

“*La Citoyenne* in the World: Hubertine Auclert and Feminist Imperialism”

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In 1881, Hubertine Auclert founded the feminist newspaper *La Citoyenne* with the “single goal of bringing about the equality of woman and man.” Established primarily to advocate French women’s suffrage and full citizenship, the influential, controversial, and groundbreaking publication also looked beyond national borders. Its male and female journalists examined the lives of women across Europe, and around the world, focusing most often on the colonies, and, especially, on Algeria. *La Citoyenne* emerged not only as France’s first suffragist newspaper, but also as its first feminist periodical to address imperialism.

Auclert’s journal questioned the era’s assumptions of civilization versus savagery. Articles contrasted the circumstances of French women with those of women in Niger, Tonkin, and Tunisia, as well as in countries such as Italy, Ireland, Russia, and Turkey. While they most frequently concluded that French women held a preferable position, Auclert and her fellow writers also emphasized aspects of “uncivilized” women’s lives and status which compared positively to those of women in the metropole, such as Algerian women receiving dowries and keeping their family name at marriage. Although *La Citoyenne* journalists critiqued issues of imperial domination and indigenous gender inequities, they simultaneously recognized that women in nations beyond Europe were not merely victims of patriarchal laws and traditions, but rather that they possessed certain degrees of agency. Correspondingly, these feminist writers questioned France’s level of “civilization” under a code of laws that disenfranchised and subjugated its entire female population. Guided by Auclert, *La Citoyenne* strove to disrupt the

absolutes of “civilized” France and “uncivilized” colonies. Embracing and amending the era’s anthropological hierarchies of civilization and race, Auclert and her contributors developed a feminist imperialism that challenged women’s oppression in both the metropole and colonies by subsuming cultural differences into a universalized French identity. Advocating a different sort of empire, she appropriated the imperial model and adapted it to her objectives.

An investigation of these *La Citoyenne* articles reveals particular French feminist conceptions of race and female agency, both within and outside of Europe. For these journalists, women’s status marked a society’s level of civilization. They critiqued and compared gender roles and relations in France and other societies, agitating for the expansion of women’s rights and the amelioration of their oppressions. The journalists’ ascriptions of agency to colonized women, in particular, rested upon the period’s dominant “scientific” and anthropological categorizations which contended that races and peoples evolved at differing rates along a singular historical trajectory, with Europe, and especially France, heading the course. French governmental authorities embraced this model, as did Auclert and members of her staff. Yet the feminist journalists modified and refigured the paradigm for their own purposes. Challenging France’s presumed position at the evolutionary apex of civilization, they contended that while France had, indeed, advanced more than most on the evolutionary ladder, it was not yet fully civilized. *La Citoyenne* compared women’s lives in France and in colonial societies, developing multiple and varied critiques of oppression, all of which called for republican, egalitarian, and universalist solutions.

La Citoyenne was the first French feminist newspaper, and Auclert one of the first French feminists, to address questions of empire. Beginning in the 1880s, Auclert developed and promoted a feminist imperialism, an explicitly racialized politics that emerged at the intersection

of her republicanism, socialism, and feminism. Yet this central aspect of her work has remained historiographically neglected. Although scholars have recognized her central role in the suffrage struggle, beyond Julia Clancy-Smith's germinal essay examining Auclert's feminism in the Algerian context, little attention has been paid to her investigations and analyses of empire.¹ This article builds on Clancy-Smith's work and on Antoinette Burton's groundbreaking study of nineteenth-century imperial feminism in the British milieu.² I contend that Auclert constructed a distinctive feminist imperialism with the intention of undermining existing colonial gender, race, and class hierarchies, while simultaneously advancing the cause of metropolitan women's suffrage. She recognized the permeable lines and multi-directional influences between metropole and colony.³ Shaped by her understandings of civilization, history, and race, Auclert's republican universalism and Franco-assimilationism ultimately undervalued Arab women's experiences, voices, and culture. Although she strove to ameliorate their conditions, she nonetheless appropriated their oppression to further her primary goal.

¹ Julia Clancy-Smith, "Islam, Gender, and Identities in the Making of French Algeria, 1830-1962," in *Domesticating the Empire: Race, Gender, and Family Life in French and Dutch Colonialism*, ed. Julia Clancy-Smith and Frances Gouda, (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 1998), 154-174; Antoinette Burton, *Burdens of History: British Feminists, Indian Women, and Imperial Culture, 1865-1915* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994). Beyond the focus on imperialism, Steven C. Hause's 1987 biography of Auclert remains exceptionally valuable. His recent collection of Auclert's writings, edited with Geneviève Fraisse, includes some of her work on Arab women. Steven C. Hause, *Hubertine Auclert: The French Suffragette* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987); Steven C. Hause and Geneviève Fraisse, eds. *Hubertine Auclert: Pionnière du féminisme* (Saint-Pourcain-sur-Sioule: Bleu autour, 2007). For Auclert's suffragism see, in addition to Hause, Patrick Kay Bidelman, *Pariahs Stand Up! The Founding of the Liberal Feminist Movement in France, 1858-1189* (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1982); Charles Sowerwine, *Sisters of Citizens? Women and Socialism in France since 1876* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); Claire Goldberg Moses, *French Feminism in the Nineteenth Century* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984); Maité Albistur and Daniel Armogathe, *Histoire du féminisme français, du moyen âge à nos jours* (Paris: Editions des femmes, 1977); Edith Taib, ed., *La Citoyenne*, (Paris: Syros, 1982); and Joan Wallach Scott, *Only Paradoxes to Offer: French Feminists and the Rights of Man* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996). For Auclert's imperialism, in addition to Clancy-Smith, see Edith Taieb, "Coloniser and Colonised in Hubertine Auclert's Writings on Algeria," in Diana Holmes and Carrie Tarr, eds., *A 'Belle Epoque'? Women in French Society and Culture 1890-1914* (New York: Berghan Books, 2006), 271-272.

² Clancy-Smith, "Islam, Gender, and Identities," 154-174; Antoinette Burton, *Burdens of History: British Feminists, Indian Women, and Imperial Culture, 1865-1915* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994).

³ Alice Conklin and Julia Clancy-Smith, "Introduction: Writing Colonial Histories," special issue of *French Historical Studies* (2004), 504-505.

