, government administrators, and nurses. Exploitative piecework at home continued as one of the largest sectors of working-class female employment, aided by the affordability of sewing machines after 1865, along with menial work in domestic service. As unionization of unskilled labor increased, businesses in every sector sought ways of rationalizing and streamlining efforts. With the

rise of scientific management, the male worker found it impossible to claim authority on the basis of custom alone. If patriarchal hierarchies were to survive, they would do so in a new political and social environment.

The "New Woman" emerged from this contentious context, confident of her independence in the diverse urban environment at the turn of the century. Her quest for self-understanding, freedom from convention, and sexual satisfaction became legendary in fiction and drama, through Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* (1879), George Bernard Shaw's *Major Barbara* (1905), and Sigrid Undset's *Jenny* (1911). Encountering derision as "manly women" and "spinsters," bold women emerged on public platforms and in the creative world. Some, like Annie Besant (1847–1933), labor organizer and political activist, shocked contemporaries by their flagrant disavowal of family life, traditional Christian values, and monogamous sexual relations. Others, like Maria Montessori (1870–1952), promoted the professional contributions of women in medicine and childhood education. Such leadership in campaigns for equal opportunities for women reaped important gains, yet they also provoked deep fears of the power of women in modern settings: as consumers, cultural arbiters, and political agents.

The struggle for women's suffrage, with twenty-first-century hindsight, may appear as a logical extension of feminist efforts, but resistance rose from many quarters, and in some instances, from women themselves. Anti-suffrage sentiment drew strength from nineteenth-century notions of gender difference, which emphasized the complementarity of women and their duties rather than their rights in society. In England, such sentiment led to organized opposition in the form of a petition signed by thousands of women, including the socialist reformer Beatrice Webb. In France, fear of an alliance of women with conservative clerical forces kept many liberal men from supporting female suffrage. Many Marxian socialists opposed women's suffrage on the grounds that it distracted attention from the need for more systemic renovation of society; the best strategy, many argued, would be to seek universal suffrage, which would include people of both sexes who were too poor to qualify for the limited property suffrage advocated by most women activists. It is impossible to ignore cultural antagonism towards women generally in anti-suffrage efforts, demonstrated in various forms of misogynistic statements and actions, that strove to place women in subordinate positions. Such deep-rooted hostility to women proved hard to counteract. Particularly in Catholic countries, women had too few opportunities to assume leadership roles that could offset antipathy towards their participation in the public realm.

New Century, Modern Norms

By the first decade of the twentieth century, most European nations displayed features that would characterize the next era: increasing urbanization, a dramatic decline in birth rates, rising consumption of a wider array of goods and services, and a greater expectation of entitlements provided by governments. As liberal governments moved towards creating democratic polities, new policies relating to education and welfare provisions reiterated familiar discourses of gender: male-dominated state bureaucracies allocated resources to mothers dedicated to providing for the nation. Militant efforts to obtain suffrage for women, led by Hubertine Auclert (1848–1914) in France and Emmeline Pankhurst (1857–1928), her daughter Christabel (1880–1958), and Annie Kenney (1879–1953) in England, contributed to the

tensions of the prewar period. Gender equality proved impossible to disentangle from the larger context of material and social life.

The production and dissemination of knowledge about hygiene as it related to gender was a key feature of European life at the end of the century. An argument as basic as germ theory, in the public domain after 1865, led to a government-sponsored "gospel of soap and clean water" aimed at mothers as part of an effort to improve infant mortality in France. International competition heightened the urgency of national campaigns to support a falling rate of population growth. Following the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–1, concern mounted over what appeared to be an unnatural decline in French natality; the census of 1891 only confirmed fears that the nation was in danger of falling behind other continental powers in numbers and strength. (The German population had grown by more than four times the increase in France between 1880 and 1891.) Such concerns prompted a rhetoric of "social motherhood" and a notable shift in the attitude of the government towards single and poor mothers in need of assistance. Governments everywhere began to allocate greater resources to the health and welfare of the poor, many of whom were women formerly disciplined or shunned by religious and state agencies.

The growth of welfare bureaucracies in European nations resulted from a confluence of voluntary and state initiatives. Historians have debated the relative strength of the two sources of effort, but within both streams, women played key roles in identifying and servicing needy sectors of the population. Maternalist discourses, which emphasized the essential value of female nurturance and moral awareness, mobilized men and women of all social classes to allocate resources to mothers and children in need. At the head of the League for the Protection of Motherhood, Lily Braun advocated that women offset the distinctly male character of German industrial society, including the decidedly masculine socialist movement. Conservative organizations outnumbered feminist and suffrage groups: the Ligue Patriotique, for example, boasted over 400,000 members by World War I. Women from all over Europe collaborated in organizations aimed at designing protective legislation, and many parallel developments gave women with subsidized nurseries, maternity leaves, and payments upon childbirth.

The outbreak of war in 1914 mobilized nationalist sentiments and reasserted conventional gender divisions. It is true that the crisis of wartime production enlisted the efforts of women in unconventional roles throughout society. But given the tensions embedded in maternalist state policies, as well as the social conflict created by the sexual freedom of women, the extraordinary conditions of war would leave many questions unanswered. The dual revolutions had made possible a reorganization of political power and the creation of resources without historical precedent. Whether or not these advances could achieve the political parity and economic justice embedded in the principles of the dual revolutions remained to be seen.

NOTES

1 Mary Astell, "Preface," *Reflections upon Marriage.* 3rd edition (London, 1706), x–xi.

2 See Roger Lonsdale, ed. *Eighteenth Century Women Poets* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).

3 Catharine Macaulay-Graham, *Letters on Education* (London, 1787).
4 Ann Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture* (1977, repr. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1998).
5 Quoted in Catherine M. Prelinger, "Prelude to Consciousness: Amalie Sieveking and the Female Association for the Care of the Poor and the Sick," in Ruth-Ellen B. Joeres and Mary Jo Maynes *German Women in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1986), p. 19.
6 Weeks (1981), p. 141.

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Chapter Twenty-six

Latin America and the Caribbean

Sonya Lipsett-Rivera

This period encompasses a time of major changes in the region ranging from political status to economic life, but most especially in the cultural realm. The lives of women and men in 1750 were quite starkly different in many ways from those of their counterparts in 1914. During this period one of the most important changes was the beginning of a reconfiguration of the concept of female utility and the embracing of the concept of social motherhood. This seemingly benign notion began the slow transformation of female roles but also forced changes in male roles and expectations. Begun with the idea that women could form better future citizens, it gave mothers a foothold in claiming authority over their children and eventually forced a reevaluation of male familial roles. At the same time, it fed into the heightened moral expectations for women that were so prevalent in this period and also began to change gendered conceptions of morality. In effect, female utility was a slow-moving but revolutionary concept.

The Bourbons

The colonial world's legal statutes were influential in shaping gender because they assigned roles to men and women and restricted women as to their functions and rights in society. Families in the Hispanic world were governed by the legal doctrine of *patria potestas*, which gave fathers tremendous authority over their children. Mothers, however, did not share in this authority over their children. When widowed, women had a precarious control over their own offspring that could be taken away if they showed any signs of frivolity or immorality. These ideas were rooted in centuries-old Hispanic laws which were applied both in the empire and in the notion of women's inherent inferiority. But these arguments began to alter very slowly at the end of the eighteenth century when royal officials and colonial thinkers started to reassess women's utility within society.

By the middle of the eighteenth century, the conceptions of gender roles emanating from Spain began to change. The Bourbon reforms, a series of measures adopted by the new Spanish dynasty from early in the century, were starting to affect

the colonial world. A similar movement, under the leadership of the Portuguese minister Pombal, influenced Brazil. The push to modernize allowed for a new secular intellectual framework that permitted the widespread and easy discussion of new ideas in the colony. Maria Graham, who traveled to Brazil in this period, remarked on the witty conversation of Brazilian ladies who were very well-acquainted with the prevailing ideas of the time (Burns, 1975). Despite these observations, Brazilians did not embrace the prevailing notion that female education was important. The debates common in Spanish America, which led to a widespread acceptance of schooling for girls, were adopted late in the nineteenth century in Brazil. In the Caribbean, vocational training for poor white girls was a strategy embraced in Barbados in the late eighteenth century but female education in general was not accepted until the late nineteenth century (Forde-Jones, 1998).

Enlightened officials in Spain had absorbed a lesson from the prevailing European philosophy that privileged child rearing as useful to a productive and prosperous state. Suddenly the role of mothers in this process became important. Bureaucrats and thinkers alike started to ponder women's role in society. Motherhood became an important function within the State, and therefore so did the preparation of women, and, in particular, their education. Brother Benito Gerónimo Feijóo y Montenegro's writings were particularly influential in advancing this point of view. Considered the seminal figure of the Spanish Enlightenment, he argued that women could become productive members of society with the proper training. Accordingly, young girls should be taught skills that made them knowledgeable, thrifty, and sensible. These ideas had practical consequences such as the opening of many more schools for girls as well as a more general acceptance of the utility of female literacy. The actual program of expanding female education was not implemented equally within Spanish America. It was in New Spain that the plan was most forcefully applied with the founding of many new schools for girls.

While providing an educated motherhood was sufficient for the women of the elite, reformers believed that poor women should become productive workers as well. In Spain, the enlightened Count of Campomanes argued that women could take over certain trades that had often been occupied by men. Such work was not so physically taxing and thus perfectly suited to women and could free up men to take on more arduous work. Also because women could be paid less, the cost of the goods produced would be cheaper. Of course, such modifications required changes not only in law, such as the freeing up of guild regulations, but also in the gendered concepts of work. Trades such as embroidery, which had been done by men, began to be redefined as delicate work only appropriate to female hands. One of the concrete ways that Bourbon reformers began to redirect gendered notions of work was in the foundation of tobacco manufactories. These institutions provided work, without guild control or restrictions, to both men and women, who could then earn a living wage. By 1810 workers at the tobacco manufactories were primarily women. The workforce's transformation can be related to gender notions; those in charge began to perceive women as naturally more moral and less likely to steal. Women used tactics of resistance and were as vociferous as men in their opposition to certain requirements, but the new gendered ideas of female work habits seem to have prevailed. Of course, they were also paid less than men were (Deans-Smith, 1994). However, this example shows how, at a certain level, the notion of higher standards of morality

were beginning to be associated with women. Mothers also began to use this notion to assert rights over their children even though the laws concerning parental authority still favored men. In this way, gender roles within the family and, as perceived by society, began to be altered in advance of lawmakers.

The Bourbons also tried to impose a more stringent morality in the colonies. The campaign to make the plebeian classes more orderly and rational had many facets. Many church officials embraced campaigns to oblige women to dress decently – that is, to avoid fashion statements that displayed their bodies. At the same time, both religious and secular officials were concerned that men wore feminized versions of their clothes thus blurring the lines of gender. In Mexico, attempts were made to try to implement a more stringent separation of the sexes in the theater, the baths, and toilets.

The traditional concepts of honor, as derived from Mediterranean culture, shaped the way men and women conceived of their social place. Personal honor was partly derived from status as a result of birth within a respectable, usually noble family. But honor was also acquired by conduct, that is to say, by behaving in a virtuous manner. Although the upper classes did not recognize that plebeians could claim honor, the lower classes believed themselves to be honorable through conduct and fiercely defended their self-identity as honorable individuals. Standards of honor differed by gender. Women retained their honor by their sexual purity. Chastity before and fidelity after marriage as well as circumspect behavior in all areas of life were key to maintaining female honor. Plebeian women had more difficulty negotiating such modesty because their daily life and work forced them out into public spaces. Yet, they claimed honor by virtue of their respect for the code of sexual purity. Masculine honor was very much related to their role as a patriarch, their ability to control the sexuality of dependent women. Therefore any insult or seduction of a daughter, or worse, a wife, was a very serious affront to an honorable man. Related to this male control was the notion that men had to regulate the mobility of women within their household. The code of manliness (*hombría*) that governed plebeian men, apart from the notion of control over women, privileged hospitality and generosity. As Sarah Chambers (1999) notes, in late-eighteenth-century Peru an honorable man could not refuse when offered a drink and then was obliged to buy the next round. Challenges to masculine honor were usually answered with violence. Plebeian men particularly had very little tolerance for such provocation. Knife fights were extremely common and the instigation could be as simple as touching another man's beard. Very often, however, words that denigrated manhood were at the root of these conflicts (Johnson in Johnson and Lipsett-Rivera, 1998; Chasteen, 1990). In frontier areas, masculine honor was very much associated with military action and the feminization of hostile indigenous men such as the Apaches. In order to assert their masculinity and consequent honor, frontier men had to feminize indigenous men and appropriate their women. Elite men also protected their honor via the duel's more elaborate and stylized violence or, failing that, in the courts. Despite the gender image of reclusive passive women, when either their own or their families' honor was challenged, many women answered with violence (Alonso, 1995). Despite the fact that both men and women did not live up to the requirements of honor – and in fact these were quite diffuse and variable – honor was intertwined with gender expectations. Honor codes, such as they were, defined the demands for both men and women.

Notions of honor also served indirectly to gender spaces. The house and all interior spaces were characterized as feminine spaces. Ideally, women were supposed to restrict their movements outside of the house and defined themselves as honorable, modest, and proper women if they stayed within their house's walls. The streets with all the hustle and bustle of crowds, merchants, processions, and noise were considered to be a masculine space. Therefore, when women went out into the streets they were entering a masculine, sexualized space. Women who had to work, either as domestic servants, in the market, or selling goods in the streets could not obey such strictures. In addition, even women who worked primarily for their own households had to go to the fountain to get water, to do errands, and to wash clothes among many other tasks that took them out of the house. Yet, the idea that good and honorable women stayed at home weighed heavily upon women of all classes. Because men of honor had to control the mobility of their wives, lovers, daughters, and even servants, they often found fault with these women for straying from the domestic enclosure.

The picture of gender as derived from the honor model provides a framework in which to place the relations between women and men in late-colonial societies. But it is important not to assume that women and men accepted this model at face value. Clearly it was significant in the way that it shaped the constraints of everyday life but women, especially of the lower classes, challenged the ways that it could confine their movements and rights. Although the model was generally accepted, people flouted its conventions in practice (Stern, 1995). Nevertheless, honor was a powerful tool in shaping gender relations and one that republican societies began to alter to suit their new necessities in the nineteenth century.

Rebellions

In Latin America and the Caribbean, the eighteenth century was characterized by regular localized rebellions. Most of these disturbances did not really threaten colonial rule but a few spread beyond the boundaries of local jurisdictions. Research on rebellions in eighteenth-century Mexico shows that women played a prominent role in the uprisings. Women often led mobs of men in facing down royal officials, using their wounds to spur on the opposition. At other times, the crowd was composed almost entirely of women (Taylor, 1979). The reason for this seemingly discordant role may have hinged on notions of gender. It is possible that women tried to use male reluctance to attack women because of ideas of women's inviolability. Yet, clearly officials did not hesitate to use violence against recalcitrant women. However, the practice of using women as a buffer between striking men and police, for example, or in other similar situations in twentieth-century Latin America, seems to derive from this pattern. In slave societies, both men and women constantly challenged the system that oppressed them with small everyday acts of disobedience or noncooperation or, less frequently, with rebellions or plots of uprisings to end slavery (Bush, 1998).

Before the end of the eighteenth century, colonies in Latin America and the Caribbean were shaken by major upheavals that challenged and, in some cases, overturned colonial rule. In 1780 indigenous armies following Tupac Amaru II temporarily overturned colonial rule in large areas of the Andes. Women were a large

component of these armies and the revolt itself. There may be precedents for their active participation in Andean history as in previous anti-colonial movements such as the Manco Capac movement, women and children went into battle and in general, in Andean indigenous society women defended folkways and rituals. The Tupac Amaru II revolt began to a great extent as a reaction against officials' abuses associated with the Bourbon reforms but it quickly transformed into a race war. Women, as much as men, were affected by these injustices. In this movement women served as soldiers and military commanders, not simply as camp followers. In fact many of the most influential leaders of the movement were women. Micaela Bastidas, wife of Tupac Amaru II, commanded the secretariat in San Felipe de Tungasucan and as such was responsible for safe-conduct passes, as well as food and supplies for a large region. She played an important role in strategic military decisions and in fact became such a significant symbol that soldiers carried her image into battle. Tomasa Titu Condemayta, the *cacica* (leader) of Acas, an Inca noble in her own right, defended the Pilpinto pass for over a month and supplied the movement with money and food. Later as the rebellion spread to present-day Bolivia, in the Tupac Katari phase, Bartola Sisa took charge of a contingent of 2,000 troops in the absence of male leadership.

When most of the rebel leaders were arrested in 1783, thirty-two out of seventy-three were women. The colonial officials who tried the rebels were particularly horrified at women's role in the struggle. It shocked their gender notions and they were at pains to portray the women as particularly cruel and to masculinize them. The attorneys defending these women tried to use traditional gender stereotypes to excuse them, stating that they had simply been obeying cruel husbands or male leaders. But, in fact, the sentences meted out to women rebels were often harsher than those of their male counterparts. The judges in fact had to distort the law of *lesa majestad* (betrayal of the crown) because it did not refer to women. The women were executed although, in deference to their sex, they were garroted instead of being publicly hanged.

In 1781 in Gran Colombia, the Comuneros, a primarily creole movement, challenged viceregal authority. Women were active participants both in leadership and supportive roles, and as actual participants in the army that was formed (Cherpak, 1978). The region was also rocked with some important indigenous and slave revolts. Such participation presaged the active role that women took in the Wars of Independence.

All over Latin America and the Caribbean slaves rose up in armed revolt but no movement had as much impact as the successful slave revolution in Haiti. After many years of upheavals and uncertainty linked to the French Revolution, in 1791 slaves rebelled against their masters and began a bloody war for freedom. The revolution started with a voodoo ceremony presided over by one of the movement's first leaders: Boukman. But some historians report that a high priestess, possibly Cécile Fatiman, also led the ceremonies. Women took many roles in this movement. The nuns of the Communauté des Religieuses Filles de Notre Dame du Cap Français reported seeing a former pupil, a mulatress known as the Princesse Améthyste, who headed a company of women called Amazons. They were recruited from the convent through their initiation into voodoo. Women also stood out in slave movements in the rest of the Caribbean. Nanny of Maroons, guerrilla commander for Jamaican slaves, is a national heroine in Jamaica. Nanny Griggs, famous for her role in the 1816 Barbados slave

rebellion, was literate, and promulgated the idea that the Haitian slave revolution needed to be replicated (Beckles 1999).

Wars of Independence

The battle to overthrow royal control in the Spanish colonies was portrayed by the rebels in terms of a family struggle. King Ferdinand VII had ceased to be a loving father figure and had become a hateful and cruel stepmother. When the wars of independence broke out in the early nineteenth century, lower-class women participated in their usual roles in rebellions. Elite women exerted their newly expanded social roles to become directly involved in the struggle for independence. Voluntarily and against their will, women helped both sides. They participated in these wars in a number of ways that extended their gender roles. The *Rabonas* of Peru followed their male companions into battle and are viewed as precursors of the *soldaderas* or women soldiers who participated in the Mexican Revolution of 1910. Some women stood out because of their heroism and because they were martyred by Royalist army officials. In 1817, the Spanish executed Policarpia Salvarrieta, known as "La Pola" in Colombia for her role in the war. She became a symbol inspiring many to join the cause. Many other women achieved local prominence because of their role as soldiers. Evangelista Tamayo fought under the command of Simon Bolívar in Colombia. Leona Vicario fought for Hidalgo in Mexico. Some put on men's clothing in order to take a more active role while others operated within more traditional gender roles. In Mexico royalist officers accused women of "seducing" their soldiers away to the cause of independence. In all the different struggles throughout the region, they also served as spies, couriers, nurses, and recruiters within the traditional salon or *tertulia*. Even women who remained loyal to the crown began to work in ways that extended their gender roles. They formed patriotic organizations, often with a religious overtone, that published pamphlets, raised funds, and helped the poor in an attempt to preserve loyalty to the king's cause. The activities of royalist and rebel women provided them with an opportunity to act publicly – that is, to take on roles within male spaces. These actions became public political acts and showed that domestic activities – female tasks – could have a public as well as a private usefulness. Not everyone was very comfortable with this overt participation. In many instances, men chose to portray women as victims and to transform their participation into symbolic and passive acts. There was particular anxiety over female mobilization that was translated into the constant recounting of rapes. For many male leaders female patriotism was appropriate only if it was from the sidelines. There is considerable debate as to how much female activity during this period effectively altered the way women were perceived by both sides. Clearly, however, women took active roles and these were recognized, albeit at times in ways that diminished their feats in the struggle for independence.

Slavery and Emancipation

In the late eighteenth century slaves were present both in the cities and the countryside of Latin America and the Caribbean. Their lives differed considerably depending upon the concentration of African populations and what jobs they were assigned.

In some respects, the work of slaves was determined by gender. Male slaves were usually assigned to skilled occupations in the plantations. In the cities, apart from domestic work, female slaves were usually allocated such occupations as street vendors, laundresses, and prostitutes. In the plantations, however, there was no gender distinction in relation to work in the fields and in some cases female slaves outnumbered male in the field gangs' arduous work. The ideas that provided a justification for slavery also influenced gender notions. Female slaves were often perceived as sexual libertines. This image was derived from various practices, many of which were out of their control. Yet this view was long-lasting and even after the end of slavery, African qualities or dark color were equated with sexual promiscuity. Thus women who practiced prostitution or who were "morally deficient," in the parlance of the times, were often described as dark no matter what their racial phenotype. At the same time, the lure of African sensuality was thought to have a deleterious effect on young men's morals, sapping their virility and feminizing them (Suarez-Findlay, 1999).

Slavery remained a reality in much of Latin America and the Caribbean even after independence. Many Latin American countries abolished slavery at independence but it continued as an institution much longer in the Caribbean, Brazil, and Peru. In the British Caribbean, however, white women practiced a "gender culture of exclusion." They tended to masculinize African-American women who were enslaved, denying that they had anything in common. White elite women supported the continuation of slavery. Some non-white free women did, however, take up the cause of emancipation. In the 1820s, Sarah Ann Gill of Barbados used her pulpit in the Methodist Church to urge that Christianity and slaveholding were incompatible. The Hart sisters of Antigua, also radical Methodists, denounced the institution of slavery in pamphlets and polemics. In addition, they wrote about gender issues, women's rights, and social justice in general (Beckles, 1999). In Brazil, where slavery was only abolished in 1888, by the 1860s elite white women took up the cause of emancipation. They embraced this goal and many others in part to break out of their traditional isolation but also to be able to feel that they had some social utility. Most Brazilian women who worked in the abolition campaigns took secondary roles, content to raise funds by selling items or organizing *soirées*. But a small number of women went further and, for instance, sheltered runaway slaves in their homes. Another few spoke out publicly on the topic, not fearing the consequent ridicule they faced. The question of slavery occupied the minds and hearts of all Brazilians in this period. Becoming part of the debate, even if in minor roles, was a way that Brazilian women declared their right to be part of an important political discussion (Hahner, 1990).

New Nations

There is some debate as to how women's participation in the struggle for independence affected their position in society once it was achieved. More importantly, was the expansion of gender roles seen in the previous period maintained in the new nations? In fact the conception of women in the new republics was cumulative. The greater emphasis on female education and work that had begun in the late-colonial period, as well as the active role that many women took in the wars for independence, did not translate into political rights *per se*. Rather it evolved more slowly and

subtly into a consciousness among many women of the importance of their social roles and an acceptance of such active participation by many men. Some involvement was an extension of traditional roles. For example, the emergence of more formal charity organizations such as foundling homes and orphanages, set up and run by women, could be seen as derived from their previous association with pious works. At times, the female-run charities were a practical solution for governments who could not or would not fund such organizations. In Argentina, high-society ladies of Buenos Aires ran the Society for Beneficence, established shortly after independence. It was initially established in order to set up and run a girl's public elementary school system. Eventually it took on female orphanages, charity hospitals, prisons, a normal school, and social welfare. It became a major political force within Argentina. But women also began to agitate for a voice in political matters, using collective petitions to pressure the government. Again, however, this might be seen as an extension of the way that women in the colonial period wrote letters of petition to the king, the viceroy, or local officials. Yet, here women were not asking for personal favors but rather trying to influence political decisions. Also they were beginning to work collectively to create a voice for themselves in the political sphere (Arrom, 1985).

Even as the role of mothers was being elevated in social discourse, the creation of new nations also meant the need to foster patriotism. In Mexico, civic leaders used the family as a trope in their civic project. They presented the president as the new father-figure replacing the sovereign. As they began to conceptualize the nation in patriotic discourse, they inserted the family as a common image to evoke nation, but within this discourse the father-figure was supreme. The patriarchal image introduced the idea of hierarchy and authority over the population. Citizens were equal but had to accept the government's fatherly right to rule. Just as women were seeking a greater voice in public life, the nation was gendered masculine. This shaping of the nation's social discourse limited the ways that women could hope to influence politics. In Peru the discourse of republicanism began to alter gender roles – as based on the honor system – in very subtle but important ways. For men, the primary way to earn honor began to be through military service. Both men and women were presented with a higher standard of morality. For men, this was primarily articulated in the work ethic embraced by the new republic. The traditional category of patriarch, which men had earned simply by being head of household, suddenly became associated with those who actually earned the money to support the family. This notion of male honor was equated on some levels with that of citizenship. But citizenship was denied to all those who could not qualify as a head of household: the unemployed, slaves, servants, and all women. Ironically, throughout the region female-headed households were common, if invisible to those who formulated this discourse. Male honor therefore became embedded in the dual notions of service to nation and work. The rights of the citizen were not extended to women, who continued to depend on a patriarch. In fact, even women who embodied all the virtues of the new republic in terms of morality and service were not defined as citizens or patriots (Chambers, 1999). As such the new political discourse and the categories of citizen and patriot were gendered male despite women's many contributions.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, women began to be required to live up to a heightened moral standard. These new expectations affected them in a number of ways. On the one hand, there was considerable social pressure upon wives

and mothers to be long-suffering and to forgo complaints about abusive husbands. Traditionally women had used secular courts to try to control violent husbands or ecclesiastical courts to secure a legal separation from their spouses. In the period from 1840 to 1860, Peruvian women found little sympathy in the courts except in cases of very extreme abuse. On the other hand, in their petitions before the courts, they began to move away from personal demands and to frame their arguments within notions of social justice. As such, they began to change some of the ways that gender was perceived within society. Women also began to argue the notion that taking responsibility was a type of morality. In this way, many republican societies began to reconfigure the way that husbands and fathers had to live up to moral standards. Men who lived off their wives' income were exposed to censure and men became more reluctant to disclose their marital problems. Children also began to be an important indicator of gender morality. Increasingly both men and women asserted their appropriateness and superior abilities or morality as parents. Still some nineteenth-century liberal politicians limited female independence in economic matters even more drastically than colonial law had. The Mexican civil code of 1870, for example, prevented women from engaging in legal contracts, undertaking litigation, and the sale or purchase of properties.

By the mid- to late nineteenth century, women worked outside the home more frequently but they had to negotiate the requirements and limitations that gender imposed upon them. In order to remain respectable and acceptable as members of society, Mexican women had to ensure that their occupations did not interfere with their roles as wives and mothers. In Peru, women were increasingly active participants in economic decisions, a fact that they defended by associating their financial activities with their children's welfare. Female work continued to evoke anxiety among spouses and male leaders. In the early nineteenth century, civic leaders particularly worried about female morality among those women who worked in the streets and public squares. This apprehension was perhaps a remnant of some of the misgivings they felt about the female mobilization during the wars for independence. It also was mixed up with the use of vagrancy charges to force plebeians into occupations that they disliked. In Buenos Aires, for example, in 1832, the police deported 300 women into the provinces for having "doubtful character" – a euphemism for lax morality and prostitution.

Although mothers had been advocating their greater responsibility for their offspring since the late eighteenth century, it was in the middle of the nineteenth century that legal codes began to catch up. The 1870 Mexican civil code, for example, granted widowed mothers the right to *patria potestas* over their children. Although these rights were still very fragile and easily lost, the new legal provision represented the first time that women had been recognized as suitable to have authority over their own children (Ramos-Escandon, 1996). It was an important part of the transformation of social perceptions about women and mothering. Fatherhood had always been bound up in the legal concept of *patria potestas*. It was generally an unchallenged male right during the colonial period. In the nineteenth century, however, some paternal rights began to be questioned by children, mothers, and even, at times, the State. Officials in Latin America began to draw up civil and penal codes with provisions to restrict, punish, or even remove patriarchal control from fathers or mothers who failed to provide for their children. These legal codes began to delineate the

rights held by male heads of household. In Argentina the courts more frequently intervened with lower-class fathers and were more prone to take away the maternal rights of single mothers, but the intervention of the courts and politicians served to change thoughts about male rights in the family. Concern for children began to be medicalized and to go beyond simply forming proper citizens and patriots. Consideration for the health of infants and children was codified in a new subdiscipline *puericultura* that brought together interest in young citizens' physical and moral health.

Up until the middle of the nineteenth century in Brazil there was still a lot of resistance to female education. Generally, parents were satisfied if young girls learned some prayers and were only minimally literate. An 1827 law allowed the admission of girls to elementary schools but did not permit them to attend institutes of higher learning. In 1835, the first normal schools were founded in Brazil, and both young women and men began training as schoolteachers. For women, the normal schools represented their only opportunity within their own nation to study beyond the rudimentary skills deemed socially acceptable. But increasingly, in Brazil as elsewhere in the nineteenth century, being a schoolteacher was a respectable occupation for women. Teaching satisfied the prevailing gender notions because it seemed to be an extension of the mothering role so valued by society. At the same time, female teachers could be paid less than men performing the same task, and so gradually over the nineteenth century the teaching profession was feminized. In Mexico officials opened a secondary school for young women in 1869, followed by a vocational school in 1871. Normal schools had existed since 1850 and the demand for places in the program was intense. By the end of the nineteenth century two-thirds of the teachers were female. On average their salary was two *pesos* daily – the bare minimum for one person to survive (Macías, 1982).

Turn of the Century

By the last quarter of the nineteenth century, many countries began to open up institutions of higher education to women beyond the normal schools. Feminists had been arguing for the right to higher education and although female education was generally accepted as desirable by the middle of the nineteenth century, many societies still resisted allowing women to study at the secondary or university levels. The Brazilian government allowed women into universities in 1879, thus permitting them to enter professions but few women could or did actually take this path. By the 1880s women began to graduate from medical school in Brazil, Chile, and Mexico. Female doctors were more acceptable than women lawyers or politicians because they did not intrude on the male public sphere. The first women to graduate from law school in Brazil found it very difficult to practice at first. Over time, professions took on a gender identity. More women than men tended to study pharmacy and dentistry in Brazil. Pharmacy had lost its prestige in the nineteenth century and therefore no longer attracted many male students. Dentistry was perceived as appropriate to women because it could easily be practiced in an office off the family home (Hahner, 1990). In Mexico the first woman doctors attracted a primarily female clientele, especially among those hesitant about consulting male professionals. These women, however, could not keep late office hours or make house calls because such conduct was not acceptable for respectable women. The first female lawyer caused a scandal

when she tried to defend a male client in a criminal trial. She was forced to limit her practice to civil law (Macías, 1982). Women began to make inroads in their access to higher education and the consequent possibilities of work. Yet their careers were severely limited by the overarching gender conceptions of acceptable occupations and work habits. Even before they chose a course of study women were directed onto certain paths by the feminization of professions and by the acceptability of occupations.

Work patterns by gender began to change in the last half of the nineteenth century. Along with the increasing feminization of school teaching, as economies changed new spaces were opened for women. Industrialization meant that work previously performed as cottage industries or in the putting-out system was increasingly performed in factories. In general women's wages were lower than men's. Salaries for women were considered simply as a way of supplementing a family income rather than providing sole support. Yet increasingly it was not only the female-headed households that relied on women's wages; working-class men rarely could support a family without their wives' and often their children's earnings. Nevertheless, this inequality of wages at times caused tension because it produced gender rivalry for jobs. For example, in Buenos Aires, the pay for male cigarette workers in 1887 was 4.5 *pesos* daily whereas ten years later women, who received half that salary, had replaced them (Guy, 1991).

In the 1880s, as Buenos Aires emerged as a major trading center, the demand for clerical and sales workers and other white-collar occupations expanded dramatically. Schools began to include curricula that could prepare young women for these positions, such as typing, telegraphy, accounting, stenography, sales techniques, and modern languages. Women then were able to enter the ranks of white-collar workers, though at the lowest echelons. This same phenomenon occurred at the turn of the century in Brazil and Mexico with some women entering jobs in government, the mail service, railroads, and the telegraph service. Typing schools for women also began to have large enrollments as many more women took office jobs. In Brazil, the least-skilled women, who were often Afro-Brazilian, were left behind in this movement into new occupations and they tended to continue to work in the worst-paid sectors as maids, cooks, nursemaids, laundresses, street vendors, and finally, as prostitutes. Many of these occupations were no different from those of urban slaves before emancipation. In Mexico, by 1890 the majority of the women in the workforce had jobs in factories or the white-collar sector as opposed to being employed in domestic service (Tuñón Pablos, 1999).

The entry of more women into the workforce caused considerable anxiety in many societies concerning their possible masculinization, especially when their occupations veered from traditional female roles. In the late nineteenth century, socialists, anarchists, and liberals took an interest in regulating women's work. The prejudices against women's work outside the home that were rooted in the centuries-old honor system did not disappear. Many civic leaders worried that female work in factories and other places of employment jeopardized their morality and made them vulnerable to sexual abuse (Lavrin, 1995). Gender shaped work in the countryside with particular roles for men and women. But the specific roles of men and women were interdependent and mutually supportive. Thus the family unit was vital to the rural economy and single men or women could not easily survive. Men worked the land

and often took additional seasonal work on large estates or plantations to supplement their earnings. Women took various roles in agricultural work but most importantly they did time-consuming chores such as food preparation, pottery, and other crafts such as weaving. They often sold their surplus of either food or craft goods at the local market. In some regions, they sold homemade alcoholic beverages; for example, in Mexico women often sold *pulque* from their homes. Female activities often allowed the family economy a diversity that permitted them to escape an overwhelming dependence on outside sources of income. But there were no legal impediments to women owning lands. Under the break-up of communal lands implemented by Liberals in mid-nineteenth century Mexico, widows were sometimes a majority of those receiving private ownership of formerly communally held lands. The commercialization of agriculture led, however, to the elimination of some traditionally female occupations in the Mexican countryside and increased the number of women who began to work for wages as day laborers even as there was a general impoverishment of the lower classes in the countryside.

Changes in the rural economy over the nineteenth century led to a migration, particularly of females, from the countryside to the cities. Many Latin American nations were also industrializing at the end of the century, but jobs for women were not as plentiful and certainly paid less than their male equivalent. Some women turned to prostitution to survive and others used it to supplement their inadequate wages. Although certainly prostitution was not a recent phenomenon, civic leaders became particularly anxious about it at the turn of the twentieth century. In 1869, 5 percent of Buenos Aires's female population worked as prostitutes (Guy, 1991). Police often singled out these women as the source of disorder in the urban landscape even if crime statistics did not support this view. By mid-century prostitutes worked in dancehalls and nightclubs. At the same time, the public health movement and the new class of professionals called *higienistas* were concerned that prostitutes transmitted venereal diseases. In Argentina, the public health officials were as powerful as the police in civic efforts to contain and control prostitution. They tried licensing bordellos, individual women, red light zones, and areas of exclusion. Doctors began to control prostitutes through a required medical examination. The check-up had moral overtones in the gender relations between male doctors and female prostitutes. In Argentina, if a prostitute did not act with proper deference, the doctor committed her to the *Sifilicomio* (Syphilis Hospital) whether she was sick or not. Once admitted, women had to acquiesce with proper submissiveness and docility. In Puerto Rico, prostitutes had to submit to pelvic examinations in the police station, in full view, with dirty metal speculums – a device deemed too invasive for decent women. Venereal diseases were gendered female and the cure was not only physical but also psychological – to show the proper female conduct. Syphilis and gonorrhea were also gendered female in another way. Public health officials never considered that male customers or prostitutes could transmit the disease. It was a purely female condition. Male prostitutes also were not really considered to be sex-workers but rather curiosities to be studied (Guy, 1991; Suarez-Findlay, 1999).

The increased anxiety over prostitution could have been related to an increase in the numbers of women practicing the trade but this cannot entirely explain the level of panic. The rising numbers of women working outside the home in jobs not associated with nurturing also contributed. In areas where slavery was a recent memory,

civic leaders worried about the African sensual qualities of the lower-class women who worked outside the home. But, most importantly, the obvious presence of prostitutes was in sharp contrast with the image that most Latin American societies had promoted of women, as moral arbiters of the home, and beneficial influences upon disorderly men. Prostitutes were the antithesis of "angels of the home" and they defied the moral discourse of patriotism by refusing to be good mothers and wives. They betrayed the national project of reform and were an obstacle to dreams of modernity.

Male politicians and public health officials mostly dominated the discourse about prostitution and venereal diseases. Women began to take an interest in this debate when they started to graduate from medical schools at the end of the nineteenth century (Guy, 1991). In the Southern Cone women began to be admitted into medical schools in 1890s. Elvira Rawson de Dellepiane, an influential Argentine feminist and medical doctor, initiated one of the first efforts to study sexuality and reproduction from a female point of view. Around the turn of the century, feminists had begun to denounce the double standard of morality that was derived from the old honor system. As advocates of gender equality, feminists noted how male conduct led to high rates of illegitimacy, child mortality, and the marginalization of single mothers. In Argentina, mostly male anarchists championed a released sexuality and the end of monogamy. Some female anarchists also embraced this freedom although their version was more akin to serial monogamy. In Chile, leftist women discussed birth control and connected class, poverty, and reproduction. In 1902, Uruguayan María Abella de Ramírez denounced the old codes of honor in sexuality and how they defined gender relations. One of the consequences of this more open discussion promoted by feminists and anarchists was that sexual education began to be proposed as an important component of a healthy society. The medical profession, however, continued to consider sex education as appropriate for men only (Lavrin, 1995).

In the Southern Cone countries, massive waves of immigrants from Europe in the nineteenth century provided the medium to introduce new ideas in a more widespread fashion. Political movements such as anarchism and socialism became important mobilizing tools for both the working and middle classes. Adherents eventually adopted gender equality as part of their political agenda but they did not immediately articulate gender issues for workers. In the middle of the nineteenth century, despite rhetoric of higher female morality, politicians in the Southern Cone countries changed their civil codes in ways that strictly circumscribed women's rights and reinforced fathers and husbands' authority. At the turn of the century, feminists began to challenge these laws as obsolescent given the fact that many more women were educated and working. These women started to ask for civil equality before the law. As early as 1869, a study of electoral rights argued for female suffrage. The educated middle class began to organize female clubs many of which later supported women's voting rights. In Chile, in 1917, young members of the Conservative Party proposed a bill that called for female suffrage. Feminists in Brazil began to demand suffrage in the late 1880s as part of their drive for gender equality. The right to vote was not formalized in this period but it began to be part of the debate over gender equality and the disjunction between female realities, such as work and education, and their political status at the beginning of the twentieth century.

