CHAPTER 4

Conversations About the Transnational: Reading and Writing the Empire in the History of Education

Rebecca Rogers

Introduction

The various "turns" that have marked historical writing since the 1960s reflect new ways of conceptualizing what we do: new types of sources, new analytical categories, or new methods. The "cultural" turn, for example, shifted attention away from social and economic forces while calling for studies of discourse, practices, and representation. The "spatial" turn used the insights of cultural geography introducing explorations of the materiality of place. The "imperial" turn has sought to connect studies of the metropole and the empire by emphasizing circulations between the two, while the "global" turn highlights the interconnections that have shaped the worlds within which we live. This simplistic rendering of decades of theoretical debate and innovative case studies serves as a reminder of how labels announce the ostensible production of new knowledge, but also how labeling produces conversations

R. Rogers (✉)
UMR Cerlis, Université Paris Descartes, Paris, France
e-mail: rebecca.rogers@parisdescartes.fr

E. Fuchs and E. Roldán Vera (eds.), *The Transnational in the History of Education*, Global Histories of Education,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-17168-1_4

that allow us to think differently, to seek out new sources, and to ask new questions. In this respect, what might be termed the "transnational" turn holds potential that this volume seeks to render explicit.

In what follows, I seek to position the imperial and the transnational within a single analytical framework exploring what this offers to the history of education. My interest lies in exploring this question for the modern period characterized by the emergence of nation-states.[1] My specific interest is in exploring the objects of empirical study as well as specific types of sources that have allowed historians of education to shift their analytical gaze and to introduce new questions thanks to an approach that is termed transnational. Rather than seeking to distinguish what characterizes a transnational approach from *histoire croisée* (entangled history), transfer history, international or global history, I will focus on how transnational perspectives have entered the conversation about modern empires in the history of education, much as Noah Sobe has sought to do for American history of education.[2] I begin by considering how the interest in empire within the field has introduced approaches focusing on circulations and exchanges that increasingly have been named transnational. I then turn to studies that adopt a transnational approach to the study of traveling teachers and consider how the focus on teachers, combined with an interest in exploring particular types of sources, offers new perspectives on the process of empire. A third section then focuses on transnational experiences in the context of colonial schools, arguing that attention to these experiences changes the questions we ask. Finally, in conclusion, I address the challenge of labeling the study of circulations, flows, and exchanges that characterize scholarship on the empire. Are there characteristics of a "transnational" approach that stretch across our disparate institutional and national historiographic settings and how do these challenge narratives about the ways schooling and education participated in the imperial project?

[1] Akira Iriye and Pierre-Yves Saunier, eds., *The Palgrave Dictionary of Transnational History: From the Mid-19th Century to the Present Day* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Akira Iriye, *Global and Transnational History: The Past, Present and Future* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Pierre-Yves Saunier, *Transnational History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

[2] Noah W. Sobe, "Entanglement and Transnationalism in the History of American Education," in *Rethinking the History of Education: Transnational Perspectives on Its Questions, Methods and Knowledge*, ed. Thomas S. Popkewitz (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 93–107.

The Imperial Turn in the History of Education: Analytical Steps Toward the Transnational

The postcolonial moment has stimulated in the last twenty years considerable scholarship on empire, which has offered grist for approaches that are called transnational.[3] In particular, as scholars emphasized the importance of analyzing the effects of empire on the metropole, research increasingly explored how the two were mutually constituted. This involved an attention to movement, connections, and circulations, which produced new questions about both "home" and the colony. Catherine Hall was among the historians who most convincingly argued for such an approach. Recognized for her pioneering study with Leonore Davidoff on the role of gender in the making of the British middle class, her subsequent scholarship moved outward to consider how the empire made a difference at "home." "What representations of empire circulated in a mid-nineteenth-century town, and, in what ways, if any, did the associated knowledge shape political and other discourses," she asks in *Civilizing Subjects*.[4] Her theoretical and empirical work highlighted the circulation of people and ideas, emphasizing how these circulations drew attention to the workings of race in nonconformist thinking about Englishness. Although most scholars would not peg her as an historian of education, her attention to missionaries and their role in disseminating ideas and values meant her insights were quite seductive for those of us who felt increasingly constrained by the—often implicit—national framework within which we were writing. By highlighting the transformations in Baptist missionary discourses in Jamaica in the early nineteenth century, she showed how the experiences of empire reconfigured notions of blackness and whiteness, while the practices of the patriarchal mission family inscribed gender alongside race at the heart of the missionary enterprise.[5]

[3] Chloé Maurel, *Manuel d'histoire globale: Comprendre le 'global turn' des sciences humaines* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2014).

[4] Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination, 1830–1867* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 12.