Auclert's interest in Algerian women emerged from her feminist, socialist, and republican commitments. One of the first and foremost advocates of French women's suffrage, Auclert came to Paris in 1873 at the age of 25 from her provincial home in the department of Alliers. Immediately joining Léon Richer and Maria Deraismes in the nascent liberal women's rights movement, Auclert subsequently broke with these mentors because their moderate advocacy of civil, but not full political, rights for women conflicted with her more radical goals.⁴ Auclert espoused a rights-based republican socialism; she worked with a number of burgeoning socialist groups in the late 1870s, attempting to integrate women's political equality into their programs. Briefly successful in gaining the support of the socialist *Parti ouvrier* in 1879, the following year internecine battles split the party and led to Auclert's expulsion. The French socialist women's leadership, particularly the revolutionary Paris Commune veterans Paule Mink and Louise Michel, roundly rejected Auclert and her brand of reformist republican socialism, in spite of Auclert's dogged advocacy of communard women. In the wake of these failed alliances, she began her intense push for women's suffrage.⁵

Auclert stood alone at the head of the suffrage campaign in these years, garnering minimal support from other feminists and enormous opposition from detractors across the political spectrum. Never an advocate of violent revolutionary change, she nonetheless gained widespread notoriety for her suffrage activism which reached a crescendo in 1880-1881 when she undertook public civil disobedience by organizing women in a property tax boycott (no taxation without representation), headed a campaign to (illegally) register women to vote, led two suffrage demonstrations, and coordinated a strike against the national census.⁶ Sustained by

⁴ Hause, "Hubertine Auclert," in Hause and Fraisse, eds. *Hubertine Auclert*, 22-27; Edith Taieb, "Coloniser and Colonised," in Holmes and Tarr, eds., *A 'Belle Epoque'?*, 271-272.

⁵ Hause, *Hubertine Auclert*, 47-68.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 68-86.

her family wealth, she managed, through what her biographer Steven C. Hause has rightly termed her “indefatigable dedication,” to firmly insert the idea of women’s suffrage into the French political landscape, where she persisted as its champion for the remaining three and a half decades of her life.⁷ Her 1881 establishment of *La Citoyenne*, France’s first suffragist newspaper, epitomized this project.

Creating *La Citoyenne*

Between 1881 and 1891, within a context of expanding empire and a growing awareness of life within the colonies, *La Citoyenne* examined the social, political, cultural, and economic conditions of women in France’s empire and beyond. Auclert and her writers also addressed larger questions of empire. The newspaper, for example, published protests against militarism and imperial wars of conquest, stating that “The Republic has other means than the cannon to employ for civilizing the barbarians.”⁸ While challenging France’s approach to empire, Auclert, in particular, did not oppose imperialism or reject the idea of the *mission civilisatrice*. Rather, she advocated what can be termed a “feminist imperialism,” promoting the introduction of feminist-influenced ideals and laws into France’s colonies, conditions and rights she also advocated for the metropole.

Auclert provided the heart, brain, and muscle of *La Citoyenne*. As editor, primary writer, fundraiser, and promoter, she sustained the publication through years of low circulation, tight finances, internal conflicts, and low morale.⁹ Auclert fervently believed in the periodical’s role as a forum “open to everything that interests women,” yet suffrage clearly held primacy

⁷ Ibid, 68.

⁸ “Protestation des femmes,” May 8, 1881, *La Citoyenne*.

⁹ Hause, *Hubertine Auclert*, 91-93.

throughout the paper's run.¹⁰ Questions of women's rights and status dominated the columns, focusing mainly on France, but also extending beyond the metropole in investigations of individual countries or in comparative analyses of different nations or peoples. Auclert wrote the majority of the articles examining women outside of France, followed in frequency by Antonin Levrier, her long-time collaborator, companion and (later) husband, who generally signed his pieces with his own name, and by Léon Giraud, a writer, financial backer and unwavering ally, who wrote under his true name, the pseudonymous anagram "Draigu," as well as the female pseudonym "Camille."¹¹ Although the newspaper's contributors included a number of well-known female feminists, including Eugenie Potonié-Pierre, Maria Martin, and Blanche D. Mon, the articles on non-European women were written almost exclusively by Auclert and her male allies and benefactors.

In 1888 Auclert joined, and subsequently married, Levrier in Algeria, where he had been appointed justice of peace in the city of Freneda. Her one-time secretary at *La Citoyenne* and in the *Société pour la revendication des droits politiques et sociaux des femmes*, as well as a member since its 1876 founding of her organization *Droit des femmes* (later to become *Suffrage des femmes*), Levrier continued to contribute to *La Citoyenne* during their years in Algeria, for him a period of failing health leading to his 1892 death (and Auclert's subsequent return to Paris).¹² Living in the colony gave Auclert a new and distinct perspective. She spent a good deal of time investigating its social and cultural contexts, interviewing women and men about

¹⁰ *La Citoyenne*, 12 February 1881.

¹¹ These articles focusing beyond France appeared an average of six per year. The frequency of the paper's publication varied notably over its decade run, due to a lack of funds and a shortage of subscribers. Beginning as a weekly, *La Citoyenne* became monthly in April 1882, and then bimonthly from December 1890 until its final issue in November 1891. Almost one-third of its 187 issues were published during its first year. Taib, *La Citoyenne*, 35-36; Bidelman, *Pariahs Stand Up*, 111-112; Hause, *Hubertine Auclert*, 89.

¹² The organization's name translates as "The Society for Claiming the Political and Social Rights of Women." Henry Fouquier, "Chronique" 30 juillet 1880 (no journal name), Bibliothèque Marguerite Durand (BMD) ; Dossier Hubertine Auclert, Ba/885, Archives de la Préfecture de la Police (APP) ; Hause, *Hubertine Auclert*, 87-88, 96.

their customs and practices, and investigating their perceptions of the colonial authority.

Through the specific vantage point of Levrier's role in the justice system, Auclert also examined and critiqued the co-existent legal structures of French and Islamic law and their effects on Algerian women. Auclert's extensive writings on the Algerian context relate her thoughts, impressions, and analyses, yet Algerian women's voices, their experiences and their desires, remain virtually absent.

