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Sexual Affronts and Racial Frontiers: European Identities and the Cultural Politics of Exclusion in Colonial Southeast Asia

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This essay is concerned with the construction of colonial categories and national identities and with those people who ambiguously straddled, crossed, and threatened these imperial divides.¹ It begins with a story about *métissage* (interracial unions) and the sorts of progeny to which it gave rise (referred to as *métis*, mixed bloods) in French Indochina at the turn of the century. It is a story with multiple versions about people whose cultural sensibilities, physical being, and political sentiments called into question the distinctions of difference which maintained the neat boundaries of colonial rule. Its plot and resolution defy the treatment of European nationalist impulses and colonial racist policies as discrete projects, since here it was in the conflation of racial category, sexual morality, cultural competence and national identity that the case was contested and politically charged. In a broader sense, it allows me to address one of the tensions of empire which this essay only begins to sketch: the relationship between the discourses of inclusion, humanitarianism, and equality which informed liberal policy at the turn of the century in colonial Southeast Asia and the exclusionary, discriminatory practices which were reactive to, coexistent with, and perhaps inherent in liberalism itself.²

Nowhere is this relationship between inclusionary impulses and exclusionary practices more evident than in how *métissage* was legally handled, culturally inscribed, and politically treated in the contrasting colonial cultures of

¹ Earlier versions of this essay were presented at the American Anthropological Association meetings, "Papers in Honor of Eric Wolf," in New Orleans, December 1990, and at the TNI Conference, "The Decolonization of Imagination: The New Europe and Its Others," Amsterdam, May 1991. I thank Talal Asad, Val Daniel, Geoff Eley, Lawrence Hirschfeld, Barbara Laslett, Jeffrey Weeks, Luise White, and fellows of the Histories of Sexuality Seminar at the Institute of the Humanities, the University of Michigan, for their comments.

² Uday Mehta outlines some features of this relationship in "Liberal Strategies of Exclusion," *Politics and Society*, 18:(4) (1990), 427–54. He cogently argues for the more radical claim that the theoretical underpinnings of liberalism are exclusionary and cannot be explained as "an episodic compromise with the practical constraints of implementation" (p. 429).

French Indochina and the Netherlands Indies. French Indochina was a colony of commerce occupied by the military in the 1860s and settled by *colons* in the 1870s with a métis population which numbered no more than several hundred by the turn of the century.³ The Netherlands Indies by contrast, had been settled since the early 1600s with those of mixed descent or born in the Indies numbering in the tens of thousands in 1900. They made up nearly three-quarters of those legally designated as European. Their *Indische* mestizo culture shaped the contours of colonial society for its first two hundred years.⁴ Although conventional historiography defines sharp contrasts between French, British, and Dutch colonial racial policy and the particular national metropolitan agendas from which they derived, what is more striking is that similar discourses were mapped onto such vastly different social and political landscapes.⁵

In both the Indies and Indochina, with their distinct demographics and internal rhythms, métissage was a focal point of political, legal, and social debate. Conceived as a dangerous source of subversion, it was seen as a threat to white prestige, an embodiment of European degeneration and moral decay.⁶ This is not to suggest that the so-called mixed-blood problem was of the same intensity in both places nor resolved in precisely the same ways. How-

³ Cochinchine's European population only increased from 594 in 1864 to 3,000 by 1900 (Charles Meyer, *De Français en Indochine, 1860-1910*, 70 [Paris: Hachette, 1985]). By 1914 only 149 planters qualified as electors in the Chamber of Agriculture of Tonkin and Annam; on Java alone there were several thousand (John Laffey, "Racism in Tonkin before 1914," *French Colonial Studies*, no. 1 [1977], 65-81). In 1900 approximately 91,000 persons were classified as European in the Indies. As late as 1931 there were just under 10,500 French civilians in Indochina, when the Indies census counted 244,000 Europeans for the same year (see A. van Marle, "De groep der Europeanen in Nederlands-Indie, iets over ontstaan en groei," *Indonesie*, 5:5 (1952), 490; and Gilles de Gante, *La population française au Tonkin entre 1931 et 1938*, 23 [Mémoire de Maitrise, Université de Provence], 1981).

⁴ See Jean Taylor's subtle gendered analysis of the mestizo features of colonial culture in the Netherlands Indies (*The Social World of Batavia* [Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983]). The term *Indisch* is difficult to translate. According to Taylor, it is a cultural marker of a person who "partook of Mestizo culture in marriage, practice, habit and loyalty" (p. xx). It is most often used in contrast to the life style and values of the Dutch *totok* population comprised of Hollanders born and bred in Europe who refused such cultural accommodations and retained a distinct distance from inlander (native) customs and social practice. Thus, for example, the European *blivjers* (those who stayed in the Indies) were commonly referred to as *Indisch* as opposed to *vertrekkers* (those Europeans who treated their residence in the Indies as a temporary assignment away from their native metropolitan homes).

⁵ See Martin Lewis, "One Hundred Million Frenchmen: The 'Assimilation' Theory in French Colonial Policy," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 3:4 (1961), 129-51. While the social positioning of Eurasians in India is often contrasted to that in the Indies, there are striking similarities in their changing and contradictory legal and social status in the late nineteenth century. See Mark Naidis, "British Attitudes toward the Anglo-Indians," *South Atlantic Quarterly*, LXII:3 (Summer 1963), 407-22; and Noel Gist and Roy Wright, *Marginality and Identity: Anglo-Indians as a Racially-Mixed Minority in India*, especially 7-20 (Leiden, 1973).

⁶ For an extended discussion of the politics of degeneracy and the eugenics of empire, see my "Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: The Politics of Race and Sexual Morality in Colonial Asia," in *Gender at the Crossroads: Feminist Anthropology in the Post-Modern Era*, 51-101, Micaela di Leonardo, ed. (University of California Press, 1991).

ever, the issues which resonated in these different colonies reveal a patterned set of transgressions that have not been sufficiently explored. I would suggest that both situations were so charged, in part because such mixing called into question the very criteria by which Europeanness could be identified, citizenship should be accorded, and nationality assigned. Métissage represented not the dangers of foreign enemies at national borders, but the more pressing affront for European nation-states, what the German philosopher, Fichte, so aptly defined as the essence of the nation, its “interior frontiers.”⁷

The concept of an interior frontier is compelling precisely because of its contradictory connotations. As Etienne Balibar has noted, a frontier locates both a site of enclosure and contact, of observed passage and exchange. When coupled with the word interior, frontier carries the sense of internal distinctions within a territory (or empire); at the level of the individual, frontier marks the moral predicates by which a subject retains his or her national identity despite location outside the national frontier and despite heterogeneity within the nation-state. As Fichte deployed it, an interior frontier entails two dilemmas: the purity of the community is prone to penetration on its interior and exterior borders, and the essence of the community is an intangible “moral attitude,” “a multiplicity of invisible ties.”⁸

Viewing late nineteenth-century representations of a national essence in these terms, we can trace how métissage emerges as a powerful trope for internal contamination and challenge conceived morally, politically, and sexually.⁹ The changing density and intensity of métissage’s discursive field outlines the fault lines of colonial authority: In linking domestic arrangements to the public order, family to the state, sex to subversion, and psychological essence to racial type, métissage might be read as a metonym for the biopolitics of the empire at large.

In both Indochina and the Netherlands Indies, the rejection of métis as a distinct legal category only intensified how the politics of cultural difference were played out in other domains.¹⁰ In both colonies, the *métis-indo* problem produced a discourse in which facile theories of racial hierarchy were re-

⁷ In the following section I draw on Etienne Balibar’s discussion of this concept in “Fichte et la Frontière Intérieure: A propos des *Discours a la nation allemande*,” *Les Cahiers de Fontenay*, 58/59 (June 1990).

⁸ Fichte quoted in Balibar, “Fichte et la Frontière Intérieure,” 4.

⁹ See my “Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power” on métissage and contamination. Also see Andre-Pierre Taguieff’s *La Force du Préjugé* (1987), in which he discusses “la hantise du métissage” and argues that the métis problem is not a question of mixed-blood but a question of the indeterminate “social identity” which métissage implies (p. 345).

¹⁰ This is not to suggest that the French and Dutch rejection of métis as a legal category followed the same trajectory or occurred in the same way. As I later show, the legal status of métis children with unknown parents was still a subject of French juridical debate in the 1930s in a discourse in which race and upbringing were offered as two alternative criteria for judging whether a métis child should be granted the rights of a *citoyen*. See Jacques Mazet, *La condition juridique des métis dans les possessions françaises* (Paris: Domat-Montchrestien, 1932).

jected, while confirming the practical predicates of European superiority at the same time. The early Vietnamese and Indonesian nationalist movements created new sources of colonial vulnerability, and some of the debates over the nature and definition of Dutch and French national identity must be seen in that light. The resurgence of European nationalist rhetoric may partly have been a response to nationalist resistance in the colonies, but it cannot be accounted for in these terms alone.¹¹ For French Indochina, discourses about the dangers of métissage were sustained in periods of quiescence and cannot be viewed as rhetorics of reaction *tout court*. This is not to suggest that there was no correspondence between them.¹² But anticolonial challenges in Indochina, contrary to the discourse which characterized the métis as a potential subversive vanguard, were never predominantly led nor peopled by them. And in the Indies, where persons of mixed descent made up a potentially powerful constituency, the bids they made for economic, social, and political reform were more often made in contradistinction to the demands of the native population, not in alliance with them.

Although the content of the métis problem was partially in response to popular threats to colonial rule, the particular form that the securing of European privilege took was not shaped in the colonies alone. The focus on moral unity, cultural genealogy, and language joined the imagining of European colonial communities and metropolitan national entities in fundamental ways. Both visions embraced a moral rearmament, centering on the domestic domain and the family as sites in which state authority could be secured or irreparably undermined.¹³

¹¹ Paul Rich, *Race and Empire in British Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), argues that the anti-black riots in Liverpool and Cardiff in 1919 represented “the extension of rising colonial nationalism into the heart of the British metropolis itself at a time when nationalist ferment was being expressed in many parts of the empire” (p. 122).

¹² The profusion of French juridical tracts in the 1930s debating whether métis should be made a separate legal category (distinct from European and *indigène*) and what were the political effects of doing so were forged in the tense environment in which Vietnamese nationalists were making their opposition most strongly felt. See David Marr’s two important studies of the Vietnamese nationalist movements, *Vietnamese Anticolonialism, 1885–1925* (Berkeley: California Press, 1971) and *Vietnamese Tradition on Trial, 1920–1945* (Berkeley: California Press, 1981). It is noteworthy that Marr makes no reference to the métis problem (generally or as it related to citizenship, immigration and education) in either text.

¹³ This is not to suggest, however, that the battles for legal reform regarding, for example, paternity suits, illegitimate children, and family law waged by jurists, feminists, and religious organizations in the Netherlands and the Indies at the turn of the century were animated by the same political projects or fears; on the contrary, in the colonies, the social menace of illegitimate children, as we shall see, was not only about future criminals and prostitutes but also about mixed-blood criminals and prostitutes, about European paternity, and native mothers—and thus about the moral landscape of race and the protection of European men by the Dutch colonial state. For contrasting discourses on paternity suits in the Indies and Holland, compare Selma Sevenhuijsen’s comprehensive study of this political debate (*De Orde van het Vaderschap: Politieke debaten over ongehuwd moederschap, afstamming en huwelijk in Nederland 1870–1900* [Amsterdam: Stichting Beheer IISG, 1987]) to R. Kleyn’s “Onderzoek naar het vaderschap” (*Het Recht in Nederlandsch-Indië*, 67 [1896], 130–50).

