Giving Masculinity a History: Some Contributions from the Historiography of Colonial India

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Contemporary historiography, especially in North American, European and Australian history, now includes a fairly respectable body of literature on men and masculinity. At its best, this scholarship has gone well beyond the limitations of ‘sex-role theory’, and the sex-role socialisation of men, to make important and valuable contributions to the recognition of gender as a ‘useful category of historical analysis’. Yet the new interest in ‘masculinity’ and the related development of ‘men’s studies’ and the ‘men’s movement’ has also produced a certain wariness within feminist scholarship, the latter being of course the main inspiration for the critical attention to gendered identities. After having pioneered the call to study constructions of masculinity as much as of femininity, however, many feminist scholars have now become more cautious in response to some trends within the new scholarship, sensing a potential evasion of the central feminist problematic: the gendered organisation of power. It may still be necessary to be reminded of the question that R. W. Connell, whose own pioneering work on gender and masculinity consistently refuses such evasions, asks in connection with a recent collection of essays on masculinity: What, exactly, is involved in writing a history of masculinity? I invoke this double legacy of the scholarship on men and masculinity to reflect on the potential contribution that the historiography of colonial India offers to the study of masculinity.

Until recently, the urgent task for women’s history, as well as for gender studies and feminist scholarship more generally, was to make the history of women ‘visible’. It soon became apparent, however, that in many ways it is men who have no history. To be sure, almost the entire corpus of historical scholarship that does not specifically allude to ‘women’ is, and always has been, about the doings of men. Yet, in the sense that Michael Kimmel suggests, these have not been histories of men as men. For, according to Kimmel, to write the histories of men as men would require at the least an examination of how the construction and experience of manhood has informed the course and meanings of the activities of men. It would
also require an examination of the ways in which the meanings of manhood and masculinity have differed across different groups and classes and changed over the course of history, and a critical analysis of the ways in which the pursuit of an always-elusive ideal of masculinity has animated some of the central events of history. It is in this sense, then, that he argues that men and masculinity were until recently barely visible in history.

The emergence of masculinity as a category of historical analysis, however, occupies a somewhat paradoxical position in the gendered mode of analyses that have gained currency in the contemporary historiography of colonial India. The scholarship on gender in colonial India has by and large been about women. Both social histories of gender relations in colonial India and discursive analyses of the gendered constructions of colonialism and nationalism have tended to focus on women. Yet this scholarship as a whole – notwithstanding the variety of its theoretical and methodological orientations – has also contributed to giving the history of masculinity in colonial India a certain visibility. On the one hand, therefore, there remains a relative dearth of scholarship on men and masculinities in colonial India. On the other hand, however, the existing scholarship on gender has served to denaturalise the history of men and masculinities in significant ways. This paradoxical situation, I want to suggest, is not a sign of weakness. Rather, it holds enormous potential for developing adequately contextualised histories of masculinity in which masculinity itself is understood as constituted by, as well as constitutive of, a wide set of social relations. Masculinity, seen thus, traverses multiple axes of race, caste, class, sexuality, religion, and ethnicity. Masculinity, that is to say, cannot be confined solely within its supposedly ‘proper’ domain of male–female relations. The contribution of the historiography of colonial India, then, is significant precisely as an example of what would be involved in writing a history of masculinity.

