COMPLICITY AND RESISTANCE: FRENCH WOMEN'S COLONIAL NONFICTION

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Opportune Zongo
Empire has traditionally been viewed as a masculine endeavor. Only in the past few decades, along with the rise of gender history, have scholars to a meaningful extent taken up the study of women and gender in the context of empire. This thesis examines the complexity of French women’s intellectual thought about the colonies during the time period of 1900-1962, which includes both the climax and the breakdown of the French colonial empire. Many other studies of colonial fiction have prevailed in this field, addressing cultural history in particular, but women’s nonfiction remains to be examined in detail and in relation to intellectual history. This study thus consists of three chapters, each a case study of a different French woman’s nonfictional work. Through the lenses of gender and postcolonial theory, along with the aid of the literary theory of narratology, these women’s navigations between complicity and resistance with regard to colonial ideology in their writings can be articulated in a more detailed way.

Grace Corneau, author of *La femme aux colonies*, published in 1900, is the first writer to be profiled. An American who married a French nobleman, she was a journalist and author who published this work after living in Indochina and Africa.
Although Corneau was writing to recruit women to the colonies, she displays strategies of resistance related to her own gender ideology.

Clotilde-Chivas Baron, wife of a colonial administrator who lived *en brousse* in Indochina, is the second case study. A successful and award-winning fictional author, she also authored a comprehensive history of women in the colonies titled *La femme française aux colonies*. Written in 1929, her work demonstrates a retreat into bourgeois gender roles even as she has a more polemic purpose in writing— to correct misconceptions about the role of women in the colonies.

The third case study centers around Germaine Tillion, by far the most well-known and studied woman referenced in this thesis, who was involved in the French resistance, interned at Ravensbrück concentration camp, and then worked for the French government in Algeria during the Algerian War. A trained ethnologist who completed years of fieldwork in Algeria, she became an intellectual touchstone during the Algerian conflict for precisely this reason. Her works *Les ennemis complémentaires* and *L’Afrique bascule vers l’avenir*, published in 1960 and 1957 respectively, analyze the situation during the Algerian war and recommend a course of action for the future. Although she takes up the cause of the Algerians out of duty to fight for the oppressed (since she had been a Nazi concentration camp), she nevertheless fails to indict the system of colonialism for causing the Algerian conflict.

The juxtaposition of these three writers helps bring to light the realities of French women who were directly implicated in the colonial enterprise’s complicity
and/or resistance to colonial ideology, embedding these works into the context of colonial writing.
To my friends in Cameroon
I would like to thank Dr. Beatrice Guenther for her meticulous training, Dr. Beth Griech-Polelle for always encouraging me, and Drs. Brooks and Zongo for their comments and suggestions. Thank you all for being a part of my committee.
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INTRODUCTION: GENDER AND THE FRENCH EMPIRE

“Consciously or unconsciously accepting the “masculine attributes” of colonialism, most scholars have simply excluded or marginalized Western women from the focus of their studies.”

Since Chaudhuri and Strobel wrote this in 1992, the field of gender and imperialism has expanded exponentially. Clare Midgley identifies six areas of scholarship in this field, which include “white Western women and imperialism, the impact of empire on women in Britain, colonized women’s experiences, masculinity and empire, sexuality and empire, and gender and colonial discourse.” While some studies of the writing of the British empire exist, this field in French history has yet to be developed. This thesis examines the nonfiction writing of three women directly implicated in the colonial empire: Grace Corneau, Clotilde Chivas-Baron, and Germaine Tillion. These women, writing about 20 years in between each other, all spent significant time living in French colonial holdings, and subsequently wrote works of nonfiction expressing their views of French imperialism. All three of these women considered themselves patriots of la mère patrie, so that at first they seem to subscribe to the genre of colonial propaganda. Tillion is the only woman among the three whose work has been examined in great detail. For this reason, this study seeks to inscribe Corneau and Chivas-Baron into an intellectual history of French Empire.

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Gender historians have made it a priority to destabilize the study of history as a narrative of purely male subjectivity. In fact, “women’s voices and their texts were often obscured or lost altogether.”4 The number of sources written by women in colonial contexts is therefore limited for a number of reasons. Their voices in general were excluded from the colonial canon as not being a valid subject of study, coupled with the fact that far fewer French women migrated to the colonies compared with men. Thus, the limited number of sources that do exist promise to offer insights into a feminine colonial experience which the administrative record is less likely to provide. Moreover, taking into account the nationalistic nature of these temporary migrations to the colonies, at first glance it may seem like complicity to colonial ideology would be dominant in their work. However, the act of writing about the colonies, a nontraditional domain for women, actually serves to demonstrate tensions present in a colonial ideology which is gendered at the same time. This study will examine the question of whether the act of writing nonfiction about the colonies was complicit or resistant to French nationalism of their time, focusing on the work of three women. It does not seek to put their work into one stable category; rather, it will examine the tensions of complicity and resistance within each of the works. This study will add to the existing scholarship about women and imperialism in that it focuses on nonfiction, in contrast to many studies that have focused on fictional depictions of the colonies. Before describing the project in detail, the historiography of the subject must be examined in order to inform and direct this study.

Historiography of Gender and Empire

Postcolonialists were the first significant group to reexamine the field of imperial history in order to look at aspects such as the view of "the other" through a new perspective. Orientalism by Edward Said is, of course, arguably the most well-known example of this type of study. In this work, he examines cultural discourse of Western writers about the Middle East, and posits that they have contributed to Western cultural hegemony through the continual discourse of superiority of the West over supposed Middle Eastern “barbarianism.” He also articulates the concepts of strategic location and strategic formation, which examine the relationship between the author and the text, and the connections between groups of texts in producing and perpetuating a hegemonic discourse. Postcolonialist studies like Said’s are integral tools for interpreting colonial texts and describing the connections between the authors and colonial discourse which may influence their texts.

In the late 1980s, the topics of women and imperialism became legitimized as a sub-field of colonial history through the work of gender historians. This subject sparked the interest of Helen Callaway and Claudia Knapman, who emphasized white women’s roles as resisters to patriarchy and additionally focused on empowering the indigenous women with whom they worked. As a response to their works, Jane Haggis wrote an article in the Women’s Studies International Forum journal which critiqued their works as colonizing the study of gender in focusing solely on white women, while neglecting indigenous women. Although she acknowledged the importance of the subject of women and imperialism, she critiqued Callaway

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and Knapman’s studies for focusing too much on the “positive” contributions of the women, understood as “resistant” to dominant nationalist discourse. In a subsequent chapter, Haggis critiqued approaches to the study of European women and colonialism. The first is “recovery,” which seeks to fill in the gap in scholarship in regards to women in empire. Associated with women’s history, as opposed to gender history, this approach applies traditional methodologies to the study of women and imperialism. The second is “recuperative,” which works to destabilize the myth that women “ruined colonialism” by driving a wedge between men and the indigenous peoples when they started to migrate to the colonies. Thus Haggis’ work is an integral theoretical resource for the topic of gender and imperialism. Her insights show that a study which focuses on women who were more ostensibly supportive of colonialism are still worthwhile topics of study, as long as the research question posed is one that breaks the traditional mold of imperial history.

In the 1990s, the field of gender and imperialism flourished. One of the main themes of the scholarship of that time is that even though western women were complicit with the imperialism of the age, some found strategies to empower themselves or others in the context of patriarchal societies. Most of the scholarship from this time period covered British women. Western Women and Imperialism and Domesticating the Empire, for example, contain only a few chapters on French women, and Gender and Imperialism focuses on British colonialism, however, these works still offer invaluable insights into the field of gender and imperialism which can be applied to the French Empire.

As Chaudhuri and Strobel indicate in *Western Women and Imperialism: Complicity and Resistance*, not only has the scholarship on imperialism focused on men and men’s space, but in relation to women, there has been an interest in indigenous women as opposed to white women. They attempt to analyze the role of Western women in colonialism and the complexities that defined their role. Pointing out that one of the historian’s roles is to study ourselves, not only others, they indicate that scholarship exists which shows the role of imperialism in shaping gender ideology both in the colonies and at home. According to Chaudhuri and Strobel, many scholars have emphasized women’s roles as resisters to colonialism, when in fact they were also highly complicit, hence the complexity of their roles. In addition, they demonstrate that while feminist and women’s studies have taken an interest in women’s history in the colonies, they have chosen to depict more politically correct people who showed more elements of resistance instead of showing a more general picture of all the different views, whether imperial or not. The editors justify the overabundance of examples from British colonies in their own work, specifically India, by the fact that British India was one of the largest and longest held colonies.

Using a women’s studies approach, the essays in *Western Women and Imperialism* show the oscillation of white western women in their full complexity, including elements of complicity and resistance. In all of the instances, the authors demonstrate that white Western women showed both imperialistic and resistant tendencies, depending on the situation. They draw from examples in India, West Africa, Egypt, Algeria, and Southern Africa. For this reason, the editors indicate that any number of these subjects warrant further information. They also concentrate on various hierarchies- gender, race, class and even culture and age- to show how these factors influenced women’s actions and views of the other. The sources employed in these essays include travel writing, autobiographies, letters, and government documents. Chaudhuri and
Strobel’s work presents an indispensable guide in the topic of women and colonialism, and inspired the choice of women in this study, who are not necessarily the most noteworthy in terms of progressive politics.

Clare Midgley’s *Gender and Imperialism* compilation combines the approaches of British imperial history and the history of women and gender. In some ways, it is a critique of traditional imperial history, which has been historically used as discourse that reinforced imperial objectives. This edition is also a critique of postcolonial theory, which the editor believes lacks the tools for de-stabilizing colonial discourse when re-examining colonial sources. It seeks instead to writing women’s history from international perspectives. The editor observes that until that point, gender history has mainly been concerned with social history. She chose the material in order to enrich the picture of imperial history and portray that the colonizer and colonized groups were both diverse in their own respects. Focusing on British Empire, this study includes a section on more theoretical ideas, movements of resistances in the colonies of Australia, Ireland, India, and the Caribbean, and views of the empire from the metropolis. The chapters examine themes such as female agency, forms of feminism influenced by imperial and anti-colonial nationalisms, masculinity and empire, and engaging with post-colonial theory throughout. This study addresses the problem of finding indigenous women’s voices by using sources such as interviews carried out by missionaries, memoirs, letters, and government documents.

Midgley points out several areas which merit further research, such as masculinity and imperialism, the impact of empire on Britain itself, work outside of the high imperialism period, material impacts of empire, comparative analysis with other European cases, and the relationship between post-colonial theory and imperial history. Since this book was written in 1998, some of
these areas have already begun to be addressed. However, it does provide strong methodology for the study of gender and empire.

Trying to alleviate the imbalance of scholarship towards British colonialism, the authors of *Domesticating the Empire* chose to explore the more neglected areas of French and Dutch colonialism. The editors seek to answer the question of how and why national values changed, again emphasizing that both the metropolis and the colonies are active in this exchange. They point out that the field of history is transforming in that scholars of imperial nations like Britain, France or the Netherlands increasingly include and intertwine histories of colonized nations. The essays in this edition, organized chronologically, focus on discourses and language which depicted race, gender and family life in French and Dutch colonies. Various tropes arise in these studies of cultural sources such as manuals and advice literature, children’s literature, postcards, travel accounts, and women’s literature. The authors shed light upon many different images and depictions of the family in these different areas, with the discourse oscillating between maternal and paternal models, representations of indigenous peoples as gendered subjects, the connection between working-class women and colonized women, feminizing the landscapes of the colonies, political constructions of sexual desire, and racialized definitions of citizenship. The focus is summed up as a concentration on “one particular strand of imperial rhetoric- the ways in which notions of parenthood or emblems of masculinity and femininity undergirded French and Dutch efforts to normalize their subjugation of native peoples.” Alice Conklin’s chapter on French West Africa is a valuable source of information on the neglected area in French colonialism. Her theme is the racial construction of citizenship in interwar France, and also touches upon interactions between colonies and mainland France.

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10 Julia Clancy-Smith and Francis Gouda, *Domesticating the Empire*, 19-20.
The 2000s saw more scholarship in the field of French colonialism in general, with an emphasis on cultural studies.\textsuperscript{11} A monograph also appeared on the topic of miscegenation in the colonies.\textsuperscript{12} Another group of scholars wrote about the effects and debates surrounding imperialism on the metropolis.\textsuperscript{13} These works emphasize the more ambiguous ideas about colonialism both in the colonies and in the metropole. They work to destabilize the monolithic image of a united French population which was said to have overwhelmingly supported colonialism. Instead, even within the ranks of colonial administration, ambiguities and disillusions were present. However, opportunities for a gender scholar are clearly still relevant in French colonialism. To take Haggis’s vocabulary, ‘recovery’ work is still in progress. For example, Claire Griffiths recently published an article following a project in which she digitized and conserved a previously neglected report from Denise Savineau called \textit{La Famille en AOF-Condition de la femme (The Family in French West Africa- Women’s Condition)}.\textsuperscript{14} The fact that historians are still uncovering sources from the archive which relate to women demonstrates the fact that this area of research has the potential to be developed.

Griffith’s article is a study of how gender ideology in the metropolis informed knowledge production in the colonies. Using the ethnographic writings of Denise Savineau, a colonial


\textsuperscript{12} Emmanuelle Saada, \textit{Les enfants de la colonie: les métis de l'Empire français entre sujétion et citoyenneté}. (Paris: La Découverte, 2007).


researcher in interwar France who wrote extensively about African culture in a report that followed her tour around West Africa, Griffiths interweaves her story with the history of French ethnography. Savineau’s writings, rediscovered in the 1990s, are important for several reasons: they show the developments of ethnography in the interwar period, they incorporate not only a racialized but also a gendered vision of the other, and they focus on African women. This report was commissioned by the colonial administration in 1937 as a study of the family and the condition of women in French West Africa. At the time, the new field of ethnography was thought to provide the means to solve social problems in the colonies. Griffiths points out that the colonial administration transferred European patriarchy and gender roles to Africa through modernization efforts in the legal, social, education and economic sectors.

In relation to Savineau’s report, Griffiths asserts that Savineau used her own subjective point of view as a white European woman to analyze African women, and according to European norms, she found evidence of matriarchal tendencies in the West African societies she studied, as well as evidence of African women using French institutions such as the court to further their own benefits. Focusing her attention on gender norms and roles, sexuality and femininities/masculinities in her report, she found surprising customs such as marriage between two women in Upper Volta (today’s Burkina Faso), functioning as a system of surrogate mothers for infertile women, and sexual liberty before marriage in Lobi women. In this way, she was challenging the myth of patriarchal Africa which was prevalent at the time. Very little scholarship exists on French West Africa and women; therefore Griffiths’ article provides an invaluable source for the topic of gender and imperialism while bringing a new primary source to light.
Centered on the topic of race, class and gender in colonial settings, *Empire and Boundaries* is another relevant work for the historiography of gender and empire. In her chapter titled, “Gendering the Colonial Enterprise: *La Mère Patrie* and Maternalism in France and French Indochina,” Nicola Cooper focuses on representations of empire in media, new roles for women in the colonies, and deviancies from the exigencies of empire.\(^\text{15}\) She describes a shift in the relationship between France in its colonies which occurred in the 19th century, when the French desired to leave the violent past behind and focus on their cultural and moral mission in France. The iconography of empire became an Imperial Mother, and females could play roles as “citizen mothers.” This shift thus required women to serve in “policing and surveillance of males” and involved new, maternal representations of empire both in the metropole and in the colonies. Bringing this standard to bear, another form of the “other” emerged in the literature of the 1920s and 1930s: a European “other” in the colonies whose actions did not support the ideals of French empire, “Europeans whose behavior, appearance, and morals deviated from the ideal threatened the boundaries and barriers that shored up the differences on which colonial rule was premised.”\(^\text{16}\) In relation to women, the *femme fatale* and the “weak woman” were two images that were targeted in this process. The *femme fatale* is of course the prostitute, while the weak woman is the woman whose frail nature prevented her husband from carrying out his colonial duties. This study adds to the field of women and French colonialism in describing different images of women’s role in the colonies.

Women’s roles in the colonies are expanded upon by Laura Godsoe in her dissertation for York University entitled, *Pour la grandeur de la patrie et nous-mêmes: Reading Women’s* 

\(^{15}\) Harald Fischer-Tiné and Susanne Gehrmann, *Empires and Boundaries*.

\(^{16}\) Ibid, 138.
Colonial Work in the Pages of the Women's Press in France. Through her examination of ideas about the colonies and women’s roles in empire, she works against the notion that French women were not involved in colonialism before the First World War. She centered her study thematically, focusing on visions of the other, the civilizing mission, white women’s emigration, and travel narratives. One of her main contentions is that the women in her study were concerned with recording the contributions of women in the colonies in order to gain rights in the political sphere, namely suffrage. Godsoe’s study is thus one of the a few examples focusing on nonfiction work, in the form of women’s press. The study of Grace Corneau in particular would correlate with Godsoe’s study, given the fact that Corneau also demonstrates women’s involvement in empire prior to World War One.