At the turn of the century, in both metropole and colony, the liberal impulse for social welfare, representation, and protective legislation focused enormous energy on the preparatory environment for civic responsibility: on domestic arrangements, sexual morality, parenting, and more specifically on the moral milieu of home and school in which children lived.¹⁴ Both education and upbringing emerged as national projects, but not as we might expect, with a firm sense of national identity imported to the periphery from the metropolitan core. As Eugene Weber has argued for late nineteenth-century France, “patriotic feelings on the national level, far from instinctive, had to be learned.”¹⁵ As late as 1901, six out of every ten French army recruits had not heard of the Franco-Prussian war.¹⁶ Thus the Gallicization of France and its colonies through compulsory education, moral instruction, and language was not a one-way process with a consensual template for that identity forged in the metropole and later transported by new metropolitan recruits to colonial citizens. Between 1871 and 1914, French authorities were preoccupied with the threat of national diminishment and decline, with the study of national character a “veritable industry in France.”¹⁷

French anxieties over national identity are commonly attributed to the loss of Alsace-Lorraine in 1870, but of perhaps equal import was the collective assimilation of over 100,000 Algerian Jews under the Crémieux Decree of the same year.¹⁸ Debates over who was really French and who was not intensified over the next twenty years as increasing numbers of working-class Italians, Spanish, and Maltese in Algeria were accorded French citizenship. A declining birth rate (accelerating in the 1880s) placed a premium on expanded membership in the French national community but prompted a fear of internal aliens and pseudo-compatriots at the same time.¹⁹ The Dreyfus affair coupled

¹⁴ On the relationship between racial supremacy and new conceptions of British motherhood at the turn of the century, see Anna Davin’s “Imperialism and Motherhood,” *History Workshop*, no. 5 (1978), 9–57, and Lucy Bland’s “‘Guardians of the Race’ or ‘Vampires upon the Nation’s Health’?: Female Sexuality and Its Regulations in Early Twentieth-Century Britain,” in *The Changing Experience of Women*, 373–88, Elizabeth Whitelegg, et al., eds. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982). On the European maternalist discourse of the emerging welfare states, see Seth Koven and Sonya Michel’s “Womanly Duties: Maternalist Politics and the Origins of the Welfare States in France, Germany, Great Britain, and the United States, 1880–1920,” *American Historical Review*, 95 (October 1990), 1076–1108.

¹⁵ See Eugene Weber’s *Peasants into Frenchmen*, 114 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976). Although Weber’s argument that much of France’s rural population neither considered itself French nor embraced a national identity has been refuted by some scholars, for my purposes his ancillary argument holds: Debates over the nature of French citizenship and identity were heavily contested at the time.

¹⁶ Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*, 110.

¹⁷ Raoul Girardet, *Le nationalisme français*, 30–31 (Paris: Seuil, 1983); and Robert Nye, *Crime, Madness and Politics in Modern France: The Medical Concept of National Decline*, 140 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).

¹⁸ See Pierre Nora, *Les Français d’Algérie* (Paris: R. Julliard, 1961).

¹⁹ French fertility rates began to decline in the late eighteenth century, much earlier than in other European countries, but then they decreased most sharply after 1881 (see Claire Goldberg Moses, *French Feminism in the 19th Century*, 20–24 [Binghamton: SUNY, 1984]).

with concerns over the suspect loyalties of the new French of Algeria gave particular urgency to debates about the cultural contours of what it meant to be French.²⁰

Heightened debates over the mixed-blood question in the Dutch context converged with domestic and colonial social reform, crystallizing in a civilizing offensive of a somewhat different order. It targeted the “dangerous classes” in both locales—Holland’s paupered residuum (as distinguished from its respectable working class) and the Indies’ growing population of impoverished (Indo) Europeans, the majority of whom were of mixed descent but legally classified as European. The domestic project joined liberals and conservatives, Protestants, and Catholics in a shared mission, with middle-class energies concentrated around the “uplifting” of the working-class family and its moral reform. This “civilizing offensive” focused in large part on child welfare and particularly on those “neglected” and “delinquent” children whose “upbringing” ill-prepared them for “their future place in the social system” and thus marked them as a danger to the state.²¹

Although national anxieties were not at the same pitch as in France, there is evidence that, at the turn of the century, Dutch national feeling—what Maarten Kuitenbrouwer has called an “extreme nationalism”—“underwent something of a revival,” then later subsided again.²² In tandem with the domestic offensive was also an imperial one that spanned concerns about Dutch paupers in the Indies and “vagabond Hollanders” in South Africa both. Efforts to counter “the perils of educational failure” and the increased mixing, marrying, and interaction of poor whites with colonized populations in the two locales gave rise to increased investments in the education of poor white children and assaults on the parenting styles those children were subject to at

²⁰ Thus, of the 200,000 “*Française d’Algerie*,” more than half were of non-French origin. Coupled with the 20,000 Parisian political undesirables deported there by the Second Republic in 1851 (commonly referred to as “*les sans-travail*,” “*les révoltés*,” “*les déracinés*”), the equivocal national loyalties of Algeria’s French colonial population were reopened to question. See Pierre Nora’s *Les Français d’Algerie* (Paris: René Julliard, 1961). Also see Stephen Wilson’s comprehensive study of French antisemitism at the turn of the century, in which he suggests that violent cultural racism in the colonies against Jews provided a “model” for antisemitism at home (in *Ideology and Experience: Antisemitism in France at the Time of the Dreyfus Affair*, especially 230–42 [Teaneck: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1982]).

²¹ See Ali de Regt’s “De vorming van een opvoedings-traditie: arbiëderskinderen rond 1900” in *Geschiedenis van opvoeding en onderwijs*, B. Kruithof, J. Nordman, Piet de Rooy, eds. (Nijmegen: Sun, 1982). On the relationship between the development of the modern Dutch state and the new focus on family morality and motherhood at the turn of the century, see Siep Stuurman’s *Verzuiling, Kapitalisme en Patriarchaat: aspecten van de ontwikkeling van de moderne staat in Nederland* (1987). For France, see Jacques Donzelot’s *The Policing of Families* (New York: Pantheon, 1979) which traces state interventions in family life and childrearing practices to a half-century earlier.

²² See I. Schoffer’s “Dutch ‘Expansion’ and Indonesian Reactions: Some Dilemmas of Modern Colonial Rule (1900–1942),” in *Expansion and Reaction*, H. Wesseling, ed., 80 (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 1978); and Maarten Kuitenbrouwer’s *The Netherlands and the Rise of Modern Imperialism: Colonies and Foreign Policy, 1870–1902*, 220 (New York: Berg, 1991).

home.²³ The securing of Dutch influence in South Africa on the eve of the Boer War centered on strategies to instill a cultural belonging that was to mark the new boundaries of a “Greater Netherlands” embracing Flanders, South Africa, and the Indies.²⁴ In both metropolitan class and imperial projects, questions of national identity, childrearing, and education were on the public agenda and intimately tied.

Thus, the question of who might be considered truly French or Dutch resonated from core to colony and from colony to core.²⁵ In the Indies and Indochina, cultural milieu, represented by both upbringing and education, was seen to demarcate which métis children would turn into revolutionaries, patricides, loyal subjects, or full-fledged citizens of the nation-state. As T. H. Marshall has argued, “when the State guarantees that all children shall be educated, it has the requirements and the nature of citizenship definitely in mind.”²⁶ Métis education raised issues about retaining colonial boundaries and regenerating the nation. At issue were the means by which European *beschaving* (civilization or culture) would be disseminated without undercutting the criteria by which European claims to privilege were made.

As such, the discourses about métissage expressed more pervasive, if inchoate, dilemmas of colonial rule and a fundamental contradiction of imperial domination: the tension between a form of domination simultaneously predicated on both incorporation and distancing.²⁷ This tension expressed itself in the so-called métis problem in quintessential form. Some métis were candidates for incorporation, but others were categorically denied. In either case, the decision to grant citizenship or subject status to a métis could not be made on the basis of race alone, because all métis shared some degree of European descent by definition. How then could the state mark some candidates so they would be excluded from the national community while retaining the possibility that other individuals would be granted the rights of inclusion because

²³ See Colin Bundy’s “Vagabond Hollanders and Runaway Englishmen: White Poverty in the Cape before Poor Whiteism,” in *Putting a Plough to the Ground: Accumulation and Dispossession in Rural South Africa, 1850–1930*, 101–28. William Beinart, Peter Delius, and Stanley Trapido, eds. (Johannesburg: Raven Press, 1987). On the colonial state’s concern about Dutch paupers in the Indies, see *Rapport der Pauperisme-Commissie* (Batavia: Landsdrukkerij, 1902). I discuss these issues at more length in “Children on the Imperial Divide: Sentiments and Citizenship in Colonial Southeast Asia” (Paper prepared for the conference on “Power: Working Through the Disciplines” held by Comparative Study of Social Transformations at the University of Michigan in January 1992).

²⁴ See Kuitenbrouwer, *The Netherlands*, 223.

²⁵ For the Netherlands, compulsory education was only instituted in 1900, about the same time it was introduced to the Indies (see Jan Romein, *The Watershed of Two Eras: Europe in 1900*, 278 [Middletown, CN: Wesleyan University Press, 1978]).

²⁶ See T. H. Marshall, *Class, Citizenship and Social Development*, 81 (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1963, reprint 1973).

²⁷ See Gerard Sider, “When Parrots Learn to Talk, and Why They Can’t: Domination, Deception, and Self-Deception in Indian-White Relations,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 27:1 (1987), 3–23.

French and Dutch “blood prevailed in their veins”? I explore that question here by working off of a seemingly disparate set of texts and contexts: a criminal court proceeding in Haiphong in 1898; the Hanoi campaign against child abandonment in the early 1900s; the protracted debate on mixed marriage legislation in the Indies between 1887 and 1898; and finally, the confused and failed efforts of the Indo-European movement itself in the Indies to articulate its opposition to “pure-blood” Dutch by calling upon race, place, and cultural genealogy to make its demands.

In each of these texts, class, gender, and cultural markers deny and designate exclusionary practices at the same time. We cannot determine which of these categories is privileged at any given moment by sorting out the fixed primacy of race over gender or gender over class. On the contrary, I trace an unstable and uneven set of discourses in which different institutional authorities claimed primacy for one over another in relationship to how other authorities attempted to designate how political boundaries were to be protected and assigned. For mid-Victorian England, Mary Poovey argues that discourses about gender identity were gradually displaced in the 1850s by the issue of national identity.²⁸ However, the contestations over métissage suggest nothing linear about these developments. Rather, class distinctions, gender prescriptions, cultural knowledge, and racial membership were simultaneously invoked and strategically filled with different meanings for varied projects.