[5] Catherine Hall, "Missionary Stories: Gender and Ethnicity in England in the 1830s and 1840s," in *White, Male and Middle-Class: Explorations in Feminism and History*, ed. Catherine Hall (New York: Routledge, 1992), 205–254; Hall, *Civilising Subjects*; Catherine Hall and Sonya Rose, eds., *At Home with the Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

Hall's challenge to the writing of British social history was not framed in the guise of transnational history, but her insights encouraged historians to question the national, in ways that are congruent with recent calls for a transnational perspective that "deepens and complicates our understanding of colonialism, the nation state and the responses of local communities, institutions and individuals."[6]

Hall's perspective challenged historians of education to look differently at what happened within schools and classrooms in the metropole. Not surprisingly given the rich vein of postcolonial scholarship in Britain, historians studying British schools were more prompt to develop this approach in their concern to understand how the *fact* of empire penetrated the schooling experience, be it through the presence of teachers who had traveled, lived, or taught outside of Britain, through the existence of an imperial culture within schools, or through the lessons of empire dispensed within classrooms. Scholarship on education in British colonies took up the challenges of an approach that rendered increasingly nuanced the nature of interactions within schools and learning environments that were conceptualized as contested spaces.[7]

In the field of the history of education, the association of empire and the transnational has emerged most strongly in the journal *Paedagogica Historica* thanks to a number of special issues.[8] Again, it is not surprising that an international journal, linked to an international association (ISCHE—International Standing Conference for the History of Education) would be at the forefront of an approach that seeks to challenge the preeminence of the national in our historical narratives, be it through international, comparative, or transnational approaches. In 2009, for example, a special issue devoted to "'Empires Overseas' and 'Empires at Home': Postcolonial and Transnational Perspectives on Social Change in the History of Education" offers a quick introduction to the diversity of contemporary scholarship through a series of

[6] Barnita Bagchi, Eckhardt Fuchs, and Kate Rousmaniere, eds., *Connecting Histories of Education: Transnational and Cross-Cultural Exchanges in (Post-)Colonial Education* (New York: Berghahn, 2014), 2.

[7] Bagchi, Fuchs, and Rousmaniere, *Connecting Histories*; Tim Allender, *Learning Femininity in Colonial India, 1820–1932* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016).

[8] For example, Rebecca Rogers, "Paedagogica Historica: Trendsetter or Follower?" *Paedagogica Historica* 50, no. 6 (2014): 717–736.

case studies. Despite the introduction to this issue, which argued that discussions of empire were moving closer toward "forms of transnational, global or world histories," the analytical framework adopted by most of the authors in most of the articles appears, however, less transnational than postcolonial.[9] In his conclusion to the issue, Antonio Nóvoa traces three tendencies in educational history "in the light of colonial and post-colonial issues: the reconceptualisation of space-time relations; second, the multiplication of spaces and the unfolding of times, third, the search for new zones of looking, fostering new meanings and understanding."[10] He concludes by stating that "post-colonial theories lie at the essence of our argument, in particular when 'Europe' functions as a silent reference for all of our history," even if his remarks suggest approaches that might well be labeled transnational.[11] Indeed, this is a useful reminder that the interest in circulations, flows, and connections that underlies much work done under the label of the transnational does not necessarily dialogue easily with an interest in forms of imperial domination.

Latin American historians of education have also been at the vanguard of those engaging with the connections between empire and the transnational, exploring the effects of what happened in the process of nation-building following the end of empire. In 2011, *Paedagogica Historica* brought these issues to the forefront of an international conversation in a special issue entitled "Lost Empires, Regained Nations: Postcolonial models, cultural transfers and transnational perspectives in Latin America."[12] The very useful introduction to this issue offers a brief genealogy of three terms—postcolonial, transnational, and cultural transfers—and proposes a definition of transnational history borrowed from the American studies specialist Micol Seigel: "'Transnational

[9] Joyce Goodman, Gary McCulloch, and William Richardson, "'Empires Overseas' and 'Empires at Home': Postcolonial and Transnational Perspectives on Social Change in the History of Education," *Paedagogica Historica* 45, no. 6 (2009): 699.

[10] Antonio Nóvoa, "Endnote," *Paedagogica Historica* 45, no. 6 (2009): 817.

[11] Ibid., 820.

[12] Gabriela Ossenbach and María Del Mar del Pozo Andrés, eds., "Lost Empires, Regained Nations: Postcolonial Models, Cultural Transfers and Transnational Perspectives in Latin America (1870–1970)," special issue, *Paedagogica Historica* 47, no. 5 (2011): 579–717.

history' examines units that spill over and seep through national borders. It conceptualizes categories and identities, discovers networks united by bonds stronger than social class or ideology and links narratives and experiences that transcend time and location, while it 'considers cross-national comparison as subject rather than method'."[13] The articles assembled in this issue explore the Latin American postcolonial context through a series of case studies that highlight the interactions between these modes of conceptualization. In the process, they reveal their porosity, and hence the difficulty of labeling, but also the exciting intellectual challenges this offers scholars working on Latin America. More generally, the issue highlights the usefulness of these modes of conceptualization for non-British empires and encourages the travel of methods and theorizations across historiographic communities.[14]

