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Gender and Empire: Intimacies, Bodies, Detritus*

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INTIMACIES, bodies, *detritus*. Naturally, the detritus comes after: the last word, the lasting impression, the legacy of empire—the wreckage, the leftovers, the scraps and scars that forever serve as reminders. There are other ways bodies are intimate, and so there are other remnants. The Chinese scalp preserved in South Africa (Rachel Bright); a French bawdy cartoon, torn and yellowed from a newspaper in Hanoi (Michael Vann); faded dossiers from the not-quite colonial archives of Lebanon (John Boonstra) and El Salvador (Aldo Garcia-Guevara); containers of foreclosed intimacies and barely suppressed violence. More often the colonial archive is stained with traces of terrible violence: women enduring sexual slavery in the Straits Settlements of the nineteenth century (Shawna Herzog) or in postwar Japan over one hundred years later (Robert Kramm), giving the lie to the narrative of global progress. But detritus may be benign, even beautiful: a nutritious recipe from Nigeria (Lacey Sparks); a silver buckle from Malaya (Matthew Schauer). After all, some colonial actors meant well, and of course colonial subjects weren't *merely* subjects. Model Japanese homemakers in Brazil weren't *really* colonizers (Sidney Lu) and Indians after the Raj weren't *exactly* white supremacists even though they censured interracial intimacies (Timothy Nicholson).

In each morsel of detritus resides a clue, a piece of a life, or rather intersecting lives, lives which can never really be known by a

*I wish to thank Judith P. Zinsser for inspiring me to undertake this ambitious project. I thank her, along with Kerry Ward, John Boonstra, Steven Gerontakis, and Aldo Garcia-Guevara for constructive criticism as this essay evolved. I am also incredibly grateful to the editors and staff at JWH who worked very hard to bring this double issue to fruition, and to the peer reviewers, without which this special issue would have been impossible: Trevor Getz and Heather Streets-Salter.

biographer let alone a world historian. In fact, world historians are well positioned to glean meaning from fragments as we situate individual stories in broader trends and patterns, without which they are mere curiosities. When we talk across boundaries and borders, as we do here, we risk forcing each case study to yield world historical significance; intimacies evoke the singularity of a hidden history. Yet we can't leave them alone even though we know the taxonomical impulse may itself be a form of epistemic violence.

With world history's emphasis on the "big" picture, the subtleties, the individuals may disappear. Mrinalini Sinha expressed this worry: "the tendency of the bird's eye view to flatten and totalize the diversity and contingency of human experience is real."¹ The *Journal of World History*'s stated mission is to publish "research into historical questions requiring the investigation of evidence on a global, comparative, cross-cultural, or transnational scale. It is devoted to the study of phenomena that transcend the boundaries of single states, regions, or cultures, such as large-scale population movements, long-distance trade, cross-cultural technology transfers, and the transnational spread of ideas." We cannot understand the *world* as an object of historical study without big scale attention to big scale processes. But can we incorporate one woman's story, to take an example from these pages, that of a Lebanese housekeeper who evoked French Republican ideals of justice when expressing grievances against her French employer, into a grand narrative about the transnational spread of ideas? As a footnote to some purportedly more significant investigation will Marie El Khoury disappear?

HISTORIOGRAPHY: EMPIRE

Between El Khoury and global metanarrative stands Empire. In an introduction to a special issue on networks in this journal, the editors query why empire has become a bridge to world history.² These stories could have been placed elsewhere: there are textile histories, food histories, and women's histories. There are national or regional histories each with their own specialized journals. Each author was

¹ Mrinalini Sinha, "Projecting Power: Empires, Colonies and World History," in *A Companion to World History*, ed. Douglas Northrop (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 268.

² Gareth Curless, Stacey Hynd, Temilola Alanamu, and Katherine Roscoe, "Editors' Introduction: Networks in Imperial History," *Journal of World History* 26, no. 4 (2015): 708.

trained in the history of something, somewhere, else; few of us *do* world history. So why did we come *here*? If we consult the *World History Encyclopedia* for answers, we find this: “The goal is to build a mosaic that can be understood from many perspectives.”³ Similarly, the editors of *The New World History: a Field Guide for Teachers and Researchers* point out that it is “the large scale patterning that puts the *world* in world history.”⁴ Thus practitioners of world history link micro histories from seemingly disconnected locations to reveal their broader significance. To get to the global we might see empires as connectors. Ross E. Dunn, Laura J. Mitchell, and Kerry Ward suggest that we might study networks; Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton prefer the more tenuous web; and Ann Stoler might include all of these in a rubric that is at once broader and narrower: “imperial formation.”⁵ Broader in the sense that formation includes connectors, webs, networks, and myriad other arrangements of people and place; and narrower in that it retains the reminder of hegemonic power. “In working with the concept of imperial formation rather than empire, the emphasis shifts from fixed forms of sovereignty and its denials, to gradated forms of sovereignty and what has long marked the technologies of imperial rule sliding and contested scales of differential right . . . they are processes of becoming, not fixed things.”⁶ Such a fluid construct has obviously gained currency. One third of the articles in this issue consider events in “not-quite” colonial spaces and moments: Lebanon, El Salvador, postwar Japan, and post Raj India. Together they demonstrate that processes of becoming don’t have precise starting and ending points, that searching for “legacies of empire” misses the point. This is why Stoler sifts through debris. “At issue is the political life of imperial debris, the longevity of structures of dominance, and the uneven pace with which people can extricate themselves from the colonial order of things. Rubrics such as ‘colonial legacy’ offer little help.”⁷ At the end of empire, at the end of intimacy, is *detritus*, the leftovers and wreckage remaining in the wake

³ Carolyn Neel quoted in Tom Laichas, “How Does World History Differ from National and Regional Histories?” in *World History Encyclopedia*, ed. Alfred J. Andrea (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2011).

⁴ Ross E. Dunn, Laura J. Mitchell, and Kerry Ward, “Introduction,” in *The New World History: A Field Guide for Teachers and Researchers*, eds. Ross E. Dunn, Laura J. Mitchell, and Kerry Ward (University of California, 2016), 5.

⁵ Dunn et al.; Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton, eds. *Bodies in Contact: Rethinking Colonial Encounters in World History* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005); Ann Laura Stoler, *Imperial Debris: On Ruins and Ruination* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013).

⁶ Stoler, *Debris*, 8.

⁷ Stoler, *Debris*, 8.

of the literal departure of the colonizer, which assured the continuity of a scarcely disrupted legacy and could either be wielded by the inheritors of empire or repurposed toward liberatory ends. While “debris” results from a cataclysmic event, “detritus” happens slowly, imperceptibly, in geological time. Empire produced both of course, but “detritus” calls to mind complex processes, both human-made and natural; it evokes longer swaths of time than the relatively short-lived empires discussed here. Perhaps its in the detritus where we can find the world history. Ruins beg explanation: what forces acted upon the formerly integral fragment resulting in its decomposition? How is *this* remnant similar to *that*? Because they continue into our own time, and operate in scarcely detectable ways, attention to that which endures leads us to articulate the relationship between the imperial and the intimate.

Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton explain that “targeting empires is *one* way of making sense of world history because it requires us to pay attention to big structural events and changes as well as to ask what impact they had on microprocesses and the historical subjects who lived with and through them.”⁸ By emphasizing intimacies and bodies in this volume, we focus on actual lives lived under duress. This may be most evident in the private sphere, seemingly impervious to the formal or literal reach of imperial institutions and discourses. Intimacies suggest, most obviously, sexual liaisons. But scholars also note the physicality of “bodies in contact,” nannies holding children for example. Relations between colonizer and colonized might involve “tense and tender ties,” ties that could facilitate or impede the modernization of family, home, city, and nation, or conversely demarcate distinct and forbidden zones of contact. Although intimacies is a broad enough rubric to include all sorts of physical relationships, Ballantyne and Burton remind us that “. . . empire has historically been an intimate project and that modern Western empires are indebted to the presumption that the intimate couple is the humanizing ground of all legitimate subjects [whether of the state or of history].”⁹ In this view, specific forms of intimacy are foundational, not just to imperial formations but to modernity itself. Most of the articles here excavate the “intimate couple” and the strenuous efforts undertaken by philanthropists, parents, church, and state to humanize

⁸ Ballantyne and Burton, *Bodies*, 4.

⁹ Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton, “Epilogue: The Intimate, the Translocal and the Imperial in an Age of Mobility,” in *Moving Subjects: Gender, Mobility, and Intimacy in an Age of Global Empire*, eds. Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 336.

and legitimate them—or censure them when they trespassed racial boundaries or otherwise created scandal: model Japanese homemakers instrumentalized by the state and international Christian organizations; Salvadoran teens abandoning family and home for love; East African and Indian students whose intimacies were forbidden; Asian prostitutes assuaging male lust in the Straits Settlements, Japan, and Viet Nam; a French woman in Beirut abandoning one intimate partner for another.

HISTORIOGRAPHY: GENDER

An emphasis on bodies rather than women or men reflects the intellectual orientation of a generation of scholars who explored the impact of heteronormativity. The management of bodies as constructs was central to colonialism; they bear the imprint of institutional racism and sexism, even in their self-understanding. Education and medicalization imparted health and hygiene regimes that globalized European sex and gender norms. As ciphers, bodies—adorned, fetishized, public—displayed and even negotiated imperial relations. Emerging from gender studies, bodies as a conceptual frame is an attempt to return human beings and their stories to the historical narrative. But gender as a category of historical analysis can perhaps ironically disappear women in the rush to theorize masculinity and queer the historical subject. In a 2008 assessment of her 1986 article, Joan Scott reassured: “Although there was a great deal of concern voiced about whether gender, added to or substituted for women (in book titles and course curricula), would weaken feminist claims, in fact gender signaled a deepening of the commitment to the history both of women and of ‘women.’”¹⁰ In fact, scholarship on women in world history has proliferated since 1986, but has it been truly integrated into the major journals, publishing houses, and conferences to the same degree that scholarship on men and gender has? Is world history as a field, and gender and empire as a subfield, still describing individuals and groups as generic historical subjects? Is it adequately accounting for the position of women and men in given historical contexts? Gender, in other words, can help us situate women and men historically rather than erase them.

Though unmarked, gender always lurked behind traditional histories of imperialism in the masculine figure of the diplomat,

¹⁰ Joan Scott, “Unanswered Questions,” *American Historical Review* 113, no. 5 (2008): 1427.

explorer, soldier, or freedom fighter. By analyzing them *as men*, historians of masculinity like Ronald Hyam and Robert Aldrich legitimized a gender-studies approach to world history.¹¹ Two essays in this issue add to those explorations by analyzing hitherto unknown fragments: cartoons drawn by French bureaucrats in fin-de-siècle Hanoi and South African newspaper accounts of Chinese scalp curation. As Michael Vann documents, bored bureaucrats stationed in Hanoi put pen to paper in a not so subtle act of sublimation, mapping frustrated desires onto the map of the city's Old Quarter in the 1890s. Like white male colonists everywhere, they deployed sexualized clichés to represent colonized others. Vann's reading of the images is multilayered where the sometimes satirical gendering of metropole and colony hint at a critique of imperialism by the very men perpetuating it. Rachel Bright analyzes South African newspaper reports of Chinese scalp collection by colonial officials, which she situates in a long history of hair fetishes, Orientalism, and human trophyism (including Native American scalping traditions). Brittle white masculinity in South Africa made a fetish of the Chinese braid or queue, the theft of which emasculated the supposedly effeminate Chinaman, who was perceived as a part of "yellow peril" in proportion to the size of diaspora communities. Bright's reading of scalp collection builds on the work of other pioneers in Asian masculinity studies such as Mrinalini Sinha and Heather Streets-Salter who show, respectively, that white imperial manliness was produced by reference to the subaltern other, rendered either effeminate or hypermasculine.¹² The queue, and its status as a human trophy, illustrate both of these polarized constructions. Vann and Bright document straightforward expressions of imperial domination, even as they complicate our understanding of domination by referring to countervailing forces on the ground—including infighting among white men and interactions with locals.

Scholars of masculinity have indeed contributed to the gendering of world history, according to Latin Americanists Ulrike Strasser and Heidi E. Tinsman: "... they have made the masculine nature of men, and its making, a key subject of study. For this reason, they provide inspiration for integrating a central world-historical concern, the

¹¹ Ronald Hyam, *Empire and Sexuality: The British Experience* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1990); Robert Aldrich, *Colonialism and Homosexuality* (London: Routledge, 2003).

¹² Mrinalini Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity: The 'Manly Englishman' and the 'Effeminate Bengali' in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1995); Heather Streets, *Martial Races: The Military, Race and Masculinity in British Imperial Culture, 1857–1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004).

changing face of the political economy, with a critical aspect of gender history, the shifting nature of masculinity.”¹³ In reviewing historiography they surmise that world history has been slow to incorporate gender because “it is a heavily materialist world history that faces off with a predominantly culturalist history of gender and sexuality.”¹⁴ Indeed, the authors assembled here are primarily practitioners of cultural history, though Herzog, Schauer, and Bright at least glimpse standard materialist emphases on labor and trade. Only Garcia-Guevara, a Latin Americanist, sustains an economic analysis by tracing the impact of coffee production on class mobility, wage earning, and family over several decades in several departments of twentieth century El Salvador. Such forces of global modernization help explain anxieties coalescing around women’s sexuality. His article exemplifies a fruitful merger of world history, *women’s* history, and Latin American History. To more fully incorporate women’s history into the mainstream of world history more of us might also root our analyses of cultural, legal, and social developments in materialist conditions. This should be easier for Latin Americanists according to Strasser and Tinsman. Due to “a certain hostility from Marxism . . . women’s history and gender history entered Latin American studies almost simultaneously, rather than consecutively . . . and so have maintained a central engagement with narratives of political economy.”¹⁵ But positing that world history and masculinity studies are “natural allies” runs the risk of marginalizing women’s history. What interests Garcia-Guevara is not the masculinist project to revitalize a patriarchal control threatened by escalating modernization, but women’s creative adaptations and resistance. These, he asserts, can best be understood in a world historical framework.

At various moments in the last decade Merry Wiesner-Hanks and Judith P. Zinsser measured the degree to which the institutions of world and global history (journals, conferences, and traditional publishers) integrated gender or women. Their findings are disappointing.¹⁶ Decades of research on women and empire, later gender and empire, have produced more books and articles than can possibly be surveyed

¹³ Ulrike Strasser and Heidi E. Tinsman, “It’s a Man’s World? World History Meets the History of Masculinity, in Latin American Studies, for Instance,” *Journal of World History* 21, no. 1 (2010): 85.