In French Women and the Empire: the Case of Indochina, Marie Paule Ha focuses on women’s work in Indochina, employing different sources centered in Indochina rather than France. Through archival research, the reading of private correspondence, and interviews, she elaborates upon the various positions of employment which were available to widowed women in Indochina, women whose stories are in fact found in the official archive, but scholars until now have not chosen as a subject of study. Ha posits that these women, when their husbands died, expected the state to fulfill the role of provider for them, through pensions and paid employment with the colonial administration, one example of the way in which they employed patriarchal and racist ideas to further their own cause. Furthermore, the colonial administration was willing to help these women since they framed their requests as public concerns, implying that if the state did not help them there would be public consequences such as prostitution.

French Women and Empire works towards breaking the public/private dichotomy by showing

that these women worked in paid positions in the public sphere given to them in the spirit of prevention of a negative colonial image.\textsuperscript{18}

**Description of Subject**

In *Travel, Gender, and Imperialism*, Alison Blunt studies self-representation in the travelogue of an Englishwoman, Mary Kingsley.\textsuperscript{19} Her work shows that when writing about the colonial space, one gives indications of her ideologies. This is one approach that has not been applied to writings by French women, even though there is a multitude of documents available digitally today. This thesis on the self-representation of three women writers, who authored non-fiction at different periods in the early to mid-twentieth century, will make a contribution to this field. Numerous studies have already focused on fictional writing of British women in particular, but very few target women’s nonfiction in their published works.\textsuperscript{20} The main research question proposed is how French women implicated in colonialism demonstrated qualities of complicity and resistance to French colonial ideology. I am particularly interested in the fluctuations between national, gender, and racial subjectivities. Like the authors of *Western Women and Imperialism*, this work examines the complexities of the female colonial experience, and their oscillation between complicity and resistance.

\textsuperscript{18} Marie-Paule Ha, *French Women and the Empire: the Case of Indochina*, (Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2014).

\textsuperscript{19} Alison Blunt, *Travel, Gender, and Imperialism*.

Empire has traditionally been viewed as a masculine endeavor. Only in the past few decades, along with the rise of gender history, have scholars taken up the study of women and gender in the context of empire. This thesis demonstrates the complexity of French women’s intellectual thought about the colonies between 1900 and 1962. Many other studies of colonial fiction have prevailed in this field, addressing cultural history in particular, but women’s nonfiction remains to be examined in detail and in relation to intellectual history. This study thus consists of three chapters, each a case study of a different French woman’s nonfictional work. Through the lenses of gender and postcolonial theory, along with the aid of the literary theory of narratology, these women’s fluctuations between complicity and resistance with regard to colonial ideology in their writings can be articulated in a more detailed way.

Most of the information on women in the French colonies comes from Marie-Paule Ha, a historian from the University of Hong Kong. Her work focuses specifically on women in Indochina. Her article, “La femme française aux colonies:’ Promoting Colonial Emigration at the turn of the century” is an analysis of turn of the century writings, Grace Corneau’s contemporaries, promoting the emigration of women to the colonies, especially Tunisia, Indochina and Madagascar. In “La femme française aux colonies,” she analyzes a group of writings from books and periodicals from the turn of the 19th century promoting women’s emigration to the colonies. In 1897, a group called the Société Française d’Emigration des Femmes (French Society for the Emigration of Women) started promoting this form of migration for a double purpose of addressing the needs of the colonies for wives and mothers, as well as relieving the metropolis of excess single women. However, only some places were considered suitable for women, and French West Africa was not one of these. Instead, women were

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21 Marie-Paule Ha, ”"La Femme française aux colonies": Promoting Colonial Female Emigration at the Turn of the Century". French Colonial History. 6 (1): 2005, 205-224.
encouraged to migrate to colonies in Tunisia, Madagascar and Indochina. According to Ha, these writings formed an idea of the coloniale, the ideal Frenchwoman in the colonies. In this article, she highlights the contradictions of race, class and gender in the writings, but her main focus is information on the type of women which were eligible for migration. It is interesting to note that although promotional narratives were very open to working class or lower middle class single women migrating in order to find first work then a husband, the author is skeptical as to whether this was the reality: “My own investigation of French women in Indochina in the early part of the twentieth century shows that the situation of French women in the colonies was much more complex than the promotional narratives suggested.” Since this study focuses on work written by women with actual on-the-ground experience in the colonies, it also seeks to analyze the full complexity of women’s experience.

According to Ha’s research, women were called to emigrate in order to promote settlement and start families in the colonies. These women would profit from social mobility; because of the low prices and high standard of living, they would live as upper middle class, regardless of their background. This lifestyle would include multiple servants to attend to household chores, a personal car, and leisure time for glamorous social events. In addition, single women arriving in the colonies could find work until they found a husband in the colonial administration. Many options were available to them in fields such as medicine, laundry, dry cleaning and embroidery. Some of these promotional writings encouraged the French government to employ women, but this did not become standard because they could pay indigenous workers lower wages. Although Ha is arguably the most published scholar on the subject of French women in the colonies, she focuses more on the discourse surrounding the

22 Marie-Paule Ha, ""La Femme francaise aux colonies": Promoting Colonial Female Emigration at the Turn of the Century", 17.
ideal colonial women and their social realities in the colonies, in contrast to the study of their colonial ideology.

Grace Corneau, author of *La femme aux colonies*, published in 1900, is the first writer to be profiled. An American who married a French nobleman, she wrote as a journalist for both French and American newspapers. She published this work after living in Indochina and Africa. Although writing with the explicit purpose of recruiting women to the colonies, she displays strategies of resistance related to her own gender ideology.

Clotilde-Chivas Baron, the wife of a colonial administrator who lived *en brousse* in Indochina, figures as the second case study. A successful and award-winning fictional author, she authored a comprehensive history of women in the colonies titled *La femme française aux colonies*. Written in 1929, her work promulgates into bourgeois gender roles even as she has a more polemic purpose in writing - to correct historic misconceptions about the role of women in the colonies having “ruined colonialism” by driving a wedge in between colonial administration (their husbands) and the indigenous.

Marie-Paule Ha, in the introduction to the re-edition of Chivas-Baron’s *La Femme française aux colonies*, observes that the work of Chivas-Baron “has been largely forgotten,” for unknown reasons, which is especially surprising given that she was a critically acclaimed author in her time.23 Ha’s introduction also constitutes the only published scholarship devoted to Chivas-Baron, providing basic biographical information, as well as contextualization of the text and its main themes. Her tract, according to Ha, represents “propagandist literature,” and she situates it within the context of the establishment of the French Society for the Emigration of

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Women and the promulgation of a new role for women in the colonies as wives and mothers. Matt Matsuda also features Chivas-Baron in his *Empire of Love*, a study of the French Empire in the Pacific, which was imagined as a relationship of love in colonial writing. His chapter on Indochina featured several examples of Chivas-Baron's writing as it contributed to his theme. Like Corneau, Chivas-Baron surfaces therefore as a source of colonial history which has, up until now, been neglected by the historians of gender and imperialism, except as related to the portrayal of the colonial relationship as a form of love.

The third chapter centers on Germaine Tillion, by far the most well-known and studied among the women of this study. She led a unit of the French resistance, was interned at Ravensbrück concentration camp, and then worked for the French government in Algeria during the Algerian War. A trained ethnologist who completed six years of fieldwork in Algeria, she became an intellectual touchstone during the Algerian conflict for precisely this reason. Her works *France and Algeria: Complementary Enemies* and *L’Afrique bascule vers l’avenir*, published in 1961 and 1957 respectively, analyze the situation during the Algerian war and recommend a course of action for the future. Although she takes up the cause of the Algerians out of duty to fight for the oppressed since she herself had been interned in a Nazi concentration camp, she nevertheless fails to indict the system of colonialism for causing the Algerian conflict.

As a result of the multiple world changing events that Tillion lived through and in which she participated, as well as the vastness of her own publications, a number of scholars have deemed her a worthy subject of research. However, it is important to note that French language scholarship dominate the field. Two biographies exist on her life, which were written while she

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was still living; both of the authors therefore exploited the opportunity to interview her. The first biography is *Le témoignage est un combat*, written by Jean Lacouture. It is standard biography which details the major events, publications and themes of her life. The second, *Germaine Tillion: une femme-mémoire*, concentrates on situating her life into historical context, clarifying her influence on historical events, and inserting the information garnered from interviews into this historiography. The author, Nancy Wood, also seeks to explain why Tillion plays such a significant role in French national memory. This work, elaborating on certain moments of Tillion’s life instead of a comprehensive presentation, delves into detail on her work during the Algerian War, highlighting certain aspects of her works *L’Afrique en 1957, France and Algeria: Complimentary Enemies*, and *L’Afrique bascule vers l’avenir*. Wood’s main questions focus on how Tillion and Jacques Soustelle, Governor General of Algeria 1955-56, could come from such similar backgrounds as anthropologists and Resistance fighters, but reached such different conclusions regarding the “Algerian question,” and how Tillion’s political and moral position was criticized by both the Right and the Left in the course of the war. Thus Wood’s study is very closely related to the study at hand, but they differ in their focus; Woods concentrates on Tillion in relation to other intellectuals of the time, while this study examines her in the context of the historiography of women and colonial ideology.

In addition to two biographies, an edited volume supplements the scholarship related to Tillion. This work consists of three parts which feature chapters about Germaine Tillion’s life and work, some previously unpublished works from Tillion, and bibliographical references. Donald Reid’s contribution, “De Ravensbrück à Alger,” for example, traces the effects of her

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deportation experience on her later work in Algeria. He observes that Tillion applied the survival strategies that she learned during her experience in a Nazi concentration camp to formulating the social centers which she later managed in Algeria. Jean Lacouture, in his brief chapter “Au Coeur de l’Algérie,” touches briefly on Tillion’s influence as a scholar of Algeria, pointing out that her method was unique in her choice to study the Aurès region of Algeria, which has not been directly affected by colonialism. Later during the Algerian war, he observes that her extensive experience in Algeria made her insertion into the debate possible. Especially significant in Lacouture’s eyes are her meetings with Yacef Saadi, which opened the door for dialogue between the two sides. Specifically on her writing, he points to her method of situating the Algerian problem in its historical context, which is one method to establish herself as an authority on the subject, an aspect which is relevant to this study of her strategic location in relation to the colonial material she describes.

Reid develops the influence of Tillion’s deportation experience on her subsequent work in his *Germaine Tillion, Lucie Aubrac, and the Politics of Memories of the French Resistance*. He observes that, “what has made Tillion such an appealing figure to Lacouture, Todorov, and many French men and women is not solely her moral qualities, but her dialogues with the lived experience of deportation as a means to confront and master new situations.” It is important to note here the imbalance between Anglophone and Francophone scholarship; Tillion has been understudied in the case of English language studies. In addition, Reid points out that she drew parallels between the treatment of Algerian Muslims and the Nazi treatment of deportees to the

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32 Reid, *Germaine Tillion*, 41.
camps, leading her to conclude that the German people as a whole should not be condemned for the Second World War, because that type of brutality was possible in any society. According to Reid’s analysis, she held up the qualities of the resisters in the camps as standard bearers for French morality, which was disintegrating during the Algerian War. In another chapter titled, “Re-viewing The Battle of Algiers with Germaine Tillion,” Reid asserts that Tillion is the “absent presence” of Pontecorvo’s film; he therefore inserts her writings on Algeria, particularly her account of meeting with the FLN and her subsequent testimony on Saadi’s behalf at his trial, into the historiography with the film. Reid’s study asserts the importance of Tillion’s role in the Algerian, portraying her as a key player on the side of resistance towards colonial administration, as she was the first to advocate negotiating with the FLN.33

While the other scholars focus on Tillion’s involvement with major events in French history, Alice Conklin contributes to French intellectual history with In the Museum of Man, in which she traces the history of the anthropological profession and thought and its connections to empire.34 In this work, she addresses the question of ethnology as an imperial science. Conklin identifies the ambiguous position of ethnology in its humanist and non-racist tradition, coupled with its dependence on the colonial empire for research opportunities and funding.35 Although her book does not feature Germaine Tillion in great detail, Conklin identifies Tillion as one of a group of ethnologists who were openly skeptical of the ability of colonialism to improve the lives of the colonized.36 Conklin also briefly discusses Tillion’s writing, in which she observes characteristics typical of students of Marcel Mauss’ interwar students, such as confidence in

33 Algerian National Liberation Front
36 Ibid, 275, 331.
ethnographic interactions and references to potlatch. Conklin’s insights to the field of ethnology are thus critical to the study of Tillion, who was undoubtedly influenced by her professional training as an ethnologist. However, Conklin examines Tillion’s work through the paradigm of ethnography, without examining her colonial ideology in general. Conklin, like Donald Reid, positions Tillion as resistant.

**Methodological Tools**

The main research question to be addressed in this study centers on complicity and resistance to colonial ideology in the works of three women writing in France during the early 20th century. In order to respond to this inquiry, it is necessary to utilize scholarship related to colonial ideology. This study also employs postcolonial, gender and narratological theories.

One scholar who directly addressed complicity and resistance in colonial writings is Nancy Paxton. In her chapter on “Complicity and Resistance in the Writings of Flora Annie Steel and Annie Besant,” she shows the fluctuations of two women between complicity and resistance in their autobiographical writings. She finds that although both women identified as feminists, their relationship to the colonial context differed. On one hand, Steel demonstrated aspects of racism, elitism and conservatism in her feminism, while Besant surpassed these types of views in the colonial context. Although Paxton concludes that Besant demonstrated more resistance than Steel, she also observes that the British nation state forced them both “into a position of complicity by demanding that both women define themselves as either “loyal or disloyal to [British] civilization.” Although Paxton does not directly state it, her analysis is centered on

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37 Ibid, 260.
38 In *Western Women and Imperialism*, 158-176.
complicity and resistance to colonial ideology, and thus her conclusions are an integral paradigm for this study.

It is also essential to define colonial ideology in order to examine complicity and resistance to it. For this question, Alice Conklin’s *A Mission to Civilize* is useful in articulating a definition of colonial ideology, particularly for the period of 1895-1930, which concerns both Corneau and Chivas-Baron. Conklin states that colonial ideology of the period was based on the civilizing mission, which assumed the cultural superiority of the French over all other peoples, as well as the ability to assimilate other cultures into the French way of life.

In addition to existing historiography related to the topic, this study will employ theoretical tools in order to address the research question. Since the topic concerns women’s writings, the first theoretical construct is gender. One gender scholar who addressed the question of writing about white women and colonialism is Jane Haggis. In an article in the *Women’s Studies International Forum*, she critiques some scholars because in depicting white women as unwaveringly positive influences in the colonial venture, they are in fact “feminizing’ colonialism, for making it more harmonious, more positive, and more beneficial. It was European men who defined and operated an aggressive and antagonistic imperialism and who symbolically and ideologically constructed white women as innately racist.”

The study of both sides of the coin- complicity and resistance- thus takes Haggis’ critique into account, showing the complexity of white women’s experience, and breaking the binary distinction between these two poles. Another critique that Haggis sheds light on is the definition of racism based on the sole criteria of behavior. She states, “hence whether white women were racist…is read simply

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from their behavior alone.”42 A study based primarily on women’s writings and rooted in intellectual history thus problematizes and extends this definition to ideology as expressed in nonfiction writing. Haggis also comments on class analysis when she calls for an analysis which includes “the class divisions between white women.”43 As we will see in the works of Corneau and Chivas-Baron, class tensions among white women presented themselves in various ways, particularly in the context of who they found suitable for colonial emigration. A final critique that Haggis asserts regards gender analysis; “somewhat paradoxically, white women are ultimately defined and primarily located in all-encompassing relations of subordination with white men.” The women of this study break this stereotype just in the act of writing and being published, in the first place, but they also write against the grain through other strategies, illuminated through post-colonial and narratological methods.

One useful concept in investigating the question of complicity and resistance in French women’s colonial nonfiction is Edward Said’s idea of strategic location. Writing about dominant discourse of the West about the Middle East in *Orientalism*, he defines strategic location as “a way of describing the author’s position in the text with regard to the Oriental material he writes about” which “includes the kind of narrative voice he adopts, the type of structure he builds, the kinds of images, themes and motifs which circulate in his text—all of which add up to deliberate ways of addressing the reader, containing the Orient, and finally, representing it or speaking in its behalf.”44 These elements can serve as a guide in examining the complicit and resistance aspects of the works of Grace Corneau, Clotilde Chivas-Baron, and Germaine Tillion. In

42 Ibid, 110.
43 Jane Haggis, “Gendering Colonialism or Colonizing Gender? Recent Women’s Studies Approaches to White Women and the History of British Colonialism,” 111.
studying the narrative voice, structure of the work, and images, themes and motifs, the author’s position between complicity and resistance will become clearer.

A third theoretical paradigm which this study utilizes is narratology. Gérard Genette analyzes the multiple effects of narrative function and focalization in his work. He highlights five narrative functions which the narrator of a text employs based on the type of interaction she desires with the reader. Through the application of narratology to the colonial texts of Corneau, Chivas-Baron, and Tillion, this study can determine if complicity or resistance to colonial ideology is more dominant in their works. For example, in Corneau’s case, the examination of the communication function, employed to connect with her reader and emphasize her viewpoint, is used primarily to amplify her gender, rather than colonial ideology. Thus, the tool of narratology serves to illuminate more resistant elements in her work.