There are several ways, indeed, in which the existing historiography of colonial India provides fertile ground for further explorations of the history of masculinity. At the most obvious level, the historiography of colonial India forces a reconsideration of the seeming embodiments of what Ed Cohen has referred to as the “imaginary” mappings of bodily difference (i.e. ‘masculinity’ and ‘femininity’). In other words, it makes considerations of power central to the assignment of qualitative attributes to bodily signifiers of difference. The context for this problematising of gendered categories comes of course from the peculiar investment of colonial power in India in the cult of manliness and masculinity. Historians of Victorian and Edwardian Britain have already charted the shifting ‘cult of manliness’ in Britain and its particular articulation with British imperialism. This has meant that the impact of such bastions of male culture as the Victorian public schools and the ‘clubland’ and of the ideals of Victorian manliness, athleticism, and militarism, has featured centrally in studies of British or Anglo-Indian society in India, especially in accounts of the colonial Indian bureaucracy and the Indian Army. On the Indian side, moreover, scholars
have explored an equivalent elite male culture among the rajas and maharajas of Princely India and in such institutions as Mayo College and Doon School, initially founded under colonial auspices for the socialisation of the sons of the Indian aristocracy in appropriate ‘manly’ behaviour.\textsuperscript{12} Of greater significance, perhaps, have been studies of the ubiquity of the colonialist stereotype of ‘effeminacy’ and of the development after the revolt of 1857 of an elaborate colonialist ethnography of ‘martial’ and ‘non-martial’ races in India for the purposes of reorganising the recruitment of Indians to the Indian Army. The contrasts in imperialist thinking between the so-called ‘manly’ peoples of the Punjab and the North-West Frontier Provinces and the ‘effeminate’ peoples of Bengal and the more ‘settled’ regions of British India, or between virile Muslims and effeminate Hindus, have long been known to scholars of colonial India. At its best, this scholarship has shed light on such things as the exercise of bureaucratic control in colonial India through the recruitment of men of different regions, religions, castes and classes into various colonial institutions and the implications of the internalisation of ideas about effeminacy by a certain class of Indians.\textsuperscript{13} Although much of this scholarship, like the early accounts of the cult of manliness in metropolitan British society, has not been concerned with gender ideology per se, it has nevertheless served to clear the ground for a more profound troubling of gendered categories. This subsequent scholarship has achieved a fuller articulation of masculinity with relations of power.

In recent years, especially in the wake of Edward Said’s pathbreaking work on the discursive constructions of imperial power, the gendering of imperial power has received considerable attention.\textsuperscript{14} Although Said himself made only passing references to such things as the eroticisation of the ‘Orient’ as female and to the feminisation of the colonised male in relation to the colonising male in colonial discourse, he inspired a generation of scholars to explore the specifically gendered implications of colonial discourse. In the particular context of the British in India, moreover, the gendered investments of colonial discourse have been further elaborated and modified to render masculinity in particular more visible. So in \textit{The Rhetoric of English India}, for example, Sara Suleri complicates the familiar trope in colonial discourse of heterosexual rape – the figuration of the colonised country as a woman raped by the coloniser – by way of the more complex dynamics of a ‘deferred homosexual decorum’.\textsuperscript{15} For Suleri, then, an underlying script of homosocial eroticism – figured in the encounter between hypermasculinised British men and effeminate Indian men – subtended British colonial discourse in India and relegated women, both British and Indian, to the peripheries of an exchange essentially ‘between men’.\textsuperscript{16} The most influential elaboration of the implications of the hypermasculinist discourse of British Orientalism in India, however, comes from the pioneering work of Ashis Nandy on the psychology of colonialism. Nandy focuses on what he calls a ‘language of homology between the
sexual and the political’ in colonial culture. Nandy suggests that the rigid dichotomy between the masculine and the feminine that was part of the gender ideologies of the post-Enlightenment West was manifested in the hypermasculinity of British imperial ideology in India, which reshaped the more fluid and diffuse gender identities in Indian tradition. For the masculinised ethos of aggressive-but-gentlemanly competition among the British was accepted by much of the nineteenth-century Indian male elite, according to Nandy, who took the existence of British domination as proof of a masculine superiority that they should emulate. Thus Nandy identifies M. K. Gandhi’s profound challenge to British colonialism as lying precisely in his refusal to accept the inherent superiority of a ‘masculinity’ that was increasingly equated with rationality, materialism, and physical strength.

While various aspects of the binary that Nandy constructs between ‘Western’ and ‘traditional’ Indian masculinity remain problematic, his work has inspired much of the subsequent literary and historical work on the construction and reconstruction of masculinity in colonial India.

