



A Female Poetics of Empire: From Eliot to Woolf (Routledge Studies in Nineteenth Century Literature)

By Julia Kuehn

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Many well-known *male* writers produced fictions about colonial spaces and discussed the advantages of realism over romance, and vice versa, in the ‘art of fiction’ debate of the 1880s; but how did *female* writers contribute to colonial fiction?

This volume links fictional, non-fictional and pictorial representations of a colonial otherness with the late nineteenth-century artistic concerns about representational conventions and possibilities. The author explores these texts and images through the postcolonial framework of ‘exoticism’, arguing that the epistemological dilemma of a ‘self’ encountering an ‘other’ results in the interrelated predicament to find poetic modalities – mimetic, realistic and documentary on the one hand; romantic, fantastic and picturesque on the other – that befit an ‘exotic’ representation. Thus women writers did not only participate in the making of colonial fictions but also in the late nineteenth-century artistic debate about the nature of fiction.

This book maps the epistemological concerns of exoticism and of difference – self and other, home and away, familiarity and strangeness – onto the representational modes of realism and romance. The author focuses exclusively on female novelists, travel writers and painters of the turn-of-the-century exotic, and especially on neglected authors of academically under-researched genres such as the bestselling novel and the travelogue.

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About the Author

Julia Kuehn is Associate Professor at the University of Hong Kong where she teaches courses on nineteenth-century British literature and culture. She has published widely on women's, popular and Empire fiction, as well as on travel writing.

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