Conclusion

In her study of counter-discourse and disillusionment in pro-colonial writing, Nicola Cooper shows that “colonial production and domination of Indochina was often challenged unconsciously from within French colonialism’s ranks.” The study of complicity and resistance also underscores her idea, since the three case studies featured in this thesis are directly implicated in the colonial project, yet they also display strategies of resistance. The subject of complicity and resistance to colonial ideology addresses question of the complexity of women’s views on colonialism. This study also examines neglected writings. Marie-Paule Ha articulates the fact that Chivas-Baron’s study is “one of the first works to address the evolution of women’s

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role in the colonies.” Furthermore, this study will also insert the texts of forgotten women such as Corneau and Chivas-Baron into Tillion’s more documented (albeit in French) history, contributing to the intellectual history of French women in the colonies. Since the three women wrote at different times and the specific circumstances of their colonial experience varied, their views will also be complicated by the context in which they wrote, which will provide many interesting points of comparison and contrast.

Finally, this study takes into account an innovative notion of French colonial history. In After the Imperial Turn, Gary Wilder re-conceptualizes the traditional approach to French history as that of a single nation state, disconnected to the empire which it possessed for most of modern history; he asserts, “I am suggesting that writing French colonial history may require us to begin unthinking national historiography.” This study of women and empire extends the boundaries of France as a nation state to include the colonies, since the colonial space is integral to these women’s work. The juxtaposition of these three writers helps bring to light the realities of French women who were directly implicated in the colonial project, embedding these works into the context of colonial writing and a definition of the French nation as an imperial empire.

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47 “un des premiers ouvrages à s’intéresser à l’évolution du rôle de la femme aux colonies. ” “Introduction, ” La femme français aux colonies, xi.
CHAPTER 1: GRACE CORNEAU: FRENCH WOMEN IN THE COLONIES AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY

Introduction: Contextualizing la femme coloniale

Grace Corneau begins *La femme aux colonies* with, “making ends meet, already so hard for men on our continent, has become almost impossible for women.”49 This seems an unusual starting point for a recruitment manual for colonial settlement, but it illustrates the ideology of Grace Corneau, a French colonial administrator’s wife and journalist at the turn of the 20th century. In this work, published in 1900, she promotes the independence of women in the colonies. Since women’s independence is not directly related to colonial ideology, the question of how complicit the author is to colonial ideology arises in the study of this text.

One useful concept in investigating the question of complicity and resistance in *La femme aux colonies* is Edward Said’s idea of strategic location as he writes about dominant discourse of the West about the Middle East. In *Orientalism*, he defines strategic location as “a way of describing the author’s position in the text with regard to the Oriental material he writes about” which “includes the kind of narrative voice he adopts, the type of structure he builds, the kinds of images, themes and motifs which circulate in his text—all of which add up to deliberate ways of addressing the reader, containing the Orient, and finally, representing it or speaking in its behalf.”50 These elements, as well as the photographic images, can serve as a guide in examining the complicit and resistance aspects of Grace Corneau’s *La femme aux colonies*. In studying the narrative voice, structure of the work, and images, themes and motifs, the author’s position between complicity and resistance will become clearer.

49 “La lutte pour la vie, si dure déjà pour les hommes sur notre continent, est rendue presque impossible pour les femmes,” Grace Corneau, *La femme aux colonies*, (Lille, France : Librairie Nilsson, 1900), 9.
Complicity Through Recruitment

At first glance, Grace Corneau’s *La femme aux colonies* demonstrates a subjectivity marked by nationalism: to inform and recruit women for the colonies. Her vested interest can be understood in part through her biography. Born and raised in the United States, she married a French nobleman, the Count of St. Maurice, and relocated with her husband to France in 1896.\(^{51}\) Within the next few years, they lived in Indochina and Africa, presumably in an administrative capacity.\(^{52}\) In addition, they travelled extensively, to places such as Afghanistan, India, China, and Burma.\(^{53}\) She exploits this relationship in writing a work of nonfiction for the purpose recruiting women to the colonies. She states that her mission in writing her work is supported by the colonial administration: “The Administration, moreover, has every interest in attracting an intelligent and hard-working feminine population to Tonkin,”\(^{54}\) because it evidently seeks to establish settler colonies like that of Algeria in the newer colonies of Indochina, Tunisia and Madagascar. As Corneau states, “People become attached to the place where their children were born.”\(^{55}\) In this passage, her gendered language highlights the importance of women in the establishment of settler colonies, whose promulgation depends on women moving to the colonies to join their husbands, and giving birth to French stock.

At the turn of the century, there was a push to recruit women to the colonies for various reasons, the first of which was related to the French defeat in the Franco-Prussian War. This not only affected France psychologically, but also physically with the depopulation of some of the


\(^{54}\) “L’Administration, du reste, a tout intérêt à attirer une population féminine intelligente et travailleuse au Tonkin,” Corneau, *La femme aux colonies*, 14.

\(^{55}\) “On s’attache au sol sur lequel les enfants sont nés,” ibid.
country’s most virile men and the loss of Alsace-Lorraine. The nineteenth century in France also saw a changing attitude towards race. Arthur de Gobineau, a French man, is credited as being the father of scientific racism. Theories about race, promoted and disseminated by the budding field of anthropology influenced racial ideas, especially relating “the métis question.” According to Conklin, the idea of miscegenation as a method of elevating the inferior races was acceptable in the colonies. However, with the advent of conquest in Algeria, miscegenation came to be rejected as a means to elevate other races. Concern about population decrease and birth rates, coupled with a changing attitude towards race, produced a colonial ideology opposed to the biological mixing of the races. Nicola Cooper stresses the racial aspect of the image of the French nation as Imperial Mother when she articulates, “the French state certainly emphasized the racial value of the ‘maternal’ abroad: For a demographically weakened France, this emphasis on heterosocial generation and regeneration was all the more pertinent, and the empire was envisioned as a breeding ground.” This issue also targeted the past colonial practice of concubinage with indigenous women. Before the colonization of Algeria, it had been a practice of colonial men to live with indigenous women in the colonies. However, in the post-war context, miscegenation resulting from colonial administrators living with concubines was no

longer acceptable for the continuation of the race. Marriage and legitimate births were encouraged instead, and the mixing of races was to take the form of a cultural rather than biological exchange. Furthermore, since women could access certain spaces that men could not in the colonies, they would be effective emissaries of French culture. Women’s emigration to the colonies would therefore solve both the problem of depopulation resulting from the Franco-Prussian war and promote the “pure” French race.

Corneau’s writing also coincides with a trend of propaganda promoting women’s participation in colonialism at the turn of the century. In 1897, a group called the Société Française d’émigration des femmes started promoting women’s emigration to the colonies for a double purpose: address the needs in colonies for wives and mothers for administrators and relieve the metropolis of excess single women. Corneau’s La femme aux colonies, published a few years later in 1900, seems to subscribe to this ideology as well. For example, she writes, “the only way to found a future colony is to establish permanent settled Europeans, to create families of colonists.” In addition, she cites the example of a colonial administrator, General Bichot, who brought his family over to live in Tonkin as another example of the administration’s support of the mission to colonize conquered territories and set up settler communities. She elaborates that, “he lives in Hanoi with his wife and children. He has already married off two of his daughters.” She also targets the numerous single women of Paris who

63 French Society for the Emigration of Women
65 “le seul moyen de fonder une colonie d’avenir est d’y établir à demeure fixe des Européens, d’y créer des familles de colons.” Corneau, La femme aux colonies, 14.
66 “Il vit à Hanoï avec sa femme et ses enfants. Il y a marié déjà deux de ses filles,” ibid, 17.
are educated but unable to find employment, addressing them directly when she writes, “It is mostly to these women that you must say: expatriate yourselves.” The women she refers to were part of a general trend resulting from industrialization and urbanization; in fact, many of the rural migrants to the city were women. Both Corneau and the administration supported women’s migration as an essential element for establishing settler colonies, as well as the media.

A series of articles in *Le Petit Parisien* devoted to the subject of women’s emigration in August and September 1902, which highlight Corneau’s contribution to the field, speaks to the fact that women’s role in colonialism was a prominent idea at the turn of the century. *Le Petit Parisien* was one of the first mass media newspapers in France, marking a departure from earlier papers which were explicitly political in nature. For the first time, this newspaper targeted middle to lower class readers, on diverse subjects. In the first article, featured on the front page of the paper, the journalist justifies the need for works like Corneau’s because French women are particularly “attached to their native country,” and thus need special incentives in order to help them contribute to the colonial project. Furthermore, these articles echo the need for women’s emigration to the colonies to relieve Paris of an excess of single, educated women in the capital: “French women can become excellent colonists, all while enjoying a higher standard of living than they would have in Paris.” In an interview with Corneau published a week later, she and the author comment on the response that they have received in response to the series on *Les

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67 “C’est surtout à ces femmes qu’il faut dire expatriez-vous,” ibid, 10.
71 Ibid
Emigrantes, with Corneau remarking that she is “now the busiest woman in the world,” with women constantly seeking her advice about travelling to the colonies.72

As far as her recruitment mission is concerned, Corneau participates in the colonial ideology of her time. She aggressively tries to recruit women to come to the colonies through the act of writing a guidebook for prospective emigrants. It is clear that she found the most opportunities in Tonkin, as ten of the sections in this first chapter explicitly mention women or gendered preoccupations with marriage and family. In her attempt to recruit women for this area of the colonies, she describes how a woman can travel there, what she needs to bring, what she can expect to do as employment, and facts about daily life in general. Other sections address living conditions in Tonkin, stressing her self-representation as an expert in the area, able to inform on a number of subjects including the resources of the country, daily life, and agriculture. This information, delivered authoritatively, provides from a practical point of view everything a woman might need to know before going to the colonies.

Corneau critiques the French government in the metropolis for its ineffectiveness in the recruitment mission, demonstrating her own commitment to this mission. She specifically cites the service des renseignements au ministère des colonies for its inefficiency; the staff does not have firsthand knowledge of the colonies, and moreover, there is not even an updated map of Tonkin.73 Furthermore, she asserts that the British are more successful as colonists than the French since they even have “charming, illustrated brochures on each of their colonies.”74 Thus it is clear that she is devoted to recruiting women to the colonies and even finds fault with the

73 “Il n’y a pas une carte à jour du Tonkin au ministère,” Corneau, La femme aux colonies, 38.
74 “Il a fait composer encore de charmantes brochures illustrées sur chacune de ses colonies,” ibid.
French government for its deficient recruitment strategies, while representing herself to be more colonialist than the official colonizers.

Corneau’s recruitment mission seems to be more restricted when it comes to women’s emigration to Tunisia and Madagascar, however, because she recommends that only women with significant capital should emigrate to these areas. She elaborates that since Tunisia is close to the metropolis, colonists simply buy their products in France, limiting the business opportunities in Tunisia, in contrast to the case of Indochina, where she draws attention to the opportunities for women to start their own small businesses as florists and shopkeepers. As for Madagascar, the cost and length of the voyage limits the opportunities in Corneau’s eyes. Her reticence about Tunisia and Madagascar demonstrates therefore the intersection between gender and class. In these cases, the promotion of women’s independence is directed at a selected group of women who possess a certain amount of capital to start their farm. Corneau’s gender ideology is thus limited to a certain type of educated, well-off woman, rather than encompassing all French women as potential colonizers. Although committed to attracting women to the colonies, Corneau limits her recommendation to a select group.

Resistant Gender Ideology

Corneau’s complicity in colonialism is complicated, however, precisely because she uses the recruitment mission as a gendered tool, employing colonial ideology as a means to create a space for more opportunities for women. When she asserts, “Making ends meet, already so difficult for men on our continent, has become almost impossible for women,” she highlights her goal to improve women’s lives. Furthermore, it is evident she is reaching beyond colonial ideology when she encourages women to become proprietors and managers of their own estates.

75 “La lutte pour la vie, si dure déjà pour les hommes sur notre continent, est rendue presque impossible pour les femmes,” Corneau, La femme aux colonies, 9.
She admits that “we will not say that the administration will not be a little surprised to see, for the first time, at least in Tonkin, a woman become a colonist and request a compound.” It can be inferred that colonial administrators’ surprise would come from the fact that this is not typical colonial practice.

The promotion of women through financial independence is the main thrust of Corneau’s gender ideology. She emphasizes the economic opportunities for women in the colonies, highlighting a model not from the French but from the so-called Cattle Queens in America. She describes these women as managers of their own estates on the American western frontier. They supervise the cowboys “not without firmness, but always with intelligence,” who raise their livestock. It is tempting to attribute her views on this subject to her upbringing in America, however, she is not the only writer to compare French methods of colonization with those of Britain or America, as the article in *Le Petit Parisien* compares French women to English and American women, and finds them deficient in their desire to emigrate to the colonies. Since it is not standard practice for women to run their own farms in the French colonies, her Cattle Queens example further illustrates Corneau’s willingness to go above and beyond typical French colonial ideology to further her own agenda regarding women’s independence.

Corneau also points to possible social mobility as an advantage for women who emigrate to the colonies when she states, “it seems extraordinary to speak of [acquiring] single family homes, of [hiring] domestic workers, when speaking to young women...and that is the best part of exile and the thing that you catch yourself loving about a country in that it provides you with

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76 “Nous ne dirons pas que l’Administration n’éprouvera pas quelque surprise à voir pour la première fois, au moins au Tonkin, une femme devenir colon et solliciter une concession,” ibid, 36.
77 The Cattle Queens of America have not been studied, although Corneau’s reference is confirmed by this article: "A Cattle Queen," *The Youth's Companion (1827-1929)* 58, no. 22 (May 28, 1885): 220 and this book: Elizabeth M. Smith Collins, *The Cattle Queen of Montana*, (St. James, Minn.: C.W. Foote, 1894).
78 Ibid, 51.
la vie large [the good life].”

In this passage, she articulates an advantage which women enjoy in the colonies- single family homes and domestic workers- which are the standard for colonial women. Because of the higher cost of living in France, young women just starting out would not be able to afford these luxuries. But in the colonies, where the cost of living is less, young women can expect to live with more luxuries than they would in the metropole.

As alluded to above, Corneau’s gender ideology is limited, however, to a privileged group of women, based not only on class but also on racial grounds. Seemingly unconcerned with elevating the status of indigenous women, like some of her contemporaries, she instead relates to women based on class similarities. This is especially apparent in her descriptions of Madagascar, in which she describes the class system in place there, and that the queen, with whom she shows solidarity, in saying, “the poor queen we sent into exile,” was frowned upon as a “bourgeois pretender” because she came from the middle class instead of the nobility. In contrast, she categorizes the Muslim women in Tunisia as veiled and concealed in oriental (her term) harems. Corneau’s gender ideology therefore rests upon both racial and class distinctions; she does not advocate a global sisterhood in any measure.

**Narrative Strategies of Resistance**

In *La femme aux colonies*, Corneau demonstrates two inter-connected missions—recruitment of women to the colonies and the promotion of their opportunities unique to the colonial space. Present in this double mission is an underlying tension between colonial

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80 “Il semble extraordinaire de parler de maisons particulières, de domestiques quand on s’adresse à des jeunes femmes…et c’est là l’heureux côté de l’exil et ce qui fait qu’on se prend à aimer un pays qui vous donne la vie large,” Corneau, *La femme aux colonies*, 27.

81 Marie Paule- Ha discusses *la vie large coloniale* in her “*La Femme francaise aux colonies*: Promoting Colonial Female Emigration at the Turn of the Century.” *French Colonial History* 6, no. 1 (2005): 205-224.


83 Corneau, *La femme aux Colonies*, 104.

84 Ibid, 85.
ideology, which seeks to establish colonies with the aid of women, and Corneau’s gender ideology which views this mission as a means of gaining independence for certain educated women from the metropole. Which one of these missions is more important to Corneau?

Corneau’s own language can provide insight into this line of inquiry, specifically through the lens of Gérard Genette, an expert in narratology. Genette analyzes the multiple effects of narrative function and focalization in his work.\textsuperscript{85} He highlights five narrative functions which the narrator of a text employs based on the type of interaction she desires with the reader. In Corneau’s text, the ideological, directing and communication functions are most prevalent. The ideological function is marked by the narrator’s use of statements which express her ideology. The directing function demonstrates instances in which the narrator draws attention to the act of narration. Lastly, the communication function involves direct communication with the reader through various strategies, which is similar to the idea of breaking the fourth wall in theatre or film.

Through this lens, it becomes clear that Corneau’s use of the ideological, directing, and communication functions serve to support her own gender ideology, rather than the colonial ideology. Multiple passages from her work illustrate this point. She states, for example, “We will not return to what we have already said (see the chapter titled “ la femme au Tonkin”) about the chances that exist for a woman to manage a farm just as well as a man can.”\textsuperscript{86} In this instance, she uses the directing function to underline her gender ideology. The directing function draws attention to the act of narration, which the author does in this example when she refers to another


\textsuperscript{86} “Nous ne reviendrons pas sur ce que nous avons déjà dit (voir notre chapitre “ la femme au Tonkin”) sur la possibilité qu’il y a pour une femme de diriger, aussi bien qu’un homme, une exploitation agricole, “ Corneau, \textit{La femme aux colonies}, 50.
instance in a previous chapter in which she also mentioned the opportunities for women in agriculture. Furthermore, in employing her own text as a reference point, she demonstrates Said’s concept of strategic location, establishing her authority as an author. Thus in this excerpt, she uses the directing function to emphasize the many opportunities for French women in the colonies, which is her own ideology, not the normalized colonial ideology which still assumes a gender hierarchy.