Colonialism and Anthropology

Colonization escalated and metropolitan awareness of colonial life grew in the latter decades of the nineteenth century. France had taken control of Algeria in 1830, and by the 1870s civil authority had replaced military rule, inheriting a highly masculinist and patriarchal culture.¹³ As Julia Clancy-Smith has explained, with the governmental shift France became increasingly concerned with the status of Muslim women, which colonial authorities viewed as a reflection of Algerian culture's level of "civilization."¹⁴ When faced with questions of Algerians' assimilation and rights under the French Republic, the colonial authority pointed to women's subjugation as evidence of all Arabs' fundamental and irreconcilable differences from Frenchmen and French colonial settlers, thus providing a rationalization for the local peoples' continued disenfranchisement.¹⁵ In this way, issues of gender increasingly appeared in the official French imperial political discourse.

The anthropological ideology of the period supported the government's rhetoric, asserting fundamental racial differences between the colonizers and the colonized. By the

¹³ Patricia Lorcin, "Mediating Gender, Mediating Race: Women Writers in Colonial Algeria," *Culture, Theory, and Critique* 45, 1 (April 2004), 45-61.

¹⁴ Clancy-Smith, "Islam, Gender, and Identities," 154. Women's status had been used as a metric of civilization by a broad range of groups, and for dramatically differing purposes, reaching back to the Scottish Enlightenment. I thank Karen Offen for raising this point.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

nineteenth century, racial categories had multiplied as ideas of race widened beyond primarily physical or “color” classifications to include an increasing number of cultural and social distinctions. Correspondingly, imperial expansion assured the affirmation of racial hierarchies, subsuming newly “discovered” peoples to the white Europeans who situated themselves firmly at the top of the racial order. French anthropologists termed Algerian Arabs an aggressive, “conquering race, with mores opposed to our civilization,” with an essential character resistant to “adaptation” to western culture.¹⁶ This conceptualization of an Arab race with values antithetical to those of the French supported the dominant imperial argument against extending rights and equality to Algerians. Accordingly, Algerians would remain subjects, not citizens, of the republic, because by their nature they could never be French.

As the political theorist Uday Singh Mehta argues, nineteenth century liberals used the “uplift” of races as justification for empire and conquest (in contrast to conservative thinkers who generally opposed empire, viewing non-Europeans as unworthy of such “aid”).¹⁷ France’s imperial project emerged from its republican tradition, and from the centuries-long belief in European superiority, a fiction reaching back to the ancient Greek myth of Zeus selecting and honoring Europe.¹⁸ In the 1870s, the new, fragile and tenuous Third Republic embraced the colonial idea in an effort to transcend deep political rifts, erase the shame of the Franco-Prussian War and the crisis of the Paris Commune, and to solidify governmental authority and legitimacy. The *mission civilisatrice* represented the idealized potential of what France could become. It

¹⁶ “Instructions anthropologiques,” in *La Grande encyclopédie*, Paris, 1885, quoted in Carole Wiarte, “Hubertine Auclert: une féministe en Algérie (1888-1892),” unpublished manuscript, Paris, 1997.

¹⁷ Uday Singh Mehta, *Liberalism and Empire: A Study in Nineteenth Century British Thought*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999.

¹⁸ Claude Liauzu, *Race et civilisation: L’Autre dans la culture occidentale* (Paris: Syros/Alternatives, 1992), 41-72.

cast imperialism in a republican light: France would bring the civilized and highly evolved characteristics of its Republic as a benevolent gesture to its colonies.¹⁹

Embracing an anthropologically-based hierarchy, what postcolonial theorist Walter Mignolo has termed “the denial of coevalness,” imperial powers contended that non-European peoples were not intrinsically different, but merely lagged behind Europeans on an evolutionary timeline: a developmental, historical ranking of societies based on race.²⁰ This idea generally held that different peoples stood at various stages of history, ranging from the pre-historical “savage,” which included groups such as the New Caledonian Kanaks and sub-Saharan Africans, up to the truly “civilized” Europeans, and, most especially, the French. Algerian and Southeast Asian peoples fell somewhere in the middle.²¹ This schema granted “uncivilized” people the capacity for development, a capability that varied depending upon a group’s position on the evolutionary ladder, and which relied, of course, on the facilitation of imperial power.²² By asserting that only one historical trajectory existed, and that all peoples fell somewhere on this linear chronology, colonial powers could ignore or profoundly trivialize any differences between themselves and the colonized, thus justifying the forced “improvement” of those cultures.²³

¹⁹ Françoise Vergés, “Coloniser, Eduquer, Guider: Un Devoir Républicain,” in *Culture coloniale: La France conquise par son Empire, 1871-1931*, edited by Pascal Blanchard and Sandrine Lemaire (Paris: Editions Augrement, 2003), 194-196; Pascal Blanchard and Sandrine Lemaire, “La Constitution d’une culture colonial en France,” in *Ibid.*, 23-26, 31-32; Alice L. Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize: The Republican Idea of Empire in France and West Africa, 1895-1930* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997).

²⁰ Walter E. Mignolo, “Globalization, Civilization Processes, and the Relocation of Languages and Cultures,” in *The Cultures of Globalization*, edited by Frederic Jameson and Masao Miyoshi (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), 32-53.

²¹ Alice Bullard argues that the recent discovery of deep time, rather than biblical, allowed the creation of racial hierarchies that stretched back into pre-history, producing “‘scientific’ knowledge of the Kanak as the lowest of all humanity...” Alice Bullard, *Exile to Paradise: Savagery and Civilization in Paris and the South Pacific, 1790-1900* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 11-12. Alice Conklin describes sub-Saharan Africa as “what the French deemed their most barbaric territory of all.” Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize*, 5.

²² Nicholas Thomas, “Colonial Conversions: Difference, Hierarchy, and History in Early Twentieth-Century Evangelical Propaganda,” in Catherine Hall, ed., *Cultures of Empire: A Reader* (NY: Routledge, 2000), 298-299.

²³ Mignolo, “Globalization, Civilization Processes, and the Relocation of Languages and Cultures,” 32-53.

