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# Thinking About Women's and Gender History & World and Global History: Intersections, Tensions, Opportunities \*

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World and global history and the history of women and gender are two fields of historical inquiry that speak to some of the most pressing issues of our intensely connected twenty-first-century world: how power is distributed globally and exercised across boundaries; how the planet's environmental resources are used and

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\* This think piece is based on a keynote for the graduate student workshop on “Engendering World History” held at the Academia Sinica in summer 2019. Because the talk was meant to provide a shared framework and stimulate discussion for the workshop, its written version does not offer a comprehensive overview, but instead it seeks to point to key issue and literatures for further study and for application to specific research projects. I shortened some of historical examples provided in the workshop for the written version. My thanks go to Frank Biess for his helpful feedback and to the students for the lively discussion at the workshop.

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shared by the world's different peoples; how pathogens that arise in one part of the world affect all others although in often dramatically different ways; and how the production and traffic of goods can generate tremendous wealth and opportunities as well as exacerbate structures of poverty and inequality. We face these issues not only as members of communities — political, national, international, religious, culture, and ethnic — that have to relate to one another in co-operation, competition, and conflict. All of us also face them as gendered individuals since gender, even if its specific contours vary from place to place, remains an organizing social principle of communities world-wide.

World and global historians and historians of women and gender have produced a great number of studies that can help illuminate the deep histories behind the problems of our present and how they have historically affected groups and individuals. Yet it has also proven quite difficult to bring those two fields of history into the kind of sustained dialogue that generates an integrated scholarship combining the best of both global and gender history. In the following, I want to sketch out areas of intersections and tensions between these two intellectual enterprises to then discuss suggestions and possibilities for integrating the two historiographies more fully. It is important to note at the outset that I address my subject from a particular position. I was initially trained in European history in Germany but then went on to pursue graduate training in the United States, where I have spent most of my professional life, became immersed in women's and gender history and then also in global or world history. My main focus is the early modern period, a pivotal era for both global historians and gender historians. These are some of the more specific institutional and intellectual contexts that inform my observations and remarks. Differently positioned scholars no doubt would take note of other literatures and issues.

## Shared Impulses, Parallel Paths: Two Revisionist Historiographical Enterprises

To begin on a note of commonality, historians of women and gender and global historians share a revisionist spirit vis-à-vis the institutionalized academic discipline of history. Each group of scholars has challenged the implicit and explicit parameters of historical writings: what types of history or histories are told and said to truly matter; how historical knowledge is organized in research and teaching; and what groups enjoy access to the institutions in charge of historical knowledge production either as producer and teachers of knowledge or as learners.<sup>1</sup> To understand just how radically revisionist gender history and global history are, it is worthwhile to back up for a moment and recall the origins of history as an academic discipline. The modern academic discipline of history took shape at a particular time and place, the 1800s in Western Europe and the Eastern United States, and its first officially recognized practitioners were a very specific group of people, white men in the service of nation-building projects. There were of course prior traditions of historical writing in these places, as there were in many places of the world. In Western Europe, for example, people for many centuries had written chronicles, court histories, biographies of rulers, accounts of religious communities or kept family books in which they recorded significant events across generations, blending personal and political observations.<sup>2</sup>

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1 Merry Wiesner-Hanks makes the same observation. See Merry Wiesner-Hanks, "World History and the History of Women, Gender and Sexuality," *Journal of World History* 18:1 (March 2007), p. 54.

2 These forms of historical writing allowed for the relatively greater participation of women in the creation of collective memory during the early modern period compared to the new and more limiting conventions of historical writing that emerged in the nineteenth century. See the thought-provoking essay by Gianna

With the nineteenth-century advent of the academic discipline of history, the subject matter of history and its agreed upon methods became more clearly and narrowly defined; the new “scientific history” had to be based on primary sources and its practice acquired in the setting of “the seminar.” The social group in charge of producing the newly institutionalized “scientific history” hailed from a small segment and understood their historical work to be of service to nation states, as exemplified by Leopold von Ranke (1795-1886), the profession’s founding father as well as an ardent civil servant of Prussia.

Although much has changed since those early days in the life of our profession, the circumstances of its birth have cast a long shadow on the fortunes of historical writing. Two defining legacies are most salient for our purposes. First, the new professional history was a highly gendered enterprise although it proclaimed to be searching for a universal or genderless historical truth. As Bonnie Smith laid out in detail, women were barred from the academic seminars where the new source-based, “scientific” methods were taught, as well as from the archives where the indispensable primary sources could be found in the first place. Women continued to write historical works, about everyday life or queens, but because their women authors were excluded from the domain of the newly professionalized male historian, these works were devalued and dismissed as amateurish, trivial, or even fictional.<sup>3</sup> Such

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Pomata, “History Particular and Universal: On Reading Some Recent Women’s History Textbooks,” *Feminist Studies* 19:1 (January 1993), pp. 6-40.

3 Smith and Pomata both take note of such dismissals. Inversely, one can conceive of some nineteenth-century novels by female authors as a form of social and cultural history in fictional disguise. Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, the most widely sold book in US other than *Bible* that stirred up anti-slavery sentiment in the US, was based on her reading of slave narratives as well as oral history. Although modern critics like James Baldwin decried the book’s

exclusionary practices were part of a larger phenomenon of gendered boundary drawings in nineteenth-century Europe. The new ideas of national citizenship were equally gender-specific. Women were excluded from formal political rights and relegated to motherhood, marriage, and (ideally) domesticity.<sup>4</sup> Thus they were made absent from the realm of formal politics, of state- and nation-building, bureaucracy, diplomacy, and war — the very domains that in turn formed the primary subject matter of the new “scientific history.” In this scheme of things, women thus neither wrote nor made official “History.”

Second, just like the academic discipline of history prioritized men's over women's history and political over other kinds of history, it also prioritized white over non-white history, and what came to be known as “the West” over the alleged “rest” of the world.<sup>5</sup> The first professional historians in Europe and the United States focused on a small sample of the world's nation states at a moment when those states were rapidly on the ascent due to the twin factors of the industrial revolution and imperial domination. Historians told the story of this group of states as a teleological story of success in which these political formations appeared as innately

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sentimental and melodramatic quality, Christian moralism, and racial stereotyping, Stowe's novel is now also valued for opening a window on nineteenth-century race relations, including their gendered dimensions, in the United States. See the most recent annotated edition of the novel by Henry Louis Gates Jr. published by Norton & Company in 2006.