¹⁴ Strasser and Tinsman, 77.

¹⁵ Strasser and Tinsman, 85.

¹⁶ Merry Wiesner-Hanks, “World History and the History of Women, Gender, and Sexuality,” *Journal of World History* 18, no. 1 (2007): 53–67; Judith P. Zinsser, “Women’s and Men’s World History? Not Yet,” *Journal of Women’s History* 25, no. 4 (2013): 309–318.

here for every empire and new collections appear all the time in print and on conference programs.¹⁷ We are certainly talking to each other. “In fact, gendered studies of colonialism and imperialism have been undertaken for long enough that they are now generating revision and self-criticism,” according to Wiesner-Hanks.¹⁸ Indeed an overview of “the” field is all but impossible, but readers are encouraged to consult the multiple handbooks now available on the new imperialism, of which works on gender are constitutive.¹⁹ Classic works from the 1990s for multiple empires, many of which are cited in this issue, spawned two decades of scholarship with books and articles in what might be called gender and empire now numbering in the hundreds. These publications have enabled the first comprehensive survey of gender and empire, *Intimate Empires: Body, Race, and Gender in the Modern World* by Tracey Rizzo and Steven Gerontakis which also attempts to use empire as a bridge to the global.²⁰ Some scholars have even contributed directly to broader surveys of world history with Wiesner-Hanks’ *Concise History of the World* more thoroughly integrating women and men than others.²¹

Zinsser concludes that gendering world history must begin with the simple substitution of “men” and “women” for the generic categories world historians use: farmers, bureaucrats, bodies. But when decades of growth yield few inroads into the mainstream of historical practice we have to do it ourselves. “We now decide tenure, review manuscripts, and books. We head examining boards and participate in setting standards. We teach, we encourage new scholarship, we create our own. We are writing what can become women’s world history, and we will probably have to be the ones to write that elusive universal history of the world.”²² Encouragingly, new massive compilations like Bonnie Smith’s *Encyclopedia of Women in World History* and the digital

¹⁷ See for example Michele Mitchell, Naoko Shibusawa, and Stephan F. Miescher, eds., *Gender, Imperialism and Global Exchanges* (Gender and History Special Issues) (New York: Wiley, 2015).

¹⁸ Merry Wiesner-Hanks, “Crossing Borders in Transnational Gender History,” *Journal of Global History* 6, no. 3 (2011): 367.

¹⁹ See *The New Imperialism Histories Reader*, ed. Stephen Howe (New York: Routledge, 2009); *The Routledge History of Western Empires*, eds. Robert Aldrich and Kirsten McKenzie (New York: Routledge, 2014).

²⁰ Tracey Rizzo and Steven Gerontakis, *Intimate Empires: Body, Race, and Gender in the Modern World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).

²¹ Bonnie G. Smith and Marc van de Mieroop, *Crossroads and Cultures: A History of the World’s Peoples* (New York: Bedford-St. Martin’s, 2012); Peter N. Stearns, *Gender in World History*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2006); Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks, *A Concise History of the World* (New York: Cambridge, 2015); *Gender in History: Global Perspectives*, 2nd ed. (New York: Blackwell, 2010).

²² Zinsser, 315.

collection “Women and Social Movements in Modern Empires,” co-edited by Kathryn Kish Sklar and Thomas Dublin, provide the raw material out of which students and researchers alike can begin to recreate a world history in which women participate as much as men.²³

OVERVIEW OF THE ARTICLES

The articles in this volume analyze women *and* men, featuring women as primary subjects, primary actors (Boonstra, Garcia-Guevara), or, at the very least, agents to some degree (Lu, Nicholson, Schauer, Sparks). Some examine forces whose major impact was on women (Herzog, Kramm) while drawing attention to the gendered content of those forces. Moreover, they do so through the lens of intersectionality, parsing the differential impacts of colonialism by race, class, and age. Sex and gender orientation is not the principal subject of any of these articles but pressures on men to use prostitutes or to marry picture brides and fears of colonized men’s unbridled sexuality (Vann, Herzog, Kramm, Lu, Bright) betray a deep-seated homophobia in addition to misogyny.

Even authors whose ostensible focus is masculinity acknowledge their debt to women’s history. Vann introduces his article accordingly: “this analysis of colonial masculinity and imperial whiteness compliments the history of women in Southeast Asia.” (p. 396) He goes on to cite the rich and truly global historiography of women and imperialism, and not just in the French empire. Historians interested in colonized and imperial femininity study gender-specific and universal forms of domination starting with prostitution. Essays by Shawna Herzog and Robert Kramm on prostitution in Asia bookend this collection reminding us that the exploitation of women’s bodies was a constant feature of imperial relations. In the nineteenth century, sex slavery persisted in the Straits of Malacca long after the British empire abolished slavery. Herzog argues that assumptions about Asian sexuality enabled British officials to mistake slavery for debt servitude while grudgingly admitting the need for prostitution in the increasingly diverse—and predominantly male—Straits Settlements. As one of the oldest intersections of world history, Southeast Asian economies

²³ Bonnie Smith, ed., *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Women in World History* (Oxford University Press, 2008); Kathryn Kish Sklar and Thomas Dublin, “Women and Social Movements in Modern Empires,” (Alexander Street, 2017).

depended on a slave trade involving Chinese, Arab, and European commercial and domestic interests. Thus regional stability increasingly depended upon the exploitation of the poorest and most vulnerable populations—girls. British officials and settlers evoked Orientalist stereotypes to justify limited law enforcement, even when some were quite young girls. Containing a supposedly rapacious male sexuality—Asian or European—was a preoccupation of imperial states. Over one hundred years later, Japanese officials recruited women to “comfort” United States occupying soldiers in the weeks after the end of World War II. Haunted by defeat, Japanese men believed they needed to construct a “female floodwall” to siphon off male lust, thereby saving virtuous Japanese women they were otherwise impotent to protect, according to Kramm. Defeat propaganda terrorized subjects into compliance with the special police to prevent further disorder, coming from either dissenting political parties—anarchists and communists—or from the occupation forces. Predictions of mass rapes and castrations led to mass evacuations of women and children in some prefectures. Conscripting a subset of the female population to sacrifice themselves for the nation continued the enslavement of women which was constitutive of the Japanese empire.

Seeking to enhance its status among imperial nations, the Japanese government instrumentalized women in another way, according to Sidney Lu. Reacting against U.S. efforts to curb Japanese immigration in the early twentieth century, it sought “better” sorts of Japanese women—less rural and less poor—to populate its new colonies. Integrating U.S.-ethnic studies into world history enables Lu to show the impact of anti-Asian prejudice on three continents. Faulting diasporic Japanese women for undermining Japanese prestige, especially those who engaged in prostitution, the Japanese government recruited young women to bring Japanese values and racial distinctiveness to its new colonies in Manchuria and Brazil. Prostitution abolitionists in the Japanese Women’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) blamed the scourge of overseas prostitution for the national disgrace perpetrated by diasporic communities. The arrival of picture brides in their place did not improve Japan’s image in the United States. So feminists in the Japanese Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA) advocated women’s education to improve the lives—and image—of picture brides. However, this was a white supremacist’s game that Japanese reformers ultimately could not win. Accepting—rather than critiquing—imperialist racism doomed women migrants to disappoint.