Patriarchal principles were not always applied to shore up government priorities. Colonial authorities with competing agendas agreed on two premises: Children had to be taught both their place and race, and the family was the crucial site in which future subjects and loyal citizens were to be made. These concerns framed the fact that the domestic life of individuals was increasingly subject to public scrutiny by a wide range of private and government organizations that charged themselves with the task of policing the moral borderlands of the European community and the psychological sensibilities of its marginal, as well as supposedly full-fledged, members.

At the heart of this tension between inclusionary rhetorics and exclusionary practices was a search for essences that joined formulations of national and racial identity—what Benedict Anderson has contrasted as the contrary dreams of “historical destinies” and “eternal contaminations.”²⁹ Racism is commonly understood as a visual ideology in which somatic features are thought to provide the crucial criteria of membership. But racism is not really a visual ideology at all; physiological attributes only signal the non-visual and more salient distinctions of exclusion on which racism rests. Racism is not to biology as nationalism is to culture. Cultural attributions in both provide the

²⁸ See Mary Poovey’s *Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1988).

²⁹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 136 (London: Verso, 1983).

observable conduits, the indices of psychological propensities and moral susceptibilities seen to shape which individuals are suitable for inclusion in the national community and whether those of ambiguous racial membership are to be classified as subjects or citizens within it. If we are to trace the epidemiologies of racist and nationalist thinking, then it is the cultural logics that underwrite the relationship between fixed, visual representations and invisible protean essences to which we must attend. This convergence between national and racial thinking achieves particular clarity when we turn to the legal and social debates in the colonies that linked observable cultural styles of parenting and domestic arrangement to the hidden psychological requirements for access to French and Dutch citizenship in this period.

CULTURAL COMPETENCE, NATIONAL IDENTITY, AND MÉTISSAGE

In 1898 in the French Indochinese city of Haiphong, the nineteen-year-old son of a French minor naval employee, Sieur Icard, was charged with assaulting without provocation a German naval mechanic, striking his temple with a whip, and attempting to crush his eye. The boy was sentenced by the tribunal court to six months in prison.³⁰ Spurred by the father's efforts to make an appeal for an attenuated prison term, some higher officials subsequently questioned whether the penalty was unduly severe. Clemency was not accorded by the Governor-General, and the boy, referred to by the court as "Nguyen van Thinh *dit* Lucien" (called Lucien) was sentenced to bear out his full term. The case might have been less easily dismissed if it were not for the fact that the son was métis, the child of a man who was a French citizen and a woman who was a colonial subject, his concubine and Vietnamese.

The granting of a pardon rested on two assessments: whether the boy's cultural identity and his display of French cultural competence supported his claim to French citizenship rights. Because the Governor-General's letters listed the boy as Nguyen van Thinh *dit* Lucien, they thereby invoked not only the double naming of the son, privileging first Nguyen van Thinh over Lucien, but suggested the dubious nature of his cultural affinities, giving the impression that his real name was Nguyen van Thinh, although he answered to the name Lucien. The father, Sieur Icard, attempted to affirm the Frenchness of his son by referring to him as Lucien and eliminated reference to Nguyen. But the angry president of Haiphong's tribunal court used only the boy's Vietnamese name, dropping Lucien altogether and put the very kinship between the father and son in question by naming Icard as the "alleged" father.

Icard's plea for pardon, which invoked his own patriotic sentiments as well as those of his son, was carefully conceived. Icard protested that the court had wrongly treated the boy as a "*vulgaire annamite*" (a common Annamite) and

³⁰ Archives d'Outre-Mer, Protectorat de l'Annam et du Tonkin, no. 1506, 17 December 1898.

not as the legally recognized son of a French citizen. Icard held that his son had been provoked and only then struck the German in retaliation. But more important, Lucien had been raised in a French patriotic milieu, in a household in which Germans were held in “contempt and disdain.” He pointed out that their home was full of drawings of the 1870 (Franco-Prussian) War and that like any impressionable [French] boy of his age, Lucien and his imagination were excited by these images.

The tribunal’s refusal to accept the appeal confronted and countered Icard’s claims. At issue was whether Nguyen van Thinh dit Lucien could really be considered culturally and politically French and whether he was inculcated with the patriotic feelings and nationalist sentiments which might have prompted such a loyal response. The tribunal argued that Icard was away sailing too much of the time to impart such a love of *patrie* to his son and that Icard’s “hate of Germans must have been of very recent origin since he had spent so much time sailing with foreigners.”³¹ The non-French inclinations of the boy were firmly established with the court’s observation that Lucien was illiterate and knew but a few French words. Icard’s argument was thus further undermined since Icard himself “spoke no annamite” and therefore shared no common language with his offspring.

Although these counter-arguments may have been sufficient to convince the Governor-General not to grant leniency, another unclarified but damning reason was invoked to deny the son’s case and the father’s appeal: namely, the “immoral relations which could have existed between the detainee and the one who declared himself his father.”³² Or as put by Villeminot, the city attorney in Haiphong charged with further investigating Icard’s appeal, the boy deserved no leniency because “his morality was always detestable” and the police reports permitted one “to entertain the most serious suspicions concerning the nature of the relations which Nguyen van Thinh maintained with his alleged father.”³³

Whether these were coded allegations of homosexuality or referred to a possibly illegal recognition of the boy by Icard (pretending to be his father) is unclear. Icard’s case came up at a time when acts of “fraudulent recognition” of native children were said to be swelling the French citizenry with a bastard population of native poor.³⁴ Perversion and immorality and patriotism and

³¹ See Archives d’Outre Mer, December 1898, No. 39127, Report from Monsieur E. Issaud, Procureur-Général to the Résident Supérieure in Tonkon at Hanoi.

³² “Relations immorales qui ont pu exister entre le détenu et celui qui s’est déclaré son père” (Archives d’Outre Mer [hereafter, AOM], Fonds Amiraux, No. 1792, 12 December 1898).

³³ AOM, Aix-en Provence, No. 1792, 12 December 1898. Report of M. Villemont, Procureur in Haiphong, to the Procureur-Général, Head of the Judicial Service in Hanoi.

³⁴ According to the procureur-general, Raoul Abor, these fraudulent acknowledgments were threatening to submerge the French element by a deluge of naturalized natives (see Raoul Abor, *Des Reconnaissances Frauduleuses d’Enfants Naturels en Indochine*, 25 [Hanoi: Imprimerie Tonkinoise, 1917]).

nationalist sentiments were clearly considered mutually exclusive categories. As in nineteenth-century Germany, adherence to middle-class European sexual morality was one implicit requisite for full-fledged citizenship in the European nation-state.³⁵

But with all these allusions to suspect and duplicitous behavior perhaps what was more unsettling in this case was another unspeakable element in this story: Namely, that Icard felt such a powerful sentiment between himself and his son and that he not only recognized his Eurasian son but went so far as to plead the case of a boy who had virtually none of the exterior qualities (skin tone, language, or cultural literacy), and therefore could have none of the interior attributes of being French at all. What the court seemed to have condemned was a relationship in which Icard could have shown such dedication and love for a child who was illiterate, ignorant of the French language, and who spent most of his time in a cultural milieu that was much less French than Vietnamese. Under such circumstances, Icard's concern for Lucien was inappropriate and improper; his fatherly efforts to excuse his son's misdeeds were neither lauded by the lower courts nor the Governor-General. On the contrary, paternal love and responsibility were not to be disseminated arbitrarily as Icard had obviously done by recognizing his progeny but allowing him to grow up Indochinese. In denying the father's plea, the court passed sentence both on Icard and his son: Both were guilty of transgressing the boundaries of race, culture, sex, and patrie. If Icard (whose misspellings and profession belied his lower-class origins) was not able to bring his son up in a proper French milieu, then he should have abandoned him all together.

What was perhaps most duplicitous in the relationship was that the boy could both be Nguyen van Thinh in cultural sensibilities and Lucien to his father, or, from a slightly different perspective, that Lucien's physical and cultural non-French affinities did not stand in the way of the father's love. Like the relationship with the boy's mother, which was easily attributed to carnal lust, Icard's choice to stand up for his son was reduced to a motive of base desires, sexual or otherwise. Neither father nor son had demonstrated a proper commitment to and identification with those invisible moral bonds by which racist pedigrees and colonial divides were marked and maintained.

CULTURAL NEGLECT, NATIVE MOTHERS, AND THE RACIAL POLITICS OF ABANDONMENT

The story invokes the multiple tensions of colonial cultures in Southeast Asia and would be of interest for that alone. But it is all the more startling because it so boldly contradicts the dominant formulation of the "métis question" at the turn of the century as a problem of "abandonment," of children culturally on the loose, sexually abused, economically impoverished, morally ne-

³⁵ George Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985).

glected, and politically dangerous. European feminists took up the protection of abandoned mixed-blood children as their cause, condemning the irresponsibility and double standards of European men, but so too did colonial officials who argued that these concubinary relations were producing a new underclass of European paupers, of rootless children who could not be counted among the proper European citizenry, whose sartorial trappings merely masked their cultural incompetence, who did not know what it meant to be Dutch or French. The consequences of mixed unions were thus collapsed into a singular moral trajectory, which, without state intervention, would lead to a future generation of Eurasian paupers and prostitutes, an affront to European prestige and a contribution to national decay.

If we look more closely at what was identified as abandonment, the cultural and historical peculiarities of this definition become more apparent. In his comprehensive history of child abandonment in western Europe, John Boswell commonly uses “abandonment” to refer to “the *voluntary* relinquishing of control over children by their natal parents or guardians” and to children who were exposed at the doors of churches or in other public spaces and less frequently for those intentionally exposed to death.³⁶ Boswell argues that ancient and contemporary commentators have conflated abandonment with infanticide far more than the evidence suggests. Nevertheless, perceptions and policies on abandonment were integrally tied to issues of child mortality. Jacques Donzelot argues that in nineteenth-century France abandonment often led to high rates of child mortality and that the intensified policing of families was morally justified for those reasons among others.³⁷ This does not suggest that abandonment always led to death nor that this was always its intent. The point is that in the colonial context, in contrast, discussions of abandonment rarely raise a similar concern for infanticide or even obliquely address this eventuality.

The abandonment of métis children invoked, in the colonial context, not a biological but a social death—a severing from European society, a banishment of “innocents” from the European cultural milieu in which they could potentially thrive and where some reformers contended they rightfully belonged.³⁸ Those officials who wrote about métis children argued that exposure in the colonial context was to the native milieu, not the natural elements, and to the immoral influence of native women whose debased characters inclined them to succumb to such illicit unions in the first place. Moreover, abandon-

³⁶ John Boswell's *The Kindness of Strangers: The Abandonment of Children in Western Europe from Late Antiquity to the Renaissance* (New York: Pantheon, 1988). According to Boswell, this relinquishment might occur by “leaving them somewhere, selling them, or legally consigning authority to some other person or institution” (p. 24). As we shall see, abandonment in colonial practice did not fit this definition at all.

³⁷ See Jacques Donzelot's *The Policing of Families*, 29.

³⁸ I do not use this term in the sense employed by Orlando Patterson with regard to slavery but to suggest the definitive exile from European society which abandonment implied.

ment, as we shall see, was not necessarily voluntary, nor did both parents, despite the implication in Boswell's definition, participate in it. The statutes of the Society for the Protection and Education of Young French Métis of Cochinchine and Cambodia defined the issue of abandonment in the following way:

Left to themselves, having no other guide than their instincts and their passions, these unfortunates will always give free rein to their bad inclinations; the boys will increase the ranks of vagabonds, the girls those of prostitution.