By the first decades of the twentieth century, the gender picture for women had changed considerably. Women were increasingly working outside the home in factories, schools, and shops, as well as in small numbers in the liberal professions. They were entering institutions of higher learning, albeit not in great numbers, and they were beginning to be active politically both in unions and in more formal political movements. The map of acceptable spaces according to gender had also changed. More women could venture out into such places as department stores, boulevards and parks, and to take tea without male escort than ever before. Of course, not all women had the luxury of such leisure activities but their presence in the previously male public sphere was more acceptable. Nevertheless the more vocal middle-class and elite women began to organize behind feminist causes such as female suffrage and an end to the double standard of sexual morality while lower-class women were beginning to organize in unions and other political action groups.

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Chapter Twenty-seven

North America from North of the 49th Parallel

Linda Kealey

The subject "gender and women's history in North America" encompasses a vast geographical area and time frame. Within this area, the history of what is now the United States has been studied most extensively; so extensively, in fact, that there is a separate *Blackwell Companion to American Women's History*. This chapter approaches North America from a different perspective, focusing on developments north of the 49th parallel . . . as viewed through the lens of Canadian women's/gender history. By starting in the colonial period, the boundary between Canada and the US becomes much less important. When we take into consideration that native peoples occupied this area long before European adventurers, merchants, traders, and settlers arrived, the border further recedes in importance.

This introductory section is followed by a brief comment on the colonial context as a backdrop to understanding the specific discussion in section 1 on native women and European settler women. This all too brief section highlights some of the most recent and exciting work in the area and ranges widely chronologically. The era from approximately the turn of the nineteenth century through the rebellions in Upper and Lower Canada (1837–8) forms section 2 with a focus on social, economic and political developments from a gender perspective. Since we can trace the notion of "separate spheres" for men and women to this time frame, relevant studies from later in the century are noted here. The third section addresses the middle decades of the nineteenth century, the 1840s, 1850s, and 1860s which were a key period in the development of an industrial society and the forging of the nation of Canada with Confederation in 1867. In the United States these were also key decades in industrialization, in the evolution of the slave system and the outbreak of the Civil War. The fourth section spans the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries which witnessed the emergence of class tensions, labor movements, women's organizations and other reform-minded groups in both countries. Similarly both countries grappled with the migration of large numbers of new immigrant groups to their shores. These decades were also important ones in empire-building; in Canada the expansion of empire involved prairie settlement by Europeans and Americans, who took land from the native peoples. Immigrant and native women often faced particular intolerance

when the host society expressed negative views which combined cultural and gender stereotypes in a highly racialized context. World War I climaxed this period and brought particular dilemmas and opportunities for women in the context of human slaughter of unprecedented intensity. The concluding section points to future directions in Canadian women's/gender history in the North American context.

Colonial Background

By 1700 a number of European powers had established their presence in North America, and most important to the northern section of the continent were the English and the French. Both powers had claims to vast territories from Hudson's Bay to the Gulf of Mexico. The English colonies founded in the seventeenth century along the eastern coastal areas in particular had attracted settlers and dispossessed many native tribes from their land. The fur trade also pushed settlement westward in both French and English-controlled territories thus increasing the pressure on native populations. The French, however, had a more tenuous hold on their colonies with fewer settlers even after the Crown assumed direct control from the original companies that set out to explore North America. The fur trade was the main preoccupation of the French in the earliest days rather than settlement. Nevertheless by 1750, the population of New France had grown to 70,000: by contrast the English colonies of North America had an estimated population of over 1.5 million. Colonial rivalries between England and France intensified as England regarded France as its greatest overseas competitor. There were three major eruptions of conflict between the two countries between 1715 and 1789 and the first two of these coincided with territorial wars in Europe: 1740–8 (War of the Austrian Succession); 1756–63 (Seven Years' War); and the era of the American Revolution. By 1763 France had lost most of its colonial possessions in North America to the English (including New France which was renamed Quebec). In 1791, this large territory which extended from the Ohio Valley up to what is now Northern Quebec and Labrador was divided into Upper and Lower Canada. Legislation imposed a British structure of government on the two new provinces and provided for British freehold tenure of land yet left the seigneurial system intact in Quebec as well as the French civil law. The division was also intended to allow the English and the French to pursue their own development though clearly its architects expected the French to find the English system more attractive.

Native Women

Imperial plans and colonial developments severely affected the population of native peoples who were often regarded as primitive heathens, immoral in their cultural and social practices and as barriers to European settlement and civilization. From the earliest days of English and French colonization, efforts were made to Christianize and civilize natives unless disease or warfare had intervened. Native women in particular have been subject to critical commentaries from missionaries and other Europeans who decried their perceived subjugation to men, their sexual freedom to choose and divorce their own partners and their powerful interventions in political, social, and economic life. The other polarizing stereotype is that of the Indian princess, the

"Pocohontas" myth which attributes innocence and closeness to nature as key features of the native woman.

While anthropologists have dominated writing about aboriginal women in North America, social historians in the past two decades have begun to grapple with the history of native peoples. Initially, scholars were preoccupied with the comparative status of women in the pre-contact and early contact periods (Fiske, 2000). Jennifer Brown's *Strangers in Blood* (1980) and Sylvia Van Kirk's *Many Tender Ties* (1980) explored the relationships that developed in fur-trade societies between European traders and native women who came to form intimate liaisons that supported not only family life but also the very trade itself. Their early work stressed the agency of aboriginal women who acted as guides, interpreters, and negotiators as well as producers of fur goods and wives and mothers of mixed-race children. Married according to the "custom of the country" without benefit of church or civil service, these native women found themselves sometimes abandoned when their fur-trader husbands left the company's service or returned to Europe to marry women of their own cultural group. Increasingly, the mixed-race children also had problems as their numbers grew – the fur trade posts became more reluctant to support these dependents and mixed-race offspring found themselves increasingly alienated from both cultures.

While we still need studies that address the role of native women, and particularly the role of the state and settler society in marginalizing and stereotyping native women, there is a growing trend towards analyzing texts to tease out how a gendered aboriginal identity has been constructed. Building on the work of Brown and Van Kirk, Elizabeth Vibert, for example, has analyzed fur traders' narratives as gendered constructions of masculinity which threaten to mix Indian and white characteristics. As Vibert comments, the "boundary between the heroic culture of hunter-warrior and savage nature is a brittle one in trader discourse" (Vibert, 1996: 58). Moving into the later part of the nineteenth century, Sarah Carter also analyzes the construction of aboriginal womanhood in her *Capturing Women* (1997). Carter remarks on the relatively frequent pairings of aboriginal women with white settlers, policemen, and others during the earlier periods of settlement. By the 1880s, an intensification of racial discrimination occured as the western prairies become more settled, and in the wake of two Metis uprisings. The courts also began in this decade to rule that marriages according to the custom of the country were invalid and did not entitle offspring to inherit property. In this process native women were portrayed as inferior to white women and specifically as women of loose morals with tenuous claims to property and respectability. In a related study, Mary Ellen Kelm (1998) analyzes how twentieth-century medicine and science helped to racialize aboriginal bodies in British Columbia.

Native women are expected to preserve and promote "tribal identity" as part of their role in the community. As feminist historians have come to understand the long-lasting effects of colonialism on native groups, there is room to explore how native women's identities and experiences might not fit a universalizing feminist framework. This has meant more openness to storytelling, autobiography, and oral history as ways of understanding a past that has been so fragmented (or non-existent) in documentary sources. As native women have claimed ownership of their past and tribal identities, these oral sources have become increasingly important. In 1990, for

example, Julie Cruikshank published *Life Lived Like a Story* in conjunction with three Yukon native women elders. Cruikshank became a collaborator with the three women of Athapaskan and Tlingit ancestry to produce a unique kind of biography which tells their life stories through storytelling. Interest in a life histories approach has been reinvigorated, as Cruikshank points out, with "increasing attention to analysis of symbolism, meaning and text" (Cruikshank, 1990: 1).

Non-native writers have in recent years turned more towards deconstructing texts as aboriginal women have discovered or recreated their own histories. Questions of voice inevitably arise in this context. Literary scholar Carole Gerson and historian Veronica Strong-Boag have confronted this question in their study of native writer Pauline Johnson (1861–1913), entitled *Paddling Her Own Canoe* (2000). Confining their analysis to archival and published works on Johnson, the authors situate themselves as "speaking about" rather than "for" their subject in an attempt to create a dialogue between Johnson and Euro-Canadian society. Adele Perry's *On the Edge of Empire: Gender, Race and the Making of British Columbia 1849–1871* (2000), while not a work on aboriginal history, usefully discusses the interaction between white-settler and aboriginal societies and her work demonstrates the recent engagement among gender historians with representation and questions of power. She analyzes the highly sexualized nature of this cultural contact as aboriginal women formed relationships with white men thus reinforcing negative stereotypes and attitudes toward these women and native groups more generally. Attempts to regulate mixed-race relationships varied but ultimately the solution to the problem was to bring white settlers, in particular white women, to "civilize" the backwoods though in actuality the women who came were not "gentle tamers" of middle-class background but working-class women whose lives were characterized by hard work and dependency. Ultimately attempts to tame the backwoods, regulate mixed-race relationships, and reshape British Columbia into a white settler society were challenged and resisted especially by aboriginal groups. Both gender and race, concludes Perry, were key to colonialism and to the relations between white and aboriginal societies.

White Settler Societies and Women

By the mid-eighteenth century the "habitants" of New France had fashioned a stable society, largely agricultural and rural, where women's lives resembled those of their counterparts in the old world, though the age of marriage was earlier (early twenties) than in France. Unlike their Anglo and American counterparts, women in New France followed northern French legal practices which recognized that the husband and wife "formed a sort of two-person corporation, the marital community (*communauté de biens*) owned equally by both" (Greer, 1997a: 69) Women who did not marry had the option of joining religious orders which provided educational, medical, and social welfare services to the population. Family was as central to the elite as it was to the bourgeois or habitant class. Lorraine Gadoury's study of a large collection of letters (1998) suggests the importance of family among the elite and the mixture of traditional and modern characteristics attributed to the family in the eighteenth century.

A small group of French settlers also formed a new society in the Bay of Fundy region which became known as "Acadia." In 1976, Naomi Griffiths in *Penelope's Web*

argued that Acadian women carried considerable influence and contributed equally (if differently) to the community which was dispersed and deported as part of imperial British political and military strategy in the 1750s. Survival in exile, Griffiths stressed, depended on both maternal and paternal kinship ties. More recent work on aspects of Acadian women's history appeared in *L'Acadie au Feminin* (Basque et al., 2000) with articles on teaching, widowhood and orphanages, and clothing.

British North America

As Cecilia Morgan notes, few feminist historians have been attracted to the study of colonial society in Canada. Given the small populations of white settlers in New France/Quebec and in British North America/Ontario and the later period of settlement (in contrast to the American colonies), perhaps it is not so surprising. While Nova Scotia had roots back into the seventeenth century, the other Maritime provinces, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, were creations of the eighteenth century. The fishing colony of Newfoundland though officially off limits to settlement attracted some settlers even in the seventeenth century. By 1791 with the reorganization of British North America (BNA) in the wake of the American Revolution, there were six colonies under British dominion – Lower Canada, the most populous; Upper Canada; New Brunswick; St. John's Island (renamed Prince Edward Island in 1799); Newfoundland; and Nova Scotia. All were much less developed and settled than the thirteen colonies to the south which had fought for independence from the British.

Those who fled the American Revolution and came to BNA moved into Nova Scotia and Quebec. Eventually tensions in Nova Scotia between the newcomers and the older settlers resulted in the creation of New Brunswick as a haven for the loyalists, most of whom came from the seaport towns of the former thirteen colonies. Those that moved to Quebec and Ontario tended to come from the back country of New York, Pennsylvania, and New England. This American migration was merely the first installment in a larger one which continued into Canada in the early years of the nineteenth century. Loyalist families were often led by women whose male relatives had been called to serve with the British. Loyalist women, Janice Potter-MacKinnon insists, have been overlooked particularly in the Canadian context. Until Potter-MacKinnon's work appeared in the late 1980s and early 1990s, our knowledge of loyalist women largely came from the works of American historians Mary Beth Norton and Linda Kerber. Potter-MacKinnon notes that the choice to remain British reinforced patriarchy and paternalism; on the other hand she also ties the latter to the real material and structural constraints faced by loyalist women who were forced to petition for food and other kinds of aid. Drawing attention to the language these women used, the author points out the irony in that language of supplication given the great obstacles they overcame (Potter-MacKinnon, 1993).

Katherine McKenna's study of Anne Murray Powell provides a detailed portrait of an elite loyalist woman and her family in *A Life of Propriety: Anne Murray Powell and Her Family, 1755–1849* (1994). Born to a large middle-class Anglican family in England, Anne received a young lady's education and was sent to Boston to work with her widowed aunt, a successful milliner. In Boston she met and married William Dummer Powell, son of a leading merchant who eventually took up law and became

a judge, ultimately succeeding to the office of Chief Justice of Upper Canada. Anne Murray Powell's life was filled with uncertainty as her husband's fortunes waxed and waned according to his relationship with the political powers of the day; Anne filled the role of supporter and subordinate wife in the marriage and gave birth to nine children while running the household and engaging in the extensive socializing required by their social position. Unlike the loyalist women discussed by Potter-MacKinnon, Powell seems to fit the patriarchal/paternal mode.

As the area known as Upper Canada (now Ontario) grew in population and settlements in the post-Revolution era and into the 1830s, the roles of women changed very little. As Jane Errington notes, the association of women with work and family was key. Her book *Wives and Mothers, School Mistresses and Scullery Maids* (1995) explores working women in Upper Canada between 1790 and 1840. Her argument is that women's work played a significant role in the development of the colony. While essentially a rural society during the period, by the 1820s and 1830s more social differentiation is evident in women's work and family roles. In addition colonial leaders began to pronounce on the moral duties of women and to promote the separate-spheres division between the sexes. Despite these strictures few women in Upper Canada could or would conform to an ideal that stressed women's innate weakness.

Cecilia Morgan's *Public Men and Virtuous Women* (1996) examines Upper Canadian society through the lens of imagery, symbol, and language. In contrast to past writers who emphasized loyalty as the central issue of politics in this period, Morgan insists that concepts such as loyalty and patriotism were profoundly gendered. In the years after the war of 1812, political conflict intensified as the "establishment" was challenged by a loose coalition of reformers whose views were sometimes labelled "seditious." Morgan's point here is that both sides engaged in gendered political discourse that emphasized manliness as emblematic of their point of view while condemning the other as effeminate. Self-restraint and independence were characteristics of the ideal "public man" while the discourse surrounding women emphasized their separate roles and more private lives centered in home and family.

In contrast to this view of women in the early nineteenth century, Alan Greer (1997a) and Rusty Bitterman (1994) have found that women in Lower Canada and in Prince Edward Island were active participants in politics, while recognizing that women were mainly excluded from the formal political realm. Women of the popular classes played roles in public events – participating in meetings, boycotts, and even violent actions. While at the level of formal politics women's self-assertion indicated sexual disorder and political danger, in the arena of popular politics, women's participation often arose from the conditions of their daily lives. As Bitterman argues, rural women used to hard physical labor and lacking the "separate sphere" experience of middle class life, might not think it inappropriate to defend their households or communities with physical force or by participating in collective action. In addition, there were times and places in which even formal political recognition occurred – Quebec women with the requisite property qualifications could vote between 1791 and 1834 when they were officially disenfranchised, an experience repeated in Prince Edward Island in 1838. Arguments were used that stressed the dangers to the domestic sexual order that women's exercise of the franchise posed. As Greer explains the association of the public interest with female chastity and modesty and the withdrawal of women from the public realm were linked (Greer, 1997b). Nevertheless, as Gail

Campbell's (1994) work has shown, women in mid-century New Brunswick though in the minority signed temperance petitions in significant numbers thus demonstrating their awareness of politics and their willingness to participate. While women did not have the franchise, she notes, they were not politically passive either.

The notion of "separate spheres" has been criticized as too universalizing, as a concept most appropriate to the middle class. Janet Guildford and Suzanne Morton have argued, however, that the concept needs to be retained and contextualized (1994). They point out that scholars sometimes refer to separate spheres as a prescriptive ideal while in other usages it appears to be an all powerful doctrine that governs behaviour. Finally, the concept has generated an historiographic debate among scholars. In its most positive rendition, separate-spheres ideology has been used by women of various classes to "negotiate power in the home and to make claims in public based on a respectability rooted in domesticity" (Guildford and Morton, 1994: 20). The tenacity of the concept is a testament to its wide resonance in our culture and yet "it could not provide the basis for a generalized sex-consciousness or sense of sisterhood as it failed to recognize differences within the category of woman" (21). The notion of separate spheres arose in reaction to the upheavals of the late eighteenth century and implied a sexual double standard for men and women, with the latter assuming responsibility for morality and respectability. While fairly commonly expressed in British North American life, the separate-spheres prescription, as noted previously, had limited or no resonance among some groups, such as aboriginals, immigrants, and some rural dwellers.

The very notion of "Victorianism" rests on the assumed divisions between the public and the private, between men and women. Writers in recent times have pointed out the class basis for such a view, noting that such strictures were based in middle- and upper-class prescriptions and practices. Working-class women could seldom if ever retreat to a private, domestic sphere though female networks among working-class women have been noted by historians. In addition to urban neighbourhood networks discussed by historians, Lynne Marks also notes the participation of the wives and daughters of skilled workers in small-town Ontario church-based activities (1996) and she analyzes the working-class base of the Salvation Army which attracted large numbers of women as well as men. These examples suggest the complexity behind assertions that women remained in the private arena while men dominated the public. While the publicly acceptable view relegated women to backstage, it is clear that women's lives were much more complicated and often did not fit the mold.

The 1840s–1860s: Years of Transformation

Canada's industrial transformation began in the middle years of the nineteenth century, somewhat later than in the United States. To oversimplify greatly, by mid-century a paternalist order was in the process of transformation into a more clearly industrial capitalist one. As we have seen, the paternalist order had a decidedly gendered dimension to it involving notions of separate spheres, proper womanly behaviour and the centrality of famly life, especially in defining women's lives. As Canadian society experienced the transformation to industrial capitalism, merchants, independent producers, landed gentry, poor farmers, laborers, and others grappled with the changes that accompanied industrialization. These changes were not sudden nor were

they evident everywhere. Early industrialization occurred in urban areas much earlier, for example, in Montreal and Toronto. Vast areas of Canada remained tied to agriculture, fishing, mining, or forestry, however. Nevertheless, the 1850s and 1860s witnessed tremendous growth in Ontario and Quebec of manufacturing with the establishment of shops and factories, and an unmistakable trend toward women working in trades such as garments and shoes. Earlier work in Canadian labor history noted the influx of women into the labor market as part of the economic transformation of the era. As Bryan Palmer noted in his overview, *Working Class Experience* (1992: 83):

> A view of Hamilton, Toronto, and Montreal in the years from 1850 to 1870 reveals the overwhelming changes. The industrial work force of such cities comprised approximately 16–20 percent of city populations. More and more laboured in larger settings and entire new communities of industrially employed workers emerged out of the economic transformation of the period. . . . Of considerable importance in the new factories were women workers. Three-quarters of the work force in Toronto's rising clothing industry were female and the "Globe" estimated in 1868 that almost 4,000 women laboured in the city factories or in their homes on outwork. Larger work sites, expanding industrial work forces, and technological innovations did not, however, eliminate smaller, more traditional shops, which survived and remained a significant economic presence.

Drawing on his own and Michael Katz's earlier studies of Hamilton, as well as Gregory S. Kealey's pioneer study of Toronto, Terry Copp's work on the consequences of industrialization on Montreal, and that of Quebec labor historians such as Joanne Burgess, Fernand Harvey, and others, Palmer's useful (1992) survey places its primary emphasis on class and cultural formations in this transformative period.

Industrial work, however, took a back seat to domestic service for women until well into the twentieth century. Surprisingly, no monograph exists on Canadian domestic service that attempts to analyze this occupation in the period of its largest importance for women's work. As with many other occupations, domestic service provided a transition from countryside to city and also retained the features of preindustrial work well into the twentieth century in some parts of the country, particularly on remote prairie farms, lumbering camps and communities, and in fishing outports. Access to electricity, modern appliances, and other labor-saving devices varied not only according to urban/rural placement but also by class and culture. Thus the experience of domestic service could vary enormously. For some immigrant groups, domestic service was preferred by women, for example among the Finns. For other women, factory or shop work with its regular and predictable hours and better wages became more attractive. For black women who were the descendants of loyalists or fugitives from American slavery, domestic service was the most frequent form of wage labor.

These mid-century decades also witnessed the movement of more women into teaching, a phenomenon that appears to be consistent across the country although the timing varied, with New Brunswick and predominantly Catholic Lower Canada/Quebec leading the way prior to 1850. Since the 1970s at least, historians have noted that the rural poverty and the migration of young men into resource industries encouraged the employment of women in rural schools. Later, as school

boards in urban areas realized the savings that could be had in hiring lower-paid women teachers, and women pressed their claims, the demographics of the teaching profession changed significantly so that both urban and rural schools employed a preponderance of women teachers in the later decades of the century. As is the case with domestic service, no gendered, historical overview of public school teaching has appeared, though there are many local studies.

Whether working outside the home or not, women were also members of families and under considerable pressure to remain largely within the domestic sphere. Young women who had to work outside the home most often eventually married and left the labor force, if only temporarily, or performed paid work within the home when family circumstances warranted. In this transitional period, demographic statistics indicate that on average women married around the age of twenty-two and young men, slightly later at twenty-six, according to the 1861 census. Usually the couple shared the same community, socio-economic status, and religion, though there were exceptions. Comacchio notes that courtship was fairly public and engagements binding, though this was probably more true of the middle or upper class. Respectability, however, was highly valued by artisanal and working-class families as well (Comacchio, 1999).

Family history in Canada has been the subject of an important review article by Bradbury (2000) as well as of Cynthia Comacchio's synthetic overview for the period 1850–1940. Bradbury notes the importance of Comacchio's work in the context of the growth of the field in the 1990s, especially in feminist approaches to understanding women's roles in both reproductive and economically productive relations. Other areas of feminist scholarship include understanding the relationship between families and various institutions such as religion or the law, the formation of policy, and regulatory discourses around gender and sexuality. Inspired by international debates these historians draw on both materialism and discourse analysis since "class remains an important category within Canadian feminist and family history" (Bradbury, 2000: 375), an observation that applies to many areas of Canadian feminist research.

As Bradbury's own work shows, children were highly valued and families depended on their children's labor. According to the 1861 census, average family size included 6.0 children in English Canada and 6.4 in Quebec. Since children's labor was restricted and was also affected by school attendance laws, and as the economy depended less on their labor, fertility levels declined and family size decreased. Children spent longer in school if their families could afford it, and society began to recognize adolescence as distinct from childhood. For working-class children this was often unattainable; the death or illness of the breadwinner, for example, could plunge families into poverty and debt which meant that children had to contribute to the family economy, a point explored in detail by Bradbury for Montreal between 1861 and 1881 (Bradbury, 1993).

1867 and Beyond

As the United States was torn apart by a civil war, north of the border a new nation was forming. After years of meetings and negotiations, the British North America Act proclaimed Canada a nation on July 1, 1867. The original four provinces –

Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia – were eventually joined by others including the western sections which became Manitoba (1870), Saskatchewan (1905), Alberta (1905), and British Columbia (1871). Prince Edward Island followed in 1873 while Newfoundland was the last to join in 1949. The west was particularly important in terms of economic expansion and population growth. The Canadian structure of government departed in many significant ways from the American, including the choice of a House of Commons, a prime minister, and a division of powers between the provinces and the federal government that placed residual powers in the hands of the federal government, not the provinces.

As these momentous political questions were in the process of settlement, industrial development continued in the context of urban growth as well as western settlement and the extension of the rail system. By the 1870s agriculture still dominated but manufacturing came to play an increasingly significant role, with value added by manufacturing equal to 19 percent of gross national product in 1870 as compared to 34 percent for agriculture (Palmer, 1992: 86). As industry grew so too did local unions of working men who identified with the craft traditions of their occupations – as tailors, printers, carpenters, and others. Canadian historians have been researching and writing about industrial development, the formation of the working class, and the gender and ethnic dimensions of work and labor organizations for over thirty years, as part of the discipline's embrace of social history. As noted previously, women were drawn into the labor force and sometimes into labor organizations, though evolving patterns of working-class unionism often drew on values and ideas that emphasized masculinity and excluded women. Recent work by feminist historians has built upon and expanded this earlier work.

Christina Burr's *Spreading the Light* (1999) examines work and labor reform in late-nineteenth-century Toronto where she analysed the writings and cartoons of prominent labor reformers as well as the gender division of labor within the printing and garment trades. In this study she combines the analysis of rhetoric with the experiences of working men and women to suggest how "language, symbols, and popular culture – in addition to the economic components of working-class life – were integral to an understanding of the ways in which working people experienced their world as organized, yet simultaneously divided along the lines of class, gender, and race" (Burr, 1999: 7).

Burr examines the work of editor, lecturer, poet, and cartoonist J. W. Bengough who was inspired by the political cartoons of Thomas Nast of "Harper's Weekly" as well as those of "Punch" cartoonist, John Tenniel (Burr, 1999: 57–8) in his own satirical paper, the "Grip." Close reading of his work enables Burr to tease out images and associations on a variety of issues of concern to the working-class in particular but also more broadly. Bengough, for example, often used the symbol of "Miss Canada" to make his points, for example in 1887 portraying her as a seductive barmaid assisting the male bartender (the devil) in debauching a working-class clientele. In other chapters, she examines the gender division of labor and the association of craft skills with masculinity in the printing and garment trades. Members of the International Typographical Union, for example, quickly established control over new mechanical typesetting machines in the 1880s and later, fearing employer plans to hire women or boy apprentices for the job. Referring to the garment trades, Burr underlines that work performed in the home was always considered unskilled.

Furthermore, "Masculinity was associated with the work carried out by skilled journeymen in the shop" (178). Thus it is not surprising that domesticity was counterpoised to waged work and that masculinity in working class terms involved not only the ability to work but also the ability to provide for the family.

Quebec's manufacturing industries employed large numbers of women in the late nineteenth century. The clothing trades and shoemaking provided the majority of employment for women in Montreal, according to Bradbury whose study emphasized the importance of gender and age as well as class and ethnicity in her study of working families. Similarly, Peter Gossage's *Families in Transition* (1999), a community study in the same period, delineates the importance of female and child labor in a predominantly textile- and leather-manufacturing town outside of Montreal. Demonstrating the importance of historical demography at a time when it has become less popular, Gossage's material shows a quadrupling of women in waged labor in late-nineteenth-century Saint-Hyacinthe where women mainly worked in textiles. Unlike Bradbury, however, Gossage's material does not lend itself to discussion of the nature of married women's work within the household, an important factor in working-class survival.

While early research focused on central Canada, more recent work acknowledged that industrialization also affected the Maritimes, at least in some prominent centres such as Halifax and Saint John as well as the mining areas of Cape Breton and Pictou. Cotton mills also developed particularly in the 1880s, employing women and children in unhealthy conditions for long hours at low pay. Halifax's Nova Scotia Cotton Company, according to Sharon Myers, "eventually employed the greatest number of the city's women under a single roof" (1994: 164). Other Halifax firms that employed women in the late nineteenth century included clothing companies, tobacco and confectionery establishments, and boot and shoe manufacturers; in addition, women worked at home, often in the sweated garment trades, or became domestics. Myers reports that 65 percent of the girls and women counted by the 1891 census in Halifax worked in dressmaking, millinery, tailoring, or garments (166).

The promise of industrial development and prosperity was short-lived, however. As the traditional maritime economy based on agriculture, fishing, forestry, and shipping/shipbuilding hit hard times and industrialization did not occur as rapidly as predicted, many Maritimers looked for work outside the region. Betsy Beattie's *Obligation and Opportunity* (2000) is a study of the out-migration of thousands of women to the "Boston States" in the late nineteenth century. Massachusetts and Maine in 1880 had the highest number of inhabitants born in the Maritimes. In the mid-1880s, for example, Boston had by far the largest number of Maritime-born migrants, with women outnumbering men (Beattie, 2000: 38). In fact Boston was the favorite relocation spot for Maritime women into the twentieth century, until approximately 1930. As Beattie illustrates, most migrated into domestic service work hoping to assist their families. Those from slightly better-off families came to Boston as student or trained nurses and formed the second most common occupational group among Maritime women (Beattie, 2000: 88, 94–8). In an earlier study of nursing Susan Reverby had noted that approximately one-third of those entering nurses' training in Boston came from the Maritimes (Reverby, 1987: 80).

While the historiography of the Atlantic region's women is far smaller than that of other parts of the country, the same cannot be said of Canada's west where

"pioneer" women and the "Women's West" has garnered much interest. From the 1970s on, western women's experiences have fascinated researchers who initially grappled with the question of what difference the frontier made – did demographic scarcity mean higher status for women? Perhaps more so than elsewhere "region and place have been critical categories of scholarly analysis" (McPherson, 2000). In the prairie west, much scholarly attention has been focused on the period of European settlement from the 1870s through to the 1920s. As in the case of the United States, the Canadian west was perceived as the "last frontier" masking the fact that there had been a long process of resource exploitation and displacement of aboriginal groups. Gradually, this resource frontier was transformed into an agricultural society as federal legislation, treaties with aboriginal groups (or outright military defeat as in the Riel Rebellion of 1885), and immigration brought agriculturalists to take up homesteading, raising cattle, growing wheat, and the like. As McPherson notes, historians have tended to pursue one of two models: the egalitarian frontier or the "unique inequity" model. Many authors have pointed out that women were key to successful homesteading, providing essential economically productive and reproductive labor and have concluded that the opportunities for women were considerable. While recognizing the structural importance of women's labor, other historians have emphasized physical isolation, legal inequalities, and the subordination of women's domestic labor to the needs of agricultural production. Practically speaking the latter often meant sacrificing labor saving technology in the home to the purchase of combines or other machinery.

Homesteading was a gendered undertaking since few women could claim the free land available to British male subjects over 18 – only widowed or deserted/divorced women could legally claim a homestead under the Dominion Lands Act of 1872 (McPherson, 2000: 78). Dower rights were also lacking in the prairie provinces from 1885/6 on as legislators removed encumbrances from lands by abolishing dower laws. It took several decades of struggle to restore them, with limited success. Thus, the literature on prairie women's legal status tends to adopt the "unique inequity" model. In other writings, such as Eliane Silverman's *The Last Best West* (1984), based on oral accounts from Alberta, or Catherine Cavanaugh and Randi Warne's collection, *Telling Tales* (2000), the emphasis is on the diversity of women's experiences, including their ethnic differences.

Over the course of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries various groups of immigrants settled on the prairies. Eastern Europeans, including large groups of Ukrainians, replaced previous emigrants from the British Isles and Scandinavia. Ukrainian women are the subject of several studies, most prominently that of Frances Swyripa whose *Wedded to the Cause* (1993) explores ethnic identity over the course of a century. In her view, the pioneering years of settlement served to reinforce traditional roles within the family and increased the physical labor women were expected to perform. Finnish women also migrated to Canada, primarily to Ontario and British Columbia but in some cases also to the prairies; while Ukrainian women usually immigrated with husbands and children, very high percentages of Finnish women came alone and many of them gravitated towards cities (or resource towns) and work as domestics, valuing their independence and the chance to learn English. As Varpu Lindstrom Best notes, by the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, Finnish women were increasingly reluctant to move to remote areas or become farmers' wives (1988, 31).

Northern women's lives have until recently been neglected in historical literature. As Charlene Porsild notes (1998), until the late 1970s Northern and Arctic history attracted little scholarly attention while the role of women remained obscure until more recently. She describes a pioneer phase of discovery featuring biographical sketches and the theme of overlooked women followed by a second phase where authors stressed the role of middle-class white women (in contrast to the stereotypical dance-hall girl). Porsild's own work represents a third stage, one that provides a wider context for understanding gold rush society in the Klondike. *Gamblers and Dreamers* examines gender, class, and ethnic divisions in Dawson City and analyzes various economic, social, and cultural groups demonstrating a complex society that made hierarchical distinctions between native and non-native and even within the prostitute population. Her work builds on that of several others who wrote theses or popular works too numerous to include here.

Canadian social historians have spilt a great deal of ink on the social ferment of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In addition to the influx of immigrants and displacement of aboriginal peoples, these decades witnessed significant movements of social reform – temperance, women's rights, labor organization, and moral regulation of various kinds. Women became involved in social movements, often initially through church-based groups such as women's missionary societies or temperance groups. In many cases initial experiences in women's organizations led to social activism and participation in the women's movement.

Religion was central to most nineteenth-century citizens and it has assumed a more prominent role in Canadian women's history in the last decade. Catholics and Protestants (the majority) had very different and gendered traditions. While Catholicism offered women roles as nuns as well as wives and mothers, the Protestant denominations had less scope for independent roles for women. One exception occurred when women became missionaries, as single women or as wives of missionaries, or as supporters of the home missions. Ruth Compton Brouwer's 1990 study, *New Women for God* explores one of the largest of these groups, the Toronto Presbyterian Women's Foreign Mission Society. Whether supporters on the home front or as workers in India, these women found active roles and careers in some cases. Despite this, Brouwer argues, the call of the women's movement fell on deaf ears. Presbyterian women felt that women's suffrage in Canada would not aid the cause of spreading the gospel in foreign lands and might jeopadize their work within the church.

Scholarly research on women religious has been slower to develop in English Canada while Quebec writers have produced dozens of studies, particularly of the various orders of religious sisters who first emigrated to New France in the seventeenth century. One of the key works in the history of Quebec's nuns is Marta Danylewycz's *Taking the Veil* (1987). She argues that taking the veil was a credible alternative to becoming a wife, mother, or spinster and that women religious performed important and useful work. The final chapter examines the close relationship between some of these nuns and early Quebec feminists, concluding that a kind of partnership existed between them that promoted a widening of women's roles. Work on women religious in Quebec has been carried on by others as well: Micheline Dumont and Nadia Fahmy-Eid edited a collection called *Les Couventines: L'education des filles au Québéc dans les congregations réligieuses enseignantes, 1840–1960* (1986). Most recently Micheline D'Allaire has published the first volume

of two dealing with the social-work roles of *Les Communautés réligieuses de Montreal* (1997) between 1659 and 1900; the second will deal with educational work in the same period. Danielle Juteau and Nicole Laurin have taken on the twentieth century in their *Un métier et une vocation. Le travail des réligieuses au Québéc de 1901 a 1971* (1997). Both of these latter works analyze the professionalization that occurred among women in religious orders while also examining the wider context of state regulation. Recent work by Elizabeth Smyth has opened up the world of English Catholic women religious noting the trend toward professionalization there as well (Smyth, 1999).

Unlike the women's missionary societies, however, women in temperance groups such as the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) were closely associated with the women's movement. Wendy Mitchinson's early dissertation on the WCTU has been followed by Sharon Anne Cook's study, *Through Sunshine and Shadow* (1995), a study of evangelicalism and reform in Ontario. Cook's monograph draws on local as well as national sources and she finds that evangelicalism persisted much longer at the local level than at the national; central to the WCTU's influence was the evangelical and maternal feminism based in the home which promised to improve self and society alike.

Founded in 1874, by 1891 there were more than 9,000 members in local temperance groups in Canada and by the 1880s and 1890s, the emphasis on individual pledges of abstinence and the need for prohibition had been widened to encompass many social reforms under the umbrella of evangelicalism. By the turn of the century, the major Protestant churches were engaged in the social-gospel movement which grappled with contemporary social and economic problems. Arguing that the churches needed to be relevant to the issues of the day, those engaged in social-gospel work tackled problems such as housing, poverty, alcoholism, the inequality of women, and many other issues. For women in the movement the social gospel fit well with the principles of maternalism which established wider roles for women in the public arena. Appeals to maternal responsibilities meant that women could justify intervening not only in areas that affected women, children, and the family but also in the wider world which impinged upon domestic life.

Early Canadian social and women's history dealt with a number of these themes, including my own edited collection, *A Not Unreasonable Claim* (Kealey, 1979) which proposed maternal feminism as key to understanding the Canadian women's movement. Maternal feminism fueled the campaigns for social reforms such as prohibition, revision of married women's property laws, wider access to education and the professions, protection for working women, and the attainment of women's suffrage. While suffrage came to dominate and overshadow other campaigns, the vote was a powerful symbol of citizenship and personhood for many and a tool for change as well. Even working-class women active in the labor and socialist movements of the early twentieth century saw the vote as a weapon in the struggle for social justice, a factor not well understood in the 1970s. The first official organization to address women's lack of access to the political process began as the Toronto Women's Literary Club, formed in 1876, as a forum to discuss social, economic, and political issues. By 1883 the Club openly adopted a pro-suffrage motion, then disbanded and reformed as the Canadian Woman Suffrage Association in order to support equal suffrage for women and men. Later with the assistance of suffrage speakers from

the United States, the organization metamorphosed once again into the Dominion Women's Enfranchisement Association.

The 1890s witnessed further developments as nation-wide groups emerged, such as the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) which provided services to single working women and the National Council of Women (NCWC), a Christian, conservative, and upper-middle-class women's group that established Local Councils of Women across the country. Striving to attract women from various political perspectives and of various religions, the NCWC under the leadership of Lady Aberdeen avoided sectarian practices and issues and thus resisted support of women's suffrage until 1910. The NCWC had difficulty becoming all things to all women but it did provide a national network of local councils which were joined by a number of affiliated national women's groups. In 1993, the centennial of the organization was celebrated in Naomi Griffiths' commissioned volume, *The Splendid Vision*.

Much of the work of supporting women's suffrage occurred at the local level, however. Rural and small-town women often moved into suffrage work through their WCTU or Women's Institute work. Some women, particularly those from European countries where women had achieved suffrage, also took part in campaigns, for example the Icelandic women of Manitoba in the 1890s and Finnish women in the early twentieth century. While initially French- and English-speaking women in Quebec joined the Montreal Council of Women in order to open up the public arena for women, by 1907 a separate "Fédération nationale Saint-Jean-Baptiste" was formed by prominent francophone feminists. Pockets of support for suffrage existed in the Maritime provinces as well though the only separate suffrage organization recorded was the Women's Enfranchisement Association of New Brunswick, founded in 1894. The suffrage campaign would continue until the provincial and federal campaigns succeeded during and immediately after World War I, with only Quebec holding out beyond 1925, finally granting the vote to women in 1940.

While the campaigns for social reform gained strength in the early decades of the twentieth century, other developments were key for women as well. Continuing the trend toward increased numbers of women in the labor force, predominantly single women found employment in the expanding factories, shops, and other workplaces of the nation. In this century women were also drawn into office and professional occupations (Lowe, 1987). While approximately one in five clerical workers was a woman in 1901, a decade later the figure had risen to one in three. In the professions, women were increasingly moving into nursing, social work, and other similar areas while teaching had already become highly feminized by the last quarter of the nineteenth century in some regions of Canada. Despite these developments, women workers found it difficult to organize themselves into labor unions in an era in which women were viewed as young, transient workers whose biological functions made them unsuitable workers. Working-class masculinity emphasized physical strength, skilled work, and solidarity among working men, dismissing women workers as weak, unskilled, lacking in collective values and traditions, and inherently conservative. Despite these widespread perceptions, women were involved in labor organizations and strikes in the pre-war period, mostly in the garment and textile industries (Kealey, 1998). Not surprisingly, research on women's labor history has assumed a prominent role in Canadian women's history from the 1970s on, though at least one scholar has suggested that a decline of interest is noticeable in recent years (Sangster, 2000).

