INTRODUCTION

This book explores the life and work of Eugénie Allix Luce, a provincial French schoolteacher. In 1832 she fled from her husband, leaving behind her five-year-old daughter, and migrated to the newly colonized soils of Algeria. There, she labored and loved for thirteen years before founding the first school for Muslim girls in 1845. Virtually single-handedly, she placed girls' education on the colonial agenda and forced the authorities to support what she described as her mission: "to change native morals, prejudices and habits, as quickly and as surely as possible, by introducing the greatest possible number of young Muslim girls to the benefits of a European education."[1] For fifteen years she taught French spelling and grammar, arithmetic, and sewing. When the tide of colonial politics turned against the "French" education of Arab girls, she trained them for another fifteen years in the arts of embroidery. At her death in France at the age of seventy-eight, her obituary noted: "Madame Luce devoted her youth, her intelligence, and her heart to the education of Arab girls. For forty years, without flagging a single day, she pursued her oeuvre: the regeneration of the Arab woman through work and instruction."[2] Who was this Madame Luce? And what difference does the story of her life make for our understanding of the French conquest of Algeria?

Some people's lives add only color and nuance to the past; others make us read the past differently. Madame Luce's life is one of the latter. Her story shows a woman's active participation in the colonization of Algeria. Her initial success and then her later disavowal reveal the place of gender in the evolution of colonial cultural politics. Madame Luce wrote Muslim women into the French "civilizing mission," and the attention she garnered in mid-century Algiers shows the ways that the French sought to advertise their gender egalitarianism for a time. The closure of her school spelled the end to that experiment but not to Luce's effect on attitudes toward women's roles within Muslim society. Her embroidery workshop taught women marketable skills and brought French and foreign visitors to her doorstep in the Casbah. Thanks to Madame Luce, Algerian embroideries circulated between Algiers, mainland France, and London, creating a legacy whose significance remains largely unexplored. Telling her story sheds light on the European

and indigenous women who lived and often worked side by side, but it also shows that her life mattered, not just to her family and granddaughter, who carried on her work, but also to our way of thinking about the French colonization of Algeria.

ARCHIVAL STORIES AND THE PRACTICE OF HISTORY

My interest in Madame Luce began with an initial archival encounter. While pursuing the activities of French women teachers overseas and in the colonies in the French colonial archives in Aix-en-Provence, I stumbled upon the voluminous dossier about her school in Algiers. Mingled with letters and reports from the men who worked in the Government General of Algeria were those of an unusual French schoolmistress. Page after page were filled with grandiloquent statements about the role she sought to play in the French civilizing mission and the importance of including indigenous women in this mission. For instance, in 1850 she wrote to the prefect of Algiers: "I was intimately convinced that our efforts to effect the fusion of civilizations would come to naught, as long we were unable to have our morals, our habits and our beliefs penetrate within families. How else to achieve this goal but through the education of women, the touchstone of the family, women who were destined as daughters, wives, and mothers to either inspire love or hate of the French?"[3] Her voice captured my attention.

Eugénie Allix (the future Madame Luce) was forty-one years old in the summer of 1845 when she started her campaign to receive support for her school. On 14 July 1845, she wrote the queen of France, Marie Amélie de Bourbon-Sicile, pleading for help: "Without the means to create the sort of establishment which is necessary, I am seeking the generosity of your Royal Highness to aid in the foundation of an institution destined to improve the morality and to ensure the happiness of a people whose future is inextricably tied up with that of France."[4] In November her school was indeed up and running with a few students; it would take many more months and many more letters, however, for her to persuade the government to finance her efforts.