- 4 For example, see Isabel V. Hull, *Sexuality, State and Civil Society in Germany, 1700-1815* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996); also Ida Blom Karen Hagemann, and Catherine Hall, eds., *Gendered Nations: Nationalism and Gender Order in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford International Publishers, Ltd, 2000).
- 5 Kenneth Pomeranz and Daniel A. Segal, “World History: Departures and Variations,” in Douglas Northrop ed., *A Companion to World History* (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2012), p. 16.

superior and highly advanced. If the same historians considered states or political formations beyond the boundaries of this select group of nation states at all, then only in order to use them as a foil for highlighting the West's modernity and superiority. The few more general histories of the world that appeared at the time were written by historians outside the discipline and, just like women's historical writings, rejected as amateur histories.<sup>6</sup>

The institutional discipline of history as it emerged in the nineteenth century, in sum, defined itself through a double exclusion: on the one hand, the exclusion of women, what one could also call a blindness to gender and its politics, and, on the other, the exclusion of the world beyond the newly invented "West," or what one could call a blindness to the global and its politics. This double exclusion in effect meant that men in "the West" were cast as the protagonists of history as well as of historical writing. Written into the discipline's DNA, these exclusions made it very difficult for global historians and women's and gender historians to gain a foothold in academic institutions and intellectual endorsement by mainstream historians.

The 1960s became a breakthrough moment for both fields on their long march towards institutionalization in the United States. The social movements that revolutionized political consciousness and the institutional landscape also paved the way for global historians and historians of women and gender. As regards the development of studying the world beyond the "West," the post-World War II era and the Cold War era had seen the rise of area studies fields; however, geopolitical interests loomed large over inquiry in these fields and accordingly the study of East Asia,

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6 Kenneth Pomeranz, and Daniel A. Segal: "World History: Departures and Variations," in *A Companion to World History*, p. 16.

South-East-Asia, and Latin America stood at the center. The New Left and the Anti-War Movement of the 1960s became a catalyst for looking at the world at large in a new light by articulating and fuelling critiques of Western imperialism. Complaints about the Euro- and US-centrism of history curricula grew louder and led to institutional changes. The number of colleagues who taught about other parts of the world began to increase. Classes in world or global history appeared at various US colleges in the 1970s and then also at high schools in some US states in the 1980s, the decade when world history hit its stride. In 1983, the World History Association was founded as a subsidiary of the American Historical Association, the premier professional organization of historians in the US, marking the field's arrival in the profession.<sup>7</sup> In 1990, the field's flagship journal, the *Journal of World History*, started publishing, followed in 2006 by the equally influential *Journal of Global History*. Also, in the 1990s a number of universities established the first graduate programs in world/global history. By the end of the decade, the first monographs appeared that billed themselves as works of world or global history.

Two prime examples are the works of the US-based China historians Bin Wong and Kenneth Pomeranz.<sup>8</sup> This is not the place to give a detailed accounting of the complex arguments of Wong's and Pomeranz's studies. Even a cursory summary of the

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7 For a concise overview, Kenneth Pomeranz and Daniel A. Segal, "World History: Departures and Variations," in *A Companion to World History*, pp. 15-31; here especially pp. 17-19. A longer excellent overview of the development of the field can be found in Patrick Manning, *Navigating World History: Historians Create a Global Past* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

8 Bin Wong, *China Transformed: Historical Change and the Limits of European Experience* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997, paperback 2000). Kenneth Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence: Europe, China, and the Making of the Modern World Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

books, however, can serve to highlight three defining features of world and global history more broadly. Wong's and Pomeranz's works each represent global history's turn to relatively underexplored areas of the world, in this instance China, and its move towards greater spatial coverage beyond the "nation state" and "the West." They further exemplify the much greater temporal coverage that characterizes global history, as it cuts across the conventional periodization of any one place to think in time scales associated with changes reverberating through larger trans/regional systems.<sup>9</sup> Lastly, these studies marshal comparative methodologies as well as explorations of connections to de-center Europe's place in history and historical writing.<sup>10</sup>

The European Enlightenment bequeathed upon the Western social sciences and humanities a notion of human history as unfolding in secular time and moving progressively towards a telos of political capitalist modernity.<sup>11</sup> Modernity in this scheme was seen to emanate first from Europe on account of its particularly early and pronounced propensities towards rationality, curiosity,

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9 An extreme example of the larger temporal reach of global history is David Christian's *Big History* approach. David Christian, *Maps of Time: An Introduction to Big History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

10 Important early articles discussing the use of comparisons and the study of connections in world history include: Jeremy H. Bentley, "Cross-Cultural Interaction and Periodization in World History," *The American Historical Review* 101:3 (June 1996), pp.749-770. Joseph Fletcher, "Integrative History: Parallels and Interconnections in the Early Modern Period, 1500-1800," *Journal of Turkish Studies* 9 (1985), pp. 37-57. Shmuel N. Eisenstadt and Wolfgang Schluchter, "Introduction: Paths to Early Modernities: A Comparative View," *Daedalus* 127:3 (June 1998), pp. 1-18. Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "Connected Histories: Notes towards a Reconfiguration of Early Modern Eurasia," *Modern Asian Studies* 31:3 (July 1997), pp. 735-762.

11 On historical teleology as a figure and mode of thought, see Henning Trüper, Dipesh Chakrabarty, Sanjay Subrahmanyam, eds., *Historical Teleologies in the Modern World* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015).

individuality, and freedom before it could radiate outward, or be delivered to other parts of the world as the case may be, as part of the European “civilizing mission.” On the march to modernity, Europe or the West supposedly led the way in terms of both political organization and the generation of wealth while the rest of the world inevitably lagged behind in political and economic development.<sup>12</sup> This Eurocentric conception of the historical evolution of the world's societies came to underlie reigning scholarly paradigms, notably Weberian modernization theory, that were used to study other parts of the world – to always find them falling short of the European benchmarks for truly modern societies.

Bin Wong's and Kenneth Pomeranz's studies shed light on the limits of modernization theory and undercut the presumed inevitability of European dominance in the modern world. Bin Wong's *China Transformed* is a comparative work of the political economies of Europe and China, situated as they are on the ends of the immense Eurasian landmass. The study centers primarily on the period from 1600 to the present, with occasional forays into much earlier times. Rather than using European developments as the default categories for the comparison, Wong productively reverses the gaze and examines European developments through the lens of the Chinese experience as another possible and plausible path into modernity. While the organization of politics in Europe and China respectively had taken on quite distinct forms by the end of the first millennium, Wong finds no stark difference in the economic developments of China and Europe. Successes and setbacks occurred in both places across the centuries up until 1900. There

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12 One of the most powerful critiques remains Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

was no inevitability to Europe's economic takeoff during the industrial age, nor were European institutions and attitudes intrinsically better equipped or suited for modernity.