What the scholarship in the wake of Nandy has demonstrated is precisely the centrality of questions of power to any history of masculinity. Much of this scholarship has, not surprisingly, focused on the Bengali Hindu bhadralok (elite or respectable class) that, throughout the nineteenth century, was perhaps most noted for its peculiarly symbiotic relationship with the colonial British elite. In the case of Bengal, moreover, there was a particularly physical dimension to the Bengali bhadralok’s self-perception of effemeness that was manifested in the flowering of the new physical culture of akharas (gymnasia) in the nineteenth century and in the later masculinist subculture of secret terrorist societies in the early twentieth century. There was also a certain pointed dimension to the masculine anxieties that plagued the leading nineteenth-century male figures among the Bengali bhadralok, who developed elaborate and creative responses to the perceived crisis of masculinity. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee tried in his writings to respond to Bengali effeminacy (the Bharata Kalanka or the Indian Stigma) by reconstructing the iconic figure of Krishna, cleansed of his famed qualities of sensuality and playfulness, and thus sublimated into a new representation of masculinity defined by love of action and rational self-control. Ramakrishna Paramhansa defiantly and ambivalently appropriated representations both of the masculine and the feminine in his own self-presentation, a response that prefigured Gandhi’s construction of his persona as both father and mother to his disciples. Swami Vivekananda aggressively advocated a masculinised Bengali and Hindu identity that combined Hindu spirituality with the ‘Western’ emphasis on physical strength to create his own brand of a superior Indian/Hindu spiritual masculinity. This ‘redemptive pedagogy of manliness’ in Bengal, indeed, is the focus of a new book by Indira Chowdhury in which she examines the creation and re-creation of masculinity in a network of institutions from the Hindu Mela of the 1870s to the popular songs of the Swadeshi movement of 1905.
This internalisation of effeminacy, as various scholars have shown, was itself part of a new hegemonising project that assured the dominance of a predominantly elite, upper caste, and Hindu masculinity in the process of remasculinisation.\textsuperscript{26} The sense of ‘effeminacy’, of course, has characterised other social groups in varying degrees and for a variety of reasons in different historical periods; so, for example, effeminacy emerged as part of the self-perception of Parsis in post-independent India partly in response to a perceived sense of decline in their status from the colonial period.\textsuperscript{27} The larger point, indeed, is that the scholarship on masculinity in the colonial context has helped lay the ground for histories of masculinity that go beyond the mere tracking of changing historical and cultural perceptions of masculinity. It suggests, in fact, that histories of masculinity can be – and, indeed, should be – more fundamentally about relations of power: a network variously criss-crossed by hierarchies of race, class, caste, gender, and sexuality.

At a second level, and following in many ways from the first, the historiography of colonial India also makes visible both the relational construction of masculinity and the anxieties percolating within its norms. This has been an important implication, for example, of much of the scholarship on the gendered construction of national and communal identities in India. Hence Partha Chatterjee, one of the most influential theorists of official nationalism in India, identifies an elaborate gendered dichotomy between an inner/spiritual and outer/material world as crucial to the construction of national identity in India.\textsuperscript{28} Given the ‘constitutive contradictions’ of a belated nationalism under conditions of colonialism, he suggests, Indian nationalists located their own autonomous identity in the inner/spiritual world while conceding superiority to the West in the outer/material world. The discursive strategies of Indian nationalism, having acknowledged its own surrender and impotence in the ‘outer’ world of men, thus invested the figure of the Indian Woman with the burden of an authentic Indian identity.\textsuperscript{29} Henceforth, indeed, the terms for the emancipation and self-emancipation of women were set within the parameters of a new and improved nationalist patriarchy. One implication to be drawn from this gendered analysis of nationalism is that the consequent nationalist investment in the reconstruction of the Indian home and of Indian domesticity was as much about an ambivalence in the construction of masculinity as about a normative construction of femininity.