Auclert's Feminist Imperialism

Auclert espoused certain aspects of this conceptualization. As Jane Haggis explains, the discourse of cultural and racial hierarchies so permeated nineteenth century thought, that even those opposed to the imperial project could not fully escape its hegemony.²⁴ Auclert's imperial advocacy emerged within this context. As a republican socialist feminist, she considered republicanism an ideal governmental form. Although deeply critical of the existing French state, particularly for its disenfranchisement and subjugation of women, she saw in Republican France the potential to bring justice and equality to its colonies. Auclert advocated a social republic, a government in which the social question remained fully intertwined with the political – a much-contested concept under the Third Republic. As Joan Scott argues in *Only Paradoxes to Offer: French Feminists and the Rights of Man*, Auclert contended that the accepted symbolic equation of women with the social (the private or domestic, in contrast to the public or political), demonstrated the link between women's disenfranchisement and the ongoing depoliticization of the social question. In a true republic, the social would be constitutive of the political; it would holistically engage issues of social, economic, and political equality. Such a republic would inclusively embrace a diverse array of citizens, regardless of sex.²⁵ For Auclert, republicanism therefore held the seeds of emancipation for French women (and workers) and, correspondingly, for other subjugated groups under France's purview: namely, its colonial subjects. Specifically, she viewed imperialism as the vehicle for introducing social, cultural, and legal changes to improve colonized women's status and the conditions of their lives. "The Arab people," she

²⁴ Jane Haggis, "White Women and Colonialism: Towards a Non-Recuperative History," in Clare Midgley, ed., *Gender and Imperialism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), 63-64.

²⁵ Joan Scott, *Only Paradoxes to Offer: French Feminists and the Rights of Man* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 90-99.

wrote from Algeria in 1891, “have...everything to gain from becoming French.”²⁶

Although she was a socialist, Auclert’s republicanism allied her with liberals of her era, including John Stuart Mill, who believed the French republican model of secular education and representative government could liberate the oppressed Arabs. More specifically, she sought the virtually complete assimilation of the Algerians into French society.²⁷ Based on her experiences in the colony, Auclert asserted the races’ similarities and Arabs’, particularly Arab women’s, desire for Frenchification, contending that “The dream of Arab women is to be assimilated and to become French.”²⁸ By comparing, for example, Charlemagne’s eight wives to the contemporary Arab practice of polygamy, Auclert minimized existing cultural and legal differences between the French and the Algerians, attributing them to the progress of time.²⁹ She thus placed Algerians on a historical trajectory, locating them within France’s past. Auclert contended that as Algerians became increasingly civilized under a feminist-influenced imperialism, they would reject antiquated practices like polygamy.

Auclert considered the colonial authority responsible for expediting this process, an obligation that she and her fellow feminist journalists accused France of shirking. Calling for the legal curtailment of polygamy in Algeria, Auclert wrote that France did not deserve “the magnificent colony...[i]f we do not know how to use our right to civilize the Arabs... In order to morally annex Algeria, it is necessary to suppress polygamy.”³⁰ Auclert presented this “right to civilize the Arabs” as contingent on properly moral application. She used the pages of *La*

²⁶ Hubertine Auclert, “L’Avis des Musulmanes,” *La Citoyenne*, May 1, 1891.

²⁷ A classic text on assimilationism is Raymond Betts, *Assimilation and Association in French Colonial Theory, 1890-1914* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961).

²⁸ Auclert, “L’Avis des Musulmanes,” May, 1891. Auclert wrote a number of other articles on assimilation. See especially “Arabophobes. Arabophiles,” March 15, 1891; “François L’Algérie,” April 15, 1891; Hubertine Auclert, *Les Femmes arabes en Algérie* (Paris: Société d’Editions Littéraires, 1900), 9-17, 20-26, and 30-36; Hubertine Auclert, “Le Feminisme: La Femme et l’Algerie,” *Le Radical*, November 22, 1896; Hause, *Hubertine Auclert*, 141.

²⁹ Hubertine Auclert, “François L’Algérie,” *La Citoyenne*, April 15, 1891.

³⁰ Auclert, “François L’Algérie,” April 15, 1891.

Citoyenne to critique and challenge both the metropolitan and colonial authorities, promoting feminist imperialism, and demanding a legal end to what she termed the “instincts grossiers et pervers” [“vulgar and perverted instincts”] of the Arabs.³¹ She contended that French feminists could influence the introduction of egalitarian feminist principles, including those not yet extant in the metropole, to eradicate what she termed base Arab instincts. Consistent with her idea of racial evolution, these Arab “instincts” could be erased not only through a long-term historical process, but also, and more expediently, through a feminist-influenced French intervention in the legal code. In Auclert’s conceptualization, “instincts” appear more cultural than essential; lacking permanence, they allow room for transformation. A feminist imperial intercession could thus lead to the legal and cultural end of polygamy, effectively elevating indigenous women, and thereby the conditions of the entire colony and of France as a whole.

Auclert directly linked women’s suffrage to the polygamy question. Arguing “If the women of France had their due power, this monstrosity [polygamy] would have, for the common good, long ago ceased to exist on *our* territory,” she assumed female solidarity against polygamy. Auclert embraced and relied on the era’s widespread essentialist assumption of women’s “natural” moral superiority, one which, in her eyes, would undoubtedly decry polygamy.³² Referring to a “greater France,” she maintained that French women’s disenfranchisement clearly delayed legal and socio-cultural progress, and thus “the common good,” on all French territory.³³

Auclert faced detractors from across the political spectrum, from socialist men who opposed female suffrage because they feared women’s “traditional” connection to the Catholic

³¹ Auclert, “Francisons L’Algérie,” April 15, 1891.

³² The italics are mine. Ibid. Auclert continued to write and publish arguments against polygamy for the rest of her life. See especially her weekly Sunday column « Le Feminisme, » in *Le Radical* between 1896 and 1909.

³³ Taieb, “Coloniser and Colonised,” 276-277.

Church; from the conservative wing of liberal feminism, including Maria Desraismes and Léon Richer, who advocated civil rights only; and, most intently and aggressively, from the right. Responding to Auclert's attacks on polygamy, an unnamed male detractor published a sarcastically derisive reply, stating that

We will accommodate our traditional system of hypocritical monogamy, but leave the fecund and virtuous polygamy to the Arabs, and also leave Algeria to the Algerians and the ladies of the feminine emancipation to their raving.³⁴

A conservative, anti-imperialist, and anti-feminist, this writer belittled *La Citoyenne's* critique of Frenchmen's marital infidelities, played on the sexualized racial stereotypes of Arabs, advocated France's abandonment of the colony, and denigrated feminists. Opponents of imperialism came from both left and right, and this right-wing commentator would have considered Algeria and its Arabs to be base and unworthy of French intervention and "assistance."

