Introduction

In 1978 the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire, an organization of Canadian women founded in 1900 and still in existence, changed its name to ‘just IODE’, an often used informal abbreviation. As one member put it: ‘IODE really doesn’t stand for anything.’ That was the hope of publicity officers at national headquarters in Toronto, who initiated the name change keen to overcome what they perceived to be the unwelcome connotations of ‘empire’. The now peculiar and elusive name conjures up faint memories and suspected intrigue, with little actually known of the IODE and its vital place in twentieth-century imperial history. In this book I redress the neglect and place the IODE in the spotlight, resurrecting it from a contemporary shadow of a presence. I position the IODE in historical context, revealing its substantial contribution in the making of an Anglo-Canadian identity in the image of Britain.

At a first glance the IODE appears as one of the many women’s philanthropic organizations that emerged from the second part of the nineteenth century onwards. With an increase in the status given to what was deemed women’s ‘natural’ work of nurturing and domestic matters, women of the upper classes throughout the Western world busied themselves with philanthropic activities. Sometimes benevolent activities were organized in women-only clubs, that were in the main infused with first-wave feminist concerns of health and welfare for women and children. Other women’s groups were branches of empire-wide organizations that were underpinned by Christianity and devoted to providing aid with war relief, immigration and colonization. The IODE’s working relationship with a variety of organizations, such as the National Council of Women, the Federation of University Women, the Salvation Army, the Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA), the Girls’ Friendly Society, the Society for the Oversea Settlement of British Women (SOSBW) and the Red Cross, appears throughout this book.
More specifically, the IODE was first and foremost a patriotic organization, advancing its own particular brand of female imperialism. Although unusual, as women’s patriotism was an awkward fit with the gendered masculine domain of politics, nation and empire, here the IODE was not alone, as there were other groups of solely patriotic women – most notably, the Victoria League, the South African Guild of Loyal Women and the American Daughters of the Revolution. What is so interesting about the IODE is that, from the Dominion of Canada, it confidently positioned itself at the centre of the British Empire, declaring itself to be the Empire’s ‘premier’ women’s patriotic organization. It was certainly the largest in membership, and, for many years, went about its work proudly advancing its patriotic intentions. But how successful was it? Although its ‘good works’ in education, health and welfare were extensive and were arguably ahead of government initiatives, the growing embarrassment and the attempt to forget the past suggest that the beliefs of the IODE express once-dominant ideas now in decline, rather than a concern with shaping the future.

The move to erase all historical reference from the IODE’s name has met with considerable debate and dissension among individual members: ‘There are some of us who are still saying “Order” in the prayer. We stumble over it, it’s stupid, but I call it “The Order”. It’s distinctive.’ A past member from Quebec City considers the move silly: ‘In this province all you need is an acute and you’re iodé, and we’re not iodine!’ Her personal name for the Order was the Irresistible Daughters of the Evening. Unable to completely change from the old name due to the sentiments of members, the IODE is stuck with a name that represents its identity crisis: transformed from its past, yet still strongly attached to it. What sort of a past had it been?

There are matters dealt with in this book that the IODE would rather were forgotten. By the late 1970s the IODE had developed a sense of uneasiness about its history, a sense which has continued into the present. These feelings concern ideas on and attitudes towards race, immigration and citizenship now eclipsed and found generally unacceptable. Specifically, the embarrassment involves the IODE’s past as an organization of female imperialists, and its part in the construction of an Anglo-Canadian identity that celebrated all things British and advanced Canada’s destiny as a part of the British Empire. It is the uncovering of such identity that forms the core of this book. In a country as diverse as Canada, there were obviously dissenting opinions and regional differences throughout the IODE’s history, and I reveal some of these in the course of the book. Yet, in order to explore the IODE’s overall construction of a pro-British Anglo-Canadian identity, I
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privilege general statements, and am most preoccupied with and fascinated by the official opinions that emerged from individual members to speak for the Order. This is a book about a group of women and the collective identity and vision they forged, rather than a study of women as individuals.