Among British historians of education, Joyce Goodman has been one of the most active proponents of this approach through her work on secondary school headmistresses and their relations to empire. As early as 2002, Joyce Goodman drew attention to a vision of empire seen as a set of relations, implying political, cultural, and economic exchanges between metropole and colony, and she argued for the need to adopt "a transnational rather than a comparative or an international methodology."[15] Through her study of the Association of Head Mistresses (AHM) in a pioneering edited volume on *Gender, Colonialism and Education*, as well as subsequent articles, she has developed a convincing case for the usefulness of a transnational method to understand how individual headmistresses experienced empire, through their travels to schools in the colonies, through their engagement in the League of Empire and

[13] Gabriela Ossenbach and María del Mar del Pozo Andrés, "Postcolonial Models, Cultural Transfers and Transnational Perspectives in Latin America: A Research Agenda," *Paedagogica Historica* 47, no. 5 (2011): 581; Micol Seigel, "Beyond Compare: Comparative Method after the Transnational Turn," *Radical History Review* 91 (2005): 62–90.

[14] Antoinette Burton, "Getting Outside of the Global: Repositioning British Imperialism in World History," in *Empire in Question: Reading, Writing, and Teaching British Imperialism*, ed. Antoinette Burton (Chapel Hill: Duke University Press, 2011), 275–292.

[15] Joyce Goodman, "'Their Market Value Must Be Greater for the Experience They Had Gained': Secondary School Headmistresses and Empire, 1897–1914," in *Gender, Colonialism and Education: The Political Experience of Education*, ed. Joyce Goodman and Jane Martin (London: Woburn, 2002), 188.

the Victoria League, and through the epistolary networks they formed.[16] This method involves tracking the connections between teachers, integrating spatial analysis into the study of social interrelations and identities, and highlighting how travel experiences, discussions within imperial education conferences, or lessons within classrooms at 'home' reveal how transnationalism refracts and shapes the local.

Attention to the circulation of both ideas and persons has thus brought to light the extent to which the empire was a crucible for the forming of new professional and individual identities. Through the study of "imperial careering," historians have drawn on the insights of cultural geographers as well as anthropologists to explore the networks that connected different colonies within the British Empire.[17] Gender historians have noted that women teachers also had imperial careers, most notably as missionaries or women religious.[18] The fact of imperial travel, then, has brought to light the ways schools and pedagogical ideas moved across space, encountering resistances, but also undergoing forms of adaptation that have been the focus of much scholarship. Unquestionably, the interest in networks and circulations in these studies is shared by those who have adopted transnational perspectives with enthusiasm, but only recently has the term itself entered the historical vocabulary.

Joyce Goodman defines the transnational perspective she deploys as one that examines not just the movement of reformers but also that of ideas, social movements, and institutions. Not coincidentally, I would argue, her scholarship is not solely focused on the empire. The headmistresses she studies traveled to South Africa but also to Geneva where their interlocutors were other European women teachers. The

[16] Joyce Goodman, "Working for Change across International Borders: The Association of Headmistresses and Education for International Citizenship," *Paedagogica Historica* 43, no. 1 (2007): 165–180; Joyce Goodman and Zoe Milsom, "Performing Reforming and the Category of Age: Empire, Internationalism and Transnationalism in the Career of Reta Oldham, Headmistress," in *Women Educators, Leaders and Activists: Educational Lives and Networks, 1900–1960*, ed. Tanya Fitzgerald and Elizabeth Smyth (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 96–120.

[17] David Lambert and Alan Lester, eds., *Colonial Lives across the British Empire: Imperial Careering in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

[18] Deirdre Raftery and Mary Clarke, eds., *Transnationalism, Gender and the History of Education* (New York: Routledge, 2016).

women in the interwar period who dialogued within the League of Nations' International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation were women seeking deliberately to move beyond the nation-state in their intellectual exchanges. Goodman's recourse to a transnational perspective for the study of this period is congruent not only with that of her historical subjects, but also with an increasingly voluminous historiography on non-state organizations.[19]

For many historians of education, however, it is not apparent that the metropole–colony nexus requires or indeed is enriched by the use of a transnational perspective, particularly given the deeply engrained empiricist and anti-theoretical tendency within the field. In France, the interest in empire is very recent and the only special issue of *Histoire de l'éducation* devoted to education in the French colonies makes no reference to the issue of transnationalism. Indeed, the authors in the issue speak very little about metropole–colony connections and the focus for the most part is on schooling in the colonies. Pascale Barthélémy's historiographic introduction to the issue notes that scholarship in France is relatively undeveloped although the public uproar about the legislators' decision that teachers should teach "the positive role of the French presence overseas" (article 4 of the law of 23 February 2005) has spurred historical work since then.[20] Although this article has since been abrogated, scholarship on education still remains strongly influenced by anti-colonial ideologies that are more attentive to the symbolic politics of domination and oppression than to the interflow of ideas and persons between metropole and colony.