The author further emphasizes her gender ideology using Genette’s communication function. This narrative strategy concerns instances in which the author of a work communicates directly with the reader, with the aim of establishing a connection between reader and narrator. One example of a passage, characterized by a particularly effective narrative voice: “But what, you ask, would make you claim that a woman can also raise livestock. “It is a harsh occupation, ill-suited to our weaknesses.” Are you that certain? Admit, then, will we answer, that our nice French girls...aren’t they also a little energetic?”87 Employing the communication function, Corneau reaches out to the reader through the use of rhetorical questions and the imperative in order to reinforce her opinions about gender ideology and the equality of men and women. The connection that she established between the narrator and the reader implies agreement between them. This effect is further strengthened through the use of zero focalization. Another one of Genette’s strategies, zero focalization describes a narrative voice, also known as the omniscient voice, which shows that the narrator possesses more knowledge than the reader, thus adding to the authority of the narrator. When she inserts the supposed reply of French women to her ideas in saying, “It is a harsh occupation, ill-suited to our weaknesses,” she multiplies her point of

87 “Mais quoi, nous direz-vous, allez-vous prétendre qu’une femme peut également se faire éleveur. “ C’est un rude métier, peu fait pour notre faiblesse. ” En êtes-vous si certaine ? Admettez-vous alors, répondrons-nous que nos gentilles filles de France….n’aient pas un peu d’énergie dans le caractère ?, ” Corneau, La femme aux colonies, 50.
view, projecting her beliefs onto other French women, thereby simultaneously reinforcing her own authority. This is an efficient way of establishing her authority, since she knows the thoughts of the reader and can address possible reservations about what she is promoting in her text. These narrative strategies, in that they reinforce the narrator’s point of view, are thus working to support Corneau’s gender rather than colonial ideology. Her narrative strategies imply that for her, women’s empowerment takes precedence over colonial ideology.

Although Genette’s narrative strategies allow us to recognize how Corneau is not fully committed to a colonial perspective, it is also necessary to recognize the complicity in colonial ideology inherent in her gender ideology. Since she employs the colonial space as a space for French women’s independence, she is also complicit in colonial ideology. To some extent, she supports the idea of the civilizing mission, which rests on the idea of French cultural, economic and scientific superiority. In her eyes, the indigenous serve a manual labor function in the colonies while the French are responsible for administration and economic development. However, in regards to cultural superiority, Corneau’s position is not one sided. She once again demonstrates some resistance to colonial ideology.

**Cultural Relativity in *La femme aux colonies*: Tolerance or Ideological Tool?**

The term cultural relativism is attributed to the American anthropologist Franz Boas. It gradually replaced an older theory of focused on identifying progressive stages of civilization: savagery, barbarism, and civilization. As early as 1887, he articulated that he “considers every phenomenon as worthy of being studied in its own right. Its mere existence entitles it to a full share of our attention.”88 Furthermore, as Davis observes, “by the time Boas wrote, grand systems of cultural evolution were losing their plausibility and, as noted above, he worked to

defeat them." Corneau, writing just before the turn of the century, was among the first to utilize cultural relativity. However, she employs it in the sense which Davis described—as an ideological tool. Although she makes an effort to study the culture and customs of the indigenous peoples in the areas she studies, she does so in a way to describe the condition of women in these different societies and points out that French culture may not be the most superior in the world when it comes to women’s place in society. Her extensive descriptions of Hova culture in regards to women’s sexuality and marriage practice underscores the author’s willingness to consider the merits of another culture.

Corneau’s extended critique regarding the policy of slavery in Madagascar is a primary instance in which she questions the superiority of French culture. She sheds light upon the fact that the Malagasy people had abolished slavery in the Kingdom of Madagascar “even before the proclamations of 48” in France, referring to the revolution of 1848, while the French, even after the abolition of slavery, practiced it in places like Tonkin, under the auspices of “protection of commerce.” This is another example in which Corneau demonstrates cultural relativity, in recognizing the abolition of slavery in another culture, while France continued to practice it in the colonies even while abolishing it on paper. In targeting the social conscience of her readers, this passage also plays on her authority as a narrator, increasing the potential influence on her readers.

In addition to her study of slavery policy, throughout La femme aux colonies, Corneau displays interest in indigenous cultures when discussing the customs of indigenous peoples. Even

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90 Corneau, La femme aux colonies, 86.
though she finds Muslim Tunisian culture deficient in many respects, her criticism of their culture is not monolithic. For example, she describes the Tunisian contrat d’Enzel as similar to the French concept of public assistance. In Tonkin, she refers to the “Annamite” market as a convenient supplier of necessities for a French home. In the third chapter of her work, she delves into detail about the Hova culture in Madagascar, particularly the sexual freedom of women. In fact, she devotes three sections on the subject, including the title “A Moral Immorality,” which suggests that the Hova culture, while at first may appear immoral, may actually be more moral when viewed with an open mind. She observes that a French woman arriving in Madagascar might be bothered by these strange customs, but that “she will consider that not all human wisdom is found on the banks of the Seine.” She speaks directly to cultural relativity in this phrase, since she expresses that French women would at first be surprised to encounter different cultural practices, but she cautions her readers that difference does not automatically equal inferiority. In this instance, she implies that the wisdom of the metropolis is deficient. Moreover, once again the author employs the narrative technique of zero focalization to establish her authority and enter the mind of French women, transferring her ideology into their minds. This example also illustrates the way in which she evaluates other cultures based on the freedom that they allow women.

The type of cultural relativity which Corneau demonstrates in her commentary on women’s condition in society shows a paradox in her ideology. It becomes evident that Corneau has opposing views about Muslim Tunisian and Hova culture in Madagascar primarily because

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92 For example, on page 64 she describes Muslim fanaticism in the country.
93 Corneau, La femme aux colonies, 59-60.
94 La nourriture d’un ménage français se fournissant au marché annamite, “ibid, 9.
95 “Une Immoralité morale”, ibid, 91.
96 “toute la sagesse humaine ne se trouve pas concentrée sur les bords de la Seine,” ibid, 95.
of the contrasting cultural practices towards women. In the first sentence of her chapter on Tunisia, she states that Tunisia is a “Muslim country, where women are hardly at the level of domestic worker and considered less important than the Caïd’s favorite mare.” The fact that she starts the section on this note is significant, as the rest of the passage is critical of Tunisian Muslims. She points out, for example, that in their eyes, “we are impure beings, whose contact must be avoided by all good Muslims.” In this phrase, she breaks her detached tone of colonial ethnographer and shows solidarity with French women, using the nous in this phrase to show that all French people are in opposition to Tunisian Muslims. Furthermore, she once again employs zero focalization to convince her readers that all Muslims think they are infidels, which transfers her prejudice to her readers. In contrast, the Jewish women in Tunis have “nothing in common with the Arab women, veiled in white.” In this description, she displays a cultural hierarchy between Jewish and Arab Muslim cultures in Tunisia. The Jewish population in Algeria was traditionally more highly regarded as well when compared with the Muslim population. In fact, the French government had given the Jewish (male) population the right to vote in Algeria in 1870. In contrast, the beginning of the second chapter on Madagascar shows Malagasy culture in a more favorable light than that of the Tunisian Muslims. Although Corneau focuses once again on women, observing that “one of the characteristics of this curious Hova class is the capital place that women play in its political and social organizations,” since this culture is more favorable to women’s independence, it occupies a higher place in her cultural hierarchy.

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97 Corneau, La femme aux colonies, 47.
98 Ibid, 54.
99 Ibid, 68.
100 The Muslim population did not get the vote until 1944.
101 Ibid, 91.
the point of departure for both of these chapters is the place of women in society, and Corneau
arranges her cultural preferences in a corresponding hierarchy.

Since Corneau included photos which she took herself, their contribution to the structure
and content of her work can also provide insight into her ideology.\(^\text{102}\) She includes four images,
three taken in Tonkin and one from Tunisia. The Tonkin images feature a French woman in a
rickshaw and at the market, demonstrating successful feminine integration into the community,
while the third image shows familiarity between the French and the “Annamites” in that the wet
nurse is holding a French baby. In contrast to the images which Nicola Cooper analyzes of
colonial propaganda, which stress the preventative role that women were meant to play in
colonies against miscegenation, the photos of Tonkin stress the independence of women; the
absence of the white man in the photos attests to the ability of women to move around freely in
Tonkin.\(^\text{103}\) The side angle in which the photo is taken contributes to this familiar effect; the photo
appears to be a more candid shot of typical life in the colonies. In contrast to these domestic
scenes, the photo of Tunisia shows a masculine group of herders in a more posed photo.
Moreover, implied in the image is the submission of the masculine subjects to the feminine
colonizer. The photos of Tonkin would therefore appeal more to Corneau’s feminine readership;
domestic scenes of Tonkin are more attractive than the cold, more formal and ultimately more
masculine photo of Tunisia.

\(^{103}\) Nicola Cooper, “Gendering the Colonial Enterprise,” 133.
Figure 1: A French woman in her rickshaw in Hanoi

Figure 2: Herders in Tunisia
In his article “Culture and Relativism,” Joseph E. Davis points out that multiple scholars of culture critique the use of cultural criticism as an ideological tool. The example he gives is that of “primitivism” which promotes aspects of another culture. However, primitivism, in its critical stances regarding the original culture, becomes an “inverted racism,” trivializing the other culture.\textsuperscript{104} This view of the other is also present in Grace Corneau’s \textit{La femme aux colonies}. Although at first glance, she appears to accept qualities of cultural relativism when she comments on the policies, customs, and treatment of women in indigenous cultures, in reality this is a technique which she employs in order to further her argument for women’s independence.

Corneau’s cultural relativity also undermines the colonial ideology of the civilizing mission. This concept, elaborated upon by Alice Conklin in \textit{A Mission to Civilize}, articulates “the assumption was that there existed a single universal human civilization capable of winning over from savagery all peoples and nations. This civilization was largely French in inspiration.”\textsuperscript{105} Thus, if the entire idea of civilizing mission was based on French superiority, cultural relativity would serve as a form of resistance to colonial ideology, demonstrating a second strategy of resistance in Corneau’s tract. In her work, this resistance takes the form of cultural relativity relating to the study of other culture’s policy towards slavery, customs, and gender practices.

Although at first it appears as if Corneau’s cultural relativity may be acceptance of another culture, she is in reality using it as a tool to promote French women’s independence in the colonies. She is in no way advocating human rights for indigenous peoples. In “Islam, Gender, and Identities: French Algeria,” Julia Clancy-Smith details the development of this ideology in Algeria at the turn of the century. Clancy-Smith asserts that women became “\textsuperscript{104} Joseph E Davis, "Culture and Relativism," 270-276. 
\textsuperscript{105} Conklin, \textit{A Mission to Civilize}, 15.
ideological terrain for debating issues of identity, cultural authenticity, and moral integrity.”

Gender ideology came to be used for arguments of French superiority over “an invincible Islamic legal system and unchanging indigenous mentalité toward women and sexuality.” 106 Corneau displays a similar view of Muslim Tunisians in numerous instances. For example, she states it would be a strange paradox that Tunisia, a Muslim country where women are hardly domestic workers and are regarded as less than the Caïd’s favorite mare, procure fortune, in other words, independence, for European women. It is true that French women are not those miserable creatures living in the Harems of the Orient. 107 In this passage, she articulates her position on colonialism perfectly- it is a space which offers French women more independence, and she is in no way concerned with elevating the status of women or indigenous peoples in the colonies. Instead, she employs the colonial space as an ideological tool for her own goals.

**Conclusions: Complex Subjectivities**

The study of Grace Corneau’s life and work shed light not only on the history of the colonies, but it also shows that women were actively engaged in the colonies in the nineteenth century, a subject which has been largely neglected by historians thus far. 108 She describes women in the colonies, not only as wives, but also as teachers, business owners, and even government employees. 109 In addition, she provides insight into child-raising practices in the colonies, detailing that many people send their children back to France for schooling once they reach the age of eight years old. 110

106 In Domesticating the Empire: Race, Gender, and Family Life in French and Dutch Colonialism, 173.  
107 “Il serait d’un paradoxe curieux que la Tunisie, pays musulman où les femmes sont à peine des domestiques du maître et sont moins considérées que la jument favorite du Caïd, procurât la fortune, c’est-à-dire l’indépendance, à des femmes européennes. Il est vrai que la femme de France n’est pas une de ces malheureuses créatures vivant au fond des harems de l’Orient,” Corneau, La femme aux colonies, 47.  
108 This is pointed out in Laura M. Godsoe, 'Pour la grandeur de la patrie et nous-mêmes.': Reading Women's Colonial Work in the Pages of the Women's Press in France, 1870-1914.  
110 Corneau, La femme aux colonies, 32.
Furthermore, Corneau’s biography demonstrates many interesting nuances related to gendered subjectivities of her time. As an American who married into French nobility, she would be considered French upper class. However, she practiced an active and successful career as a journalist, writing for both American and French newspapers. In fact, her articles were often featured on the front page of the Chicago Tribune.\textsuperscript{111} In addition, she wrote for the French feminist newspaper La Fronde.\textsuperscript{112} Hause and Kenney, in their comprehensive study of feminism in the Third Republic, point out that “virtually no nobles, with the noteworthy exception of the Duchesse d’Uzès, joined republican feminist groups.”\textsuperscript{113} Although there is no evidence thus far that she explicitly identified as a feminist, through the lenses of Said and Genette, we have seen that gender ideology played an important role in not only her writing, but her life as well, as she was acknowledged in speaking out for women as colonists and women in journalism.\textsuperscript{114} Furthermore, her background as an American who married into the French nationality may have influenced her susceptibility to cultural relativism since she had experienced different ways of life herself. Thus Corneau’s life story displays the complications of multiple subjectivities.

In La femme aux colonies, Corneau displays elements of resistance to colonial ideology, which dictated a push for women’s emigration to the colonies at the turn of the century. Colonial administration, the colonial lobby, and the mass media explicitly supported this mission. Although Corneau’s stated purpose in writing highlights the goal of women’s emigration, the structure, narrative voice, and content of her work does not consistently reinforce this objective, as we have seen above.


\textsuperscript{112} Madame Hagen calls her a colleague in her article “La femme explorateur,” La Fronde, February 5, 1899.


On the other hand, Corneau demonstrates complicity in colonial ideology. Not only is her explicit purpose complicit, but her entire gender resistance rests upon the existence of the colonial space. She never questions the justification for colonialism, only the status of women in society, both in the colonies and the metropole. As Patricia Lorcin writes of her contemporary, Hubertine Auclerc, who was an outspoken feminist, Corneau shared “the settler view that they [the colonized] were beasts of burden.” She viewed the Other largely in terms of class, rather than race, usually finding points of solidarity with the middle class of the indigenous, while simultaneously promulgating the view of the indigenous as manual labor for the colonists. This ideology is perfectly illustrated in the statement, “The arms don’t do anything for farm management; it is the head which is everything.”\textsuperscript{115} Through her metonymy, she undermines the importance of indigenous labor while simultaneously valuing the white colonist’s work. Thus she does not share the concern for elevating the status of the indigenous that rises in prominence during the interwar period in France.\textsuperscript{116} Moreover, she creates the image of the utopian colony, which offers the “colonial good life” for her targeted women, based on the exploitation of the indigenous peoples.