Making “better” women through modern education trapped colonized women in traditional domesticity while also urging them

to become modern consumers and practitioners of Western hygiene and domestic science. Model housewives in Nigeria were admonished by colonizers and local and international activists to modernize cooking, as Lacey Sparks writes. The British “discovery” of vitamins in the 1920s was coincident with increased access to education for elite Nigerian women who worked with rural women suffering from malnutrition to update traditional cookery—with the addition of an egg, or bread baking in a pot over a fire. They generally rejected British soups and meat dishes as “tasteless” but enjoyed desserts which they served with tea in order to “marry up” into the Nigerian elite. The pot, the recipe, and the girls’ school curriculum all resulted from imperial knowledge transfers that circulated in at least two directions: metropole to colony and back. With a similar focus on education, Matthew Schauer describes intercolonial borrowing between the U.S. Philippines and British Malaya in the early twentieth century as both empires introduced gendered educational initiatives. Educators instructed women in hygiene and revived handicraft production thereby updating their traditional roles while increasing their earning power. This placed them in a bind where they were both modern—as hygienic housewives—and traditional—as guardians of heritage.

Japanese picture brides, Lagosian cooks, and Malaysian crafts women blended tradition and modernity, the local and the imported, to craft new forms of personal and cultural expression. Produced in both likely and unlikely locales by the growth of the global urban middle class, “modern girls” aspired to class and geographic mobility as “historical agents who produced and performed new appearances and subjectivities by incorporating elements from different locations.”²⁴ Some modern girls also fought for their rights. John Boonstra follows one such woman through the archives of the French Consulate in Beirut. At 18 years old, Juliette Aubey, engaged to a Jewish jeweler, ran off with an Arab man in 1906. Detained and confined to a Catholic hospital on the orders of the French consulate—not her parents or the police—she struggled for her independence, even to the point of death as she wielded a pistol and a razor. When her parents reiterated their support of her autonomy to pursue whatever marriage or profession she wished, the consul relented and Aubey disappears from the archive. Aubey’s immigration to Beirut was overlaid by her movement in and

²⁴ Alys Eve Weinbaum et al., “The Modern Girl as Heuristic Device: Collaboration, Connective Comparison, and Multidirectional Citation,” in *The Modern Girl around the World: Consumption, Modernity, and Globalization*, eds. Alys Eve Weinbaum et al. (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008), 5.

around the intimate spaces of the *fin-de-siècle* city. Modern in the sense of transnational and independent from parental control, Aubey crossed racial and religious boundaries as well. Her scandalous behavior unnerved some members of the French bureaucracy because from their perspective she jeopardized its prestige in this not-quite colonial situation. Garcia-Guevara's work in the court records of El Salvador, another not-quite colonial space, describes young women's demands for autonomy in circumstances that couldn't be more different from Aubey's yet reveal surprising similarities. These include women's bids for greater sexual autonomy in the first half of the twentieth century thanks to their increasing status as wage earners and the slow breakdown of traditional honor codes rooted in the Catholic rural family. While perhaps not as affluent as the "modern girl" whose identity derived from Western consumer culture, young women in developing economies repurposed other colonial instruments, in this instance law courts, to exert agency over their own lives. Otilia L. in the Santa Ana department ran off with her lover and defied her parents in 1912. She was 15 years old yet claimed "carnal" knowledge as her right.

In later decades, young women charting their own destinies had different options; yet they nonetheless were caught between their own aspirations and romantic entanglements; their families; and the broader conflictual forces of tradition and modernity. To capture this global dynamic, Timothy Nicholson relays the experience of Adeline Akoth Opondo, a Kenyan exchange student studying in Pakistan in the 1960s. Her relationship with an Indian man created scandal and she returned home pregnant. Like Aubey and Otilia L., she was sufficiently empowered by the global forces which enabled young women's mobility to push against social and familial constraints. Also like them, her choice of lover went too far. Although subjected to Indian racism, perhaps a colonial holdover, she nonetheless benefited from yet further globalization: as an educated member of the postcolonial technocracy, she was able to return home, raise her daughter, and build up a transport and wholesale business. Nicholson emphasizes another aspect of Opondo's intersectional experience: her youth. Drawing explicit attention to youth as a category of analysis he fruitfully compares the experiences of East African men and women; his work enables the special issue to draw parallels between young people of quite different times and places whose lives were influenced by various imperial formations.

All of the women in all of these articles were clearly caught between the liberatory possibilities of modernization and the counter-forces

shoring up tradition, either to maintain family honor, a gender stratified labor force, or white supremacy. The authors squarely situate their work in the themes of the special issue. They also, when viewed together, glimpse related themes that require further elaboration, both here and in further research, including the globalizing economy; the archive and spatiality; religion; and ableist studies. New work in each of these areas compliments the articles in the special issue and enables them to be viewed in yet more complex contexts.

GLOBALIZING ECONOMY

As the construction of the modern girl shows, commodification—both what is commodified and by whom—is a gendered act. The transnational circulation of goods described by Schauer for Malaya reminds us of the central role of a globalizing economy in modern imperial relations. Beginning with Herzog's article on slavery in the Straits Settlements we are reminded that profit motives even more than willful misunderstandings of Asian sexuality denied autonomy to girls trafficked into domestic service and prostitution; so commodified, their mobilities facilitated the growth of an international trading hub as early as the first decades of the nineteenth century. Herzog identifies a gender imbalance resulting from male immigration, particularly Chinese, and the conundrum this caused for British officials. Chinese migrant labor is also the essential backstory in Bright's article on Chinese scalp collection in South Africa. Chinese male migrants numbered in the tens of thousands in the first decade of the twentieth century, brought in on indenture contracts to work in the Transvaal mines. White hysteria about male predation did not lead to state-sponsored prostitution in this case, but to brutal treatment when alive, and dead.

Scalping reveals a sexualization of Chinese hair, the loose queue associated with loose morals, even to the point of homosexuality. Its collection reveals much about masculinity, racism, the formation of imagined communities, and the globalizing economy. Indeed, Bright uses the scalps to demonstrate the "commodity potential of all things." The consumption of globally produced goods enabled people throughout the world to claim vague familiarity with other cultures, if not connoisseurship. For many, the products inspired the creation of entirely new and modern hybrid artistic forms or consumer goods. Production and consumption went both ways, indicating how inextricably bound to the imperial project most people had become.

Consumers in the colonies may have genuinely prized European-made objects and fads but may also have felt pressure to mark their own level of modernity by acquiring European goods. Consumers all over the world adopted Western fashions, foods, and cultural norms, but always adapted them to their own milieu. In Tanganyika, for example, in the interwar years youths sported cheap eyeglasses even when they didn't need corrective lenses, incurring the ire of traditionalists, according to Maria Suriano in a recent article. Modern boys innovated the generic Western suit, wearing wide-leg trousers, as opposed to straight, and a short jacket, as opposed to long, but looked "ridiculous" in the words of Anton Yohana, in a letter to the Mambo Leo newspaper. He pointed out that this was a copy of the British navy suit and broke all the rules of respectable fashion, concluding that Africans "would die" if they kept on "imitating" Europeans.²⁵ By contrast, traditionalists attempted to signal authenticity by rejecting Western imports. Consumer goods thus performed the work of empire by both fostering hybridity and its opposite, and by mediating relationships between producers and consumers, colonizer and colonized. Above all, they are testament to multidirectional knowledge transfers that problematize a purely top-down approach to the study of imperialism.