This research on women workers led to recognition of the important roles played by immigrant women in large urban centres of manufacturing – Montreal, Toronto, Hamilton, and Winnipeg. Jewish women, for example, were key players in many of the clothing strikes and community strike support in urban areas before the war. As Ruth Frager points out in *Sweatshop Strife* (1992), the barriers to women's participation in the Jewish labor movement were also daunting. Immigrant women also played a role in the development of the socialist movement in Canada, though these roles were often circumscribed by gender and cultural expectations. These themes are taken up in two books which address the roles of women and feminism in the early Canadian socialist movement. While Newton's *The Feminist Challenge to the Canadian Left 1900–1918* (1995) stresses the writings and ideology of English-speaking socialists, my own work attempts to paint a broader picture incorporating material as well as ideological considerations while paying attention to the intersections among various groups of women – immigrant, working-class, and middle-class (Kealey, 1998).

Farm women, like other groups of women, also organized in the early twentieth century, fighting to improve the conditions of women in far-flung settlements, on isolated homesteads and in small towns (Cavanaugh and Warne, 2000). Many of these groups took on issues such as the lack of medical care for or the legal disabilities of women as well as temperance and eventually suffrage. Other groups emerged in the context of war needs and the political, economic, and social crises associated with World War I, topics beyond the scope of this chapter. Despite the recognition that World War I was a significant catalyst for change, no monograph study focused on women's roles and gender relations has yet appeared in the literature.

Future Directions

Canadian women's/gender history emerged in the 1970s as historians worldwide discovered social history with its early emphasis on studying oppressed groups, collectivities, and daily life. Much of this history took its inspiration from contemporary social movements as well as theoretical debates on class, gender, ethnicity, and race. In the last decade or so historical writing has begun to encompass new theoretical perspectives which question older certainties and categories, including class. Feminist social historians not only have insisted on the need to examine race and "whiteness" but also have moved into the history of sexuality in its many forms, and have revamped the way we look at politics and the State. Studies of sexuality have also intersected with research on culture, as in Dubinsky's study of honeymooning and tourism at Niagara Falls (1999). Interest in biographies has grown and will most likely remain important as historians incorporate analyses of gender, race/ethnicity, and class with methods and perspectives from cultural studies and post-structuralism (Coates and Morgan, 2001). The history of women of colour and of aboriginal women has only begun to be studied and will continue to attract historical researchers, some of whom will continue to be interested in the colonial relationship. Historians can also expect more openness to aboriginal women's storytelling as essential to understanding their history and culture, and greater interest in exploring topics involving religion. Earlier work encapsulated in *Gendered Pasts* (McPherson et al., 1999), a collection on femininity and masculinity in Canada, promises to continue

to elucidate how gender is socially constructed in various times and places. Studies of regional women's/gender history will also have a larger place as historians grapple seriously with the question of place. As historian Suzanne Morton remarks on the relative invisibility of Atlantic Canadian studies on women/gender in the general historical literature, the problem "reflects the difficulty of reconciling the study of gender to a regional framework" (Morton, 2000). Perhaps the most striking trend, however, is the very diversity of subjects and approaches in this rich field of historical scholarship.

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Gender in the Contemporary World
(1920–2003)

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Chapter Twenty-eight

Frameworks of Gender: Feminism and Nationalism in Twentieth-Century Asia

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Gender and gender identity in twentieth-century Asia were framed in terms of feminism and nationalism. Feminism and nationalism had, of course, widely varying meanings in colonial and post-colonial India, Southeast Asia, and Korea, revolutionary China, and imperial and post-imperial Japan. But throughout Asia, gender identities and national identities developed in tandem, and feminism was central to this development. This essay will focus on feminisms – defined here as the quest for rights and improved status and conditions of women – in South, Southeast, and East Asia. It will also explore the defining (and essentializing) of characteristics of womanhood in support of nationalism.

Nationalism had various forms in twentieth-century Asia. In countries under direct colonialism (such as India, Korea, Indonesia, Vietnam, and the Philippines in the first half of the century) or threatened by foreign economic or cultural domination (such as China in the first half of the century and many other Asian countries in the post-colonial era), nationalism was an ideology of liberation that produced liberation movements. Women's roles were both active and symbolic in those movements, earning improved status for women and, paradoxically, locking them in symbolic maternal roles. In Japan, nationalism took its other common twentieth-century form – that of expanding the international position of the nation – leading in Japan's case to imperialism. Both forms of nationalism defined individuals as members of a distinct group, the nation. Feminism also defined women as members of a distinct category – and this was part of the process of constructing gender. Although international feminism, in which Asian women's rights movements played an active role, transcended national boundaries, feminism was often used in the service of nationalism.

At the same time, women and men who supported improvements in the condition of women and the extension of rights to women used nationalism as a means to those ends. Asian feminist strategies took two general forms, which though appearing to be opposites, were often employed simultaneously without a sense of irony. These forms were: imagining the nation as a family with strong mothers and fathers whose different contributions were equally important and deserving of respect and

protection after the attainment of national independence and strength; and struggling for equal rights of citizenship as a prior condition for women and men to work on behalf of the nation.

Nationalism, Feminism, and Gender in South Asia

Decades before the era under consideration in this essay, Indian reformers took up the question of women's status, conditions, and rights. As historian of Indian feminism Radha Kumar has written, "[O]ver the last one hundred and eighty years, the focus of campaigns for improvement in women's lives has changed from needs to rights and within this from the restricted right to parity in selected areas to the larger right of self-determination" (Kumar, 1993: 3). The quest for *political* rights was not a central issue in the nineteenth century, but did become a critical concern in the twentieth.

Pre-independence advocates for women were ever mindful of nationalism; some stressed the need to improve the status of women, especially as mothers, in order to strengthen India as a society and a nation, while others saw a stress on Indian national culture distinct from the culture of imperial Britain as a step toward improving women's status. In both cases, characterizing women as a group – that is, creating a gender identity – was necessary. Nineteenth-century Indian nationalists, roughly divided into two groups, reformers and revivalists, addressed the issue of gender and women's status. The earliest reformers in the 1820s, men like Raja Rammohan Roy, developed a nationalist notion of a Golden Age of Hindu culture preceding both the arrival of Islam and later colonial domination by the British, which produced what they viewed as the degenerate Hindu culture of their own time. In that Golden Age, the theory went, women had higher status, and, therefore, reformist attempts to overcome "modern" sexist practices, even attempts undertaken in concert with British officials and private citizens, were justified as a return to an authentic national past.

The education of girls, the prohibition of *sati* (widow immolation) and female infanticide, support for widow remarriage, and raising the age of marital consent were first addressed by colonial officials, missionaries, and Indian male reformers who were joined by Indian women in the last decades of the nineteenth century. Education for girls was a central issue for Indian reformers interested not only in the fair treatment of women but also concerned about Christian evangelism promoted by schools for Indian girls run by missionaries. By the end of the century, Indian reformers had come to articulate the purpose of girls' education as primarily functional – that is, to make women better mothers in a strengthened society – though many also stressed the role of education in promoting virtue and proper behavior, equally for boys and girls. Education continued to be a rallying point for reformers, as might be expected in a society in which women's literacy rate was just 0.7 percent in 1901 and 6 percent in 1946. School-based education faced numerous obstacles, including resistance to sending girls out to public places, reluctance of many educated men to extend the privilege of education to their wives, sisters, and daughters, and the custom of very early marriage which would cut off educational opportunities.

Confinement of girls to the home and men's reluctance to permit their female relatives the same privileges they themselves enjoyed were common to other contemporary societies. Child marriage was highlighted by reformers as a particularly

Indian problem; but while women reformers rued its effects in limiting girls' education, many male reformers gave it a nationalist twist, criticizing the damage caused to girls' bodies, and thus the physical health of India's women and children, by youthful maternity. The eugenic argument against early marriage made a connection between physical weakness and colonial humiliation. Revivalist nationalists also focused on women's bodies, but they supported early marriage as essentially Hindu. Age-of-consent laws were promulgated in 1860 (establishing the age at 10) and 1891 (raising it to 12). Neither law was particularly successful, but debates over marital legislation encouraged the discourse on equality in marriage. One noted case that arose in that climate was that of Rukhmabai (1864–1955), who, though married at age 11, continued to live and be educated in her natal home during her adolescence. Her uneducated, dissolute husband sued for his conjugal rights, and, following British law, the British judges ruled in his favor. Eventually, Rukhmabai obtained a divorce, went to England to study medicine, and returned to India as a physician. Women reformers rallied to her side. By the end of the century, concerned women took up a number of causes, founding schools for girls, running homes for widows, and attacking child labor and excessive work hours for women as destructive to the workers themselves and to India. Some, such as Pandita Ramabai, who studied abroad following widowhood and whose conversion to Christianity made her reformism somewhat suspect, combined her interest in improving the conditions and status of women with membership of the Indian National Congress.

From its inception in 1885, women were included as observers in the Indian National Congress. Although not allowed to speak or vote at first, women delegates attended meetings, anticipating being able later to ameliorate the condition of women under existing political conditions and to create a place for women as citizens as India moved to demand enfranchisement. The Indian National Congress took up a number of issues, including those related to sexuality, disease, and prostitution. At the same time, nationalist discourse began to address women as needing the protection of Indian men. Sexual attacks by British soldiers linked colonialism with rape. Rape was viewed as a violation of community honor rather than a sexual attack against the victim of the crime, however. Little outrage was expressed when the perpetrator was an adult husband of a child bride, although it was illegal for adult husbands to have sexual relations with underage "wives."

After the turn of the century, nationalist rhetoric became more revolutionary. Angered over the partition of Bengal by Lord Curzon in 1905, Indian women joined protest meetings, formed women's support groups, and boycotted British products in favor of indigenous goods – a type of consumer nationalism. Hindu goddesses, particularly Kali, and also Durga and Chandi, were identified with the nation itself. Mother Kali was equated with Mother India. Mother-goddess imagery went hand in glove with an increasing stress on education for "mothers of the nation." Through this feminization of nationalism, women were increasingly encouraged to enter the nationalist struggle. At the same time, although the goddesses that represented the nation were uniquely Indian, nationalist feminists also appealed to women as a gendered group that transcended single societies or nations. Sarojini Naidu (1879–1949), the first Indian woman to be elected President of the Indian National Congress, viewed women around the world as united by "the common divine quality of motherhood."

The question of whether women should attempt social reform within a colonial India in anticipation of later independence or focus on attaining political change first and then work for social uplift intensified in the early decades of the twentieth century. Many advocates for women saw both struggles as advancing in parallel, although some nationalists attacked feminist reformism as diverting attention from their primary cause, nationalism. Despite these differences, numerous women's clubs and ladies' societies sprang up all over India in the decade of the 1910s. Social uplift (that is, the effort to "improve" women) was an important goal of these groups, many of whose members were the wives and daughters of Indian professional men and nationalists. In addition to these scattered groups working on behalf of women, there were attempts at nation-wide organizations, including the Ladies' Congress (Mahila Parishad) formed in 1908 and the Great Circle of Women of India (Bharat Stri Mandal) in 1910. The All-India Muslim Ladies Conference, established in 1914, also had a nation-wide bailiwick. Within male-dominated groups, women like Sarojini Naidu and Irish expatriate Annie Besant took up women's issues and explicitly connected women's activism to nationalism, though both saw men as taking the leading role in the nationalist struggle.

Other feminists advocated fuller political rights for women as a means to women's uplift and Indian Home Rule or even independence. The Women's Indian Association (WIA) joined Indian feminists with British and Irish colleagues in 1917. Irishwomen Margaret Cousins (1878–1954), already well-known for her work as a Irish nationalist and feminist, and Dorothy Jinarajadasa helped organize a delegation of Indian women to petition the British Secretary of State for India for equal rights for Indian men and women. There was some irony in the WIA demand, as Indian men did not yet have full political rights nor was India independent. Although the British were initially reluctant to extend the civil rights of Indian women, support by Indian nationalists for the WIA demands persuaded them to leave the matter of women's civil rights to provincial legislatures. Madras (in 1920) and Bombay (in 1921) granted those rights, though an extremely limited number of women (less than 1 percent) were granted the franchise. Madras was a particularly fertile ground for feminist ideas; for several decades, male and female reformers had met in associations to undertake social work, medical service to the poor, and schools for girls. Journals written by and for women proliferated in Madras after the turn of the century.

Even a limited franchise fundamentally changed the relationship of women to civil society and the State. Increasing, though still small, numbers of women were educated. Many left cloistered containment in the family home (*purdah*) to undertake social reform activities. Others were organized by nationalist associations to assist with the new civil disobedience movement in 1920–1. A new concept of womanhood was emerging in the 1920s. Women's rights came to be part of the larger narrative of liberation, and were justified in two different ways: (a) women were socially useful as mothers and their biological differences from men were the reason women should have rights; and (b) women and men had the same needs and therefore women should not be denied rights. The former justification for rights – motherhood – resonated with nationalists' advocacy of mother-and-child health, sanitation, and other social welfare concerns. Like many feminists in Japan and elsewhere in Asia, Indian feminists who supported this view glorified motherhood at the expense of Women's role as daughters-in-law or wives. The latter justification for women's rights

– gender equality – came into some conflict with more orthodox nationalists' views, especially after the founding of the All India Women's Conference (AIWC) in 1927. Initially called to discuss education issues, the Conference quickly expanded its focus to address labor issues, early marriage, maternity leave, and women's rights. A women's suffrage delegation from AIWC traveled to London to ask for the franchise in the early 1930s. The vote had been extended to some women throughout India, although the franchise had property and other types of limitations. Indian feminists protested these limitations.

New Indian women were characterized as mothers, as deserving of respect for their social work on behalf of others, as symbolic of the strength of the nation. Their gender was both universal – Indian women played a major role in international women's congresses in the 1920s – and reflective of their Indian context, which itself was influenced by class, religion, and regional culture. Like many feminists, Indian feminists of that era were both Indian and cosmopolitan at the same time.

The arrival of Mohandas K. Gandhi in 1917 had a defining impact on both feminism and nationalism. Viewing women as having a greater capacity for self-sacrifice and endurance, Gandhi saw women as the best practitioners of his form of nationalist resistance – passive resistance. He called on women to weave their own fabric made of homespun in order to avoid purchasing British goods. Viewing women as a repository of values, he promoted temperance and sexual virtue as nationalist goals. These could be practiced within the home, and Gandhi as well as many women saw them as a way of empowering women while strengthening the nation, thus binding feminism and nationalism. But Gandhi did not question the division of gender roles into a more public sphere for men and a home sphere for women. In 1930, when he undertook the famous salt marches to undermine the government monopoly on the production of salt, he initially barred women from taking part. Women bitterly protested their exclusion, and Sarojini Naidu joined the protest and was promptly arrested. Muthulakshmi Reddi (1886–1968), one of India's first women doctors as well as India's first elected woman legislator, resigned from the Madras Council in support of the salt marches. Eventually 80,000 people, of whom 17,000 were women, were arrested in the salt protest. By 1930, women had forced themselves into the center of Gandhian feminism.

Differences among feminists began to emerge in the 1930s as feminists focused more attention on national issues. Some criticized working so closely with British feminists in international movements. Some began to question feminism as too Western, focusing, they said, on women's "selfish" needs rather than on society's needs. By 1940 tension between Hindus and Muslims, who had worked both together and in parallel for decades, emerged. World War II brought increasing numbers of British soldiers to India. Brutal treatment of Indians in general and sexual violation of women in particular led to an intensification of the demand for British departure from India. The Quit India Movement, begun in 1942, drew millions of men and women. Women hoped that their involvement would lead to equal rights upon independence.

Independence in 1947 led to the partitioning of India into two, and later three, countries. The uprooting of the lives of many people, particularly women who were forced to return to their original families in those cases where they had been living in an area outside their natal religious area, was brutal. But in other ways,

independence initially promised many reforms for women. The Indian Constitution (1950) granted the vote to women. Since the 1950s, many elite women have entered politics and the public sector at the state and municipal level, and one, Indira Gandhi, daughter of (Founding Father) Jawarhalal Nehru, claimed the prime ministership in 1966, remaining in that office for most of the years until her assassination in 1984. Indeed, the rate of female representation in government surpasses that of most Western industrialized countries. Professional women are active and numerous, and journals, literature, and women's culture are lively. As Indian feminists note, however, these successes pale by comparison with continuing women's rights problems. Nationalism, so intimately tied to the quest for women's rights in the pre-1947 era, now became an impediment to women's rights. With the division of India, women's rights and gender identity came to be framed within the context of new forms of nationalism. State-sponsored and religious nationalisms have defined gender narrowly and have not promoted feminist liberation. Modern feminists are, as a result, very active in India.

Feminists' first disappointment came with the government's inability to pass a uniform marriage code. Marriage legislation passed in the mid-1950s recognized religious rights as superseding women's rights. The code outlawed polygamy and permitted both husbands and wives to sue for divorce. But it was not extended to Muslims; men could have up to four wives and divorce was to be governed by Muslim religious law rather than a uniform Indian law.

Political divisions emerged among feminists in the post-1947 era, as the common enemy, imperialism, fell away. Many feminists were part of the Congress movement while others were members of communist organizations. The latter began to run out of steam in the 1960s, when India and China went to war, but feminism continued to be active on the Left. Indeed, feminisms developed among new groups of women, acting in solidarity to address continuing problems. The 1970s in India as elsewhere saw an explosion of new feminist activism. The Shehada movement addressed poverty and famine in the early 1970s, but its women activists very soon began to ask why they, too, should be oppressed. They took up the issues of wife beating, and focused on anti-alcohol campaigns. The Self-Employed Women's Association, founded in 1972, to help women vendors and rag-pickers, addressed economic justice issues for women. Anti-price rise demonstrations by lower-class women did not appear to question gender roles as women demonstrated for household issues, but their public presence was another way in which patriarchy was undermined. Peasant and *dalit* (untouchable) women's movements in the 1970s demanded equal rights for all women, thereby injecting into feminist discourse the important issue of class and other forms of difference – a significant new concern among feminists worldwide at the time. As elsewhere, the difference debate was a challenge to feminists. With many on the Left critiquing feminism as "Western" and "bourgeois," feminists responded by building networks among groups, ideological differences notwithstanding, and by addressing larger issues that focused all their attention. These included poverty, the resurgence of child marriage, and the worsening sex ratio (929 : 1000 in the 1990s), caused by female infanticide, undernourishment of girls, and violence against women, much but not all of it in the family relationship. By addressing inequities in the family, these issues engendered strong resistance, framed in fundamentalist nationalist terms.

Feminists attacked domestic violence, subsumed under the category of dowry violence and/or murder, starting in the late 1970s. Dowry had been legally prohibited in 1961, but the custom spread to new social classes and to new areas where it had not appeared earlier, accompanying the commodification of daughters as brides among the newly affluent or middle class. Not all domestic violence was related to dowry, but a noteworthy proportion was, as grooms' families' demands for increased dowry payments were, in some cases, backed up by the threat of violence against the bride. At the same time, outrage over the rape of women by police officers and other representatives of the State exploded, and grassroots movements by women joined the larger national groups in protest. (Rape within the family is not recognized in law, so the focus was on rape in a public venue.) Feminists' actions did lead to new anti-dowry legislation and to some prosecution of rape – in the event, neither of these crimes is fully reported or adequately prosecuted – but religious nationalists attacked feminists for their threat to the family in the anti-dowry movement and coopted the rape issue by focusing on the protection of family honor.

The slow pace of implementation of legislation encouraged feminists to shift tactics in the 1980s. On the one hand, they saw the courts as providing redress for individual women's problems, and on the other, they celebrated women's strengths. Women's arts, women's studies at the university level, women's networks both in India and in the international arena sponsored by the UN and other institutions, women's journals and presses, and the lauding of women's strengths as seen in the women-led landless peasant, slum improvement, health, and environmental movements were central to Indian feminism in that decade. Communication networks were built across classes and regions. On the downside, however, individual women were urged to seek solutions to their problems as individuals rather than through large-scale political movements. This would emerge as a problem in the face of communal-identity politics and the rise of religious fundamentalism.

Communal-identity politics were visible in numerous cases, and one of great concern to feminists was the Shah Bano divorce case in 1985. Shah Bano, a 75-year old Muslim divorcee, sued her former husband for alimony support under the Indian marriage code. When the lower courts ruled in her favor, Muslim opponents claimed this undermined Muslim law, and the Indian government agreed to exempt Muslim women from the protection of Indian marriage law. In the late 1980s, Hindu nationalists had their own form of oppressive fundamentalism that manipulated and violated women. In 1987, eighteen-year-old widow Roop Kanwar died on the funeral pyre of her husband in an act of *sati*. Feminists decried this action as coerced by a family intent on making money from what they believed would become a pilgrimage site, while Hindu nationalists turned feminist rhetoric on its head by criticizing Indian feminists for denying widows their right of self-expression through self-immolation. Feminists were accused of being cultural imperialists and supporters of capitalist materialism, which stripped them of their ability to lead the anti-*sati* movement. But other supporters joined them, and anti-*sati* legislation was strengthened in the mid-1990s. Nationalism is not, however, dead, and many Hindu women have been coopted into the Hindu nationalist movement against Muslims in India. Rather than focusing on the continuing gender problems in their own communities, many of these women have deflected their feminist anger onto Muslim men. Feminists

continue to struggle in India, and ideological and religious differences continue to stymie concerted, unified actions.

Pakistan

Since the founding of Pakistan following the 1947 partition, Pakistani law has been interpreted through Qur'anic law. As a result, feminist actions have often taken the form of influencing the Islamic interpretation of the law. The 1961 Muslim Family Laws Ordinance, which attempted to limit polygyny and permit women to divorce, was supported by the All Pakistan Women's Association. By the following decade, the Council of Islamic Ideology was set up to monitor the implementation of all laws, and the Muslim Family Laws Ordinance was interpreted in conformity with Islamic principles, thereby limiting its benefit for women. Professional women, particularly lawyers and members of the Women's Action Forum, have periodically protested the legal limitations of the Council of Islamic Ideology. Although women have the right to vote and stand for political office – Benazir Bhutto, daughter of an assassinated prime minister, was twice prime minister herself in the 1980s and 1990s – her rise to political prominence was based on her family ties, a common thread in South Asian politics. Moreover, like other women in Pakistan, Bhutto had to behave and dress with Muslim modesty. All Pakistani women are subject to rules about proper dress; in the 1970s, popular South Asian styles like the Indian *sari* dress and the *bindi* dot which, while a Hindu sign of marriage, came to be seen as simply a beauty mark, were prohibited. Women's employment is also limited to "suitable" occupations. While occupational limitations have restricted women's employment opportunities in some ways, in other ways they have enhanced them. Women physicians treat women patients, women teachers teach girls, and women bankers work in banks set up for women customers. Nationalist tensions with India have existed since the partition, and these have been exacerbated since the 1990s because of international issues, including those in the border state of Kashmir. As in India, where Hindu nationalism has grown against the backdrop of tensions with Pakistan, in Pakistan as well, nationalist Islam has tightened the restrictions on women's rights. Nationalisms have increasingly impeded women's freedoms.

Bangladesh

The status of women in Bangladesh is also ambiguous. Women have full voting rights, and, as in India and Pakistan, there have been women prime ministers. One of the two women in that post, like India's Indira Gandhi and Pakistan's Benazir Bhutto, was the daughter of a prime minister, the other the widow. Founded in 1971 after breaking away from Pakistan, Bangladesh is an Islamic country, and the laws governing the family are based on religious principles. But gender segregation is less in evidence in Bangladesh than in Pakistan, and many indigent women work outside the home. The constitution stipulates the equality of men and women, and Western international aid has often been contingent on women's involvement in development schemes. Inequality persists, however. Women's life expectancy, bucking international trends, trails behind men's. Dowry deaths, bad workplace conditions, and other forms of gender oppression have been protested by women's non-governmental organizations.

Gender in Colonial and Post-Colonial Southeast Asia and Northeast Asia

Early modern European visitors to Southeast Asia typically commented on the roles of women. Drawing attention to what was different from European societies, their comments may reflect a romanticizing of the exotic, but they generally found that Southeast Asian women played important economic roles as domestic and international traders, enjoyed some rights in marital choice and divorce, and took part in religious rituals, all of which were denied to most European women of the time. To be sure, Hindu and Islamic religious practices (in western and maritime Southeast Asia) as well as Confucian socio-political theory (in Vietnam) played a role in the construction of gender before the coming of the Europeans. By the late nineteenth century, Thailand alone was independent of imperialist control, and women in Southeast Asia were subject to European law as well as local customs and practices. Early in the twentieth century, independence movements, mainly but not exclusively led by men, emerged in Southeast Asia, and women's roles in nationalist movements, conditioned by both pre-colonial practice and modern libratory rhetoric, helped construct gender in the twentieth century.

Indonesia

Liaisons between Indonesian women and Dutch men helped to create a hybridized society beginning in the seventeenth century. Marriages, many of them temporary as the Dutch traders moved between the metropole and the colony, offered local women and their families links to foreign trade networks and opened local markets to Dutch traders. At the same time, of course, these marriages produced children, who, when recognized by their fathers, were considered "European" rather than indigenous as were children of mixed ancestry in many other colonial settings. Although the colonial authorities in the 1920s encouraged Dutch men to marry Dutch women to support the social hierarchy, cross-cultural ties continued to predominate. These connections could be seen in practices outside of marriage as well. The best-known symbol of women's rights and national liberation in early twentieth-century Indonesia, Raden Ajeng Kartini (1879–1904), was a product of a Dutch school in Java.

Kartini died very young, but her life took on many layers of meaning. Her formal European-style education ended when she was twelve so that she could prepare for marriage, but she spent the next decade in her home reading the works of Indian and European feminists. Her prodigious letter-writing during that time left a large intellectual legacy, used by Dutch colonial authorities, Indonesian nationalists, and post-colonial government leaders. Kartini's symbolism exemplifies the seemingly contradictory ways in which feminism and nationalism intersected. Like many feminists elsewhere at the turn of the century, Kartini, in her letters and public utterances, called for women's education to raise their status, to make them better mothers, and to emancipate them from marital inequality. Yet, in apparent contrast to her expressed ideas, Kartini accepted an arranged marriage with an elderly widower with several secondary wives. She lived only four days after giving birth to her only child.

The Dutch were the first to construct the meaning of Kartini's life. She was held up as a symbol of genteel education for aristocratic Javanese girls – an education that

blended Dutch and Javanese values – and of the value of Dutch social policies. But among Kartini's letters were strong critiques of colonial rule, suppressed in the first (Dutch) collections of her letters. Later Indonesian nationalists drew attention to those ideas. Kartini continued to be constructed in other ways after independence. During the Suharto era (1966–98), the Indonesian government promoted a "Mother Kartini Day," in which girls, wearing clothes that were supposed to copy Kartini's but were really a contemporary fabrication, feted Kartini as a symbolic mother of the nation. This reified the state-supported ideology of women as mothers and wives first and as citizens secondarily by honoring a woman who was a mother for just four days and whose letters called for women's independence and autonomy.

Women's associations, many of them advocating improved education for women and reform of wives' roles in the family, emerged in the first decades of the twentieth century. By 1928, these associations came together for the first Indonesian Women's Congress, which addressed the need for a secular marriage law. Two years later, a more explicitly nationalist organization, the Isteri Sedar (Aware Women) was established and called for national independence and marriage reform. Muslim members of some of these groups opposed the groups' rejection of polygyny, however. In 1938, women's groups began to advocate suffrage. The coming of World War II terminated many of these movements, but women and men worked together in the struggle for independence from the Netherlands in the post-war years.

Unfortunately, the post-colonial era was one of gender stratification. The valorization of women as mothers was a central component of Suharto-era social control; the patriarchal family was the basis of state authority. But wives were not entirely without rights. The 1974 marriage law raised the age of marriage, called for women's protection from marriage against their will, and allowed women the right to initiate divorce. Islamic families, however, were partially exempt from this law, since their divorces (as in the case of India) could be handled in Islamic courts.

The valorization of motherhood cut two ways in the 1990s. Though the Suharto government had promoted motherhood as part of the gender differences at the base of the patriarchal state, women demonstrated against the regime in their capacity as mothers who demanded basic commodities for their families. Activist women took part in demonstrations and took part in the occupation of parliament in May 1998. Their activism, which embraced women's rights, was spurred by the revelations of the rapes of Chinese women. Muslim women rejected Muslim men's defining of those rapes as part of a *jihad*, seeing them instead as male violence against women. Indonesian women have continued their political demands in the last several years. A large part of the industrial workforce is female, and reformers make use of international feminist tools such as the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) to rectify work conditions. Women are entering formal politics as well. Although there are few women in national legislative bodies, there are women at the top of the political system, including the current president Megawati, daughter of Indonesia's founding president Sukarno. Many middle-class women advocate an expansion of women's rights in politics and in the workplace and demand an end to political violence. Indonesian women marched to protest violence on March 8, 1999, the first time International Women's Day was celebrated in Indonesia.

The Philippines

The construction of gender in contemporary Philippines has many pillars. The Philippines was colonized twice – by Spain from 1565 to 1898 and by the United States from 1900 to 1946 – and was under Japanese military occupation from 1941 to 1945. For most of the years after independence in 1946, the US continued to control military bases in the islands, which was often viewed by both women and men as a continuing form of neo-colonialism that called for a nationalist response. Thus, notions of gender, though based on indigenous models, were constantly recast through feminist and nationalist responses to these occupations as well as through notions of gender instilled by the occupiers.

Filipinas had historically enjoyed a relatively high status compared to men. Among other rights, women could inherit, play important public roles, and name their children. Sons were not preferred over daughters. The Spanish colonials attempted to Catholicize and hispanicize the islands' inhabitants, and this led to greater seclusion of Filipina women and the curtailing of the inheritance and marital rights they had possessed before colonization. Many Filipinas did not adopt the prescribed womanly reticence, however; Gabriela Silang, for instance, led a rebellion against the Spanish in the seventeenth century. Two hundred years later, in the last decade of Spanish rule, Filipina women demanded education as a means of improving the status of women, as did their counterparts elsewhere in Asia. Women also played a significant role in the independence struggle against Spain, serving as sentries for the Katipunan, the main independence group, and even, in one known case, leading troops. The end of Spanish colonialism did not lead to independence, however, as the Americans swept in to claim the islands.

Even against the backdrop of continuing colonialism, Filipina women worked to establish new roles and identities for women. Several explicitly feminist organizations, such as the Asociación Feminista Filipina (founded 1904), worked for social welfare, temperance, and public-governance roles for women. In 1906, the Asociación Feminists Ilonga made women's suffrage its goal. And in 1909, the women's journal *Feminista* was founded with the objective "to revindicate the rights of women." Filipina women took part in international feminist movements as well. The struggle for the vote continued for three decades, culminating in the victorious plebiscite of May 1937, which made Filipinas the first women in Asia to gain the vote.

What was the meaning of the vote in the absence of full national independence, however? Some feminists later downplayed the significance of women's suffrage under those conditions. Yet others have noted that women thereby joined Filipino men in the right to express themselves in public governance, even under the limitations of colonialism. In the succeeding decades, during and after World War II, enfranchised women worked alongside men for national liberation (during the war) and for social improvement and community issues (in the post-war decades). Most believed that the conditions of women would improve as women and men worked for broader national goals. Few expressly addressed gender issues during those years after women's enfranchisement.

This changed in the 1970s when women in the predominantly student movement opposing the Marcos regime focused on feminist issues. The Free Movement of New Women (acronym MAKIBAKA) was founded in 1970 to protest the national beauty

contest, and joined the anti-Marcos forces after the declaration of martial law in 1972. Other groups whose agendas were more expressly feminist were founded, but these encountered charges that feminism was a bourgeois Western concept. Many were pressured to prioritize nationalism or feminism. The tension between nationalism and feminism pushed feminism to take a back seat temporarily. Women in radical movements were relegated to auxiliary roles. Feminist nuns, however, because of their moral power, were able boldly to address feminist concerns throughout the 1970s and 1980s. By the early 1980s, expressly feminist groups, in addition to the nuns, came forward. The best known of these groups was GABRIELA (General Assembly Binding Women for Reforms, Integrity, Equality, Leadership and Action, founded 1984), whose inspiration was the seventeenth-century anti-Spanish rebel, Gabriela Silang. GABRIELA was an umbrella organization bringing together ninety groups, then 120 by 1992, and close to 200 by 2000. Issues they took up were reproductive rights, domestic violence, trafficking in women, prostitution around US military bases, comfort women's rights, sexual harassment, poverty, sex tourism, overseas workers as maids or sex workers, "mail-order" brides, and AIDS. Many of these issues are linked to nationalist aspirations as well as feminist goals. A number of the organization's goals have been legislatively addressed with laws outlawing the mail-order system for marriage, setting up rape crisis centers, and criminalizing sexual harassment in the workplace.

Women have also played significant political roles. Imelda Marcos was a co-ruler during her husband Ferdinand's regime. Corazon Aquino and Gloria Macapagal served as president, and women have been elected to all levels of government. Aquino's election had another important meaning – her gender and spirituality made her a symbol of morality, an ideal foil for her corrupt opponent in the 1986 election, Ferdinand Marcos. To be sure, women's numbers trail behind men's, but they compare favorably with many other democracies such as the USA. As in other South and Southeast Asian countries, many elected women are daughters or wives of politically powerful men, and women who are not elected, like Imelda, could also wield great power through their family connections.

Vietnam

The connection between feminism and nationalism has deep roots in Vietnam. Legendary women warriors – the Trung sisters in the first century and Trieu thi Trinh in the third century – symbolized patriotism in the struggle against Chinese domination of Vietnam. And yet, at the beginning of the modern women's movement in twentieth-century Vietnam, women still confronted the Three Submissions – when a child, to her father; when married, to her husband; when a widow, to her sons – and the Four Virtues – housewifery, appearance, speech, and conduct. Moreover, Vietnam was colonized by France. The French were a source of both nationalist and feminist ideology and, as Vietnamese feminist activists of the inter-war era pointed out, oppressive in their treatment of Vietnamese women. Following independence in 1954, Vietnam was partitioned. Escalating military tensions between the sectors led to full-scale American involvement by the early sixties. War continued with the United States until 1973 and between North and South Vietnam until reunification in 1975. During the war era, women had constitutional equality with men and played a very

active role in both civilian and military affairs. After 1975, women's participation dropped off significantly, but feminist initiatives have recently reemerged.

Few Vietnamese women were formally educated before the beginning of the twentieth century. As in China, the primary goal of formal education had been preparation for Confucian-based civil-service examinations open only to men. In the first decades of the twentieth century, colonial policies extended education to elite Vietnamese women, and journals of interest to both men and women began publication. Short stories and novels with themes of women's self-sacrifice came to be read – as they were often intended to be – as allegories of national humiliation, with the victimized woman standing in for Vietnam. The most popular tale at the time, *The Tale of Kieu*, depicted a young woman who fell into prostitution to save her falsely imprisoned father and who later was redeemed by a platonic marriage to her first love. As young urban middle-class Vietnamese men and women began to chafe at Confucian social rigidity and parental controls in the 1920s, these tales lost their lustre. National salvation came to be tied to improving the status of women.

The Vietnamese Youth League (founded 1925, which later became the Indochinese Communist Party) and the Vietnamese Nationalist Party (founded 1927) were first and foremost nationalist parties working for independence. Both, however, addressed feminist issues because their women members demanded women's liberation and because women's issues were an important drawing card to increase female membership. As in the case of Indian feminism, the question arose of prioritizing national or gender liberation. The Youth League, led by Nguyen Ai Quoc (later named Ho Chi Minh), had a ready answer: there could be no women's liberation without national emancipation and the destruction of private property. The editors of the Youth League's journal, *Youth*, chided women, in their regular column on feminist issues called "The Ladies' Forum," for attending to their families rather than throwing themselves completely into revolutionary activities. They failed to say who should take care of the family in the absence of women, however.

The Youth League had competitors for women's attention. In addition to the Nationalist Party in the area of political organizing, a popular journal, *Ladies' News* (*Phu nu tan van*), hit the news stands in Saigon in 1929. Widely circulated until its demise in 1934, *Ladies' News* was a strong proponent of women's education and women's rights. Its reporters covered feminist activities around the world and attacked Confucianism for its gender inequality. Its ideology borrowed from both liberal and Marxist rhetoric. The dissemination of feminist ideas occurred at the same time that the Youth League and the Vietnamese Nationalist Party were being suppressed by the French authorities, the former for the internecine murder of a leader accused of sexual harassment in 1928, the latter for murdering a French official in 1929. The Nationalist Party never recovered, and the Youth League transformed itself into the Vietnamese Communist Party in 1930. The Vietnam Women's Union, established in October of that year, brought numerous women into the communist fold. By the end of World War II, a quarter of all Vietnamese women were members of the VWU. Leading communist women, such as Nguyen thi Minh Khai, stressed that the defense of interests common to all social classes rather than the struggle between men and women should be the goal of the movement.

Vietnam declared independence in 1945 and promulgated its constitution in 1946, but the return of the French put self-governance on hold until 1954. The

constitution stipulated gender equality in politics, economics, the workplace, and marriage, granted widows the right to remarry, and protected the rights of children born to unmarried mothers. Women played a significant role in the military struggle in the next two decades, particularly between 1965 and 1973, the era of significant US involvement. More importantly, women filled political posts – usually at the assistant level – carried out agricultural work, and occupied virtually every type of job filled by men before 1965. Women's possession of positions of responsibility peaked in the early 1970s, and in some sectors dropped by half after 1975. Despite constitutional guarantees of equality, women were forced out when the men came home from the battlefield. With the increasing emphasis on the market economy since 1986, the economic role of women has continued to change. The family is designated as the basic unit of production, so women's contributions are not easy to unbundle. As a result, a woman's reproductive functions have become increasingly valuable to her family and community. This shift has not gone unnoticed by the Vietnam Women's Union. A "mass organization," the VWU is government-affiliated and, therefore, susceptible to being viewed as an instrument of government policy. Yet 40 percent of Vietnam's women are now members, and the VWU has taken on a role of feminist advocacy. Responding to international organizations like the UN, the VWU, together with the National Committee for the Advancement of Women (established in 1993), advocates improved educational opportunities, offers low-cost loans to women, promotes awareness of HIV/AIDS, and fights against violence toward women.

Korea

After a decade of international pressure to open Korea to foreign trade and cross-cultural contacts, the Korean monarchy felt compelled to sign treaties of commerce, first with Japan (in 1876) and then with a variety of Western countries. Social Darwinism was in its heyday in the late nineteenth century, and Korean nationalists urged the monarchy to modernize the country lest it suffer the consequences of imperialist domination. Modernization required the discarding of past practices and discourses, and high on the list of culprits for Korea's "backwardness" was Confucianism. The rejection of Confucianism required the rejection of its fundamental gender inequality. Early advocates of strengthening the nation made education and respect for women key elements of their nationalist agenda. Notions of gender created during the Yi dynasty (1392–1910) were revised, at least in the attitudes of the numerically small but highly influential group of elite men who supported improving the status of women in the name of national self-strengthening.

Even before the elite reformers' efforts at modernization, Tonghak (Eastern learning), a new religious movement that blended Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism, and shamanism, called for egalitarian relations between husband and wife. This peasant movement threatened the monarchy and was suppressed, although its reemergence in the 1890s was the immediate cause for Chinese and Japanese intervention in Korean affairs and the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–5. Tonghak only enjoyed two brief eras of popularity, but it created one strand of gender equality outside the Korean elite. Meanwhile, some members of that elite created the Kaehwadang (Enlightened Party) in 1884. This group called for the modernization of Korea along the lines pursued by Japan at that time, including modern schools, commerce, international

relations, technology, language, government administration, hygiene, and national defense. Conservatives at court expressed violent opposition, executing some members of the group and forcing others into exile in Japan and the USA. Pak Yŏng-hyo returned from Japan to propose a far-reaching agenda for marital equality and women's education. But internal and international events intervened without the court's implementation of those reforms. Following the Sino-Japanese War, Japan's influence in Korea expanded exponentially, and by 1910, Japan had annexed Korea as a colony. In the meantime, feminism took fragile root as a way to enhance national strength and thereby preserve national independence.