Left to their mothers and lost in the milieu of Annamites, they will not become less depraved. It must not be forgotten that in most cases, the indigenous woman who consents to live with a European is a veritable prostitute and that she will never reform. When, after several years of free union with Frenchmen, the latter disappear or abandon her, she fatally returns to the vice from which she came and she nearly always sets an example of debauchery, sloth, and immorality for her children. She takes care of them with the sole purpose of later profiting from their labor and especially from their vices.

For her métis son, she seeks out a scholarship in a school with the certainty that when her child obtains a minor administrative post, she will profit from it. But, in many cases, the child, ill-advised and ill-directed, does not work and when he leaves school, abandons himself to idleness and then to vagabondage; he procures his means of existence by extortion and theft.

Abandoned métisse girls are no better off; from the cradle, their mothers adorn them with bracelets and necklaces and maintain in them a love of luxury innate in the Annamites. Arriving at the age of puberty, deprived of any skills which would help them survive, and pushed into a life by their mothers that they have a natural tendency to imitate, they will take to prostitution in its diverse forms to procure the means necessary to keep themselves in luxury.³⁹

Here, abandonment has specific race, cultural, and gender coordinates. Most frequently, it referred to the abandonment of métis children by European fathers and their abandonment of the children's native mothers with whom these men lived outside of marriage. The gaze of the colonial state was not directed at children abandoned by native men but only at the progeny of mixed unions. Most significantly, the child, considered abandoned whether he or she remained in the care of the mother, was most frequently classified that way precisely because the child was left to a native mother and to the cultural surroundings in which she lived. But the term abandonment was also used freely in another context to condemn those socially *déclassé* European men who chose to reside with their mixed-blood children in the supposedly immoral and degraded native milieu. In designating cultural rather than physical neglect, abandonment connoted at least two things: that a proper French father would never allow his offspring prolonged contact nor identification with such a milieu and that the native mother of lower class origins would only choose to keep her own children for mercenary purposes.

³⁹ AOM, Amiraux 7701, 1899, Statute of the "Société de protection et d'éducation des Jeunes Métis Français de la Cochinchine et du Cambodge."

If abandonment of métis offspring by European men was considered morally reprehensible, the depraved motives of colonized women who refused to give up their children to the superior environment of state institutions were considered worse. Thus the president of The Hanoi Society for the Protection of Métis Youths in 1904 noted that “numerous mothers refuse to confer their children to us . . . under the *pretext* of not wanting to be apart from them, despite the fact that they may periodically visit them at school.”⁴⁰ But if maternal love obscured more mercenary quests to exploit their young for profits and pleasure, as was often claimed, why did so many women not only refuse to hand over their children but reject any form of financial assistance for them? Cases of such refusal were not uncommon. In 1903 the Haiphong court admonished a métisse mother who was herself “raised with all the exterior signs of a European education” for withdrawing her daughter from a government school “for motives which could not be but base given the mother’s character.”⁴¹ Resistance also came from the children themselves: In 1904, the seventeen-year-old métisse daughter of an Annamite woman cohabited with the French employer of her mother’s Annamite lover, declaring that she *volontairement* accepted and preferred her own situation over what the Society for the Protection of Métis Youths could offer.⁴² Numerous reports are cited of métisse girls forced into prostitution by *concubin*, that is, by native men who were the subsequent lovers of the girls’ native mothers. These cases expressed another sexual and cultural transgression that metropolitan social reformers and colonial authorities both feared: namely, a “traffic in *filles françaises*” for the Chinese and Annamite market, not for Europeans.⁴³

The portrait of abandonment and charitable rescue is seriously flawed, for it misses the fact that the channeling of abandoned métis children into special state institutions was part of a larger (but failed) imperial vision. These children were to be molded into very special colonial citizens; in one scenario, they were to be the bulwark of a future white settler population, acclimatized to the tropics but loyal to the state.⁴⁴ As proposed by the French Feminist caucus at the National Colonial Exposition of 1931, métisse young women could

⁴⁰ AOM, No. 164, 11 May 1904 (my emphasis).

⁴¹ AOM, 13 November 1903.

⁴² Letter from the Administrative Resident in Bac-giang to the Résident Supérieure in Hanoi.

⁴³ AOM, Letter (No. 151) to the Governor-General in Hanoi from Monsieur Paris, the President of the Société de Protection et d’Éducation des Jeunes Métis Français abandonnés, 29 February 1904. This concern over the entrapment of European young women in the colonies coincides with the concurrent campaigns against the white slave trade in Europe (see Frank Mort, *Dangerous Sexualities: Medico-Moral Politics in England Since 1830*, 126–7 [London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987]).

⁴⁴ For such recommendations, see A. Brou, “Le métis franco annamite,” *Revue Indochinoise* (July 1907), 897–908; Douchet, *Métis et congais d’Indochine* (Hanoi, 1928); Jacques Mazet, *La conditions juridique des métis* (Paris: Domat-Montchrestien, 1932); Philippe Gossard, *Études sur le métissage principalement en A.O.F.* (Paris: Les Presses Modernes, 1934).

marry with Frenchmen, would accept living in the bush where young women from the metropole would be hesitant to follow their husbands, . . . [and would form] the foundation of a bourgeoisie, attached at one and the same time to their native land and to the France of Europe.⁴⁵

This perspective on mixed marriages was more optimistic than some, but echoes the commonly held view that if métisse girls were rescued in time, they could be effectively educated to become *bonnes menageres* (good housekeepers) of a settled Indochina, wives or domestics in the service of France. Similar proposals, as we shall see, were entertained in the Indies in the same period and there too met with little success. However, in both contexts, the vision of fortifying the colonial project with a mixed-blood yeomanry was informed by a fundamental concern: What could be done with this mixed population, whose ambiguous positioning and identifications could make them either dangerous adversaries or effective partisans of the colonial state?

FRAUDULENT RECOGNITIONS AND OTHER DANGERS OF MÉTISSAGE

The question of what to do with the métis population prompted a number of different responses, but each hinged on whether métis should be classified as a distinct legal category subject to special education or so thoroughly assimilated into French culture that they would pose no threat. In French Indochina, the model treatment of métis in the Netherlands Indies was invoked at every turn. In 1901, Joseph Chailley-Bert, director of the *Union Coloniale Française*, was sent on a government mission to Java to report on the status of métis in the Indies and on the efficacy of Dutch policy towards them. Chailley-Bert came away from Batavia immensely impressed and convinced that segregation was not the answer. He was overwhelmed by the sheer numbers of persons of mixed descent who occupied high station in the Indies, with wealth and cultivation rivaling those of many “full-blooded” Europeans. He argued that the Dutch policy not to segregate those of mixed descent nor distinguish between illegitimate and legitimate children was the only humane and politically safe course to pursue. He urged the government to adopt several Dutch practices: that abandoned métis youth be assigned European status until proof of filiation was made, that private organizations in each legal grouping (i.e., European and native) be charged with poor relief rather than the government; and that European standing not be confined to those with the proper “dosage of blood” alone. In the Indies he noted that such a ruling would be impossible because the entire society was in large part métis and such a distinction “would allow a distance between the aryan without mix and the asiastic hybrids.”⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Etats-Generaux du Feminisme, *Exposition Coloniale Internationale de Paris 1931, rapport général présenté par le Gouverneur Général Olivier*, 139 (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1931).

⁴⁶ AOM, Amiraux 7701, *Report on Métis in the Dutch East Indies* (1901).

Monsieur A. July, writing from Hanoi in 1905, similarly applauded “the remarkably successful results” of the Indies government policy rejecting the legal designation of métis as a caste apart. He argued that France’s abolition of slavery and call for universal suffrage had made a *tabula rasa* of racial prejudice; however, he was less sanguine that France’s political system could permit a similar scale of naturalization as that practiced by the Dutch, since not all young métis could be recognized as *citoyen français* for reasons he thought better not to discuss. Firmin Jacques Montagne, a head conductor in the Department of Roads and Bridges also urged that French Indochina follow the Indies path, where the Dutch had not only “safeguarded their prestige, but also profited from a force that if badly directed, could turn against Dutch domination.”⁴⁷ Based on the account of a friend who administered a plantation on Java, he urged that métis boys in Indochina, as in the Indies, should be educated in special institutions to prepare them to be soldiers and later for modest employment in commerce or on the estates.

These appeals to Dutch wisdom are so curious because they reflected neither the treatment of the poor Indo-European population in the Indies, nor what administrative quandaries were actually facing Dutch officials there. In the very year of Chailley-Bert’s visit to Batavia, the Indies government began a massive investigation of the recent proliferation of European pauperism and its causes. Between 1901 and 1903 several thousands of pages of government reports outlined the precarious economic conditions and political dangers of a population legally classified as European but riddled with impoverished widows, beggars, vagrants, and abandoned children who were mostly Indo-Europeans.⁴⁸ The pauperism commission identified an “alarming increase” of poor Europeans born in the Indies or of mixed parentage, who could neither compete for civil service positions with the influx of “full-blooded” Dutch educated in Europe nor with the growing number of better-educated Indonesians now qualified for the same jobs.⁴⁹

The Dutch did investigate Indo-European adult life and labor, but the focus

⁴⁷ “Courte notice sur les métis d’Extrême Orient et en particulier sur ceux de l’Indochine,” Firmin Jacques Montagne, AOM, Amiraux 1669 (1903), 1896–1909.

⁴⁸ The fact that the issue of poor whites loomed large on a diverse number of colonial landscapes at this time, in part, may derive from the fact that white poverty itself was coming to be perceived in metropole and colony in new ways. In Calcutta nearly one-fourth of the Anglo-Indian community in the late nineteenth century was on poor relief (N. Gist and R. Wright, *Marginality and Identity: Anglo-Indians as a Racially Mixed Minority in India*, 16 [Leiden: Brill, 1973]). Colin Bundy argues for South Africa that white poverty was redefined “as a social problem to be tackled by state action rather than as a phenomenon of individual failure to be assuaged by charity” (p. 104). In the Indies, this reassignment of poor relief from civic to state responsibility was hotly contested and never really made.