The context for the relational construction of masculine identities is further expanded in the work of Sumit Sarkar, who looks beyond the binary of coloniser and colonised to illuminate the masculine anxieties of lower-middle-class men in nineteenth-century Bengal. His analysis of the construction of masculinity in the context of the confinement of a majority of the Bengali middle-class males to the slavery of chakri, or petty clerical work under the particular conditions of the colonial political economy in Bengal, raises interesting questions about the relationship of masculinity to work and to specific forms of property relations.\textsuperscript{30}
men’s culture against the background of *chakri*, and against the supposedly debilitating attractions associated with *kanchan* (gold) and *kamini* (women), offers a picture of a colonial middle class that is much more internally divided in terms of status than has been commonly assumed. What these different contexts for the construction of masculinity reveal, however, is precisely the extent to which masculine identities are constructed in relationship to men of other communities no less than to women.

The new interest in masculinity has been most marked, perhaps, in the scholarship on the gendered politics of communalism (religious sectarianism) in colonial as well as contemporary India. One context for this interest is provided by the reconfiguration of gendered politics in the current ascendancy of the Hindu Right in contemporary India. So, for example, the rhetoric that accompanied the demolition by right-wing Hindu communal groups of the Babri Masjid (mosque) in 1992, on the ostensible ground of reclaiming Ram Janmabhumi (the birthplace of Ram), appealed both to a remasculinised figure of Ram (the hero of the eponymous Indian epic *Ramayana*) as Hindu saviour and to an infantilised Ram lalla or ‘baby Ram’ (evoking women’s maternal protection). This marked a broader shift in the image of the Hindu Right in contemporary India from disillusioned young men with ‘khaki shorts and saffron flags’ to assertive women in saffron robes spouting hate-filled speech. For the militant Hindu organisations of late colonial India, which drew mainly from the ranks of urban teenage boys ‘not yet corrupted and made timid by family concerns, university students and lower middle classes such as shopkeepers and clerks’, had been associated with a very different kind of hypermasculinist rhetoric in which women’s own agency was considered marginal at best. The study of communal riots, both before and during the eventual Partition of the subcontinent in 1947, has demonstrated both the ways in which women’s actual bodies were the sites for demarcating and violating the boundaries of communities and the ways in which the men of rival communities were constructed as the rapists and abductors of hapless women. So, also, the examination of the gendered rhetoric of communalism has revealed the significance of such notions as those of male honour and shame, as well as of calls for male revenge and for tests of manhood, in keeping the fires of Hindu, Muslim, and Sikh communalisms burning. The hypermasculinist rhetoric of Hindu communalism, furthermore, reconstructed the ‘virility’ of the Hindu not just in relation to women and to men of ‘other’ communities, but also against men who, although defined as part of the same community, were held responsible for its decline and emasculation. Hence, as Gyanendra Pandey notes, ever since the 1940s militant Hindu organisations have periodically raised the question: ‘How Mahatma Gandhi with his “feminine” *charkha* (spinning wheel) can possibly be considered the “Father of the Nation”?’. What this scholarship amply demonstrates is that masculinity is constructed neither in isolation from the full dynamics of social relations nor on the basis of a self-evident foundation. In this sense,
then, it suggests that masculinity cannot be adequately studied in terms of the self-contained history of any particular group.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the knowledge about masculinity that emerges from the scholarship on shifting gender relations in colonial India serves as a timely reminder that masculinity needs to be examined not just in the context of cultural representations but also in the context of material and ideological arrangements. Just a few examples must suffice here. The work of Tanika Sarkar on nineteenth-century Bengal is suggestive in positing Hindu domesticity – constructed as a space of love and affection, and of the wife’s willing surrender to the husband – as a central site for Hindu male identity in colonial India, given that his access to rights in the colonial public sphere remained limited. Having allowed himself to be colonised and having surrendered his autonomy to the West, the Hindu male now constructed a vision of Hindu domesticity in which the ‘chaste body of the Hindu woman’ carried the burden of marking the difference of the Hindu from the West. The crucial point for Sarkar, as her analysis of debates over such practices as child marriage and premature sexual intercourse demonstrates, is precisely the particular domestic arrangements that this construction of masculinity sustained.