Why then Europe did ascend economically in the nineteenth century? This is the big question that drives Kenneth Pomeranz's aptly titled study *The Great Divergence*. Upon closer inspection, the economic rise of Europe proved to be geographically quite narrow and should more appropriately be characterized as the rise of England. And if one compared England to the most economically advanced areas of China, it was not really possible to discern significant differences in gross domestic product, life expectancy, consumption patterns, markets, and state support for economic activity. According to Pomeranz, England owed its nineteenth-century economic breakthrough first and foremost to two circumstances: a) easy access to coal, the industrial revolution's chief energy source; and b) the English colonies in the Americas, enabling the outsourcing of the production of European goods like timber, sugar, and cotton and freeing up arable land in England for the build-up of industry. The first circumstance was fortuitous rather than hard earned whereas the second was created on the backs of African slaves from the early modern period onwards.<sup>13</sup>

Taken together, Wong's and Pomeranz's scholarship thus de-centered European history and upended teleological narratives about the rise of "the West" from the vantage point of the alleged "rest of the world."<sup>14</sup> Contingent advantages instead of intrinsic

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13 Kenneth Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence: Europe, China, and the Making of the Modern World Economy*.

14 These works sparked much discussion and fruitful debate. See for example, Philip Huang, "Development or Involution in Eighteenth-Century Britain and China? A Review of Kenneth Pomeranz's the Great Divergence: China, Europe, and the Making of the Modern World Economy," *Journal of Asian Studies* 61:2 (May

capacities gave nineteenth-century “Western” societies the global economic edge. It is important to note that national history is not absent from these accounts, but national history takes on new meaning as these works embed the story of “the nation” in a much larger matrix and show how it was shaped by trans-regional and even trans-continental systems, be they economic, political, or colonial.

While global history from the beginning re-framed national history by stepping outside its boundaries, women's and gender history, although it took a more transnational turn later, began its critical interrogation of national frameworks initially from within the nation. The US feminist movement of the 1960s and 70s bemoaned the exclusion of women from a host of domains. They included the foundational institutions of higher learning, academic disciplines, and university curricula meant to prepare citizens for participation in professional and public life. The exclusion of national politics seemed inextricably bound up with the exclusionary politics of knowledge production. To rectify this situation within the discipline of history, women's historians (usually women scholars) began to offer courses and conduct research on women's historical experience, and to push for the establishment of subfields in history or women's studies programs more broadly.

As women's historians turned up more and more evidence of women's experiences in the past, it quickly became apparent that this new knowledge exploded existing interpretative frameworks which derived from the experiences of men, often a mere subset of men.<sup>15</sup> In a 1977 essay of the same title, Joan Kelly asked the

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2002), pp. 501-528; and the rejoinder by Ken Pomeranz, “Beyond the East-West Binary: Resituating Development Paths in the Eighteenth-Century World,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 61:2 (May 2002), pp. 539-590.

15 For an overview of the development of the field and additional references on specifics, see for example, Sonya Rose, *What is Gender History?* (Cambridge:

provocative question “Did Women Have a Renaissance?” and re-visited the definition of this historical period as it was first established by the nineteenth-century Swiss historian Jakob Burckhardt (1818-1897).<sup>16</sup> Burckhardt pointed to the rebirth of classical learning, a growing secularism, and a new individualism as distinct hallmarks of the European Renaissance. For him, the epoch marked a rupture with the previous era, or what became known as the Middle Ages, and ushered in the birth of “modern man” or modernity itself.<sup>17</sup> Against this backdrop, Kelly charted lives of women at Europe’s courts from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance to show that their opportunities for cultural expression and their sociopolitical influence actually suffered a decline, leading her to answer her own question in the negative. Thus she turned the story of modernity in the West on its head from within European history. Kelly’s by now classic article continues to provide a case in point for the critical potential of women’s history not only to make women visible in the historical record but to use women’s experience as a yardstick for re-evaluating storylines that upon closer inspection fit only a segment of the population, in this instance upper-class European men.

In the 1980s, as course offerings and programs grew and more

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Polity Press, 2010), pp. 1-17; Laura Lee Downs, *Writing Gender History* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2010), pp. 9-42; Merry Wiesner-Hanks, *Gender in History: Global Perspectives* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2011), pp. 1-24.

16 Joan Kelly, “Did Women Have a Renaissance?” in *Women, History & Theory: The Essays of Joan Kelly* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), pp. 19-50. Jakob Burckhardt, *Die Kultur der Renaissance in Italien* (Basel, 1860).

17 Burckhardt himself was not without ambivalence about modernity and its effects. Burckhardt’s trope of modernity found its way into other time period and domains. See, Jason Josephon-Storm, *The Myth of Disenchantment: Magic, Modernity, and the Birth of Modern Science* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017), pp. 90-93.

articles and books began to appear, women's history evolved and developed into gender history, although the shift sparked considerable internal debate and was never all encompassing.<sup>18</sup> Many historians in the field continued to produce women's history, even as others fully embraced gender history, or blended the two approaches in their work to varying degrees. By the end of the decade, not one but two flagship journals emerged with those two conceptual poles in their title: *Gender and History* in 1989 and the *Journal of Women's History* in 1990. Debate of course is in itself a marker of a more advanced stage of development of a field. Joan Scott's landmark essay on "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis" appeared in the *American Historical Review (AHR)*, the profession's premier journal, in 1986 signaling a new level of arrival in the mainstream.<sup>19</sup> One of the most widely read and cited *AHR* articles ever, it is at this moment of rapid digitization of knowledge transfer also the most downloaded *AHR* piece. Not surprisingly, Scott's programmatic piece generated different responses and reverberations in different fields and national historiographies given their distinct disciplinary developments, political debates, and theoretical orientations. In 2008, the *AHR* published a special forum on the varied reception of Scott's concept in US History, Latin American History, Eastern Europe, Medieval European History, and Chinese History.<sup>20</sup>

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18 See, for example, the provocative critique of Scott's concept by Laura Lee Downs, "If 'Woman' is Just an Empty Category, Then Why Am I Afraid to Walk Alone at Night? Identity Politics Meets the Postmodern Subject," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 35:2 (October 1993), pp. 414-437.

19 Joan W. Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *American Historical Review* 91:5 (December 1986), pp. 1053-1075.

20 Joanne Meyerowitz, Heidi Tinsman, Maria Bucur, Dyan Elliott, Gail Hershatter, Whang Zheng, Joan W. Scott, "Forum: Revisiting Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *American Historical Review* 113:5 (December 2008), pp. 1344-1430.

The two main components of Scott's definition of gender as a historical category warrant repetition. As Scott put it in her seminal article: "The core of the definition rests on an integral connection between two propositions: gender is a constitutive element of social relationships based on perceived differences between the sexes, and gender is a primary way of signifying power relations."<sup>21</sup> The first part of the definition points to the mutability and historicity of gender across time and space. Gender is not an innate and unchanging difference inherent in human bodies ("*perceived* differences"), but rather the cultural and social meaning attached to and thus also shaping bodily differences. Gender norms are made by societies ("element of *social* relationships") and the genders of both men and women are shaped in relation to one another ("*between* the sexes"). Gender meanings further multiply along distinctions of social status, ethnicity, and generation; they evolve within societies and across time, leading to masculinities and femininities in the plural.