Sŏ Chae-p'il (1866–1951) returned in 1895 from exile in America to found the Independence Club and the *Tongnip Simun* (*Independence Newspaper*). He wrote editorials in favor of renouncing Confucianism and adopting individualism, human rights, and women's equality. He also called for women's education as a prerequisite for considering Korea a civilized nation. Educated women could serve the State as "wise mothers and good wives," their gender being defined in the intersection of feminism and nationalism. Rallies and meetings were inspired by the feminist debate in the pages of *Tongnip Simun*, and by 1898 a group of middle- and upper-class women formed the Ch'anyanghoe (Praise and Encouragement Association), the first women's public organization. Other groups followed suit: by 1910, there were at least twenty-eight women's groups demanding improved status and education for women. Several women's groups put their ideology into effect by founding schools for girls and women; one started Korea's first women's journal, *Yŏja chinam* (*Compass for Women*), in 1908.

In the years leading up to Japanese colonialism in Korea, some educated and politicized women turned to more direct political action. Japan had transformed Korea into a protectorate in 1905, five years before it made Korea a colony outright. Nationalist anger erupted, and women joined in. The National Debt Compensation Campaign, though proposed by male nationalists, focused the efforts of around thirty women's organizations. In February 1907, these groups began to amass savings to repay Korea's debt to Japan, which they incorrectly assumed would encourage Japan to disengage from Korea. The women argued that nationalism knew no gender bounds, but their collections did, in fact, reflect women's gendered sources of income. The women were to donate household savings as well as jewelry, and most interestingly, they were to collect the money saved by preventing their husbands from smoking. As elsewhere at the turn of the century, Korean women were viewed as saving the nation or society by their moral control of men's petty vices.

Women's nationalist groups arose alongside men's nationalist groups in the decades after Korea's colonization by Japan. Kim Maria (1891–1944) established the Taehan Aeguk Puinhoe (Korean Patriotic Women's Society) in April 1919, and by 1920, the organization had around 2,000 members. Although the society, like many of its sister groups at that time, focused more on national liberation than on gender issues, its positioning of women in the public arena modified notions of gender appropriate behavior. In the mid-1920s, two main streams of women's nationalism emerged: the nonsocialist, Christian groups identified with the YWCA and other Christian and patriotic associations, and the socialist and communist women's organizations affiliated with the socialist groups of the members' husbands. When the various (men's) nationalist organizations decided to establish a united front against

the common enemy of imperialism, the women followed suit in July 1927, forming the Kŭnuhoe (Friends of the Rose of Sharon) to make sure feminist issues were not ignored. This was a necessary step, as the official position of the men's socialist movement from 1924 to 1927 rejected women's rights issues that required that Korean men change their behavior, stressing only those that could be explained as the result of colonialism or "feudalism" (as Confucianism was described). The Kŭnohoe demanded feminist social changes and, turning the usual socialist prescription on its head, asserted that the world would be liberated when women liberated themselves. The group grew quickly, gaining almost 3,000 members by 1929, when ideological differences over how to respond to repressive measures by the colonial authorities led to its demise. The short life of the group notwithstanding, it had a powerful influence on Korean thinking about gender. Numerous journal articles by men and women discussed education of rural women (mainly carried out by non-socialist YWCA women), the contributions of pioneering women doctors and educators, the need for greater marital equality, and other issues. "New Women" were criticized, as well. How could one praise the educational advancement of some women while the majority was mired in ignorance? (To be sure, the men who penned those criticisms rarely questioned their own educational privilege.) Shouldn't women focus more on their responsibility to serve their families and the nation rather than demanding rights? Most damaging to the cause of women's advancement was its awkward parallel to the Japanese authorities' promotion of women's education and modernity.

Korean feminists' rejection of Japan was evident in their lack of desire to work with Japanese feminists resident in Korea to eradicate prostitution in the 1930s. Feminists of both nationalities shared the goal of eliminating licensed protitution, and indeed, in the following decade, Korean women suffered tremendously as tens of thousands were abducted to serve as sexual slaves for the Japanese military. In the end, Korean women attained no equality under colonialism, although they had broadened the range of opportunities for women in the 1920s.

The abrupt end of Japanese colonial rule in 1945 did not usher in a period of independence and democracy. Instead, the country was partitioned and, until 1948, was subjected to foreign military rule by the United States in the south and by the Soviet Union in the north. Two years later, North Korea attempted to reunite the country by force. The Korean War hostilities ended in 1953 with a ceasefire maintained by the two militarized states, only one of which, South Korea, has significantly democratized since the late 1980s. In both, the condition of continuing fear of the other for more than forty years produced a state-directed nationalism, one of whose repressive elements was the definition of gender in limited ways. At the same time, South Korean women's organizations, labor activists, and others outside the government have promoted greater democracy and feminism in the name of the nation, though often in opposition to the existing state. No such movements have existed in North Korea. In fact, in North Korea, the usual Marxist rejection of feminism as bourgeois, divisive, and Western is not heard. Women are defined as mothers, and there is little discussion at all of women in a political sense. Feminism is not something to be attacked; it is simply invisible.

This has not been the case in South Korea. In countless ways, women's lives have improved since the colonial era. Although men vastly outnumber women in higher education – 51 percent of college-age women and 86 percent of college-age men

were in tertiary education in 1997 – the numbers of educated women are startlingly higher than 50 years ago. Women's labor-force participation rate more than doubled since 1960. Women workers were largely responsible for Korea's extraordinary economic expansion in the last quarter of the twentieth century. Nevertheless, despite women's higher rates of college education, employment practices have restricted women to poorly paid occupations with low status and few opportunities for advancement. College-educated women continue to have a harder time finding jobs than less educated women. Working conditions in the factories that drove the economic boom (before the recession in the late 1990s) were abysmal, especially for married women. Discrimination in the workplace was joined by social attitudes that privileged women as housewives. Despite having civil rights, South Korean women have been remarkably underrepresented in political offices (approximately 2 percent of elected officials since 1953). During the years of authoritarian government before 1988, government policy reified women's subordination as supportive of the nation; wives were subordinate to their husbands, daughters had fewer rights of inheritance than sons, and women were legally discriminated against in the workplace. The government reacted to strikes by working women as a threat to the State not only because they slowed production but also because militant women countered the official Cold War construction of gender. To be sure, the opposition to the authoritarian government from 1960 to 1988 was also gendered as male, as the uprisings were usually violent and dominated by male students. Since 1989, legislation has radically changed women's status, and women's organizations must be credited with these changes.

Two large umbrella organizations of women's groups emerged before 1988. In 1959, the Council of Korean Women's Organizations (CKWO) brought together church women, the YWCA, and other reformist groups. During the early decades of this umbrella organization, its political agenda was the improvement of family life, sexual equality in inheritance, mothers' rights of child custody after divorce, and the amelioration of working women's factory conditions. The Council's platform did not call for the elimination of American bases, reunification of the two Koreas, or violent opposition to the government, and was thus considered middle-of-the-road and "reformist." The other umbrella group, the Korean Women's Associations United (KWAU), by contrast, did oppose government policies in the name of Korean nationalism and democracy, and was considered "radical." The KWAU coalesced in 1987 and was far smaller than the CKWO. The two groups were rivals, but in the end, legislation pushed by one or the other improved all Korean women's lives. New laws for which feminists publicly struggled included the Equal Employment Law (1988) which prohibited sex discrimination in the workplace (it has not been effectively enforced, however), the Family Law Act (1989) which permitted equal inheritance, and the Mother-Child Welfare Act (1989) which gave welfare payments to single mothers. As democracy has developed in Korea, the two groups have found common ground in the past decade, and all share a focus on sexual violence. In the early part of the decade, violence against women if committed by a foreigner (especially if connected to the American military) was far more severely criticized than if committed by a Korean man, indicating the continuing importance of nationalism in feminist activism. Even the brutal treatment of Korean women as "comfort women" in World War II was seen as a violation of Koreans by Japanese more than as a violation of women by men.

In 1993, the groups' activities became more explicitly feminist. Their activism led to the passage of the Act Pertaining to Punishment of Sexual Violence. The Act left much to be desired, and further agitation by feminists succeeded in its revision in 1997 to include rape by relatives (though not husbands) and the shifting of the definition of rape from a crime against chastity to a crime against the victim's free will. The Domestic Violence Prevention Act, passed in 1997, was the most direct challenge to the Confucian patriarchal practices. Domestic violence can no longer be swept under the rug as a private family matter, but now is an issue of public concern.

Nationalism, Feminism, and Gender in China

Being Chinese has, for at least two millennia, been intricately connected with the construction of gender. Although the importance of Confucianism has waxed and waned over the centuries and varied among social classes, it was, until the early twentieth century, the defining discourse of the state, society, and ideology. One of the central tenets of Confucianism was the subordination of wife to husband and, by extrapolation, of woman to man. Thus, maintaining unequal gender relations was one of the foundation stones of being Chinese. In addition, gender took on more specifically national meanings at various points throughout history. During the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644), for example, widely disseminated tales of women's self-sacrifice to fend off sexual violation or atone for having been sexually violated by a stranger were not only didactic stories to preserve women's (and their families') honor, but also allegorical tales of Chinese national resistance against barbarian penetration. Gender and nation were closely tied.

The *challenge* to Confucian (fundamentally Chinese) gender relations by nineteenth- and twentieth-century feminists *for the sake of the nation* seems paradoxical. Yet, here, too, we see the equally fundamental connection between gender and the nation in Chinese practice and ideology. Reformers attempted to save China by altering the practice of Confucianism, which had long defined the meaning of being Chinese. And challenging the status of women and the practice of gender were arguably the most important early nationalist efforts in China. Feminism and nationalism worked together to construct gender during the last century.

By the mid-nineteenth century, Confucian practices were common throughout China, though not universal, especially among ethnic minorities and the poor. As in Vietnam, girls were to be submissive to their fathers, wives to their husbands, and widows to their sons. Daughters were given in arranged marriages to families in exchange for a brideprice. The birth of a son to the oppressed daughter-in-law was her ticket to eventual status within the family. The birth of a daughter could mean punishment of the wife and infanticide for the hapless baby. In some areas with economic opportunities for women as well as religious or cultural traditions that respected women, some women escaped marriage by purchasing other women to take their reproductive place. This was hardly feminism, but it helps explain why long-practiced gender relations could be changed in the face of a foreign threat.

China faced several types of "foreign" threats. From 1644 to 1911, China was ruled by Manchus, whose adoption of Confucian practices made them acceptable to the Chinese for most of their reign. During their last years, their foreignness became an issue, however. The more immediate threat in the nineteenth and twentieth

centuries came from across the water, in the form of Western and later Japanese imperialists. To address these threats, Chinese nationalists determined that they had to mobilize the contributions of all its people, men and women. Confinement of women to a passive role by both gender relations and the practice of footbinding had to be terminated. A few Chinese reformers had criticized the crippling practice earlier in the nineteenth century, but it was undertaken in earnest after 1895 by nationalists who blamed footbinding, among many other Chinese practices, for the West's ability to penetrate China. Anti-imperialism, together with reformers' anger at the unnecessary pain Chinese girls and women suffered, spurred the anti-footbinding movement. Women joined men in these movements, and within just a few decades, a centuries-old practice was ended. Thousands of Chinese students, most but not all of whom were men, congregated in Tokyo to pursue modern and often revolutionary studies abroad. Their revolutionary nationalism was directed against the Manchus, the Qing Dynasty, after the turn of the century. The most famous of these students was Qiu Jin, who called on her fellow countrywomen to rise up, be educated, and to reject footbinding to save China from the slavery of imperialism. Her words still ring with feminist clarity, although her feminism was at the service of national liberation. Despite her prioritizing of nationalism over feminism, Qiu expanded the boundaries of gendered behavior by leaving her family to study, wearing men's clothing, and becoming a martyr (in 1907) for the revolutionary, anti-Manchu cause.

Other women became involved in the nationalist movement because they believed a democratic government would offer them rights of citizenship necessary to stand up to Western pressure. Shortly after the fall of the Qing government, the Women's Suffrage Comrades Alliance was established, and the provisional president of the Republic of China gave his support to women's suffrage. In February 1912, this first group merged with five other women's groups to form the Women's Suffrage Alliance, with Tang Qunying as its leader. When the government dragged its feet on the issue of women's rights, Tang's groups stormed the parliament, smashing windows in emulation of British suffragettes. They failed to gain the vote. A year later the democratic experiment collapsed, and women's suffrage activists were forced into silence or exile for several years.

In the meantime, a cultural revolution was brewing in Beijing, as students demanded science, democracy, and feminism as the keys to modernity and the ability to throw off the shackles of Western economic imperialism and the straightjacket of Confucianism. The New Woman was central to China's freedom during this period, called the May Fourth era after the major student uprising on May 4, 1919 against Japan's being granted Chinese territory formerly held by Germany. Women's groups sprang up in Beijing and other cities, and some forged ties with international feminist groups like the Woman's Christian Temperance Union. A lively feminist nationalist movement emerged in the 1920s. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) got its start in the 1920s as well, and an important part of its agenda was women's rights. But the groups that were primarily feminist were viewed by women in the CCP as bourgeois and counterproductive as they sought rights of political inclusion in a state which the CCP was working to overturn. Women's purity, the communists argued, would be sullied by being connected to the corrupt men in the government. The National Party (GMD) and the CCP elements ceased collaboration in 1927 and entered a period of civil war, mitigated between 1937 and 1945 by their common

struggle against Japan. This separated the women's groups that worked with each side. Those in the GMD areas received constitutional guarantees of the vote in 1936, but the vote was suspended during World War II. Women were deeply involved in reform activities in the communist areas, but feminism was on shaky ground. Noted writer Ding Ling was severely criticized by the communists whom she supported for her 1942 article, "Thoughts on March 8," which raised the issue of contradictions between women's rights and the behavior of her colleagues in the CCP.

Women got the vote in 1947 in the Republic of China (ROC – after 1949, the government on Taiwan) and in the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949. In both cases, suffrage was fairly meaningless, as the ROC did not have fair, multi-party elections until 1987 and the PRC still does not have a multi-party system at the national level, although local elections have been increasingly open since 1979. Women have gained a significant measure of equality with men, however, in the last half century.

The legal basis for gender equality in the PRC was established in the constitution of 1950 and has been repeated in every revision of the constitution since that time. The Marriage Law of 1950 and its subsequent revisions made compatibility of the couple the basis for marriage, thereby diminishing the power of the couple's parents and permitting the wife to divorce. (However, the wife's legal equality has been tempered by conservative social attitudes as well as by periodic shifts in official policies making divorce far more difficult.) Land reform programs in the PRC have included women along with men, although contemporary privatization has modified this in recent years. The Great Leap Forward, a disastrous attempt to form collective farms from 1958 to 1960, drew tens of millions of women into the workforce. Less than a decade later, the Cultural Revolution (1966–76) reissued the call again for men and women to work equally to make a new China. This campaign was also a disaster in terms of productivity. Millions of Chinese starved or were worked to death during these two campaigns. Because gender differences were suppressed – women and men wore unisex clothing, women were exhorted to hold up half the sky, and Iron Brigades of superhuman girls were made into models for all – the repudiation of the Cultural Revolution following the death of Mao Zedong led to a questioning of feminism, viewed as a tool of Maoist state policy. In the last decades of the twentieth century, women's rights advocates in China have tended to address women's particular needs rather than focusing exclusively on gender equality, which they see as characteristic of Western feminism.

The All China Women's Federation (ACWF), founded in 1949 as a mass organization and thus an arm of the government, has begun to change its role as an advocate for women. (It ceased operating during the Cultural Revolution.) When the ACWF complains about the sexual commodification of women in the media or in beauty pageants as China develops its market-based economic system, it appears as old-fashioned as the Cultural Revolution. Yet the ACWF has reinvented itself as an advocate for women, despite its relationship to the government. It has promoted the protection of infant girls and their mothers suffering misogynistic abuse at the hands of their husbands and in-laws as a result of China's one-child-per-family birth-planning program. Local branches of the ACWF have helped women obtain jobs and have set up local offices of the National Institute of Women's Studies, established by the ACWF in 1983. The ACWF campaigned for the Law on Protecting Women's Rights and Interests after China signed the CEDAW in 1980. The 1992 law is quite

comprehensive, covering family and marital rights, political rights, education, and equality in the workplace as well specific gendered protections in the areas of trafficking in women and female infanticide. Inequalities persist, however: women account for 70 percent of unemployed workers; an unnaturally skewed sex ratio reflects female infanticide; 80 percent of primary-age children not in school are girls; and tens of thousands of girls and young women are abducted each year and forced to marry men unable to afford the inflated brideprices resulting from the unnatural sex ratio. The CCP line holds that these inequalities will decline as China develops. "Feminism," which is seen as Western, is not considered the answer, although many of the actions taken by the ACWF and academic women's studies programs are, indeed, feminist. China's role in international feminist colloquies as well as the rise of a new generation in liberalizing China, may create conditions for the type of feminist discourse that characterized the May Fourth era once again.

Feminism and the Modern State in Japan: The Problem of Nationalism

With the exception of seven years of US military occupation after its defeat in World War II, Japan did not suffer the indignity of imperialism as did most Asian countries. Indeed, Japan joined the ranks of the imperialists in the late nineteenth century, making colonies of Taiwan (1895–1945) and Korea (1910–45) and occupying much of Pacific East Asia during World War II. Until the beginning of the twentieth century, however, Japan was encumbered by unequal treaties with Western nations, and its subordinate international standing engendered a nationalist response which aimed to gain respect through modernization and nation-building. Feminist activism emerged in this context, and as in other Asian countries, nationalism and feminism produced new constructions of gender. Japanese women sought inclusion in the rapidly evolving state both in order to strengthen the State internationally and to improve the status of women, while the state authorities attempted to define gender in their own ways as well.

Unlike other Asian countries, Japan remained independent. With that independence came a different sort of nationalism that sought to expand Japanese influence and power in the region. Feminists responded to this new and aggressive nationalism, at first eschewing it as destructive to women's rights and in conflict with the feminist internationalism most feminist activists espoused. After 1937, however, they reluctantly adopted this nationalism, seeing it as an integral part of the state in which they had struggled, for decades, to gain the rights of citizenship. In the wake of the war, women gained civil rights, and the scope of rights was expanded in the 1980s. Japanese feminists were active, particularly after 1970, in espousing a wide variety of feminisms in domestic and international movements. And post-war Japanese scholars and feminists have addressed the responsibility of Japanese women for complicity with imperialism in their quest for civil rights and recognition by the State in the 1930s and 1940s.

To ward off the threat of imperialism as well as to revise the unequal treaties in the late nineteenth century, Japan's leadership as well as many ordinary Japanese proposed social, political, economic, legal, and cultural changes they believed would render Japan more respectable in the eyes of the West. Some proposed "escaping

from Asia" (*datsu-A*) in various ways, and for women that meant adopting some Western ideas of women's subjectivity, marital equality, and the desirability of education. When (mostly male) advocates of constitutional rights arose as the Freedom and People's Rights movement in the 1870s and 1880s, citing Rousseau and John Stuart Mill as their inspiration, male and female feminists took the demands one step farther and called for women's rights. Kusunose Kita (1836–1920), a landowning widow, demanded no taxation without representation in 1878. Kishida Toshiko (1861?–1901) inspired a generation of women with her fiery oratory in the early 1880s calling for equal rights, especially in marriage, both to strengthen Japan and to liberate Japan's wives and daughters. She left the soapbox when she was arrested, but continued to write feminist tracts in such publications as *Jogaku zasshi* (*Women's Education*). For many of these feminists, women as well as men should develop the full extent of their abilities. Education was a cardinal element of their feminism. This focus on education paralleled the official view of gender under construction by the State at the time, though the State was hardly interested in feminist goals; that is, the Ministry of Education called for women to be educated as "good wives and wise mothers" (*ryōsai kenbo*) who could, first, serve their husbands, families, and the State by increasing family productivity and, second, educate the next generation of boys to develop the nation economically and serve in its military. For feminists, education would advance women's rights and permit those women themselves to serve the nation.

The Constitution (1889) and the Civil Code (1898) gave no rights to women. Civil rights – even the right to reign as emperor – were limited to men, and wives had no rights independent of their husbands. Husbands could maintain concubines, but a wife's adultery was grounds for divorce. Wives had no right of contract. Sons were given absolute priority in inheritance. Women were even prohibited, under Article Five of the Public Peace Police Law (first passed in 1890 and expanded in 1900), from joining political parties or speaking at public rallies. Thus, organizing to overturn these limitations on freedom of political expression, a prerequisite for any further political feminism, was itself circumscribed.

Fortunately, women could use the written word, albeit subject to censorship, to disseminate their ideas, and they could gather for social reform projects as long as the government did not construe them as political. Thus, the Nihon Kirisutokyō Fujin Kyōfūkai (Japanese women's Christian reform society, an affiliate of the international Women's Christian Temperance Union), founded in 1886 by Yajima Kajiko (1833–1925), could continue to organize against polygamy and licensed prostitution as these were seen as moral and religious causes, rather than political ones. In the first decade of the twentieth century, socialist women, including Fukuda Kameyama Hideko (1865–1927), who had been inspired as a young girl by Kishida Toshiko, began to demand women's rights. Fukuda used the printed word, her newspaper *Sekai Fujin* (*Women of the World*), while others appealed to the Diet (parliament). Until the emergence of a middle-class women's rights movement in the 1910s, feminists, except for the socialists, were not particularly vocal after the 1890s. But women themselves were not passive. Since the 1870s, Japan's industrial revolution had brought thousands of women and girls into the textile mills and coal mines, many suffering abysmal conditions which social reformers worked to ameliorate. Women trod the stage in feminist plays such as *A Doll's House*, shocking viewers. Women

writers penned stories and poems. Women entered the classroom as teachers and civilian hospitals and battlefield clinics as nurses (in the Russo-Japanese War). Bicycles, trolleys, and trains gave working-class and middle-class women mobility. On the conservative, nationalist side, Okumura Ioko (1845–1907) organized the Aikoku Fujinkai (Patriotic Women's Association) in 1901 to offer comfort to dead and wounded soldiers of Japan's foreign wars and solace to their families. The New Woman, emblematic of feminism in the West and East, was creating a new definition of gender. The climate was ripe for the emergence of political feminism.

In 1911, Hiratsuka Raichō (1886–1972), a college-educated writer, began publication of *Seitō* (Bluestocking). Her announcement that the journal would publish the works of Japanese women writers and overseas feminists was accompanied by what has come to be called the "Feminist Manifesto": "In the beginning, woman was the sun." Not only was Hiratsuka calling on her contemporaries to display their brilliance, she was using nation-centered imagery that had deep cultural meaning, as the Sun Goddess was presumed to have founded the imperial family line. In the modern nation, as well as in antiquity, Hiratsuka suggested, women were meant to play an important cultural role. Many other journals joined *Seitō* in publishing women's scholarship, opinion, and fiction. In the mid-1910s, the most important feminist debate in the public media concerned "motherhood protection." Should women wait until they were financially independent to bear children, or should they be dependent on their husbands? Was motherhood a gendered contribution to the State that should be rewarded with state compensation? Or would a socialist revolution be necessary to improve the lot of women, rendering moot all this debate about women's status under capitalism? In the end, the questions raised by this debate were not resolved, but the debate had two important effects: it privileged women as mothers (in previous decades fathers had often been seen as superior at child rearing) and it suggested another reason why women/mothers should have civil rights. Construction of gender was certainly linked to feminist rights discourse.

This linkage was made more explicit in 1919, when Hiratsuka, with Ichikawa Fusae (1893–1981) and Oku Mumeo (1902–97), formed the Shin Fujin Kyōkai (New Women's Association). This group lobbied to revoke Article Five, which denied women's right of political meeting, and for legislation permitting a woman to leave a marriage or engagement if her husband or fiancé had syphilis. In 1922, Article Five was partially repealed, opening the door for the subsequent women's suffrage movement. When the great earthquake of September 1923 killed 100,000 people and destroyed the Tokyo area, women's groups of all political persuasions, including socialists, middle-class reformers, housewives, college alumnae, and Christians and Buddhists, came together to get food to the needy, milk to children, and clothing and shelter to everyone. By 1924, their philanthropic work done, the women decided to turn to other issues. Women's suffrage was high on the agenda for women who firmly believed their involvement in public renewal and civic action earned them civil rights. The male universal suffrage movement was in full swing – property though not gender qualifications were eliminated in 1925 – and many women wanted their due. Kubushiro Ochimi, then president of the Christian Women's Reform Society, founded the Fusen Kakutoku Dōmei (Women's Suffrage League) in 1924. Ichikawa Fusae soon came to lead this movement and is generally associated with leadership of the women's suffrage movement in the pre-war period.

Despite their cooperation in the earthquake relief efforts, liberal and socialist women appeared to work at cross purposes for several years. The 1928 election was the first to be held under universal manhood suffrage, meaning that men of working-class backgrounds were able to vote for the first time. Ichikawa and her colleagues in the Women's Suffrage League traveled the length and breadth of Japan, giving 726 speeches for male candidates who promised to help them gain the vote. These candidates spanned the political spectrum, leading some women in the proletarian movement to criticize Ichikawa as a political prostitute who would support any man as long as he supported the feminist goal.

By 1930, much of the ideological bickering had ended, as women joined together for the first of seven All-Japan Women's Suffrage Conferences. A few months later, representatives of Japan's two major political parties proposed a Bill to allow women to vote at the municipal level – though not yet in national elections. It passed the House of Representatives but failed in the conservative House of Peers. After the next year's All-Japan Women's Suffrage Conference, sympathetic representatives again proposed a women's suffrage Bill, and again the House of Peers, claiming that the vote would lead to the destruction of the family, voted it down. By the time of the third Suffrage Conference, Japan had invaded Manchuria, and right-wing forces had gained strength at home. Women's suffrage appeared to be doomed. And yet, the Conferences continued to meet. In 1932 and 1933, the women passed resolutions demanding the vote and expressing opposition to the growing forces of fascism and militarism. At the 1934 Conference, police officers ringed the stage to make sure the women did not pass resolutions opposing the growing hostilities in China. But they did. The next year, however, showed a remarkable shift in the feminists' position. Instead of calling for suffrage and peace, both of which seemed impossible in the climate of increasing militarism and repression, the 1935 Conference focused on practical ways in which women could act as if they were members of the State by carrying out civic duties such as setting up a workable garbage removal system, making sure political candidates did not take bribes, and pushing for a Mother-Child Protection Law (passed in 1937) that made welfare payments to single mothers with children under thirteen years of age. The 1936 Conference was cancelled because of the military *coup d'état* attempt earlier that year, and the 1937 Conference was the last meeting. A few months later, the non-socialist feminist groups formed a unified organization called the Nihon Fujin Dantai Renmei (Federation of Japanese Women's Associations). While lamenting the expansion of the war, the Federation also expressed pride in women's ability to work for the nation in its time of need. The feminists' earlier assumption that their participation in the work of the government would usher in an era of peace now gave way to the sentiment that women should participate to help the nation at war. These previously autonomous women's groups cooperated with the government-affiliated Patriotic Women's Association and the Kokubo Fujinkai (National Defense Women's Association). Several, like the Women's Suffrage League, dissolved, and their leaders were appointed to government boards that dealt with women, culture, the home front, and so on. Average Japanese women were addressed by the government as well. With the men away, women took positions in heavy and armaments industries. Local tasks like rice rationing and fire brigade management often fell to women. In war, women had achieved a recognition they had not in peace.

But at what cost? It is true that feminists had a few choices: they could go to jail for continued feminist and peace advocacy; they could go silent and sit out the war; they could try to ignore foreign policy while working to make the best of daily life for Japan's millions on the home front; or they could embrace the war as an opportunity to show society women deserved the vote. Japanese women, though increasingly involved in public functions, did not obtain the vote, however. Motherhood was glorified by the State. Women were told by the prime minister's wife that "having babies is fun!" and exhorted to produce more soldiers. And Japanese women were part of an empire that had a systematic policy of enslaving continental women for forced sex with Japanese soldiers. This policy continues to affect Japan's international position today. Many feminists today assert that the cost of cooperating with the government was too high.

Ten days after Japan's surrender, Ichikawa Fusae established the Sengo Taisaku Fujin Iinkai (Women's Committee on Post-war Policies), whose main goal was women's full civil rights. One day after the first post-war Cabinet took office on October 9, 1945, Ichikawa visited new prime minister Shidehara Kijurō who agreed to grant women the vote. The American military occupation concurred, and women's suffrage was included in the new election law. Japanese women went to the polls for the first time on April 10, 1946, with a remarkable 67 percent of those eligible exercising their right to vote. A few months later, the new Constitution stipulated that all people were equal, and the revised Civil Code of 1947 removed women from control under the patriarchal family system codified in the 1898 Civil Code. The Labor Standards Law of 1947 called for equal pay for equal work, but retained protections (exclusion of women from certain types of work sites, limitation of hours women would work, menstruation leave policies, and others) that effectively permitted continued discrimination in the workplace. Subsequent labor laws, particularly the Equal Employment Opportunity Law (1985) and its revisions, have eliminated many of these structural limitations to workplace equality; customary discrimination, including both sexist attitudes and stereotyped notions of women's roles as wives and mothers, continues to hinder Japanese employed women, however. Women constitute more than 40 percent of the workforce, but they occupy low-level positions and are most vulnerable to layoffs.

Women's inequality is also evident in politics, where fewer than 3 percent of the House of Representatives are women, and in the judiciary, with about 5 percent of judges being female. Inequality persisted in the post-war era in unexpected places, too. Married couples must share a surname, and in most cases, that is the husband's. Until 1984, the children of Japanese women married to non-Japanese men could not inherit their mother's nationality, although Japanese men could pass their citizenship on to their children regardless of the mother's nationality. Until 1993, only girls were required to take home economics in high school, a contemporary application of "good wife, wise mother" education. Sexual exploitation of poor and powerless women, overwhelmingly from Southeast Asia, continues in Japan's cities and towns, a modern version of wartime sexual exploitation. Young Japanese women have responded to the societal demands on mothers by refusing to have babies. Japan's rate of 1.4 children per woman is one of the world's lowest, causing anxiety among government leaders who fear the declining population and the "graying" of society. Insufficient steps have been taken to ensure that women can have families and live

fulfilling lives of work and pleasure, and women have responded by deferring marriage and childbearing. At the same time, middle-aged women bear the brunt of caring for their elderly parents and parents-in-law. Japanese enjoy a longer life-span than any other nationality, but, again, women are called on to do the labor of care.

Japanese feminists have addressed all of these issues over the past decades. In the first post-war decades, women worked on issues of poverty, corruption, and prostitution. By the 1970s, feminists critiqued Japan's headlong rush to redevelop and become one of the world's economic superpowers. That rush had produced environmental destruction, overworked husbands who never even saw their children, shoddy and dangerous consumer products and foods, and exploitation of Japan's neighbors through sex tourism and employment of cheap labor. Dozens of feminist groups, including career women, veteran feminist activists, and housewives wielding the power of activist consumers, took on these problems. Moreover, in 1975, the United Nations International Women's Year inspired many more to coalesce in the International Women's Year Action Group. Led by feminist veterans like Ichikawa Fusae, by then a popular member of the Diet, the Action Group became a potent and "legitimate" lobbying force. One of the group's achievements was Japan's signing of the CEDAW, which forced the government to at least appear to make efforts to improve the conditions for working women. Many feminists rue the fact that it was international embarrassment at being "backward" – a nationalist attitude on the part of the State – that forced the government's hand, but in the end, conditions did improve. Women's Studies classes began to appear in universities in the late 1970s, and the field is now well established in Japan. Japanese feminists certainly do have issues that divide them, but their movements are influential both on the national and international level.

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Chapter Twenty-nine

Women and Gender Roles in Africa since 1918: Gender as a Determinant of Status

Sean Redding

The roles and status of women in Africa altered dramatically in the years after World War I. The year 1918 is conventionally seen as the high point of imperialism, the first time that most of the continent, except Ethiopia and Liberia, were under direct political control by outside powers, and these powers had succeeded in consolidating their rule by imposing effective administrative structures. In the pre-colonial period, African women had filled numerous roles as individuals and as members of families and clans and had widely ranging social ranks. The years of the colonial scramble and of the early period of colonial rule had brought with them a number of changes, some subtle and some stark, for Africans generally and women in particular. Yet, it was only after 1918 in much of Africa that European colonial administrators had sufficient enforcement powers to begin implementing laws and regulations that often had wide-ranging effects on the African societies they ruled.

The impact of the colonial period should not be over-emphasized, however; by the 1960s in most of Africa the tide of imperialism had receded and new post-colonial governments were in place in all but the white settler states of southern Africa (Angola, Mozambique, Rhodesia, and South Africa; these states finally rid themselves of white rule in 1975 in the case of Angola and Mozambique, 1979 in the case of Rhodesia, and 1994 in the case of South Africa). Although the colonial and post-colonial states did not always place the roles of women high on their list of changes they would like to make, often the changes to women's roles that resulted were substantial, particularly as the social and economic foundations of women's pre-colonial and early colonial roles eroded. These changes were then accelerated and codified by alterations to the legal and administrative structures that provided real social and legal meaning for the word "woman."

In this chapter I will argue that the word "woman" acquired new meanings in the colonial and post-colonial periods. In particular, it is my contention that gender identity had been in the pre-colonial period simply one of many factors that determined social status for an individual. The innovation of the colonial period, with the twined forces of European gender ideology which tended to view women as legal minors and social dependents upon their male relatives (Chanock, 1982; Wright, 1982), and Christian

mission teachings, which deemed domesticity to be women's highest, most moral role (Thomas, 2000: 1–12; Stoler, 1989), was the tendency to bring gender to the fore as a determinant of status. However, colonial administrators and missionaries, whether white or black, did not act in isolation. Their administrative structures and teachings interacted dynamically with African cultures and the numerous African middlemen who were present to interpret those cultures. At the foundation of the interaction, however, was the belief held by most colonial officials that gender was an unproblematic and universal category, rather like "tribe" (Comaroff and Comaroff, 1992b: 48–67; Mamdani, 1994: 79–82); and so officials and missionaries set about trying to make African women behave like (or at least adhere to some of the same legal and social rules as) European women in Europe (Hansen, 1992: 4–13; Van Allen 1976: 80–3).

The changes wrought by Europeans and Africans during the colonial period extended into the post-colonial period. The majority of post-colonial states retained the administrative and legal frameworks left to them by their departing rulers. In most cases, the developing ideology of African nationalism from the 1940s onward did not question these frameworks themselves so much as the fact that non-Africans were running the State. Moreover, when nationalist leaders came to power in the immediate post-colonial years, they did not have the means to raze the old administration and start fresh (even supposing that they might have had no difficulty in deciding what a "fresh start" would look like). The nation-states of Africa, even if they have been bureaucratically weak, have been able to deploy a legitimizing ideology of nationalism and self-determination that has created incentives for the maintenance of elements of the old colonial and pre-colonial social orders (Cooper, F., 1997). This ideology has in many cases included an overt hostility to feminism as it has developed in the non-African world, defining it as "un-African" and therefore as "neo-colonial." The hostility to the assertion of women's legal rights and to the development of women's political movements has tended to perpetuate the notion that women are men's subordinates. Insofar as African states have formulated policies explicitly for women, these policies have focused on health care, primary education, and family issues which, although laudable in themselves, have tended to reinforce women's roles as mothers within a male-headed household (Abdullah, 1995). There has been little consideration of, for example, domestic violence, or the needs of single mothers or independent women. For women who are poor and from rural backgrounds, their depressed status can make them available for tribal or ethnic political movements or it can alienate them from politics altogether (Barber, 1994). Thus, despite the vital social and economic roles that African women have played historically (and still do play), in politics and the legal system women have had to battle with an ascribed status as men's dependents.

The Colonial Period

The colonial period was one of dynamic change for ideas about gender, as fluid pre-colonial ideas about women interacted with imported ideas. I will not spend much time on pre-colonial societies here, as the topic is covered in chapter 13 of this volume. However, it is important to mention some salient points about pre-colonial African societies so that we may better understand the developments of the colonial and post-colonial periods.

Most pre-colonial African societies had strong concepts of "male" and "female," and in many societies people believed that all work was gendered, although the reality of who actually did the work might not have always matched up with the ideal case. Many, although not all, societies had deities and spirits who were female, a fact that suggests that people esteemed femaleness and accorded it some supernatural powers as well as more mundane ones (Okeke, 2000). And a number of societies (particularly those found in Central Africa) were matrilineal – that is, they traced inheritance and lineage through the female line. (It should be noted that "matrilineal" does not mean "matriarchal," and that matrilineal societies could be just as male-dominated as patrilineal ones. In matrilineal societies, inheritance and family membership typically passed from maternal uncle to nephew.)

Although gender distinctions were thus key in many ways to how pre-colonial societies were structured, other information was often more determinative of an individual's status. For example, a sister/daughter within her own natal homestead frequently had more rights and a higher status than a brother's wife, even if the wife was chronologically older (Oyewumi, 1993). A mother had more rights and higher status than either a newly married wife or an older wife who had no living children (Wilson, M., 1961: 30–5). A wife married through bridewealth (or brideservice) had more rights and higher status than one married through sale (i.e. a slave-wife or concubine) (Broadhead, 1983). An older, post-menopausal woman, with adult children, could have as high a status as an older man, depending upon the individuals involved and the social norms. A chief's or big man's daughter could retain an elevated status in most cases in her married household regardless of whom she married (Kopytoff and Miers, 1977: 30–6). In some societies, including Asante (in present-day Ghana) and Buganda (in Uganda), royal women had considerable political power (Musisi, 1991). And a woman who practiced as a diviner or healer (and who had a substantial popular reputation) could, at least while she was actively engaged in her profession, have a significantly higher status than even an older man (Berger, 1976). By contrast, the majority of rightless persons to be found in any African society were held by those groups who participated in the internal and/or external trade in slaves, and most of these rightless persons were "trade slaves," slaves bought (or forcibly seized) explicitly for the trade, who were kept only for a brief period and then sold once again, regardless of their gender (Kopytoff and Miers, 1977: 14–27). Nonetheless, the market at any given moment might assign a higher price to one gender or the other, making that gender more "valuable" in market terms. Although the Atlantic trade in slaves ended in the nineteenth century, the internal market and the East African market (that sent slaves across the Sahara and the Red Sea to external destinations) continued well into the twentieth century, and has sporadically reappeared in war-torn areas in the post-colonial period as well.

In societies in which slavery was uncommon or non-existent, other forms of dependency existed in the pre-colonial period. Most societies regarded age as a more important marker of status than sex; and wealth (sometimes measured in material goods or livestock, but more frequently measured in control over people) also determined status. Some women were able to acquire material goods and dependents (including slaves), and thereby acquire status in their own right (Brookes, 1976). Thus, in the pre-colonial period, the status of women was not uniformly below that of men.

