



Writing Under the Raj: Gender, Race, and Rape in the British Colonial Imagination, 1830-1947

By Nancy Paxton

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Writing Under the Raj: Gender, Race, and Rape in the British Colonial Imagination, 1830-1947 By Nancy Paxton

Writing Under the Raj is the first study to challenge the long-held critical assumption that the rape of colonizing women by colonized men was the first, or the only, rape script in British colonial literature. Nancy Paxton asks why rape disappears in British literature about English domestic life in the 1790s and charts its reappearance in British literature about India written between 1830 and 1947. Paxton displays the hybrid qualities of familiar novels like Kipling's *Kim* and Forster's *A Passage to India* by situating them in a richly detailed cultural context that reveals the dynamic relationship between metropolitan British literature and novels written by men and women who lived in the colonial contact zone of British India throughout this period.

Drawing on current feminist and gender theory as well as a wide range of historical and cultural sources, Paxton identifies four different "scripts" about interracial and intraracial rape that appear in novels about India during the period of British rule. Surveying more than thirty canonized and popular Anglo-Indian novels, Paxton shows how the treatment of rape reflects basic conflicts in the social and sexual contracts defining British and Indian women's relationship to the nation state throughout the period. This study reveals how and why novels written after the Indian Uprising of 1857 popularized the theme of English women victimized by Indian men. Paxton demonstrates how all these novels reflect unresolved ideological and symbolic conflicts in British ideas about sex, violence, and power.

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Editorial Review

Review

Paxton has written a book whose rich hybridity and interdisciplinary crossings echo and extend the goals of postcolonial theory. -- *Joseph Allen Boone, University of Southern California*

From the Back Cover

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