The second part of the definition ("Gender is a primary way of *signifying* relations of *power*") is especially salient for our purposes because it locates gender at the heart of power relations: from the realm of family and kinship to government and the political economy. Gender not only assigns *different* meanings to "female" and "male," it also creates *hierarchies* or *relations of unequal power* between those who are designated "male" and those who are designated "female." Scott's definition draws on Derrida's understanding of language as constitutive — as opposed to reflective — of social reality and combines this poststructuralist understanding of language with Foucault's notion of dispersed power. Gendered

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21 Joan W. Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *American Historical Review* 91:5, p. 1067.

language always carries multiple meanings and generates multiple effects. This makes gender a powerful vehicle for organizing power more broadly. Gender is a central force field in and through which political power articulates, manifests, and legitimates itself.

In spite of her broad Foucauldian view of politics, many of Scott's specific examples for the working of gender actually stem from politics in the more narrowly construed sense of government or the nation state. In the wake of Scott's work, a rich literature on gender and politics has appeared that rendered older stories about state formation or nationalism newly complicated by calling attention to the mechanism of exclusion and hierarchization inherent in these large-scale processes. More important still, Scott's definition implies that gender as a mechanism of power is operative even in domains where there are no women; that is to say that the absence of women is itself an effect of gender. This is especially pertinent for global history because its focus has been on domains in which men are the primary and sometimes the only actors: from trade expansion and colonial conquest to labor exploitation and imperial domination. At the same time, world and global historians still do not habitually ask why these domains are coded as masculine in the first place (why are there no women?) and what this coding reveals about the broader workings of political power more generally (often scrutiny reveals some women were there; in colonial contexts, most or all of these women may have been indigenous).

This leads us to the question of what type of relationship the powerfully revisionist enterprises of gender and global history have had with one another.

Although historians in the two fields share a deep concern with revising traditional narratives, world historians and gender historians have tended to operate in their own institutional and intellectual

spaces without much overlap. A statistical overview of articles published in two of the flagship journals of each field offers a poignant measure of the intellectual segregation between them. Between 2000-2010, the *Journal of Women's History* published 150 articles, but only 15 of those or 10% deal with questions of world/global history. During the same time period, the *Journal of World History* published 160 articles of which a mere eight or 5 % dealt with women and gender.<sup>22</sup> In other words, scholars of women gender rarely see themselves writing world/global history and scholars doing world/global history rarely consider themselves to also be producing scholarship that addresses topics or concerns of women and gender history.

There have been periodic attempts to open up more channels of communication and exchange between the two fields. The organizers of the World History Association's 2010 meeting opted to make "gender" one of their two themes. Inversely, the organizers of the 2011 Berkshire Women's History Conference stated in their conference announcement that they wanted to tap into the energy associated with the new global history and recruited papers and panels on transnational topics.<sup>23</sup> These efforts remained of limited effect when we again apply the measure of articles published in the fields' primary venues as a meaningful proxy for intellectual exchange between them. Rather than showing an increase in articles, statistics have actually shown a downward trend in more recent times. Between 2011-2019, the *Journal of Women's History* published 250 articles, an overall higher number; meanwhile, the number of articles with world/global history topics remained at 15, lowering the

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22 Merry Wiesner-Hanks, "Crossing Borders in Transnational Gender History," *Journal of Global History* 6:3 (November 2011), pp. 357-379; here p. 362.

23 Merry Wiesner-Hanks, "Crossing Borders in Transnational Gender History," *Journal of Global History* 6:3 (November 2011), p. 362.

percentage down to 6%. The *Journal of World History* shows a similar trend. I was only able to consult the volumes for the years from 2011 to 2015, when a total of 125 articles appeared, again a higher overall number. However, a mere six engage explicitly with women's and gender history; the percentage comes in under five (4.8%).

Women's and gender history, on the one hand, and world/global history, on the other, appear like two rivers that emerged from the same source, or well of criticism of mainstream history, yet soon traveled along two riverbeds that run parallel and each create their own momentum, making it difficult to establish channels between them. Anyone compiling a syllabus that bridges the two fields quickly learns about the difficulty of integrating them.<sup>24</sup> At the risk of being schematic, at this point, world/global history is heavily materialist in emphasis while women's and gender history (at least in its Anglo-American and European variant) is heavily culturalist.<sup>25</sup> World and global historians have traditionally focused on the political economy, transposing categories of national history — states, markets, Empires — onto a global scale, to make comparisons and study connections. Although women's history in the 1970s was deeply materialist, drawing on lessons from structural anthropology and Marxism, the move towards gender history in the

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24 For an early diagnosis of this problem see Judith P. Zinsser, "And Now for Something Completely Different: Gendering the World History Survey," in Ross E. Dunn ed., *The New World History: A Teacher's Companion* (Boston: Bedford, 1999), pp. 476-478. For a recent very helpful guidebook for world history course design, see Antoinette Burton, *A Primer for Teaching World History: Ten Design Principles* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011).

25 For a fuller articulation of the diverging intellectual trajectories of the two fields, see Ulrike Strasser and Heidi Tinsman. "It's a Man's World? World History Meets History of Masculinity, in Latin American Studies for Instance," *Journal of World History* 21:1 (March 2010), pp. 75-96.

1980s in the US ushered in by Scott was symptomatic of the broader “linguist turn” in Humanities scholarship that had long-term repercussions in many fields.<sup>26</sup> The theoretical reorientation of the “linguistic turn” pivoted on the conviction that language was less a reflection of social reality and cultural meaning than an instrument for creating social reality and cultural meaning and hence needed to be made a central subject matter of inquiry or “deconstruction.” Gender historians wielding the tools of literary and cultural analysis came to produce ever more nuanced accounts of “difference” – of gender, and sexuality, and also of race and ethnicity – for a host of locales, and further eroded the notion of universal or master narratives that had already been targets of women’s history.<sup>27</sup>

The focus on difference and the distrust of false universalisms has made historian of women and gender habitually suspicious of mega-narratives of any kind. World history is without a doubt a new mega-narrative – surely the most ambitious thus far propped. It raises the specter of a pernicious return to universal history, particularly since world historians often rely on the 1970s social theory that historians of gender and sexuality spent so much time deconstructing. At times, such apprehensions appear exaggerated; as we saw, global historians like Wong and Pomeranz themselves set out to critically interrogate and re-write Western social theory.

When it comes to world history textbooks, however, the issue indeed becomes more pressing, since textbooks always require an

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26 Doris Bachmann-Medick, *Cultural Turns: New Orientations in the Study of Culture*, trans. by Adam Blauhut (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016), pp. 21-32.