When the major colonial powers, Great Britain, France, Germany, and Belgium began aggressively taking colonies in Africa in the 1880s (Portugal retained colonies from an earlier period), their initial concern was with establishing direct and defensible political control. By 1918 they had established working colonial administrative systems that included legal codes with direct effects on the status of African women. (Germany lost its colonial possessions in the aftermath of World War I; its African colonies were divided among the other colonial powers to be ruled as "League of Nations Mandated" territories.) In many cases, colonial administrators had two aims with regard to African women. One aim was to "liberate" them from the hard physical labor that most women (including both slave and free) performed in the fields in the production of food and cash crops. In many areas of Africa, the development of a market for cash crops had preceded the onset of the colonial period, and production for the market was well-entrenched in some form by the time that colonial administrators were able to exercise effective control over their districts. Coincident with this desire to "liberate" women was the desire to force men to become more directly economically productive, in other words to engage in wage labor or to take a larger role in the production of cash crops (Bradford, 2000; Redding, 1993). Missionaries and administrators were also intent on liberating women from arranged marriages, and to that end they generally liberalized divorce laws, at least until women proved so willing to divorce that they often clogged colonial courts with cases relating to the dissolution of marriages (Parpart, 1988: 116–19).

The second aim was to "domesticate" women. "Domestication" involved in some areas (although not all, the most notable exception being most of West Africa) trying actively to keep women out of the market; encouraging them to subscribe to more Westernized or Christian notions of monogamous marriage (equally true for men); and ultimately restricting the legal rights of women, making them the legal wards of their male relatives (Gaitskell, 1990; Hansen, 1992). The latter had the added benefit (from the point of view of colonial administrators) of effectively harnessing the family as an administrative unit, making older men the "policemen" of the families by making them responsible for the conduct of their dependents (Marks, 1989).

Administrators also had other items on their agenda. For example, they usually wished to keep women and children largely in the rural areas even if adult men were required for wage labor in the major urban centers. Europeans tended to think of Africans as being "essentially" rural and thus out of place in the city. If men were needed as laborers, administrators still felt that women and children should remain in the country, and they devoted numerous laws and a great deal of enforcement power to achieve that end. Moreover, whites were worried about the long-term political effects that a class of fully urbanized Africans might have, and the prohibition against women migrating into town seemed likely to inhibit the development of such a class (Parpart, 1988; Posel, 1993; White, 1990). The criminalization of female migration had the further effect of diminishing women's economic roles as it hindered them from taking up some of the more highly paid forms of wage labor and undercut their ability to organize to demand higher wages and better working conditions. The regulations in many cases forced them into criminal activities, such as the illegal brewing of beer (and other forms of alcohol) and prostitution, since legal employment was denied them (White, 1988). It also barred their access to

education and other forms of social services that might potentially have allowed them some social mobility or independence.

Perhaps the most important effect of these changes to the legal and administrative structures during the colonial period was the degree to which Africans began using the legal code and the administrative framework in their daily lives. African adaptation obviously varied across regions, and in some important ways, it was not that Africans adapted as much as it was that European administrators altered the structures to allow Africans to adapt, partly to cut administrative costs and partly to lessen the potential for revolt or resistance (Fields, 1982). But still it is important to consider why at least some Africans availed themselves of colonial tools, even those that had been reshaped to be more appealing to them.

With regard to marriage, in most regions, colonial administrators began after 1918 to change their attitudes. Previously they, along with missionaries, had allowed women (particularly those who had converted to Christianity) to resist or overthrow their marriages to non-Christians and to polygamists by making the potential bride's consent mandatory and divorce broadly available. But this resulted in too many women leaving families and setting off on their own, which conflicted with the administrative desire to keep people in stable villages in the countryside. So, by the 1920s, administrators began to make it more difficult for women to leave their marriages by making divorce more costly for women and their natal families (Renne, 1992; Rude, 1999: 7–20). Unless a woman could prove she had been assaulted criminally by her husband, or accused of witchcraft by him (also a criminal offense), the family of a woman who left her marriage would almost certainly have to reimburse the husband's family for the bridewealth payment (Redding, 1996: 37–40). Since the woman's family might well have already spent or dispersed the goods or livestock they had received for the bridewealth, having to refund the amount was a substantial hardship.

This gradual alteration in the attitudes towards women and marriage gave African men a greater legal space in which to increase their control over women, both as wives and as daughters (Redding, 1996: 25–35). Daughters came under increasing pressure in the family to maintain a very strict version of virginity until marriage. In the pre-colonial period, many (non-Muslim) African societies had allowed unmarried girls some freedom in sexual expression as long as they stopped short of full sexual intercourse. (Although even full premarital sex that resulted in pregnancy could usually be legitimated through subsequent marriage or through the payment of a penalty by the offending boy to the girl's father.) Christian missionaries deemed this rather liberal view of virginity uncivilized, and put pressure on converts to adhere to a much narrower definition that prohibited all sexual play prior to marriage. Even African parents who did not convert to Christianity often adopted this stricter definition because it lessened the potential for out-of-wedlock pregnancies that might render their daughters either unmarriageable, or else lower the bridewealth that prospective husbands would pay (Bastian, 2000; Berman and Lonsdale, 1992: 386–90; Mager, 1998). Colonial magistrates and district officers tended to reinforce the "customary law" on out-of-wedlock pregnancies by allowing fathers to sue their daughters' boyfriends for "damages." The girls themselves, however, had no legal standing to sue their boyfriends for child support or remuneration. In certain circumstances, if the girl was under age or if there was evidence of a violent sexual

assault upon her, she could go to the headman (a subordinate to the chief whose duties were those of a local policeman) and inform him that a crime had been committed, and then the boy (or man) could be tried in a colonial court. However, under colonial laws a girl or woman was not legally considered an adult, capable of authority even over her own person.

The status of legal minor for women also had a immense impact on marriage. Some wives who, had they lived in the pre-colonial or early colonial periods, might easily have left unhappy marriages, increasingly found themselves after the 1920s legally bound to partners who neglected them or abused them. In regions where male migratory labor was common (southern Africa and the eastern region of the Belgian Congo), it was not unusual for men to become more and more irregular about sending some of their wages back to their rural families as time went by; wives in this situation were left very much to their own devices. They could only retain their rural rights to cultivate land if they remained within the marriage, since the land they cultivated was held in their husbands' names (see below). However, their ability to grow cash crops on their own (without some male assistance) was often severely limited by the size of the plot allotted to them, and by their other family-related responsibilities. If a wife chose to migrate to town, however, she was usually in violation of the law, and she risked the family's right to continue cultivating the land. Alternatively, if a wife chose to leave the marriage, her own family was then liable to return the bridewealth paid for her, and her children (in patrilineal societies) could be taken away from her, since they belonged to her husband's lineage; both customs were rigorously upheld in colonial courts (Parpart, 1988; Redding, 1993; Renne, 1992). The colonial enforcement of some of the stricter patriarchal customs tended over time to create, in the words of sociologist Mamphela Ramphele, a "demand for unquestioning obedience on the part of women . . . by both educated and uneducated men as central to the maintenance of patriarchal family relations. One has to be seen as a 'real man' or be laughed at by one's friends and neighbours" (Ramphele, 1993: 76).

At the same time, some kinds of marriages began to disappear. These included marriages that were considered unusual or immoral by Western standards, such as female husbands (in which a family paid bridewealth for a wife for their daughter, and any children this wife had – as a result of taking a lover – became part of the family of the female "husband") (Amadiume, 1987: 1–10) and slave marriages (in which a family bought a slave to be the wife or husband for one of their children) (Cooper, B.M., 1994). Some of the women who had been involved in these marriages may have found their status empowering, while others were more socially disabled by the arrangements in the pre-colonial period. However, the net effect of the colonial laws was to homogenize women's status, thereby sometimes raising the status of those women who had been the most powerless, but simultaneously lowering the status of those women who had had substantial power.

Moreover, as women were increasingly identified as the legal dependents of men (either fathers, husbands, brothers, or in some cases, sons and nephews), they usually could not bring legal cases without the assistance of male relatives, and had no legal claim to property as individuals distinct from their male guardians (Okeke, 2000). Individual women of course found ways to evade these restrictions, but they had little recourse to the State to protect them or their property, and this necessarily

weakened their social status, their economic independence, and their ability to transmit their property at their deaths to those whom they designated. This occurred despite the fact that in many regions of Africa women were often visible as successful professionals and shopkeepers.

Perhaps the most significant type of property ownership denied a woman under colonial rule was the right to cultivate land in her own name. Technically, in most colonies, the State denied Africans – male or female – the right to *own* land. However, the states recognized use rights, known as "customary tenure," over particular parcels of land that usually were registered in individuals' names; in ordinary circumstances only men could legally have title to such rights. Under the colonial version of "customary tenure," the (male) titleholders could not sell the land (which was owned by the State) or legally sell the use rights. But they did have the right to decide what to grow on the land, and they could pass on the right to work the land to their (male) heirs. The legal control over the land belonging to the men contrasted with the historical preeminence of women in working the land, setting up potential conflicts over "ownership" of the land versus ownership of the crops (Goheen, 1996: 107–40). If these conflicts ended up in court, women found themselves legally at a disadvantage. In the colonial and post-colonial periods, an additional dimension was added to this gender split: as access to markets and the importance of cash crops increased, men often took some of the best agricultural land over for the growing of cash crops, and left women some of the poorer land for growing "garden" crops – crops specifically for household use. Men then sometimes retained the profits made from cash crops and left women to provide food for the household and, occasionally, forced them into limited cash-crop production to provide money for children's school fees, health care, clothing, and so on (Goheen, 1996: 107–20). In regions where livestock and livestock products (such as wool or milk) became important cash "crops" (such as in southern and eastern Africa), men usually owned the livestock and controlled the profits as well (Bradford, 2000; Redding, 1993). Individual women have occasionally poached on these male privileges, sometimes under the cover of acting as their male relatives' agents, and sometimes openly but at the cost of their social "respectability" (Bozzoli, 1992: 16–25, 122–64).

Religion often played a key role in legitimizing changes in women's status. In Muslim areas, the idea of gender separation was already established prior to the colonial period, even if separation was not widely practiced, especially in those areas where it conflicted with a reliance on female agricultural labor (Cooper, B.M., 1994). But *purdah* (the segregation of women) had been a sign of a flourishing household – a status symbol to which many Muslim families aspired. This segregation of women corresponded with the colonial wish to redivide the gender division of labor, and so found some favor with colonial authorities. (Usually, colonial powers did not allow extensive Christian missionary work in Muslim areas, and so any misgivings that missionaries might have had about *purdah* were not expressed in policy.) Women may have chosen to be segregated because it allowed them to retreat from a harsh world outside the domestic sphere, to avoid some of the most arduous agricultural labor, and to claim a higher social status, even though this retreat, in the long run, may have hurt their legal rights and eroded their economic independence (Cooper, B.M., 1994: 61–4).

In areas that became widely Christian or in those areas where there were distinct splits between those who converted to Christianity and those who did not, a dynamic

mix of religious beliefs developed that affected the status of women, whether or not they as individuals were Christian. Women frequently adapted the missionaries' messages as to their proper roles; these roles then became part of a more generalized system of social status, so that various trappings of Christianity, such as Western-style clothing, sending children to school, drinking tea, going to the hospital to give birth, and restricting women's activities outside of the household, became status symbols for all women (Comaroff and Comaroff, 1992a; Gaitskell, 1990: 351–72; 37–68; Hunt, 1999: 5–24).

In the process of being adapted by Africans, "Western" social practices often took on new meanings that transcended and in some cases contradicted the original meanings imputed by missionaries. For example, as the historian Nancy Rose Hunt notes in her study of colonial rule in the Belgian Congo: "A hospital birth did not necessarily mean compliance with colonial desires and rules. Congolese insinuated their own fertility strategies into this seeming obedience. Colonial obstetrics began, after all, because Congolese sought help in childbirth emergencies" (Hunt, 1999: 322). In this case, successfully bearing children was the single most important local determinant of a woman's achievement of full adulthood and social status. Not having children, or not being able to bear live children or raise them to adulthood, was more than a personal tragedy: it could become a cause of social ostracism by leaving the woman and her family open to accusations of witchcraft; it could cause her husband to divorce or abandon her and her natal family to disown her; and it could leave her without children to care for her in her old age. Most Western-trained doctors in the 1920–50 period were missionaries, and most hospitals were run by mission societies and were sites of intense evangelization. Entering the hospital to give birth made a woman available for Christian preaching, which might have been an onerous price to pay for many non-Christian women. But in certain circumstances, such as breech births or other childbearing-related difficulties, the desire for a live baby probably outweighed the cost of having to listen to Bible stories. Moreover, the African nurses (who were often male) and nurses' aids who staffed the hospitals acted as cultural intermediaries, adapting Western medicine to fit African social realities and vice versa.

Mission societies also controlled most schools in African colonies, at least until the 1950s, and thus tended to control the curricula, often with minimal input from the colonial state. Mission schools were not just sites for evangelization; they also attempted to reform African gender identities by providing gender-specific skills. In addition to basic literacy, manual trades such as brick-making, carpentry, and agricultural techniques, were part of the education boys received; girls learned to read but they also learned to iron, sew, and clean. Africans did not necessarily accept in an unqualified or unreflective way the missionaries' ordering of society. Boys and girls regularly defied mission rules on behavior, particularly sexual behavior, and sometimes chafed under the usually strict hierarchy imposed by missionaries. Yet, most colonial African parents and children alike regarded literacy as a real benefit, enabling families to negotiate better with the colonial administration as well as increasing the earning power of the educated individuals and their families. Realistically, however, the kinds of jobs open to most girls emerging from these schools consisted of domestic labor, thus reinforcing a particular version of female gender identity. (Some women did go on to attain professional status as teachers, nurses, doctors, lawyers,

and business leaders, but they constituted a small minority among African women. (Marks, 1987: 1–42; Musisi, 1992: 172–88).)

Beyond the resistance of individuals, there were also significant, wider backlashes against innovations in gender identities proposed by missionaries. In Kenya, for example, when mission doctors, supported by their colleagues in the schools, tried to abolish the practice of female circumcision among Gikuyu Christians in the 1920s, they faced extreme resistance, and lost many converts. Female circumcision (in this case, cliterodectomy that ordinarily was performed at puberty as a mark of a girl's imminent transition into a new phase of her life) subsequently became a mark of Gikuyu identity and a rejection of Western imperialism, although prior to the 1920s not all women who spoke Kikuyu had been circumcised. Many Gikuyu banded together and formed independent schools, modeled in part on the mission schools, but which did not prohibit their female pupils from going through the circumcision ritual. In doing so, Gikuyu hoped to retain an aspect of their culture that they increasingly saw as essential to their emerging ethnic identity. Many parents (both men and women) also hoped that the ritual would give them greater control over their unmarried daughters so that they would continue as virtuous and productive members of their families. The issue of female circumcision endured as an inspiration of anti-colonial feelings among Gikuyu until it became in the 1950s one of the central issues of the Mau Mau rebellion (the rebellion of the Land and Freedom Army) that rocked the British colonial administration and eventually led to Kenyan independence in 1963 (Berman and Lonsdale, 1992: 389–97). Despite the significance of the issue of female circumcision to the development of Kenyan nationalism, however, women often found other issues important to them (such as women's legal rights to own property and participate in business) sidelined during the anti-colonial struggle and not seriously championed by the men on either side (Robertson, 1996). The prominence of issues about women's sexuality and social roles was also no guarantee that women themselves would figure prominently as leaders in nationalist movements, even as these movements attempted to regain African control over the machinery of the State. Thus in resisting Western imperial control, African political and cultural movements often continued the colonial tradition of viewing women as the subordinates of men, and could have a similar flattening effect on the landscape of gender roles and identities.

The Late Colonial and Post-Colonial Periods

Further evidence of this flattening effect on the status of African women can be seen in the late colonial and post-colonial periods, as African colonies began to emerge as independent nation-states. The nationalism that developed in most colonies in the 1940s and later was based largely on two different kinds of movements: one that mobilized Africans on the basis of a liberal political notion of ethnic or cultural self-determination, and another that followed more of a trade-union model, with some Marxist ideology occasionally attached. Each of these political strands had its own strengths and limitations, but regardless of the ideological stripe of any given movement, what was remarkable was how few female leaders there were in this period. Some women leaders were found in trade unions, particularly in South Africa which was the most industrialized of the African colonies. But many other African

nationalist parties had women's auxiliaries or women's leagues that often acted merely in a support capacity for the main party that was the province of men. When these women's organizations did act independently, their actions were frequently couched in terms of protecting women's roles as mothers and wives.

A classic example of women's organizations mobilizing around certain kinds of feminine roles can be found in the women's anti-pass campaigns in South Africa. The various colonial states in the region had required for many years that African men carry passes (internal passports), and violations of the pass laws were the most common cause of criminal imprisonment in South Africa. African women, however, did not have to carry passes, largely because the history of passes was intertwined with the history of labor migration, and until the twentieth century men were more likely than women to migrate to major urban centers in search of wage labor. Ironically, however, given colonial administrators' desire to force women and children to remain in the rural areas, the fact that women did not legally have to carry passes made this policy difficult to enforce. In 1913 in one province of South Africa (the Orange Free State), officials attempted to impose passes upon women, only to have women successfully protest that laws requiring them to carry passes would make them subject to indecent treatment by policemen, and would take them away from their families should the women be arrested for being without their passes. It was not until forty-five years later, in the late 1950s, that the State (by then the apartheid state) tried again to impose passes on women, this time on a country-wide scale and with greater resolve and success. Women once again mobilized, using both the African National Congress and the Congress's Women's League to structure the protests. Women voiced many of the same issues relating to their roles as mothers and wives, as well as expressing fears about the predatory nature of policemen. At the same time, however, most of the leaders of the ANC (which included both men and women) were on trial for treason, and were unable to devote significant time to the protests. Moreover, the ANC was perennially short of funds and was embattled by the apartheid state that had enacted numerous laws in its determination to impose a very rigorous form of racial segregation upon the South African population. The result was that within five years all African women were required to carry passes (Wells, 1983). These pass laws remained in place until the apartheid state began to crumble in 1990.

The fact that women were most visible in political movements that highlighted their maternal roles should not be read as an indication of a lack of interest in broader political activities among women. As Teresa Barnes has noted: ". . . it can be taken for granted that if there was a political struggle in colonial Zimbabwe, African women were involved in it. Perhaps they were not involved in the same ways as their husbands, fathers, and sons, but they acted in ways that were important . . ." (Barnes, 1999: 149) Politically-minded African women formed the organizational backbone of the ANC during the Defiance of Unjust Laws Campaign in South Africa in 1952, and often provided the strongest support for bus boycotts and other strikes in the 1960s and later. They also were critical to the success of various strike actions in colonial French West Africa, in Nigeria, Cameroon, Kenya, and Tanzania, and to guerrilla movements in Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Angola, and Namibia (Geiger, 1987; Isaacman and Isaacman, 1984).

But if women were so critical to the success of African nationalist movements in attaining state power, how does one account for the low priority subsequently given

to women's rights and issues in most post-colonial states? This is not a question that can be answered easily, and is the subject of ongoing research by many scholars. One partial answer may be that the maternalist focus of many women's groups during the late colonial period, when combined with the legacy of colonial laws that did not favor legal rights for women, tended to accentuate the role for women as mothers and wives whose voices were not properly or effectively heard outside of the domestic realm. Another factor may be that the nation-states that emerged in the post-colonial period were almost immediately beleaguered by problems that were not entirely of their own making, such as the Cold War rivalries that were being played out on Third World ground, and the oil crisis of the early 1970s with the worldwide recession and inflation it caused. These problems combined with issues that were unique to the African post-colonial experience, including states that were both authoritarian (being direct lineal descendants of the authoritarian colonial regimes) in terms of policy creation, and relatively weak when it came to enforcement, particularly outside of the major urban areas. In such a situation of political and economic uncertainty, many of the leaders who came to power in the aftermath of the colonial era scrambled to maintain their own hold on power at the same time as they struggled to hold their countries together. One of the few tools that many leaders had was the legitimating ideology of nationalism (and increasingly ethnicity), which they deployed to defend their own positions and policies, and to attack their political rivals, deriding them as allies of neo-colonialism or, sometimes, as traitors (Cooper, F., 1997: 406–25; Wilson, F.R., 1982: 150–70). The price of active dissent for women could be inordinately high under such circumstances (Oduol and Kabira, 1995: 187–207).

Moreover, many African women had some difficulty in coalescing around issues or an ideology other than those surrounding their roles as wives and mothers. Western feminism, *circa* the 1970s, seemed to many African women to be too focused on individual expression and on sexual liberation, and not concerned enough with the problems of motherhood and marriage. Western feminists also sometimes focused on the same issues that had been objectionable to colonial-era missionaries (such as female circumcision and polygyny), and these objections activated a number of deeply held suspicions among both African men and women that feminism was a new form of Western cultural imperialism (Bozzoli, 1983; Roberts, 1984; Steady, 1983).

African women attempted to address these problems by developing "womanist" and "African feminist" theories. These emphasized the historical agency of African women and tried to speak to real political, social, and economic issues faced by the majority of women. One of the initiators of African womanist theory, Nigerian literary critic Chikwenye Ogunyemi, defined it as an attempt to deal with "issues like extreme poverty and in-law problems, older women oppressing younger women, women oppressing their co-wives [in polygynous households], or men oppressing their wives. Religious fundamentalism is another African problem [for women] . . ." (Arndt, 2000: 714–15) She also noted that she felt some frustration that Western feminists tend to focus only on one or two issues at the expense of other concerns:

> If I am talking in Europe, I do not want somebody to tell me what to deal with [in Africa]. And then, if I am talking at home, I think I can be more – what shall I say? –

> outspoken, more candid. I may say frankly, 'Listen, this female circumcision is terrible.' . . . Whereas, when I come here [Europe], if somebody is going to dictate the agenda and limits me to female circumcision . . . so that I do not talk about other things, where you really can help me, I get annoyed. Because I do not want to be objectified.
>
> (Arndt, 2000: 724)

However, despite the attempt to appeal to a broader audience and to present their political agenda in ways that might be more in tune with African social norms, African womanists are still often seen as elitist. And while these theories could potentially have an impact on policies in African states, the reality often has been that African women political leaders face the same problems of limited state resources and a hostile political environment.

The scarcity of state resources has become particularly acute in countries affected by structural adjustment policies. These policies, implemented by external lending institutions such as the World Bank as a prerequisite for new loans, usually require the states to cut their budgets dramatically and deregulate their economies in the hope that over the long term these policies will result in freer market economies with stronger growth rates. Specific components of the policies often include land reform (doing away with "customary tenure"), the eradication of price supports and subsidies for basic cash crops and foods, and the termination of various social welfare measures. Although gender-neutral in theory, in practice many of these measures have hit women the hardest. Rural women frequently have not had the cash to buy the land they had previously cultivated, and so have found themselves evicted by the new, private owners. Husbands and other male kin have often not stepped in to replace the diminishing social welfare network, particularly since their own cash crops typically have brought in smaller profits (Goheen, 1996: 130–40). Some of the recent initiatives under the structural adjustment policies have tried to remedy the worst effects of the earlier ones, often by targeting women's organizations as recipients of donor aid. Whether these new measures will have their desired effect remains to be seen.

The worst consequences of a lack of a political voice for women can be seen in the rapid spread of AIDS since the 1980s. The dominant mode of transmission for the disease in Africa is through heterosexual sex, and so one might expect that men and women would be equally at risk for developing AIDS symptoms. In fact, however, women frequently develop the symptoms of full-blown AIDS long before their male partners, largely because of their disproportionately poor access to resources of all kinds, ranging from money and food, to adequate (or even basic) health care. The lack of a strong political presence has made it relatively difficult for women to press for resources in the political arena (Iliffe, 1987: 238–47). The fact that social welfare systems are on the decline also tends to hit poor and rural women the hardest: as they rapidly find themselves unable to grow their own food because of illness, there are few government services to assist them, and members of their family may shun them because they fear catching the disease (Altman, 1999; Crossette, 2001; Kalipeni, 2000). While widespread medical intervention, with assistance from international agencies and states, is necessary to combat AIDS, African women will also have to engage even more aggressively in politics beyond the local level to ensure that their voices are heard and their needs addressed.

Conclusion

African women's roles and status changed dramatically from 1918 onwards. Some of these changes were intentionally constructed by colonial administrators and missionaries, and some were the result of a dynamic mixing of African and Western cultures, political and administrative structures, and economies. Over the course of the colonial and post-colonial periods, the status of women has tended to become more uniform than it was in most pre-colonial societies. Gender has become one of the foremost determinants of status, as legally, socially, and economically women are subordinate to men and largely dependent upon them for access to various kinds of resources. As a result, African woman have had a number of difficulties in the post-colonial period relating to their lack of access to various resources controlled by men and by the states.

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Chapter Thirty

Continuities Amid Change: Gender Ideas and Arrangements in Twentieth-Century Russia and Eastern Europe

Barbara Evans Clements

This chapter must begin with a question: Why should Eastern Europe be considered separately from the western part of the continent? The answer seems relatively straightforward. Eastern Europe is a region that has long been set apart by geography, religion (Orthodox Christianity is strong there), and linkages to the Byzantine and later the Ottoman Empires. The differences between it and the rest of Europe grew in the nineteenth century, as industrialization and urbanization transformed the northwestern part of the continent and then slowly and very unevenly moved eastward. In the mid-twentieth century, the Soviet Union imposed governments and economic systems in Eastern Europe that were modeled on its own, thereby further dividing the region from Western Europe, with manifold political and economic consequences that continue to be influential in the twenty-first century.

Eastern Europe's distinctiveness is problematic, however, particularly in an essay on gender ideas and practices. First, it is difficult even to define the region geographically. Most educated Western Europeans and North Americans would probably say "eastern Europe" refers to the lands east of Germany, Austria and Italy. That is the working definition used here: Eastern Europe, for purposes of this analysis, consists of Poland, the Czech and Slovak Republics, and Hungary in the north; the nations of the Balkans to the south, and the successor states to the Soviet Union in the east.[1] But there are many Poles and Czechs who consider that Eastern Europe begins on their eastern and southern borders. They want to be considered "Western" because the very term "Eastern" is freighted with notions of backwardness, isolation, and inferiority, while "Western" is associated with political and economic success.

The negative nuances that are attached to the concept of Eastern Europe, nuances that were heightened by the Cold War but pre-existed it by hundreds of years, have produced exaggerated conceptions of the differences of that region from central and Western Europe. The differences that do exist are real and significant, but they should not obscure the considerable commonalities that tie together all the peoples of Europe. Those peoples have always been connected to one another by shared culture and history, and they have always, even in their most divided periods, maintained lively patterns of trade, migration, and communication.

Finally, lumping all of Eastern Europe under one set of generalizations can lead to minimizing the important cultural, political, religious, economic, and ethnic differences within the area itself. The Balkans, for example, is populated by Greeks, Romanians, Romani (gypsies), Albanians, Turks, and various groups of Slavs. These peoples speak different languages; some are Catholics, many are Orthodox; Jews inhabit the region, as do more than a few Muslims. Russia contains an even larger array of ethnicities, and it, like the rest of Eastern Europe, is also characterized by significant differences between urban and rural people. Millions of Eastern Europeans live in modern cities, but there are many villages in the countryside that lack indoor toilets and paved streets. To generalize about this enormous variety is a perilous undertaking. It is possible to make suggestive observations about the gender ideas of the region, but one must do so without losing sight of the risks of vastly oversimplifying what is in fact a very complex part of Europe.

With these caveats in mind, we will sketch in broad outline the common characteristics of Eastern European gender ideas and arrangements before the twentieth century, discuss the development of the Soviet Union and the export of Soviet ideas westward, and conclude by considering the collapse of the Soviet system in the late 1980s and the early stages of constructing new systems thereafter.

Eastern Europe in the Nineteenth Century

Before industrialization and urbanization transformed Western Europe, Eastern Europe was very similar in its basic economic and political structures to the rest of the continent. The peasantry comprised the great majority of the population; political power lay with a small, politically conservative landowning aristocracy. By the end of the nineteenth century that elite was increasingly being challenged by the middle and working classes that were growing in the cities as economic changes and new ideas seeped in from the west. The political situation was further complicated by the fact that Eastern Europe in the nineteenth century was ruled by aging empires, the Ottoman Turkish in the Balkans, the Austro-Hungarian at the center, and the Russian in the north.

Eastern European gender ideas were not much different from those that had prevailed in Western Europe for centuries, and this is hardly surprising, since Eastern Europe was also predominantly Christian culturally and had been very similar to the rest of Europe in its living patterns and political arrangements since Roman times. Women and men were seen as God's creations, flawed but redeemable. Men's virtues were considered to include honesty, courage, physical strength, diligence, piety, and submission to the will of superiors (peasants were to obey nobles, nobles were to obey higher-ranking nobles, everyone was to obey the king and submit as well to the authority of the Church). A man's primary family duties were to provide for the welfare of his dependents and obey senior family members, most especially fathers but also mothers, aunts and uncles, grandparents, even more distant relations upon occasion. In short, men were to be responsible, cooperative members of the various intersecting communities into which they were born.

And so were women. Europeans thought both genders should strive to be loyal, honest, diligent, pious, and obedient. Women were not expected to be as physically assertive as men, but they were to guard their chastity more closely. With women

there was also heightened stress on obedience, in keeping with beliefs that women had been created by God to be men's dependent helpers, and hence had been made less rational and more emotional. Women were consequently suited to taking care of children, the old, and the sick and to working hard in the family's service, but they required governing by men. These notions were leavened with considerations of social position; class-rank and age granted power, following the logic that the upper classes and the old were morally and intellectually superior to the poor and young. Consequently a noblewoman's gender might require her to obey her husband, but her class gave her considerable power over the male peasants who farmed her estates and her seniority in her family made her a power to be reckoned with in the lives of her daughters, daughters-in-law, and sons.

These traditional notions came under fire in the nineteenth century as democratic ideas spread from west to east in Europe. Feminism called for more egalitarian family relations and the entry of women into the public world of education, employment, and politics. Adult sons disputed the power of parents to control their choices of brides, of work, and of ideas. Trade unions, professional organizations, mainstream political parties and revolutionaries throughout Eastern Europe attempted to undermine the power of entrenched elites and imperial governments. These disparate groups all professed democratic individualism, the proposition that each person's autonomy and well-being should be fostered by society, rather than subordinated to the greater good of family, community, class, church or state. Socialists put more stress on class solidarity and the collective welfare of the poor than did liberals, but socialists also dreamed of a society of free individuals living in voluntary cooperatives. Within the constellation of gender ideas, obedience was beginning its slide into a distinctly inferior position. Of course, we are talking about values being contested here, not vanquished. The contest is in fact still ongoing, and its history reveals that gender ideas change very slowly. Nonetheless, the challenging of traditional conceptions about women and men began throughout Eastern Europe in the nineteenth century.

The Early Twentieth Century – the Fall of Empires and Rise of the Soviet Union

Europe's twentieth century began in bloodshed: first small wars in distant lands such as South Africa and China, and then the great cataclysm of World War I (1914–18). That conflict killed millions of young men in Eastern Europe and it also destroyed the three empires, the Austro-Hungarian, Russian, and Ottoman, that had governed much of the region. The collapse of the imperial governments brought independence to most of the nations of Eastern Europe, from Poland in the north to a newly created Yugoslavia in the south. It also set off the Russian Revolution, an upheaval that began as a revolt against Tsar Nicholas II in February 1917 and led to the rise to power of a small group of revolutionaries who called themselves the Bolsheviks. The Bolsheviks were Marxists committed to abolishing Russia's traditions root and branch so as to build a new society where humankind would be freed from all forms of oppression, including the oppression of gender ideas and practices. It was their experiment that Stalin exported westward as the Soviet Union established control over much of the rest of Eastern Europe in the aftermath of World War II, so the study of gender change in Eastern Europe in the twentieth century must perforce pay rather a lot of

attention to what was going on at the easternmost edge of the region, in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

The Communist Party had to win a vicious civil war to assure its control over Russia, and when it had defeated its enemies in the early 1920s, the leaders turned their attention to what they referred to as "socialist construction."[2] "Socialist construction" required building up heavy industry and developing agriculture, but it also included a comprehensive program for changing gender ideas. The communists were particularly interested in freeing women from traditional discrimination. Following Marx and Engels, they argued that women must be enabled to enter the public world as men's equals. That meant full access to education and employment. It also meant the establishment of social services – maternity care, daycare, public catering, laundries – that would eliminate housework. Lenin declared in 1920, "The domestic life of the woman is a daily sacrifice of self to a thousand insignificant trifles" (1975: 115). Those trifles needed to be transferred to publicly funded institutions so that women could become productively involved in socialist construction. Reluctantly, the government also legalized abortion in 1920 so as to prevent the harm done by backstreet abortionists. The communists, particularly the party leaders who had been well schooled in Marxist feminism, paid some attention as well to the necessity of reeducating men to treat women as equals in the workplace and in the family.

The Soviet Communist Party in the 1920s was unquestionably the most open-minded government in Europe on matters of women's emancipation. No other regime thought so carefully about the sources of gender discrimination or did so much to promote women's involvement in the public sphere. But there were critical limits to the communists' ideology and practices. The party itself was a predominantly male organization knit together by ties of patronage and clientage between men; the top leaders were all men, while women, who made up less than 10 percent of the membership, served mainly in the lower ranks. The communists never said openly that women did not belong in politics, for officially they were committed to quite the opposite proposition, but neither did they make serious efforts to promote women into the leadership. In fact, male communists often spoke as though they saw emancipation as a gift men bestowed on women, who had helped out with the Revolution. This was not an interpretation approved by the thousands of female communists who had worked in the party before the revolution, nor was it popular with the tens of thousands who staffed the party's Woman's Department (Zhenotdel) in the 1920s, but these feminist women, always a tiny minority of the membership, could not alter the party's masculinist political culture. Consequently it was mainly men who made the decisions about and controlled the funding of programs beneficial to women. The belief that men should lead in politics, an ancient one in Europe, was challenged in print in Soviet Russia, but not in practice.

The Communist Party crafted its ideas about men – how they were and, more importantly, how they should be – from conceptions floating around in the Russian revolutionary movement. The founding generation of party leaders – Lenin, Trotsky, and Stalin, for example – believed that the ideal man was a revolutionary fighter, totally committed to the cause and to his fellow revolutionaries, educated in Marxism, disciplined, courageous, and hardy. He followed orders but he could also be an innovator and free agent when necessity required. How he lived his family life they rarely discussed because they did not consider the domestic world politically significant and

perhaps also because the Western European middle classes, which the Bolsheviks despised, put such stress on the importance of being a family man. The first generation of Russian communists tended to believe that a man's domestic life was at best an irrelevancy, at worst a hindrance to his work for the cause.

These conceptions that ideal women and men were stalwart revolutionaries and equal comrades, living lives totally devoted to the cause, did not find widespread acceptance among the Soviet people. Most citizens of the world's first socialist state in the 1920s were peasants still living in the countryside. Millions of peasant men became communists and learned the party's gender ideas, but millions more remained fairly conservative in their beliefs about the inferiority of women and the rightful authority of senior men. Although the powers of the patriarchs in peasant families had been under challenge for more than a generation, there still were fathers in rural Russia who demanded unquestioning obedience from their adult sons in the 1920s. By comparison with the peasants, the urban working class and the tiny middle class were closer in their gender ideas to the communist leadership, but they too were less radical than the party elite, more like the bourgeoisie and working classes of Western and Central Europe in their notions about family life and women's emancipation. Widespread among the city population were beliefs in the importance of domestic life to people's well-being; urban people generally favored a nuclear family composed of a bread-winning, considerate father, a nurturing, home-making mother, and a small number of well-cared for children.

The Stalinist Synthesis

The Stalinist dictatorship that came to power in the late 1920s blended the gender utopianism of the founders of Soviet communism with ideas and practices that were more acceptable to ordinary folk, urban and rural. This syncretism reflected the influence of the party rank and file, most of whom had joined the party since 1917 and were less radical than the founders. It also served the regime's interests and priorities. The principal goals of the government headed by Stalin were building up heavy industry (steel, mining, railroads, tractors, and military equipment), establishing central control over agriculture (collectivization), and managing the entire society so as to mobilize everyone to heroic efforts and ruthlessly eliminate any opposition.

Much of the previously developed program of women's emancipation harmonized quite neatly with this agenda. The push to industrialize actually strengthened the party's ideological commitment to women entering the paid labor force and so recruitment and training programs were established across the Soviet Union in the early 1930s to get women working in the factories and fields, as well as offices and shops. The labor force swelled in that decade largely because of the entry of women into it. Girls and young women also poured into the schools, so that by the end of the decade the literacy rate of urban women had risen to over 90 percent, a 15 percent increase in a little over ten years. Rural women lagged behind, but they too made substantial gains (Clements, 1994: 145, chart 2).

At the same time the regime endorsed conceptions of marriage and motherhood that were similar to those widely accepted among Russia's urban population and throughout Europe. In the 1920s, the party's founders had given little consideration to women's family lives, beyond arguing for the socialization of housework. A few

prominent communists had believed that the traditional family should be abolished altogether, replaced by communes in which residents shared parenting. The Stalinist leadership, which contained very few utopians in the top ranks, continued to affirm in the 1930s that women should work full time and be equal citizens of the new socialist nation, but they also began to declare that women should also devote a lot of their energies to rearing their children and taking care of their husbands. Galina Shtange, the wife of an engineering professor, wrote the following summary of a talk in 1937 given by L. M. Kaganovich, Commissar of Transport and a close associate of Stalin's, to a meeting of faculty wives:

> L. M. reminds us and emphasizes that our first thoughts and concerns must always be for our husbands. The work our husbands are doing is difficult and crucial, and we must make our homes into a place where they can truly rest from their labors, we must create peace, comfort and joy for our families. (Garros et al., 1995: 186)

"Creating peace, comfort, and joy" required women to do a lot of housework and to take care of the children. Such notions made economic sense (resources were insufficient to build up industry at a breakneck pace and also fund social services that would replace housework). But the new stress on domesticity also bespoke an ongoing syncretism between party and popular values. The woman who sustained a comfortable home for her family in the industrializing city was an ideal in capitalist nations as well, in no small part because modern cities were unsettled and unsettling places. Traditions and customs that had knit village communities together no longer held in a Moscow where most people were recent arrivals. The political oppression of the Stalin regime produced a pervasive fear of the authorities' arbitrary persecutions and had a chilling effect on relations between co-workers and friends. It is not surprising that Soviet people of all walks of life, facing such an unstable, demanding world, would cling to consoling conceptions of women as caregivers and the family home as a refuge.

The consequences of the creation of this ideal, this New Soviet Woman, have been well documented. Urban women coped with what they came to call the "double shift," that is, they worked all day and then went home to spend the evenings on domestic chores. The load made it difficult for many married women (and the great majority of Soviet women did marry and have at least one child) to take advantage of the opportunities for advancement in the workplace. "I'll just have to divide my time between family and work," Galina Shtange wrote in her diary in 1937, "which is what I'm doing at the present time. It's putting a lot of stress on me, I'm becoming exhausted and irritable" (Garros et al., 1995: 178). Furthermore, the persistence of traditional ideas about women's natural ability to nurture meant that they tended to work in fields associated with the feminine (education, medicine, the arts, childcare, retail sales, and clerical), fields that were poorly paid. The continuing strength of beliefs in men's natural leadership skills meant that women inhabited mostly the lower ranks within the professions and continued as well to be absent from the upper and middle ranks of the political leadership.