Gender and hegemony

Taking my lead from a variety of scholars concerned with themes of nation, empire and colonization, I excavate the IODE’s history to reveal the characteristics of an Anglo-Canadian identity. I argue that this was a hegemonic identity that appealed to an enlightenment sensibility of unquestioned conquest and colonization of native peoples. Economic and cultural ‘progress’ were supported, and the assimilation of all difference was demanded. Throughout, it had an unfailing belief and confidence in knowing best. Canada was to become a nation through conformity to a grand narrative, the contents of which were to be based upon British democracy and constitutional monarchy, the Christian myths and saintly symbols of the British Isles, and economic and cultural ‘progress’ through new innovations and technologies. Thus, along with the other ‘pink’ parts of the map, colonial Canada was situated as British territory. Canada was a ‘child’, one which through copying the ‘mother country’ would grow up to be a nation whose identity was situated in its own space. Due to my geographical training, a preoccupation with space underpins this book. Influenced by work on geographers’ oft-times support of empire builders, I approach the history of the IODE from a post-colonial critique of the construction of colonialism. The shifting location of Anglo-Canadian identity is a continual theme. I follow Homi Bhabha when he writes of the need to ‘think beyond narratives of originary and initial subjectivities and to focus on those moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of cultural differences’, of ‘in-between’ spaces and interstices of difference where ‘the intersubjective and collective experiences of nationness, community interest, or cultural value are negotiated’. In centring Canada, rather than Britain, an examination of the IODE’s history holds insights for the study of British imperialism.

Over the twentieth century the British Empire itself became history, and Canada as a nation dramatically changed. From mimicking a British imperial centre in population, economics, politics and culture, Canada has moved beyond dominion status to become a globally powerful multicultural nation state, whose identity is centred in its geographical location. French Canadian identity is now partially recognized, with on-
going tension and controversy over the right to self-determination. If the future relationship between Quebec and Anglo-Canada is unknown, it is clear that the IODE’s narrative and vision are now history. Absolutist truth-claims are now under question, and ‘diversity’ is the order of the day. We have experienced a sense of the ‘loss of European history and culture as History and Culture, the loss of their unquestioned place at the centre of the World’. Nations themselves are narrations (Said), they are contestable, imagined (Anderson), invented traditions (Hobsbawn and Ranger), and steeped in ever-changing memory (Samuel).

With the shift from colonial to post-colonial understandings of imperial history, new genealogies of the previously taken-for-granted are appearing. Work is now turning to ‘the sense in which Europeans’ constitution of reality had its own exotic and hegemonic quality’. Influenced by Gramsci and the legitimation of domination, Kay Anderson’s work on Vancouver’s Chinatown focuses on the construction of Chinatown according to European ideologies of race and the hegemonic policies those ideas have shaped. In The Mountie from Dime Novel to Disney, Michael Dawson deconstructs the meaning of the mountie to represent changing Anglo-Canadian nationalism. Also concerned with icons, Daniel Francis takes a critical look at national identity through an examination of ‘myths’ in Canadian history such as the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR), and the myth of unity with Quebec. The shaping of Canadian culture, history, politics and health care is investigated in Painting the Maple, a book of interdisciplinary essays on race, gender and the construction of Canada. The editors state that ‘one purpose of this work-in-progress is to problematize the construction of Canada by discovering assumptions, biases, and hegemonic practices’. Likewise, Karen Dubinsky’s work on honeymoonging and tourism at Niagara Falls deconstructs hegemonic heterosexual citizenship.

This book focuses on the IODE’s invention of ‘Britishness’ as a part of its vision for Anglo-Canada. That focus makes necessary the complicating of notions of imperialism as beginning in a European metropole and expanding outwards. Instead colonialism becomes ‘a moment when new encounters with the world facilitated the formation of categories of metropole and colony in the first place’. For such purposes, I look at the imposition of hegemony, not by the direct force of a colonizing power, but by the mimicry of descendants from the constructed British imperial centre. Hence, Canada as a ‘white settler society’ shapes my research. The process of European settlement in past empires is now problematized and un-settled. Conquest, domination, colonization and assimilation, the tools of imperialism and nation
building in societies, such as that of Canada, to which AngloCeltic settlers migrated and there became dominant, are now questioned. But, as Phillip Buckner has suggested, Canadian historiography has downplayed the significance of the imperial experience in shaping the identity of British Canadians. This book takes up Buckner’s challenge, and examines the development of a British Canada through the work of a group of female imperialists. It sheds new light on the complex relationship between Britishness and national identity. It is time for Canadian historians to re-acknowledge the British influence on the Canadian nation, albeit in a way that draws upon recent postcolonial work in other settler societies, and that does not do so at the expense of the histories of indigenous peoples, French Canadians, or migrants from outside of Britain and France.