In March 1846 the articulate schoolteacher once more took up her pen to defend the school for Muslim girls that she had opened at her own cost in Algiers a few months earlier: "It is civilization itself, inoculated in Algeria through pacific means; it is the fusion of the races, a problem heretofore considered insoluble, which is resolved affirmatively through a new institution; it is, in addition, such an unexpected success and it so decisively counters indigenous prejudices, that once the first step is taken one can reasonably and without presumption hope for

everything in the future."[5] Page after page pursues these arguments. The French conquest of Algeria required a woman's touch, Luce asserted. Women were the key to the pacification of relations; through girls' education the French would penetrate Muslim families and persuade them of the grandeur of the civilizing mission. In other words, the domestic was political and required attention. By January 1847 Madame Luce had managed to persuade the authorities to fund her school, but she had acquired a reputation for brashness and immodesty in the process.

Fifteen years later, in the summer of 1861, a commission of Arab notables and French administrators debated the wisdom of continuing to subsidize her school. As Commissioner Adolphe Michel noted: "The usefulness of the Arab-French school directed by Madame Luce has always been controversial." He went on to insist that it was "sheer illusion" to think that the reform of Algerian society would occur thanks to teaching urban Muslim girls to read, write, and calculate: "By raising them as Europeans, we have sullied them for Arab life; we are preparing concubines for Europeans rather than wives for native men."[6] Arab notables confirmed this negative vision of Madame Luce's school, feeling that it fostered a morally questionable fusion of the races. They argued heatedly against continued funding, stating that no respectable Muslim man would place his daughter in Luce's hands or choose to marry a graduate of her institution. On 19 September 1861 an official decree transformed Luce's Arab-French school for Muslim girls in Algiers into a vocational workshop. Although she sought to defend her school, ultimately she recognized that the tide had turned; authorities no longer supported the spread of book learning among Muslim girls. As a result, Madame Luce dropped from public visibility in Algiers and spent the next fifteen years teaching embroidery skills to girls. If one stops the story here, the colonial archives appear to chronicle the rise and fall of a female adventurer.

This book began as a project for an article about that rise and fall. The dossier in the colonial archives offered a tantalizing entry into colonial cultural politics and triggered my initial questions and investigation. From the outset, the colonial administration questioned Luce's motives and were troubled by the expression of her ambitions. There was something unseemly and unwomanly in her oft-repeated conviction that the authorities required the aid of both European and indigenous women in order to succeed in their civilizing mission. But as I toiled through the colonial archives, I increasingly questioned whether Adolphe Michel was right. Was Eugénie Luce really just an amoral adventurer, seeking financial advantage through the education of Muslim girls? Surely there

would have been easier ways to earn money in colonial Algeria if that were indeed her main concern. Who was this woman who wielded such a trenchant pen and whose institution aroused such a passionate denunciation? Why would the provision of a modicum of book knowledge among indigenous girls provoke such indignant response? What explained the colonial volte-face with respect to a schoolteacher whose school had received tens of thousands of francs since the late 1840s? Increasingly, I wanted to learn more. A series of discoveries gradually persuaded me that there was enough material for a biography. The historian's craft involves far more than the critical reading of sources. It also requires imagination and at times serendipity, which I capture through a few snippets from my research diary.

7 March 2004, the University of Wisconsin Library (Madison)
God bless the Dewey decimal system! My audience at Madison asked me interesting questions about gender politics in the 1860s in Algeria. What do I know about gender politics then? Not much because there's so little work on the subject. Where might I find answers, I puzzled, as I roamed through the DT section concerning Algeria of the library. Travel narratives. Ah, that's a possibility—travelers might have interesting things to say. At eye level I spot Mrs. Rogers, *A Winter in Algeria, 1863–64*; I pull it off the shelf, along with a few other books with promising titles and disappointing content. My homonym Mrs. Rogers, however, represents one of those moments of epiphany in a historian's life. She has written a diary with subchapters on "The Status of Arab Women," on a visit to a Protestant orphanage, on the tale of five French nuns forced to leave Algiers and . . . on a visit to the Moorish school run by Madame Luce! And there, to my unbelieving eyes, I find six whole pages describing Madame Allix Luce, telling me about her early upbringing in France, shedding light on her unhappy marriage (a husband who really wanted to be a priest), and revealing she was known and written about by one of the most prominent British feminists of the time, Barbara Bodichon, who published an article on her in the *English Woman's Journal*. I can hardly believe Mrs. Rogers is giving me all of this, and that I have found it mostly because we share the same name and I was curious to read something that was not penned by a historian.