Similarly, when Uma Chakravarti examines the reconstitution of ‘Brahmanical patriarchy’ in nineteenth-century western India under pressure from the processes of caste contestation, class-formation, and the emergence of nationalism, her interest is in the ideological and material practices that sustain, and are sustained by, issues of gender. Yet another context for masculinity as a material and ideological arrangement is suggested in Padma Anagol-McGinn’s study of that peculiar pattern of public sexual harassment of women by men that is today known in both official and popular discourse in India as ‘Eve teasing’. The skewed urbanisation of colonial India – which resulted in a preponderance of men in the cities as the result of a pattern of recruiting migrant male labour for mills and industries that necessitated leaving behind females in rural areas – provides the historical context in which Anagol-McGinn locates her study of the phenomenon of Eve-teasing. What this scholarship on gender relations in colonial India strongly suggests is that the project of ‘recasting men’, like the argument that Kumkum Sangari and Sudesh Vaid make about ‘recasting women’, cannot be abstracted from an entire range of social arrangements and their cumulative material and ideological effects.

What I have been suggesting so far, then, is that there is much to build upon, despite a relative absence of histories devoted specifically to the exploration of masculinity, from the ways in which masculinity has been made visible in the scholarship on gender in colonial India. From here, indeed, there are several possible directions in which a scholarship explicitly about masculinity may proceed. One direction is best represented in Rosalind O’Hanlon’s essay ‘Issues of Masculinity in North Indian History: The Bangash Nawabs of Farrukhabad’, on the political culture of late

pre-colonial India. Here O’Hanlon examines the gendered culture of the ‘codes of martial bravery and correct manly behaviour’ as they were used to cement alliances between rulers and their clients and between mercenary leaders and their warbands in the politically volatile context of the relative decline of Mughal power in north India and the rise of numerous regional power-holders. O’Hanlon suggests that the norms of military masculinity, once so successfully deployed by the Mughal rulers to recruit elite supporters, gradually declined as rival models of military masculinity emerged to challenge the Mughal model. She establishes the centrality of a Mughal ‘imperial masculinity’ – a code that was both shared and competed over by rival political elites – in the working of the eighteenth-century political system in north India. The terms of this ‘imperial masculinity’, as O’Hanlon’s analysis of a Mughal military servant’s manipulation of its codes suggests, were defined in a variety of contexts: the contrast between the simple and manly world of the soldier, on the one hand, and the ‘womanly realm of the harem’ and the ‘luxurious world of the court’, on the other; the ethos of fighting contests between warriors at court; the courtly ethos of recreational hunting and animal fights; and, of course, the experience of the battlefield itself. The codes of ‘imperial masculinity’, she suggests, defined ‘what it meant to be a man [in the political elite] in 18th century north India at the level of individual identity and experience’.

The direction taken by O’Hanlon’s richly contextualised study of the gendered culture of eighteenth-century north Indian politics – and, in particular, of masculinity – is one that constructs a scholarship about masculinity around a history of men as gendered beings. O’Hanlon, indeed, defines masculinity as ‘that aspect of a man’s social being which is gendered: which defines him as a man and links him to other men, and conditions other aspects of his identity, such as of class, occupation, race, and ethnicity’. Working with this definition, her analysis succeeds not only in looking at a familiar aspect of eighteenth-century north Indian politics in a new light – political diplomacy, alliances, and negotiations – but also in reconsidering the nature and implications of the gendered articulation of British colonial power later in the century. This latter consideration, as O’Hanlon herself points out, is the broader implication of her study. First, as she suggests, her study of ‘imperial masculinity’ in pre-colonial India makes clear that British colonial culture was certainly not the first to deploy masculinity as a form of power and may, indeed, have built on earlier such deployments of masculinity. Her challenge here is directed quite explicitly at Nandy’s claim that martial Kshatriya traditions were a relatively minor part of pre-colonial culture in India until they were inflated by the hypermasculinist culture of British colonial rule. The supposed break between the fluid gender identities of pre-colonial India and the rigid gender identities introduced under the British may, indeed, be in need of some qualification. Second, since the shared codes of imperial masculinity were
defined primarily in an ‘outdoor world of the contest, the game, the hunt, and the battlefield’ – and explicitly against the ‘indoor realms of court, household and harem’ – they provided a space that brought men together in ‘contests about and in recognition of commonalities of gender that often transcended other forms of cultural difference’. The decline of this world of imperial masculinity – especially its integrative potential for the Hindu or Muslim, Rajput, Maratha or Pathan to compete within a broadly shared code of martial masculinity – had implications for the redrawing of sectional and communal boundaries in India. Finally, with the contraction of opportunities for the expression of this imperial masculinity under British rule, the indoor realm of household and family acquired greater significance in the social world in India. This had important implications both for women and for the nature of the transformation of gender relations under colonial rule.