27 Wiesner-Hanks makes a similar point about the attention to difference but also thinks that the two fields have an outmoded view of one another, having paid little attention to what has been happening in the respective other; based on this misperception, their practitioners have little interest in engaging with one another, see Merry Wiesner-Hanks, “World History and the History of Women, Gender and Sexuality,” *Journal of World History* 18:1 (March 2007), pp. 54-55.

extreme degree of synthesis, summary, and abstractions inviting problematic shortcuts. Judith Zinsser has pointed to what she decries as “false universals” in world history accounts: <sup>28</sup> abstractions like “populations” or “societies” that denote inclusivity of male and female historical subjects but upon closer inspections turn out to be short-hands for male populations only, even though women make up more than half of the world's overall population. Even accounts that do include women often deliver problematic messages about gender between the lines, in the style of narration or choice of language. Women, for example, appear as individuals only if they are exceptional, a framing that in effect underwrites the notion that male historical activities are the most consequential and important. Add to this that women are marked as gendered individuals while men are not as if their gender did not matter. Mary Prince who left a narrative account of her life as a slave is characterized as a *female* slave or *female* writer.<sup>29</sup> Meanwhile, as Zinsser puts it pointedly, readers would be startled if they read a line like “Mao Zedong, the male leader of the Chinese communists.”<sup>30</sup>

How then could we make gender operative as a category of historical analysis for questions of world and global history? How could one forge more long-term connections between these fields of inquiry? The concluding sections sketches out three pathways for en-gendering new historical narratives about our shared planet: foregrounding women; foregrounding men *as men*; and examining the gendered dimensions of macro-historical, distance-spanning processes.

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28 Judith P. Zinsser, “Women's and Men's World History? Not Yet,” *Journal of Women's History* 25:4 (December 2013), pp. 309-318.

29 Mary Prince's narrative as well as primary sources and information about other women can be found at the rich internet site *Women in World History*: <http://chnm.gmu.edu/wwh/>.

30 Judith P. Zinsser, “Women's and Men's World History? Not Yet,” *Journal of Women's History* 25:4 (December 2013), p. 310.

## Foregrounding Women: A Separate Women's World History and the Comparative Study of Gender Norms Around the World

Judith Zinsler whom I just cited aspires to a comprehensively gendered world history and urges women's and gender historians to keep moving towards it. She advocates trying out in the classroom new universal world history narratives that are attuned equally to men's and women's manifold experiences, with the caveat that the lack of good teaching materials, particularly textbooks, hampers such efforts.<sup>31</sup> Given the advanced state of research on women's and gender history, however, Zinsler further suggests that the time has come to write separate women's world history narratives.

What would the history of the world look like when told through the eyes of women, that is to say 51% of its population? Since the early days of women's history, a wealth of scholarship has appeared on all parts of the world. In some fields it always has included, in other it increasingly does feature discussions of crossing borders, cross-cultural interactions, entangled and shared histories, questions of mixture and hybridity. The existence of this scholarship for different parts of the world can serve as the basis for new trans/regional and transnational narratives focused on women that marshal tools and thematics associated with the world and global history paradigms, such as the use of comparisons or the

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31 For an example of a course on gender and world history that does not rely on any textbook, see Ulrike Strasser and Heidi Tinsman, "Engendering World History," *Radical History Review* 91 (Winter 2005), pp. 151-164. Mary Jo Maynes and Ann Walter at the University of Minnesota also developed and taught a course, which centered on the family as a historical institution since 10,000 BCE and integrates gender history through this lens. They wrote a textbook based on this approach. Mary Jo Maynes and Ann Waltner, *The Family: A World History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

study of phenomena touching different parts of the globe. Zinsser offers “a very subjective list of some six broad thematic-topical approaches” towards the writing of women’s world history.<sup>32</sup> To list them briefly, Zinsser proposes to focus on: women in their families; women’s labor; women living and acting together; women’s roles and identities in political entities; religious, social, and political control of women’s bodies; diasporas, migrations, or movement of people. This is not the place to detail the subtopics Zinsser outlines for each of those bigger themes. Suffice it to say that students and readers in search of a research project will be well served in consulting her detailed longer list.<sup>33</sup>

We might also add at this point that on a very basic level, gender (and not only the gender of women) is a world history topic par excellence, begging for comparative study and for the tracking of connections across times and place. Notions of gender are a human universal, with most cultures, though not all cultures, assuming two primary genders, male and female, and defining them in relationship to one another.<sup>34</sup> Individuals labeled male or female are supposed to feel and behave a certain way. Societal institutions and legal regimes serve to secure that individuals adhere to these expectations. All religious traditions – Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Confucian thought – stipulate specific behaviors for men and women, although often the most extensive regulatory commentary is reserved for women. There is rich material for cross-cultural comparison. As these religions traveled to other areas of the world, those normative frameworks moreover traveled with them to

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32 Judith P. Zinsser, “Women’s and Men’s World History? Not Yet,” *Journal of Women’s History* 25:4 (December 2013), p. 313.

33 Judith P. Zinsser, “Women’s and Men’s World History? Not Yet,” *Journal of Women’s History* 25:4 (December 2013), pp. 313-315.

34 This is amply documented by Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks, *Gender in History: Global Perspectives*.

become part of new fabrics of connection.<sup>35</sup> Gender norms tend to be recorded in more easily accessible sources, such as legal records, political edicts, or works promulgating religious ideals and moral guidelines. These records are relatively equivalent across societies and cultures and allow for fairly straightforward comparisons. At the same time, behind the human universality of gender norms one of course finds considerable variations in practices. Norms and practices have changed over time, particularly as cultures have come into contact and systems of norms and practices intermingled to produce new outcomes, offering yet more rich material for cross-cultural, comparative studies of gender norms around the globe.

### Foregrounding Men: World/Global History as the Story of Competing Masculinities and Their Attendant Patriarchal Dynamics

As noted above, world and global history has traditionally focused on domains in which men are the primary actors without, however, considering the gendered nature of these domains and/or considering men *as men* rather than treating them as the seemingly genderless protagonists of history. Women's and gender history offers both ways for understanding world historical processes as being carried out by and affecting men in gender-specific ways and also of narrating world history as the story of competing masculinities.<sup>36</sup> What it means to be a man has historically always been forged in competition with other men, as well as in reference to control over women. Masculinity everywhere has been a

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35 Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks, *Gender in History: Global Perspectives*, pp.109-136.

36 For a more detailed proposal of narrating world history as the story of competing masculinities, with guiding examples from Latin American Studies, see Ulrike Strasser and Heidi Tinsman, "It's a Man's World? World History Meets History of Masculinity, in Latin American Studies for Instance," *Journal of World History* 21:1, pp. 75-96.

contested constellation among men of varying social classes, ethnicities, and ages. How was masculinity defined in different times and places? How were not only female but also male bodies understood and controlled through norms around deportment and clothing? When did new types of manhood emerge and how was the emergence connected to new political or labor regimes? And how did different masculinities shape specific locals, cross-cultural interactions, or world historical encounters?