27 September 2004, Arsenal Library (Paris)
Went in search of the Saint-Simonian archives at the Arsenal today in the hopes I might find signs of my Madame Luce.[7] Napoleon III's advisor, Ismaÿl Urbain, a well-known Saint-Simonian who converted to Islam, clearly knew her, as he mentions her school

in his prose. I don't know the Arsenal well. The librarian directs me to an inventory where I find the last name Allix. A tremor of anticipation begins, although I know Allix is not a particularly unusual name. I order the register and wait a mere fifteen minutes. A large bound volume with letters stuck to the pages in alphabetical order arrives. I page my way to the appropriate folio, AL, and my breath stops—it's her! Her signature, clearly recognizable. She, like other women of her time, admired the Père Enfantin, as they called him.[8] I can hardly believe it. Four letters and a poem. I refrain from reading rapidly but rather start copying her prose, slowly and carefully, letting her words and her feelings envelop me. In 1840 she is living in Bône, she is in trouble, Enfantin appears to be a savior, an idea who keeps her mind and soul together. A third letter in 1845 is full of joy: her husband is dead, she has inherited money, her project for a school for Muslim girls is finally taking shape. And for the first time I read about the daughter she has not seen for thirteen years. Her husband's death has allowed her to reclaim this daughter. And then a final undated poem I don't really understand. Full of strong emotions, love, passion—requited or unrequited? I'm not really sure. But I spend the afternoon reading, copying, and smiling. What pleasure to glimpse a side of Eugénie I have never seen. Intimate correspondences evoke such different emotions compared with petitions and administrative reports. She's beginning to take shape. I don't yet know what I will do with her, but this gradual finding is a source of happiness.

14 October 2005, Center of Town (Strasbourg)

Took a break from student essays to bike into town today. Decided to explore my favorite used bookstore, the Somnambule. The little store is packed with books, piles on tables, but a rigor in the organizing principle that allows me to locate colonial history books with ease. First I stumble on Julien's weighty tome about the history of the colonization of Algeria, being sold for what seems like a pittance. Snatched that book up. I then turn to the big picture book for sale about Algeria. It's organized alphabetically; under "E" for "école" I find an interesting photo of a sewing school for girls in Kabylia, turn two more pages, and there she is! Madame Luce in person, taking up space at the back of her class. She's looking and gesturing with a ruler at a black woman in white who stands before a blackboard, a motley assembly of little girls at their feet. The caption: *L'école de jeunes filles mauresques dirigées par Madame Luce* [The school for young Moorish girls run by Madame Luce], the photographer is Félix Antoine Moulin [the image is shown in Chapter 4]. But what astonishes me more than the existence of the photo is Madame Luce's appearance in 1856. She is forty-two years old, her face is framed by ringlets. She's wearing a rather garish full-length gown that accentuates her

corpulence, which is considerable. I had read she was fat, but that was not my vision of her. I had imagined her a bit like myself: slender, not massive. On the contrary she is vast and imposing; her physical presence commands respect. I leave the bookstore heavier with my new purchases and my head full of new images. This changes my relationship to Madame Luce, now that I can see her, and not just hear her.