Certainly, scholars have analyzed the circulation of emancipatory ideals among indigenous elites, the so-called *évolués*, in the context of the struggles for independence, but very few studies question how the educational experiences of empire impacted on the metropole.[21] Indeed, Pascale Barthélémy concluded her overview of French scholarship by noting that "the question of colonial education deserves to be studied in its imperial dimension, that is to say, attentive to the circulations (of

[19] Joyce Goodman, "Women and International Intellectual Co-operation," *Paedagogica Historica* 48, no. 3 (2012): 357–368.

[20] Pascale Barthélémy, "L'enseignement dans l'Empire colonial français: Une vieille histoire?" *Histoire de l'éducation* 128 (2010): 5–28.

[21] Françoise Blum, "Sénégal 1968: Révolte étudiante et grève générale," *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* 59, no. 2 (2012): 144–177.

discourses, programs of study, of teachers, of pedagogical practices, and even of pupils) between regions of the empire but also between colonized regions and the metropole."[22] For this prominent scholar of colonial education, however, transnationalism is not the term or the approach she highlights. Connected or entangled history reflects more accurately her vision of the relationship between metropole and colony, particularly given the absence of *nation-states* on one side of this equation. The introduction to a recent book on education and colonization in the French context similarly refers to global history or connected history as a prism through which to study the circulations, borrowings, and hybridizations observed in colonial educational settings.[23]

In what follows, I narrow my attention to scholarship on teachers and missionaries, examining how attention to this particular set of actors offers a fruitful way to engage with transnational perspectives in the history of empire, thanks to the existence of sources that shed light on how ideas about schooling, pedagogy, and teaching practices traveled around the world.

Traveling Teachers as Transnational Actors

Historians of pedagogy have a long tradition of tracing the "influence" of educational ideas around the world. In the study of empire, ideas clearly travel, but they are notoriously difficult to pin down and their effects difficult to measure. For social historians of education, however, teachers represent a privileged object of analysis. Teachers have biographies, they move in traceable spatial patterns, they frequently write and publish about what they are hoping to accomplish, they report on what they see, and, when they travel, they often belong to networks of like-minded individuals with whom they correspond.[24] The schools they direct or operate within have material consistence and they interact with students whose characteristics can be studied. For scholars working on

[22] Barthélémy, "L'enseignement dans l'Empire colonial français," 27. My translation.

[23] Gilles Boyer, Pascal Clerc, and Michelle Zancarini-Fournel, "Introduction," in *L'école aux colonies: Les colonies à l'éducation*, ed. Gilles Boyer, Pascal Clerc, and Michelle Zancarini-Fournel (Lyon: ENS Éditions, 2013), 5–10.

[24] Tanya Fitzgerald and Elisabeth M. Smith, eds., *Women Educators, Leaders and Activists: Educational Lives and Networks, 1900–1960* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

empire, the study of teachers offers a particularly fruitful entry into a transnational approach that sheds light on the complex interactions that existed on the ground. Given the plethora of scholarship focusing on the British Empire, here I explore scholarship primarily on the French Empire highlighting how empirical studies and the mining of specific types of sources have produced scholarship with an increasingly transnational perspective.

For over a decade, my own scholarship has looked at teachers who left the French metropole to set up schools in the colonies or elsewhere. Inspired by scholarship on the British Empire, and particularly that of Catherine Hall, I have called attention in historiographic essays and in empirical studies for the need to look carefully at traveling teachers—the enterprising schoolteachers and particularly the women religious who set up schools for girls around the world.[25] In my book *From the Salon to the Schoolroom* (2005), I devoted a final chapter to the laywomen and especially the teaching sisters who contributed to the French "civilizing mission," exploring the characteristics of "French" schools on foreign soils and charting their evolution over time.[26] I did not use the term "transnational" in my book; rather, I sought to analyze the characteristics of what I termed a "French model of girls' education" in its interactions with other national and cultural traditions. In the course of the nineteenth century, teachers carried this model with them to northern and sub-Saharan Africa but also to Britain and the USA. In these very different settings, teachers wrote about their "civilizing" goals in letters and bulletins, revealing successes and failures as well as the reorientation of their pedagogical mission once in contact with the ethnically and religiously diverse populations they encountered. Although postcolonial studies framed my thinking to some extent, my focus was less on the dynamics of empire than on the long-term effects of expatriation, both on teachers and their schools. Indeed, I positioned my investigation of French schools outside the metropole as one of cultural encounters,

[25] Rebecca Rogers, "Questioning National Models: The History of Women Teachers in Comparative Perspective" (Paper, International Federation for Research in Women's History Conference, Sydney, July 9, 2005); Rebecca Rogers, "Paedagogica Historica: Trendsetter or Follower?" *Paedagogica Historica* 50, no. 6 (2014): 717–736.