Less analyzed here than consumption is production, with the slight exception of Schauer who describes American and British attempts to revive handicraft production in their respective colonies. As some economies shifted to cash crop cultivation for export (rubber in Malaya and coffee for El Salvador), gender, race, and class divides deepened. Indeed, as Garcia-Guevara insists, all twentieth century economies, and the social structures emanating from them, were neither colonial nor "postcolonial," but modern, of which the imperial was constitutive. More work, likely quantitative, remains to be done on the gendered aspects of the modernization of labor globally. Pointing toward fruitful new directions, in African history for example, Zachary Kagan Guthrie chronicles the shift away from economic history and back again in his introduction to a 2016 special issue of *African Economic History* on migrant labor: "Scholars increasingly favored cultural dynamics as an object of study and as a lens into historical change, moving away from the materialist approaches that had previously dominated academic discourse. Historians of Africa, reflecting these changes, began to increasingly examine colonial rule in the registers of identity and

²⁵ Maria Suriano, "Clothing and the Changing Identities of Tanganyikan Urban Youths, 1920s–1950s," *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 20, no. 1 (2008): 95–115.

culture, rather than class . . .”²⁶ Similar to Strasser and Tinsman’s assessment of the trajectory of Latin American history, Guthrie notes the potential of merging the cultural and the economic to gain a transnational sense of the broad trajectories of migrant laborers. Here we might better understand Chinese hair fetishes in South Africa for example if we know more about the labor conditions of migrant Chinese workers, or about the international black market in human trophies. We might better understand what Japanese women and their families gained and lost by migrating across the Pacific or, relatedly, what East African men and women gained and lost by studying in India. Economic considerations were surely behind local and international initiatives to reduce malnutrition in West Africa; Sparks points out that educating Nigerian women to make due with less would not disturb its export-driven cash-crop economy. Much of this information is known, but it is seldom integrated into gender or cultural history and vice versa.

ARCHIVES AND SPATIALITY

The articles assembled here explore differing opportunities and struggles experienced by individuals based on gender, race, role in the global economy, and relationship to the state. Like the best work in the field today they also engage theories of spatiality and the archive. As John Boonstra demonstrates for fin-de-siècle Beirut and Michael Vann for Hanoi in the same period, the “colonial” city attracted migrants, including prostitutes, laborers, and pleasure seekers where, due to the interplay of gender and geography, matters of conduct became matters of scandal. Their movements, the displacements those movements occasioned, and the backlash against them left traces in the very structure of the city and its archives. Each essay also pivots on rumor and uncertain knowledge, more likely to circulate unchecked in rapidly urbanizing, multi-cultural environments. Thus the intersection between the city and the archive: cities as cultural and administrative headquarters, generators and warehouses of knowledge, extracted from the intimate sphere, bureaucratized, dedicated to contain that which escapes containment.

Scholars have expanded the definition of the archive to include historical memory. Oral histories, both the subjects interviewed and the

²⁶ Zachary Kagan Guthrie, “Introduction: Histories of Mobility, Histories of Labor, Histories of Africa,” *African Economic History* 44 (2016): 3.

techniques for collection, open a wider window on late and postcolonial relations than is possible for earlier periods, as Timothy Nicholson discovered while interviewing East Africans who were exchange students in the 1960s. Kenyan women and men repurposed Western education by studying abroad in India and Pakistan if they could not go to Britain or the United States. Women as well as men sought technical training but their experience of India differed based on gender, especially when they entered interracial romantic relationships. The communities in which they sought belonging, as well as the institutions meant to promote Nehru's vision of third world solidarity, deployed gendered clichés about African sexuality. Nicholson concludes that the detritus of imperial racial hierarchies, imbibed for centuries by Indian elites, foreclosed third world solidarity in the immediate aftermath of decolonization. Indexing Luise White's validation of rumor as a source of African intellectual life, he points out how often rumor surfaced in his interviews; anticipated violence or censure shaped East Africans' experiences of India even more than did documented forms of discrimination.

Anticipated violence, stoked by uncertain knowledge, reached a fever pitch in the weeks after Japan surrendered in World War II; Robert Kramm cites defeat propaganda rife with "seditious uncertainty." Uncertain knowledge made the theft of Chinese scalps seem more widespread than it probably was in South Africa. Akin to fear-mongering rumors, insults drove families to court in Beirut and El Salvador as they sought to defend against blemished reputations. Uncertain knowledge is characteristically produced by imperial relations where worldviews collide. In Malaya the myth that British manufacturing destroyed traditional manufacturing drove generations of nostalgics to fetishize the handicraft. Thus we must catalog sources of uncertain knowledge alongside the only superficially more certain archived text.

One of the risks of theorizing the archive is potentially concretizing *the* archive. While some of these authors added novel sources to *their* archives—oral histories, cartoons, or cookbooks—all articles rested on traditional sources warehoused in traditional repositories. A continued disciplinary preference for texts dictates what sorts of histories will be written. Thus in this volume, as in most in the field of gender and empire, there is congestion in the early twentieth century, with a slight backwards glance to the abolition of slavery in the British Empire (Herzog) and a slight forward glance to the Cold War (Nicholson). Correspondingly, most authors work in English. The British Empire predominates here but the range of locales is wide: Malaya, South

Africa, Nigeria, India, and East Africa. Vietnam and Lebanon represent the French Empire, and the United States features directly in two articles—intercultural borrowing between the colonizers of Malaya and the Philippines, and Japanese immigration; and indirectly in the anticipated occupation of Japan after World War II. Two authors use Japanese language sources to deepen our understanding of Japan's gendered imperialism. Extending this collection's rich geographic and linguistic diversity into the Americas is Garcia-Guevara's article on El Salvador and Lu's analysis of Japanese settlements in Brazil. Attention to what's lost in translation as authors move between text and rendering, whether literally from one language to another or from one era and context to another, will enrich what we mean by "archive" as verb and process, as well as by noun and fixed location. All articles could draw attention to what constituted uniquely modern spaces, the physicality as well as the idea of settlements in Brazil, for example, or the liminality of both the temporal moment of the "postwar" period, and of the spatial momentary zone of occupation.

Colonial cities as uniquely modern and constantly evolving spaces have attracted attention for decades. The recent special issue of the *Journal of Urban History*, "Sex and the Colonial City," asks questions similar to those asked here. Editor Lorelle Semley contends "cities reflect more than government policies or the views of those who are watching from the outside. Women and men imagine and shape the cities where they live, from the courthouses to the universities, as well as from the rooms and homes they inhabit, defining themselves and engaging with local politics as a crucial part of the urban landscape."²⁷ Even when they were unmarked, most of the microhistories recounted in this article took place in cities: whether Santa Ana, Lagos, Lahore, or San Francisco.

New work on the German Empire, like Heike I. Schmidt's study of neurasthenia in Dar Es Salaam, would complement articles in this issue on Hanoi and Beirut. Like them, Dar Es Salaam was a cosmopolitan city at the fin-de-siècle in a not-quite colony. Its bureaucrats, much like Vann's, were prone to nervous disorders, sexual frustrations, and infighting.²⁸ With promising recent research on German colonialism, a future collection of essays on gender and empire will likely include

²⁷ Lorelle Semley, "Introduction: Sex and the Colonial City," *Journal of Urban History* 42, no. 5 (2016): 836.