4 April 2009, 14 rue de Verdun (Strasbourg)
I'm still rocking from my discovery of this afternoon, which has, as a result, prevented me from pursuing Luce's elusive girl students in my prose. Since the last time I checked, the European civil registers of Algeria have been digitized and are now available online. The miracles of modern technology. I was curious to see if Eugénie's daughter was pregnant before wedlock and so I started checking various birth certificates. Then I got curious about the Berlau family in Algeria, Eugénie's uncle. Back in 1835 a little Césarine Berlau dies. Let's see who that is . . . and, lo and behold, Eugénie is a mother again! She is listed as a "*lingère*" [laundress], her daughter "*de père inconnu*" [of unknown father], no mention of the forsaken husband Alexandre Allix. My, my, my, her early years in Algeria are far juicier than I expected. And so I decided to check the various records more carefully. Who, for instance, is this Louis Lucien Allix who is born and then quickly dies in Bône in 1840? Oh my goodness, yet another illegitimate child, although this time she claims the father is Alexandre Allix, schoolteacher in Vendôme, which is many thousands of miles from Bône. Louis Napoléon Luce, musician in the 26th regiment of the infantry, is one of the witnesses. One certainly suspects this must be the happy father and then the distraught father when little Louis dies 8 months later (or perhaps the relieved father—who knows?). The plot thickens. All this unsettles my vision of the *institutrice dévouée* [devoted schoolteacher].

19 October 2009, Algiers
Monday morning I awake feeling a bit anxious that there is still so much to accomplish: I need to talk with the head of the museum, I want to find Henriette Benaben's tombstone in the cemetery [Madame Luce's granddaughter], I want to see Madame Luce's dossier in the archives, I want to explore the library here at the Glycines, I need to check in with the Bibliothèque nationale to see if they have miraculously found material for me in their library, I need to change money and buy presents for my loved ones, and I haven't visited the Casbah. . . .

Getting to the Saint-Eugène cemetery is a bit of an expedition that involves speaking with quite a few of the Algerians who are waiting at the bus stop. After a substantial

wait a bus arrives that is deemed appropriate and I am whisked off along the coast heading west. The men sitting around me are all intrigued by my expedition and one of them accompanies me off the bus when we arrive and walks me into the cemetery, assuring me along the way that things are very safe here and that he is himself a cop. The cemetery is beautiful and quiet, nestled under the Basilica Notre-Dame d'Afrique; it looks out onto the sea. Incredibly, the guardian of the cemetery has all of the archives and so he's able to find the date of burial and the plot in which Henriette Benaben,

Gravesite of Madame Luce's granddaughter, Henriette Benaben, née Belly, in the Saint-Eugène cemetery in Algiers. Although not cared for, the inscriptions on the stones are still legible in French and Arabic. The French reads: "Madame Luce Benaben, née Henriette Belly / She devoted her life to Muslim art / And to the welfare of the indigenous woman / 21 February 1847–9 March 1915." The Arabic reads: "Here lies Madame Luce Benaben, the head of the ex-bureau of Arab art. May God welcome her in his vast paradise." The form of the headstones demonstrates the affinity Henriette Benaben felt with Muslim culture.

née Belly, is buried, although he has less luck figuring out where Louis Luce and Marie Allix are buried, Eugénie's husband and daughter. After about fifteen minutes we're off into the cemetery, with a map in hand, to find Henriette. Hard to describe my emotions when we come upon the grave, very overgrown with vegetation but highly distinctive because Muslim-style amongst lots of Christian graves. "I thought it was that one," says the guardian, "because of the name." On one side of the tombstone there is an inscription in French and on the other side one in Arabic. From the hillside I gaze out onto the Mediterranean. Enough said.

6 March 2010, London

There are moments when one feels the British are truly civilized. Like at this moment, as I end my day of work at the Victoria and Albert Museum and am now settled in the café downstairs, richly inlaid with gold floral patterns, sipping a much appreciated tea. I have spent the previous two hours working in a frigid conservation room. Apparently textiles do not need heat, and so those who work on textiles do without. Very moving experience to see and handle objects, which most probably come from Madame Luce's

Embroidered handkerchief from the Luce workshop purchased by Mrs. L. F. M. Preston in the 1860s. Girls stitched and embroidered these handkerchiefs for sale, often personalizing them, as in this example, with the name Eleonora (the client's mother's name) and "El Djezaïr" (Algeria) in Arabic. Victoria and Albert Museum, T.211-1922.

