This interesting analysis of nineteenth century marriage among six English couples involved in the colonization of Australia draws on rich sources of historical data, including personal letters and prose, to depict how these couples merged what Russell calls two "inseparably linked and totally incompatible" concepts: marriage and colonization. The major contradiction was in the portrayal of colonization as an almost exclusively public arena, male-centered enterprise involving adventure, conquest, and society-building; yet, marriage and the making of families were also intricately tied to the concept of civilization. Indeed, social reform and economic progress were thought to require the creation "decent families," defined as breadwinner/homemaker units. The promotion of this family model led to a second contradiction -- the conflict between female subordination and the essential economic roles women usually assumed. How, then, did couples reconcile the labor demands of colonization with the ideologies of traditional marriage and gender inequality?

Interestingly, the heavy reliance of colonial society on both the productive and reproductive labor of women did not challenge gender ideologies which assigned women domestic roles. While colonization provided men with a variety of masculinity styles from which to choose, femininity was still defined as being "restrained, ladylike, affectionate, devoted, dutiful, and by implication domestic (20)." Moreover, the attribution of these characteristics to particular women influenced their status and treatment in colonial society. For example, femininity was seen as being beyond the reach of most colonial women because they were of convict origin; thus, they endured deplorable living conditions, forced prostitution, and economic exploitation. Most of the wives of the British colonists were at least assumed to be in conformity with the ideals femininity and its code of morality, although neither their social background nor their husband's status made them exempt from the restrictions imposed by gender norms.

Indeed, violations of sexual and gender norms received wide public censorship, as vividly illustrated in two of the marriages presented in this book. In one case a leading citizen of Sydney, William Wentworth, married his mistress, Sarah. While he went on to become a prosperous and well-respected politician, any effort by Sarah to present herself to "polite society" resulted in a public outcry. The writer notes that although her "humble and convict parentage could be overlooked; her sexual immorality could not. She was, forever, the damned whore (120)." Lady Jane Franklin also experienced the penalties imposed on women who were defined as violating the boundaries between the public and private arenas. When her husband was assigned Lieutenant Governor of Van Diemen's Land, she was enthralled with the possibility of helping in the creation of a free society. Her highly visible public role as her husband's key political adviser and consultant, however, led to accusations of interference with governmental affairs and neglect of her domestic duties. Critics charged that the...
town was being run by a "weak-willed husband, subservient to the will of his wife," and Sir John was recalled from his position.

In fact, only one colonial wife was able to enter the public arena openly and effectively: Caroline Chisholm. Convinced in early adulthood that her life was to be a "dedicated philanthropic endeavor," Caroline married her husband only after she agreed that she would be free to engage extensively in philanthropic work. Moreover, her marriage to a career soldier -- a man often away from home on long assignments-- provided her with the basic requisites for a successful public career: respectability, status, autonomy, freedom from frequent pregnancies, and an environment explicitly chosen to be "civilized." Caroline worked fervently to improve the conditions of young women of convict origin by rescuing them from poverty, early marriages, and prostitution, and she earned public support for her efforts. She provided work and training for women and urged them to rely on their "utilitarian value" rather their sexuality in finding a mate, as there could obviously be no real communion between a "highly-cultivated and well-informed man, and a weak and ignorant woman." Caroline saw her work as solving a crucial need in colonial society by creating a pool of decent, marriageable women.

Several lessons on the participation of women in the public arena and the merging of marriage, colonization and gender norms emerge from these stories. First, it would appear that women can perform extraordinary and crucial amounts of labor in the private arena without challenging assumptions about a woman's place, as such labor receives no public recognition. Charlotte Bussell worked diligently in the management of her husband's property and demonstrated business acumen that far exceeded that of her husband. Yet, her private arena labor did not threaten the ideal of femininity nor jeopardize the imaginary line between the public and private. The entry of women in the public arena, however, was quite limited and governed by more stringent criteria. Only women who were morally beyond reproach could enter the public arena; their activities had to appear to be secondary to their domestic duties and they had to coincide with the family and gender ideals of colonization.

While the wives in this book chose to become colonists by their choice of husbands, they willingly endured the isolation, hardships, and sacrifices of colonial life and made enormous contributions to the goals of colonization. The marriages of these affluent colonists were based on free choice and infused with the language of romantic love and the belief in female subordination; yet, male colonists often were motivated to marry because they needed the labor and practical assistance of their wives and their marriages were partnerships rather than male-dominated units. Russell notes that these women "created their own space and their own sense of purpose," and in the process they were able to use and develop skills which contrasted sharply with notions of women as helpless, submissive, and dependent. There is little evidence, however, their the structural demands of colonial society or the creation of marriages that were economic partnerships influenced the gender ideologies of the day.

The role of women in Islamic cultures has gained considerable attention in recent years. As a case study of lower-middle-class working women in Cairo, Egypt, Accommodating Protest is limited in its generalizability. Nonetheless, Macleod's focus on the lives of educated, urban women in this particular setting provides interesting insights into the rationale for an emerging and complex phenomenon, called "new veiling" or "higab." To Macleod, this "higab" practice symbolizes women's behavior as a form of "protest" or "resistance," and simultaneously, as "accommodation" or "acceptance."

Aided by her Arab and American heritage, Macleod has done a superb job of providing perspectives on the everyday activities of this particular subculture in the context of the broader Egyptian Islamic culture. Through this detailed picture, based on field work with roughly 85 women in Cairo, she has been able to capture the essence of subtle interacting forces that are simultaneously shaping these women's identities and lives.

The book is divided into seven chapters and includes an extensive bibliography. The sections dealing with the social history of veiling are especially noteworthy. Macleod provides the reader with rich information on the varied definitions and functions of the veil throughout the history of the Middle East. In so doing, she also challenges some of the stereotypes that are common in the Western literature about the role of women, generally, and about veiling practices, specifically, in the Middle East.

Macleod focuses, in detail, on the new meaning of the veil in the subculture of lower-middle-class, Cairo working women: not as a symbol of "religious revivalism," but rather as part of a movement toward "cultural reformation" and returning "to a more authentic and culturally true way of life" (p. 111). Central, here, is the focus on culture and on identity, and not simply on religion. Indeed, Macleod notes that very few of the "veiling women" she studied "seem to be turning to religion in a genuine way" (p. 110).

Socioeconomic changes in Egypt have resulted in opportunities and options for women in the formal labor force. However, more recently, due to changes in the global economy and the consequent economic conditions in Egypt, these opportunities have changed, as women have been forced through "necessity" to become part of the formal labor force. As Macleod notes, "Clearly women face a crisis of cultural and personal identity, created by the new experience of working outside the home, which erodes women's traditional identity, without providing a reasonable alternative" (p. 116).

These lower-middle-class working women manifest "the clash of tradition and modernity" (p. 11). And "new veiling," according to Macleod, serves to reconcile the conflicting roles of "traditional mother and wife," on the one hand, and "working outside the home," on the other (p. 121). Further, in searching for a symbol that will capture the true value of these modern "working wife and mother" roles, the lower-middle-class women utilize the "veil" or "higab" as a...