²⁸ Heike I. Schmidt, "Colonial Intimacy: The Rechenberg Scandal and Homosexuality in German East Africa," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 17, no. 1 (2008): 25–59.

Germany. Schmidt's article is anthologized in the recent book *German Colonialism in a Global Age*, a tome that brings together diverse scholars and microhistories situated not just in the German Empire but in the "global age."²⁹ Influenced by Lora Wildenthal's *German Women for Empire*, Germanists also explore the gender dynamics of settlement across Germany's empire, with attention to topics ranging from the mystical uniforms worn by men who survived the Herero genocide to the recruitment and preparation of better sorts of German women by colonial housekeeping schools.³⁰ It would be interesting to compare the latter to the Japanese women's recruitment societies in the same era described by Lu. Were fascist colonial housekeeping schools comparable to British, French, or Dutch? Eric Roubinek's analysis of Nazism's Africa centered ambitions extends to an examination of its relationship with the Italian Empire, gendered in the person of Louise Diel, the first woman to cross Africa by car. Her admiration for Mussolini's racial policies in Italian East Africa, which included a regulated system of prostitution and strictures against interracial sex, influenced Hitler.³¹

Fouad Makki and Sandra Ponzanesi study Ethiopian and Eritrean prostitution and mixed-race children.³² Ponzanesi, a literary critic, describes a system of high-class prostitution known as "madamismo" in which local women entered into relations with Italian servicemen. Erotic depictions of "Black Venuses" stoked demand and some women maintained control over their work and of the resulting patron-client networks. But after the Italian invasion of Ethiopia in 1935, Italian racial purity laws gradually criminalized such relationships. Makki, a rural sociologist, sees this as the outcome of the contradictions in settler imperialism, especially after Italy avenged its defeat at Adwa in 1896. At the same time, lower class men used poorer more "native" prostitutes whose hair pomades made of animal fats disgusted them.

²⁹ Bradley Naranch and Geoff Eley, eds., *German Colonialism in a Global Age* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015).

³⁰ Molly McCullers, "'We Do It So That We Will Be Men': Masculinity Politics in Colonial Namibia, 1915–49," *Journal of African History* 52, no. 1 (2011): 43–62; Willeke Sandler, "Colonial Education in the Third Reich: The Witzenhausen Colonial School and the Rendsburg Colonial School for Women," *Central European History* 49, no. 2 (2016): 181–207.

³¹ Eric S. Roubinek, "Re-Imagined Communities: National, Racial, and Colonial Visions in Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, 1922–1943" (PhD diss., University of Minnesota, 2014).

³² Fouad Makki, "Imperial Fantasies, Colonial Realities: Contesting Power and Culture in Italian Eritrea," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 107, no. 4 (2008): 735–754; Sandra Ponzanesi, "The Color of Love: Madamismo and Interracial Relationships in the Italian Colonies," *Research in African Literatures* 43, no. 2 (2012): 155–172.

Filling in the mosaic with stories like these, vivid stories of women's agency, differentiated by class and rooted in material conditions, enriches the world historian's ability to theorize about global white supremacy and to describe a range of experiences on the ground. Including totalitarian empires invites explorations of military masculinity, one of the thematic areas not directly represented in the special issue, although it is implied in Kramm's article on immediate postwar Japan; unsurprisingly, that article is primarily about prostitution.

RELIGION

A third area ripe for further comment is religion. Indeed, religion is a specter in all of the articles in this issue, yet rarely marked. Hindus held prejudices against East Africans in part because of their Christianity—and Nicholson shows the prejudices went both ways. Boonstra notes how the religious identities of those involved in Beirut's scandals was unmarked—what can this mean? Juliette Aubey was likely Catholic, her would be lover Azmi likely Muslim, and her fiancée Soriano likely Jewish. To what extent did Catholicism, concretized in the institutions and family structures of families in El Salvador, define honor codes and women's options? Surely Nigerian women marrying up by serving British cakes at teatime were likely converts to Christianity. How did modernizing Malay women negotiate tensions between tradition and modernity in Islam? Are these unmarked because imperial archives are monuments to a secularizing modernity? The immigration promotion of the Japanese branches of the YWCA and WCTU reflected the Christian internationalism of those institutions—did that undercut or ironically bolster militant nationalism? What can we learn from their international archives?

Converts to Christianity enjoyed privileges access to the legal system. For example, in Herzog's article on slavery in the Straits Settlements, women alleging their own enslavement were triply silenced because of their age, gender, and lack of Christianity. Christians also had privileged access to national belonging. As Bart Luttikhuis shows for Indonesia, native Indonesians and "foreign Orientals" could become "equated Europeans," determined by the gendered cultural competencies they possessed. To become equated, male applicants emphasized their European training and travel, in addition to their wealth, profession, and relationships with Europeans. Professing Christianity also demonstrated Europeaness. Men could gain equation for their families but women could not gain it for

themselves. Some local women rejected equation to the degree they enjoyed greater autonomy in their own communities.³³ This micro-history exposes how gender remained a barrier to citizenship even as, if rarely, racial barriers fell. Similar work for other empires could answer questions raised here: what kind of status gains did Japanese, Nigerian, or Kenyan Christians enjoy?

Obvious terrain for a world history of gender and empire is the study of institutions that were ostensibly global in their outreach and thoroughly gendered. An emphasis on global networks in the historiography of empire would be incomplete without studies of the global reach of religious orders. Sarah Curtis recounts the life of Sister Anne-Marie Javouhey (1799–1851), founder of a Cluny monastery in France and global missionary. She established branches in India, Tahiti, Madagascar, Reunion, Senegal, and Guiana. In the latter she became known as the “mother of the blacks” having established a colony for former slaves, the utopian community at Mana in French Guiana, which institutionalized strict gender segregation yet her rule itself incurred the ire of French authorities, nervous about a woman wielding so much power.³⁴ Javouhey was an abolitionist. Some Christians also became anti-imperialists. Australian women missionaries in the late nineteenth century converted Indian women whose intimate spaces only they could access; together they claimed membership in an international community of Baptists, an alternative to British hegemony.³⁵

The modernization of Islam is also broadening the range of regions and thematic emphases in gender and empire scholarship. Studies of Islamic Feminism extend our ability to trace its global reach. Tuba Demirci and Selçuk Akşin Somel describe intersections between Islam and reproductive rights in the Ottoman Empire, for example.³⁶ As part of a general overhaul of Ottoman administration, abortion was criminalized under the Tanzimat. Yet some were sympathetic to the plight of women seeking abortions. According to Namik Kemal (1840–1888), writing in 1872, “In our country, abortion is also performed due to some contemptible men who are indulged both in

³³ Bart Luttikhuis, “Beyond Race: Constructions of ‘Europeanness’ in Late-Colonial Legal Practice in the Dutch East Indies,” *European Review of History* 20, no. 4 (2013): 539–558.

³⁴ Sarah A. Curtis, *Civilizing Habits: Women Missionaries and the Revival of French Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

³⁵ Margaret Allen, “‘White Already to Harvest’: South Australian Women Missionaries in India,” *Feminist Review* 65, no. 1 (2000): 92–107.