⁴⁹ *Rapport der Pauperisme-Commissie* (Batavia: Landsdrukkerij, 1902); *Uitkomsten der Pauperisme-Enquete: Algemeen Verslag* (Batavia: Landsdrukkerij, 1902); *Het Pauperisme onder de Europeanen in Nederlandsch-Indie*, Parts 3, 5 (Batavia: Landsdrukkerij, 1901); *Uitkomsten der Pauperisme-Enquete: Gewestelijke Verslagen* (Batavia: Landsdrukkerij, 1901); *De Staatsarmenzorg voor Europeanen in Nederlandsch-Indie* (Batavia: Landsdrukkerij, 1901).

of the commissions' concern was on children and their upbringing in the parental home (*opvoeding in de ouderlijkewoning*).⁵⁰ Among the more than 70,000 legally classified Europeans in the Indies in 1900, nearly 70 percent knew little Dutch or none at all. Perhaps the more disturbing finding was that many of them were living on the borderlands of respectable bourgeois European society in styles that indicated not a failed version of European culture but an outright rejection of it.⁵¹

The causes of the situation were found in the continued prevalence of concubinage, not only among subaltern European military barred from legal marriage but also among civil servants and European estate supervisors for whom marriage to European women was either formally prohibited or made an economically untenable option. Although government and private company policies significantly relaxed the restrictions imposed on the entry of women from Europe after the turn of the century, non-conjugal mixed unions, along with the gendered and racist assumptions on which they were based, were not about to disappear by government fiat. In Indochina, French officials had to issue repeated warnings against concubinage from 1893 to 1911 (just when the societies for protection of métis youth were most active), suggesting the formation of another generation that threatened not to know where they belonged.⁵² The pauperism commission condemned the general moral environment of the Indies, targeting concubinage as the source of a transient "rough and dangerous pauper element" that lived off the native population when they could, disgracing European prestige and creating a financial burden for the state.⁵³

But Indo-European pauperism in the Indies could not be accounted for by concubinage alone. The pauperism commission's enquiry revealed a highly stratified educational system in which European youths educated in the Indies were categorically barred from high-level administrative posts and in which middling Indo-Europeans were offered only a rudimentary training in Dutch, a basic requisite for any white collar job.⁵⁴ European public (free) schools in the Indies, like those in Indochina, were largely schools for the poor (*armensholen*) attended by and really only designed for a lower-class of indigent and mixed-blood Europeans.⁵⁵

⁵⁰ See Petrus Blumberger's *De Indo-Europeesche Beweging in Nederlandsch-Indie*, 26 (Haarlem: Tjeenk Willink, 1939).

⁵¹ See J. M. Coetzee, *White Writing: On the Culture of Letters in South Africa* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), in which he argues that the British railed against Boer idleness precisely because they refused the possibility that an alternative, native milieu may have been preferred by some European men and have held a real attraction.

⁵² AOM, Archives Centrales de l'Indochine, nos. 9147, 9273, 7770, 4680.

⁵³ *Encyclopedie van Nederlandsch-Indie* (1919), 367.

⁵⁴ In 1900, an educational survey carried out in Dutch elementary schools in the Indies among 1,500 students found that only 29 percent of those with European legal standing knew some Dutch and more than 40 percent did not know any (Paul van der Veur, "Cultural Aspects of the Eurasian Community in Indonesian Colonial Society," *Indonesia*, no. 6 (1968), 45).

⁵⁵ See Dr. I. J. Brugmans, *Geschiedenis van het onderwijs in Nederlandsch-Indie* (Batavia: Wolters, 1938).

A concrete set of reforms did form a response, to some extent, to concubinage and educational inequities, but European pauperism was located in a more unsettling problem: It was seen to have deeper and more tenacious roots in the surreptitious penetration of inlanders into the legal category of European.⁵⁶ Because the European legal standing exempted men both from labor service and from the harsher penal code applied to those of native status, officials argued that an underclass of European soldiers and civilians was allegedly engaged in a profitable racket of falsely recognizing native children who were not their own for an attractive fee. Thus, the state commission argued, European impoverishment was far more limited than the statistics indicated: The European civil registers were inflated by lowlife mercenaries and, as in Indochina, by *des sans-travail* (the unemployed), who might register as many as thirty to forty children who did not have proper rights to Dutch or French citizenship at all.⁵⁷

The issue of fraudulent recognition, like concubinage, hinged on the fear that children were being raised in cultural fashions that blurred the distinctions between ruler and ruled and on the fear that uneducated native young men were acquiring access to Dutch and French nationality by channels, such as false filiation, that circumvented state control. Such practices were allegedly contingent on a nefarious class of European men who were willing to facilitate the efforts of native mothers who sought such arrangements. Whether there were as many fraudulent recognitions of métis children in Indochina, or *kunstmatig gefabriceerde Europeanen* (artificially fabricated Europeans) in the Indies as authorities claimed is really not the point. The repeated reference to fictitious, fraudulent, and fabricated Europeans expressed an underlying preoccupation of colonial authorities, shared by many in the European community at large, that illicit incursions into the Dutch and French citizenry extended beyond those cases labelled fraudulent recognition by name. We should remember that Nguyen van Thinh dit Lucien's condemnation was never explicitly argued on the basis of his suspect parentage, but on the more general contention that his behavior had to be understood as that of an *indigène* in disguise, not as a citizen of France. Annamite women who had lived in concubinage were accused of clothing their métisse daughters in European attire, while ensuring them that their souls and sentiments remained deeply native.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ See J. F. Kohlbrugge, "Prostitutie in Nederlandsch-Indie," *Indisch Genootschap*, 19 February 1901, 26–28.

⁵⁷ See n.a., "Ons Pauperisme," *Mededeelingen der Vereeniging "Soeria Soemirat,"* no. 2 (1892), 8. One proof of the falsity of the claim was that these fathers often conferred upon these children "repulsive and obscene" names frequently enough that a government ruling stipulated that no family name could be given that "could humiliate the child" (G. H. Koster, "Aangenomen Kinderen en Staatsblad Europeanen," *De Amsterdammer*, 15 July 1922).

⁵⁸ Letter from the Administrative Resident in Bac-giang to the Resident Supérieure, Hanoi, AOM, No. 164, 11 May 1904.

Colonial officials wrestled with the belief that the Europeanness of métis children could never be assured, despite a rhetoric affirming that education and upbringing were transformative processes. Authorities spoke of abandoned métisse daughters as *les filles françaises* when arguing for their redemption, but when supporting segregated education, these same authorities recast these youths as physically marked and morally marred with “the faults and mediocre qualities of their [native] mothers” as “the fruits of a regrettable weakness.”⁵⁹ Thus, abandoned métis children not only represented the sexual excesses and indiscretions of European men but the dangers of a subaltern class, degenerate (*verwildereren*) and lacking paternal discipline (*gemis aan vaderlijke tucht*), a world in which mothers took charge.⁶⁰ To what extent the concern over neglected métis children was not only about the negative influence of the native milieu but about the threat of single-mother families as in Europe and America in the same period is difficult to discern.⁶¹ The absence of patriarchal authority in households of widows and native women who had exited from concubinary domestic arrangements was clearly seen as a threat to the proper moral upbringing of children and sanctioned the intervention of the state. Métis children undermined the inherent principles upon which national identity thrived—those *liens invisibles* (invisible bonds) that all men shared and that so clearly and comfortably marked off *pur-sang* French and Dutch from those of the generic colonized.

The option of making métis a legal category was actively debated in international colonial fora through the 1930s but was rejected on explicitly political grounds. French jurists persuasively argued that such a legal segregation would infest the colonies with a destructive virus, with a “class of *déraciné, déclassé*,” “our most dangerous enemies,” “insurgents, irreconcilable enemies of our domination.”⁶² The legal rejection of difference in no way diminished the concern about them. On the contrary, it produced an intensified discourse in which racial thinking remained the bedrock on which cultural markers of difference were honed and more carefully defined.

This was nowhere clearer than in the legal discussion about whether and by what criteria children of unknown parents should be assigned French or native nationality.⁶³ Under a 1928 *décret*, all persons born in Indochina (that is, on French soil) of unknown parents of which one was presumed to be French

⁵⁹ See Jacques Mazet, *La Condition Juridique de Métis* (Paris: Domat-Montchrestien, 1932) and Douchet *Métis et congais d'Indochine*.

⁶⁰ Kohlbrugge, “Prostitutie in Nederlandsch-Indie,” 23.

⁶¹ See Linda Gordon’s discussion of this issue for early twentieth-century America in *Heroes of Their Own Lives: The Politics and History of Family Violence* (New York: Vintage, 1988).

⁶² See Mazet, *La Condition Juridique de Métis*, 37, 42.

⁶³ Questions about the legal status of métis and the political consequences of that decision were not confined to the French alone. The International Colonial Institute in Brussels created by Joseph Chailley-Bert in 1893 engaged this question in at least three of its international meetings in 1911, 1920, and 1924. See *Comptes Rendus de l’Institut Colonial International* (Bruxelles: Bibliothèque Coloniale Internationale, 1911, 1920, 1924).

could obtain recognition of “*la qualité de français*.”⁶⁴ Presumed Frenchness rested on two sorts of certainty: the evaluation of the child’s “physical features or race” by a “medico-legal expert” and a “moral certainty” derived from the fact that the child “has a French name, lived in a European milieu and was considered by all as being of French descent.”⁶⁵ Thus, French citizenship was not open to all métis but restricted by a “scientific” and moral judgment that the child was decidedly non-indigene.⁶⁶ As we have seen in the case of Nguyen van Thinh dit Lucien, however, the name Lucien, the acknowledged paternity by Icard, and the patriotic ambiance of the household were only sufficient for the child to be legally classified as French, not for him to be treated as French by a court of law. Inclusionary laws left ample room for an implementation based on exclusionary principles and practices.

The moral outrage and crusade against abandonment attended to another underlying dilemma for those who ruled. Métis youth not only had to be protected from the “demoralisation of the special milieu” in which they were raised but, as important, educated in a way that would not produce unreasonable expectations nor encourage them to harbor desires for privilege above their station simply because French or Dutch blood flowed in their veins. The aim of the Hanoi society for the protection of métis youth was “to inculcate them with our sense of honor and integrity, while only suggesting to them modest tastes and humble aspirations.”⁶⁷ Similarly, in the Indies, Indo-European pauperism was commonly attributed to the “false sense of pride” of Indos who refused to do manual labor or take on menial jobs, who did not know that “real Dutchmen” in the Netherlands worked with their hands. The assault was double-edged. It blamed those impoverished for their condition but also suggested more subtly that if they were really Dutch in spirit and drive, such problems of pauperism would not have arisen.

THE CULTURAL FRONTIERS OF THE NATIONAL COMMUNITY

Fears of white impoverishment in the colonies were held by many different constituencies: by social reformers concerned with child welfare, by European feminists opposed to the double-standard of European men, and by colonial officials who fiercely debated whether increased education would diffuse the discontents of the European poor or, as with the peasants of France, turn them into empowered enemies of the state.⁶⁸ However, none of these fears were

⁶⁴ Mazet, *La Condition Juridique de Métis*, 114.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 80.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 90.

⁶⁷ Statute of the “Société de protection des enfants métis,” 18 May 1904, Article 37.

⁶⁸ Similar debates occurred at the International Colonial Congress of 1889, in which scholars and administrators compared and contrasted pedagogic strategies for natives in the colonies to those for the peasants of France. See Martin Lewis, “One Hundred Million Frenchmen: The ‘Assimilation’ Theory in French Colonial Policy,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 3:4, 140.

very far removed from the more general concern that European men living with native women would themselves lose their Dutch or French identity and would become degenerate and *décivilisé*. Internal to this logic was a notion of cultural, physical, and moral contamination, the fear that those Europeans who did not subscribe to Dutch middle-class conventions of respectability would not only compromise the cultural distinctions of empire, but waver in their allegiances to metropolitan rule.

Such fears were centered on mixed bloods but not on them alone. In the Indies, at the height of the liberal Ethical Policy, a prominent doctor warned that those Europeans born and bred in the colonies, the *blijvers* (those who remained), lived in surroundings that stripped them of their *zuivere* (pure) European sensibilities, which “could easily lead them to metamorphize into Javanese.”⁶⁹ A discourse on degeneracy with respect to the creole Dutch was not new in the Indies but in this moment of liberal reform took on a new force with specific moral coordinates. This discourse was directed at poor whites living on the cultural borderlands of the *echte* (true) European community, at some European men who married native women, at all European women who chose to marry native men, and at both European and Indo-European women who cohabited with, but chose not to marry, men of other nationalities.