For example, Jesuit masculinity first emerged in sixteenth-century Europe during a time patriarchal retrenchment and colonial Empire-building, which also saw the emergence of another, complementary as well as competing masculinity, that of the conquistador.<sup>37</sup> Capitalizing on structures of Europe's colonial and merchant empires, Jesuits shipped out to the Americas, Asia, and Africa, evangelized local populations and tried to inculcate European-Christian norms, including those of gender and sexuality, in the indigenous.<sup>38</sup>

As regards China, the mission itself generated a limited number of converts, women among them. However, Jesuits through their reporting, as is well known, contributed to the development of China's global image as a Confucian country. They downplayed the importance of Buddhism in Chinese society and presented Confucius as a secular philosopher whose ethical system was easily compatible with Christianity. Long hidden from view, however, were Ricci's more personal and distinctly gendered reasons for

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37 See R. W. Connell for an early recognition of the emergence of this new masculine type in the West, in R. W. Connell, *Masculinities* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), pp.186-191.

38 On Jesuit masculinity and global history, see Ulrike Strasser, *Missionary Men in the Early Modern World: German Jesuits and Pacific Journeys* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2020). Available via Open Access.

dismissing Buddhism and befriending the Confucian scholarly elite.

Cambridge historian Mary Laven has unearthed how male anxiety and jockeying among competing masculinities at the Chinese court influenced the course and shape of Matteo Ricci's world-historical mission to China. Before he put on the Confucian robes that came to symbolize his identification with Confucian scholars, Ricci had tried out another male costume. Upon arriving in 1583 and eager to make inroads in Chinese society, he first dressed up as a Buddhist monk, only to learn that many a Buddhist monk kept women and led the kind of dissolute lifestyle that in Europe had become the fodder of Protestant anti-monastic writings. That ended Ricci's first sartorial experiment; he began to rail against "dissolute" Buddhist monks. But Ricci reserved the worst of his venom for the eunuchs at the imperial court, as Laven details. He depended for access to the Emperor on this group, and while their exclusion from sexual reproduction gave them contested status in Chinese society because they could not fulfill their filial mandate, it brought to mind the Jesuits' own celibate status and that it presented a liability in evangelizing the Chinese. To maneuver successfully in China's complex political landscape, Ricci decided to throw in his lot with the eunuchs' rivals and courtiers-in-ascent: Confucian scholar officials. Along with the mandarin robes Ricci began to wear, he sought to don the prestige and credibility of literati manhood in Chinese society and especially before the Chinese Emperor. This was male dress for success of the highest order, with world-historical implications for the development of Western Sinology and China's global image.<sup>39</sup>

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39 Mary Laven, "Jesuits and Eunuchs: Representing Masculinity in Late Ming China," *History and Anthropology* 23:2 (June 2012), pp. 199-214.

We can pair this example with a modern example. Christopher Bayly has linked shifting geopolitics in the long nineteenth century to fundamental changes in the bodily comportment of the world's most powerful men. He outlines how in the late eighteenth century, the Ottoman Empire and China were powerhouses and large parts of Africa and the Pacific still lay beyond the reach of Europe. By the early twentieth century, however, European Imperialism had reached its height and expanded into Africa and the Pacific, while the Ottoman Empire and China had fallen into decline. The altered geopolitics found their reflection on the bodies of men. In 1780s, the world's male power-holders donned locally specific clothes: from frock coats in Europe to mandarin robes in China, and performative nudity in certain regions of Africa and the Pacific. By 1914, Western-style top hats and black morning coats had become the indispensable uniform for the world's most powerful men. Functionaries in Meiji Japan had to show up at the office in Western dress, just as Chinese nationalists wore the same garb to signal their standing in the world. Related to this sartorial transformation was the spread of pocket watches. Local time systems, such as those of China and India, became secondary to standardized world time and the new elites submitted themselves to a globally synchronized rhythm of work, business, and political dealings.<sup>40</sup> This is another example of how scholarship that pays attention to the bodies of men — what they wore, how they moved, and why — can illuminate the historical nexus between geopolitical shifts around the world and individual lives and male identities.

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40 Christopher Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780-1914: Global Connections and Comparisons* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), for an overview see 1-21, on bodily comportment as an analytical lens as exemplified by men's bodies, see 12-19. Interestingly, Bayly's index has no entry on gender at all, only an entry on women.

## Writing a Gendered History of Large-Scale Processes: The Case of Empires, Gender Frontiers, and Inter-Marriage

All large-scale processes described in global history accounts — trade, migration, cross-cultural exchange or conquest — were processes that the world's people experienced *as men* or *as women* whether they participated directly in them or were caught up inadvertently.<sup>41</sup> A third path towards en-gendering world and global history leads via an exploration of the gendered nature of large-scale processes. Differently put, this approach combines attention to macro-historical phenomena that create global connectivity with attention to the micro-histories of places and individuals and to questions of identity and subjectivity, which are inevitably questions of gender.

The study of empires is a good example. Scholarship on empire, although disproportionately focused on the modern period and the British Empire, has been a place where world and global history and women's and gender history have become increasingly intertwined.<sup>42</sup> Imperial history is not synonymous with global history and one should be careful about the slippage between the two. That said, empire studies provide a portal for engendering global history, since empires have been among the main engines of

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41 See also Merry Wiesner-Hanks, "Gender and Sexuality," in Jerry H. Bentley, Sanjay Subrahmanyam and Merry Wiesner-Hanks eds., *The Cambridge World History Vol.6: The Construction of the World 1400-1800CE, Part I: Foundations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), pp. 133-156.

42 See Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton, eds., *Bodies in Contact: Rethinking Colonial Encounters in World History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005). For an example of centering a world history course on empire, gender, and sexuality, see Ulrike Strasser and Heidi Tinsman, "Engendering World History," *Radical History Review* 91 (Winter 2005), pp. 151-164. A few other examples of emerging intersections are identified in Wiesner-Hanks, "Crossing Borders in Transnational Gender History," *Journal of Global History* 6:3 (November 2011), pp. 357-379.

connectivity in world history. They have thrust different parts of the globe into contact and conflict, and effected the migration and intermingling of peoples and cultures. At the same time, empire-building has led to drawing new boundaries on a local, continental, and global scale. Before 1500, the world's two hemispheres developed separately but were each integrated through empire building. The Mongolian Empire advanced the integration of Eurasia in the Eastern hemisphere. The Empires of the Aztecs and Incas subdued and incorporated many peoples and parts of the Americas. After 1500, European overseas empire-building led to large-scale migrations and brought the world's two hemispheres into sustained contact and exchange, ushering in the first phase of globalization and Europe's rise to hegemony in the nineteenth century, although the latter was owed to various global conjunctures, as previously discussed.

Empire-builders throughout history have sought to replace existing arrangements with alternate arrangements that better serve the needs of empire and the new ruling elites, and centrally so by altering practices of gender and sexuality. Kathy Brown has coined the term "gender frontier" for colonial and imperial contexts to describe the collision between culturally specific systems for understanding and organizing sociopolitical life around gendered identities, symbols, and practices.<sup>43</sup> Empire-builders everywhere have also drawn on gender as an ideology and metaphorical language – a signifier of power in Scott's sense – to explain and justify conquests, domination, and particular forms of imperial rule. Women's bodies and women's sexual comportment in particular have been an intense focus of regulatory efforts in imperial contexts all over the world.<sup>44</sup>

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43 Kathleen M. Brown, "Gender Frontiers and Early Encounters," in Ellen Hartigan-O'Connor and Lisa G. Matterson eds., *The Oxford Handbook of American Women's and Gender History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), pp. 19-41.