Ideals of the New Soviet Woman were partnered with those describing a New Soviet Man, and he too had been modified as the revolutionary ethos gave way to the more conventional gender norms of the Stalin period. The New Soviet Man was

usually pictured as a young, well-muscled, square-jawed worker. His characteristics were diligence, competence, commitment to building the system, submission to authorities, and a striving to better himself. Gone was the revolutionary rebel, contemptuous of all social conventions. In his place was an ambitious organization man. Ambition was not loudly trumpeted as a virtue, because it was too difficult to reconcile with the collectivist ethics of Stalinist socialism, so the regime sent out a somewhat muffled message that a young man who followed all its prescriptions would rise in the system and might even become a party leader lauded in the press. Leonid Potyomkin, a young man from the countryside who earned a scholarship to an engineering institute in Moscow, was one of the millions who got the message quite clearly. He enthused in his diary in 1935:

> Now for the first time in my life I have squared my shoulders freely, boldly, fervently, and maybe even audaciously and can look at people with triumphant self-confidence. I am in the front ranks of those who are mastering the technology of production. I am not only a member of a production brigade; I am an assistant brigade leader. I am the first to grasp new things and to pass them on to my comrades.
>
> (Garros et al., 1995: 270)

There is a strong resemblance between the ethic of hard work and character development preached to young men in Stalin's USSR and the prescriptions for success widely publicized in the capitalist West in the nineteenth century. This similarity, as well as that between notions of women's domestic roles in Stalin's Russia and Queen Victoria's Britain, are perhaps not so strange as they may seem at first glance. The simplest explanation is that Soviet people and party leaders had been exposed to Victorian ideals, for they circulated widely in Russia before the Revolution. But those ideals resonated with communists in the 1930s also because there were fundamental similarities between the Soviet situation and that of the industrializing British or Americans. Both nineteenth-century capitalism and communist revolution shook up established social hierarchies, created huge, fearsome, energizing cities, and opened up new opportunities for ambitious young men. There was less explicit praise for individual advancement in the 1930s Soviet Union than in the 1880s United States, but opinion makers east and west promised that the man who developed good work habits and a healthy lifestyle could become one of the pioneering leaders of a vibrant economy that was revolutionizing human life for the better. Women were to help out, at work and at home, while the men blazed new trails. These notions did not square too readily with Soviet proclamations of women's emancipation, but this did not diminish the enthusiasm with which they were promulgated. Very little was said about the New Soviet Man's family life, but it was suggested that he should be kind to children and considerate of women. The government also rewarded men who rose in the system with higher wages and special access to scarce goods and services, thus reinforcing ancient beliefs that a successful man was a good provider.

There is another significant similarity between notions about men promulgated in the capitalist West and in the Soviet Union: they were part of efforts to make-over the working-class and peasantry. Protestant ministers and communist party leaders alike decried the unruliness of lower-class men, their drunkenness, their poor work habits, their irresponsibility toward wives and children. For their part, Soviet men brought with them to the cities a peasant culture that valued camaraderie and sharing

(the party approved), but also physical aggression and lots of socializing lubricated by prodigious quantities of alcohol (the party did not approve). Molding these rough-hewn country boys into New Soviet Men was one of the chief goals of the Stalinist regime. Working men resisted, sometimes getting rowdy at sporting events, often carousing with their mates and taking a slap-dash attitude toward work. This tension between the desire of the leadership to create cadres of disciplined supporters and the refusal of men to give up cherished habits persisted throughout the twentieth century, and indeed was present in the capitalist West as well.

The System in Eastern Europe During the Cold War

The Stalinist package of gender ideas, economic priorities, and dictatorship was exported to the rest of Eastern Europe after World War II. For women throughout the eastern bloc the consequences were quite similar to those in the Soviet Union. Eastern European governments sought full female employment because of their ideological commitment to it, because of labor shortages caused by the war, and because of a push to industrialize on the Soviet model. They also promulgated Soviet notions of the importance of women's domestic roles, a process facilitated by the fact that those ideas were as readily accepted in their countries as in the USSR. The governments of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia did establish social services (daycare, maternity care, public catering), but did not fund them sufficiently to meet public needs. And so women worked the double shift and held lower-ranking, lower-paying jobs. Data from Poland suggest that in the early 1980s women's wages were 20 to 40 percent lower than those of men even when they were doing the same work. (Marody and Giza-Poleszczuk, 2000: 155). Men held most leadership positions and better-paying jobs.

Urban and rural women all over Eastern Europe therefore carried a considerable burden, one made heavier by the fact that throughout the Cold War era communist governments did not manage to provide the amenities that eased life for women elsewhere. Rural people suffered from a lack of indoor plumbing as well as chronic shortages of medical care, consumer goods, and mechanized equipment. In cities, there were few laundries, electric service and phone systems were unreliable, tap water was undrinkable without boiling, and most households could not afford refrigerators until the 1970s. The supply of heating and hot water was often disrupted. Milk came from the store unpasteurized, so it had to be carefully cooked before it could be used. Because of scarcities, women had to shop often and then carry their purchases home on trams or buses.

By the 1970s many Eastern European women, particularly those in the cities, were defining their situation according to an interpretation that has been dubbed "the emancipated woman/brave victim" by Polish sociologists Mira Marody and Anna Giza-Poleszczuk (Marody and Giza-Poleszczuk, 2000). Women in blue- and white-collar occupations considered their jobs and the social services that assisted them as valuable improvements in their lives, particularly in view of the far more traditional norms that had governed their societies before the communists came to power. They liked being "emancipated women." But they also understood that the promises of full equality had not been met, with the consequence that they were not men's equals in workplace or home and had ended up with a huge workload. Furthermore, many

women perceived men as lazy and self-indulgent, demanding lots of attention while contributing very little to family welfare. "A husband in the home is just another child, only greedier," declares a character in *Women's Decameron*, by Russian novelist Julia Voznesenskaya (1985: 12). Believing themselves to be burdened by dependent children and selfish husbands, women saw themselves as "brave victims," sacrificing their personal happiness to their families' welfare. These notions were a way of coping that valorized women's unending labor and preserved the value women had long attached to sustaining family life. The prevalence of these ideas suggests that many women agreed with the government's conceptions of their contributions to society, while remaining critical of the burdensome consequences. And the "brave victim" notion spoke to certain developments in the lives of men as well.

There was some truth in the widespread complaints about lazy husbands. Men's lassitude seems to have been a response to the increasing failures of eastern-bloc socialism. Studies of conceptions of masculinity in Eastern Europe are in their infancy as yet, so what follows here is offered as a very preliminary analysis of a crisis of masculinity that occurred in the region in the 1970s and 1980s. Earlier, in the years immediately following World War II, conceptions of the New Soviet Man came from the Soviet Union into the newly communist states, where they appealed to party members, especially the highly placed ones. Working-class men were praised as the bedrock of the system and there was a good deal of stress on camaraderie and upward striving. Many men from the pre-war lower classes enjoyed great opportunities for advancement, especially in the 1950s and 1960s. All these developments are of course very similar to what had happened in the USSR before World War II.

Then, in the 1970s and 1980s, many men began to find that the rosy predictions of limitless futures became less persuasive. The state socialism of the post-Stalin era was not as tyrannical as its predecessor, but it proved far better at rebuilding war damage and constructing heavy industry than at delivering a high standard of living. Unmet consumer demand and notoriously poor public services bore witness to economies that were stagnating by the late 1970s, even while the capitalist West flourished. At the same time the emergence of a new elite composed of party members, their relatives, and children limited social mobility. Gaps between the lifestyles of the privileged and the poor widened. Paradoxically, women were actually less financially dependent on men than they had been in the past because they had their own incomes and could rely on publicly funded medical services and childcare. The consequence of women's new economic situation and the generally low level of all wages meant that few men could pride themselves on being successful providers for their families.

In short, by the late 1970s, there were many reasons for Eastern European men, from Warsaw to Sofia, in countryside and city, to feel dispirited. A few became involved in resistance movements, the largest of which appeared in Poland in 1970 and 1979–81. Most resorted to an ethic of coping that stressed resourcefulness and endurance, comradeship with male friends, and emotional ties to family, but held out little hope for personal advancement. This was not as satisfactory an adaptation as women's emphasis on service to family, because the latter fit very easily with long-established notions about woman as suffering servant. Eastern European men at the middle and lower ranks of their societies, having imbibed the widespread ideas that individual success and providing for one's family were central measures of men's worth, found their resigned submission galling. That their governments and

economies were controlled by the Soviet regime was only another sign of their general powerlessness. Some men expressed their sense of failure in excessive consumption of tobacco and alcohol; others withdrew from family obligations, thus giving rise to the common lament from women that their husbands were behaving like demanding children. There may also have been increases in domestic violence; definitive data are not available.

The End of Communism and the Launching of New Worlds

This crisis of masculinity, which afflicted Soviet men as well in the 1970s and 1980s, may have helped to bring about the collapse of the eastern bloc itself. It is certain that discontent with economic stagnation led Mikhail Gorbachev and a new generation of leaders in the USSR to launch political reforms in the 1980s and then refuse to shore up tottering communist governments in Eastern Europe. Those governments fell with astonishing swiftness in 1989; the Soviet Union itself disintegrated soon after. Since then changes once unimaginable have followed: democratic parliaments, civil liberties and free press, mixed economies with free markets and foreign investment, far more contacts with the rest of Europe. The countries that have benefited the most economically from this enormous transformation are those that were best connected to the economies of the capitalist West before 1989, that is, Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary.

Those individuals who have prospered are primarily women and men with marketable skills and access to the new opportunities. Someone without such connections may still succeed in business or rise to the top of a new political party, but the odds favor the young and well educated or the older and well-positioned. For the poor of Eastern Europe, especially rural people but also the workers who labored in the enormous, outmoded factories, plant closures and inflation have brought poverty, displacement, and demoralization. One's social position may be as important as gender in determining the effects of all this, but gender ideas and practices have affected and been affected by the revolutionary changes.

Most noticeably, women are just as absent from the ranks of the political leadership as they were under communism. This fact should be put in perspective: women make up roughly the same percentages of parliamentary representatives and government officials today in Eastern as in Western Europe. But feminists in the East and West are disappointed that the establishment of democracy in a region long plagued by political oppression did not call into question the proposition that politics should be led by men. When asked what rights women have gained since the fall of communism, one Romanian woman sardonically replied, "The right to speak without being listened to" (Grunberg, 2000: 319).

The political stage is not solely occupied by male actors, however. Women, mostly professionals, are active in new organizations that engage in a wide variety of voluntary activities, from rape-crisis centers to historical preservation, and promote the career development of their members, as well as facilitate people's adjustment to the new economic and political situation. Such widespread civic involvement is new to Eastern Europe, and it has the potential to enlarge women's participation in public life and promote a grassroots activism that may contribute directly to the development of democratic institutions and habits.

The dismantling of socialist economies has had serious effects on women and men, as unemployment has risen and new jobs have become available only to those able to learn new skills. Government income has fallen drastically, forcing cuts in social services such as medical care. Costs of everything from transportation to utilities have increased. In most of the nations of Eastern Europe, women have been more likely to lose jobs than men and more likely as well to resort to very insecure part-time employment in the emerging private service sector. Differentials between women's and men's wages have persisted and in some countries and types of work they have worsened.

The effects of these widespread changes on ideas about gender vary from nation to nation, according to the heritage and particular conditions of each. In Yugoslavia, a region where masculine codes have long put enormous stress on preserving individual and family honor, political instability led to civil war. The rising hostilities were expressed in violence against women; as part of "ethnic cleansing," Serbian soldiers repeatedly raped captive Islamic women in Bosnia. But even in peaceful areas of Eastern Europe (and they are the great majority), the building of new economies and polities has created a great deal of stress, because it has broken up familiar social arrangements and called ideals into question for both women and men.

Thus far there has been considerably more discussion of the appropriate roles of women than of men in the new societies. That is in keeping with the practice in communist days, when women's public and domestic roles were seen to require extensive elucidation, perhaps because they conflicted with one another, perhaps because women were thought, by party leaders and ordinary folk alike, to play a more important part than men in preserving the family. It was to be expected, therefore, that the enormous political and economic changes that ensued after the fall of communism would give rise to a discussion of women's public and family lives.

Notions about women today in Eastern Europe can be grouped into three broad categories. Particularly popular among the well-educated is a feminist egalitarianism that criticizes existing inequalities and argues for women to be fully equal to men in the public world and in the family. By contrast, maternalist ideas emphasize the importance of woman's role as child-rearer and argue that her nature is essentially different from men's. Maternalism is easily adopted by nationalists, who declare that women have a duty to preserve the spirit of the people by nurturing national values in their children. These ideas have been mobilized to support efforts to outlaw abortion in Poland, Slovakia, and Germany.

Feminism and maternalism are variations on themes present in the discourse of the communist period. Far newer to the region is a consumerist individualism that praises women for being successful in the new economy. Individualism takes as its icon the ambitious career woman, who is prosperous, beautifully dressed, sexually active, and unburdened by inept husband or needy children. This super-achiever, often featured in advertisements for expensive imports and magazine articles aimed at the middle class, is devoted to her own self-development and her own pleasure. "The most popular [women]," declares a recent contributor to the Polish magazine *Your Style*, "are those who are newly employed – but not those who work in the telephone unit or with the photocopier. . . . The women most sought after are not only attractive and fashionably dressed, but they have a high IQ, know how to make brilliant conversation, and have a sense of humor" (Marody and Giza-Poleszczuk, 2000:

167). There are very few such privileged women in Eastern Europe (or in Western, for that matter), but the glitzy images that decorate billboards and TV commercials appeal to people who would like, at long last, to be modern and rich, like the French and the Germans. Many older women see the chic young career woman as a sign that the new society no longer values their sacrifices and even is beginning to question the notion that a woman's highest expression of self lies in devotion to her family.

For men the new ideal is the aggressive entrepreneur. He is quite like the individualistic career woman, but harder, more competitive. His defining characteristics are a delight in risk-taking, competence in the new economy and politics, financial success, ease in international circles, and often youth. With his independence, his willingness to seize opportunities, and his *savoir-faire* the New Post-Soviet Man repudiates the passivity, provincialism, and ineptitude ascribed to the Soviet man. Some hint of negativity hangs round this swashbuckling wheeler-dealer, however, because business success is still regarded in Eastern Europe as a sign that one is corrupt. These are ancient ideas that can be traced back to the agrarian past when merchants were believed to be swindlers who gulled the peasants out of their hard-earned cash. It is also true that in the newly established businesses of Eastern Europe, bribes and special access are routine practices. Both admired and despised, the entrepreneurial man remains as remote from the experiences and opportunities of most Eastern European men as does the footloose career woman from the reality of women's lives. Ideas about him are powerful, however, in shaping the aspirations of the young and feeding the bitterness of those members of the older generation who felt marginalized in the Soviet order and now feel equally marginalized in a world of Mercedes Benzes and Rolexes.

One should be wary of predicting how the ongoing transformation in Eastern Europe will play out, but it is possible to draw some very general conclusions from our broad-brush examination of twentieth-century developments. First, gender ideas and practices will figure prominently in the change process in the East, shaping perceptions and behavior. Secondly, alterations in gender ideas and practices will often be perceived by contemporaries as more revolutionary than they actually are. Just as long-established ideas from the pre-Soviet period affected Soviet people, so too will ideas from the Soviet period continue to be powerful. And interactions with the rest of Europe will also have an impact, as they have for hundreds of years. The long historical view teaches that gender ideas do change, but slowly, so the core beliefs about women and men that have been accepted in Europe for centuries will continue to exercise a persistent influence, even as they are modified to suit new circumstances.

NOTES

1 I have not included Greece in this essay, because it is substantially different from its northern neighbors. It is more closely allied to the Latin cultures of the Mediterranean than to the Slavic peoples to its north and it was also not a part of the eastern bloc during the Cold War. The broad generalizations about gender ideas and practices that describe Europe as a whole do apply in Greece, of course.

2 In the 1918 the Bolshevik organization adopted the title Russian Communist Party. By the 1920s members were commonly known as communists and the term "Bolshevik" became an honorific reserved for people who had been members of the organization before 1917.

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Chapter Thirty-one

Engendering Reform and Revolution in Twentieth-Century Latin America and the Caribbean

Susan K. Besse

Feminist historians have only recently begun to uncover the history of women's activism and the importance of gender systems to the construction of power in twentieth century Latin America. The dependency paradigm that dominated Latin American historiography during the 1970s and early 1980s focused on structures of the international capitalist system that helped to determine Latin American economic possibilities, political arrangements, and social and cultural life. Similarly, the leftist revolutionary projects of the 1960s to 1980s subordinated women's interests and feminist politics to the overturning of class hierarchies. In reaction to the invisibility of women within these paradigms, early feminist researchers began to document the impact of capitalist economic development on women and households.

A significant shift in the paradigms used to understand Latin American societies occurred in the mid-1980s, when economic and political crises toppled the military regimes that had ruled much of Latin America since the 1960s to 1970s. By the 1990s, possibilities for revolutionary transformation closed following the electoral defeat of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua and the negotiated settlement of the war in El Salvador. Together, these developments ushered in a new period of formal democracy and a new focus on grassroots social movements as the favored site of progressive change. These historical developments, along with the growing influence of postmodernist intellectual theories, helped to shift the historiography from state-centered to society-centered analyses of power and authority. This shift has opened space for new interpretations that embrace gender and race along with class relations.

Great differences in the political histories and socio-cultural formations of the more than thirty countries that make up Latin America and the Caribbean make generalization difficult. Gender identities and practices are shaped by the region's extreme class polarization, varied racial and ethnic make-up, and diverse religious belief systems. Afro-Latin American religions and culture strongly define the national cultures of many Caribbean nations as well as that of Brazil; and indigenous American languages and culture continue to prevail in regions of the Andes, in Guatemala, and (although endangered) in areas of the Amazon. Immigrant communities from

Europe, China, Japan, the Middle East, and India also play important political and socioeconomic roles in numerous countries. Nevertheless, with the risk of simplifying the complexity of Latin American societies, broad patterns can be identified. This can be explained by Latin America's centrality in the global economy since the sixteenth century as well as in its participation in international intellectual and cultural movements.

Conventional periodization of twentieth-century Latin American history follows the shifts in governmental systems that accompanied global economic and political trends: liberal oligarchic states, 1870–1929; corporatist and populist governments, 1930s–1950s; socialist revolutionary experiments, 1950s–1980s; military dictatorships, 1960s–1980s; and exclusivist democracies, mid-1980s to the present. Feminist historians have not reached a consensus regarding an alternative periodization of the region; nevertheless, they are beginning to uncover the important ways in which these state formations were buttressed by gender systems and, in turn, shaped gender systems according to their varied political projects.

Liberal Oligarchic States, 1870–1929

The twin projects of Latin America's liberal oligarchies, which ruled from the 1870s to the world financial crisis of 1929, were order and progress. Committed to the integration of their countries into the international economy, they promoted the production of primary commodities for export to Europe in exchange for manufactured goods. Laissez-faire economic policies attracted European investment in agriculture, mining, and infrastructure. Railroads opened up the hinterlands for commercial agriculture and mining, and facilitated government expeditions to subdue rebellious rural populations. The burgeoning capital cities became showcases of modernization, graced by grand beaux-arts style museums, theaters, banks, government buildings, and landscaped parks. The rising middle classes formed a clientele for schools, medical facilities, varied forms of entertainment, newspapers and periodicals, and consumer goods. Excluded from the benefits of "civilization" was the vast majority of Latin America's population: the "backward," heterogeneous rural poor and urban underclasses, whose dark complexions and non-European customs posed obstacles to the liberal intelligentsia's vision of an ideal homogenized modern nation.

The coincidence of two cataclysmic events, the Mexican Revolution and World War I, ushered in a period of intense and unsettling social change in Latin America. Economic development, intensified during World War I, strengthened the urban working classes as well as the growing national business classes and middle sectors, whose resentments over political exclusion exploded in strikes and political confrontations during the late 1910s and 1920s. Urban political coalitions articulated nationalist and reformist platforms and vied for power with the agro-exporting rural oligarchy. *Avant-garde* movements staged an aesthetic rebellion against older generations, embracing innovation of artistic forms and ideas. At the same time, women, who had assumed important public roles as factory workers, shop assistants, office workers, and professionals, demanded civil rights, access to education, employment opportunities, and suffrage. Finally, the spread of new cultural forms, especially the radio and cinema, and the introduction of images of the independent working girl and sexy "flapper" heightened the sense of danger and disorder.

Within this context, many Latin American intellectuals began to look inward and to reassess their nations' potential. Concerned that the vast diversity of their populations precluded the achievement of true nationality, they sought means to purify, unify, and homogenize their nations. Gender relations became an urgent matter of state concern; key to the achievement of orderly and prosperous nationhood was the modernization of patriarchy and rationalization of domesticity. Men recruited women into the program of modernization not as equal partners, but as healthy and competent mothers, national beauties, public servants in the caring professions, and "office girls." In short, elite male support for certain revisions of the gender system rarely came from a desire to emancipate women; their concern was to harness more effectively women's reproductive capacities and labor for service to the nation.

Women also had their say. Beginning in the late nineteenth century, anarchist, socialist, and liberal feminist organizations coexisted uneasily in many countries of Latin America, divided by class interests, ideological perspectives, and race. In Peru, for example, where the majority of the population was indigenous American or mestizo, and in Brazil, where the majority was black or mulatto, racial as well as class barriers proved insuperable obstacles to building a mass movement of women. Nevertheless, by 1910, the First International Women's Congress held in Argentina brought together a diverse group of over two hundred activists who demanded juridical equality, suffrage, and social rights, including education, employment, health care, and welfare. During the 1920s, national women's congresses convened throughout Latin America. Although a small elite of middle-class professional women including doctors, lawyers, and scientists formed the leadership, the ranks of these organizations were made up of factory workers, labor-union activists, socialists, teachers, office clerks, and charity workers. Absent were the vast majority of Latin American women: the illiterate urban underclass of maids, seamstresses, street vendors, and prostitutes as well as rural women who labored in the fields. More autonomous than their more privileged sisters, these women contested masculine authority in their daily lives, forming families that were not always based on legitimate marriage or even stable consensual unions, and fashioning alternative standards of morality.

Constrained by the strength of Catholicism and the still limited economic and social opportunities for women's self-realization outside of motherhood, feminists tended to employ maternalist constructions of femininity to challenge women's exclusion from social and citizenship rights. Rather than attacking religious and scientific beliefs that upheld bipolar gender roles as moral and biological imperatives, feminists argued that women's domestic and maternal virtues qualified them for service to – and recognition by – the nation. Indeed, their entrance into public spaces would moralize politics; their education would turn them into better mothers; their employment would protect children from destitution; their altruistic service, especially toward women and children, would enhance the health and welfare of the nation. Such maternalist bids for citizenship based on notions of gender difference united socialists, liberals, and Catholic activists while they drew on ideals of femininity widely shared across class and ethnic boundaries. Maternalism also resonated more strongly than the discourse of equal rights given the authoritarian political traditions of Latin America, where the liberal discourse of equality was not matched by a history of effective male suffrage, and thus the vote had not served as a means for reform. Although feminists demanded suffrage, this was not a cause that could mobilize the masses of

Latin American women. Their disenfranchisement – along with the disenfranchisement of their male family members – lay more in poverty, illiteracy, and racism than in the denial of the vote.

Feminists found male allies in their demands for juridical reform among liberal professionals and progressive political movements. Nineteenth-century civil codes of Latin American countries glaringly contradicted new concepts of equality and "progress," subordinating the wife to her husband who, as head of household, enjoyed legal authority over his wife's property, her activities, and their children. A wife could not enter into any legal action or work outside the home without the authorization of her husband; nor could she control her own earnings if employed. *Patria potestad* (parental rights) were conferred solely on the father; only in the father's absence, death, or neglect of duties could a woman assume parental rights. On the assumption that familial harmony required a hierarchy of authority, numerous codes specified that wives owed their husbands "obedience" in return for protection. During the first decades of the twentieth century, congressmen introduced Bills in many countries to emancipate women economically and legally, yet victories were few before 1930. Among the exceptions, Mexican women gained freedom to represent themselves legally in 1917, as well as equal rights with husbands to *patria potestad* and equal authority to spend family funds. In Argentina, the 1926 "law of women's civil rights" allowed women to accept employment, administer their own property, and represent themselves in legal suits; nevertheless, women gained *patria potestad* only if they were unwed mothers, or over their children from a previous marriage. Except in a few cases, including Brazil (1932), Uruguay (1932), and Cuba (1934), female suffrage was delayed until after World War II.

More successful were women's efforts to expand their participation in education, employment, and social reform. Influenced by positivist notions of the perfectibility of society and desiring to quell social unrest, liberal elites favored increased state regulation of society. Public education and social reform were the favored channels: areas that offered important new employment opportunities for middle-class women. Although the first normal schools for teacher training had opened in Argentina and Brazil in the 1870s, it was not until the first three decades of the twentieth century, in response to the impacts of rapid urbanization and industrialization, that sustained growth in public education occurred. Progress was highly uneven, however, centered in the largest cities of the most economically dynamic countries. There, a new generation of middle-class women embraced elementary school teaching as a respectable, if poorly paid profession. Through the 1920s, women had still made very little headway in entering institutions of higher learning except in the field of education – and those of pharmacy and dentistry, which were the least prestigious of the medical professions. Latin America's dual educational systems in which primary, normal, and vocational schools were disconnected from university and university-preparatory secondary schools, functioned to preserve gender as well as class hierarchies. Outside the cities, the majority of Latin America's population, non-white, and often non-Spanish-speaking, remained illiterate until the second half of the twentieth century.

Educated women, including teachers, nurses, and social workers, also became highly visible members of the growing class of professionals involved in developing and implementing public health and welfare programs. Such roles fit well with

women's traditional involvement in church-sponsored charitable activities, and they reinforced the association of femininity with maternal altruism and sensitivity. At the same time, they opened new niches for female independence and activism, and legitimated women's skills as essential to national well-being. Embracing social hygiene and the "science" of *puericultura* (child development), women participated in campaigns to reduce child mortality, curb alcoholism, and control contagious and infectious diseases. Working alongside Latin America's eugenicists, who chose environmental over biological determinism, women collaborated in efforts to "improve the race" and thus lay the bases for both economic modernization and political stability. Class and race privilege, however, separated professional women from their poor clients who did not always welcome scrutiny of their "degenerate" practices and rarely had the means to follow new hygienic prescriptions for improving child and maternal health.

Regardless of class, women and marital relations also became objects of state regulation. With the family perceived at risk, threatened by women's presence in the workforce, new sexual mores introduced by mass communications, high rates of illegitimacy, abandonment of the home, domestic violence, prostitution, and poverty, concern for promoting marriage and family stability led to new legislative and social initiatives. During the 1910s many countries introduced protective legislation to regulate women's work. These laws banned women from occupations deemed dangerous or immoral and restricted their hours in order to safeguard their reproductive functions. Schools, health clinics, and social service agencies, along with reams of normative literature instructed women in hygiene, *puericultura*, and "scientific housework." Jurists criminalized abandonment of the home in Brazil, Mexico, and Chile; and they regarded men who killed purportedly unfaithful wives with increasing intolerance. Labeling such acts as "barbaric" remnants of the old order, leading Brazilian lawyers and judges sought (with marginal effect) to end the impunity enjoyed by such criminals. Divorce was legalized in Uruguay (1907) and Mexico (1917), but the intent of male advocates in these countries, like reformers throughout the region, was to moralize and legitimate marriage as a voluntary association based on free will, not to emancipate women. Eugenicists, social hygienists, and medical doctors increasingly embraced sex education, but again their goal was to promote healthy reproduction and happy, stable marriages, not sexual freedom.

The Latin American liberal elite thus embraced "modernity" with considerable ambivalence. While recognizing that the triumph of rationality in the public sphere required modernization of the gender order, they feared the erosion of patriarchal privilege. Where legal reforms succeeded, they rested on traditional ethical precepts; their impetus was generally to mobilize women for national development, protecting, not repudiating, their maternal roles and upholding marriage as a key institution for social stability. Women were caught in the middle, their new public roles essential for national economic development but their adherence to traditional maternal roles and their cultivation of traditional feminine "virtues" regarded as fundamental for protecting Latin American nations from subversive foreign ideas and practices. If a few women were able to use new legal rights and new educational and employment opportunities to empower themselves, their actions did little to undermine the patriarchal status quo.

Corporatist and Populist Governments, 1930s–1950s

Liberalism was dealt fatal blows first by the Mexican Revolution, which toppled the twenty-five-year regime of Porfirio Diaz in 1911, and second by the 1929 collapse of the world economy, which ruined Latin America's export economies. After years of bloody turmoil had swept away the old order in Mexico, the 1917 constitution gave birth to a new secular, nationalist state that used corporatist structures to integrate the male peasantry and working classes into the political process, populist rhetoric to legitimize its rule, and nationalist economic measures to address the ills of export-oriented development. Its radicalism lay in a project of land reform designed to destroy the rural oligarchy and sideline the Catholic Church from power. Its cultural project, however, which involved celebration of the mestizo "cosmic race" and elevation of male revolutionaries to the status of superhuman redeemers, associated nationalism with virility, silencing narratives of female heroism and radical critiques of the traditional gender order. Despite the fact that *soldaderas* (women soldiers) had fought with revolutionary armies and feminists had won male allies in their demands for citizenship rights, the revolutionary leadership distrusted women as potential traitors. Their ties to the Catholic Church and their supposed (innate, biological) conservatism were cited as grounds for the denial of the right to vote and to hold public office until 1953. Like Latin America's modernizing liberal states, the Mexican revolutionary governments of the 1920s took some steps to free wives from patriarchal absolutism, but only in order to mobilize women for service to the nation. Women were assigned auxiliary roles to men in bringing children under state tutelage, instilling modern "scientific" notions of childcare, and rationalizing the domestic economy.

After 1929, variations of populist corporatism pioneered in Mexico were widely adopted throughout Latin America. Faced by the bankruptcy of export economies, skyrocketing unemployment, and massive social unrest, governments dramatically increased their role in promoting nationalist economic development while incorporating the masses into the nation's political and cultural life. Classic examples of populism include the governments of Lázaro Cárdenas in Mexico (1934–40), Juan Perón in Argentina (1946–55) and Getúlio Vargas in Brazil (1930–45 and 1950–4). Based on urban political coalitions of national industrialists, organized labor, middle sectors, and progressive elements of the military, populist governments pursued a policy of import-substitution industrialization aimed at achieving greater national economic self-sufficiency and social justice. Their vision was one of organic national integration and class harmony; their means involved the tight control and cooptation of organized labor, which won material benefits in exchange for loss of autonomy from the expanding state apparatus. In general, populist governments (with the exception of Mexico) excluded the rural masses from participation in new entitlements and rights, which reflected their weakness to directly confront the rural oligarchy and presented serious obstacles to the achievement of national integration. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of the populist model for achieving capitalist economic modernization while suppressing radical political alternatives appealed to the growing elite of national industrialists. Using a combination of democratic and authoritarian appeals and practices, populist governments both incorporated the masses into social and political life, and acted swiftly to repress dissidents.

The populist national project forged tight bonds between male-dominated trade unions and the party, led by a charismatic man of the people. Juan Perón and Cetúlio Vargas epitomized the virile father figure who stood up to the oligarchy and foreign capital and restored national dignity. As benevolent fathers, they assumed responsibility to "elevate" the downtrodden and "protect" the weak. Male workers, especially in higher-paid industrial sectors, shared in the sense of empowerment, using corporatist bargaining to win significant wage increases, improvements in working conditions, and social security. Thus their ability to fulfill the manly role of head of household was enhanced; workers could assume authority as paterfamilias, capable of supporting a wife and children. But by making paternalism and authoritarian rule work for the benefit of the disenfranchised, populist leaders protected class and gender hierarchy. Their use of familial and patriarchal metaphors often cast workers as children, who owed loyalty to the father who had bestowed gains upon them, and shrouded the political process with a cloak of intimate familial sentiments that helped mask continuing exploitation and dependency. Women benefited from redistributive measures primarily as dependents of men. Although women formed a significant part of the workforce, post-World War I industrialization increasingly favored men, marginalizing women in poorly paid and less-organized sectors. New labor legislation and social welfare measures sought to protect poor women and aid single mothers, but their employment was generally viewed as an unfortunate necessity. Male-dominated trade unions and populist governments shared middle-class and conservative ideals of the woman as a full-time housewife and mother, dependent on the male breadwinner.

Nevertheless, populists courted women as political subjects and helped redefine the terms of citizenship. Eager to tap the female vote, governments throughout Latin America passed female suffrage and promoted female activism. Seeking to mobilize women as efficient consumers and competent socializers of new generations, they also strengthened women's education and legal authority within the family, shifting the locus of patriarchal authority from the male head of household to the patriarchal state. Women teachers, nurses, and social workers found new employment opportunities within rapidly growing state bureaucracies and social service agencies. At the same time, the State, along with industrialists, increasingly sought to domesticate men, curbing their drinking, gambling, womanizing, and violence in favor of healthy recreation and responsible fatherhood. Rationalizing production required rationalizing reproduction.

The mobilization of women in Argentina was most dramatic. In 1947, the Peronist Congress rewarded women for their support with suffrage, and in 1949, the Peronist Women's Party (PPF) was created as one of the three autonomous branches of the Peronist movement. By 1952, it had mobilized a half-million, mostly working-class women into its ranks. Its six female candidates for senate seats and its twenty-three candidates for deputy seats all won in the 1951 elections, giving Argentina the largest number of elected female representatives in the hemisphere. But Peronism was hostile to feminism, which it associated with imported ideas and opposition political groups. The PPF operated as a hierarchical organization tightly controlled by Eva Perón who defined women's political participation in traditional feminine terms. Loyal supporters of Perón, women's task was to render service to the State and its leader, not strive to advance their own interests. Drawing on their special

feminine virtues, women were to moralize politics and promote the well-being of the nation's families, avoiding masculinization and competition with men.

Eva Perón's meteoric rise to the heights of power in Argentina had contradictory impacts. Although she transgressed on male realms, her power was never institutionalized nor her authority legitimized; she remained the "spirit" and the "heart" of Peronism. Using self-effacing language and gestures, she claimed to be nothing but a humble wife loyally serving her husband and the self-sacrificing "mother" of the Argentinian "national family." She represented the "feminine" values of Peronist doctrine – love, compassion, charity, altruism – and cast herself as the protector of the poor masses. Indeed, her marriage to Perón served as a paradigm for both gender and class relations. Women were welcomed into public life, but they were to remain *almas tutelares* (spiritual guardians) who promoted Peronist economic and social agendas within the domestic sphere. The workers with whom Eva identified were beneficiaries of Perón's dispensation of concessions, but like dependent women and children, they owed obedience to the father.

Other governments of this period that do not fit the populist model, including the popular-front coalition governments in Chile (1938–46) and the "revolutionary," democratically elected governments in Guatemala (1944–54), shared the broad regional goals of achieving national economic development and social justice. Although not strictly corporatist, in that organized labor remained politically autonomous, these governments also sought to quell class conflict by expanding public education, labor rights, and welfare initiatives as well as by promoting organicist ideals of national unity and harmony. Central to their development project was a gendered vision of national progress that upheld men's role as the principal breadwinner and political subject while incorporating women into citizenship primarily as mothers and housewives. Here, as throughout the region, cross-class alliances of workers and industrialists rested on shared assumptions of male privilege. Progress was tightly linked to tamed concepts of virility that emphasized hard work, restraint, and responsibility to family and nation. Such concepts did not envision female emancipation; but they opened significant new areas for women's participation in the public sphere and validated women's efforts to escape male abuse.

Socialist Revolutionary Experiments, 1950s–1980s

Although only in Cuba did a socialist revolutionary movement seize state power (1959) and succeed in thoroughly transforming the nation's economy and society, revolutionary movements in many Latin American countries contributed to deepening the region's radical anti-liberal and nationalist traditions and gradually weakening its patriarchal order. In the 1960s, before the rise of second-wave feminism, the Cuban revolutionary leadership made a commitment to achieving the full equality of men and women through socializing reproductive work and guaranteeing equal access to educational and employment opportunities. Early feminist analyses were optimistic that women's material and legal gains would lead to the social empowerment of women and a major transformation in gender relations. Recent analyses have been far more pessimistic about the power of states to affect lasting social and cultural change. Although they acknowledge the substantial material benefits women received in Cuba, especially poor and rural women, feminists now place more hope

in the power of autonomous grassroots women's movements to challenge traditional patriarchal culture.

In revolutionary movements throughout Latin America, women bore arms, led troops, provided logistical support, and died alongside men. Based in the countryside, guerrilla armies depended on whole villages for logistical and material support. Rigoberta Menchú's account of her life in a Quiché Mayan village in Guatemala (Menchú, 1984) provides powerful evidence of the key roles played by women in revolutionary movements and the transformative impacts of women's participation. But throughout Latin America, unconventional gender roles and the autonomy women gained during periods of war proved difficult to consolidate once peace returned. If the contributions of female troops and commanders were vital, only a few are remembered – including Celia Sánchez, Vilma Espín and Haydée Santamaría in Cuba, and Mónica Baltodano and Dora María Téllez in Nicaragua – and they are seen as exceptional. Others remain largely uncommemorated, and thus inconsequential to the heroic narratives of revolutionary struggle and triumph. Equally ignored are the women who played supportive (more appropriately female, if often equally dangerous) roles: keeping safe-houses, transporting messages and weaponry, nursing male combatants, and organizing demonstrations and human rights movements. In contrast, the most celebrated and honored women of Nicaragua are the "mothers of the martyrs and heroes": womanly women who sacrificed not their own lives, but the lives of their sons for the nation.

The rise of hero myths around guerrilla leaders like Ernesto "Che" Guevara obscured women's participation and displaced gender concerns. The embrace of violence as essential for purging nations of colonial legacies and rupturing neo-colonial dependencies made revolutions into manly affairs. The Latin American revolutionary project was both nationalist and anti-oligarchic; it sought to restore the nation (symbolically female and violated by male colonizers) to strength and autonomy, as it sought to empower the impoverished masses (symbolically feminized by their disenfranchisement.) Men, not women, and certainly not homosexuals, were conceptualized as the principal protagonists in an epic struggle to break the grip of the male colonizer and aristocrat. Not surprisingly, it was largely charismatic male leaders who defined the proper role of women in the new society, often marginalizing women from power as they were supposedly "emancipated." Homosexuality was actively repressed, associated with weakness, decadent bourgeois values, and betrayal of the nation.

In Cuba, Fidel Castro understood that women's oppression not only contradicted his project of equality and justice, but undermined the goal of achieving national development. Concerned to tap women's skills for the Revolution and to win their political support, Castro moved quickly to mobilize women, establishing the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC) in 1960. A "mass organization" under the direction of the Communist Party and headed by Castro's sister-in-law Vilma Espín, it had the authority to seek women's emancipation through promoting formal juridical equality, social rights to health care and education, and expanded workforce participation. A "feminine" – not "feminist" – organization, it attributed women's oppression to capitalism, and sought to further women's interests by helping to consolidate the revolutionary program of socioeconomic transformation. The FMC thus mobilized millions of women to participate in the early literacy campaigns, volunteer work brigades in the countryside, and neighborhood Committees for the Defense of the

Revolution (CDRs). Domestic servants, prostitutes, and illiterate women received education for new careers; agricultural cooperatives welcomed female members; and universities recruited women into non-traditional and higher-paying fields, most notably medicine. At the same time, laws mandating equal pay for equal work and maternity leaves, as well as the socialization of some aspects of domestic work, especially childcare, helped to increase the participation of women in the labor force. According to most key indicators of progress, the Cuban Revolution brought women one of the highest standards of living in Latin America, as evidenced by mortality, health care, educational levels, and employment opportunities. In addition, Cuba has the most progressive attitude toward reproductive rights in Latin America, and is the only nation that provides free access to abortion.