The application of Said’s concept of strategic location to Corneau’s tract demonstrates that her writing cannot be characterized in a stable binary of complicit or resistant to colonial ideology. Through the analysis of the narrative voice, structure, images, themes and motifs in the text, a more in depth picture of her ideology is formed, demonstrating a fluctuation between complicity and resistance depending on the situation and her own ideology. The recruitment mission in her work is dominated by complicity, but also complicated by the intersection of

\textsuperscript{115} Corneau, \textit{La femme aux colonies}, 50.
\textsuperscript{116} see Jennifer Anne Boittin, “These Men’s Minor Transgressions”: White Frenchwomen on Colonialism and Feminism,” \textit{Colonial Metropolis The Urban Grounds of Anti-imperialism and Feminism in Interwar Paris.} (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press. 2010), 171-211.
gender and class. Her narrative strategies demonstrate many strategies of resistance, while her cultural relativity undermines colonial ideology based on a straightforward assumption of cultural superiority. While the dichotomy of complicit/resistant does not apply to Corneau, as she oscillates between these poles, and at the same time, they are interconnected. Most significant, however, is the insight that her relationship to the colonial space is characterized by domination. Even though she resists gender ideology in the colonial context and shows qualities of cultural relativity, her resistance would not be possible without the colonial ideology and space on which it is founded.
CHAPTER 2: CLOTILDE CHIVAS-BARON: (RE)WRITING FRENCH COLONIAL PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

Introduction

The first unmarked page of text of Clotilde Chivas Baron’s *La Femme française aux colonies*, positioned between the dedication to “French colonial women” and the first chapter, “Autrefois,” clearly states Chivas-Baron’s purpose in writing this work of nonfiction on the history of women in the colonies; she subscribes to the views of Georges Hardy, author of *Les Eléments de l’histoire coloniale*, director of the *Ecole Coloniale* since 1926, that there existed many misapprehensions about the role of women in the colonies. She, like Hardy, critiques the fact that many images of the colonial woman exist in literature, but that they are overwhelmingly negative: “The Colonial Woman in literature…this could be the title, almost enticing, of a work very different from this one…We have known the Demoralized, the Woman Without Morals, depicted rigorously and judiciously by Robert Randau.” This single opening page of Chivas-Baron’s work underlines many facets of colonial ideology at play in the interwar period in France. In order to draw attention to her main objective, she uses numerous narratological devices to underline the importance of her mission and to draw the reader into active participation with her views. She, for example, engages two high-ranking colonials with contrasting views about women in the colonies, deftly illustrating a disconnect between the official discourse regarding women in the colonies and the literature that depicts them. This study of *La Femme française aux colonies*, published in 1929, examines her complicity and resistance to colonial ideology of the interwar period in France. While Chivas-Baron’s stated

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117 “In the old days”
purpose is to correct misconceptions about the *Coloniale*, or the figure of the ideal Colonial woman, historically and in the future, her work explicitly subscribes to complicity in the colonial project. However, the examination of her work in relation to Said’s concept of strategic location reveals elements of resistance as well.\(^{119}\)

Like Grace Corneau, Clotilde Chivas-Baron had a vested interest in the colonial project, based in part on personal experience living in the colonies. The wife of an administrator, she spent four years, primarily *en brousse*, in Indochina at the turn of the century. Her first publication was a collection of stories and legends from Annam, the central region of Vietnam, titled *Contes et légendes de l’Annam*, for which she won the Montyon Literary Prize from the *Académie Française*.\(^{120}\) Her next publication, *Trois femmes annamites*, published in 1922, won the Jouy Prize, while a third work won the Grand Prize for Colonial Literature in 1927. Chivas-Baron was not only a prolific author, but also an active promoter of women’s participation in colonialism in mainland France once she returned with her family. She participated in conferences by the *Ecole nationale de la France d’Outre-mer*,\(^{121}\) spoke about the role of women in the colonies on the radio, and was member of various colonial organizations, including the *Etats généraux du féminisme* at the International Colonial Exposition of 1931.\(^{122}\) Chivas-Baron was therefore committed to promoting women’s emigration to the colonies, a mission to which her text *La Femme française aux colonies* undoubtedly contributes.

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\(^{120}\) Literary prizes awarded by the *Académie Française* are considered the most prestigious awards in France.
\(^{121}\) National School of Overseas France
Resistant Epistemology

However, from the opening pages of Chivas-Baron’s text, it is evident that rather than blindly subscribing to colonial ideology, she is also resistant to received knowledge about the colonies that depicts women in the colonies in a negative light. She summarizes the image of the languishing colonial woman in this passage, “But – let us confess it as well- not better than the swallow not bringing spring, the woman rudely dressed, sprawled on a chaise lounge, the unhinged woman or the lush, cannot represent THE COLONIAL WOMAN.” In this instance, employing the communicative function in the imperative form- “let us confess”- she draws the reader into her view, underlined by the use of capitalized text to further emphasize her point that the image of the languishing woman is not the colonial woman; indeed she will correct these misconceptions and depict the reality of the true colonial woman.

Through her repudiation of the myth of the colonial woman on the metaphorical chaise lounge, Chivas-Baron asserts the formation of her own feminist epistemology. Uma Narayan defines the act of feminist epistemology as: “to depict an experience different from the norm and to assert the value of this difference.” It is no coincidence that the two colonial writers whom Chivas-Baron mentions in her untitled preface are men; she directly challenges the colonial archive which has largely been written by men and devoted her nonfiction work to correcting this erroneous archive, a task which continues to this day. Moreover, she challenges the idea, which remained prevalent in academia until into the 1980s, that characterized imperialism and

123 “Mais- avouons-le aussi- pas mieux qu’une hirondelle ne fait le printemps, la dame sommairement vêtue, affalée sur une chaise longue ; la détraquée ou la noceuse, ne peuvent représenter la COLONIALE,” Chivas-Baron, La Femme française aux colonies, 5.


colonialism as a “masculine endeavor.” Instead, Chivas-Baron inserts the history of women’s involvement in empire from its very origins in the 17th century. In addition, she elaborates on women’s various activities in the empire; rather than simply being present as wives, they were active in the fields of education, religion, and health care. These details effectively demolish the stereotype of the languishing woman unable to handle the harsh conditions of the colony.

The entire structure of her work contributes to her contestation of the archive. Originally published in 1929 by Larose, *La Femme française aux colonies* consists of four main chapters titled, “Autrefois,” “Hier,” “Aujourd’hui,” and “UNE COLONIALE.”126 The last chapter is set apart by a separate title page and the use of capitalization, suggesting that this chapter is the most significant to the author. It depicts the story of He and She in an unnamed COLONY, which could represent any couple who sets out to establish a life in the colonies. She starts at the beginning of the colonial archive “Autrefois” and works her way up to the present day, “Aujourd’hui,” and then ends by projecting her own views into the future with the chapter “UNE COLONIALE.” Her choice of chapters in a chronological order, beginning at the origins of French colonialism, while projecting her views into the future in the last chapter, demonstrates that she seeks to re-write the history of the colonies with the addition of women colonists and their works which have been overlooked until the time she wrote.

Chivas-Baron’s contestation of the traditional colonial archive continues with her enumeration of a multitude of case studies in her work. Beginning with the colonies of the *ancien régime*, she inserts the names of women and elaborates on their work which contributed to the colonial project in a positive way, contradicting the belief that “women hinder perfect

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126 “In the old days,” “Yesterday,” “Today,” “A COLONIAL WOMAN”
penetration of Europeans in the colonies.”127 The example of Mother Benjamin, a Catholic missionary who worked with métis children in the colonies, is particularly illustrative. After having to justify her actions in court because they concerned “the little sins of our gentlemen,”128 public opinion turned in the Mother’s favor and she was allowed to continue her work. Chivas-Baron then states, “Resolving this problem, this will be, undoubtedly- completing the work of Mother Benjamin and Colonel Bonifacy- work for enlightened sociologists, compassionate legislators, this will be (and we wish it to be) one of the most important feminine endeavors in the present and in the future.”129 In this passage, Chivas-Baron inserts the work of Mother Benjamin into colonial historiography, equating her work with a colonel from the standard colonial archive.

Chivas Baron’s strategy of inserting women’s work into the colonial archive is emphasized by her use of both the ideological and communication narrative functions in the above statement. When she uses the pronoun “we,” she establishes a direct communication between the narrator and the reader, which is an effective means of convincing the reader of her argument. Furthermore, her phrase “we wish it to be” underlines her ideological position, along with positive adjectives such as “enlightened,” “compassionate,” and “important.” These narrative devices, as articulated by Genette, reveal the means that Chivas-Baron reaches out to

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127 “Des coloniaux trop littéraires prétendent que la femme blanche empêche la parfaite pénétration européenne aux Colonies, ” Chivas-Baron, La Femme, 76.
128 “les petits péchés de ces messieurs, ” Chivas-Baron, La Femme, 64. Jennifer Boittin discusses this phrase which she translates as “These men’s minor transgressions” in her Colonial Metropolis: The Urban Grounds of Anti-Imperialism and Feminism in Interwar Paris. (Lincoln, Neb: University of Nebraska Press, 2010), 171-211. It is interesting to note that her source on this phrase dates from 1930, after the publication of Chivas-Baron’s work in 1929.
connect to the reader. Undeniably ideological in tone, this quotation unites the narrator with the reader, and thus transmits the ideology of the narrator to the reader.

Chivas-Baron also employs the literary device of asyndeton to emphasize the contributions of women to colonialism. Throughout La Femme française aux colonies, she uses the strategy of profuse listing without using conjunctions to convey the many interventions of women in colonization. One example of asyndeton’s usage is when she lists the various places where the missionary women work; “Wearing many hats, they [the sisters] are in the West Indies, in the Philippines, in Algeria, in Tunisia, in Madagascar, in India and Indochina. They have penetrated Equatorial Africa as they went to West Africa.”130 An additional case study Chivas-Baron elaborates on is the work of Mother Javouhey, and she uses asyndeton to list the Mother’s superior qualities: “she was comprehensive, superiorly intelligent, divinely good.”131 The use of the literary device asyndeton conveys the effect of a never-ending list. Without a conjunction joining the various elements listed, there seems to be no end to the possibilities, contributing to Chivas-Baron’s overall goal of supplementing the historiography of colonial France.

In addition to inserting the histories of women and their work into colonial historiography, Chivas-Baron also reveals the history of forced migration during the Ancien Régime into her study of French empire, which she calls “white slavery.” She observes, “more or less skillfully, more or less humanely, the colonizers practiced white slavery as much as black slavery.”132 She includes the topic of forced migration in her study of women in the colonies

130 “elle fut compréhensive, supérieurement intelligente, divinemment bonne,” Chivas-Baron, La Femme, 64.
131 Ibid, 49.
132 “Plus ou moins adroitement, plus ou moins humainement, les colonisateurs pratiquèrent la traite des blanches comme la traite des noirs,” La Femme, 12. She also says, or the settlement of Louisiana which practiced “in all its scope, in all its horror, white slavery” (la mise en valeur de la Louisiane que fut pratiquée dans toute son ampleur, dans toute son horreur, la traite des Blanches) on page 20.
because this subject demonstrated a definite gendered bias, since she uses the feminine form of “white” and describes women being forced to marry and emigrate with their husbands. While at first it was the poor who were targeted for forced migration, soon the phenomenon reached to the upper echelons of society. Chivas-Baron details how the aristocracy would send their misbehaving daughters, termed *les Scandaleuses* to Mississippi as punishment or as a solution to a lack of dowry. Migration studies, which include the topic of forced migration, is a currently emerging field today. The fact that Chivas-Baron in 1929 began to supplement the historiography of the colonies with these stories at the intersection of gender, class and migration makes her a pioneer in the field even by today’s standards, and clearly resistant to colonial ideology of her time.

Furthermore, her discussion of white slavery forges a connection between white women and black colonial subjects, who were also historically enslaved. It is important to note that this was an idea that began to materialize in feminist circles of interwar France. A number of colonized men had served in the French Foreign Legion during the First World War, and for the first time, they were a significant presence in metropolitan Paris. This, coupled with a surge in feminist activity, since France was the only Western country to continue to deny women the right to vote post World War I, caused new solidarities to be forged between two groups, women and the colonized, who viewed themselves bound by a similar oppression from white patriarchy.

Boittin explains that in interwar Paris, “colonized men and feminist women were in a strategic location for making themselves heard by fellow migrants and other disabused metropolitans.

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133 Ibid, 19.  
134 “Scandalous girls”  
136 Jennifer Boittin, *Colonial Metropolis*, 171-211.
This migration, intended to fulfill the nation’s need for a wartime workforce, soon gave rise to an intellectual and political evolution that called into question a number of tenets of Third Republic France, including the place of empire and women in modern life.”137 This solidarity was exacerbated by the fact that French women were the exception in women’s suffrage in the West during the interwar period. As Boittin points out, women during this time voted in places such as Turkey, Latin America, China, and Kenya.138 The connection between French feminism and concern for colonized peoples was also demonstrated in the *Etats Généraux du féminisme*, a feminist conference which took place in May of 1931, at the same time as the Colonial Exposition in Paris. Whereas Grace Corneau found solidarity with the other in regards to female sexuality, Chivas-Baron forges a connection against patriarchy of white men. More importantly, the connection she establishes between the colonial history of women and colonial subjects demonstrates resistance to colonial ideology. The allusions to difficult moments in colonial history also underscore another resistant aspect of her work and a primary theme in Chivas-Baron’s work: colonial disillusionment.

**Colonial Disillusionment**

While Chivas-Baron contests the colonial archive with an abundance of women’s stories, she does not depict the realities of their colonial life through rose-colored glasses that might be expected of conventional colonial propaganda. A prominent theme in the latter two chapters of her work, “Today” and “A COLONIAL WOMAN,” features what she terms the *cafard colonial*, or homesickness, an aspect of her work through which she resists colonial ideology.139 In these sections, she employs asyndeton to emphasize the monotony of colonial life, particularly for 

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137 Ibid, xix.
139 She first mentions it on p. 87.
broussardes, the colonial women who live en brousse. To combat the boredom, she suggests many hobbies such as reading, drawing, or interior decoration. She writes for example, “one broussarde indochinoise, that we know particularly well, abbreviated many grey hours with the works of d’Aymonnier, de Launay, de Cabaton, de Maybon…”140 This excerpt alludes first of all that the broussarde indochinoise she hints at is probably herself, providing insight into the author’s personal experience. Secondly, her use of asyndeton in this case stresses the vast amount of “grey hours” at the disposal of the colonial, seemingly endless, as the ellipsis also suggests.

Chivas-Baron’s use of asyndeton underscores a second aspect of the colonial life’s darker side. Her last chapter, for example, reading more like a narrative than the previous ones, includes a discussion between Madame Toute-Neuve141 and more seasoned colonists, who tell her about the “malice and competitions, injustices and concussions, resentments and bitterness, weariness and desperations” which plague their lives.142 When Madame reaches their new home, Chivas-Baron describes it as a “region too unknown, too forgotten, too disgraced.”143 Thus as the narrative progresses, the monotony of colonial life transforms and progresses into bitter disillusionment, a theme underscored by the multitude of terms that the author possesses for the idea of cafard colonial, which include “grey hours” as already mentioned, but also “hours of moral depression,” “les heures cafardieuses,” “nostalgia,” and “melancholy.” The author’s profusion of terms for this phenomenon underscores its prominence as a theme of her work,

140 “Une broussard indochinoise, que nous connaissons particulièrement, a écourté beaucoup d’heures grises avec les ouvrages de…” Chivas-Baron, La Femme, 89
141 “Mrs. Brand New”
142 “Malveillances et compétitions, injustices et concussions, rancunes et rancœurs, lassitudes et désespérances ?” La Femme, 105.
143 “région trop ignore, trop oubliée, trop disgraciée,” Ibid, 110.
while alluding to her resistance to colonial ideology, which would depict colonial life in more positive terms.

If *La Femme française aux colonies* subscribes to the genre of colonial propaganda, as Marie-Paule Ha suggests in her introduction to the re-edition, why would it portray the theme of disillusionment? Nicola Cooper attempts to respond to the same question through her study on the theme of exile and nostalgia in colonial literature which expresses itself in what she terms linguistic, cultural or ideological “slippages” present in many works on Indochina. She concludes that, “the disillusionment and disappointment unveiled in many accounts of Indochina thus provide a counterpoint to the quasi-utopic portrayals of French Indochina disseminated by official sources.”

In her view, the less official sources of colonial propaganda, such as colonial literature, did not consistently subscribe to official colonial ideology. Cooper’s analysis thus mirrors the way in which Chivas-Baron critiques received knowledge about the colonies in the form of the traditional colonial archive in favor of her own epistemology which shows both the positive and the negative aspects of colonial life, a depiction of her lived experience of colonialism. However, a detailed examination of Chivas-Baron’s work demonstrates how the theme of disillusionment functions in relation to her colonial ideology. Even though this theme is resistant to colonial ideology, which emphasizes the positive aspects of colonialism in official sources and propaganda, Chivas-Baron’s strategy for combatting the *cafard coloniale* leads her to emphasize a traditional gendered role for women in the colonies.

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A Gendered Role for Women

While Chivas-Baron’s expression of disillusionment with the colonial experience shows qualities of resistance to colonial ideology, it also causes her to emphasize women’s gendered role as wife and mother in the colonies, leading to complicity in colonial ideology. The last chapter of *La Femme française aux colonies* illustrates this fact in particular. The concluding section describes a generic colonial couple, never named, and simply referred to as *Il* and *Elle* with the italics to stress the anonymous and universal nature of the characters, as if the reader could insert her own name into the story. As Ha writes, this section “is devoted to a portrait of the ideal colonial woman, as Chivas-Baron conceived her.” The author depicts the story of a woman who is afflicted with the *cafard colonial*. However, as soon as this woman gives birth to her baby, “gone is the monotony of life…and gone is the melancholy.” A daughter follows, and “despite undeniably difficult times, *she* is convinced that it is easier to raise children, free in the vastness of nature, with all the space it offers, rather than a metropolitan city.” It is clear from these lines that this colonial woman, meant to represent the future ideal, finds fulfillment in her maternal role; the birth of her children signals the end of the monotony of colonial life, and subsequently she can devote herself to raising and educating her children. Chivas-Baron therefore promotes a traditional gender role for women in the colonies: she presents the role of wife and mother, as the solution to the infamous *cafard colonial*, consistent with colonial ideology.