44 Ballantyne and Burton also note this in their introduction to the volume *Bodies in Contact: Rethinking Colonial Encounters in World History*.

In the Spanish Americas, for which we have many excellent studies of women and gender, intimate relations between Spanish men and indigenous women were already important to the conquest itself. The Inca and Aztec empires consisted of many conquered peoples. There was a great deal of resentment by Andean and Mexican populations towards their rulers. Significant groups of Mexican tribal communities joined ranks with the Spanish. In the Inca case, a whole faction of the Inca trying to unseat the other faction temporarily joined the Spanish. Historians agree that Spanish victory would have been impossible without these alliances, notwithstanding the tenacious myth, first cultivated by the conquerors themselves, that the Spanish under the leadership of Hernán Cortés and Francisco Pizarro conquered these powerful empires all alone with only a few hundred men. In reality, the Spanish entered alliances and fought with a great many indigenous supporters, many of them women.<sup>45</sup>

Hernán Cortés depended crucially on the indigenous woman referred to as Malintzin in Nahuatl and Doña Marina in Spanish. Known today as La Malinche, she is often anachronistically decried as a “sexual traitor to her race” based on modern notions of shared Indian identity and nationalism. La Malinche came from one of the many communities that the Aztecs had conquered and had been sold by them into slavery to the Maya who handed her over to Cortés. Throughout the conquest, she served as Cortés’s translator and negotiator before she became his mistress and mother of his son; he later married her off to another conquistador, Juan de Jaramillo, with whom she had another child.<sup>46</sup> Her life history is

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45 Matthew Restall, *Seven Myths of the Spanish Conquest* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

46 Primary source material and a teaching unit on La Malinche can be found at *Women in World History*: <http://chnm.gmu.edu/wwh/>.

emblematic of the process of gendered domination and mixing that attended Spanish colonialism in the Americas from its inception.

Meanwhile, Cortés's lieutenant Francisco Pizarro's conquest of the Inca entailed a relationship with an Inca princess, Doña Angelina Yupanqui Coya, who also had a child with him. The relationship bestowed legitimacy upon Pizarro in the eyes of Inca elites and gave him ties to Inca nobility, while simultaneously symbolizing patriarchal Spanish dominance over the Inca. Pizarro's relationship with Angelina moreover gave him control over new resources: land and human labor. Angelina, as an Inca princess, had traditional rights to distribute land privileges to other women within her family line. But under the Spanish, men were given more authority over women's decisions about property. Pizarro could legitimately intervene in Angelina's decisions about land and could influence which communities were rewarded or who had their land usurped. Angelina was not entirely a victim in all of this. The Spanish granted people of royal Inca heritage rights to claim lands to ancestral community lands as private property. Under the Inca, a princess like Angelina would have made decisions over which women had rights to use which land. Under Spanish notions of private property, she could claim that all the land that she had "overseen" before was now her own property. Angelina was happy to participate in the land-grab, dispossessing Andean commoner-women of their communal land holdings.<sup>47</sup> Here we see that the conquest was driving a wedge between women of different social classes, highlighting the nexus between gender and class.

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47 See the classic and still unsurpassed account of the gendered dimension of the rise and fall of the Inca Empire: Irene Silverblatt, *Moon, Sun, and Witches: Gender Ideologies and Class in Inca and Colonial Peru* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1987), pp.115-117.

Interestingly, Pizarro did not marry Angelina. Instead, he took a Spanish woman of noble descent for a wife. This was for the same reason Cortés did not marry Malinche but also chose a Spanish woman. For both men, marriage into Spanish nobility was crucial to linking oneself to powerful political allies back in Spain and to legitimating oneself as a member of the ruling elite given their non-elite social background. Gender, class, as well as race were operative. So what happened to Angelina? Pizarro “gave” Angelina to a friend, a prominent Spaniard and scholar named Juan de Betanzos, who legally married her.<sup>48</sup>

Marriages between prominent Spanish military men and Inca and Aztec nobility (as well as nobility from communities that had been allies) were repeated throughout Spanish America. Spanish elite men saw marriage as important to laying claim to the spoils of Empire. New marriage laws introduced by the Spanish meant that the lion’s share ended up in the hands of men. These laws emphasized men representing women in court and having veto-power over women’s decisions about how to use property.<sup>49</sup> Intermarriages and sexual unions with the indigenous populations became key to the survival of the colonial project, even as Spanish notions of “pure blood” spoke against this practice. The Spanish project in the Americas launched by the all-male conquistadors would have quickly died down without intermixing and intermarriage with the indigenous population.

It is only a short step from the growing number of studies that have documented the pivotal role of women and gender in the

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48 Susan Migden Socolow, *The Women of Colonial Latin America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 37-39.

49 See for example Irene Silverblatt, *Moon, Sun, and Witches: Gender Ideologies and Class in Inca and Colonial Peru*; Patricia Seed, *To Love, Honor, and Obey in Colonial Mexico: Conflicts over Marriage Choice, 1574–1821* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992).

history of empires, such as the Spanish Empire in the Americas, to studies that take a deliberately global historical approach to the subject and thereby en-gender world history. Making comparisons and tracing connections across imperial frameworks we can scale up imperial to more global histories.<sup>50</sup> Moving in this direction, Susan Amussen and Allyson Poska have looked comparatively at different empires and societies across and around the Atlantic World and how work, family, and sexuality were negotiated in each.<sup>51</sup> Their panoramic analysis reveals that Europeans from different colonial Empires exported a strikingly uniform set of patriarchal gender and sexual norms throughout the Atlantic world, but rarely were able to impose their ideas on indigenous peoples in Africa and the Americas. The latter had their own notions and practices related to gender and sexuality, showed ingenuity and agency in thwarting the European agenda, and co-created the Atlantic world. "Thus," they conclude, "a focus on gender allows us to move away from a simplistic model of European dominance towards a more sophisticated and inclusive theoretical framework for Atlantic history."<sup>52</sup> Although Amussen's and Poska's approach remains

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50 Ballantyne and Burton propose that a focus on the body can make women and gender visible in world history but it is less clear from the essays assembled in their volume, which work within imperial frameworks and are simply placed side by side, how one can make the leap from imperial history to writing world and global history narratives through the lens of gendered bodies. See Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton, "Introduction: Bodies, Empires, and World Histories," in Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton eds., *Bodies in Contact: Rethinking Colonial Encounters in World History*, pp. 1-14; especially p. 4.

51 Susan D. Amussen and Allyson M. Poska, "Restoring Miranda: Gender and the Limits of European Patriarchy in the Early Modern Atlantic World," *Journal of Global History* 7:3 (November 2012), pp. 343-362.