Nevertheless, women's emancipation has always been subordinated to the priorities of the Revolution. Neither legal and educational equality nor free day care altered traditional definitions of sex roles or translated into social equality for women. The labor force in Cuba continues to be sex-segregated, with women concentrated in less well-remunerated jobs in traditional areas such as food preparation, childcare, education, and social services, while men are better represented in skilled and managerial jobs. When economic crises have forced contractions in the labor force, male workers have enjoyed greater guarantees than female workers, who are doubly disadvantaged by shrinking funds for public childcare and social services. In the political realm, women have been well-represented when compared to other Latin American countries, occupying between a quarter and a third of the seats in the National Assembly. But male domination of the party bureaucracy and state control of the FMC have closed off channels for women to critique the gendered impacts of state policies and to press for a more feminist agenda.

The Revolution has also not freed women from their traditional responsibilities for housework and childcare. In recognition of the insufficiency of public funds for the socialization of reproductive tasks as well as the resilience of *machista* attitudes, the Cuban government passed the Family Code of 1975, mandating that men share equally in caring for their children and performing housework. Among the goals were to stabilize marriages while freeing wives for greater participation in the labor force, volunteer work, and political organizations. However the government never attempted to enforce this law, and it has been observed mainly in the breach. As a result, women continued to look to the State for services and relied on educational and employment opportunities that allowed them to survive independently.

The ambivalence of the revolutionary leadership to real transformation in the gender order, along with the lack of forums for open public discussion, limited the ability of women to attack the foundations of patriarchal authority in Cuba. This has been especially apparent since the economic crisis following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Dramatic cuts in childcare and other social services have left women to assume highly unequal burdens in sustaining their families. Gendered impacts of scarcity are also evident in the rise of prostitution to serve the growing tourist business. Interestingly, as state support structures for women have crumbled, critical feminist inquiry has begun to flourish. Cuban feminists have established women's studies programs at the universities and are increasingly participating in international feminist dialogues.

As in Cuba, the program of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) in Nicaragua (1979–90) committed itself to the emancipation of women, but conceived

of this emancipation in terms of its utility to the larger revolutionary project. AMLAE (the Luisa Amanda Espinosa Nicaraguan Women's Association), like the FMC, was a Sandinista-affiliated mass organization that sought to mobilize women for the defense of the Revolution and national development. Although the Sandinista revolution encouraged democratic participation through both sectoral organizations and national elections, AMLAE had a difficult time establishing an autonomous program and choosing its own leadership. Initially, believing that women would gain equality through their integration into the tasks of the Revolution, the AMLAE leadership recruited members from the popular classes and focused primarily on addressing poor women's immediate material needs. Even as women in other mass organizations were effectively challenging sexism and women's exclusion from leadership, AMLAE remained timid, passively following the agenda set by the FSLN hierarchy.

During the mid-1980s, however, in face of war against the US-funded Contras (whose goal was the overthrow of the Nicaraguan government) and economic crisis, AMLAE responded to criticism from Nicaraguan feminists by charting a more autonomous and activist approach to tackling women's issues such as workplace discrimination, sexual harassment, domestic violence, rape, sexual education, and reproductive rights. In 1985, the Second National AMLAE Assembly raised formerly taboo topics for public discussion and launched a woman's agenda for constitutional reform that was debated in town meetings throughout the country. Unfortunately, national crisis soon cut off opportunities for creative change. In May 1989, the FSLN leadership preempted the inauguration of AMLAE's first democratically elected assembly and closed opportunities for independent decision-making, ordering all Sandinista organizations to focus on delivering the vote in the 1990 national elections. Although the FSLN lost the elections, its eleven-year period of rule contributed to mobilizing women and deepening feminist consciousness. Nicaraguan feminists have gained a powerful voice and are challenging the FSLN to rethink the meaning of democracy and revolution, paying new attention to analyzing gender inequality and the politics of the domestic sphere.

Although Latin American revolutionary movements have tended to subordinate gender concerns to class agendas, the program of the largely indigenous Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) based in Chiapas, Mexico, suggests a significant shift. On the day they launched their rebellion in 1994, the Zapatists publicized their Revolutionary Law of Women, reflecting the centrality of women in the movement. It declares women's rights: to full participation in the spheres of revolutionary struggle and politics; to health care, education, employment, and a just salary; to freedom in choosing a partner and the number of children they bear and raise; and to freedom from abuse, violence, and rape. Whether this law will have a significant impact on behavior – redefining manhood as well as womanhood – remains to be seen. Nevertheless, the EZLN's strong stand on the importance of indigenous and rural women's rights as an essential element of any revolutionary program reflects the cumulative experience of several decades and serves as a model for a new kind of politics.

Military Dictatorships, 1960s–1980s

During the 1960s and 1970s, military dictatorships seized power in many Latin American countries including Brazil (1964), Chile (1973), Uruguay (1973), and

Argentina (1976). Political crisis followed economic crisis, as the import substitution policies of the 1930s to 1960s reached their limits to spur national industrial growth, blocked by continuing inequities in income distribution and the consequent restriction of the domestic market. Inflationary spirals and the drain of capital through debt repayment sparked waves of strikes and riots that tore apart populist and reformist political coalitions. Radicalized and powerful labor movements pushed for thoroughgoing structural transformations of the economy and society. In reaction, the national bourgeoisie, which had increasingly entered into partnerships with transnational corporations, joined with the military and foreign allies to seize political power forcibly and thus rescue their nations from what they labeled communism and anarchy.

Military coups ushered in a brutal reign of terror designed to eliminate all opposition to the implementation of a neo-colonial economic model of growth based on the integration of Latin American economies into the international economy. As the foreign takeover of nationally-owned industry accelerated and private-sector business was deregulated, wages dropped sharply, unemployment soared, and all channels for expressing dissent were closed. Military governments suspended constitutional rights, dissolved national congresses, abolished trade unions and political parties, purged universities of "subversives," censored the press, and rolled back progressive reforms. Moreover, in "dirty wars," the military arrested, tortured, and murdered tens of thousands of real and suspected opponents, including intellectuals, students, workers, peasants, and even priests and nuns.

Central to the justification of military rule was the project of restoring "traditional family values" and thus the health of nations that had supposedly grown sick. In the most extreme attempt to restore patriarchal order, the Chilean military reinstated *potestad marital* (authorizing a husband's legal control over his wife and her property), restricted women's rights to divorce and unemployment insurance, tightened laws on the distribution of contraceptives and access to abortion, and further reduced women's salaries relative to men's. But while the military celebrated motherhood as women's biological and patriotic duty, they committed the grossest violations of women's human rights. Shockingly within the Latin American context, women deemed "subversive" enjoyed no immunity from rape, inhuman torture, and murder, sometimes even in the presence of their husbands and children. In Argentina, children born to women prisoners were doled out to couples with close ties to the military.

The kidnapping, torture, and murder of tens of thousands of mothers and fathers, daughters and sons destroyed the family life that military regimes claimed to be protecting. In reaction, women, using the protective cover of their motherly and wifely devotion, took their private anguish into the public sphere. In the best-known case, Argentinian women wearing white headscarves and carrying photographs of loved ones who had been "disappeared" marched daily in the central plaza in Buenos Aires demanding their return and the end of military rule. Their nonviolent defiance of the dictatorship exposed the hypocrisy of military rhetoric and galvanized the opposition into a broad-based movement for the restoration of democracy.

In further glaring contradiction to their stated ideal, military and authoritarian regimes throughout Latin America introduced economic policies that undermined women's ability to provide for their families. Cuts in public spending, devaluation,

and unemployment hit poor women especially hard. Loss of jobs compounded by lack of social services prejudiced women's health, increased their domestic burdens, and forced them to eke out livings in casual work in the informal sector. To survive, many women joined together in mothers' clubs, housewives' associations, and community soup kitchens, frequently organized with the assistance of international development programs or under the protective umbrella of church-sponsored Christian Base Communities, that served as radical religious mandates for seeking social justice. These grassroots organizations took on a dynamic of their own. Empowered through new forms of participation in the pubic sphere, women activists organized mass protests against regressive economic policies and demanded public services including health care, day care, schools, housing, water, electricity, and transportation. In numerous cases, they sponsored self-education workshops on topics raging from parenting, to sexuality, to legal rights. Through such actions, they pioneered new forms of political participation and challenged old conceptions of what constitutes politics.

Paradoxically, military dictatorship proved a fertile context for high levels of female mobilization, innovative approaches to gender issues, and the emergence of a distinctive feminist identity. The experience of organizing outside of traditional political parties around issues of economic survival and human rights politicized women's familial identities. Although poor women who organized mass protests to demand basic social services rarely considered their actions "feminist," their participation in new modes of political action broadened their own horizons as it broadened the national discourse of rights and citizenship. They ensured that political parties could no longer afford to ignore female constituencies or gender issues. Similarly, female human rights activists who protested the disappearances and murder of loved ones did not initially associate their actions with feminism. However, when many faced opposition – and even violence – not just from the State but also from husbands who opposed their public activism, the connection between women's rights and human rights became clear. Women began to understand that state authoritarianism and domestic patriarchy were mutually reinforcing, and that change required radically new forms of social relations in the private as well as public realm. The slogan *democracia en el país y en la casa* (democracy in the nation and in the home) reflected the birth of a feminist vision that challenged traditional sex roles and forced opposition parties to broaden their conceptions of democracy. In some cases, it also precipitated a break-away from progressive sectors of the Catholic Church, which balked when women activists turned their attention from economic rights to divorce and reproductive rights.

Although feminism in Latin America arose from the contradictions between military discourse and practice, it was also influenced by the feminist movement in Europe and the United States. The 1975 International Women's Year Conference in Mexico City defined gender issues as important political issues and served as a catalyst for the birth of new national organizations and international networks. Middle-class women in Latin America as well as political exiles in the United States and Europe formed consciousness-raising and activist feminist movements in which they attempted to define a theory and practice of feminism that addressed Latin American realities. Many had been alienated by the sexism of leftist political parties and guerrilla movements that relegated women to subordinate positions, upheld a sexual double standard, and trivialized gender concerns. Forming autonomous

organizations, middle-class activists united with poor urban and peasant women in shared opposition to military rule. In so doing, they discovered common concerns over a variety of issues including domestic violence, sexuality, and reproductive rights. National women's congresses offered opportunities for cross-class debates over definitions of feminism, strategies, and tactics, while they increased the movement's clout to pressure political parties to take women's issues seriously.

Despite disagreements about how to link feminist and class-based demands, Latin American women's movements have pioneered a variety of feminisms, most of which combine concern for gender rights with acute social awareness of economic injustices. These movements not only played a central role in toppling military regimes, but have also contributed to the development of a global feminist movement more sensitive to racial, ethnic, and class differences. The awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to Rigoberta Menchú acknowledged the importance of her work in upholding women's and indigenous rights as well as in denouncing military rule in Guatemala. Another pioneer is Benedita da Silva, an Afro-Brazilian former senator and governor of Rio de Janeiro, who grew up in the *favelas* (slums) of Rio de Janeiro. She has articulated a strongly feminist and anti-racist position within the politics of the Worker's Party that she helped to found.

Exclusivist Democracies, mid-1980s to Present

Since the mid-1980s, the formal democracies which replaced discredited military regimes have failed to overcome the economic, social, and political legacies of years of authoritarian rule. Saddled with suffocating foreign debt burdens, weak industrial bases, and dependency on foreign exports (of mostly low-priced primary commodities), newly elected governments – conservative and progressive alike – have been vulnerable to pressure from lenders and the IMF to implement neo-liberal remedies. These include deep cuts in government spending, wage restraints, monetary devaluation, privatization of state-owned companies, and incentives for export-oriented enterprises. The results have been disastrous in most cases: deterioration of the physical and social infrastructure, high rates of bankruptcy among small and medium-sized businesses, further denationalization of domestic industry, soaring unemployment, and widespread pauperization. During the 1990s, the gap between the rich and poor continued to widen. Even in the richest countries such as Mexico and Brazil, half of the population lives below poverty levels set by the United Nations and 20 percent live in extreme poverty. Pressure to contain recurrent economic crises also undermines democratic process as elected presidents have resorted to using executive decrees, curtailing labor's right to strike, and at least tacitly endorsing intimidation of political opponents.

Neo-liberal policies hit women especially hard. High male unemployment and deteriorating wages along with cuts in social services have sent an ever-larger percentage of women into the job market. Whereas in the 1970s working women tended to be young and single, older women are now working in increasing numbers, including wives and mothers of young children. The resulting double burden on women has contributed to soaring rates of divorce and female-headed households. In cities and export-processing zones, poor women work in *maquiladoras* (transnational assembly plants), or in other low-wage manufacturing jobs such as food-processing,

or they participate in the informal economy, selling small items in the markets and streets. Even in the industrial sector, most women are unorganized or represented by government-controlled unions that offer employers exemptions from national labor laws including protection for pregnant workers. Work speedups, violations of health and safety standards, and widespread sexual harassment, discrimination, and violence tend to be the norm, as well as child labor which harnesses young girls to the workforce from a very young age.

Researchers disagree about the degree to which wage work is empowering to women in an age of labor deregulation and low wages. Many studies have shown that even poorly paid jobs can give single women newfound social freedoms, independence from their families, and greater autonomy in choosing when and who to marry or whether to marry at all. Married women and those with children, whose wages are becoming more essential to family survival, are exerting increasing control over household budgets and decision-making, family size and living arrangements. Nevertheless, if women's income and participation in new institutional and cultural spaces (factories, offices, schools, recreation, community organizations) have empowered them to renegotiate domestic arrangements, they have not been able to translate this into social and political power within the larger community or nation.

Since the mid-1980s, the arena of political struggle has shifted from the streets to the halls of congresses and government ministries. Feminists were initially optimistic that the visibility and legitimacy women had gained in helping to topple military regimes, along with their high levels of mobilization and creative approaches to "doing politics," would empower them to transform the political culture and practice of Latin American nations. They had succeeded in making feminism legitimate and introducing formerly taboo issues such as divorce, abortion, and domestic violence into the realm of public debate. Moreover, Latin American feminists enjoyed the backing of international organizations and the United Nations accord, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination. Nevertheless, oppositional politics proved easier than developing the organizational sophistication, institutional strength, and technical skills required to influence political parties or the policies of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government.

Securing gains in legal rights as well as formal representation in the government have proved to be the easiest steps. The demands of women activists often coincided with the interests of newly elected governments to demonstrate their democratic credentials and to modernize the State. Virtually all governments in Latin America have established regional and national women's offices and modernized their laws. In Brazil, feminists gained the majority of the seats in the National Council on Women's Rights (CNDM), a governmental body created in 1985 within the Ministry of Justice. Through collaboration with the independent women's movement, the CNDM succeeded in advancing a radical agenda for constitutional reform. The 1988 Brazilian constitution provides for formal equality between the sexes, significantly expanded social and labor rights, and the right to family planning (although not abortion), as well as free care for children from birth to six years old. Thanks to the effective mobilization of Ecuadorian feminists, their country's 1998 constitution prohibits violence against women, asserts the right to make free choices about one's sexual life, and bars discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. Throughout Latin America,

including in Peru during the anti-democratic government of Alberto Fujimori, new laws have criminalized domestic violence and guaranteed women equal rights.

Yet given persistent and widening economic inequality, the ability of most women to exercise newly won rights is tenuous at best. In the Latin American context where laws are frequently observed in the breach, implementation of legal rights requires high levels of mobilization that have been difficult to sustain. In addition, IMF-imposed austerity packages drain national treasuries of revenues needed to implement legal and constitutional guarantees. The funding for national women's offices is woefully inadequate for carrying out their broad mandates. Political instability and economic crises pose further threats to the continuity of these offices and their programs. In addition, the larger patriarchal institutional context poses serious obstacles to the success of innovative projects. For example, the effectiveness of female-staffed police precincts in Brazil in serving female victims of sexual crimes was undermined by inadequate training of police officers and failure of the criminal justice system to prosecute perpetrators of these crimes effectively. Thus formal gains have been largely ineffective in improving the lives of the majority of Latin American women or in empowering them politically.

Although women have had notable success in instituting quotas to address their underrepresentation in the formal structures of political decision-making, it is not clear that quotas will challenge the patriarchal status quo. By the end of the 1990s, laws requiring political parties to run a minimum number of female candidates (ranging from 20 to 40 percent) had been passed in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guyana, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, and Venezuela. But quotas are not always enforced and can lead to a gender division of political labor, with women assigned to less-important "female" roles while men continue to dominate the most powerful positions. Moreover, even when women are elected, not all are committed to advancing a feminist agenda.

Progress has been most difficult in securing women's reproductive rights due to cultural taboos, the opposition of the Catholic Church, inadequate public health services, and non-enforcement of protective labor legislation. Throughout Latin America, especially in rural areas, women's sexuality is defined by procreation, and the sexual double standard remains firmly entrenched. Despite cross-class feminist mobilization around issues of health, the poor quality of public health services limits women's access to safe contraception and results in alarming rates of infant and maternal deaths among the poorest rural women. Elective abortion remains illegal in all countries except Cuba; as a consequence, back-alley abortions cause permanent damage or death to large numbers of women. Poverty and lack of enforcement of the law allows factories to ignore protective labor legislation with impunity; managers frequently refuse to hire pregnant women, aggressively push contraceptives, and fire women when they become pregnant.

Persistent obstacles to change have led to distrust of public institutions, disenchantment with formal politics, and the demobilization and fragmentation of women's organizations. One sign of this is the strong appeal of Pentecostalism and other evangelical religions. Given the failure of revolutionary movements and current "democratic" governments to address women's issues, many women are drawn to the more private solution of evangelical religion that promotes stable family life and conservative social values along with prohibition of alcohol.

Obstacles to change have also fueled acrimonious debates among Latin American feminists over whether activism should take place inside political parties and governmental agencies or whether autonomous organization is more effective. Although lobbying for parties to run female candidates and to include feminist goals in their platforms is essential, political parties divide the women's movement and divert energy in partisan disputes. While collaboration with the State can bring access to resources and political influence, it does not guarantee meaningful change and can in some circumstances even lead to compromises that erode feminist goals. National women's offices rarely have access to the real centers of power and are not secure enough to risk articulating strong feminist critiques of state policies. Yet limiting their focus to securing welfarist measures can reinforce traditional patterns of patronage and clientelism that reinforce women's subordination, dependency, and vulnerability to shifting political alignments. Most feminists agree that strong independent feminist movements outside the State are essential for providing women's offices with greater leverage. But the growing association of the women's movement with NGOs has shifted the focus away from activism toward professional and technical service, for which funding is more readily available.

Latin American feminists face significant challenges in protecting hard-won victories in the current hostile climate. The eighth Latin American and Caribbean Feminist *Encuentro* (meeting) in the Dominican Republic in 1999 denounced neo-liberalism for accentuating the feminization of poverty. As long as government revenues are funneled into the repayment of foreign debts, the disparities between legislative guarantees of equality and glaringly unequal realities will remain acute. More ominously, the inability of elected governments to deliver material benefits threatens democracy, and the turn toward authoritarian alternatives threatens to buttress both public and private patriarchy. Yet despite the vulnerability of feminism within Latin America's patriarchal and neo-liberal states, gender consciousness continues to grow within new constituencies, and the variety of feminisms has multiplied. Afro-Latin American women, lesbians, peasant women, and ecological activists have infused creative new visions into the movement, expanding its parameters and deepening its cultural impacts.

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Chapter Thirty-two

Equality and Difference in the Twentieth-Century West: North America, Western Europe, Australia, and New Zealand

Charles Sowerwine with Patricia Grimshaw[1]

Between 1918 and 2000, gender relations in the "West," the name we will use for the countries in the title – underwent major readjustments. The degree and rate of change varied in different countries, but followed parallel trajectories. Gender relations were experienced differently not only in different nations, but also by class, occupation, ethnic background, and religious affiliation. Nonetheless, four patterns emerged and continue to be of major significance.

(1) Women gained the suffrage in the early twentieth century but it was not until the late twentieth century that they entered the mainstream political arena in significant numbers. In the last two decades, impoverished indigenous minorities in First World countries, other minority women – black, colored, indigenous, and immigrant – also embarked on political activity on behalf of their own communities in significant numbers.
(2) Women, especially married women with children, took on a greater and less unequal share of waged labor. This accompanied significant changes in household structure, away from the nuclear family with four or more children to new forms of relationships and fewer children.
(3) Women increased their capacity to control reproduction and expectations were raised that men would begin to involve themselves more in the domestic sphere and child rearing.
(4) For heterosexuals, sexuality was increasingly split from reproduction and became recreational, while gays and lesbians gained increased public acceptance of alternative sexualities and indeed of the right to raise children.

Two World Wars

The biggest single change in gender relations was the completion of civic equality: before World War I, suffragists had struggled for the vote, but had obtained it only in a few smaller nations: New Zealand (1893), Australia (1902 for national elections), Finland (1906), and Norway (1907 for propertied women, 1913 for others). After the war, women gained the vote and the right to stand for political office throughout the English-speaking countries of the West (which we will call the English-speaking world, though of course India and other non-Western countries are English-speaking). Canadian women gained these rights nationally in 1918. In the same year, women over thirty obtained the suffrage in Great Britain (only in 1928 did women aged twenty-one to thirty also obtain it); American women won the vote for federal elections in 1920 (a number of American states had already enfranchised women).

On the European continent (which we will call the Continent, to distinguish it from the British Isles), women gained the vote wherever World War I overturned the existing order: Soviet Russia in 1917; Germany, Austria, Poland, and Czechoslovakia in 1919. In Sweden, fear that the existing order might be overturned led to women's obtaining the suffrage at the same time as working-class men (1921), for it was assumed women would vote more conservatively than men.

Elsewhere, the status quo triumphed. The French lower house voted for women's suffrage in 1919, but the senate killed it in 1922. In Italy, Mussolini came to power in 1922. Aiming to return women to domesticity, the Fascist regime refused to grant them the vote. Greek women did obtain the suffrage in 1929 and Spanish women limited suffrage in 1931, but lost it on the advent of Fascist regimes.

In the countries which granted women the vote, few working-class women or women of color took it up until after the mid-century, although in the United States F.D. Roosevelt's New Deal drew more into politics before World War II and in some countries, such as Australia, voting was compulsory. Even middle-class women found that simply having the vote did not translate into power. Male-dominated parties did have a vested interest in recruiting women once they could vote. Some women took that route, became members of political parties, discussed their concerns, got them incorporated in party platforms, and sought to influence and on occasion be selected as candidates, but more often women found themselves marginalized in parties. Instead of leadership positions, they were asked to give administrative, financial, and support services. Their policy input was generally limited to issues affecting women and children. Quite often, this marginalization was made concrete through the existence of women's auxiliaries. Liberal and right-wing women frequently formed their own, separate political organizations, outside the control of parties.

Thus in English-language countries the suffrage did not translate into substantial numbers of women parliamentarians. In Britain, in 1919, the American-born Lady Astor was elected a Conservative MP and thus became the first woman to sit in the House of Commons, taking over the seat of her husband on his elevation to the House of Lords. In the United States, the workings of the American federal system brought Jeannette Rankin, a leader of the National American Woman Suffrage Association, to Congress in 1916, four years before women obtained the vote nationally. She was elected from the state of Montana, where women had obtained the vote in

1914. Under the American constitution, anyone with a right to vote in a state enjoyed the same rights federally. In Australia, the first women were not elected to the national parliament until 1943, when the Conservatives' Enid Lyons, mother of eleven, was elected to the House of Representatives and the Labor Party's Dorothy Tangney to the Senate.

All these countries used single-member electorates. These tended to be more resistant to women's participation in politics than systems based on proportional representation, in which lists of candidates were presented to electors, thus encouraging parties to include some women. In Scandinavian countries, where party lists were usual, women had easier access to mainstream political power. In Sweden, five women were elected to the lower house of 230 in 1922, the first elections at which they could run. By 1941, there were eighteen women parliamentarians. In Finland, women accounted for 7–8 percent of parliamentarians between the wars.

Once they had obtained the vote, suffragists were reluctant to abandon the broad-based groups they had formed. Partly because they had been marginalized in national politics and partly because they were accustomed to organize around their position as women, they channeled their energies largely into national and international organizations, theoretically non-party but seldom pro-labor or socialist. More radical women were sometimes attracted to communist and socialist parties, which usually had women's organizations that met internationally. In the USA, suffrage groups constituted themselves as the League of Women Voters; in Australia as the Federation of Women Voters. In Britain, the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship may not have exercised so much power as these groups, perhaps because the battle for full suffrage continued until 1928.

The suffrage opened doors for all women, even those who had opposed it. The Australian Women's National League included many members who had opposed the vote for women, but rose on a theoretically non-party basis to be the largest women's organization in the country by the 1920s. Throughout the English-speaking world, women increased their work in powerful lobby groups, such as the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), which remained prominent in the United States and throughout the British Empire. Rural women formed groups like the Country Women's Association in Australia and the National Federation of Women's Institutes in England.

Other groups, such as the British Commonwealth League, were concerned with the position of indigenous women in the colonies for, until the middle of the century, Western nations controlled more of the developing world than ever. On the Continent, suffrage organizations were not so powerful, but women were often associated with peace, most commonly through the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, founded at The Hague (Holland) by Jane Addams and Adeletta Jacobs in 1915. Women from these non-party groups could become civic leaders and exercise considerable influence. Women political leaders, however, remained rare. Without participating and taking sides in politics, women had difficulty grasping the levers of power.

Formal equality was barely half the story. World War I – the "Great War," as it was known in Europe – completed the break with nineteenth-century gender structures which had begun in the 1890s. During the war, enlisted men lived entirely separate and radically different lives from women for more than four years. European

nations mobilized the majority of men of fighting age (usually from eighteen to over fifty). Of these, more than half were killed or lost limbs. France, Germany, Austria-Hungary, Italy, and Britain suffered immense losses. So did Australia and New Zealand. Canada, protected by distance, suffered fewer losses, and the United States, protected by both distance and late entry into the war, even fewer.

Men in the trenches experienced a nightmare world of mud, night, blood, and death. On their return they confronted women who had experienced a world in which they had struggled on their own to hold the remaining family together, care for children and relatives, and keep food on the table (few soldiers were paid enough for their families to live on). When the war ended, men and women confronted each other across an unbridgeable gulf. Domestic violence increased significantly. Divorce doubled and in some countries trebled the pre-war rate. Australia saw 468 divorces in 1910, 1,148 in 1920 and 2,087 in 1929.

Many women and men wished to resume "normal" life, the bourgeois household built on the nuclear family, the "separate spheres" of the nineteenth century. Some women did return to "home life." Structural factors, however, made this hegemonic ideal even less attainable than before the war. The war left a huge gap in the ranks of men of marriageable age. The 1921 UK census found 1.7 million more females than males aged twelve and above; the 1931 census found more than 1.5 million unmarried women over thirty-five. Single women were much more common in the 1920s and they had to work.

Women, especially of the working classes, were already accustomed to waged work. On the eve of the war, women constituted between a quarter and a third of the working population in most Western countries, ranging from 25 percent in the US and 28 percent in the UK to 36 percent in France. This proportion changed little after the war. The English-language countries seem to have emphasized the male breadwinner and the female at home more than Continental European nations. In the first half of the century, married women represented less than a fifth of English women in paid work. They made up more than half the numbers of French working women.

Middle-class women were able to take up new educational and career opportunities. In Europe, women made up half of the secondary school population by World War II. The USA was unique: women's entry into higher education had already begun, so that women made up nearly half of all higher-education enrolments in the early 1920s. As tertiary education became more accessible to those on lower incomes, men moved in first and the proportion (though not the number) of women enrolled actually declined somewhat (to 40 percent) by the eve of World War I. Single middle-class women began to move into professions, mostly those involving nurturing, "feminine" roles. The 1921 UK census listed 90 percent of *all* female professionals as teachers, nurses, or midwives. Historians have pointed to the paradox of single, middle-class women professionals' taking in hand the family lives of working-class women and promoting motherhood as women's destiny.

A cultural revolution produced a new image of women as free, assertive, and independent. Most commonly associated with that image was short or "bobbed" hair, which profoundly shocked a culture that read hair length as a primary sign of gender. One well-to-do French woman told her hairdresser, "[long hair] is the symbol of our past servitude; its loss will put an end to our humiliation."[2] The new look also

involved short skirts and fashion that de-emphasized the hips and breasts, giving women a "boyish" appearance.

In 1922 the French man of letters, Victor Margueritte (1866–1942) published his most celebrated novel, *La Garçonne* (*The Bachelor Girl or Boyish Girl*), which encapsulated the new feminine ideal. It enjoyed enormous success across the world. Known as the "flapper" or the "vamp" in the English-speaking world, the *garçonne* was unmarried, childless, and well-to-do. She was boyish in appearance and independent in life. The new look originated in Paris, still the capital of fashion for the Western world. In the old world, it authorized women to abandon the incredibly constraining corset and to move to styles that permitted movement, indeed sport. In the new world, it confirmed the change that had begun with the "Bloomer" and the bicycle.

Women experienced greatly increased access to public space. In capitals like Berlin, London, New York, Paris, and Sydney, well-to-do women could be found, alone, in couples or in groups, on the streets, in cafés, in dance-halls, often dancing together. In these cities homosexual men also had their first taste of open public self-expression. In Paris, for example, "a series of masked balls [were] held annually during Carnival or *Mardi Gras* . . . Thousands of men, most costumed and many in extravagant female drag, attended the balls at Magic-City every year." Homosexual bars also appeared. Of these, Berlin was the undisputed capital. Like Paris, and to a lesser extent New York and London, these cities became in the 1920s, as Dennis Altman wrote of Paris, refuges "from more repressive cultures for homosexuals."[3]

Progress toward birth control (the term was coined in 1914 by the American feminist Margaret Sanger) had begun before the war. Average family size fell from 5–7 children at the turn of the century to 2–4 in the 1930s. Women who used birth control faced a backlash, however. The war had left so many dead that conservatives in many countries pushed through legislation to pressure women (and the remaining men) to produce children to replace those killed in the war. France went furthest in this: the legislature imposed an income tax surcharge on single men and women over thirty without children. In Spain, divorce was not legalized until 1932 and then, like women's suffrage, it would be suppressed by Franco's Fascist regime.

Most countries refused to grant women control over their bodies. Anti-abortion laws were introduced or reinforced. French laws of 1920 and 1923 provided prison terms for anyone involved in abortion, including the pregnant woman. Irish legislation of 1935 made it a felony to sell, import, or advertise any form of birth control. Only in 1936 did the US Supreme Court rule that birth control was not an "obscenity" punishable by federal law. Well-to-do women had, in general, access to birth control and even abortion despite these laws, which caused much greater difficulty for poorer women and women of color. Birth control was also viewed differently for women of color, at least in the USA, where coercive sterilization was enforced on poor women, mostly black, in some southern states in the 1930s and 1940s.

The world depression that began in the US in 1929 not only brought widespread unemployment but also a changed climate for gender relations. By the early 1930s, unemployment rates of 25 percent or more were the rule: England, the United States, Germany, and Australia all suffered horrific unemployment under governments that refused to include social welfare in their roles. The less industrial countries of southern Europe – France and Spain – escaped such dramatic unemployment, but ordinary people there too literally tightened their belts. Only the countries with

state-controlled economies escaped the worst impact: Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany, and Soviet Russia.

In these circumstances, people took refuge in dreams of better lives, typified in the cinema by Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire, always dancing in stylish establishments, Astaire sang cheerfully about dressing in "top hat and tails," in *Top Hat*, one of their great successes. Being a "lady" came back into fashion, symbolized by more conservative styles. Elegance, as well as sex appeal, was necessary for attraction and seduction. Hollywood embraced a code which provided that "the sanctity of the institution of marriage and the home shall be upheld."[4]

Women learned how to attract men from a new generation of cheap mass-circulation women's magazines, *Wife and Home* (UK, 1929), *Australian Women's Weekly* (1933), *Marie-Claire* (France, 1937), *Confidences* (France, 1938), and *Elle* (France, 1945). These magazines brought style to ordinary women and preached women's duty to remain attractive in order to keep their husbands. One reader wrote to *Marie-Claire* complaining that the magazine put new burdens on women. A mature woman married to a wealthy bourgeois, she saw her duty not in being attractive to her husband but in running the household and ensuring the maintenance of the family's fortune and social position.[5]

This change in the view of marriage and sexuality came to dominate thinking among the well-to-do. In the US and then in the British Empire, Judge Ben Lindsey's *Companionate Marriage* (1927) enjoyed a huge success. It argued that men and women should be friends if not lovers before marriage and that marriage should be based on equality. The medical professions, while continuing to condemn homosexuality, contrasted their new emphasis on women's sexuality with Victorian repression and called for women's sexual satisfaction, though continuing to oppose birth control.

Before World War II, however, these ideas do not appear to have touched the bulk of working men and women, let alone women and men of color, who lived in grinding poverty and did not have the time for the joys of companionship in marriage. In 1938 just 4 percent of UK households had a washing machine. Even in the USA, where 52 percent of households had access to washing machines, most women (those in 90 percent of households) still spent more than thirty-five hours a week on domestic chores.[6] Not until the 1960s would structural changes reduce this load for most women. For middle-class women, housework may well have become a heavier burden as they lost the support of servants in the home.

On the political front, the 1930s were marked by different patterns in gender relations. The liberal democracies made some progress toward equality, especially in northern Europe, while the Fascist and Nazi regimes – Italy, Germany, and later Spain – stood, as Victoria da Grazia puts it, "for returning women to home and hearth, restoring patriarchal authority, and confining female destiny to bearing babies." She observes, "every aspect of being female was . . . held up to the measure of the state's interest and interpreted in light of the dictatorship's strategies of state building."[7] Mussolini believed that women were "born to keep house [and] bear children."[8] The Fascist state enrolled women in special groups, as if being a woman was a trade whose purpose was bearing children for the State. To encourage women in this direction, the State sought to cut their wages to half those of men and to push married women out of employment.

Mussolini set the pace for other Fascist regimes. In Greece, General Ioannis Metaxas established a quasi-Fascist regime in 1936. Remembering, perhaps, his favorite title, "National Father," he rescinded women's right to vote. In Spain, Generalissimo Francisco Franco started a civil war in 1936. On his victory in 1939, he established a Fascist regime and he too returned to male suffrage.

Nazi Germany went furthest. On coming to power early in 1933, Hitler dissolved feminist groups, labor unions, and socialist and communist parties. Birth-control clinics were closed. Women lost the right to stand for office. They did not lose the vote, but it hardly mattered in the Nazi state. Hitler told concerned women that under the Third Reich, "every woman . . . will get a husband for herself."[9] Instead, women were enrolled in the state effort, made explicitly subordinate to men and to the Reich. Whether and to what extent women cooperated in and indeed enforced Nazi policies, as nurses, housewives, and guardians of "purity," is a hotly debated subject. Did a retreat into domesticity help stabilize the regime or even enable some to ignore the crimes of the regime and others to perpetrate them, as Claudia Koonz has argued (1987)?

In liberal democracies, progress toward sexual equality continued at varying rates. Sweden led the way. The distinguished sociologists, Gunnar and Alva Myrdal, convinced the Social Democratic Party (SDP) that the solution to repopulation did not lie in forcing women out of employment (as in Fascist countries) or in prohibiting contraception (as in France). Women had to earn a living, so they needed equality and state support for working mothers with young children, such as créches. When the SDP came to power in 1936, contraception was legalized and maternity benefits were provided, paid directly to women. The government socialized the costs of raising children, providing services such as affordable housing and free school lunches.

In France, women's gains were only symbolic, apart from the establishment of maternity and family allowances. The conservative climate of the late 1930s saw a renewed emphasis on maternity, supported by feminists with some qualifications. Léon Blum, the Socialist prime minister elected in 1936, named three women as under-secretaries of state, but made no progress toward women's suffrage. In 1938, however, the government did repeal the infamous Article 213 of the Napoleonic Code: "The husband owes protection to his wife, the wife obedience to the husband," though the husband remained "head of the household," with "the right to choose the household's place of residence."[10]

The State initiated support for maternity in the form of "child endowment" or "family allowances." Early in the century, most Western nations began to provide some support for mothers, most often with the stated aim of encouraging them to bear children. France, Germany, Australia, Britain, Italy, the Netherlands, Denmark, and Sweden all developed some schemes by the end of World War I. By 1920, thirty-nine American states had enacted some form of support for mothers, in most cases substantially less than that provided in other nations. A 1921 federal law subsidizing health services for mothers and children, however, was never funded and was repealed in 1928. Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal improved the lot of working men and women, but ignored race and gender discrimination. Aid to Dependent Children was introduced in 1935, paid not to mothers but to the male breadwinner. It was controlled by the states, who usually excluded "undesirable" families and deprived blacks and other minorities of allowances equal to those paid to whites.

Other English-language nations also provided state allowances for children not as payments to mothers but as support for children, which often went to men: Australia in 1941, Canada in 1944, and Norway and Britain in 1945. Susan Pedersen argues that pursuit of the male family wage in Britain (as in the United States) led to benefits which were designed to increase male wage-earners' salaries and which were thus "directed disproportionately to men."[11]

On the Continent, such support was generally provided to mothers and the trend began much earlier. In 1919 the International Labor Conference recommended that women not be permitted to work for six weeks after giving birth and that state payments and free health benefits replace wages during this period. Germany implemented such measures in 1927, France from 1928, Sweden from 1937. By 1939, French law provided monthly allowances to the mother of 5 percent of the average wage for the first child, 10 percent for the second, and 15 percent for each additional child, plus 10 percent for the mother if she did not work for wages. After the war, a family with four children received twice the income of a childless worker; family allowances represented one-third of all welfare measures and 4 percent of GDP.

In most English-speaking countries, World War II led to the massive industrial mobilization of women and to their inclusion in the armed forces of many countries, though not in combat roles. In the US, the famous poster of "Rosie the Riveter" appeared widely, urging women to join the war effort by working for industry, especially in armaments. "Rosie" became so famous that a feminist campaign led the US Congress to establish in California the "Rosie the Riveter/World War II Home Front National Historical Park" in 2000. The mythical figure of Rosie was created to encourage women to enter the workforce and help increase production for the war effort. They responded: the number of women employed outside the home rose from 11.97 million in 1940 to 18.61 million in 1945.[12] British and Canadian women also responded massively to similar campaigns, Canadian women doubling their rate of employment. Australia and New Zealand mobilized women to work in the "Land Armies," growing food for Britain.

The well-organized campaigns that brought women into the war were only possible because, with the partial exception of Britain, English-language countries were spared the devastation that disrupted most of Europe. On the Continent, things were different. There women were confronted with the struggle for survival and, in the many countries invaded by Germany, with the need to take sides in virtual civil wars.

The Fascist and Nazi regimes and those which collaborated with them, like Quisling's Norway and Vichy France, shared an emphasis on restoring the family, by which they meant returning women to domestic roles. Vichy France changed the famous "Liberty, Fraternity, Equality" to "Work, Family, Fatherland." Men's position as "head of the family" was reinforced and divorce made more difficult. Vichy promulgated measures to return women to the home, but the demands of the Nazis for additional labor made this impossible in reality.

The Welfare State and Second-Wave Feminism

At the end of World War II, women obtained the suffrage in France (1944) and Italy (1945). Switzerland held out until 1971, when women voted in federal and most cantonal elections. Greek women regained the vote in 1952, Spanish women only in

1976, in elections following Franco's death the previous year. Political changes, however, affected women less than social, cultural, and economic changes. Throughout the Western world, men and women sought comfort in domesticity from the horrors of depression, Fascism and war, a war whose ravages had, much more than World War I, affected every corner of Europe and spread to all corners of the globe.