These specific fears may have been intensified by the surge of political activity at the turn of the century, coalescing around an Indisch population of “mixed-blood” and “pure-blood” Dutch of Indies origin. Their distinct economic interests, cultural style, and legal positioning produced equivocal loyalties to the colonial state. The Indische voice, evident in a range of new publications and associations, identified itself in two ways: by its cultural rooting in the Indies rather than the Netherlands and by an ambiguous appeal to the notion of race. At a time when the native nationalist project was not yet underway, this Indische press articulated a new notion of a fatherland loyal to, but distinct from, the Dutch fatherland and firmly opposed to the Dutch-born elite who managed the state. Between 1898 and 1903 various Indisch groups rose, fell, and reassembled as they each sought viable programs to promote the “uplifting” of the Indo-European poor without linking their own fate to them. To do so, they resorted to principles of racial hierarchy that accorded those of a certain upbringing, sexual morality, and cultural sensibility a right to privilege and to rule.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ J. Kohlbrugge, “Het Indische kind en zijne karaktervorming,” in *Blikken in het zielenleven van den Javaan en zijner overheerschers* (Leiden: Brill, 1907).

⁷⁰ Michel Foucault’s discussion of the historical shift from a “symbolics of blood” to an “analytics of sexuality” in the mid- and late-nineteenth century would be interesting to explore in this colonial context, where the mixed-blood problem invoked both of these principles in resolving issues of paternity and citizenship rights (*An Introduction*, vol. 1 of *The History of Sexuality*, especially 147–50 [New York: Pantheon Books, 1978]). Although a discussion of race and sexuality is notably absent from all but the very end of *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault once remarked that it was “the fundamental part of the book” (*Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977*, 222 [New York: Pantheon, 1980]).

What underwrites this common discourse is a new collusion between race and culture: As race dropped out of certain legal discriminations, it re-emerged, marked out by specific cultural criteria in other domains. The contemporary discourse on the new racism in Europe situates “cultural racism” as a relatively recent and nuanced phenomenon, replacing the physiological distinctions on which earlier racisms had so strongly relied.⁷¹ The “novelty” of the new racism is often located in its strong cultural inflection, embedded in wider structures of domination, based in the family, and tied to nationalist sentiments in ways that make it more relevant to a wider constituency and therefore more pervasive and insidious to weed out.⁷² But are these features of the “new racism” really new at all? I would argue, on the contrary, that they are firmly rooted in a much earlier discourse that linked race, culture, and national identity, a discourse elaborated at the turn of the century in Europe’s “laboratories of modernity”—the colonies—not at home.⁷³

It is striking how critical the concept of cultural surroundings (*milieu* in French, *omgeving* in Dutch) in this period was to the new legal stipulations on which racial distinctions and national identity were derived. Paul Rabinow makes a strong case that the concern about milieu permeating French colonial thinking on education, health, labor, and sex in the late nineteenth century can only be understood in terms of the scientific *episteme* on which it relied.⁷⁴ Medical guides to the acclimatization of Europeans in tropical regions fre-

⁷¹ See, for example, the contributions of those in British cultural studies, such as by Stuart Hall and Paul Gilroy; also compare the discussion of nationalism and racism in France by Etienne Balibar, who does not mark cultural racism as a recent phenomenon but does argue for a new intensification of the force of cultural difference in marking the interior frontiers of the modern nation-state. See *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*, Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein (New York: Verso, 1991).

⁷² Thus Paul Gilroy (*There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack*, 43 (London: Hutchinson, 1987), for example, argues that the “novelty” of the new racism

lies in the capacity to link discourses of patriotism, nationalism, xenophobia, Englishness, Britishness, militarism, and gender differences into a complex system which gives ‘race’ its contemporary meaning. These themes combine to provide a definition of ‘race’ in terms of culture and identity. . . . ‘Race; differences are displayed in culture which is reproduced in educational institutions and, above all, in family life. Families are therefore not only the nation in microcosm, its key components, but act as the means to turn social processes into natural, instinctive ones.

⁷³ It is not coincidental that this is precisely the period in which George Stocking identifies a shift in the meaning of culture in the social sciences from its singular humanistic sense of refinement to the plural anthropological notion of cultures as shared values of specific human groups. Although Stocking argues that Franz Boas made the analytic leap from culture to cultures as an anti-racist response, it is clear that these two connotations joined to shape the exclusionary tenets of nationalist and racist projects (*Race, Culture, and Evolution: Essays in the History of Anthropology*, especially 200–04 [New York: Free Press, 1968]).

⁷⁴ See Paul Rabinow’s *French Modern: Norms and Forms of the Social Environment*, especially 126–67 (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989), where he traces the effects of neo-Lamarckian thinking on colonial pacification policies. I am more concerned here with how this attention to milieu fixed the boundaries of the European community and identified threats to it. On the contaminating influences of milieu, see my “Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power,” 51–101.

quently warned that Europeans would lose their physical health and cultural bearings if they stayed in the tropics too long. Debates over whether European children should be schooled in France or the Netherlands were prompted by efforts to create the social habitus in which sentiments and sensibilities would be shaped.⁷⁵ These debates drew not so much on Darwin as on a popular neo-Lamarckian understanding of environment in which racial and national essences could be secured or altered by the physical, psychological, climatic, and moral surroundings in which one lived. The issue of *omgeving* and the linkages between national, racial and cultural identity were, however, most thoroughly thought out in the colonial legal discourse on the criteria for European status and inscribed, not in the laws themselves, which self-consciously disclaimed racial difference, but in the cultural logic and racist assumptions underpinning the legal arguments. What is apparent in these documents is a tension between a belief in the immutability and fixity of racial essence and a discomfiting awareness that these racial categories are porous and protean at the same time. More unsettling still was the cultural perception that the essences embodied by the colonized and colonizer were asymmetric. Thus Javanese or Vietnamese might at any moment revert to their natural indigenous affiliations, while a Dutch essence was so fragile that it could unwittingly transform into something Javanese.

JUS SOL, JUS SANGUINIS, AND NATIONALITY

In the civilized world, no one may be without a relationship to the state.⁷⁶

J. A. Nederburgh, one of the principal architects of Indies colonial law in 1898, engaged the question of national identity and membership more directly than many of his contemporaries. He argued that in destroying racial purity, colonialism had made obsolete the criteria of *jus soli* (place of birth) and *jus sanguinis* (blood descent) for determining nationality. Colonial *vermenging* (mixing or blending), he contended, had produced a new category of “wavering classes,” large groups of people whose place of birth and mixed genealogies called into the question the earlier criteria by which rights to metropolitan citizenship and designations of colonial subject had once been

⁷⁵ The similarity to Pierre Bourdieu’s notion of “habitus” as a stylization of life, an unconsciously embodied set of rules of behavior that engenders durable schemes of thought and perception, is striking. These colonial discussions of milieu denote not only a social ecology of acquired competencies but a psychological environment in which certain dispositions are promoted and affective sensibilities are shaped (Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 82).

⁷⁶ “In de beschaafd wereld, niemand zonder staatsverband mag zijn” (K. H. Beyen, *Het Nederlanderschap in verband met het international recht* [Utrecht, 1890]), quoted in J. A. Nederburgh, *Wet en Adat*, 83 [Batavia: Kolff and Co., 1898]). The word *staatsverband* literally means “relationship to the state.” Nederburgh distinguishes it from nationality and defines it as “the tie that exists between the state and each of its members, the membership of the state” (p. 91). Dutch scholars of colonial history say the term is rarely used but connotes citizenship.

assigned. Taking the nation to be those who shared “morals, culture, and perceptions, feelings that unite us without one being able to say what they are,” Nederburgh concluded that one could not differentiate who had these sensibilities by knowing birthplace and kinship alone. He pointed to those of “pure European blood” who

for years remained almost entirely in native surroundings [*omgeving*] and became so entirely nativized [*verinlandschen*] that they no longer felt at ease among their own kind [*rasgenooten*] and found it difficult to defend themselves against *Indische* morals and points of view.⁷⁷

He concluded that surroundings had an “overwhelming influence,” with “the power to almost entirely neutralise the effects of descent and blood.”⁷⁸ Although Nederburgh’s claim may seem to suggest a firm dismissal of racial supremacy, we should note that he was among the most staunchly conservative legalists of his time, a firm defender of the superiority of Western logic and law.⁷⁹ By Nederburgh’s cultural account, Europeans, especially children “who because of their age are most susceptible and often the most exposed” to native influence in school and native servants at home, who remained too long in the Indies “could only remain *echte-Europeesch* (truly European) in thought and deed with much exertion.”⁸⁰ While Nederburgh insisted that he was not “against *Indische* influence per se,” he recommended that the state allocate funds to bring up European children in Holland.⁸¹ Some eight years later, at the height of the Ethical Policy, another prominent member of the colonial elite made a similar but more radical recommendation to close all schools of higher education in Batavia and to replace them with state-subsidized education in Holland to improve the quality of the colored (*kleuringen*) in the civil servant ranks.⁸² Both proposals derived from the same assumption: that it was “impossible for persons raised and educated in the Indies to be bearers [*draggers*] of Western culture and civilization.”⁸³

Attention to upbringing, surroundings, and milieu did not disengage personal potential from the physiological fixities of race. Distinctions made on the basis of *opvoeding* (upbringing) merely recoded race in the quotidian circumstances that enabled acquisition of certain cultural competencies and not others. The focus on milieu naturalized cultural difference, sexual essence, and moral fiber of Europeanness in new kinds of ways. I have dis-

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 87–88.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 87.

⁷⁹ See Willem Wertheim’s incisive review of Prof. R. D. Kollwijn’s *Intergentiel Recht, Indonesie*, 19 (1956), 169–73. Nederburgh’s name comes up in this critique of Kollwijn, whose liberal rhetoric and opposition to such conservatives as Nederburgh belied that fact that he praised the virtues of the Indies mixed-marriage legislation of 1898, despite the racist principles that underwrote it.

⁸⁰ Nederburgh, *Wet en Adat*, 88.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 90.

⁸² Kooreman 1906.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

cussed elsewhere how the shift in the colonies to white endogamy and away from concubinage at the turn of the century, an intensified surveillance of native servants, and a sharper delineation of the social space in which European children could be brought up and where and with whom they might play marked out not only the cultural borders of the European community but indicated how much political security was seen to reside in the choices of residence, language, and cultural style that individuals made. Personal prescriptions for inclusion as citizens of the Dutch state were as stringent and intimate as those that defined the exclusion of its subjects.⁸⁴ The wide gap between prescription and practice suggests why the prescriptions were so insistently reiterated, updated, and reapplied. Among those classified as European, there was little agreement on these prescriptions, which were contested, if not openly defied.