As Antoinette Burton has argued regarding British feminists, and as Leila Rupp has asserted regarding European and American feminists in international women's organizations, "first world" feminists used a language of sisterhood while simultaneously envisioning themselves in the vanguard, leading their colonized "sisters" to emancipation.³⁵ Auclert differed in two significant ways from these feminists. First, she recognized how French imperialism negatively affected the colonized, arguing that "their political exclusion socially debases them and economically crushes them."³⁶ Second, as a republican socialist, her critique went beyond

³⁴ Unknown author, unnamed newspaper clipping, 1891, Fonds Hubertine Auclert, Archives Marie-Louise Bouglé, Bibliothèque Historique de la Ville de Paris (BHVP).

³⁵ Antoinette M. Burton, "The White Woman's Burden: British Feminists and 'The Indian Woman,' 1865-1915," in *Western Women and Imperialism: Complicity and Resistance*, ed. Nupur Chaudhuri and Margaret Strobel (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), 137-138; Leila Rupp, "Challenging Imperialism in International Women's Organizations, 1888-1945," *NWSA Journal* 8, 1 (March 31, 1996), 8-10.

³⁶ Auclert, *Les Femmes arabes*, 16; Clancy-Smith, "Islam, Gender, and Identities," 170.

gender-based oppressions, recognizing that religion, race, and class also played central roles in the intellectual justification of French empire. Auclert castigated existing colonial rule based on her observations of the interrelated prejudices and subjugations of women; Muslims, Berbers, and other indigenous groups; Jews; and the poor. Of these categories, class played the smallest role in Auclert's analyses of colonized women. Although she recognized differences between groups of indigenous Algerians, and drew attention to women's poverty, she nonetheless often discussed "Arab women" as a homogenous whole. While not oblivious to class within the colonial context, her analysis focused most heavily on gender and race. Auclert's racialized othering of Arab women tended to minimize differences among these women.

Auclert envisioned the imperial project as a humanitarian mission. She argued that

in taking possession of Algeria, France had assumed responsibility for the happiness (*bonheur*) of the Arabs... [and for] bringing them the advantages of civilization.³⁷

Auclert saw France as completely failing in this duty. Both Arab men and women remained politically, socially, and economically disenfranchised, living under a regime in which, she contended, "there is only a small French elite who consider the Arab race as human."³⁸ Algerian Jews had gained French citizenship in 1870, benefiting from the new Republic's emancipatory wave, its *mission civilisatrice*, and Algeria's shift from military to civilian rule. While European immigrants also had access to full citizenship by this period, Muslims did not.³⁹ Decrying this discrimination, Auclert wrote in an unpublished piece titled "Prejudice of Race and Sex," that "The Europeans have the same prejudices toward the Arabs that men have towards women."⁴⁰

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 247.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 3.

³⁹ Herrick Chapman and Laura L. Frader, eds., *Race in France: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on the Politics of Difference* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2004), 4-5; Joshua Schreier, "Napoléon's Long Shadow: Morality, Civilization, and Jews in France and Algeria, 1808-1870," *French Historical Studies* 30, 1 (Winter 2007), 99-103; Lorcin, *Imperial Identities*, 8.

⁴⁰ Hubertine Auclert, "Prejuge de race et de sexe," in *Affaires Algeriennes*, Fonds Hubertine Auclert, boîte

Race- and sex-based disenfranchisements, she argued, were equivalent: colonial control and the oppression of women (including sequestration, child marriage, and polygamy) demonstrated the interlinked nature of imperial France's sexism and racism.

Three Feminist Polemics

Auclert adapted the hierarchical, anthropological conception of civilizations and race to fit her imperial feminist goals in order to address these inequities. *La Citoyenne* critiques took three major approaches. First, they unfavorably compared French women's status with that of women in less developed, "uncivilized" cultures; second, they contested accepted western hierarchies of civilization and race in societies that oppressed women; finally, they contended that the golden age of Arab culture had collapsed due to the denigration of women. Just as the French government utilized women's status as a metric of civilization for its colonies, pointing to women's subjugated position as justification for denying rights to indigenous people, the feminist journalists employed the same measure to sharply criticize women's oppression in France and its colonies.

Polemic I: Barbaric France

La Citoyenne's most frequently employed polemical device was to invert dominant hierarchies of civilization to demonstrate France's need to further emancipate women. Auclert repeatedly employed the pages of *La Citoyenne* to point out the French government's unacknowledged double standard in judging colonized peoples uncivilized, and therefore unworthy of rights, based on their subjugation of women, while French women remained disenfranchised. In a May 1881 issue, the newspaper's front page carried a statement from

12, BHVP.

Auclert's organization *Le Droit des femmes* entitled "Protestation des femmes contre toutes guerres de conquête." It stated that

When the French will have ceased crushing women with their despotism...when the voters and the legislators will have ceased to impose on women laws to which they have not consented; and finally, when the French will treat women more humanely than the Arabs treat women, then they will be able to speak of civilizing the savages.⁴¹

Establishing the amelioration of French women's condition as a prerequisite to the nation's civilizing mission, Auclert undercut France's assumed cultural superiority and advanced evolutionary position. She addressed the nation's weakness in both political and social realms, indicative of her vision of the "true" social republic. Additionally, Auclert rejected violence within the imperial project, while questioning the Republic on its supposedly universal principles. Specifically assailing France's "repression of the Kroumirs," to which the publication repeatedly referred, the *Droit des femmes* statement reprovably claimed that "The Republic that seeks to eliminate borders would outlaw the act of killing with the intent of extending its own frontiers."⁴² A committed republican, Auclert condemned what she considered France's perversion of the republic ideal: a universal republic sought not the violent expansion of its borders, but rather the peaceful and beneficent spread of its purview, and with that, its rights and freedoms. Auclert's feminist imperialism constituted an alternative approach to empire, one that called for the establishment and augmentation of a more just and "civilized" republic.

Using metropolitan women's legal and social status, *La Citoyenne* endeavored to expose France's political hypocrisy and the ongoing disenfranchisement of French women. A June 1881 article signed by "Draigu," (Léon Giraud's pseudonym), again addressed the issue of polygamy. The author contended that

⁴¹ "Protestation des femmes," *La Citoyenne*, May 8, 1881.

⁴² *Ibid.*

The Turk found that polygamy was, for his concerns, a good thing, and made polygamy a social institution. The French proclaimed monogamy in principal, without renouncing polygamy in practice...I prefer the first system: it is less shady (*louche*).⁴³

In a newspaper that consistently attacked the immorality of polygamy, this article lauds the honesty involved in embracing polygamy, thus intending to highlight the duplicity of France's monogamy claims. Directly attacking France's superiority as a civilized nation, Giraud continues: "What difference do you see between these two countries?...[The Turk] has the courage of his convictions and less of his instincts and his appetites."⁴⁴ Equating France with "instincts and appetites" and Oriental Turkey with moral courage strategically inverted the dominant hierarchy of civilization.