Governments seeking to avoid the disruption that had occurred when the soldiers returned after World War I vaunted the joys of the home to entice women out of the paid workforce. In America, the Cold War meant an extreme conservative backlash, a cultural revolution that ruled off the agenda many issues debated in the preceding half century. In the new atmosphere, great efforts were made to roll back the 1920s' loosening of the gender order. The 1930 Screen Code was revised, further emphasizing domesticity (only twin beds, not double beds could be shown in bedroom scenes!). Government bodies financed short films for cinema in which experts, often women, explained that children needed a mother at home. Other experts produced books arguing that women's place was in the home: *Modern Woman: The Lost Sex* argued that successful marriage required a dependent spouse; the best-selling *Child Care and the Growth of Love* "proved" that children needed a full-time mother at home.

The American pediatrician Benjamin Spock revolutionized childcare in 1946 with his wildly successful *Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care*. In contrast to earlier childcare "experts," Spock called for feeding on demand and an easy-going attitude to discipline. Spock, however, did not challenge the prevailing message that women should and would stay at home to be mothers. Fathers could help too – then a novel idea – but mothers were the main carers. "Of course I don't mean that the father has to give just as many bottles or change as many diapers as the mother,"[13] Spock explained. Still in print when Spock died in 1998, his book had sold nearly 50 million copies worldwide and been translated into thirty-nine languages.

The mood was reinforced by cultural changes. Gone was androgyny, at least until the 1960s. Christian Dior's "New Look" of 1947 emphasized the full breast and the slim waist, obvious symbols of woman's maternal roles, as were the envied breasts of Marilyn Monroe and Brigitte Bardot. The full skirts, which had been impossible during wartime austerity, suggested a new mood of extravagant consumption. A new look for men was symbolized by the first "hunks": Marlon Brando and Rock Hudson replaced the more slender and sophisticated Fred Astaire and Clark Gable.

Hollywood held up maternity and domesticity as ideals while a housing boom offered women new spaces for modern domesticity. Consumer demand, pent-up during the war, drove three decades of unprecedented prosperity, which built the new suburbs of free-standing homes for the nuclear family unit and the now ubiquitous cars that transported people from the suburbs. In North America, car ownership had reached 50 percent of households in 1924 and rose to 75 percent in 1960. Britain, however, was typical of the rest of the world: there car ownership reached just 25 percent only in 1952, but 50 percent in 1963, just three years after the US had reached 75 percent.[14]

The car made possible the new suburban way of life and with it a new focus on the home, on the private, on the individual, on what Kristin Ross has called a "movement inward . . . the withdrawal of the new middle classes to their newly comfortable domestic interiors, to the electric kitchens, to the enclosure of private

automobiles, to the interior of a new vision of conjugality and an ideology of happiness built around the new unit of middle-class consumption, the couple."[15] Prosperity translated this ideology into reality.

All these circumstances led in the decade after the war to a temporary increase in the birth rate which we now call the "baby boom." The fertility rate is the number of children each woman will bear in her lifetime. An average rate of 2 : 1 (two children for each woman) is required to maintain population. The fertility rate crested at nearly four to one in the late 1950s: 3.7 : 1 in the US, 3.9 : 1 in Australia and Canada. During the 1960s, population grew at an annual rate of 5–7 percent, compared to less than 1 percent in the 1930s. In broad terms, the average American family had two to three children between the wars. In the 1950s, family size rose, reaching three to four children before beginning to decline again.

The post-war boom did not, however, fundamentally change the time spent on housework or its gendered structure. Prosperity brought new appliances, to be sure. Fifty percent of American households had clothes washers by 1936, refrigerators by 1938, and vacuum cleaners by 1941. But while refrigerators may have reduced shopping time (also a social activity), clothes washers and vacuum cleaners led to expectations of more frequent washing and cleaning. American women spent roughly the same time on housework in the 1960s as the 1920s.

Elsewhere, the introduction of such appliances was much slower. It was not until 1955 that 50 percent of British and Welsh households had vacuum cleaners, 1964 for clothes washers, and 1968 for refrigerators. Increased expectations may even have increased housework. British middle-class women, who got these appliances first, nearly doubled their time on housework, from 4.17 hours a day in 1937 to 7.5 hours in 1961! Working-class women, however, may not have had to meet the same expectations and may have benefited slightly from appliances. British working-class women spent more than eight hours a day on housework in 1937, but only 7.5 hours in 1961, reducing their housework time to exactly that now spent by middle-class women.

The 1960s saw two revolutions, one structural, the other cultural. The structural revolution saw married women, most notably married middle-class women with young children, enter the workforce in substantial numbers. In the United States, single women's rate of participation in the labor force remained constant between 1947 and 1987: around two-thirds of single women had waged employment. But married women's rate of participation increased enormously. Standing at 18 percent in 1947, it doubled by 1961. We have few studies of the number of working women with young children. We can assume, however, that most married women had children, so the high proportion of working married women suggests that there were many working mothers.

Activists promoted this transition with their pleas for childcare centers, their efforts to break down the gendered division of labor in the workforce, and their struggles to gain acceptance of women's dual role as both mothers and waged workers. All married women who needed to work or wished to work were greatly aided by the development of secure contraception. In 1960 the American Food and Drug Administration gave approval for the birth-control pill, which permitted sex safely dissociated from reproduction.

The use of contraception became common, especially in European nations and among the educated middle classes in general. The Roman Catholic Church led the

counterattack. After a wave of liberalization culminating in the Vatican II Council (opened in 1962), Pope Paul VI reversed course, issuing the Encyclical *Humanae Vitae* (1968), which prohibited all "artificial" conception. Many women and a number of priests and nuns left the church. Instead of reducing the use of birth control, however, this stance probably contributed to alienation from the Church and secularization of society.

The cultural revolution sprang from these structural changes. It challenged domesticity. A generation reared in the expectation of continued prosperity had no reason to accept the stricter morals of their parents. Their parents had raised them with a new permissiveness, using Dr. Spock's famous manual. The pioneering work of Alfred Kinsey demonstrated that tendencies toward greater sexual freedom had begun in the 1920s and that premarital sex and the use of contraception were by now common, especially among educated young people. The confirmation of this trend by science helped legitimate increasing sexual activity and an acceptance of greater female activity.

The underpinning of the nineteenth-century ideal that woman's place was in the home lay in the notion of the passive female. Kinsey exploded this myth by demonstrating the importance of orgasm for both sexes. In 1966, Masters and Johnson in *Human Sexual Response* demonstrated that orgasm functioned in parallel ways for men and women, through the sensitivities of the penis and the clitoris. The difference between men and women could no longer be reduced to the idea that men were active and women passive. The assumed biological difference underpinning gender differentiation disappeared.

This trend continued through the rest of the century. The UN *Human Development Report 2001* showed high levels of contraception use among married women aged 15–49: Switzerland reported 82 percent usage, followed closely by Spain, whose Catholic population, though forbidden by the Pope to use contraceptives, reported 81 percent use of birth control. The United States reported 76 percent use, New Zealand and Canada 75 percent.[16] In North America, there is some evidence that contraceptives were used less among the poor and racial minorities, especially young people, as conservatives succeeded in blocking information about contraception.

The pill was blamed for decreasing birth rates and it is true that birth rates decreased in the decades following its introduction, but birth rates were already falling before the introduction of the pill. Toward the end of the 1950s, the baby-boom began to run out of steam. From its short-lived high in the 1950s, the fertility rate fell rapidly, passing in the 1970s below two children for each woman and in many cases less: 1.8 : 1 in the US (1975), 1.9 : 1 in Australia and Canada (1980). At rates below two to one, population diminishes unless people are replaced by immigration, an option some countries pursued.

In this new context, women and men of the middle classes and, increasingly, working-class women, began to seek sexual satisfaction for its own sake. Popular culture had already begun to view sex as legitimate recreation and not just procreation. *Playboy* appeared in 1953, offering a new, upmarket pornography legitimated by substantial articles on male appetites and leisure, now known as "lifestyle."

Women were not far behind. In 1962, Helen Gurley Brown published *Sex and the Single Girl*, a bestseller offering the then new message that women could and should go out and seek sexual fulfillment. This success led to Brown's being named

editor of *Cosmopolitan* in 1964. She transformed a staid magazine into a raunchy mix of sex advice and photographs of women emphasizing their sexual attractiveness under the cover of the trademark cleavage. *Cosmopolitan* thus initiated a new generation of women's magazines, which not only told women but also showed them how to become and remain sexual objects.

The trend toward the legitimization and encouragement of recreational sex marked the rest of the century. It was symbolized by the publication in 1972 of the bestselling *The Joy of Sex: A Cordon Bleu Guide to Lovemaking*. This was followed in 1977 by the equally symbolic books, *The Joy of Gay Sex: An Intimate Guide for Gay Men to the Pleasures of a Gay Lifestyle* and *The Joy of Lesbian Sex: A Tender and Liberated Guide to the Pleasures and Problems of a Lesbian Lifestyle*.

Popular music also moved toward a sexually charged dynamic that seemed to threaten the conservative view of gender relations. Bill Haley and his Comets opened the 1955 motion picture Blackboard Jungle with "Rock Around the Clock." The new wave of music was soon known as "rock and roll," a term black Americans had long used as a euphemism for sex. Elvis Presley hit the American charts in 1956 with "Heartbreak Hotel," "Don't Be Cruel," and, most famously, "Love Me Tender." Across the Atlantic, the Beatles introduced the same sexual charge in hit songs such as "Please Please Me" (1963).

The Beatles' picking up on American rock and roll was indicative of growing American cultural hegemony over the Western world. The ideals of the American middle classes, translated through music, cinema, and television, increasingly became the ideals of other Western nations. The shift toward a more recreational view of sex was followed quickly in the rest of the Western world, where astonishing growth rates brought prosperity to almost American levels by the late 1960s.

Everywhere a new look reflected freer morals and decreased emphasis on domesticity. Maternity and breasts gave place once again to androgyny and slenderness. In 1965, Mary Quant in London and André Courréges in Paris introduced the miniskirt and, for the first time, more women's trousers were sold than skirts. In April 1967, the British model Twiggy catapulted to fame with a new, slender, waif-like look.

A year later, the Women's Liberation Movement (as it was then called), or second-wave feminism (as historians call it) became known with a demonstration on September 7, 1968 protesting the Miss America Beauty Pageant. The demonstrators tossed bras, girdles, issues of *Cosmopolitan*, *Playboy* and similar magazines into a "freedom trash can." When they set fire to the magazines, thus burning everything in the trash can, the legend of bra-burning was born.

Second-wave feminism resulted from the new cultural outlook, the new demographics, and the growth of the service sector in the Western world's economies, which helped create new types of jobs that could be done as well by women as by men. It also received stimulus from women's participation in the causes of the 1960s: the civil rights movement in the United States, the anti-Vietnam War movement in the USA and later in the rest of the Western world, and the 1968 student revolts in Prague, Paris, Chicago, and many other cities.

The French philosopher Simone de Beauvoir had prefigured this new feminist movement and given it an enduring theoretical base with *The Second Sex* (*Le Deuxiéme Sexe*, 1949). For Beauvoir, women encountered and submitted to the world –

a man's world. That is how they became women. Beauvoir's basic premise has now become legendary: "one is not born woman, one becomes it."[17]

The reforming zeal of President John F. Kennedy's administration had also laid foundations for the new feminism. While European nations had a strong welfare base, English-language countries had slimmer welfare support. It was thus revolutionary when, in 1961, Kennedy introduced Aid to the Families of Dependent Children (AFDC). Such measures paralleled those already introduced in many European countries. They enabled single-parent families, usually single mothers, to raise children without the support of a male breadwinner. Single women no longer had to put children up for adoption, so fewer and fewer children became available. This stimulated research into artificial insemination and other ways of providing children for infertile couples.

In his first year of office, Kennedy appointed a "President's Commission on the Status of Women." The commission compromised on many issues. It avoided support for the Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution (ERA), which had first been submitted to Congress in 1923, since many feared such an amendment would be used to strike down protective legislation for women workers. The Commission accepted that women's domestic role was primary. But it did put a number of long-standing feminist grievances on the agenda, including equal pay for comparable work. In 1963, Congress passed the Equal Pay Act, a watered down version of this proposal, calling for "equal pay for equal [not comparable] work."[18]

The Kennedy committee's role in articulating feminist issues cannot be overestimated. A new generation of middle-class women moved from issues of wage justice to issues of sexual equality. Betty Friedan's trajectory was typical of these women. She found her life as a housewife dissatisfying after the expectations raised by her education at the prestigious Smith College. Friedan's experience was typical of the position of American women, who had gained mass access to tertiary education earlier than most. The total number of women in US higher education institutions continued its rise after World War II. A total of 76,954 women gained bachelor's or first professional degrees in 1940 (as against 109,546 men). In 1950, 103,217 women gained degrees, but as men returned from the war and resumed their studies, supported by government loans, their numbers trebled: 328,841 men received degrees in 1950. As a proportion of the undergraduate population, women thus declined from 40 percent in 1939–40 to just under 30 percent in 1949–50. By 1969–70, the proportion had surpassed the pre-war level, nearing 42 percent, with a total of 343,060 women obtaining degrees.[19] Friedan thus spoke for a large and rapidly increasing population of educated, well-to-do women.

In 1957, Friedan circulated a questionnaire to other Smith graduates. The responses showed that many shared her dissatisfaction. This led her to write *The Feminine Mystique* (1963). Like *The Second Sex,* it became a bestseller and was translated into many languages. In 1966 Friedan joined with other feminists to found the National Organization for Women (NOW). It became the focus of second-wave feminism in the United States. The 1968 demonstration brought publicity to a movement already well under way.

Younger American women, politicized by the civil rights and anti-Vietnam War movements, quickly because radicalized, often through "consciousness-raising" groups. They drew alternative inspiration from a series of landmark works that built

the rationale of second-wave feminism. The Australian-born feminist Germaine Greer, in *The Female Eunuch* (1970), pointed to women's under-utilized capacity for self-realization. Kate Millett, in *Sexual Politics* (1970), showed how women were devalued by masculine culture. Shulamith Firestone, in *The Dialectic of Sex* (1970), enthusiastically made the case for using technology to liberate women from the burdens of conception and maternity. The Boston Women's Health Book Collective articulated a new sense of self with the now-classic *Our Bodies, Ourselves* (1973).

These women joined organizations like NOW and took them in new directions. On August 26, 1970, the fiftieth anniversary of women's suffrage in the USA, NOW organized demonstrations across America: 50,000 women marched in New York. The following year, Congress made this date a national holiday called "National Women's Day." NOW put its weight behind the ERA and it was passed by Congress in 1972: thirty states ratified it quickly and it appeared on the verge of success.

The development of the American movement in the late 1960s was soon paralleled in other countries. American feminism tended toward "radical feminism," based on sex or, as it was becoming known, gender differences often thought to be innate. British feminism tended more toward socialist or Marxist feminism, and emphasized the social formation of women as a gender and treated issues in social terms. British feminists obtained abortion in 1967 and in 1975 defeated a proposal to restrict it again. They gained the Equal Pay Act in 1970 and the Sex Discrimination Act in 1975.

Continental European movements were often more political and more theoretical. In France, the student revolt of May 1968 led small groups of young women to meet and discuss their condition. On August 26, 1970, a group of women tried to lay flowers at the Arc de Triomphe for the unknown soldier's *wife;* the police arrested them. Headlines the next day referred to them as the Women's Liberation Movement, in French MLF, which became a household word. Most of the MLF, like Beauvoir, located woman's oppression in the social construction of femininity. One major group, however – Psychanalyse et politique (Psychoanalysis and politics), *Psych et po* – sought a quasi-textual explanation of woman's difference based on Lacanian psychoanalytic theory. In the space created by this breadth of opinion, there emerged a range of "postmodern" feminist theory, of whom the most important writers were Luce Irigaray, Héléne Cixous and Julia Kristéva. All of them located sexual difference in language and psychology.

The same cultural and social changes which gave the impetus to second-wave feminism also lay behind a nascent movement for gay liberation. In New York, London, Paris, Berlin, and Sydney, gay literary cultures pioneered an explicit gay consciousness. The French literary group Arcadie took the sub-title Mouvement Homophile de France. The gay movement came to prominence in New York, on June 27, 1969, when police raided a gay bar. Homosexuals protested vigorously. The site of their protest, the Stonewall Inn, became synonymous with gay liberation. In March 1971, a more militant Paris group emerged from Arcadie and took the name Front Homosexuel d'Action Révolutionnaire (FHAR). It called for "homosexual rights and rights to all sexualities" and "rights of minors to freedom of desire and its fulfillment."

A major issue for second-wave feminists was abortion. In the USA, women found this demand channeled through the legal system rather than through political action. In 1973, the Supreme Court ruled in *Roe v. Wade* that state restrictions on abortion were unconstitutional, in effect legalizing abortion. That this was not achieved

through public debate culminating in legislative change enabled conservatives to maintain their opposition. Abortion in the United States remains fraught with difficulty. It is not available to many poor women in most rural areas and Supreme Court rulings in 1989 and 1992 upheld state restrictions on abortion.

Elsewhere in the Western world, feminists campaigned politically for abortion rights and abortion has been generally accepted. France and Germany provide examples of such campaigns, though with different outcomes. Birth control remained illegal in France until 1967, but feminists then initiated a major campaign on abortion. In 1971, 343 famous French women signed manifestos for legalized abortion, admitting (or claiming) that they themselves had had abortions. The manifestos were featured on the covers of leading news weeklies.[20] Everyone who was anyone had signed: Simone de Beauvoir and leading women's rights campaigners, of course, but also famous stars, such as Catherine Deneuve, then at the height of her fame, and famous authors, such as Marguerite Duras and Françoise Sagan. The election of a new president in 1975 led to a new Bill making abortion legal, the same year it became legal in Sweden.

The German feminist, Alice Schwarzer, inspired by the French example, organized a similar manifesto, signed by 374 German women.[21] It had fewer famous names than the French, but it too soon led to political change. In 1974, the Bundestag passed a law making abortion accessible freely in the first three months of pregnancy, but a year later the Constitutional Court overturned it on religious grounds. Abortion was subsequently more restricted. Schwarzer founded a powerful feminist magazine, *Emma,* in 1977. East Germany had, as part of its communist ideology, provided a number of women's rights, including liberal access to abortion. With reunification in 1990, West German law covered the whole of the territory and former East German women lost their liberal abortion rights.

In some countries, second-wave feminism still contended to legalize divorce. In Spain it only became legal in 1981 and in Ireland only in 1995, after a bitter referendum in which the Church went to the barricades and then only by a slender majority: 50.3 against 49.7 percent. After the Irish referendum, a leading anti-divorce campaigner expressed her bitterness at the outcome: "Go away, ye wife-swapping sodomites," she told pro-divorce campaigners.[22]

The core ideas of second-wave feminism had triumphed in both local communities and national politics. Feminism had attained a degree of equality unforeseen by either its advocates or its opponents. This was symbolized by the declaration of 1975 as "International Women's Year" and the increasing observance of International Women's Day, which had originated with the group German Socialist Women before World War I, but which in the 1980s became a major occasion, first in France under Mitterrand, later in many other countries. Women had greater recognition and greater opportunity to articulate their views than at any time in the past. Putting equality into practice, however, met with varying degrees of success.

Feminist Success and its Discontents

Second-wave feminism bore significant political fruit with widespread trends toward increasing female participation in mainstream politics. This substantially changed the hegemonic ideals governing gender relations.

In France, François Mitterrand made a strong commitment to women's rights. When he came to power in 1981, he named Yvette Roudy, Friedan's translator, Minister of Women's Rights. A Professional Equality Law defined equality between women and men in sweeping terms. Reinforced by a series of measures taken in 1989, it brought an end to wage differentials hidden by different job descriptions for the same tasks. The Ministry went far beyond such measures supporting equality. It subsidized women's organizations, including radical feminists. It set up refuges for battered women in all urban centers and created 136 centers to counsel women on their rights. It initiated a national publicity campaign to increase knowledge and use of contraceptives. In 1983, the government provided state reimbursement for abortion. By 1988, RU-486 (the "morning after" contraceptive pill, developed in France) was made widely available. In 2000, it became available free in secondary schools. The political debate had progressed to a point that this measure aroused virtually no opposition. The Ministry inspired women around the world. It seemed to justify the optimism of feminists who hoped to achieve results through political and state action.

West German feminists obtained a federal Ministry for Women in 1986. By the late 1980s, most countries enjoyed some special office, if not ministry, aimed at protecting and enhancing women's rights. The climate created by second-wave feminism and these political gains led to a spectacular increase in women's participation in mainstream politics, especially on the Continent.

In 1971, Norwegian women had gained majorities on the municipal councils of three major cities, including the capital, Oslo. Women activists soon forced major parties to present many women for office. This came to be known as "the Women's Coup." In 1981, Gro Harlem Brundtland became Norway's first woman prime minister and, in and out of office, dominated politics for the next fifteen years. Since 1986, every Norwegian government has had at least 40 percent of women at Cabinet level. In the 1990s women composed more than one-third of parliamentary representatives, the highest proportion of women in a national legislature in the world.

In the late 1990s, France led the way with a "parity" law, requiring all political parties to present equal numbers of male and female candidates. At the municipal elections of 2001, the law produced a vast increase in female councilors, who now constitute more than 40 percent of councilors. Its application to presidential and legislative elections in 2002 appeared to be heading toward similar success.

In the English-speaking world, women of all persuasions made significant gains, though they did not achieve critical mass as in northern Europe. The most spectacular success was the ascension to power of the conservative Tory Margaret Thatcher, who became Britain's first woman prime minister in May 1979. Through this position she dominated world politics and set the political agenda until her resignation in 1990. In that year, Mary Robinson became president of Ireland, a significant if ceremonial position. By the end of the 1990s, New Zealand enjoyed a woman prime minister (Helen Clark), a woman leader of the Opposition, a woman governor-general, and a woman Anglican bishop.

By the end of the century, women had entered the political arena in significant numbers. In 1918, women were on the road to getting the vote, but there were virtually no women in Western parliaments. At the end of the twentieth century, there were many, although nowhere near as many women as men. Sweden led: 43 percent of Swedish parliamentarians were women; 37 percent of Danish; 36 percent of

Finnish and Norwegian; 30 percent of New Zealand and German; 27 percent of Spanish; 25 percent of Australian and Austrian; and 24 percent of Canadian. The UK came lower at 17 percent. The US and Ireland stood surprisingly low at 14 percent. Italy (10 percent) and France (9 percent before the parity law) brought up the rear.

Some parties, especially of the Left, were developing targets for affirmative action to improve these figures. Some women joke that women are gaining political power just as it becomes less significant, since real power in a globalizing economy is shifting to major corporations. On Tony Blair's election in 1997, more than 100 British Labour women were elected to parliament. By May 2001, one third of all Australian Labor Party parliamentarians on the federal and state level were women.

Although conservatives fretted (and still fret) that these changes were causing the dissolution of traditional "family values," it appears more likely that they reflect structural changes. In much of the West the fertility rate continued the fall begun in the 1960s, hovering around 1.5 : 1 in much of Western Europe by the late 1980s. At the end of the century, it was nearer to one child for each mother in most countries: 1.29 in Protestant Germany and Sweden, 1.2 in Catholic Italy, and an extraordinary 1.13 in equally Catholic Spain. Only immigration offset the decline in reproduction, notably in the USA, Australia, and Britain, but also, surprisingly, in Continental countries like France and Germany.

Two statistics sum up the situation common to Western nations. In the United Kingdom, there were in 1900 115 live births per 1000 women aged 15 to 44. In 1999 there were 57. Fewer and fewer women were having children. Religious and other standard explanations fly in the face of the general trend. The explanation will need to be sought in the nature of Western consumer capitalism and the development of a secular society, not in cultural factors within particular countries.

These changes led to significant changes in couple patterns and household structures, generally away from the nuclear family with numerous children. Over the twentieth century, marriage lost ground as the normal structure for rearing children. By 1990, in Canada, the UK, the US, and Germany, one child of five was born to unmarried parents; in France one of four and in Sweden one of two. At the same time, the divorce rate rose across the Western world, reaching a point where one could expect half the couples married to divorce at some point. In the UK at the end of the century, the number of divorces was rising to nearly the number of first marriages.

Households grew smaller. Typical of this pattern, Australia fell from an average of 4.5 persons per household in 1911 to an average of 2.6 in 1999. This translated to a tendency for women and men to live more independently. Households with one adult accounted for a quarter to a third of all households in most Western countries. In the UK in 1996–8, for example, 12 percent of households contained a single person and almost as many a single parent. In Sweden, in 1998, 35 percent of households were single-person, but only another 5 percent were single-parent with children. Women accounted for most of the increase in single-parent households, another sign of the erosion of marriage and perhaps of independence for women. A small but significant increase in the number of adults living with their parents accounted for more of the remaining households of two or more adults: in 1977 in Britain, 31 percent of females aged 20 to 24 lived with their parents but at the end of the century 38 percent did so.

The figures seem to suggest a trend away from marriage and to a lesser degree away from long-term heterosexual couple relationships. Nadine Lefaucheur, however,

points out that the increase in single-person households does not necessarily signal the end of couple relationships: "in France, for example, one-quarter of men and one-third of women living alone in 1985 stated that they were involved in a stable amorous relationship."[23] This trend has been accompanied by a decline in households with children. In Sweden, in 1998, only 20 percent of households involved two adults with children, while 28 percent involved two adults without children. Here again the shape of households does not necessarily reflect the shape of families, since, for example, separated parents may still consider themselves parents of children living in another household.

While women and men may have continued to produce children, the age at which women had their first child began to increase significantly by the 1990s. By the end of the century, the average age of bearing a first child had risen substantially. In Australia in 2000, nearly half (49 percent) of all births were to women aged 30 or over. Fifty years earlier, with the advent of contraception, women chose to curtail or cease childbearing at that age. In Britain, the mean age of women in childbirth rose from 26 in 1971 to 29 in 1999. In the US, the statistics are confused by continuing teenage pregnancies, especially among minority groups, but there is every indication that, among white women, the age of childbirth has risen in similar fashion.

These tendencies reflect the broad shift from procreational to recreational sex. This favored the increasing acceptance of homosexuality. Gay liberation, however, suffered a serious setback with the advent of AIDS, first identified in 1981 in Los Angeles. In the next fifteen years, there were more than eight million cases of AIDS worldwide, resulting in six million deaths. Approximately 750,000 individuals in the United States and 23 million individuals throughout the world were infected with HIV.

While gay men faced the AIDS epidemic, lesbian women demanded and increasingly began to obtain the right to raise children and state-supported conception by artificial insemination. These campaigns, increasing at the end of the century, began to meet with success in some countries, but remained a contested terrain.

Since children tended to remain with the woman, many more women earned an income and raised children on their own. Thus, where once a middle-class woman had stayed at home to take care of a family while a man earned the income for the household, often of more than two children, now she often found herself earning the income and taking care of the children, though usually of a smaller number. Other women utilized sole-parent benefits, at the price of continuous poverty.

Women, especially married women with children, took on a greater and perhaps less unequal share of waged labor. People living on their own usually worked and, in most Western countries, more than half the women in couple relationships worked for wages. During the last third of the century, women, especially married women, were increasingly likely to work in paid employment. In the United States, 24 percent of married women worked in 1952, 51 percent by 1987. One of the few studies of the question shows that, in 1960, nearly half of all wage-earning women had children under eighteen at home.[24] In Britain, in 1997, only 15 percent of households had "a husband in full-time employment and a full-time housewife at home."[25]

High rates of female participation in the workforce reflect a significant change in the nature of couples. By the 1980s, women expected to combine careers and child rearing. Looking again at Canada, we find that the percentage of women with children under sixteen in employment rose from 39 in 1976 to 69.5 in 2000. By the

end of the century, in most Western nations, more than half the married women under fifty worked for wages (87 percent in Denmark in 1985!). In many countries, including Belgium, Denmark, France, and Italy, more than a third of women with children under four were employed outside the home.

Women's employment increased and men's fell. In Canada, 42 percent of all women over 15 were in paid employment in 1976, 56 percent in 2000. At the same time, men's paid employment declined, from 73 to 68 percent. In Sweden, the proportion of women aged 20 to 64 in the workforce was 60 percent in 1970; it rose to 78 percent in 1999, while the proportion of men declined from 90 to 84 percent. This did not necessarily represent a shift in gender structures in either country, for women were still concentrated in traditional female occupations. In 2000, 69 percent of employed Canadian women were working in teaching, nursing, clerical, or sales positions, as against 30 percent of employed men.

This high participation did not necessarily reflect equality in the workplace. Widespread legislation for equality had not erased structural inequalities. Women were still underrepresented in "hard" work felt to be "male," often the best-paid jobs. Only 20 percent of professionals in the natural sciences, engineering, and mathematics were female. Within certain "nurturing" areas felt to be "female", women were moving into more prestigious areas. In 2000, they accounted for 53 percent of all Canadian doctors and dentists, for example. American women represented 28.9 percent of lawyers and judges in 1999 against 15.8 percent in 1983.

The vast majority of women, however, remained in less prestigious, "feminized" occupations. In the US, women accounted for only 24.5 percent of doctors and 16.5 percent of dentists in 1999, while they accounted for 92.9 percent of nurses, down from 95.8 percent in 1983, and 97.4 percent of childcare workers, up from 96.9 percent in 1983. When women did move into more prestigious professions, within those professions they tended to occupy the lower ranks: more women doctors were GPs and fewer were specialists; more men lawyers were partners in law firms and more women were employees.

In general too, despite gains in formal equality and in access to work, women have suffered from the introduction of liberal free-market policies in the late twentieth century. The outsourcing of labor has reduced protection of wages and benefits for women. The demand for flexibility has imposed hours which are often inappropriate to child-raising and led to a vast increase in part-time jobs, which account in most countries for the increase in women's jobs and indeed in jobs for both sexes. Compared to full-time jobs, part-time jobs are insecure, less likely to be unionized, and less likely to lead to career development. They carry fewer social benefits. Pensions, for example, are rarely compulsory for part-time employees or if compulsory involve significantly less employer contribution. A 1987 French survey found that only one-third of women with part-time jobs preferred them; the other two-thirds wanted full-time employment. Rose-Marie Lagrave calls this "a sophisticated segregation."[26]

What had changed fundamentally was not that so many women worked or that they had more equal access to work, but that the hegemonic ideal for the middle-class woman was now the two-income couple in which the woman as well as the man held a fulfilling, high-income professional position. Few attained this ideal, but it dominated cultural expectations for educated women. Through the 1950s, many women had to work, but most of them worked in low-paid blue-collar jobs or domestic service.

Along with the dual-income family, the hegemonic ideal increasingly emphasized a more equal division of housework. That division did begin to shift, but only slightly. Married American women spent over 4.5 hours a day on housework in 1965, reducing to 3.2 hours by 1985, while married men spent 39 minutes a day in 1965 and 95 minutes (1.58 hours) in 1985. By 1985, housework appeared to be more evenly spread if one counted all women (married, 192 minutes, unmarried 128) and all men (135). In Britain, a similar pattern emerged with 1984 statistics, though the analysis used different categories which made the total time spent on housework appear greater: by these statistics, unemployed women spent 6.4 hours a day on housework, full-time employed women nearly 3 hours, and full-time employed men 1.8 hours. At the end of the twentieth century, the tendency was toward less gender- and class-based difference in housework, but inequality persisted.

Political and legal remedies of the kind favored by second-wave feminism seemed to work less well in the 1980s and 1990s. The American ERA, which had begun so promisingly, encountered increasing opposition. Its most famous opponent was Phyllis Schlafly, a right-wing Republican and herself a trained lawyer. In a well-financed campaign, she appealed to unwaged, often working-class women in the home, and exploited their fears that women would lose privileges and economic support from husbands for themselves and their children.[27] The ERA stalled short of the required support of thirty-eight states and, although the deadline was twice extended, it failed on the final deadline, June 30, 1982. In 1985, in a famous case brought against Sears Roebuck by the Equal Opportunity Commission, a judge ruled that Sears' failure to recruit women to higher positions was not Sears' fault, but the fault of women, who "feared or disliked the perceived 'dog-eat-dog' competition involved."[28]

English women provided the last and most spectacular burst of mass second-wave feminism with the women-only anti-nuclear protest against the US air base at Greenham Common. It began in 1981, with a march to Greenham Common by Women for Life on Earth. They set up camp. By the end of 1982, they were joined by some 30,000 women, who blockaded the base and carried out numerous imaginative protests. The movement was ultimately defeated, ironically, by Britain's first woman prime minister. Thus, just as Phyllis Schafly led the defeat of second-wave feminists over the ERA, Margaret Thatcher led their defeat at Greenham.

Political and legal remedies appeared inadequate in the face of other, more intransigent inequalities which persisted. Male violence towards women remained endemic in most societies, despite the best efforts of feminist reformers and more active policing. The possibilities of divorce and of independent lifestyles for women on their own, not to mention safe-houses and women's refuges, have increased women's choices, but domestic violence, particularly for poorer women, is yet to be effectively addressed. It may well be that further substantial change in male attitudes on gender, rather than changes for women, will be required.

Few such traumas appeared in the entertainment world, but they suggested that women have more choice than in the past. In the 1990s, a number of US television shows broadcast throughout the Western world, like *Sex and the City*, reflected an acceptance that young women could spend a considerable time on their own or living with other women while establishing themselves in a career and enjoying relationships without the necessity of making a long-term commitment or bearing children.

The increasing recognition accorded gays and lesbians on the one hand and the continuing trend toward recreational rather than procreational sex for heterosexuals on the other hand both contributed to a culture of glamour. The slender body was increasingly the hegemonic ideal for women. Body image questions have now begun to affect men as well, though the male image is now that of the hunk, not the slender male of the mid-century. These cultural pressures may help explain a trend toward eating disorders, such as anorexia and bulimia, which appear to have been rising in the late twentieth century. Ironically, obesity became a great problem at the same time. Books like Susie Orbach's *Fat is a Feminist Issue* (1978) both analyzed and capitalized on these trends.

By the late twentieth century, it was apparent that gender relations were overdetermined by differences of class and race. In the settler societies – Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the USA – indigenous and black peoples began to contest the analysis of white feminists. The black American feminist bell hooks explained, "feminism belongs to white women, they originated it as a form of analysis, it is a form of analysis that only takes into account their experience."[29] The Australian feminist Jackie Huggins argued that the interests of black and white women have often been contradictory. For example, while white women demanded sexual freedom, Aboriginal women were fighting sexual exploitation by white men. Huggins sums up the situation graphically: "while white women are fighting to get out of the kitchen, black women are fighting to get into it."[30] Aileen Moreton-Robinson suggests that "Western feminisms are predicated on sex and gender differences . . . An effect of the theorising about sex and gender differences is the creation of the universal woman: white, middle-class and heterosexual, whose life is oppressed under patriarchy. Since all women are positioned as being oppressed . . . white women's race privilege . . . remains invisible in analyses."[31]

In virtually all Western countries, substantial immigration created culturally and often ethnically distinct minorities whose gender practices and attitudes to feminism differed substantially from the feminist and middle-class ideals. Latinos in the USA, Caribbeans, Indians and Pakistanis in the UK, North Africans in France, Turks in Germany, all brought different expectations to gender relations from those of white second-wave feminists. They often felt patronized by feminists and expressed sentiments similar to those of bell hooks.

Nadine Lefaucheur suggests that the position of these groups varies according to the degree of liberal free-market policies. In the USA and Canada, and to a lesser degree in Australia and Britain, there is a high proportion of households with incomes less than half the median, and many of them are single-parent households. In the countries which have retained state welfare systems, such as Germany and France, the proportion of these poor households is half what it is in the US. And in countries with high state-welfare floors, such as Sweden and the Netherlands, there are few poor households and little difference in income between single-parent and other households with children.

Where are gender relations in the Western world after a century of rapid evolution? The UN *Human Development Report 2001* provides food for thought.[32] Women now earn substantial amounts of money in their own right and they have the right to use their earnings without consulting their partners. That much represents progress from the beginning of the century. But men still earn substantially more

than women. Denmark's women earned on average US$21,274, 70 percent of what men earned, the highest proportion in the Western world, followed by Australia and Sweden (67 percent), New Zealand (65 percent), Norway (63 percent), Canada, France, the UK, and the US (all 61 percent). Women of the Netherlands earned 51 percent of men's earnings, German women 50 percent, Swiss women 49 percent, Austrian women 48 percent, Greek and Italian women 44 percent, Spanish women 42 percent, and Irish women 38 percent. As with all statistics, caution is called for in the detail. But we can note that women in the Western world earn between two-thirds and one-third what men earn, an improvement no doubt, but not equality.

During the 1980s and 1990s, women gained, in broad terms, significant if not equal access to politics, greater control over their fertility, their work, their household formation, and their sexuality. Men have to some extent confronted the development of a norm that suggests sharing of household work. Recreational sex has now become the norm. Divergent sexualities have gained widespread acceptance symbolized in the commercial success of Gay Mardi Gras in cities like San Francisco and Sydney.

Debates on feminism, however, were far from dead. The 1990s were marked by criticism of the second-wave feminist agenda laid out in the 1960s and 1980s, often from women who claim legitimacy as feminists. Susan Faludi, in *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women* (1991), drew attention to ways in which feminist achievements were under threat, citing the failure of the ERA in the United States and the continuing challenges to abortion rights. Other women, claiming to re-invent feminism for the new free-market world, have abandoned and indeed derided the goals of second-wave feminism. Some began to speak of post-feminism, suggesting women now had the power: they just needed to seize it. Camille Paglia (more through her high profile than through her books), Katie Roiphe, and Catherine Hakim suggested, in various ways, that feminism as it developed in the second half of the century is *passé*.[33]

As the new century dawned, the term "third-wave feminism" began to enter discussions, though its meaning was somewhat unstable. On the one hand, some, mostly American, feminists, promoted "grrrl power," a phenomenon of female self-empowerment. This intersected with some strands of post-feminism, and emerged in the 1990s with movies like *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, activist groups such as Riot Grrrl and books like Elizabeth Wurtzel's *Bitch* as a complement to the legal conquests of the previous generation of feminists. "Third Wavers," writes Tamara Straus, "perhaps dismissive of the battles fought and often won by their mothers, . . . want to continue the fight for equal rights, but not to the detriment of their sexuality. They want to be both subject and object, when it comes to their sexual roles, their political power and their place in American culture."[34] Other activists and scholars, inspired by the critiques of bell hooks and the renewed mass mobilizations of Third World feminists expressed at the Beijing Conference of 1995, have developed theories of the gender issues in development and are thus putting feminism into the struggle in other kinds of societies.[35]

However feminism develops in the future, women have profited and continue to profit from the achievements of feminists in gaining a speaking voice. First- and second-wave feminisms, combined with structural changes in the economy and society, opened a path which pointed humanity towards equality between men

and women and for people of different sexual orientations. There is a long road to travel still on this path, and beyond it lie other paths of social and racial justice, but Western society came a great distance during the twentieth century. It will travel further in the twenty-first century and feminists will remain in the vanguard.

NOTES

1 The authors thank Jane Carey for her assistance, not only in the research, but also in the discussion and elaboration of the chapter. They also thank Joy Damousi, Maila Stivens, and Shurlee Swain for critical readings and useful suggestions.
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