[26] Rebecca Rogers, *From the Salon to the Schoolroom: Educating Bourgeois Girls in Nineteenth-Century France* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2005).

emphasizing the way people and educational ideas change through the experience of travel and interactions with other cultures.[27]

The research for this final chapter of my book of 2005 drew particular attention to Catholic teaching sisters and to their extensive private archives, which historians of modern French education have long neglected. Catholic teaching religious, like Protestant missionaries, left ample traces of their encounters with the "indigenous" other, and these sources have proven particularly stimulating for historians such as Deirdre Raftery in Ireland or Marc Depaepe in Belgium, seeking to unveil the transnational and imperial dimension of the educational mission.[28] In the interest of furthering our own transnational discussion, I focus here on scholarship relating to the French Empire, which is often less well known than that concerning the British Empire. In particular, I highlight how attention to traveling teachers has introduced new perspectives within the history of education and empire, while also drawing attention to source materials that remain insufficiently explored. By tracking the agents who connect different school or pedagogical cultures, scholars have shown how teaching methods and schoolbooks moved from metropole to colony, how ideas about class, gender, and racial difference were modified through the experience of empire, or how teachers themselves changed their attitudes in response to their contact with indigenous populations.

Missionary teachers are obvious actors with whom to begin an exploration anchored in the sorts of questions that interest transnational historians. Fueled by the desire to "civilize" indigenous populations, missionaries set up schools, wrote textbooks, learned native languages, and at times went native themselves, shedding their European clothes and habits. But they also circulated within and among colonies, and shipped descriptions of their experiences back home. In France, the imperial educational mission of Catholic women religious has received relatively

[27] Ibid.

[28] Deirdre Raftery, "Teaching Sisters and Transnational Networks: Recruitment and Education Expansion in the Long Nineteenth Century," *History of Education* 44, no. 6 (2015): 717–728; Raftery and Clarke, eds., *Transnationalism*; Marc Depaepe, "Writing Histories of Congolese Colonial and Post-colonial Education: A Historiographical View from Belgium," in *Connecting Histories of Education: Transnational and Cross-Cultural Exchanges in (Post-)Colonial Education*, ed. Barnita Bagchi, Eckhardt Fuchs, and Kate Rousmaniere (New York: Berghahn, 2014), 41–60.

little attention despite the numbers involved and the rich sources that have survived. The existing scholarship rarely positions itself in terms of the transnational, and yet its insights and its methods clearly contribute to a better understanding of the existence of an imperial flow of people, resources, and pedagogical ideas. As Sarah Curtis has recently argued, historians would be well advised to consider the Sisters of the Sacred Heart alongside the *Alliance Française* when considering how the French Third Republic sought to spread knowledge of French culture and language.[29] Historians of education have studied the development of French convent schools in the USA, but these studies eschew some of the difficult questions of the transnational approach by focusing on adaptations within the USA, without considering how contacts with the French home institution developed and changed over time. Nor do these studies take seriously what an "imperial" perspective might yield in terms of thinking about the relationship between France and the USA or Canada.

The recent publication of French missionary texts offers scholars the opportunity to pursue such questions about how French religious teachers viewed their mission in a variety of geographical settings, and how this vision changed over time. The anthologies published by GRIEM (*Groupe de Recherches sur l'Écriture Missionnaire*; Research Group on Missionary Writings), founded in 2001, offer easy access to a wealth of sources from religious archives that highlight the dynamic nature of cultural interactions depending on location and the populations encountered. Letters sent back to the Mother House, house journals describing the tribulations of setting up schools in foreign lands, as well as prospectuses from these schools, all shed light on the challenges nuns faced in their efforts to educate both indigenous and European students.[30] These sources also highlight the need to meld approaches that think in terms of large-scale phenomena (the organization of the civilizing mission) with

[29] Sarah Curtis, "The Double Invisibility of Missionary Sisters," *Journal of Women's History* 28, no. 4 (2016): 134–143.

[30] Patrick Cabanel, ed., *Lettres d'exil, 1901–1909: Les congrégations françaises dans le monde après les lois laïques de 1901 et 1904, Anthologie de textes missionnaires* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008); Chantal Paisant, ed., *Philippine Duchesne et ses compagnes: Les années pionnières, 1818–1823: Lettres et journaux des premières missionnaires du Sacré-Cœur aux Etats-Unis* (Paris: Cerf, 2011); Chantal Paisant, ed., *La mission au féminin: Anthologie de textes missionnaires* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009).

those that examine at the local level how individuals interacted within communities, within schools, and within the classroom. In other words, the transnational approach requires historians of education both to think big and to think little if they want to move beyond the declaration that teachers carry with them ideas about education and schooling forged within a specific pedagogical context. What happened when their travels brought them into contact with other schooling contexts? How were educational objectives modified?

This is in essence what I sought to discover in the biography I wrote about Eugénie Luce, the woman who founded the first school for Muslim girls in Algiers in 1845.[31] While positioning her initiative within the framework of what French Saint-Simonian military officers were seeking to do in Algeria, I examined at the micro-level the nature of the school she established and its evolution over time. It would be stretching the truth to claim that I saw my project as a contribution to a discussion about transnational history. Indeed, the term "transnational" only appears twice in my book—once in the introduction in reference to transnational discussions about girls' education in Algeria and once in the conclusion in reference to the transnational feminist movement (nor does the term appear in the index). And yet I believe my approach speaks to the objectives of those who advocate a transnational approach.