What O’Hanlon’s approach demonstrates, indeed, is precisely what can be achieved by filling out the history of men as gendered beings in late pre-colonial as in colonial India. There remain, indeed, vast areas of scholarship in which the history of men as gendered beings has scarcely begun to be made visible: in working-class culture; in the construction of sexualities; in subaltern politics; in social movements; and in popular culture, to name only a few. Yet, as Judith Allen suggests in a different context, one tendency of such an approach might be to assume, rather than explain, the ‘relationship between male bodies (men) and historical forms of masculinity’. Hence manifestations of masculinity (and femininity) can always already be found in the ‘home’, ‘the workplace’, ‘the neighbourhood’, and so on. While providing illustrations of a certain masculinity (and a certain femininity), such an approach may not exhaust the political efficacy or ideological significance of masculinity. It risks assuming an underlying continuity of real women [and real men], above whose constant bodies changing aerial descriptions dance.

A second direction for explorations of masculinity is represented in my own work Colonial Masculinity: The ‘Manly’ Englishman and the ‘Effeminate’ Bengali in the Late Nineteenth Century. One aim of this work is to bring together the existing scholarship on masculinity in colonial India with the gender-studies scholarship concerned more explicitly with providing gendered modes of analysis of colonialism and nationalism. In so doing, I bring to an exploration of masculinity many of the traditional concerns of a feminist-inspired scholarship on the implications of the gendered organisation of social relations in colonial Indian society. Another aim of my work is to bring a historical-materialist approach to the analysis of colonial masculinity that posits the entire imperial social formation as the unit of its analysis. The heuristic model of an imperial social formation for the study of colonial masculinity is meant to enable the following: first, to bring together the formation of ‘English’ masculinity and ‘Bengali’ effeminacy within the same field of analysis by examining their mutual constitution in
the historical contingencies of specific practices of colonial rule; and second, to explore the resulting ‘colonial masculinity’ as the product of the mediations of various contradictions both between coloniser and colonised and within each group arising out of the divisions of gender, caste, class, status, religious and provincial identities. I thus reject the tendency to overlook the ways in which the colonial encounter itself produced both the hypermasculinist rhetoric of the colonial British elite and its corollary: the distinction, as elaborated and given new meaning by a racialising colonial ethnography, between a ‘manly’ and ‘effeminate’ native elite. British hypermasculinity, then, is understood not as constituted within Britain itself and then merely transplanted to India as the basis for distinguishing between ‘manly’ and ‘unmanly’ native races. I see British masculinity, no less than native masculinity, as shaped by the contingent practices of colonial rule. In other words, ‘masculinity’ in my analysis acquires its meaning only in specific practices: it has no a priori context or origin.

