1. Since the appearance in the early 1990s of landmark volumes of essays such as those edited by Margaret Strobel, Nupur Chaudhuri, and Cheryl Johnson-Idom, several collections of essays on gender and empire have appeared. The present volume is focused on two themes: the contingent, unstable nature of nineteenth- and twentieth-century colonial modernity as unfinished business (p. 1) and the key place of gender and especially sexuality in struggles among subjects and citizens and their modern colonial and metropolitan states. Unlike other collections, such as Clare Midgley's Gender and Imperialism or Pierson and Chaudhuri's Nation, Colony, Empire, which attempt mainly to indicate the breadth of the general field of gender and colonial studies, this volume is tightly focused on its two themes. All of the essays focus on disruptions or moments of irreducible complexity. All but two essays deal with the British Empire or Anglophone successor states (the exceptions discuss Indonesia and the French city of Marseille). The essays do not range widely beyond the British Empire, but they are innovative in where they locate colonial modernities: at Niagara Falls and in San Francisco's Chinatown, for example, or in the theosophical movement of the first half of the twentieth century, as well as the more familiar contexts of schooling, hygiene, and venereal disease.

2. The volume's overall strengths include that tight thematic organization – the essays really do cohere, in spite of their divergent source material and the multidisciplinary scope – and the high number of essays (made possible by their almost startling compactness). Burton's introduction cogently states the themes of colonialism's ceaseless and fraught ambition to modernize and its production and intensification of traditional and modern antitheses. Only three of the fourteen essays have been published in any form previously, which (whether we like it or not) counts as a low number these days. One of the best, Karen Dubinsky's study of tourism and race at Niagara Falls, is oddly shared not with a journal, but with another volume of essays, the Pierson-Chaudhuri book mentioned above.

3. Not to be missed as contributions to the literature on gender and empire are the first several pages of Burton's introduction (where the main theoretical questions are laid out with precision and clarity); Dubinsky's outstanding essay, which manages to bring out labor, race, and fetishization of the authentic in tourists, encounters at Niagara; Enakshi Dua's study of the immigration debates that shaped the South Asian ethnic community in Canada – a piece that offers not only its own data but a whole new route to the history of postcolonial ethnic politics and the constituencies of that politics; and Joy Dixon's intriguing cross-cultural account of theosophy and maternalist thought. Finally, Mrinalini Sinha's explication of the key role of nationalist Indian women in the passage of the Child Marriage Restraint Act of 1929 allows her both to bring out the themes of modernity and tradition in a resounding finale to the volume and to enlarge upon and critique the well-known arguments of Partha Chatterjee on nationalism and gender relations in nineteenth-century India. Sinha's essay ought to be read as a companion piece to his now-classic essay from Recasting Women and his later book The Nation and Its Fragments. These essays are so successful because they manage to lay out and narrate their material up to the key point of paradox before they run out of space. I recommend them strongly, regardless of readers, own areas of research – indeed, they may well surprise readers who would otherwise pass over the topics of tourism, new religious movements, and legislative debates on immigration and sexuality. Saloni Mathur's essay on colonial postcards from India likewise successfully engages an existing well-known thesis (of Malek Alloula) and introduces a new way of conceptualizing the issues of sexual voyeurism and autodidactic travel.

4. That is not to say that the research projects from which the other essays are drawn are inferior. The remaining essays, however, fare less well under the constraints placed on them. In most cases, I wanted...
to seek out additional publications by their authors to find out, as it were, what happened next. These authors definitely spoke to the themes of the volume and are sophisticated in the conceptualization of their research, but they barely had space to present the setting of their research before concluding, almost abruptly, that what they had just laid out illuminated the volume's themes (indeed, it did). That abruptness seemed true of, for instance, Fiona Paisley's interesting piece on white Australian women's efforts to end state separation of Aboriginal families and of Philippa Levine's overview of nineteenth-century debate on venereal disease ordinances in Hong Kong and the Straits Settlements. These and the remaining essays therefore work less well as stand-alone pieces. Some authors faced the problem of material that does not lend itself to political narrative (which remains perhaps the simplest and stylistically most effective way to organize the presentation of what are, after all, political issues). Yael Simpson Fletcher's essay on images of race and dangerous sexuality in Marseilles, Angela Woollacott's piece on white Australian women's hopes of sexual and other personal emancipation in Europe, especially Britain, and France Gouda's survey of masculine, aggressive imagery in the Indonesian nationalist movement at the moment of independence all presented ideas so huge that they were difficult to contain and make coherent in the particular settings chosen by these authors. The very pervasiveness of the themes they discussed makes the reader long for some discussion of the many other contexts of those ideas and images. As it is, pieces such as Nayan Shah's on white American women's hygiene education efforts in San Francisco's Chinatown or Malathi de Alwis's on the key place of an idea of women's respectability in Ceylonese, then Sri Lankan nationalism draw our attention to major themes and arguments in settings that are sharply delimited, where they are basically confirmed, not overturned or even really revised. These competent essays are to be recommended if the reader is interested in their particular topics, but they will probably add to, rather than transform, how readers see their subject matter.

5. The field of gender and colonialism seems at present to be stranded somewhere between infancy and maturity. New work has appeared at a rapid pace, yet has not really become part of teaching in regular courses (indeed, gender itself, in however depoliticized form, has even now barely made it to that point). That means that research in gender and imperialism can seem simultaneously cutting-edge and repetitive, as a (still) relatively small group of people talk intensively to each other and, at the same time, seek individually to present the overall significance of the field to readers whose interests lie elsewhere. There is much still to be done on popular culture, biomedical campaigns, and the regulation of the sexual and reproductive body with respect to colonial studies, even though the basic insights of George Mosse, Ann Stoler, and Partha Chatterjee, to name a few key figures have long since been put forward. Perhaps the next new thing will be to revisit habits of thought that have persisted in the face of this new work. How should insights of work on gender and empire reshape the rest of what historians, anthropologists, and sociologists research, and how should theoretical work on law and the state, for example, be better used in work on gender and empire? Changing the larger paradigms with which we narrate history and social diversity, in and out of the field of gender and empire, is indeed unfinished business.

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