Auclert also challenged France's "civilized" status by comparing Algerian women's position to that of French women under the Napoleonic Code. She argued that under French law "the superiority of the man is strongly analogous to that established by Mohamed," and that

We have an extreme need to civilize ourselves. We must first abolish the slavery of half of our nation...Algeria will be a precious conquest if she forces us to a *mea culpa*, and to come to know ourselves.⁴⁵

Auclert intended to hold Muslim Algeria up to France as a mirror of itself, likening women's oppression in the colony to that in the metropole, in measure, if not in kind. In marriage, a French woman gave up her family name, paid a dowry, and surrendered rights to her person and property as she entered a union only recently made dissoluble, whereas an Arab woman kept her name, received a dowry, legally controlled her personal property, and held the right to appear in court, including in case of divorce.⁴⁶ While Auclert strongly condemned the Muslim practices of

⁴³ Draigu, "Les Eunuques Blancs," June 12, 1881, *La Citoyenne*.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *La Citoyenne*, April 1884.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* Divorce was first made legal in France during the Revolution, in 1792. It was subsequently

polygamy and child marriage (which she called “child rape”), she argued that ultimately for women “Arab marriage is...more advantageous than French marriage.”⁴⁷ Dramatizing her point,

Auclert wrote

The Arabs say ‘We take the woman by force; we pay for her and we take her, like buying a horse.’ These words are shocking; the French, refined by civilization, nonetheless impose on the woman a harsher yoke than the barbarian who speaks this way.⁴⁸

Auclert explained her inflammatory statement:

In marrying, the Muslim woman keeps her family name, and in a context where the French woman loses part of her liberty, the Muslim woman, in contrast, acquires a sort of civil and economic emancipation...moreover, she receives from her husband a dowry proportionate to his fortune.⁴⁹

Auclert recognized that these differences involved complexities and limitations. But, highlighting and publicizing this contrast served as a propaganda tool to underline her condemnation of women’s status under the Napoleonic Code and to support her campaign for legal and cultural change on both sides of the Mediterranean.

Polemic II: Who is Truly Civilized?

In a second approach to challenging existing imperial authority, *La Citoyenne* worked to undermine the assumption of Europe as fully civilized. Exposing a case where “The English counsel in Morocco ordered eight Jewish women publicly whipped in his presence,” an unsigned article stated that “the English are not excluded from barbarism.”⁵⁰ The author of this short item noted not only the viciousness of such punishment, but also the gender and religion of the

abolished in 1816 and only reinstated in 1884.

⁴⁷ Hubertine Auclert, “Le Mariage Arabe,” *La Citoyenne*, n. 144, May 1889. For the purchase of brides and the issue of child marriage, see Auclert, « Voile et Viol, » *Ibid.*, n. 140, January 1889.

⁴⁸ Auclert, “Le Mariage,” *La Citoyenne*, May 1889.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ April 2 - May 6, 1883, *La Citoyenne*.

victims. Condemning the action as beyond the realm of the civilized, the journalist laid bare the anti-Semitism and misogyny within English culture. Such a whipping involved the public degradation of the recipient, and embodied a sadistic, sexualized intent. By underscoring the English counsel's attendance at the punishment, the author addressed the perversion, and thus barbarism, present among Englishmen. In doing so the newspaper subverted European categories of historical evolution in accusing an English man of the sort of base sexuality and brutality with which Europeans typically linked Arab men.

A March, 1884 short piece signed only "Une Voyageuse," similarly developed the theme of savagery versus civilization. The pseudonymous journalist explained how the recently crowned queen of Madagascar had, at her coronation "demonstrated her interest in education, by replacing a military guard with a guard of students, made up of 500 boys and 400 girls," and then the following day "gave audience to all the school masters...exhorting them to continue to educate well."⁵¹ "Une Voyageuse" ended with exasperation, lamenting: "And to say that the kings and queens of Europe, as well as the presidents of republics, are going to consider this queen a barbarian!"⁵² Rejecting the common link between militarism and civilization, and between colonies and barbarism, the author reversed the expected international hierarchy. This female monarch, who the author assumes is considered a savage by the European power elite ("kings and queens of Europe...presidents of republics"), glorified education over arms and ceremoniously surrounded herself with a nearly gender-balanced student guard. Challenging the presumptive tie between Africans and savagery, the feminist "Une Voyageuse" made clear where she believed the true barbarism lay.

The French imposed a complex web of race/religion/gender hierarchies within the

⁵¹ Une Voyageuse, "La Reine de Madagascar," March 1884, *La Citoyenne*.

⁵² *Ibid.*

colonial context. The “indigenous” Algerian peoples were mainly, but not exclusively, comprised of Berbers and Arabs. The French considered the Kabyles, the largest Berber group, to be more highly evolved than (and thus superior to) the Arabs, perpetuating the cultural and race-based “Kabyle Myth.”⁵³ An unsigned article in the May 16, 1881 edition of *La Citoyenne* countered this idealization of the Kabyle, arguing that

The Kabyles are not to be praised at all for their conduct toward women...The Kabyle, like the Arab, buys his wife...The Kabyle has the right to repudiate his wife, even without cause...the Kabyle wives are virtually pack animals.⁵⁴

This feminist journalist typified *La Citoyenne*'s ongoing argument that the mark of true “civilization” lay in the lives and position of women. The article likened Kabyle women’s situation to that of female Arabs, both suffering socially, economically, and politically. In presenting this degraded position, *La Citoyenne* challenged France’s dominant imperial image of Kabyle superiority. This exposé supported the feminist imperial assertion that France needed to allow feminist, or feminist-influenced, intervention in Algeria to raise the status of Arab and Kabyle women, and therefore of the society as a whole.

Later in her career, Auclert wrote in the newspaper *Le Radical* that “The prejudice that ranks humans by sex and by race makes no sense.”⁵⁵ For her, France was merely more intellectually and culturally advanced than Muslim society, and feminist imperialism could aid in elevating the Arabs to the French level of civilization. Likening aspects of Arab culture to those of the Greeks, Romans, and Gauls, Auclert emphasized parallels between the Arabs and ancient Western societies, arguing that races evolved along a path of historical development. Rather than having fixed, essential characters, “backward” peoples had the potential to mature and

⁵³ Lorcin, *Imperial Identities*, 1-3, 53-62.