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145 He and She
147 “Finie la monotonie des jours…Et fini le spleen,” *La femme*, 124.
148 “Malgré des heures incontestablement pénibles, *Elle* est convaincue qu’il est plus aisé d’élever les petits humains, libres en la vaste nature, avec tout l’espace offert à leurs ébats, que dans la ville métropolitaine,” Ibid, 128.
In addition to her affirmation of a traditional gender role for colonial women, throughout *La Femme française aux colonies*, Chivas-Baron demonstrates her complicity to colonial ideology in her commitment to the civilizing mission *à la feminine*. One of the most important factors in colonial life to her is women’s preventative role in the colonies, a role proscribed by colonial ideology which sought to continue the colonial project through the separation of the races and the maintenance of French cultural superiority. Women’s preventive role dictated that the presence of women in the colonies hinder colonial administrators from their vices, such as interracial/extramarital sex and alcoholism. To borrow Marie-Paule Ha’s phrase, this role would “kill two birds with one stone” by maintaining the distance between colonizer and colonized, while simultaneously reducing the number of administrators living in *concubinage* and having children with indigenous women. As detailed above, Chivas-Baron wrote about the “little sins of our gentlemen” which result in *métis* children. She describes the need for this role in greater detail in her last chapter on the ideal *coloniale*, stating, “he will accomplish it [his colonial work] with less fatigue because I will be there. He will continue it without fault in that he will not look for distractions to the inevitable homesickness. HE will ignore the excesses which surely lead to defects more than supernatural enthusiasm. I will be there.” These observations, written as a prescription for potential *coloniales*, clearly stress the preventative role that women play in the colonies against the “excesses” which men may resort to as a result of loneliness and homesickness in the colonies; women’s presence serves to keep them occupied with their familial obligations, while minimizing the “fatigue” caused by promiscuity and alcoholism.

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150 “Il l’accomplira avec moins de fatigue parce que de je serai là; il le continuera sans défaillance, en cherchant moins de dérivatifs à l’inévitable nostalgie. IL ignorerà les excès qui apportent plus surement des tares que de surnaturelles allégresses,” Chivas-Baron, *La Femme*, 97.
Literary analysis brings the significance of this passage to light. First, the narrator has entered the mind of the character of the *coloniale* in the form of internal focalization, stressing the reader’s identification with her point of view. In addition, the repetition of “I will be there” emphasizes the woman’s presence, rather than any actions or words she might offer, as a solution to indiscrete behavior. Next, the author alludes to the vices of interracial sex and alcoholism through the words “fault” and “distractions,” which she states more clearly on the next page when discussing the *heures cafardeuses*, elaborating that, “the hours that are often killed with too much alcohol, too much tobacco (or sometimes too much hash or opium).”\(^{151}\) Thus it is clear that Chivas-Baron supports the feminine civilizing mission, particularly in their preventative role in the colonies. Interestingly, this role marks a shift in power for women, since in this capacity, they act as policing agents over the male colonists. Her ideology of women’s power, expressed through narrative strategy, can only be understood through an analysis of narratology in this excerpt.

In addition to women’s preventative role in the colonies, Chivas-Baron advocates for their special position as educators of the next generation of colonists. In the last chapter, for example, the narrator describes the joy that *she* feels from giving the children their first reading lessons, and her only worry is how they will interact with children in the metropolis, to which she observes that other children “will be jealous of them, envious sometimes, but they will always be listened to. Stemming from this contact, they will thrust into enthusiastic heads, the colonial idea which will sprout.”\(^{152}\) A *coloniale* will give birth to children that will carry on the colonial tradition. Thus Chivas-Baron extends the reach of the civilizing mission to future

\(^{151}\) “*les heures cafardeuses, si mauvais conseillères, les heures que l’on cherche à tuer avec trop d’alcools, trop de pipes (de haschich ou d’opium), “ *La Femme*, 98.

\(^{152}\) “*Ils seront jalouxés, enviés quelquefois, mais toujours écoutés. A leur issu, ils jeteront, en des cervelles enthousiastes, l’idée coloniale qui germera…, “ *ibid*, 129.
generations of colonial men and women, given birth by the ideal *coloniale* who educates her children in colonial ideology to take back to the metropole and pass on to others, while continuing it in their own life as well.

While it is clear that Chivas-Baron herself promoted women’s role in the civilizing mission with regards to women’s preventative role and the education of future generations, it is also interesting to note that her contemporaries cited her as the *coloniale par excellence*, attesting to the effectiveness of her strategy. One writer who took particular interest in her biography and work is Daniel Marquis-Sébie. Author and painter, he had spent 17 years in Africa as a colonial administrator. Specifically, he praised Chivas-Baron’s qualities as a *coloniale*, demonstrated in the fact that he devoted a speech and an article to her for the *Agence générale des colonies*, a group devoted to colonial propaganda. In the speech, given to a group of potential *coloniales* at the Legion of Honor, he enumerated her various qualities as a patroness of the civilizing mission. For example, he acknowledges that she is his primary source for information on women’s work in the colonies when he states, “we have gathered these details from the work of a fervent *coloniale*: Clotilde Chivas-Baron, whose work is *La Femme française aux colonies*, bedside reading, handbook, if you may, of future *coloniales*.” Furthermore, he cites a passage of her work and fully acknowledges their agreement on the “happy influence” which women exert on men in the colonies. Marquis-Sébie’s applause shows that Chivas-Baron’s complicity in the civilizing mission goes beyond merely an ideological stance expressed through the written word; in fact, it demonstrates concrete consequences in the recruitment of women *coloniales*.

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Gendered Colonial Discipline

The recruitment and education of women for the colonies reveals a third complicitous aspect of Chivas-Baron’s *La Femme française aux colonies*; her application of colonial discipline to French women demonstrates how she extends the power inherent in the colonial project to discipline members of her own “race,” similar to the way women’s preventative role in the colonies encourages them to police French men. The project of colonialism was above all defined as a relationship of power. The colonists needed to justify the rule of the minority over the majority through the use of various disciplinary methods which reinforced justifications for colonial rule. The civilizing mission, for example, required colonists to discipline colonial subjects into assimilation to their own cultural standard. As Ann Laura Stoler demonstrates in regards to sexuality, the system of colonialism required the monitoring and policing of the colonizers as well as the colonized.156 Chivas-Baron’s text reveals a similar policing of the women allowed to go to the colonies to represent *la mère patrie*. Through her depiction of the *dame fâcheuse*, and in her call for special colonial education for women, she advocates colonial surveillance over which women should go to the colonies and how they should act when once they arrive. The discipline of women serves to promulgate colonial ideology which promoted middle-class values and a strict separation of the “races”, in order to continue the justification for colonialism.

In numerous instances, Chivas- Baron evokes the image of the white woman unfit for colonial life, which she calls the *dame fâcheuse*, engaging in a process of other women of her own race, while attempting to control their behavior in the colonies.157 From the first page of her

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157 Angry woman
work, she clearly distinguishes the “bad” type of colonial woman, in opposition to the “good”
women which provide her multitude of case studies of the “true colonial woman, the figure of
the coloniale.” In contrast, these hysterical women are unfit for colonial duties because they
do not uphold the bourgeois standard of behavior in the colonies, which serves as the
justification for colonial rule by asserting the superiority of French culture, and maintaining the
strict separation of the races. The idea that colonial women who do not fit this middle class
standard are not suited for colonialism is a view consistent with colonial ideology, which
advocated that only a certain type of woman was suited for colonialism, as a representative of la
mère patrie abroad.

Chivas-Baron’s critique of colonial training and education in her text further supports
colonial ideology which states that only certain women are capable of representing the Mother
country abroad. She makes her critique of the Ecole Coloniale very clear in the phrase, “we
hoped that, from primary school, little French girls would have received aspects of pre-colonial
lessons. We deplored that the Ecole Coloniale did not annex a section for feminine preparation;
that certain courses were not co-ed.” The fact that Chivas-Baron is calling for better colonial
education for women here echoes Grace Corneau’s concerns about the lack of information on the
colonies at the Ministry. However, examining these examples in detail highlights differences in
colonial ideologies between the two women and the contexts in which they wrote.

Although at first glance it seems as though the qualms of both Corneau and Chivas-Baron
are similar in that they criticize the French Ministry of the Colonies in relation to education about

158 “La coloniale vraie, celle qui nous intéresse,” Chivas-Baron, La Femme, 6.
159 Colonial School
160 “On a souhaité que, dès l’école primaire, la fillette française reçût les éléments d’enseignement précolonial. On a
déploré qu’à l’Ecole coloniale ne fut pas annexée une section de préparation féminine ; que certains cours ne fussent
pas mixtes,” Chivas- Baron, La Femme, 91.
the colonies, the nuances of their arguments show important differences. On one hand, Corneau cites a lack of both basic geography and first-hand knowledge about the colonies, along with misinformation, while Chivas-Baron calls for the establishment of dedicated women’s courses at the *Ecole Coloniale*, going as far to suggest the co-education of women with men. Chivas-Baron advocates therefore a more specialized knowledge and training as preparation for becoming a *coloniale* rather than simply basic and accurate information as Corneau does. Writing nearly thirty years after Grace Corneau, she takes for granted the fact that information about the colonies is readily available, in fact, the colonies had surpassed the status as simply the subject of propaganda, and crossed into all facets of cultural life; cinema, literature, advertising, which Hargreaves underlines when he observes, “most historians agree that it was not until the interwar period that the overseas empire ingrained itself to a significant degree on popular consciousness in France.” By the time that she writes, the genre of colonial literature was already well-established, as the *Revue des questions coloniales et maritimes* clearly confirms this fact when it defines “colonial literature in the truest sense that we must accept, includes works inspired by our distant continents translated not as simply tourism enamored with exoticism, but written by authors with extensive experience living in these places.” This definition, written in 1937, clearly implies an established literary genre. French society in Grace Corneau’s time did not possess the same saturation of information about the colonies.

The difference between the intentions of Corneau and Chivas-Baron regarding colonial education can be elucidated by Sandra Bartky’s writing on the modern forms of patriarchy which

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discipline women’s bodies. Using Foucault’s concept of discipline as a modern form of power, she posits that the requirement of specialized knowledge acts as one means of discipline.\textsuperscript{163}

Through this lens, Chivas-Baron’s promotion of a colonial education specific to women implies therefore the desire for control over those women immigrating to the colonies; she wishes to ensure the conformity and correctness of these women so that they fall into line as good \textit{coloniales} instead of becoming \textit{la dame fâcheuse}. As a result, these women would successfully enforce the colonial project, rather than giving colonial subjects cause to question French cultural superiority through inappropriate behavior. This manifestation of colonial power through discipline thus demonstrates an additional complicity in colonial ideology which permeates Chivas-Baron’s work.

\textbf{Conclusion}

Chivas-Baron’s main purpose in writing \textit{La Femme française aux colonies} demonstrates her activism for the importance of women in the colonies, a subject that she describes as a polemic in colonial circles. Daniel Marquis-Sébie also alludes to this fact during his speech to the \textit{Agence générale des colonies}.\textsuperscript{164} The structure of her work, written in chronological order with a multitude of case studies, along with her insertion of the history of the forced migration of women to the colonies in North America, and her use of the literary devise asyndeton to emphasize the good works of women in the colonies all contribute to her creation of a resistance epistemology which challenges the colonial standard archive and the prevailing colonial ideology of her time.

The theme of disillusionment in the form of *la cafard colonial* is another resistant quality of *La Femme française aux colonies*. Michael Vann attributes discussions of *le cafard colonial* in colonial writing to the expression of the contradictions of power inherent in colonial life. According to him, the vulnerability of the colonists, demonstrated in the fact that they were the ruling minority vastly outnumbered by the indigenous majority, manifested itself in physical ailments, such as *le cafard*. These unique colonial ailments contributed to the forging of a colonial identity for the colonists.

Chivas-Baron also formed her identity through the use of the *cafard*. As already mentioned, she encourages women to find activities to fill their “grey hours,” with endeavors such as painting, reading, studying, and exploring. She observes that, “one always discovers something new in the colony” while taking a walk, for example, and she recommends taking up studies of ethnology, ethnography, and folklore. Her discussion of the various occupations to which a woman can devote herself once again touches on her personal biography. As she asserts, “you will find, in the Colony, an inexhaustible source of inspiration.”

Since her first publication was a transcription of the stories and legends from Annam, it is evident that she is speaking from experience. As Marie-Paule Ha observed, “Indeed, all of Chivas-Baron’s work emerged in large part from her colonial experience.” She thus forged her identity as a colonial writer through the prevention of *le cafard*, transforming the experience into a beneficial one, similar to Grace Corneau’s promotion of the colonies as a tool for personal advancement.

Whereas Chivas-Baron demonstrates resistance to colonial ideology in the structure and the theme of disillusionment in her work, in other aspects she is complicit with colonial ideology. She expresses her commitment to colonial ideology in multiple ways. First, she

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166 Ha, “Introduction,” *La Femme*, viii.
promotes traditional gender roles for women, and then describes their unique role in the civilizing mission as deterrents for men’s immorality and educators of the next generation of *colons*. Finally, she advocates strengthening colonial discipline over potential *coloniales*. Like Grace Corneau, Chivas-Baron uses the colonial space to further her own objectives, and displays elements of both resistance and complicity, observable through the examination of Said’s strategic location, or the structure, themes, images, motifs, and narrative voice of her nonfiction work.

Clotilde Chivas-Baron ends her work on the history of women in the colonies with the imperative: “Go without regret and without fear, with the one you love,” a direction which summarizes her views on women’s role in colonialism. In her eyes, the days of forced migration are over, and women willingly emigrate in order to contribute to the spread of French civilization and make their colonial administrator’s lives more comfortable, chasing away the specter of *le cafard coloniale*. French women play the most necessary role as promulgators of the French nation by performing their role of wife and mother, thereby continuing the French heritage. While her purpose in writing was more resistant to the traditional colonial archive, in the end, it participates predominately in reaffirming colonial ideology rather than undermining it.
CHAPTER 3: GERMAINE TILLION AND THE ALGERIAN WAR

Introduction

During the Algerian War, the relative position of Germaine Tillion could best be described as between a rock and a hard place. She expressed this sentiment in the phrase, “Our “conditioned reflexes” are- and I know I speak for the majority of us- a passionate love of Justice, a virtually instinctive solidarity with the oppressed, imprisoned, fugitives, but also loyalty to our country and to our compatriots when one is attacked and the other is in danger.”167 The conflict she articulates in *L’Afrique bascule vers l’avenir* demonstrates the difficulty of her position as a patriot of France who led a unit of the Resistance in World War Two, especially when twelve years later she discovered that the French government was committing similar acts of violence against the Algerian population.

This investigation explores the nature of her intervention in the Algerian conflict as an intellectual commissioned by the state to analyze the viability of colonial Algeria. Her intervention consisted firstly of *L’Algérie en 1957*, edited and republished in 1961 as *L’Afrique bascule vers l’avenir*.168 This work was republished in 1999, which included a supplementary section written from Tillion’s notes, followed by the texts published in 1961. Her second work is titled *France and Algeria: Complementary Enemies*.169 Through an analysis of the major themes, motifs, narrative voice, and structure, drawing on Said’s concept of strategic location, coupled with the unique circumstances of Tillion’s biography and career, this study will elucidate more

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167 “nos reflexes conditionnés” sont- et je sais que je parle pour la majorité entre nous- u amour passionné de la Justice, une solidarité quasi-instinctive avec les opprimés, les prisonniers, les fugitifs, mais aussi la fidélité à notre pays et à nos compatriotes lorsque l’un est attaqué et que les autres sont en danger, ” Germaine Tillion, *L’Afrique bascule vers l’avenir*, (Paris: Tirésias, 1999), 65.
nuanced conclusions regarding the strategies of complicity and resistance that women directly implicated in the colonial enterprise employ in their nonfiction writing.

Germaine Tillion provides a fruitful additional case study for an inquiry into the fluctuations between complicity and resistance in nonfiction writing for a number of reasons. Tillion trained as an ethnologist in Paris during the interwar period. In the course of her studies, she undertook four research missions to the Aurès region of Algeria between the years of 1934 and 1940, in which she resided in the community and conducted fieldwork on the Berber people who lived isolated, virtually untouched by French colonial rule. Shortly after returning to France in 1940, her country was defeated by the Nazis. Tillion and her colleagues quickly formed a Resistance group that they called Musée de l’Homme. Six of Tillion’s group were tried and executed in February 1942, while she was arrested and sentenced to death by the Germans six months later on four counts of espionage. She was subsequently imprisoned for one year and then transported to Ravensbrück concentration camp, where she discovered her mother interned at the same camp. Her mother became a victim of the gas chamber, but Tillion was liberated by the Swedish Red Cross in 1945.