For Canada, claiming colonial status as part of the British Empire has not necessarily meant subjugation, but rather, the advancement of nationalism. In his influential 1970 study of Canadian imperial ideology, Carl Berger proposed that, for Canada, imperial ties to Britain could be a way of increasing the power of the nation. Indeed, colonial nationalism was premised on Canada proving itself within an imperial context. Such ideas were always embedded in the beliefs of the IODE. Berger’s study focused on male intellectuals, and stopped at 1914. The IODE was destined to outlive Berger’s men, and to outweigh their significance. To contribute to an understanding of Canada’s ‘sense of power’ I focus on a group of women, and shift from the space of ‘public’ men to that of women’s voluntary work. Vital to its longevity was the IODE’s ability to change with the times.

Tracing, through the IODE’s history, the shifts in Anglo-Canadian identity and Canada’s place in the British Empire, I argue that hegemonic identity was constructed in relation to the very difference that it dominated. As Raymond Williams informed us (in his now muchused phrase), hegemony ‘does not just passively exist as a form of dominance. It has continually to be renewed, recreated, defended and modified. It is also continually resisted, limited, altered, challenged by pressures not all of its own.’ Such a dynamic process is witnessed to in the IODE’s behaviour of attack and defence: either silencing perceived ‘threats’ that challenged its vision for Canada, or assimilating – canadianzing – otherness. Beyond merely mimicking an imagined Britain, the IODE invented Anglo-Canada in response to what it perceived to be threats and resistance to its narrative. This recursive relationship between marginal and dominant groups in producing hegemonic identity was explained by Raymond Williams twenty years ago when he stated that ‘the reality of cultural process must then always include the efforts and contributions
of those who are in one way or another outside or at the edge of the terms of the specific hegemony’. Since the making of that statement, the place of ‘the other’ has received such attention that our understanding of domination has been dramatically altered.

So what of gender? This book wrestles with a current tension in feminism. On the one hand, I retain a group of women subjects as the standpoint of my research. I possess a great respect for and a sense of awe towards the IODE, an influential, efficient, clever, sometimes ruthless, and proud organization. Through its work this group of women, albeit affluent and Anglo-Celtic women, has struggled to make an impact in a sexist society, playing no small part in improving the lot of women. It has done so with sharp and organized efficiency. To have survived for so long is evidence enough of a powerful organization. There are reasons to be proud of this unique and feisty group of women.

As an organization the IODE has displayed great zeal and commitment in its efforts to produce a strong Canada and strong Canadian citizens in the image of an imagined Britain. This has involved hard work and careful thought. The IODE has been an innovator in education, health and welfare throughout its existence. It has laboured away in fighting tuberculosis, improving health care, and members have exerted an impressive presence both inside and outside the classroom. Women’s voluntary work, such as placing pictures of monarchs in classrooms, offering school prizes for ‘imperial’ essays, providing school libraries and scholarships, as teachers themselves, providing care at ports, and catering at citizenship courts, allowed the IODE access to immigrants and children. Privileged social position allowed access to education boards, government and commerce. All of these activities were united by an overarching patriotic mission, and deemed suitably ‘female’ because of underlying maternal motivations.

Yet, although I want to boast about how much of an impact the IODE has had on Canada and the Empire, this book is not an uncritical celebration of the IODE. While I want to show the IODE as an integral and important part of the British imperial past, it is my task to place the IODE in the context of the making of Anglo-Canada. That involves an engagement with work on gender, race and colonialism. I build upon insights into the relationship between white women and imperialism to examine the IODE, and in turn contribute its Canadian context in order to enrich the international literature. Thanks to works by women’s historians, it is now clear that women are not uniformly marginalized, and the work of the IODE that I choose to display provides the evidence to form my arguments about the IODE’s complicity in racism and oppression; its representation of Anglo-Canadian hegemonic identity. It is my intention to grapple with this group of women as representative of
hegemonic discourse; to show them, as Iris Marion Young has described cultural imperialism, universalizing a dominant nation’s experience and culture, and establishing them as the norm.\textsuperscript{23} This involves moving beyond the uniform celebration of women’s work and examining the contradictory and complex position of, on the one hand, extending help to those perceived to be in need, while, on the other, supporting the patriarchal and imperial practices which had led to that need in the first place.