In 1884, legal access to European equivalent status in the Indies required a “complete suitability [*geschiktheid*] for European society,” defined as a belief in Christianity, fluency in spoken and written Dutch, and training in European morals and ideas.⁸⁵ In the absence of an upbringing in Europe, district authorities were charged with evaluating whether the concerned party was “brought up in European surroundings as a European.”⁸⁶ But European equivalence was not granted simply on the display of a competence and comfort in European norms. It required that the candidate “no longer feel at home” (*niet meer thuis voelt*) in native society and have already “distanced” himself from his native being (*Inlander-zijn*). In short the candidate could neither identify nor retain inappropriate senses of belonging or longings for the milieu from which she or he came.⁸⁷ The mental states of potential citizens were at issue, not their material assets alone. Who were to be the arbitrators? Suitability to which European society and to which Europeans? The questions are disingenuous because the coding is clear: cultural competence, family form, and a middle-class morality became the salient new criteria for marking subjects, nationals, citizens, and different kinds of citizens in the nation-state. As European legal status and its equivalent became accessible to an ever broader population, the cultural criteria of privilege was more carefully defined. European women who subscribed to the social prescription of white endogamy were made the custodians of a new morality—not, as we shall see, those “fictive” European women who rejected those norms.

⁸⁴ See my “Rethinking Colonial Categories: European Communities and the Boundaries of Rule,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 31:1 (1989), 134–61; and “Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power.”

⁸⁵ W. E. van Mastenbroek, *De Historische Ontwikkeling van de Staatsrechtelijke Indeeling der Bevolking van Nederlandsch-Indië*, 70 (Wageningen: Veenam, 1934).

⁸⁶ See W. F. Prins, “De Bevolkingsgroepen in het Nederlandsch-Indische Recht,” *Koloniale Studien*, 17 (1933), 652–88, especially 677.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 677; Van Marle, “De groep der Europeanen in Nederlands,” *Indonesie*, 5:2 (1951), 110.

Colonial practice contradicted the moral designations for European national and racial identity in blatant ways: which European morality was to be iconized? That embraced by those European men who cohabited with native women, became nativized, and supported their offspring? Or the morality of European men who retained their cultural trappings as they lived with native women who bore métis children, then departed for Europe unencumbered when their contracts were done? Or was it the morality of colonial officials who barred the filing of paternity suits against European men by native women or the morality of those who argued for it on the grounds that it would hinder fraudulent acknowledgments and easy recognitions by lower-class European men? What can we make of the ruling on European equivalence for non-native residents that stipulated that candidates must be from regions or states that subscribed to a monogamous family law?⁸⁸ How did this speak to the thousands of Indisch Dutch men for whom concubinage was the most frequently chosen option? And finally, if national identity was, as often stated, “an indescribable set of invisible bonds,” what did it mean when a European woman upon marriage to a native man was legally reclassified to follow his nationality? As we shall see, these invisible bonds, in which women only had a conjugal share by proxy to their husbands, were those enjoyed by some but not all men. The paradox is that native women married to European men were charged with the upbringing of children, with the formative making of Dutch citizens, and with culturally encoding the markers of race. Colonial cultures created problematic contexts in which patriarchal principles and criteria for citizenship seemed to be at fundamental odds. At a time when European feminists were turning to motherhood as a claim to citizenship, this notion of “mothers of citizens” meant something different in colonial politics, where definitions of proper motherhood served to clarify the blurred boundaries of nation and race.⁸⁹

THE MIXED-MARRIAGE LAW OF 1898

The mixed-marriage law of 1898 and the legal arguments which surrounded it are of special interest on several counts. Nowhere in the Dutch colonial record is the relationship between gender prescription, class membership, and racial category so contentiously debated and so clearly defined; nowhere is the danger of certain kinds of mixing so directly linked to national image while references to race are denied.⁹⁰ This is a liberal discourse ostensibly about the

⁸⁸ See William Mastenbroek, *De Historische Ontwikkeling van de Staatsrechtelijke Indeeling der Bevolking van Nederlandsch-Indie*, 87.

⁸⁹ See Karen Offen's “Depopulation, Nationalism and Feminism in Fin-de-Siècle France,” *American Historical Review*, 89:3 (1984), 648–76.

⁹⁰ The following discussion is based on several documents that I will abbreviate in referring to in the section below as follows: *Verslag van het Verhandelde in de Bijeenkomsten der Nederlandsch-Indische Juristen-Vereeniging* on 25, 27, and 29 June 1887 in Batavia [hereafter, JV]; “Voldoet de wetgeving betreffende huwelijken tusschen personen behoorende tot de beide

protection of native (men's) rights and later viewed as the paragon of ethical intent to equalize and synchronize colonial and metropolitan law. But, as Willem Wertheim noted nearly forty years ago, it did far more to buttress racial distinctions than to break them down.⁹¹

Legal attention to mixed marriages was not new in the Indies but had never been formalized as it was to be now.⁹² Mixed marriages had been regulated by government decree and church decretals soon after the East Indies Company established a settlement in Batavia in the early seventeenth century. The decree of 1617 forbidding marriages between Christian and non-Christian remained intact for over 200 years. With the new Civil Code of 1848, the religious criteria were replaced with the ruling that marriage partners of European and native standing would both be subject to European law.

The legislation on mixed marriages prior to 1898 was designed to address one kind of union but not others. The 1848 ruling allowed European men already living in concubinage with non-Christian native women to legalize those unions and the children borne from them. Although the civil law of 1848 was derived from the Napoleonic civil code, a dominant principle of it had been curiously ignored: that upon marriage a woman's legal status was made that of her husband. As Dutch jurists were to argue a half-century later, because mixed marriages had then been overwhelmingly between European men and native women, the latter's legal incorporation could be easily assumed. This, however, was no longer the case in the 1880s when Indies colonial officials noted two troubling phenomena: First, more women classified as European were choosing to marry non-European men; and second, concubinage continued to remain the domestic arrangement of choice over legal marriage.⁹³ Legal specialists argued that concubinage was a primary

staatkundige categorien der Nederlandsch Indische bevolking (die der Europeanen en met hen, en die der Inlanders en met hen gelijkgestelden) aan de maatschappelijke behoefte? Zoo neen, welke wijzigingen zijn noodig? (1887) [hereafter, VW]; J. A. Nederburgh, *Gemengde Huwelijken*, *Staatsblad* 1898, No. 158: *Officiële Bescheiden met Eenige Aanteekeningen* [hereafter, GH].

⁹¹ Wertheim, *Intergentiel Recht*.

⁹² The term mixed marriages (*gemengde huwelijken*) had two distinct but overlapping meanings in the Indies at the turn of the century. Common usage defined it as referring to contracts between a man and a woman of different racial origin; the state defined it as "a marriage between persons who were subject to different laws in the Netherlands Indies" with no reference to race. The distinction is significant for at least two reasons: (1) because the designations of legal standing as inlander versus European cut across the racial spectrum, with generations of mixed bloods falling on different sides of this divide and (2) because adat (customary) and Dutch law followed different rulings with respect to the marriage contract, divorce, inheritance, and child custody.

⁹³ Although the hierarchies of gender and race of Indies colonial society in part account for the fact that in 1895 more than half of the European men in the Indies still lived with native women outside of marriage, this may only tell one part of the story. The juridical debates on legal reform of mixed marriages suggest that there were women who chose cohabitation over legal marriage. At the very least, this suggests that concubinage may not have been an appropriate term for some of these arrangements, nor does it necessarily reflect what options women may have perceived in these arrangements.

cause of Indo-European impoverishment and had to be discouraged. However, the mixed-marriage rulings, as they stood, were so complicated and costly that people continued to choose cohabitation over legal marriage. Perhaps more disturbing still, some European, Indo-European, and native women opted to retain their own legal standing (thereby protecting their own material assets and those they could bestow on their children), thus rejecting marriage altogether.⁹⁴

Colonial lawyers were thus faced with a conundrum: How could they implement a ruling that would facilitate certain kinds of mixed marriages (over concubinage) and condemn others. Two basic premises were accepted on all sides: that the family was the bulwark of state authority and that the unity of the family could only be assured by its unity in law.⁹⁵ Thus, legitimate children could not be subject to one law and their father to another, nor could women hold native status while their husbands retained that of a European.⁹⁶ Given this agreement there were two possible solutions: either the “superior European standing” of either spouse would determine the legal status (and nationality) of the other; or, alternately, the patriarchal principle—that is, a woman follows the legal status of her husband (regardless of his origin)—would be applied. Principles of cultural and male supremacy seem to be opposed. Let us look at why they were not.

Those who argued that a European woman should retain her European standing in a mixed marriage did so on the grounds, among others, that European prestige would be seriously compromised. The liberal lawyer, J. H. Abendanon, cogently argued that European women would be placed in a “highly unfavorable and insecure position”; by being subject to adat, she risked becoming no more than a concubine if her native husband took a second wife, as polygamy under Islamic law was not justification for divorce. Others pointed out that she would be subject to the penal code applied to those of native status. Should she commit a crime, she would be treated to “humiliating physical and psychological punishment,” for which her “physical constitution” was unsuited. Her relegation to native status would thus cause an “outrageous scandal” in the European community at large.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ W. F. Prins, “De bevolkingsgroepen in het Nederlandsch-Indische recht,” *Koloniale Studien*, 17, 665. That some women chose cohabitation over legal mixed marriages is rarely addressed in the colonial or secondary literature on the assumption that all forms of cohabitation could be subsumed by the term concubinage, signaling the moral degradation of a “kept woman” that the later term implies. References in these legal debates to the fact that some women chose not to marry suggests that this issue needs further investigation.

⁹⁵ Nederburgh, *GH*, 17.

⁹⁶ As the chairman of the commission poignantly illustrated, a woman with native legal standing could be arrested for wearing European attire at the very moment she emerged from the building in which she had just married a European. Nor could a European man and his wife of native standing take the short boat trip from Soerabaya to Madura without prior permission of the authorities since sea passage for natives was forbidden by law (*JV*, 29–30).

⁹⁷ Nederburgh, *GH*, 20.

The argument above rested on one central but contested assumption: that all women classified as European deserved the protection and privilege of European law. However, those who made the counterclaim that the patriarchal principle be applied regardless of origin, argued that the quality of women with European standing was not the same. Although the state commission noted that mixed marriages between European women and native men were relatively few, it underlined their marked and “steady increase among certain classes of the inhabitants.”⁹⁸ Such mixed marriages, all but unthinkable in 1848 but now on the rise among Indo-European and even full-blooded European women with native men, were attributed to the increasing impoverishment and declining welfare of these women on the one hand and of the “intellectual and social development” among certain classes of native men on the other.⁹⁹ The latter issue, however, was rarely addressed because the gender hierarchy of the argument was contingent on assuming that women who made such conjugal choices were neither well-bred nor deserving of European standing.

One lawyer, Taco Henny, argued that the category, European, was a legal fiction not indicative of those who actually participated in the cultural and moral life of the European community and that the majority of women who made such choices were “outwardly and inwardly indistinguishable from natives.” Because these women tended to be of lower-class origin or mixed racial descent, he held that they were already native in culture and inclination and needed no protection from that cultural milieu in which they rightly belonged. Similarly, their subjection to the native penal code was no reason for scandal because it was appropriate to their actual station. They were already so far removed from Dutch society proper that it would cause no alarm.