workshop in 1868. A Mrs. Preston bought them—three inscribed handkerchiefs and a little sewing trousseau. Her daughter, Miss Preston, an invalid who divided her time between Rome, London, and the Isle of Wight, donated them to the V&A in 1922. I cannot claim I really know a great deal more about the objects than what I knew coming into the museum, but there is something about actually seeing and touching them that changes my appreciation. And then, thoroughly frozen, I go off to the print and drawing study room to see if I can view a watercolor by Barbara Bodichon, *A Landscape near Algiers*. Alas, I arrived too late, but the exceedingly helpful young woman at the desk sends me an e-mail image, and takes the time to print out two color images of the landscape that add delicate pastel touches to my vision of colonial Algiers.

Embroidered sewing trousseau from the Luce workshop purchased by Mrs. L. F. M. Preston in 1882. The piece of embroidered material folds into three to make a little trousseau, or wallet. Victoria and Albert Museum, T.209-1922.

These excerpts give a glimpse into the moments of excitement that punctuate the experience of historical research and explain my "taste for the archive" so powerfully described by Arlette Farge.[9] But perhaps I should have started with an excerpt from 1997 when I unexpectedly encountered Madame Luce in the guise of great-grandmother while researching a very different topic. One of the first French women secondary schoolteachers, Jeanne Crouzet-Benaben, published her memoirs, *Souvenirs d'une jeune fille bête* (Memories of a Silly Girl) in the 1950s. To my astonishment she described being raised by "Maman Luce," the woman who opened the first school for Muslim girls in 1845. I learned from these memoirs that Luce returned to France in her declining years and raised her great-granddaughter, Jeanne. Jeanne presents a fat, fun-loving old woman with a taste for bawdy humor and wine—quite a contrast to the determined proponent of the civilizing mission whose prose I had discovered several months earlier in the colonial archives. At the time, I was amused by the coincidence that my longstanding interest in French girls' education overlapped here with my new interest in education in the colonies. I had no idea that the memoirs would end up providing precious information about the Luce Benaben family.

Biography and the Politics of Women's History

The encounters described above transformed this project from an article into a historical biography. The more I learned about Eugénie Luce, the more I became interested in understanding what sort of woman would have the courage to give up all that was familiar to her for a life in the colonies. The more I read about colonial Algeria, the more I was struck by the absence of serious attention to the presence of European women or to the ways gender played a role in French colonization. And the more I pursued the different threads of Luce's life, the more I was intrigued by the things that remained today—in both historical and material terms—most notably the Algerian embroideries produced in her school and workshop. This book, then, presents a woman, her life work, and its legacy.

Madame Luce's story emerges from the sources as a series of snapshots: the colonial schoolteacher, the pioneering feminist, the Saint-Simonian fellow traveler, and the jovial great-grandmother. These perspectives come for the most part from those whose paths she crossed; the documents penned in her hand are limited to about fifteen years of her life, and they are all almost entirely located

in the colonial archives. Like all biographers I have had to accept that there are holes in my story, years about which I know virtually nothing, feelings that were never recorded, dreams about which I can only speculate. Her life story must be reconstituted from these snapshots, whose angles, colors, and sharpness of definition vary widely, leaving a great deal in the shadows.

My desire to write about Madame Luce's adventures is clearly a sign of our times, and my method of writing openly acknowledges the interpretative nature of the biographical endeavor.[10] I cannot bring back to life the "real" Madame Luce, but I can show her influence on colonial cultural politics, her talent at drawing attention to herself, the interpretations others offered of her life and works, and the legacy she left. In other words, sources can illuminate the role she played in shaping the French civilizing mission. I bring to this book decades of experience writing about women's lives and the convert's enthusiasm to the biographical endeavor. I have long been interested in how individual girls and women respond to the messages that family, schools, books, and peers communicate, but this is my first venture into biography.[11] I have taken this step with the conviction that Madame Luce's story matters.