\textit{Feminist history and the loss of confidence}

By 1971 the IODE had become insecure about the extent to which it was perceived to be influential, and when it sent a brief to the Special Joint Committee on the Constitution of Canada it sought the support of ‘other’ groups, ‘those with Canadian backgrounds of several generations but of other than British heritage, for example Italian, Ukrainian, Chinese, thus widening the base of operations and avoiding the inevitable WASP label’.\textsuperscript{24} Here there was evidence of a limited acceptance of multiculturalism, although the IODE still believed that all Canadians should accept the British monarch as their head of state. It is not surprising that the IODE saw no need for the Canadian flag to be changed in 1965 or for the Canadian Constitution to be repatriated in 1981. Yet, increasingly aware of its complicity in an outmoded past, the IODE expressed itself with decreasing confidence. Along with involving ‘others’, the cure was to attempt a clean-up and a face lift. First, the name was ‘changed’, and then the badge abandoned its Union Jack with outward radiating stars for each corner of the Empire, in favour of a logo of four maple leaves. Symbolically, the IODE became more Canadian-centred than ever before.

Of great significance was that in 1979 the IODE cleaned out its closets and donated the most of its documented history to the Public Archives of Canada, physically moving its written memory away from its national offices in Toronto and its everyday activities, rendering its past ‘history’. At approximately the same time, chapters across Canada began to make local deposits to provincial archives (see Note on sources). Physically out of sight, it would perhaps be possible for the IODE’s history to be out of mind, locked in the past. The result was that a meticulous collection of minute books, scrapbooks, memorabilia, a full run of the IODE’s quarterly magazine \textit{Echoes}, and other publications, was handed over to a safe resting place. Ironically, the IODE’s collection was professionally preserved and made available for historians so that they could consult the details of what was often considered a secret and mysterious organization.
Why did the IODE not follow the example of other organizations scared of future exposure and light a bonfire, letting its history go up in smoke? Such an action would have contradicted the very essence of the Order. The IODE has always taken itself seriously as a maker of history. In the post-Second World War years the IODE even purchased the services of a press agency so that its activities would be comprehensively recorded. It has constantly worked to perpetuate the memory of selected Canadian citizens and has invented ‘Canadiiana’. It was simply not possible for the IODE to make a clean break from its past because, as this book shows, the history of the IODE is about representation: the past as process.

The story related here is told from the perspective of a feminist historian, informed by the post-1970s debates over and developments in the writing of women into history. Thus far, women’s historians have paid little attention to the IODE. There are the publications that the IODE has itself produced (see Note on sources), but, to date, critical work on the IODE is limited to five MA dissertations, my own PhD thesis and some articles by Nancy Sheehan. Sheehan’s useful work focuses on the IODE’s early years, and its endeavours with children and education. That it has taken so long for a history of the IODE to be written can be explained by a number of factors. First, as subsequent chapters will discuss in detail, the IODE is a conservative organization. Hence, its patriotism and politics have not fitted the agenda of a women’s and gender history intent on recovering past women’s organizations as role-models for a leftist second-wave feminism. Second, as an organization of female imperialists, and with citizenship and democracy at its centre, the IODE has not fitted neatly with the widely influential public and private spheres framework which has held so much sway with women’s historians. Overall, both inside and outside of the academy, there has been a lack of recognition given to women’s everyday influence in matters of citizenship and democracy.