To begin with, I drew on my knowledge of French primary schooling in the early nineteenth century to show how Luce used ideas forged through her experience teaching in a girls' school in the provinces, with her acquired knowledge of the gendered cultural landscape in Algiers. In order to open her school, she drew heavily on her Saint-Simonian as well as pedagogical networks, borrowing both money and savoir faire from the two. She then founded a school whose structure and program incorporated features of a French primary school with the imperial civilizing objectives of her Saint-Simonian correspondents. Concretely, this meant she taught girls to read, write, and do arithmetic, while also introducing the study of Arabic and religious lessons from the Qur'an (taught by a female Arabic speaker). The school included lessons in needlework and embroidery—the former a mainstay of French primary schools—but from the outset these lessons had both an economic justification and an

[31] Rebecca Rogers, *A Frenchwoman's Imperial Story: Madame Luce in Nineteenth-Century Algeria* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013).

artistic justification that clearly spoke to a Saint-Simonian vision of progress through an educational experience that would allow girls to engage afterward in productive work. This position only emerged in professional schools for girls in France twenty years later. Because Luce associated school learning with productive work, she also set up savings accounts for students where she deposited the sales of their needlework, a practice that historians of education associate with Third Republic reforms. The needlework was put on show in prize-giving ceremonies (like in France) but also in universal exhibitions, where she attracted international attention, particularly from British women tourists who publicized widely both her school and the embroideries produced within it. The school itself attracted over 100 pupils and adopted the monitorial method common in large primary schools for the poor throughout the world.[32]

My analysis of this school for Muslim girls situates it within a discussion about the education of the poor that spanned not only the Mediterranean but also the Channel. In studying the move from metropole to colony, I was not only influenced by the work of Catherine Hall and others, but also no doubt by the effects of my own lived experience within different institutional and national school cultures. An historian born in the USA and trained in both USA and French universities, I have now taught for over twenty years in France. The transnational approach undoubtedly holds special appeal for someone who continuously questions the specificity of national learning cultures.

The decision to pursue the traces of Luce's schools in a broader, more international setting, notably in British guidebooks, travel literature and feminist journals, in international and colonial exhibitions, and in museum collections, reflects both this personal experience and the effects of the transnational "turn" that led me to engage with new primary sources and a different set of historiographic discussions. Colonial Algeria becomes in my book the site of multiple educational conversations, between French men and women, between Saint-Simonian progressives and Arab traditionalists, between French women teachers and British feminists, but also between Anglophone and Francophone scholars of empire. Tracing these conversations revealed a history that

[32] Marcelo Caruso, ed., *Classroom Struggle: Organizing Elementary School Teaching in the 19th Century* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2015).

had never been told, a history that was considerably more complex than what appears in the colonial archive.

Schooling the Indigenous "Other": The Effects of Transnational Experiences and Conversations

Scholarship on the history of education in imperial settings has revealed the tremendous variety of schools established by Western educators: schools that targeted only Western pupils, schools that mixed Western and indigenous students, as well as schools directed toward specific categories of the "indigenous" other: Jewish or Muslim students, Arabs or Berbers, elites or the poor, boys or girls, orphans or mixed-race children. Often only careful examination of a variety of sources reveals who exactly is being taught what. Official reports about Luce's school, for example, only referred to "Muslim" or "Moorish" girls, and yet travelers as well as inspectors noted a far broader diversity. Jewish, Berber, and Arab pupils all mingled together and at times learned French not only from their French schoolteachers but also from their European peers within the school, notably Luce's granddaughter. The knowledge that girls from different ethnic and religious backgrounds studied, conversed, and worked together within the schoolroom contributes texture to a historiographic orientation that emphasizes colonial Algeria as a "*monde de contact*" [contact world]. In France, however, the entangled history of Algeria is not conceptualized as transnational, no doubt in part because the populations in contact are not "national." And yet it may indeed be useful to term these analyses "transnational" as a way of encouraging intellectual dialogue across the many disciplinary, institutional, and national borders that characterize our academic lives.

In the following, I want to suggest how transnational experiences and conversations, both past and present, open up new perspectives on the schooling of indigenous students. By emphasizing the *past and present*, I am deliberately highlighting the existence of transnational sites of exchange that merit our historical attention, but also our present-day dialogues, most notably within an international journal such as *Paedagogica Historica*, or in the conferences of the International Standing Conference for the History of Education, which have done so much to bring together historians from around the world. In closing, then, I wish to turn first to a specific geographic space (the Ottoman Empire), then to a specific category of teacher (Jewish teachers from the

Alliance Israélite Universelle), and finally to the role of congresses and world fairs as sites or objects of study where transnational perspectives yield rich insights.