⁵⁴ “La Femme en Kabyle,” May 16, 1881, *La Citoyenne*.

⁵⁵ Auclert, *Le Radical*, January 1899.

ultimately become “civilized.”⁵⁶ In this way, Auclert’s conceptualization of race harkened back to that of sixteenth-century French theorists who understood race as mutable. Having entered French usage less than a century earlier, the term race, which categorized nobles, referred to biological as well as social traits. The sixteenth-century theoretical use referred specifically to noble lineages; it addressed the ways in which breeding, education, and other social factors could bring either elevation or degeneration of a race.⁵⁷ Auclert’s advocacy of education and assimilation, as well as her threats of France’s potential degeneration, reflected these early theorizations, rather than the fixed racial conceptualizations of the two subsequent centuries.

This differed distinctly from the British imperial feminism of the era. Antoinette Burton has contended that British imperial feminists, most of whom were liberals, constructed colonized Indian women as fully subjugated and passive. They intended to demonstrate how Indian women needed uplift by the more emancipated and civilized British women. According to Burton, British feminists believed that by creating and enacting this benevolent role for themselves, they thus demonstrated their devotion and importance to Great Britain. Engaging in the support and solidification of empire by aiding downtrodden and objectified Indian women, British imperial feminists sought to prove themselves as “worthy of” fully enfranchised citizenship. Rather than criticizing Britain’s approach to empire, they sought to cement their role in the existing imperial project.⁵⁸ This contrasts with Auclert’s feminist imperialism and her criticism of France’s approach to empire. Like the British feminists, Auclert emphasized colonized women’s oppression, but unlike them she attacked the extant form of imperialism. As a socialist feminist she critiqued the established hierarchy, rather than attempting to infiltrate it

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ Pierre H. Boule, “Francois Bernier and the Origins of the Modern Concept of Race,” in *The Color of Liberty: Histories of Race in France*, ed. Sue Peabody and Tyler Stovall (Chapel Hill: Duke University Press, 2003), 11-13.

⁵⁸ Burton, *Burdens of History*, 1-19.

as the liberal British feminists did. Auclert also acknowledged and valorized the positive aspects of indigenous laws and culture, recognizing Algerian women's possession of agency. She perceived and portrayed these women living not in a state of passive degradation, but rather with varied levels of rights and freedoms, some of which French women did not yet possess.

Auclert operated in a milieu markedly different from that of British feminists. Where the British suffrage movement was expansive and strong, suffrage played a limited and somewhat marginal role within French feminism; where imperialism stood central to British feminism, it remained peripheral to the French movement during this period.⁵⁹ Burton has convincingly argued that the British women's movement can only be understood within the context of empire, a complex set of institutions and relationships the dominance of which both shaped and was influenced by feminism.⁶⁰ This dynamic also applies within the French context, although to a lesser degree during this period. An ascendant metropolitan colonial culture infused feminist imperialisms, such as Auclert's, and anti-imperial feminisms, such as those of Paris Commune veterans Paule Mink and Louise Michel.⁶¹ Consciousness of France's overseas possessions, and their peoples, became increasingly unavoidable to female activists concerned with issues of justice and rights. These divergent sets of ideologies -- feminist, racist, and imperial -- underscore the importance of analyzing ideas of gender, race, and empire (and class) in their

⁵⁹ *Ibid*; Karen Offen, *European Feminisms: 1700-1950* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 154; Claire Goldberg Moses, *French Feminism in the Nineteenth Century* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1984), 215-221; Carolyn J. Eichner, *Surmounting the Barricades: Women in the Paris Commune* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 196-197.

⁶⁰ Burton, *Burdens of History*; 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*, Catherine Hall, ed. (NY: Polity Press, 1992), 208.

⁶¹ Mink and Michel, along with Auclert, were among the earliest French feminists to address questions of empire. In contrast to Auclert, both the revolutionary socialist Mink and the revolutionary anarchist Michel opposed imperialism. See Carolyn J. Eichner, "'Ni la brutalité du maître, ni la perfidie de l'esclave': les anti-impérialismes féministes de Louise Michel et de Paule Mink," in Valérie Morignat, ed., *Louise Michel, figure de la transvertalité* (Brussels: Editions Tribord, forthcoming 2008).

evolving historical contexts.⁶² Over the subsequent decades questions of empire, and of suffrage, increased in significance within French feminism. Auclert's politics anticipated their centrality and import.

Auclert asserted the power of republican feminism to advance both French and colonized women. She argued that French women's enfranchisement would not only advance their own position, but also bring ameliorative programs to colonized women. Embracing what can be termed a "difference" feminism, Auclert believed that women, as women, possessed essential traits of morality and justice; they had a natural connection to the social. Women would therefore naturally vote away customs, traditions, and laws adverse to women. Female enfranchisement would rejoin the social to the political, shaping Auclert's true republic.

Polemic III: Signs of Degradation

Finally, *La Citoyenne* pointed out how women's subjugation not only reflected a group's lack of civilization, but also warned that it could cause cultural degeneration. Rhetorically inquiring as to the historical decline of Arab society, an 1884 article signed only "X," and almost certainly written by Auclert, asked how a culture that once led in "science...agriculture, algebra, and chemistry...has now been relegated outside of the sphere of thinking nations, and finds itself behind his younger brothers on the road to progress?" Restating one of the publication's central themes, she answered that "a truth that one can not overemphasize" is that "to judge the extent of

⁶² Laura Tabili, "Race is a Relationship and Not a Thing," *Journal of Social History* 37, 1 (2003), 125-130;

Vron Ware, "Moments of Danger: Race, Gender, and Memories of Empire," *History and Theory* 31, 4 (December 1992), 116-137.

a peoples' advancement, it is necessary above all to investigate the social condition of women."⁶³

She continued by explaining that

in the *beaux temps* of the Arab race...We find women poets, women educators, occupying chairs in schools as they did in Italy in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The female musicians of this era, singers and composers...are still celebrated...But this is the same nation who today closes women away from the light of day...the ignorance of the *mauresque* is complete. There are no schools for her; public life is absolutely forbidden.⁶⁴

Pointing specifically to women's sequestration and to the complete absence of girls' schools in Algiers, Auclert directly linked the subjugation of women with historical decline.⁶⁵ She contended that no matter how highly evolved and sophisticated a society, if it increases the marginalization and oppression of women, the entire cultural and intellectual level will fall. Women's condition, therefore, served not only as a metric of a society's advancement, but also as a determining factor. She undoubtedly intended this contention as a warning for France and its European contemporaries.