After her liberation, Tillion directed her studies toward the history of Nazi concentration camps and wrote an ethnographic work about Ravensbrück. However, at the beginning of the Algeria conflict in 1954, she was called to serve as an expert on Algeria because of her extensive previous fieldwork experience. In November 1954, François Mitterrand, then Minister of the Interior, asked her to undertake a two-month study of Algeria’s situation. After the completion of this assignment, she met with the Governor General of the French Government in Algeria,

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Jacques Soustelle, who asked her to join his cabinet as an advisor, and she effectively became the liberal voice in his cabinet.\textsuperscript{172}

Thus Tillion was a uniquely positioned intellectual in the phenomenon known as decolonization of the 1960s for several reasons. Her extensive experience and knowledge of Algeria from the interwar years, her training in ethnography which gave her special skills in interviewing different populations, and her anthropological background, allowed her to analyze skillfully “the Algerian Question.” Moreover, she was a well-regarded, decorated French resister and concentration camp survivor, which positioned her as a national figurehead and supplemented her political credibility.\textsuperscript{173} Her authority was demonstrated in the actions of Mitterrand and Soustelle, government officials who called upon her expertise almost immediately after the outbreak of the war. Finally, her position in the French Algerian government and her connections with the network of concentration camp deportees in the form of the group ADIR (National Association of Deportees and Internees of the Resistance) added to her credentials. For these reasons, she was called upon by the government to research and write about the situation in Algeria, positioning her as an expert in the field.

**Resistant Narratologies**

Tillion’s experience as a concentration camp survivor and her humanist training in ethnography comes to light in her views on the field of ethnology: “As far as I am concerned, I considered the obligations of my profession as an ethnologist comparable to those of lawyers, with the difference in that it requires me to defend a population instead of a person.”\textsuperscript{174}

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\textsuperscript{174} “De mon côté je considérais les obligations de ma profession d’ethnologue comme comparable à celles des avocats, avec la différence qu’elle me contraignait à défendre une population au lieu d’une personne,” Tillion, *L’Afrique bascule*, 18.
Throughout her works on Algeria, Germaine Tillion displays a number of strategies that reveal her resistance to colonial ideology. She focuses the attention of the reader onto these strategies through the use of what Genette terms narratology.\textsuperscript{175} Narrative functions and focalization, as articulated by Genette, reveal some of her resistant ideologies. One instance that highlights Tillion’s deployment of these narrative strategies, in this case in regards to racial ideology, is when she articulates, “no human lineage possesses a monopoly on intelligence or equality…if I mention these details to you, it is because sometimes racist arguments appear in the Algerian imbroglio. Elsewhere, they seem troublesome to me, but here they are equally stupid.”\textsuperscript{176} From the point of view of narratology, this passage presents several significant points. In this case, she promotes a racial ideology that all races are created equal, particularly related to human intelligence; no race has the advantage over another. Furthermore, she boosts the effectiveness of her message through narratological devices that are brought to light through Genette’s theories. Her use of internal focalization in the form of first-person narration underlines the importance of her ideology in this statement. Taking into account the fact that she was an established authority on the subject of Algeria, acknowledged by the French government as well as by the general public, further underlines the effectiveness of a first person ideological statement, which encourages the reader to identify with her point of view and to assert her authority. Finally, she employs the communication function to reach out and draw the reader into her point of view, when she directly addresses the reader as “you.” All of these narratological devices work to give her viewpoint credibility, while reinforcing a connection between her and the reader.


\textsuperscript{176} “Nulle lignée humaine ne détient le monopole de l’intelligence ou de l’équité…Si je vous mentionne ces détails, c’est parce qu’il arrive parfois que des argumentations racistes figure dans l’imbroglio algérien. Ailleurs elles me semblent pénibles, mais ici elles sont également sottes ,” Tillion, \textit{L’Afrique bascule}, 69.
Through the employment of narratological devices, Tillion connects the beginning of Algerian resistance to the history of colonialism in Algeria, a strategy that connects responsibility in the present conflict with colonialism. In a section of *France and Algeria* titled “1945: the Sétif riot, a consequence of the “pacification” of 1853,” the title alone foreshadows her view of the Sétif riot, named for the region where the manifestation took place on V-E day, May 8, 1945, celebrating the end of World War Two.\(^{177}\) She considers this incident the beginning of Algerian resistance to French rule, and directly connects it to the pacification of the region of Sétif in 1853, when the best lands were given to the *Compagnie genevoise*, a Swiss company controlled by the French colonists; the Algerian residents of the land were never compensated for the loss of their land. Tillion emphasizes the connection between colonialism and the current conflict in several ways. First, she opens the section with a question, communicating directly to the reader: “Why was the demonstration organized by the U.D.M.A. (*Union Démocratique du Manifeste Algérien*)\(^{178}\) on V.E. Day (May 8, 1945) peaceful everywhere in Algeria save in the region of Sétif?”\(^{179}\) Next, she responds to this question in the first person, or through internal focalization, to transfer her ideology onto the reader. She asserts, “I have spoken of those horrible days with many and varied witnesses.” Not only does she use internal focalization to reinforce her point in this case, but the content of her message also builds her authority; she spoke to witnesses about the events, thus her information is presented as credible. In this passage, Tillion uses the communication function, addressing the reader directly through a question. Subsequently, she uses internal focalization to answer the question through the assertion of her own opinion. Since her contention is that the riot in Sétif resulted from the

\(^{177}\) Tillion, *France and Algeria*, 131.  
\(^{178}\) Algerian Democratic Protest Union  
\(^{179}\) Tillion, *France and Algeria*, 131.
confiscation of Muslim Algerians’ land, in this instance she displays resistance to the colonial ideology that made the “pacification” of Algeria possible in the first place.

By examining the focalization of the narrator in further detail, one can identify another example of resistance in Tillion’s writing. She uses internal focalization to enter the mind of Algerian Muslims. At first glance, this could be viewed as a biased means of speaking for the other; however, the way in which she employs internal focalization goes further than speaking on behalf of a group. For example, she “enters the mind” of the Algerian Muslim when she explains, “this new source of frustration for the Moslems alternated with the less obvious, often unformulated pain of cultural dispossession and the open exasperation provoked, among the peasants, by the confiscation of land- an inexhaustible exasperation each generation transmits intact to the next.”

Tillion also broaches the subject of French repression of Algerian Muslims when she asserts, “confronted with an apparently total indifference on the part of French public opinion and French justice, the Moslems were stunned; thereafter they felt they had been delivered- without defense, without arms, without legal recourse of any kind- to murder pure and simple.” In passages such as these, Tillion employs internal focalization in order to transmit the Algerian Muslim point of view to a French audience. As an expert in the field, someone who had spent years living amongst the group of people in question, Tillion established expertise that allowed her to translate their viewpoint to an audience, the French public, whose opinions were sharply divided. Thus she was not speaking on behalf of a group for her own interests, but for defending their interests in making their perspective available to a wider audience by a recognized authority on the subject, all the while breaking stereotypes and prejudices the readers

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180 Tillion, France and Algeria, 130.
181 Ibid, 148.
may have had from other less-informed sources that would depict Muslim Algerians as violent, extremist terrorists.

**The Memory of Deportation and Algeria**

One of the aspects of Tillion’s writing that conflicts with colonial ideology is the connections she establishes between her experience as a deportee, as survivors of Nazi concentration camps were known in France, and the oppression of Muslim Algerians by the French during the Algerian War. Tillion forges this connection when she describes hearing about executions soon to take place in Algeria, and she expresses that “this news came as a great shock to me…because I am particularly sensitive in this area.”\(^{182}\) She then describes the execution of her comrades in the Resistance, evoking national sentiment by juxtaposing the trials of French Resistance against the Nazi regime in France, with the suppression of Muslim Algerian nationalists. Another example of the link between Nazi oppression and French oppression of Algeria is the “shock” she experienced when she returned to Algeria in 1954. Upon arriving, she witnessed the blatant discrimination of Muslims when passing through checkpoints on the road; Europeans easily passed, while a peasant had to raise his hands “like a suspect. A scene which I had seen many times in Paris between 1940 and 1942.”\(^{183}\) By connecting the experience of the Nazi occupation in France with the French occupation of Algeria, she appeals to the French public on a personal level. Since World War Two had ended not even a decade before, the memory of this horror was still fresh in peoples’ minds, which she points out when she writes, “the accidents of history would have it that among these witnesses of the sufferings of the alien people are certain Frenchmen who, less than twenty years before, had directly experienced these

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\(^{182}\) Tillion, *France and Algeria*, 42-43.

same crushing ordeals.”184 The parallel that she draws between Nazi and French occupation could not be more explicit. This effect is amplified by the change in the narrator’s focalization, that is, the use of the first person, which generates a stronger connection between the reader and the narrator. The parallels she draws between the two regimes, Nazi on one hand and French on the other, emphasize the injustice of the Algerian War, and calls into question colonial ideology that the Algerian war be won “by every means.”185 In Donald Reid’s study of Tillion’s activities, he explains that Tillion viewed the Algerian war as a moral breakdown of the French people. In contrast, the deportees of French Resistance were her models for true French values.186 Thus she was already to a certain extent creating divisions among the French themselves, an aspect of her work which should be explored in further detail.

**Complicity and the Other**

Even though Tillion’s nonfictional writings on Algeria convey numerous qualities of resistance, elements of complicity are present as well. One paradoxical but significant feature of her writing was the process of othering the actual perpetrators of the violence in Algeria, namely the French army and the French Algerians. In the former’s case, Tillion explains that political parties and Parliament in France had been weakened through various divisions, while bitterness grew within the army because of defeat in the Indochina War, and through the lack of support in France for the soldiers who fought in this conflict. First, she states, again alluding to World War Two and the divisions of the French people between collaborator and resister, but she adds that, “the cruel division that mutilated France from 1940 to 1945 subsist in our army more than

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184 Tillion, *France and Algeria*, 125.
185 Ibid, 11.
anything else.”¹⁸⁷ All of these factors lead to a situation in which, “politicians of the Left entrusted these same soldiers with exorbitant powers. Of course, one must judge severely the excesses of which certain military elements then became guilty, but even more severely those men who encouraged these elements to commit such excesses and who had every opportunity to know that these cruelties were avoidable and that they should have been avoided at any cost.”¹⁸⁸ Notably, the focalization throughout this entire passage is “zero,” Tillion writes as an omniscient narrator, which leads to a much more impersonal of a description than those of the Muslim Algerian’s viewpoints. This further contributes to the separation between the French and the French army. In this instance, by adopting the perspective of zero focalization, she chooses not to establish a connection between the reader and the view of the French army through internal focalization. Furthermore, her description of the military raises the question of authority over the armed forces, a question which Isabel Hull takes up in her study of the origins of the Nazi genocide. She attributes military culture, which developed in Germany following the Franco-Prussian War and the writing of the constitution, to the genocide committed by Germans, first in German South Africa and then in Europe.¹⁸⁹ In both cases, an unstable political climate, coupled with a rise in power of the military, led to extreme violence- the Nazi concentration system on one hand, and torture, executions, and concentration camps in Algeria. There is no question as to Tillion’s stance against torture, which was one of her motivations in writing her works on Algeria, however, in othering the army, creating and reinforcing a division between the views of

¹⁸⁷ Tillion, *France and Algeria*, 79.
¹⁸⁸ Ibid, 81.
the French nation and the actions of the French army in Algeria, is she not then shirking some of
the responsibility of the French nation in the atrocities and placing the blame military excess?190

In addition to othering the French army, Tillion also creates a division between the
French citizens of France and the French nationals of European descent in Algeria. Although
they held French citizenship as residents of Algeria, many of the French Algerians found their
origins in Malta, Spain, and Italy in addition to France; therefore, they already possessed a
cultural disconnect from mainland France.191 Tillion describes the fact, for example, that the
colonial administrators in Algeria are recruited from Algeria itself rather than transferring French
administrators from France because “the initial privilege of education permitted the descendants
of the first colons to eliminate, in almost every administrative post in Algeria, the officials sent
from metropolitan France and trained there.”192 Her choice of words in this phrase suggests that
this was a deliberate plot of the French Algerians to separate themselves from the mainland and
create their own society without the influence of the metropolis.

Not only are the French Algerians protected from imported administrators, but the
distance between the two countries leads to an inevitable dilution of metropolitan culture, which
is another means to separate this group from the French of mainland France in her process of
othering the French Algerians that Tillion employs. The structure of her work also supports this
point, as it includes an entire chapter devoted to the subject of the “Men of the Marches,” who
are, she explains, the people furthest away from the cultural center of the French nation, Paris.
She uses the image of Paris as the “beating heart of our community” to demonstrate her point

190 Both Nancy Wood and Donald Reid describe her activism against torture, see Germaine Tillion: une femme-
mémoire and “De Ravensbrück à Alger,” in Le siècle de Germaine Tillion, ed. Todorov, Tzvetan, (Paris: Seuil,
2007), 149-170.
191 Jeanne M. Boyland, “Civilizing Gender Relations in Algeria, The Paradoxical Case of Marie Bugéja, 1919-39,”
in Domesticating the Empire: Race, Gender, and Family Life in French and Dutch Colonialism. ed. Julia Ann
192 Tillion, France and Algeria, 95.
that the farther one moves from the center, the less contact one has with mainstream culture.\textsuperscript{193} Next, she describes the process by which the culture of Paris gets diluted the farther from the city travelled, until “their country fades all the same. It disappears first, and without anyone’s noticing, from institutions- then from ways of behaving, and thinking.”\textsuperscript{194} In a sub-section of the same chapter, entitled “A distant France,” Tillion once again reinforces her point through the use of imagery, depicting Algeria as “this distant France whose edges fray and are frayed,” thereby illustrating the negative and demoralizing effects of distance from the metropolis. According to her, it is these French Algerians, culturally separated, who enforce the second-class status of Muslim Algerians, by refusing them positions in the administration “under the pretext that in the “indigenous” milieu, the candidates do not possess the required credentials for the posts,” while the French government, under direction of Charles de Gaulle, passed a law in March 1944 that Muslim Algerians should enjoy full privileges of French citizenship.\textsuperscript{195} In this chapter, she therefore engages in a similar process of othering the French Algerians from the French of France as she did with the French army, once again shifting the responsibility of the current situation from the French in France to the French Algerians. Their distance from the metropolis has caused them to become morally corrupt, and they do not represent metropolitan French values.

\textbf{Complicitous Maternalism}

Germaine Tillion’s relationship to the other is further complicated by the maternalism that she demonstrates throughout her works on Algeria. In her attempt to protect Muslim Algerians from French oppression, her intervention depicts her as a maternal imperialist. The
concept of imperial maternalism is articulated in detail in *Western Women and Imperialism*.\(^{196}\) As the term suggests, it connotes the feminine version of paternalism. In regards to imperialism, and as articulated by Barbara Ramusack, maternalism is a “fictive kinship,” used to justify the presence of colonists in the colonies through the necessity of their protection and education of the indigenous peoples that they can offer in order to elevate native society.\(^{197}\) Imperial maternalists believed in the superiority of their own culture and political system, and the need to improve their colonial subjects’ own systems, envisioning a relationship like that between Mother and daughter. However, as Ramusack points out, “the mother-daughter relationship involves elements of inequality and suspicions about the motivations of the mothers.”\(^{198}\) Since an ideology of maternalism underwrote the system of colonialism, Germaine Tillion’s subscription to this creed demonstrates her implicit complicity in colonial ideology.

Tillion displays maternalist tendencies in her view that Algeria needs to remain connected to France in order to remedy the demographic problems in the country. At the time she wrote during the Algerian War, this was a controversial stance. French intellectuals of the 50s and 60s were divided about the Algerian Question, as Sorum notes in his work *Intellectuals and Decolonization in France*.\(^{199}\) When she first wrote *Algeria: The Realities* in 1956, Tillion did not support decolonization in Algeria because, in her view, it would cripple the country. Her views changed by the time she wrote *France and Algeria* in 1961 because of the brutality of the Algerian War; she knew at that time that independence for Algeria was inevitable. However, she still advocated a close relationship between France and Algeria in the future in order to protect

\(^{197}\) “Cultural Missionaries, Maternal Imperialists, Feminist Allies”, in *Western Women and Imperialism*, 133.
\(^{198}\) Ibid, 133.
and elevate the Algerian population. This role involved social assistance in large part, as she enumerates in 1962’s *L’Afrique bascule vers l’avenir*, “free education of both girls and boys, democracy, and social peace” will lead to a better future for Algeria, “over the market”.\(^{200}\) She therefore presents her viewpoint as nobler than merely economics, represented by the market, and more social and political in nature. It is no coincidence that these social qualities are those of the metropole, whose system was better suited for the modern world.

Tillion further expresses her maternalism through a recurrent motif that takes the form of the need for the Algerian population to be protected. Using the communication function in the form of a question posed to the reader, for example, she writes, “What have they to lose in losing our friendship? Virtually everything.”\(^{201}\) The communication function serves to highlight everything Algeria stands to lose, in her eyes, from the termination of their relationship, which she euphemistically describes as a “friendship.” She transmits a concern for the protection of “children and family” in particular.\(^{202}\) The structure of her work reinforces this point, as she titled the fifth chapter of *L’Afrique bascule vers l’avenir* to “The Child,” and the seventh chapter “Women, Treated like Domestic Animals.”\(^{203}\) Mervat Hatem coined the term “cultural nationalism,” which she describes as a facet of colonial ideology, which “gave women role as protectors and conveyors of cultural definitions of gender.”\(^{204}\) Through this lens, Tillion displays cultural nationalism in her promotion of Western gender norms in regards to women’s place in Algerian society, a subject she later takes on in her text *The Republic of Cousins* in 1966.\(^{205}\) The

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\(^{200}\) “l’instruction totale des filles et des garçons, à la démocratie, à la paix sociale,” Tillion, *L’Afrique bascule vers l’avenir*, 120.