My tale of Eugénie Luce is not just another example of an approach at times described as "add women and stir." Her life brings to light an unusual story of a woman who dared, who fought, and who accomplished a good deal. She is not representative of the forgotten majority whose lives exemplify the female condition. Nor would I describe this project as being a form of Italian microhistory, although I share with this scholarship an interest in the local and the small scale. Rather, I argue throughout this book that knowledge of Eugénie Luce's life changes our vision of French colonization and brings to light the opportunities offered to determined women in early colonial Algeria. Luce left more traces than many, but there were others, such as Émilie de Vialar, who brought the first nuns to care for the ill in Algeria in 1835; Rosa Barroil, who ran a sewing workshop for poor girls in the 1860s; or Madame Parent, who ran the Arab-French school for girls in Constantine for several decades.[12] Knowledge of their lives offers a way to see how gender affected the civilizing mission.

Feminist biographies have long flourished in the English-speaking world and have received new life under the guise of the "new biography" and the influence of postmodern interpretations of the performative self.[13] In France, however, an early tradition of women writing about illustrious women did not, with a few exceptions, influence the first three decades of academic women's history.[14]

The tardy turn to biography in French women's history has historical roots. In general, French feminists were less committed than the British or the Americans to creating a pantheon of foremothers, for reasons that speak to differing national attitudes toward the individual and society.[15] This has influenced the writing of women's history in France. Only recently have French women historians, and myself, begun to explore biographical writing and advocate the study of individual women's lives as another way to challenge the gender politics of writing history.[16]

The difference in national traditions of biographical writing is particularly striking in the field of education. In Britain, Ireland, and the United States countless biographical studies and biographical dictionaries recount the efforts of women such as Sophie Barat, Catherine Beecher, Dorothea Beale, Frances Bus, Emily Davies, and Mary Lyon, if one limits the scope to the nineteenth century alone.[17] In France, infant school educators, notably Marie Pape Carpantier and Pauline Kergomard, have attracted academic interest, but the women teachers who founded schools and campaigned for access to more serious education remain very much in the shadows. In 2008 a scholar in education published a volume on famous women pedagogues, but the entries rarely acknowledge the scholarship on women's history, which would allow readers to understand the social and political effects of these women's educational ideals.[18] Notwithstanding the scholarship of Françoise Mayeur and myself, the French historical narrative continues to present women's access to knowledge as the product of church or state politics.[19] French students all recognize the name of Jules Ferry, who instituted free, obligatory, and secular primary education; but virtually none has heard of Madame Jules Favre, who trained the first generations of female secondary school professors. We still have much to learn about individual women's contributions to the politics of education and to the shaping of modern French society. The same goes without saying for all of the French colonies.

The commitment to uncovering women's experiences in the past remains a political project, even now, forty or so years after the emergence of the field in the academy.[20] Approaches to this project have changed over the years as knowledge has increased and historical fashions have challenged us to investigate new objects, explore new sources, reinterpret old ones, and position ourselves more centrally within a global world.[21] This book, then, is part of a collective effort in France to bring to light not only how the politics of gender have acted to erase the memory of countless women, but also how the history of individual

women's lives reshapes our reading of the past.[22] I have sought throughout the book to situate Eugénie Luce and her family within their social context but also to highlight how knowledge of her actions changes our understanding of the French colonization of Algeria. Recovering her life also recovers a moment in Algeria when girls and women were part of a political project. This books seeks to render audible the silences of that history and set in perspective its material legacy—the celebration of women's manual skills and traditions.[23]

MADAME LUCE'S LIFE AND ADVENTURES

I begin this book by reconstructing the biographical details of Madame Luce's early life. The first two chapters explore the years before she became a public figure. Unfortunately, no private journal or familial correspondence allows us access to her private musings or her more intimate aspirations. Her origins and upbringing in the Loir-et-Cher have left little imprint on existing documentary sources. As a result, I have had to rely on stories she told friends and family about these years, stories that bear the imprint of the storyteller more than the historian.