Historians are only just beginning to grasp the past realms of a ‘separate spheres’ framework that has considered nation, empire and government to be located in a ‘public’ sphere of commerce and economy, separate from women’s ‘natural’ place in a ‘private’ realm of care and nurture. Despite acknowledgements of the limits to the separate spheres framework, as Carol Pateman indicated a while ago now, ‘the dichotomy between the private and the public is central to almost two centuries of feminist writing and political struggle’. The task of refining and nuancing our understandings of such complex, diverse and ever-changing spheres has for long captured the attention of women’s historians. Work during the past ten years has challenged the assumption of two discrete realms, and has shown how closely linked
and intertwined family, sexuality, gender, imperialism, nation and citizenship were. I build upon this literature and contribute new insights about a female imperialist organization’s relationship to the British Empire and the Canadian nation state. My perspective elaborates on the work of women’s historians. That there is now a vibrant field of gender and history is testament to the efforts of such historians from the 1970s onwards. In this book I continue many of the themes of Canadian women’s history, such as the significance of women’s voluntary work, immigration, welfare and children, and education. I also develop newer themes of colonization, gender and hegemony, along lines similar to those of Karen Dubinsky regarding Niagara Falls as a ‘contact zone’ between travel and race/ethnicity, of Cecilia Morgan on Laura Secord and narratives of Canadian loyalist history, of Myra Rutherdale on Anglican women missionaries as agents of colonization in the Pacific northwest and the Arctic, and Adele Perry on gender, race and sexuality in nineteenth-century British Columbia. In centring Canada and examining Anglo-Celtic women as empire builders, nation builders and colonizers, this book makes a distinctively Canadian contribution to the international literature on women and imperialism.

In rendering the IODE essential to the construction of Anglo-Canadian identity, I continue to grapple with the historical construction of the public and private spheres, and how women were placed, and how they placed themselves, at once in the spaces of domesticity and citizenship. I follow Anne McClintock in accusing male theorists – of imperialism and post-colonialism – of failing to explore the gendered dynamics of the subject. It is time to gender national, imperial and colonial spaces. The cult of domesticity was ‘a crucial, if concealed, dimension of male, as well as female identities, shifting and unstable as these were, and an indispensible element both of the industrial market and imperial enterprise’.

Along with gender, race and class must be taken into consideration, and the admission made that not all women are the same: that identities are multiple and complex. Writing about the female subject in history, Denise Riley states that ‘most commonly, you will skate across the several identities which will take your weight, relying on the most useful for your purposes of the moment’. She is quick to caution, however, that while ‘it is impossible to thoroughly be a woman, it’s also impossible never to be one’. Such re-thinking does, however, allow the admission that, because of race and class identities, women sometimes oppress other women. Vron Ware has suggested that ‘gender played a crucial role in organizing ideas of “race” and “civilization”, and women were involved in many different ways in the expansion and maintenance of the Empire’.
There is now a vast historical literature on gender, race and colonialism. The 1990s saw prominent feminist journals devoting special issues to research and discussion. Conferences were devoted to the importance of gender and race in the history of nation, empire and colony, while edited collections brought together an array of diverse work. Anna Davin’s 1978 article ‘Imperialism and motherhood’ set the trajectory for an examination of the importance of gender to imperialism. Subsequent work set out to recover and celebrate a unified white woman subject and her presence in imperial projects. Such an approach was quickly problematized by those who linked gender and race, grappling with the complicity of women in imperial projects. It was startlingly clear that it was not enough merely to recover and chronicle women’s presence in the imperial project, and that race would have to be taken seriously. This led to admissions that white women have ‘benefited from the economic and political subjugation of indigenous people and shared many of the accompanying attitudes of racism, paternalism, ethnocentrism, and national chauvinism’. White women were not ‘the hapless onlookers of empire, but were ambiguously complicit both as colonizers and colonized, privileged and restricted, acted upon and acting’. There was a deconstruction of ‘white’ women, to ‘get away from the assumption that to be white is to be normal, while to be not-white is to occupy a racial category with all its attendant meanings’. The awkward question of the white feminist response to racism added another dimension to the history of the women’s club movement and first-wave feminism. Such concerns provide a context for my history of the IODE. An examination of the IODE’s work and beliefs reveals the organization as a forgotten colonizer.

Another concern in the proliferation of work on gender, race and colonialism is the reconfiguration of ‘home’ and ‘away’. Here, work on travel literature, notably that of Mary Louise Pratt, collapses ‘cores’ and ‘peripheries’. Antoinette Burton suggests that ‘the United Kingdom could be as much of a “contact zone” as the colonies themselves’. This book centres Canada as its contact zone, and continues the complication of national and imperial borders. Yet, it is important to retain a strong sense of uneven power, and of the irony in the IODE’s attempt to mimic a revered British core that was considered, and considered itself to be, superior.