\(^{201}\) Tillion, *France and Algeria*, 5.

\(^{202}\) Ibid, 87.

\(^{203}\) Page 86 and 100 respectively.

\(^{204}\) “Through Each Other’s Eyes,” in *Western Women and Imperialism: Complicity and Resistance*, 35-58.

motif of French protection over the Algerian population is proof of Tillion’s maternalism and implies her complicity in colonial ideology.

The imagery of a “ford” is another theme in Tillion’s work that allows her to transmit her maternalist predilection. Throughout her works, she describes the Algerian population as if it were located in the middle of a ford. She positions Algeria in a transitory state, between the archaic and the modern, which she associated with the middle of a ford. This technique, highlighting “the transition of two worlds” implies the notion of progress, from the ancient to the modern. In describing migrant Algerian workers who travel to France seasonally to work, she articulates, that they “have progressively lost the material assets and the spiritual stability of ancient society, without having, due to [a lack of] instruction and technical support, become modern men.”  

Rita Felski, a scholar of modernity acknowledges that the term modernity possesses “a normative as well as descriptive dimension.” Tillion’s juxtaposition of the ancient with the modern in the above quote, expressed as a difference in education, presents a normative qualification (the norm being modern France), further illuminating the maternalism of Tillion’s work.

Materialist Analysis: “The Vaccine” as Complicity

Germaine Tillion’s works on Algeria reinforce an economic rather than colonial cause for the problem of clochardisation, which justifies the continued and necessary connection between Algeria and France. Tillion emphasizes the economic elements of the situation through a number of themes that circulate in her texts, the first of which is the motif of misery. Using

206 “ont progressivement perdu les biens matériels et les stabilités spirituelles des sociétés anciennes, sans avoir pu, faute d’instruction et de technicité, devenir des hommes modernes,” Tillion, L’Afrique bascule, 73.  
208 Translated as pauperization by Donald Reid
vivid imagery, she describes “the great bleeding ulcer Algeria has become,” creating a visual image in the mind of the reader in order to persuade him or her of an urgent need that should be addressed. Furthermore, she describes “primary hunger,” hunger for basic caloric intake, followed by a “secondary hunger,” for luxury products such as dairy and fruits. The types of hungers that she enumerates emphasize the misery of the population and serves as a justification for her view, and that of the colonists, that Algeria should remain tied to France.

Although in *France and Algeria*, Tillion retreats from her economic analysis that was present in *Algeria: The Realities*, when she states, “My 1956 Analysis of the Algerian tragedy may have suggested I considered purely economic measures sufficient…I regard the Algerian complex as a total phenomenon,” her ambiguous stance in regards to colonialism underlines her continued, if implicit, complicity in colonial ideology. She clearly expresses an opinion about colonialism in *L’Afrique bascule* in the following excerpt:

> The biggest crime of the 18th century seems to me to have been slavery. And colonialism represents in my eyes the one of the 19th century…Anti-slavery was often one of the excuses for colonialism, and I ask myself if anti-colonialism does not serve as an excuse, in certain cases, for pauperization. Presently, for example, the dietary situation where there were never colonists appears a little more alarming than in those regions where the colonists developed the land and created businesses.

While she acknowledges colonialism as a crime in this passage, Tillion also stresses the good works that the colonists did in the example she cites. As she implies, colonial infrastructure has reduced hunger in those areas it touched. She also distances colonialism temporally from the current situation, creating ambiguity in regards to colonialism’s responsibility for the present

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209 Tillion, *France and Algeria*, 3
211 Tillion, *France and Algeria*, 3.
conflict; colonization was a problem in the 19th century, but the 20th century has new difficulties. She mirrors this ambiguity when she writes, “the position of “colonial power” was necessarily that of scapegoat and if we had begun our reconversion earlier, we would have saved a lot of blood, a lot of gold, and also a lot of something which is at the same time bloody and costly, that is, hate.” In these lines, she once again limits colonialism’s responsibility, calling it a scapegoat for necessary economic reforms which would have “converted” Algeria into a modern nation. Tillion’s ambiguous attitude towards colonialism positions her as more complicitous in this situation than resistant, while the analysis of her narratological strategies highlights that these explicit comments cannot simply be discarded as anomaly.

Throughout France and Algeria and L’Afrique bascule vers l’avenir, Germaine Tillion’s economic analysis of the Algerian conflict implicitly denies the responsibility of colonialism for the situation, which she describes as the clash of an archaic civilization with a modern one. Her analysis is materialist in nature. As a result of advances in health care in Algeria, the population had increased to a point in which the population could not, in Tillion’s view, sustain itself economically without the help of France, specifically in the form of massive funds to provide for the education and employment of the entire population. Roland Barthes’s concept of “the vaccine” can illuminate the significance of Tillion’s analysis in regards to resistance and complicity with colonialism. Barthes elaborates on the definition of “the vaccine” as “a rhetorical device whose role is to confess the accidental damage due to class in order to better mask the principal damage.” Tillion’s materialist, economic analysis does just that. She fails to indict

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213 C’est dire que la position de “puissance coloniale” a été nécessairement celle du bouc émissaire et si nous avions effectué plus tôt notre reconversion, nous aurions fait l’économie de beaucoup de sang, de beaucoup d’or, et aussi quelque chose qui est à la fois sanglant et couteux, qui s’appelle la haine, ” Tillion, L’Afrique bascule, 114.

214 “Une figure de rhétorique dont le rôle consiste à “confesser le mal accidentel d’une institution de classe pour mieux en masquer le mal principiel”, Roland Barthes, Mythologies, (Paris: Seuil, 1957), 238.
colonialism as the reason for the *clochardisation* of the Algerian population and reduces it to a conflict of class, or, in her words, of an archaic and a modern, industrialized society.

**Conclusion**

At first glance, Germaine Tillion is predisposed to be more resistant to colonial ideology because of her history as a deportee in a Nazi concentration camp, a situation in which she experienced the loss of her humanity in every respect. Her background as an anthropologist, trained to value cultural relativity instead of privileging one culture over another, is important to take into account. In fact, she wrote one of her main works on Algeria, *L’Afrique bascule vers l’avenir* for ADIR’s journal *Voix et Visages*, specifically for an audience of readers who had experienced the loss of their humanity in the Nazi concentration camps.\(^{215}\) However, Tillion was criticized by other intellectuals upon the publication of her works because, in her critics’ eyes, she had failed to indict colonialism for causing the poverty of Muslim Algerians, promoting instead a demographic explanation.\(^{216}\) Tillion’s position between complicity and resistance in her writings on Algeria therefore merits a closer examination. After a thorough inquiry into her primary works on the Algerian War, *L’Afrique bascule vers l’avenir* and *France and Algeria*, it is clear that she displays elements of both resistance and complicity in colonial ideology which encouraged the continuation of the union of France and Algeria.

The Algerian War was unquestionably a violent episode in the histories of both France and Algeria. Many actors on both sides perpetrated atrocities against the others’ military and civilians. The blurred lines between combatant and civilian, Algerian and French, and the nature of wars of decolonization also contribute to the difficulty to characterize this conflict. Through


the use of textual analysis and narratology, this case study of Germaine Tillion’s writings on the Algerian War serves to illuminate the fluctuations of one intellectual between complicity and resistance in decolonization. On one hand, she showed resistant qualities through the connection she draws between the Nazi occupation of France and the French occupation of Algeria. Her use of internal focalization also helped break down stereotypes by depicting the Muslim Algerian’s perspective, which was not as readily available to the French public. However, her process of constructing the French army and French Algerians as Other in contrast to the French from the mainland shifts responsibility for the violence of colonialism from the French to these others, an effect that is amplified by her use of the omniscient narrator in these descriptions, minimizing personal connections between the reader and these groups. Thus the analysis of the major themes, structure, and narrative strategies in Germaine Tillion’s primary works on the Algerian War, *L’Afrique bascule vers l’avenir* and *France and Algeria: Complimentary Enemies* shows that an intellectual, who is a proclaimed defender of the oppressed, also demonstrates qualities of complicity in this conflict by erecting a wall between the French nation and the perpetrators of the violence, masking the responsibility of colonialism in economic terms, and contributing to a hierarchy of cultures in the form of imperial maternalism.
CONCLUSION

According to Joan Wallach Scott, early 21st century cultural conflicts in France, such as the 2005 youth riots in the Parisian suburbs, and the continual “veil debate” reflect the contradictory nature of the French civilizing mission: the goal of elevating colonial subjects’ culture and way of life while simultaneously and continually confirming the inferiority of their culture in order to justify the colonial system. While the civilizing mission was never static or stable in practice, nor was it ever supported by all French citizens, the idea of Europe—and Paris, in particular—as the center of the world displays a legacy of colonialism. In Scott’s view, the civilizing mission continues internally today through France’s value of ‘assimilation’ for immigrants. In fact, the concept of the “Third World” is a French invention, stemming from the colonial experience. During the first half of the 20th century, the three women of this study, Grace Corneau, Clotilde Chivas-Baron, and Germaine Tillion, grappled with these contradictions. On one hand their imperial maternalism implied their belief in the cultural superiority of France, however, this view was often complicated by their resistance to colonial gender ideologies, leading to a more ambiguous relationship with colonial ideology. The nonfiction produced by three women who had directly participated in colonialism demonstrates the fluctuations of their ideologies, whether considered from colonial, gender, or racial perspectives. Consistency was seemingly impossible in colonialism, a system built upon a social hierarchy with the concurrent purpose of elevating the inferior.

While writing about the other, the women inevitably revealed much about their vision of their own culture and value system, which often included the belief in the cultural superiority of

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Europe, and France in particular. A useful tool is Edward Said’s concept of strategic location, as articulated in his *Orientalism*, which sheds light upon the importance of narrative voice, structure, imagery, and themes in analyzing the writing of women preoccupied with the topic of colonialism. Coupled with Gérard Genette’s theories of narratology, particularly narrative focalizations and what he terms narrator’s functions, the narrative voice of these women illuminated their strategies of resistance and complicity. While these women approached the subject from diverse perspectives and purposes, the detailed examination of their strategic location shows their constant oscillation between complicity and resistance to the colonial ideology of their time.

The existing literature on gender and empire often positions Corneau and Chivas-Baron’s writing as colonial propaganda, while Tillion is known as a leader of the Résistance, both during World War Two and during the Algerian War. Therefore, one would expect the former to be more complicitous in colonial ideology and Tillion more resistant. However, the detailed study of the strategic location of these authors demonstrates the commonality between them: all three display elements of complicity and resistance. Where they differ is in their negotiation of complicity/resistance; each writer’s specific definition of complicity and resistance varies.

Complicity to colonial ideology took different forms in the writing of Corneau, Chivas-Baron, and Tillion. Corneau focused on recruiting women to facilitate the cultivation of the land and starting small businesses in the “newer” colonies of Indochina, Tunisia and Madagascar. While at first glance, her writing also hints at cultural relativity, especially concerning female sexuality in Madagascar; her descriptions of Hova women’s sexual freedom (compared to French women’s) read more like praise rather than censure. Chivas-Baron, writing nearly thirty years later than Corneau, also stresses the need to recruit women for the colonial project, however, her
work extends Corneau’s simple financial requirements for emigration further. Chivas-Baron’s enthusiasm for specialized training for women colonists shows the discipline needed to maintain the colonial project, extending colonial control over French women as well as the colonial subjects. Furthermore, she demonstrates complicity in the gender roles of her time which stress maternity, education, and the prevention of immorality like alcoholism or interracial sex. As for Tillion, writing in the midst of the phenomenon now termed decolonization, recruitment of colonists was a moot point; former colonies were slowly but surely gaining independence. Within her definition of complicity, maternalism defines her view of the relationship between Algeria and France. Such a definition continues a hierarchal association with France in the superior position. Tillion also stresses the separation between the people of France and the perpetrators of the violence in Algeria. Furthermore, her materialist analysis served as, in Barthes formulation, a “vaccine” for the greater evil of colonialism, demonstrated in her ambiguous views on the colonial system, coupled with her emphasis on the economic causes of Algerian suffering.

The three writers defined resistance using different means as well. Corneau’s writing, in seeking new opportunities and independence for women in new places, shows her resistance to the gender ideologies of her time. Chivas-Baron’s work resists the hegemony of the traditional colonial archive which neglected women’s contributions to colonialism, by stressing the names and work of a multitude of women in the form of case studies which span the entire breadth of French colonial history. In addition, she recuperates the lost history of gendered and forced migration. Another resistant theme in her work, colonial disillusionment, led her to paradoxically advocate traditional roles for women. In contrast to the previous two authors, Germaine Tillion’s work is not informed by the theme of gender. Her definition of resistance
centers on connections that she establishes with the Algerian conflict and the memory of the occupation of France during World War Two. In addition, she uses narrative strategies to offer the Algerian point of view to a French audience. These strategies are particularly effective given her background as a Resistance fighter and a deportée to Ravensbrück.

Marie-Paule Ha, in her study of French women in Indochina, observes that the women she studies, “engage us to rethink several of the assumptions underlying both the historical and contemporary understandings of the identity and roles of French women in the empire, that have often been reduced to that of a bourgeois homemaker entrusted with the task of recreating French middle-class culture and home life in the overseas dominions.”219 Similarly, Corneau, Chivas-Baron, and Tillion also break this stereotype of the bourgeois housewife, even as two of them were, in fact, wives of administrators. However, through varied backgrounds, as a journalist, novelist, and intellectual, they approached their subject in varying ways, each finding their own unique means to express complicity and resistance to the colonial project. Together, they demonstrate the fact that women approached the study of colonialism in differing ways and through varied approaches. The authors also provide access to the difference between colonial ideals and realities. Since each woman spent a significant amount of time actually living in the colonies, they were able to provide their reader with anecdotes and real-world experience. Rather than depicting the colonies as monolithically positive, they negotiated ideals with realities. All the women wrote with a purpose in mind, and often their views did not coincide with the official line. In these ways, the women showed thematic similarities.

The contrasts between the women’s writings are also interesting to explore. Why did gender ideology not figure as significantly in Tillion’s work as in Corneau’s and Chivas-

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Baron’s? To answer this question, it is important to note the differing contexts in which the women wrote. Corneau wrote during the mise en valeur period, in which the colonial administration emphasized economic development, hence her emphasis on business opportunities for women in the colonies. Chivas-Baron, writing during the interwar period, wrote during the time of la plus grande France, whose discourse sought national renewal after the Great War in re-affirming the French Empire, which was at its peak. Both of these women strove to recruit colonists for the colonies, particularly women since the contexts in which they wrote implied the continuation of the colonial project. Furthermore, the turn of the century, when Corneau wrote, marked a shift in the recruitment process; for the first time, women were actively sought out as colonists. In contrast, Tillion had seen the end of empire beginning, with the defeat of the French in Indochina in 1954. In her time, the colonial project had deteriorated into defeat in Indochina and guerilla warfare and terrorism in Algeria. Although she promoted the continuation of the imperial relationship between Algeria and France, she was no longer promoting a colonial one, and she was certainly not attempting to recruit more colonists, whether men or women. In a later work, Tillion takes up the question of gender in regards to the other, with her work The Republic of Cousins, but she is not concerned with Frenchwomen as Corneau and Chivas-Baron were.220

The study of French women’s nonfiction brings the contradictions, sometimes nuanced, inherent in colonization to light. Whether their reasons for writing in the first place were complicitous or resistant, all three of the women participated in both sides of the coin. Their exact definitions of complicity and resistance varied as well. Chivas-Baron and Tillion both reveal the contradictory nature of universalist Republican ideology. The field of postcolonial

studies is beginning to address this contradiction, which Gary Wilder posits, was an immutable aspect of French colonialism. He critiques the approach to colonial studies which depict French colonialism as having failed in its republican values. Instead, he calls for an approach which views colonialism as being \textit{a priori} incompatible with republican values, stressing the idea that the colonial system may have in fact shaped the development of republican values in France.\textsuperscript{221} This issue continues to plague French politics to this day in the context of post-colonial migration. As Huggan observes, “continuing forms of colonialist discrimination are no longer disguised by the rhetoric of universalism.”\textsuperscript{222} This statement, written in 2009, reflects the contradiction in the writings of Chivas-Baron nearly a century before. Although she employs token universalist rhetoric, consistent with her position as an interwar feminist, her view of the Other reflects colonial ideology in the view that the colonized are in need of civilization, and only certain French women are presumably capable of contributing to this mission. This contradiction seems to be absent from Corneau’s writing; hers was the only work to even hint at cultural relativity, the antithesis to cultural universalism. While it is impossible to know why this may be the case, the fact that she was the earliest writer, at the beginning of the New Imperialism period, may explain why she focused more on the economic rather than cultural aspects of colonialism. It would be shortsighted to attribute her American upbringing as the reason why she differs from the other women on her views of cultural superiority, without taking into account the parallel ideology in American idea of Manifest Destiny. Either way, these questions are brought to light through the juxtaposition of these three examples of colonial writing.

\textsuperscript{222} Graham Huggan and Ian Law, \textit{Racism Postcolonialism Europe}. (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2009), 11.
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