This is particularly evident in scholarship on the Ottoman Empire where the complexity of educational interactions has increasingly attracted historians of education seeking to move beyond a national framework. Europeanists such as myself, however, have often ignored this scholarship, having neither the language skills nor the opportunity to discover what is being done, except perhaps when the studies concern the margins of the Ottoman Empire within Europe.[33] In many ways, the call for more transnational approaches has had a stimulating effect on our scholarly conversations, as the recent publication *Connecting Histories of Education* illustrates.[34] Similarly, an edited collection on the "entangled education" of Ottoman Syria and Mandate Lebanon has brought to light the importance of pushing specialists of Jewish, Muslim, or Christian missionary education to dialogue more with each other, revealing in the process the complexity of educational encounters in imperial settings.[35] Studies, notably on the part of art historians or architectural historians paying careful attention to local usages of educational space, have also revealed how a transnational approach brings to light new questions and renews our understanding of the way "foreign" schools altered the educational landscape for a wide range of "indigenous" students.[36] The imperial classroom, as Benjamin Fortna has argued, was the product of a series of negotiations between a reforming bureaucracy, private actors, and religious and secular elites. And these negotiations played themselves

[33] Krassimira Daskalova, "Nation-Building, Patriotism, and Women's Citizenship, Bulgaria in Southeastern Europe," in *Girls Secondary Education in the Western World*, ed. James Albisetti, Joyce Goodman, and Rebecca Rogers (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 149–164; Fabio Giomi, "Forging Habsburg Muslim Girls: Gender, Education and Empire in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1878–1918)," *History of Education* 44, no. 3 (2015): 274–292.

[34] Bagchi, Fuchs, and Rousmaniere, eds., *Connecting Histories.*

[35] Julia Hauser, Christine B. Lindner, and Esther Möller, eds., *Entangled Education: Foreign and Local Schools in Ottoman Syria and Mandate Lebanon (19th–20th Centuries)* (Würzburg: Ergon-Verlag, 2016).

[36] Zeynep Çelik, *Empire, Architecture, and the City: French-Ottoman Encounters, 1830–1914* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008).

out in architectural space, in school materials, and in the organization and representation of school time.[37]

For historians interested in this sort of social and cultural complexity, the archives of the *Alliance Israélite Universelle* (AIU) are a particularly promising place to pursue educational interaction through a transnational perspective. Founded in Paris in 1860, the AIU's goal was to spread "modern" education to Jews in the Middle East and southeastern Europe. A network of both boys' and girls' schools quickly developed in these areas with teachers initially recruited in Paris and then, increasingly from the schools established within various parts of the Ottoman or French Empire. Annual reports from the French AIU and the Anglo-Jewish Association (founded in London in 1871), combined with the extensive correspondence from teachers back to the French central committee, shed light on why schools were opened in certain localities, the nature of local interactions, the architectural characteristics of the school environment, the variety of educational programs established, including vocational education, and the diversity of the student clientele. In Ottoman Iraq, for example, the girls' school in Baghdad educated Muslim, Christian, and Jewish girls and was prominent in the development of vocational schooling, thus contributing to the emergence of a new modern Jewish woman.[38] Aron Rodrigue's pathbreaking scholarship on the politics of Jewish schooling in Turkey, while not framed within a transnational perspective, offers precisely the sort of nuanced analysis about the ways French models of schooling were instituted and then altered within the context of the Ottoman Empire that scholars have begun to explore more intently.[39]

[37] Benjamin Fortna, *Imperial Classroom: Islam, the State, and Education in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

[38] Jonathan Sciarcon, *Educational Oases in the Desert: The Alliance Israélite Universelle's Girls' Schools in Ottoman Iraq, 1895–1915* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2017).

[39] Aron Rodrigue, *French Jews, Turkish Jews: The Alliance Israélite Universelle and the Politics of Jewish Schooling in Turkey, 1860–1925* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990); Frances Malino, "'Institutrices' in the Metropole and the Maghreb: A Comparative Perspective," *Historical Reflections* 32, no. 1 (2006): 129–143; Joy Land, "Corresponding Women: Female Educators of the 'Alliance Israélite Universelle' (AIU) in Tunisia, 1882–1914," in *Jewish Culture and Society in North Africa*, ed. Emily Gottreich and Daniel Schroeter (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011), 239–256.

If the traveling teachers of the AIU offer particularly promising perspectives, recent historical scholarship has pointed to the way travel and international congresses contributed to forging knowledge about the empire, with specific repercussions for the ways (national) teachers and administrators approached the schooling of indigenous others. Colonial congresses, for example, provided a transnational space where administrators, teachers, scholars, and politicians forged analytical categories with implications for educational policy decisions. These spaces were unquestionably political and went beyond the intellectual exchange of ideas. Indeed, the actors involved frequently used them to pursue national strategies (much as the PISA evaluations today fuel national reforms). This is the argument Pierre Singaravélou develops when considering the creation of the *Institut colonial international* in Brussels in 1894.[40] The institute defined its role as providing expertise for colonial administrations while facilitating transnational exchange among scholars, politicians, and high-ranking administrators. The French representatives in this transnational space were liberals with respect to colonization in France and used the expertise generated in Brussels to defend the development of courses in "comparative colonization"; these same courses offered intellectual justification for their political and especially economic interests. Singaravélou's scholarship focuses on the intellectual and political construction of French colonial expertise, and offers another way to conceptualize how the transnational fashioned attitudes toward the indigenous "other." Universal or colonial exhibitions were another site of international interaction where a transnational approach sheds light on the way education and empire were intertwined as nations jockeyed for recognition on the world stage, although for the moment not much scholarship on the subject exists.[41]