We should also be wary of limiting definitions of ‘travel’ to adventure and exploration. Sara Mills has made a call to ‘resist the projection of imperial expansion as adventure, and concentrate more on the lived experience of all those involved in colonial life, to analyse domestic and women’s spaces and see beyond the “heroic” adventures of
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male travellers’. Travel should not be viewed as separate from the ‘everyday’. Indeed, historically, immigration accounts for the greatest volume of travellers. The IODE and other patriotic organizations were well aware of the essentially pragmatic need for immigration in order to realize their goals. The renewed focus on domesticity and ‘the everyday’, however, means asserting, in a modified way, that colonialism is about motherhood and domesticity beyond elite women travellers or the viewing of women as symbols of home and purity, marginal to the process of colonialism. It is between the spaces of imperialism and nationalism, of ‘public’, ‘private’ and ‘the everyday’, that I tell the story of the IODE. The terrain I explore is replete with tensions, contradictions and ironies.

The first chapter offers a genealogy of the IODE, detailing the structure of the organization and placing it in imperial context. I show how the IODE’s set-up has itself represented its vision for Anglo-Canadian identity, and Canada’s place within the Empire. The second chapter covers the beginning years of the IODE, through to the end of the First World War. It introduces the ‘racial hierarchy’ of the IODE, and its preference for British immigration, that was to prove so important during the twentieth century. It covers the IODE’s work with immigrants, and then its maternal war-time labour. The third chapter looks at the 1920s and the growing importance of ‘canadianization’: the assimilation of all ‘others’ into Canadian identity. In the fourth chapter the focus is on the lengths to which the IODE would go to produce a Canada that emulated Britain, with a case study of the 1928 English Schoolgirl Tour of Canada. The tour also provided a statement of what an Anglo-Canada in the late 1920s should be. The persistence of and the changes in Anglo-Canadian identity through the 1930s are examined in the fifth chapter, which also documents the effects of the Second World War in re-defining and shifting this identity towards centring Canada. The sixth chapter examines the innovative work of the IODE in memorialization and considers war memorials as producers of identity, again tracing the shifts from colonial British space to national Canadian space. Chapter seven looks at Cold War Canada, including the often ignored gendering of democracy, and considers the effects of the perceived Communist threat on Canadian identity. It argues that the IODE’s representation of democracy changed during the Cold War and that this change involved an ideological as well as a spatial shift away from Britain toward North America. The eighth chapter continues consideration of the influence of the USA and looks to the IODE’s most recent projects in the Canadian north. It covers the demise of the ‘racial hierarchy’ and the IODE’s corresponding shift of focus away from immigrants to the canadianizing of ‘new’ Canadians.
This chapter shows the IODE negotiating a position increasingly away from that of government, moving towards children and individuals as the focus of its ‘charity’. The Conclusion examines the contemporary fragmented construction of an Anglo-Canadian identity based upon mimicking Britain, while also revealing the considerable continuity with and re-presentation of the past that exists.

Notes

1 Interview, 8 November 1993: Kingston, Ontario.
2 Interview, 18 April 1994: Regina, Saskatchewan.
3 Interview, 12 February 1994: Sillery, Quebec.
5 Homi Bhabha, The Location of Culture [London and New York: Routledge, 1994], 2.
9 Eric Hobsbawn and Terence Ranger [eds], The Invention of Tradition [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983].
13 Michael Dawson, The Mountie from Dime Novel to Disney [Toronto: Between the Lines, 1998].
16 Karen Dubinsky, The Second Greatest Disappointment: Honeymooning and Tourism at Niagara Falls [Toronto: Between the Lines, 1999].
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19 Phillip Buckner, ‘Whatever happened to the British Empire?’ *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association*, 4 [1994], 3–32.


24 National Archives of Canada [hereafter NAC] MG28 I 17, 10.


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31 Denise Riley, ‘Am I that Name?*: Feminism and the Category of ‘Women’ in History (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988), 114.


34 See Roach, Pierson and Chaudhuri, *Nation, Empire, Colony*.