³⁶ Tuba Demirci and Selçuk Akşin Somel, “Women’s Bodies, Demography, and Public Health: Abortion Policy and Perspectives in the Ottoman Empire of the Nineteenth Century,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 17, no. 3 (2008): 377–420.

their wives' aggression, and their own lust. These men take concubines in secrecy, and after they impregnate them, they leave the concubines and their children to the villainy of their wives."³⁷ Kemal's views earned him exile. He would later return as one of the Young Turks who modernized Turkey fully after World War I. Another reformer, the secularist Salahaddin Asim, went further in his text *On the Condition of Women in Ottoman Society* (1910). He blamed the seclusion of women as a cause of abortion because secluded women supposedly preferred lesbianism. "The greatest foe of a lesbian is the child. Sometimes this animosity reaches such a degree that if pregnant, a lesbian or a woman who would like to become a lesbian tries to abort her baby, or she gives up completely the disciplining of and caring for children . . . Abortion and refraining from birth giving harms our women, our nation, and our race at the same time."³⁸ A scholarly assessment of the global impact of modernization on religions across the world will benefit from studies like this which ask both esoteric and timely questions about intersections between gender and empire, and intersectional identities, including purported lesbianism.

ABLEIST STUDIES

With its emphasis on bodies, scholars of gender and empire also write about the destruction and construction of the physical body with attention to sport, sexology, eugenics, or body modification. Disability theory inspires a rereading of not only scientific racism but also the multidirectional knowledge transfers which complicate our assessment of the impact of Western science on the ground. Extending back to the eighteenth century, two recent articles on human perfectibility in the Caribbean trace the theories of naturalists Vandermonde and de Bory who believed interracial sex should be encouraged to breed beautiful, strong, and loyal mixed-race people.³⁹ We might examine how by condemning tattoos or conscripting labor, imperialism altered the bodies of the colonized. An ideology of ableism promoted Western norms for hygiene, fitness, and self-control. Medical personnel,

³⁷ Quoted in Demirci and Somel, 410.

³⁸ Quoted in Demirci and Somel, 414

³⁹ Clara Pinto-Correia and João Lourenço Monteiro, "Science in Support of Racial Mixture: Charles-Augustin Vandermonde's Enlightenment Program for Improving the Health and Beauty of the Human Species," *Endeavour* 38, no. 1 (2014): 19–26; William Max Nelson, "Making Men: Enlightenment Ideas of Racial Engineering," *American Historical Review* 115, no. 5 (2010): 1364–1394.

missionaries, philanthropists, and bureaucrats advanced a normative standard for mental and physical health that pivoted on the ideal body as young, male, white and free from disease or impairment. Indeed the whole campaign to uplift “less civilized” peoples was predicated on a view of their bodies as deficient. Imperialists thus conceded that bodies are both physical entities and social objects. Tobin Siebers calls this complex embodiment; he posits a spectrum of ableism that ranges from an aesthetic appreciation of the perfect body to the dangerous or costly body modifications to sterilization.⁴⁰

Historians would do well to incorporate insights from disability studies into imperial histories not only because they interface with Social Darwinism and eugenics. By placing the multivalent body at the center, disability theory goes even further and exposes assumptions underpinning all manner of prejudice, including racism, sexism, homophobia, and ageism. It helps make sense of the transnational campaigns for bodily integrity including those in opposition to scarification, footbinding, or female genital mutilation. It can conversely explain the defense of those practices on the part of the colonized who came to define their cultural distinctiveness in embodied terms. It can explain the urgency behind efforts to combat sexually transmitted diseases or masturbation, and the representations of those affected as disfigured. It can even explain the global proliferation of more mundane practices such as plastic surgery and the use of cosmetics in the quest for a youthful appearance. Valuation of bodies as productive or reproductive, as alluring or terrifying, helps explain widely varying population policies that pivoted upon promoting or suppressing the birth rate of different populations. When conventional means failed, governments regulated their immigration programs to improve their nation’s vitality, as Elisa Camiscioli has shown for France.⁴¹ This is well illustrated by Lu’s article on the instrumentalization of Japanese women migrants. Improving the quality and quantity of colonized and domestic populations led Western healthcare workers to set out across the globe to teach hygiene and appropriate family planning and to spread fitness culture and vaccines. Spark’s study of nutrition education in Nigeria is a part of this ongoing work and the only article in this issue to

⁴⁰ Tobin Siebers, “Disability and the Theory of Complex Embodiment: For Identity Politics in a New Register,” in *The Disability Studies Reader*, ed. Lennard J. Davis, 4th ed. (New York: Routledge, 2013), 278–297.

⁴¹ Elisa Camiscioli, *Reproducing the French Race: Immigration, Intimacy, and Embodiment in the Early Twentieth Century* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009).

explore the impact of modern “science” on the body. In his work on interwar Nigeria, Saheed Aderinto brings together several of these strands, tracing the involvement of elite Lagosian women—many of them members of the WCTU and YWCA—in campaigns to combat vice including alcohol and contagious diseases.⁴²

Studies of sexology in India and the Middle East enable a global assessment of intercolonial borrowing and the degree to which perfectibility became a truly global project. Liat Kozmi, for example, explicates dozens of books and journals in the early twentieth century Middle East including the *Manual on Health and Marriage* (1899) by Beirut sexologist Shakir Al-Khuri (1847–1913). In 1907, the editor of Cairo’s leading daily *The Pyramids* noted that “a few years after its publication, it became very widespread; it is seized by all hands, and I can hardly see a Syrian young man who hasn’t read it and hasn’t benefited from it.”⁴³ As in Europe, one of its main preoccupations was to prevent masturbation. Al-Khuri claimed that masturbators were readily identified by their physical bearing: a hunched posture, yellowish skin, memory lapses, and, in extreme cases, madness, heart disease, and even death. The medical discourse of controlling “degenerate” male sexuality clearly filtered into Arab popular consciousness, with letters regularly printed in Egyptian and Syrian newspapers on “the harmful habit” of masturbation.⁴⁴

Self-mastery through yoga led to an embrace of eugenics by some practitioners in India. Mark Singleton’s comprehensive study of yoga sheds light on its role in the global modernization of gender and sexuality.⁴⁵ Articulating the affinity of yoga for eugenics, Krishna Iyer (1894–1982), a physical culturist and Hatha yogi, put it bluntly in 1927: “Will our women bring forth only healthful useful children to save our motherland from this degeneration, from this slavery? . . . Physically deficient mothers and devitalized fathers [produce] helpless derelicts and weaklings.”⁴⁶ Yoga could even improve the quality of a man’s semen according to Swami Sri Yogendra (1897–1989), a materialist yogi who wanted to purge yoga of its spiritual roots. As late

⁴² Saheed Aderinto, *When Sex Threatened the State: Illicit Sexuality, Nationality, and Politics in Colonial Nigeria, 1900–1958* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2015).

⁴³ Quoted in Liat Kozma, “We, the Sexologists . . .”: Arabic Medical Writing on Sexuality, 1879–1943,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 22, no. 3 (2013): 437.

⁴⁴ Quoted in Kozma, 426.