Born in 1804, Eugénie Berlau shared with her Romantic contemporaries a taste for the quixotic and a keen awareness of the role of the individual in history. She cast her own life in this mold and later in life liked to compare herself to the novelist George Sand. She described herself acting out noble ambitions as she defended Arab womankind, although it remains unclear how she moved from being a provincial schoolteacher to being a proponent of France's civilizing mission in Algeria. She hints, however, that a faith in education underlay most of her life decisions. Certainly she came from a family that understood the value of schooling. The departmental archives offer insights into the familial culture that gave Eugénie Berlau the intellectual tools that would stand her in such good stead during the years to come. They also highlight inconsistencies and holes in the stories that she later told about herself.

Eugénie came of age in the 1820s; married a fellow schoolteacher, Alexandre Allix; and gave birth to two girls, one of whom died within the year. Influenced perhaps by the revolutionary effervescence that characterized the early years of the July Monarchy (1830–1848), she made the remarkable decision to abandon her husband and daughter, fleeing alone to Algeria in 1832. Chapter 2 puts this decision into historical perspective and describes the life that awaited a woman on her own in those early years of colonial conquest. Civil registers reveal that

Eugénie did more than just work and dream of founding a school for Muslim girls; she also encountered men and bore two illegitimate children, who both died as infants. In this respect Eugénie's experiences in Algeria mirror those of many European women at this time, who lived and loved more easily outside of the bonds of marriage. Unquestionably, Eugénie was an unusual woman, but she was far from alone in seeking a new life on colonial soils. Her flight to Algeria was not the product of pure happenstance, and it suggests that alongside the lure of the "Orient," a colonial "imaginary" existed during these years.[24] I argue that this imaginary was not just masculine; women also imagined that life might be better far from home.

Eugénie's encounter with the Saint-Simonian movement puts yet another spin on the motivations that led her to Algiers. Prosper Enfantin, the leader of this movement in the 1830s, inspired women to question their insubordinate status in French society. The radical equality between the sexes that he advocated offered some the means to challenge traditional gender roles and inspired women to fight for a more egalitarian society. In the 1830s and 1840s Algeria attracted many Saint-Simonian officers and civil administrators, but the presence of women who shared their worldview has never been mentioned. Eugénie's correspondence with Enfantin reveals a little-known aspect of early colonial Algeria: the fact that women also engaged in cultural politics.

The central section of this book, "Women in the Civilizing Mission," explores this facet of Eugénie's life. It writes women and gender back into the story of conquest and "pacification" while highlighting the role one woman played in these events. My analysis shows how women's and gender history modifies the early history of colonization, revealing the limits of a historiography that has not paid close attention to the presence of women as actors in the process.[25]

Focusing on the woman who became known as Madame Luce in the history of Algerian colonization shifts attention from the military and the masculine politics of settlement to the place women held within the nascent settler society. It brings to light the existence of women in the Saint-Simonian project with respect to Algeria. It shows how Muslim women figured into colonial politics, not just as veiled figures on the streets or languorous wives in harems, but as girls learning to recite French dialogues and to embroider following ancient patterns. The rise and fall of Madame Luce as a cultural power broker merits attention because this movement reveals the role gender played in colonial educational and social policies. I take seriously the moral condemnations that accompanied

the decision to close her school. These attacks highlight the fragility of women's reputations when they stepped out of their prescribed roles and sought to influence politics. As a schoolteacher, however, Madame Luce achieved a brief moment of fame, and this tells us a great deal about French attitudes toward schooling and the place it held in the colonization of a land whose history remains today inextricably intertwined with that of France.