My own work, framed by decades of conversations within the fields of women's and gender history as well as the history of education, has been more interested in seeing how the imperial project played out on the ground. Let me return once more to the example of Luce's school in Algiers. The French colonial archives in Aix-en-Provence offered one

[40] Pierre Singaravélou, "Les stratégies d'internationalisation du débat colonial et la construction transnationale d'une science de la colonisation à la fin du XIXe siècle," *Monde(s): Histoire, Espaces, Relations* 1 (2012): 135–157.

[41] Martin Lawn, ed., *Modelling the Future: Exhibitions and the Materiality of Education* (Oxford: Symposium Books, 2009).

perspective on how the colonial authorities envisioned her school, as well as insights into the way she positioned her school with respect to the Saint-Simonian program in Algeria. My story might have ended there, offering a case study of how gender structured the early years of the French "civilizing mission." My discovery of the British feminist interest in Luce and her school, however, pushed my project in a direction that highlighted the fruitfulness of transnational approaches (even when not named as such), not only in terms of rendering the historical narrative more complex but also in terms of offering another reading of the educational past.

Briefly put, British feminists saw Luce as a heroine, combating the misogynistic prejudices of the French colonial administration and the local Arab notables. They noted with regret the closure of the school in 1861 after sixteen years of existence, but praised nonetheless the continuing practice of training girls in embroidery. While the French colonial archives contain virtually nothing about Luce's sewing workshop after 1861, British guidebooks and British feminists continued to guide English-speaking tourists to her door and to praise the ways she trained girls to earn a living. Their way of "seeing" her, conditioned by their own national struggle to improve the professional lives of women, changed my own view of her school's history.[42] In other words, their vision allowed *me* to see differently, to deconstruct the message of the colonial archive, and to consider the products of her school—both the embroideries and the emergence of skilled female artisanal workers—in a different light. The transnational gaze of my historical objects led me to question my own gaze, trained within a French history of education community that has privileged studying the acquisition of language over the acquisition of skills.

Conclusion

The challenges of defining the transnational are not easy to resolve, particularly when the transnational refrains from "speaking its own name." Although I began with a brief discussion of British imperialism, the sheer extent of scholarship on the relationship between empire, the transnational, and the global renders it daunting for a specialist of France to

[42] Rebecca Rogers, "Telling Stories about the Colonies: British and French Women in Algeria in the 19th Century," *Gender and History* 21, no. 1 (2009): 39–59.

enter the discussion with any confidence, even if one reduces one's gaze to scholarship focused on education. In re-reading my own scholarship, I have argued in essence that the transnational represents more a posture than a methodological approach, one that addresses a series of issues that encourage us to look beyond and between nationally defined borders, as well as to question how "national" archives can constrain the questions one raises. It is also an invitation to participate in a certain type of scholarly discussion.

Pierre-Yves Saunier has argued that the transnational approach addresses three big issues: the historicization of contacts between communities, polities, and societies; the acknowledgment and assessment of foreign contributions to the design, discussion, and implementation of domestic features within communities and vice versa; and attention to trends, patterns, organizations, and individuals that have thrived in between, across, and through polities and societies. He distinguishes this approach from global history as defined in the *Journal of Global History* as "the main problems of global change over time, together with the diverse histories of globalization."[43] This characterization, while useful, describes scholarship that often thrives in other guises such as in studies of the AIU teachers.

In considering the history of education through the lens of empire, the transnational approach clearly offers a way to render more complex narratives of dominance and resistance through attention to the workings of colonial schools, an attention that is sensitive to the hierarchies that underwrote the imperial project in terms of class, race, and gender.[44] As I have sought to demonstrate, however, the interest in disrupting the binary narratives of imperial conquest did not wait for the transnational turn to make its appearance. Ultimately, this suggests that we, as historians, see and label what is familiar and acknowledged in and by our institutional and national positionings. Our perspectives are anchored within constructions of knowledge that are specific to time and place. The transnational, like the global, is an incentive to move beyond this positioning. To this extent, I would argue that it represents a "way of seeing" far more than a specific set of methodological tools. And, as others have argued, it

[43] Saunier, *Transnational History*, 3.

[44] Christopher Bayly et al., "AHR Conversation: On Transnational History," *American Historical Review* 111, no. 5 (2006): 1441–1464.

draws on the insights of a long history of scholarship framed in other guises. This mitigates the usefulness of a term that often appears more like a nod to what is currently fashionable. And yet in acknowledging the decentering perspective of such an approach, it encourages historians of education to more directly question narratives of education and modernity that structured the nineteenth-century civilizing mission, or twentieth-century modernization and human capital theories. To this extent, it challenges us to think beyond the empire, to acknowledge the existence of competing empires, and to question our own national positioning with respect to these questions.

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