⁴⁵ Mark Singleton, *Yoga Body: The Origins of Modern Posture Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

⁴⁶ Quoted in Mark Singleton, “Yoga, Eugenics, and Spiritual Darwinism in the Early Twentieth Century,” *International Journal of Hindu Studies* 11, no. 2 (2007): 135–136.

as 1954, American philosophy professor Raymond Piper (1888–1962) summarized the views of Chakravarti Rajagopalachari (1878–1972). “[He] gives a new social turn to the doctrine of rebirth: ‘Let us be re-born purified and better than we are. If we all try thus, the world will ultimately be a world full of good men. This is the plan of Vedanta, the eugenics of souls, a scientific plan to bring into existence a better breed of men.’”⁴⁷

From the infusion of yoga with eugenics to the suppression of masturbation, we now have a fuller picture of the ascendancy of heteronormativity, and its impact on the physical body, at multiple sites. Recent works on frontier masculinity and the homoerotics of Orientalism will likely spur further studies of comparative and global masculinities.⁴⁸ Situating sexology, sexual diversity, and trans-identities in the conceptual frame “gender and empire” is more possible thanks to developments in embodiment theory, the greater availability of digital sources, and the turn toward “bodies” in world history.

CONCLUSION

Cultural histories of empire could be written indefinitely, and they can be gendered without much difficulty, as these articles show. Histories of education, for example, whether in British-occupied Malaya or Nigeria can only be understood in the context of a truly gendered world history: women in these microhistories experienced pressures to be both modern and traditional in their clothing, foodways, and intimacies. These pressures emanated from colonial modernity and were as much economic as cultural. More attention to the precise interactions between the economic and the cultural is needed as is more substantial analysis of the material forces at work in each discrete area, in regional economies, and globally. A Lagosian recipe or silver buckle moves from curious relic to a microcosm of global processes when placed in a mosaic. Analysis of cultural products like colonial newspapers opens a window into the masculine worlds of imperial bureaucrats. Whether collecting Chinese scalps or penning bawdy cartoons of Vietnamese prostitutes, white men abroad expressed vulnerability to the degree they fetishized “Oriental”

⁴⁷ Quoted in Raymond F. Piper, “In Support of Altruism in Hinduism,” *Journal of Bible and Religion* 22, no. 3 (1954): 181.

⁴⁸ Robert Hogg, *Men and Manliness on the Frontier: Queensland and British Columbia in the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Joseph Allen Boone, *The Homoerotics of Orientalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014).

bodies. We might want to know more about the circulation of these newspapers, about their readership, about class—which men did the dirty work of acquiring the scalps or shuttling other men to brothels, which women commanded the highest prices. Four articles take as their starting point the allure of the Japanese prostitute vis-à-vis other Asians but class differences among the Japanese drove various forms of government intervention on at least three continents. Prostitution in particular can be read as a consequence of rapid globalization, economic as well as cultural. In addition to reviewing laws and other forms of imperial discipline, in addition to reading metropolitan constructions against the grain, perhaps the only sources we have, we would do well to listen to the women themselves. Where impossible, we can learn to situate unique experiences into broader patterns—is it possible that Seattle-based Japanese prostitute Oyae of Arabia, her name doubly exoticizing her, has something in common with a trafficked woman in Malaya a century earlier?⁴⁹ Why couldn't a trafficked woman access the courts when a Lebanese housekeeper or a Salvadoran farmworker could? Is it their probable Catholicism? Can we say anything about *the law*? Are these so culture bound that generalization is precluded? Or must we turn to material conditions to find common threads?

All of us in this special issue stretched our fragments nearly to the breaking point in order to situate them in the global mosaic. This issue proudly introduces the work of scholars new to world history, grappling with the move from the regional to the national, then transnational and finally global. We began with the comparative—the similar educational systems in the U.S.-occupied Philippines and British-occupied Malaya (Schauer); we moved through networks, exchanges of goods (Bright) and people, either as slaves (Herzog) or immigrants (Bright, Lu, Boonstra, Nicholson). We generalized about the role of the global economy in destabilizing gender norms (Sparks, Garcia-Guevara). We exposed systems of domination (Bright, Vann, Kramm) while noting the degree to which they were complicated on the ground. Nearly every article identifies racism as the impetus behind more strenuous measures to construct and control bodies: anxieties about interracial sex in Japan, India, Lebanon, and Vietnam; uplift of “less civilized” peoples in Malaya and Nigeria; and the demarcation of racially specific status objects in India and South Africa.

⁴⁹ Kazuhiro Oharazeki, “Listening to the Voices of ‘Other’ Women in Japanese North America: Japanese Prostitutes and Barmaids in the American West, 1887–1920,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 32, no. 4 (2013): 5–40.

Every article about gender was also about race for the two are imbricated. Mary Louise Roberts summarizes the contribution of Ballantyne and Burton's insight this way: "In these essays [in *Bodies in Contact*], race and gender act as homologous, if discrete, categories that express themselves each through the other: hierarchies of race are constituted through tropes of gender and vice versa. Not only is neither category more 'important,' but the two cannot be separated in the way they are historically produced."⁵⁰ As we aspire to write that universal history—thoroughly inclusive of men and women, of gender and race and class and age, we can take inspiration from all of the works cited in this essay. We can feel confident that our seemingly niche work contributes to the mosaic that is world history. Surprisingly, the imbrication of race and gender does not seem to have influenced the American Historical Association's 2018 annual meeting theme, co-chaired by Antoinette Burton and Rick Halpern. "Race, Ethnicity, and Nationalism in Global Perspective," the conference theme, has the potential to intervene in local, national, and global politics at a time when historians must insert critical thinking and insights into public discourse. Yet gender is missing. To be sure, the conference call for papers acknowledges that "feminist historians have investigated how gender and sexuality shape the ways that national experiences of race are lived."⁵¹ But this should not be feminist work alone, nor should gender be separated out as another item on a list of subtopics. We might recall Zinsser's hope that when women's and gender historians finally have the power to set the agendas of professional and learned societies truly global and fully human stories will be told. Yet somehow the imperial university and its satellites always replicate the power structures they purport to decolonize.⁵² Durba Ghosh's worry in 2004 still holds true: "how to define and study gender and colonialism so that it does not replicate the inequalities and hierarchies of colonialism."⁵³ When we privilege the metropole or masculinity, when we defer to standard periodization or consult colonial archives uncritically, or when we do none of these things, but allow our work to be shunted off to specialized academic

⁵⁰ Mary Louise Roberts, "The Transnationalization of Gender History," *History and Theory* 44, no. 3 (2005): 467.

⁵¹ <https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/october-2016/the-132nd-annual-meeting-call-for-proposals-and-theme>

⁵² Decoloniality was the 2016 theme of the annual meeting of the National Women's Studies Association and the imperial university the subject of several sessions. <http://www.nwsa.org/Files/2016/2016.NWSA.CFP.pdf>

⁵³ Durba Ghosh, 2004, 738.

niches, scholars inadvertently reproduce the hegemonic categories that sustain coloniality. We would do well to recall Marnie Hughes Warrington's words: "until world historians understand that they do not write above gender, they will continue offering limited and limiting visions of our world."⁵⁴ Taken together, the authors in this issue, at the very least, offer an expansive view of our world by writing not only about the gender *of* world history but about the lives of women and men who perpetrated, survived, suffered, or repurposed imperial detritus in intimate and not-quite colonial situations, and continue to do so. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts; for a sense of world history, read them all.

⁵⁴ Marie Hughes-Warrington, "World History," in *Companion to Women's Historical Writing*, eds. Mary Spongeberg, Ann Curthoys, and Barbara Caine (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 616.