The book's final two chapters explore the historical and cultural legacies Madame Luce left behind. Chapter 6 highlights the cosmopolitan character of colonial Algiers and the role European (and particularly British) women played in the circulation of knowledge and material goods of Algeria. Although unrecognized in the histories of French feminism, Madame Luce became a heroine of sorts in the writings of early British feminists such as Barbara Bodichon and Bessie Rayner Parkes. My focus on Luce and her project lends itself to an exploration of transnational discussions and exchanges in colonial Algiers during the 1850s and 1860s, revealing the ways in which women and gender were very much a part of the cosmopolitanism known to characterize this city. The stories that emerge from these encounters carry the ochre hues of the Orientalist painters who sought to capture the Arab woman, and they come to life through the bustling activity and the artisanal productions of the Moorish girls and their teacher who so intrigued English travelers.

Chapter 7 explores in more detail what I have termed "The Remains of the Day." The inventory and will established at Madame Luce's death testify to the astute business acumen that guided her throughout much of her life. She died leaving a comfortable sum of money to the young girl whose memoirs do the most to bring her great-grandmother to life. But she also left a legacy in artisanal handicrafts that circulated widely across France, Great Britain, North America, and North Africa, thanks to universal and colonial exhibitions. Her granddaughter Henriette Benaben continued the workshop Luce established in Algiers and actively worked to assemble collections of "oriental embroideries" that now lie in the storerooms of museums in Algiers, Paris, and London. These collections constitute, no doubt, the most permanent and highly gendered legacy of Madame Luce's Arab-French school.

In 1931 the art historian Augustin Berque summed up Madame Luce's contribution to the early years of French colonization, praising the vocational training she offered Muslim girls and the fine examples of Turkish embroidery she managed to preserve through her actions with her granddaughter. He recognized

that her name would be unfamiliar to most in this centennial celebration of the French conquest, and so he added: "France has always had such collaborators, whose lives have remained in the shadows while their agile fingers have woven the threads of the future."[26]

This statement rings remarkably true for the historian of women that I am. Indeed, yes, women more than men have remained in the shadows, and their contributions to the future are often overlooked and underestimated. I have spent my professional life emphasizing women's contribution to girls' education, but I never imagined writing about just one woman's efforts. Nor have I ever looked carefully at the material objects so frequently produced within girls' schools and pondered their significance. This book, then, is an effort not only to bring a rather remarkable woman out of the shadows, but also to shed light on what she and others created in terms of cultural and historical legacies. Above all, this book argues for the importance of peopling our histories with *both* men and women because both sexes have histories that are as inextricably intertwined as those of France and its former colonies.

A FINAL WORD ON VOICE

This project began with a voice in the archives. When I first encountered it almost fifteen years ago, I was struck by Eugénie Luce's claim to have made a difference. She wanted a place in history and actively sought to ensure that her story would be told and heard. Hers was a feminist story that offered an alternative to the violent and virile nature of the French conquest.[27] Exploring the nature of that story led me back in the end to that voice in the archives, back to the woman whose polite and elegant prose carried "a decisive ring which is quite extraordinary," as one British admirer wrote.[28] This, then, is a biography of a woman who sought public attention, who participated in the commemoration of her life, and who undoubtedly would have enjoyed knowing that an American academic teaching in France wanted to tell her tale to others.

I have struggled throughout this project with how to recount Madame Luce's adventures, in what language, addressing what audience, resorting to what claims to authority. English won the day, along with readability—I'm not a novelist's daughter for nothing. The footnotes and the conclusion deal directly with the historian's craft, offering insights on historiography and methods in Algerian, French, and women's history. In the body of the book, however, I have chosen to emphasize a life story. And although this book pursues questions about girls'

schooling, access to knowledge, and work that have long interested me, it places at the center of the story the woman who defended Muslim girls' right to learn. Her trajectory, her ambitions, and the reactions she generated conjure up the social texture of Algiers during the early years of colonization. Above all, Madame Luce's life and its legacy bring both European women and Muslim girls squarely into the limelight. But it is my voice that frames the story.