During this period, French political and social discourse rang with fears of decay and degeneration, following the loss of the Franco-Prussian War and the enormous upheaval of the Paris Commune, in a context of falling birth rates and stagnant population numbers.⁶⁶ La Citoyenne played on these fears, suggesting the potential for France to slip from its international

⁶³ "La Femme Arabe, IV," May 1884, *La Citoyenne*.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ Interestingly, Auclert did not clarify that it was the French colonial authorities who closed existing Muslim girls' schools in the capital, Algiers. They did this, however, with the complicity of local Muslim authorities. Over a period of decades, Auclert wrote letters, petitions, and articles advocating the re-establishment of female educational institutions. She argued not only for the importance of girls' education in and of itself, but also that such schools would be valuable tools for assimilation. See Auclert's Sunday column, "Le Féminisme," in *Le Radical*, between 1896 and 1909, including "M. Jonnart et les mauresques," October 25, 1900; "Reponse du gouverneur général du Algérie," December 18, 1900; and "On attend l'avis de la Chambre," April 2, 1901. See also Clancy-Smith, "Islam, Gender, and Identities," 169-170; and correspondence and manuscripts, Fonds Hubertine Auclert, BHVP.

⁶⁶ For ideas of degeneration in the colonial context, see Penny Edwards, "Womanizing Indochina: Fiction, Nation, and Cohabitation in Colonial Cambodia, 1890-1930," *Domesticating the Empire*, pp. 108-130; for the metropolitan context see Karen Offen, "Depopulation, Nationalism, and Feminism in *fin-de-siècle* France," *American Historical Review* 89, 3 (1984), 648-676.

perch atop the world's cultures. The journalist Léon Giraud, employing his pseudonym "Camille," reiterated this point in an article anticipating a voyage to Algeria by a delegation of French deputies and senators. He wrote that in their travels they will "be able to have a close look at"

a decrepit civilization...they will be able to ask how the Arab race, which had such a brilliant past, has descended so low...They will see that the Mohammedan tribes had increasingly become victims of a false principle...the subjugation of women.⁶⁷

Propounding the argument that women's oppression leads directly to cultural decline and decrepitude, *La Citoyenne* reminded its readers of the dangers of France's ongoing subjection and marginalization of women. Logically, if societies could ascend the historical ladder of civilization over time, they could descend it, too.

Conclusion

Auclert established *La Citoyenne* primarily to promote women's suffrage. She and the other feminist journalists broadly approached this goal with the belief that female enfranchisement would bring about a wide range of political, economic, and social change. They also expanded their perspective, and thus that of their readers, beyond the borders of France and of Europe. By analyzing gender relations within and between contemporary nations and cultures, they attempted to lay bare the contradictions in the era's accepted hierarchies of civilization. The French colonial authority argued that societies, such as Algeria, which severely oppressed women were too barbaric to be granted rights, effectively doubly oppressing the victims. *La Citoyenne* instead called for feminist intervention in extending colonized peoples' rights and freedoms in order to bring about progressive change and to enable the culture to

⁶⁷ Camille, "La France Africaine," 1886, *La Citoyenne*.

ascend the ranks of civilization. Much of this analysis presupposed non-French peoples', especially Algerians', desire to be assimilated into the French culture, and a willingness to abandon their own cultural practices. Auclert's and *La Citoyenne*'s feminist imperialism appropriated aspects of France's imperial program, particularly its *mission civilisatrice*, and worked, in turn, to influence that program with feminist actions and ideals. Its journalist activists did this by engaging in an international and historical discourse that placed women's status as the central marker of civilization.

Auclert attempted to improve the lives and status of French and Algerian women by pushing French authorities to live up to what she envisioned as the promise of the republic. Within the metropolitan context, Auclert viewed political rights, and thus women's full participatory citizenship, as her goal. She argued that armed with the vote, women would eradicate legal inequities in the metropole, and what she considered to be "barbaric" customs in the colonies, including polygamy and child marriage. Espousing the essentialist understandings of a feminism of difference, Auclert believed that, given the choice, women would universally and naturally oppose these practices. Her goal for Algerian women differed, however. Rather than their immediate enfranchisement, Auclert advocated Algerian women's assimilation into French culture. She argued that Algerian women either recognized, or would soon come to recognize, that nothing could benefit them more than "becoming French." Ultimately, following a process of cultural, religious, and political absorption, as "French women," they, too, would become enfranchised citizens of a true French republic.

Auclert was one of the first French thinkers to theorize the gendered nature of imperialism. She was also one of the first French feminists to engage questions of empire.⁶⁸ *La*

⁶⁸ The few other feminists addressing empire (from widely differing perspectives) in this period include Paule Mink, Louise Michel, Léonie Rouzade, and Olympe Audouard.

Citoyenne's international focus stood out among feminist publications of the period, bringing the lives and experiences of "other" women to its metropolitan readers. Auclert's interests in Arab women and gender issues predated her 1888 move to Algeria. By introducing these topics in her newspaper, she brought the politics of empire and race into the French feminist vista, challenging their dominant presumption of women's universal whiteness with questions of racial and cultural difference. Her gendered imperial critique provided her readers with an alternative to governmental imperial propaganda and the "benign" influence of the expanding imperial culture within the metropole. In an era of emerging consciousness of empire, Auclert thus shaped her audience's understanding of and potential response to imperialism.

Auclert also complicated issues of religion and gender by presenting these readers with her perceptions of Islam and of *la femme arabe*, effectively expanding the feminist religious debate beyond the dichotomy of secularism versus Catholic clericalism. She extended anti-clericalism, so prevalent among French socialist feminists, to include a castigation of Islam, which she often conflated with Arab culture. Auclert therefore criticized marriage practices and gender roles enforced by religion, culture, and law on both sides of the Mediterranean.

Recognizing the multi-layered, interwoven, and reciprocal influences between metropole and colony, Auclert saw women's rights and positions in France and the colonies as tightly entwined with each other and with questions of race, religion, and sexuality. Addressing issues including suffrage, polygamy, marriage, and fidelity, Auclert developed a dualistic imperial feminism, an activist politics through which she sought French women's immediate political equality and the ultimate assimilation of native Algerian women into the equitable French republic of the near future.