52 Susan D. Amussen and Allyson M. Poska, "Restoring Miranda: Gender and the Limits of European Patriarchy in the Early Modern Atlantic World," *Journal of Global History* 7:3 (November 2012), p. 362.

circumscribed by Atlantic history and takes European empires as the point-of-departure, their comparative trans-imperial analysis could certainly be scaled to examine various geographical clusters, conventional and unconventional, around the globe.

As regards global comparisons, Merry Wiesner-Hanks is preparing a major comparative study of the norms and practices of “intermarriage” and empire-building throughout world history. “Intermarriage” in Wiesner-Hank’s usage refers to a wide range of sexual relations between conquerors and conquered from short-term liaisons and concubinage on one end of the spectrum to marriage-like relationships and officially sanctioned marriages on the other. In some imperial and colonial situations “intermarriage” was encouraged to secure power, exert control, and transmit new norms and practices whereas elsewhere such relationships were discouraged or even officially forbidden and actively suppressed. Often the regulation of “intermarriage” evolved over time along with the shifting needs of colonial and imperial governance. Wiesner-Hanks has previewed various examples of the nexus between “intermarriage” and empire-building in articles, with the most fully developed examples stemming from the literature on European imperialism and colonialism, however.<sup>53</sup>

In closing, I therefore want to turn to Emma Jinhua Teng’s scholarship on Taiwan, which directs our attention to the gendered dimensions of a major empire in world history that did not arise in

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53 For various historical examples see Merry Wiesner-Hanks, “Crossing Borders in Transnational Gender History,” *Journal of Global History* 6:3 (November 2011) pp. 370-374; “Gender and Sexuality,” pp.139-142; For critical reflection on the categories of gender and sexuality, which are frequently used in tandem in Western scholarship, see Afsaneh Najmabadi, “Beyond the Americas: Are Gender and Sexuality Useful Categories of Analysis?” *Journal of Women's History* 18:1 (March 2006), pp. 11-21.

the West. Teng has shown that gendered discourses played a key role in Qing imperialism, specifically the annexation of Taiwan in 1683 and the reinvention of China as a multi-ethnic and geographically diverse empire.<sup>54</sup> Chinese travel and colonial writing homed in on Taiwan's tradition of female tribal heads, uxori-local marriage, matrilineal inheritance, and the free mingling of men and women, to cast the island and its people as "barbarous"; tropes of gender inversion served to mobilize for and justify their subjugation. Indigenous men were cast as effeminate and weak in the face of patriarchy, or in other words as inferior and easy to dominate. Meanwhile, indigenous women were described as hypersexual and readily available to Han Chinese men, effectively collapsing colonial and sexual conquest into one masculine project.<sup>55</sup> Thus the allure of Taiwan lay in taming its sensuous women and bringing proper patriarchal Confucian gender norms to a "barbarous" island society in need of civilization. As a widespread verdict went: "The savages value woman and undervalue men."<sup>56</sup>

Such colonial imaginings and demographic imbalances fuelled intermarriages between Taiwanese women and Han men, who outnumbered Han women in the island. These intermarriages occurred with growing frequency and enjoyed social acceptance. As

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54 Emma Jinhua Teng, "An Island of Women: Gender in Qing Travel Writing About Taiwan," in Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton eds., *Bodies in Contact: Rethinking Colonial Encounters in World History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), pp. 38-53. See also Teng's monograph, *Taiwan's Imagined Geography: Chinese Colonial Travel Writing and Pictures, 1683-1895* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2004).

55 Emma Jinhua Teng, "An Island of Women: Gender in Qing Travel Writing About Taiwan," in *Bodies in Contact: Rethinking Colonial Encounters in World History*, pp. 42-47.

56 Emma Jinhua Teng, *Taiwan's Imagined Geography: Chinese Colonial Travel Writing and Pictures*, p. 173.

patriarchal marriages, they mirrored the hierarchy between conquerors and conquered.

While some colonial officials touted them as a means of cultural assimilation, others feared that these unions between local women and outside men might give rise to interethnic conflicts. Following a local revolt, intermarriages were banned in 1737.<sup>57</sup> By comparison, intermarriages between Han women and indigenous men were very rare and did not take place until the late Qing. They too could serve to underwrite the supposed superiority of the Chinese and “savagery” of the Taiwanese as in the case of the mythical figure of the Han Chinese courtesan Baozhu who was said to have become a female chieftain donning Chinese aristocratic dress.<sup>58</sup>

Teng’s analysis marshals Scott’s understanding of gender as “a primary way of signifying relations of power” and her findings clearly resonate with postcolonial analyses of European empires. At the same time, however, and in a move more reminiscent of global historical approaches, Teng de-centers Europe through her account, as she highlights both commonalities and differences between Qing empire-building and European colonial and imperial endeavors. The trope of a “virgin land” to be possessed and penetrated, which one finds in European discourses about the Americas and Africa, is absent in the Qing case.<sup>59</sup> Rather Qing imperial discourses about Taiwan stand in a long Chinese tradition of regional stereotyping dating all the way back to the Tang dynasty. This tradition coded the

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57 Emma Jinhua Teng, *Taiwan’s Imagined Geography: Chinese Colonial Travel Writing and Pictures*, pp. 176, 186, 187.

58 Emma Jinhua Teng, “An Island of Women: Gender in Qing Travel Writing About Taiwan,” in *Bodies in Contact: Rethinking Colonial Encounters in World History*, pp. 47-49.

59 Emma Jinhua Teng, *Taiwan’s Imagined Geography: Chinese Colonial Travel Writing and Pictures*, pp. 174-175.

southern borderlands as feminine, wet, lazy, and sensual, while typecasting the northern borderlands as dry and rugged, military and masculine.<sup>60</sup> Qing gendered imperial discourses and associated practices may have resonated with Western counterparts but they were certainly not of the West and long preceded the Manchu dynasty, evolving across centuries, connecting vast spaces, and also driving the emergence of a new gender system in Taiwan under Qing rule. A global historical lens that de-centers Europe brings these gendered macro-historical processes into focus.

The above examples of en-gendering world history are far from an exhaustive list. Above all this essay sought to offer food for thought and useful starting points for further inquiry. I hope that the examples provided are at least sufficient to illustrate just how fertile the ground is between, on the one hand, women's and gender history à la Joan Kelly and Joan Scott and, on the other, world or global history à la Kenneth Pomeranz and Bin Wong. There is no question that many histories still remain to be discovered and written up about the rich shared past of men and women on our precious shared planet.

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60 Emma Jinhua Teng, *Taiwan's Imagined Geography: Chinese Colonial Travel Writing and Pictures*, p. 176. Teng, "An Island of Women: Gender in Qing Travel Writing About Taiwan," in *Bodies in Contact: Rethinking Colonial Encounters in World History*, p. 41, pp. 45-46.