The direction represented by *Colonial Masculinity*, then, is one that entails a dislodging of masculinity from its privileged grounding in (the biologically sexed bodies of) ‘real men’. For giving priority to this context – even when such an approach acknowledges interconnections with other axes of power – does not render sufficiently problematic the always mediated relationship between male bodies and masculinity. In this sense, the book neither attempts to provide a single definition of colonial masculinity nor seeks to exhaust all the possible terrains for the articulation of colonial masculinity. Rather, the term ‘colonial masculinity’ here quite specifically encapsulates the overdetermined terrain for the encounters between the colonial British elite and the Bengali Hindu middle class at a specific historical moment in the imperial social formation of the late nineteenth century. The implication of this approach is that the meaning of masculinity itself is derived from the specific power relations that it is deployed to reproduce in particular historical contexts. This second direction for the scholarship on masculinity, then, is based on a more radical problematising of masculinity as such. The meaning of ‘masculinity’ studied thus is constituted in practices that cover the full range of social relations.

From a certain reading of its contribution, then, the historiography of colonial India holds crucial implications for the broader scholarship on masculinity. For the real contribution of this historiography, to paraphrase Joan Scott in a different context, may well lie in more than just establishing that masculinity was an important issue in history: for it has also laid the foundation for giving masculinity itself a history. One implication of recognising the multiple social relations that were reproduced by the politics of masculinity in colonial India, indeed, is to be compelled to think beyond an easy equation between men and masculinity. This means that there is no domain where masculinity necessarily or naturally belongs, no foundation or anchor that could allow one to trace the progress of a continuous, albeit changing, relation between men and masculinity. Lacking any secure...
ground for masculinity, then, a history of masculinity still to come may find that the unit of analysis most adequate to its study is the social as defined in the broadest of terms. If masculinity and maleness are delinked, then the domain of ‘masculinity’ need no longer be confined to histories of men as gendered beings. It can be opened up, instead, to historical analyses of its rhetorical and ideological efficacy in underwriting various arrangements of power. Herein may lie the most radical implication of the historiography of colonial India: the realisation that there may be no proper or predetermined subject for a history of masculinity.

Notes


5. See the title of a book that was an early pioneer in the modern field of women’s history, Claudia Koonz and Renate Bridenthal (eds), Becoming Visible: Women in European History (Houghton Mifflin and Co., Boston, 1977).


7. For overviews of the historiography on women and gender in India, see Barbara Ramusack, ‘From Symbol to Diversity: The Historical Literature on Women in India’, South Asia Research, 10 (1990), pp. 139–57; and Tanika Sarkar, ‘Women’s Histories and Feminist Writings in India: A Review and A Caution’, Plenary Address to the Seventh Berkshire Conference on Women’s History, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, June 1996.


The Imperial Imagination: Magic and Myth in Kipling’s India (Wesleyan University Press, Middletown, CT, 1983).


19. For my critique of Nandy’s binary of ‘Western’ and ‘traditional’ Indian conceptions of masculinity, see Mrinalini Sinha, Colonial Masculinity: The ‘Manly’ Englishman and the ‘Effeminate’ Bengali in the Late Nineteenth Century (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1995; reprinted Kali for Women Press, New Delhi, 1998), Introduction.


29. I explore the implications of this discourse on the particular construction of the gendered citizen-subject in India in my forthcoming book Refashioning Mother India: The Advent of a Nationalist ‘Indian’ Modernity in Late Colonial India.


35. See, for example, Papiya Ghosh, ‘The Virile and the Chaste in Community and Nation Making: Bihar 1920s to 1940s’, Social Scientist, 22 (1994), pp. 80–89.


38. I am drawing here from Uma Chakravarti’s critique of gender analyses that reduce gender to a representational phenomenon rather than examine gender as a material and ideological arrangement; see Uma Chakravarti, Rewriting History: The Life and Times of Pandita Ramabai (Kali for Women, New Delhi, 1998).


51. See J. Allen, ‘Discussion: Mundane Men’. I find the distinction that Allen makes here useful; I read her against the grain, however, in not subscribing to an ‘analytics of origin: sex, sexual distinctions, and sexual politics in history’ for studies of masculinity.
55. For one example of the theoretical challenge to the ‘naturalised’ relation between men and masculinity, see Judith Halberstam, Female Masculinity (Duke University, Durham, 1998); and ‘Annamarie Jagose Interviews Judith Halberstam, “Masculinity without Men”’, Genders, 29 (1999).