If Taco Henny’s argument was not convincing enough, Pastor van Santen made the case in even bolder terms:

The European woman who wants to enter into such a marriage has already sunk so deep socially and morally that it does not result in ruin, either in her own eyes or those of society. It merely serves to consolidate her situation.¹⁰⁰

Such arguments rested on an interior distinction between *echte* Dutch women and those in whom “very little European blood actually flowed in their veins” within the category of those classified as European. Pastor van Santen’s claim that this latter group had already fallen from cultural and racial grace had its “proof” in yet another observation: “that if she was still European in thought and feeling, she would never take a step that was so clearly humiliating and debasing in the eyes of actual (*werkelijk*) European women.”¹⁰¹ This reason-

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 13.

¹⁰⁰ *JV*, 39.

¹⁰¹ *Idem.*

ing (which won in the end) marshaled the patriarchal tenets of the civil code to exclude women of a certain class and cultural milieu from Dutch citizenship rights without directly invoking race in the legal argument.

But this gendered principle did more work still and could be justified on wider grounds. First, such legislation defined a “true” European woman in accepted cultural terms: first, by her spousal choice, and, second, by her maternal sentiments. She was to demonstrate that she put her children’s interests first by guarding their European standing, which would be lost to her future progeny if she married a non-European under the new law. As such, it strongly dissuaded “true” European women from choosing to marry native men. This was its implicit and, according to some advocates, its explicit intent. In addition, it spoke on the behalf of well-to-do native men, arguing that they would otherwise lose their access to agricultural land and other privileges passed from fathers to sons under adat law.¹⁰² Finally, the new legislation claimed to discourage concubinage, as native men could thus retain their customary rights and would not be tempted to live with Indo-European and “full-blooded” European women outside of marriage. But perhaps most important, this appeal to patriarchy prevented the infiltration of increasing numbers of native men into the Dutch citizenry, particularly those of the middling classes, who were considered to have little to lose and much to gain by acquiring a Dutch nationality. Those who supported “uplifting” native men to European status through marriage would in effect encourage marriages of convenience at the expense of both European women who were drawn to such unions and those who prided themselves on the cultural distinctions that defined them as European.¹⁰³ Here again, as in the fraudulent recognitions of métis children, at issue was the undesirability of an increase in “the number of persons who would only be European in name.”¹⁰⁴

In the end, the mixed-marriage ruling and the debates surrounding it were more an index than a cause of profound changes in thinking about sexual practice, national identity, and colonial morality. Mixed marriages increased between native women and European men between 1900 and 1920. This was evident in the declining number of acknowledgments of children born out of wedlock and in an increased number of single European men who now mar-

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 51.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 40. The arguments presented over the mixed-marriage ruling are much more numerous and elaborate than this short account suggests. There were indeed those such as Abendanon (the lawyer friend of Kartini), whose proposals raised yet a whole different set of options than those offered in these accounts. He argued that both man and woman should be given European status, except in those cases in which a native man preferred to retain his rights under adat law. Abendanon also singlehandedly countered the claim that any European woman who chose to marry a native man was already debased, arguing that there were many Dutch girls in the Netherlands for whom this was not the case. But these arguments were incidental to the main thrust of the debate and had little sway in the final analysis.

¹⁰⁴ Nederburgh, *GM*, 64.

ried their *huishoudster* (housekeeper or sexual companion or both).¹⁰⁵ Condemnation of concubinage came simultaneously from several sources. The Pauperism Commission had provided new evidence that concubinage was producing an underclass of Indos that had to be curbed. By treating prostitution and the *huishoudster* system in the colonies as similar phenomena, the *Nederlandschen Vrouwenbond* (Dutch Women's Association) conflated the distinct options such arrangements afforded women and rallied against both.¹⁰⁶ The *Sarekat Islam*, one of the strongest native nationalist organizations, also campaigned against concubinage on religious grounds that may have discouraged some native women from such unions.¹⁰⁷ Still, in 1920 half the métis children of a European father and native mother were born outside of marriage. After 1925 the number of mixed marriages fell off again as the number of Dutch-born women coming to the Indies increased fourfold.

Hailed as exemplary liberal legislation, the mixed-marriage ruling was applied selectively on the basis of class, gender, and race. By reinvoking the Napoleonic civil code, European men were assured that their "invisible bonds" of nationality remained intact regardless of their legal partner. European women, on the other hand, were summarily (but temporarily) disenfranchised from their national community on the basis of conjugal choice alone.¹⁰⁸ Those mixed marriages which derived from earlier cohabitations between European men and native women were not the unions most in question, and jurists of different persuasions stated as much throughout the debate. These marriages were considered unproblematic on the assumption that a native woman would be grateful for, and proud of, her elevated European status and content with legal dependence on a European man. Were native women easily granted European legal standing and Dutch citizenship because there was no danger that they could or would fully exercise their rights? The point is never discussed because racial and gender privileges were in line.

But what about the next generation of métis? Although the new ruling effectively blocked the naturalization of native adult men through marriage, it granted a new generation of métis children a European standing by affixing

¹⁰⁵ See A. van Marle's "De Groep der Europeanen in Nederlands-Indie, iets over ontstaan en groei," *Indonesie*, 5:3 (1952), 322, 328. Van Marle suggests that the much larger number of illiterate women of European standing in central Java and the Moluccas compared to the rest of the Indies indicates that the number of mixed marriages in these regions was particularly high (p. 330). But this was not the case everywhere. In East Java, European men acknowledged more of their métis children but continued to cohabit with the native mothers of their children outside of marriage (p. 495).

¹⁰⁶ Mevrouw Douaire Klerck, *Eenige Beschouwingen over Oost-Indische Toestanden*, 3–19 (Amsterdam: Versluys, 1898).

¹⁰⁷ S. S. J. Ratu-Langie, *Sarekat Islam*, 21 (Baarn: Hollandia Drukkerij, 1913).

¹⁰⁸ A woman who had contracted a mixed marriage could, upon divorce or death of her husband, declare her desire to reinstate her original nationality as long as she did so within a certain time. However, a native woman who married a European man and subsequently married and divorced a man of non-European status could not recoup her European status.

their nationality to their father's. Would this generation be so assuredly cut from their mother's roots as well? The persistent vigilance with which concern for omgeving, upbringing, class, and education were discussed in the 1920s and 1930s suggests that there were resounding doubts. The Netherlands Indies Eugenics Society designed studies to test whether children of Europeans born in the Indies might display different "racial markers" than their parents.¹⁰⁹ Eugenicist logic consolidated discussions about national identity and cultural difference in a discourse of "fitness" that specified the interior frontiers of the nation, reaffirming yet again that upbringing and parenting were critical in deciding who would be marked as a fictive compatriot or true citizen.

Although the race criterion was finally removed from the Indies constitution in 1918 under native nationalist pressure, debates over the psychological, physical, and moral make-up of Indo-Europeans intensified in the 1920s and 1930s more than they had before. A 1936 doctoral dissertation at the University of Amsterdam could still "explain the lack of energy" of Indo-Europeans by the influence of a sapping and warm, dank climate; by the bad influence of the "energy-less Javanese race" on Indo-Europeans; and by the fact that "halfbloods" were not descended from the "average European" and the "average Javanese."¹¹⁰ In the 1920s, the European-born Dutch population was visibly closing its ranks, creating new cultural boundaries while shoring up its old ones. Racial hate (*rassehaat*) and representation were watchwords of the times. A renewed disdain for Indos permeated a discourse that heightened in the Depression as the nationalist movement grew stronger and as unemployed "full-blooded" Europeans found "roaming around" in native villages blurred with the ranks of the Indo poor. How the colonial state distinguished these two groups from one another and from "natives" on issues of unemployment insurance and poor relief underscored how crucial these interior frontiers were to the strategies of the emerging welfare state.¹¹¹

INDO-EUROPEANS AND THE QUEST FOR A FATHERLAND

The slippage between race and culture, as well the intensified discussions of racial membership and national identity, were not invoked by the echte-Europeesche population alone. We have seen that the moral geography of the colonies had a metonymic quality: Despite the huge numbers of Europeans of mixed parentage and substantial economic means, the term Indo was usually reserved for that segment who were *verindische* (indianized) and poor. Less clear are the cultural, political, and racial criteria by which those of mixed

¹⁰⁹ Ernest Rodenwalt, "Eugenetische Problemen in Nederlandsch-Indie," *Ons Nageslacht*, 1–8 (1928).

¹¹⁰ Johan Winsemius, *Nieuw-Guinee als kolonisatie-gebied voor Europeanen en van Indo-Europeanen*, 227 (Ph.D. Diss., Faculty of Medicine, University of Amsterdam, 1936).

¹¹¹ Jacques van Doorn emphasizes the dualistic policy on poverty in the 1930s in "Armoede en Dualistisch Beleid" (unpublished); I would refer to it as a three-tiered policy, not a dualistic one.

descent identified themselves. The contradictory and changing criteria used by the various segments of the Indo-European movement at the turn of the century highlight how contentious and politically contingent these deliberations were.

It is not accidental that the term Indo-European is difficult to define. In the Indies it applied to those of *mengbloeden* (mixed blood) of European and native origin, to Europeans born in the Indies of Dutch nationality and not of native origin, and to those pur-sang Europeans born elsewhere who referred to the Indies as a “second fatherland.”¹¹² The semantics of mixing thus related to blood, place, and belonging to different degrees and at different times. *Soeria Soemirat*, one of the earliest publications of the Indo-European constituency in the late 1890s, included among its members all Indies-born Europeans and took as its central goal the uplifting of the (Indo)-European poor. The *Indisch Bond*, formed in 1898, was led by an Indies-born European constituency that spoke for the Indo poor but whose numbers were rarely represented in their ranks. At the heart of both organizations was the push for an *Indisch vaderland*, contesting both the popular terms of Indonesian nationalism and the exclusionary practices of the Dutch-born (*totok*) society.¹¹³

The Indo-European movement never developed as a nationalist movement. As “socially thin” as Benedict Anderson suggests its creole counterpart was in the Americas, it could neither enlist a popular constituency nor dissociate from its strong identification with the European-born Dutch elite. The Indisch movement often made its bids for political and economic power by invoking Eurasian racial superiority to inlanders while concurrently denying a racial criteria for judging their status vis-à-vis European-born Dutch. The subsequent effort in 1912 to form an *Indische Partij* (with the motto “Indies for the Indies”) was stridently antigovernment, with a platform that addressed native as well as poor Indo welfare. Despite an inclusionary rhetoric, its native and poor Indo constituency were categorically marginalized and could find no common political ground.¹¹⁴ By 1919, when native nationalist mobilization was gaining strength, the need for a specifically *Indo-Bond* took on new urgency and meaning. As its founder argued, it would be a *class-verbond*

¹¹² J. Th. Petrus Blumberger, *De Indo-Europeesche Beweging in Nederlandsch-Indie*, 5 (Haarlem: Tjeenk Willink, 1939).

¹¹³ See Paul van der Veur’s “The Eurasians of Indonesia: A Problem and Challenge in Colonial History,” *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, 9:2 (September 1966), 191–207, and his “Cultural Aspects of the Eurasian Community in Indonesian Colonial Society,” *Indonesia*, 6 (October 1968), 38–53.

¹¹⁴ On the various currents of Eurasian political activity, see Paul W. van der Veur’s “The Eurasians of Indonesia: A Problem and Challenge in Colonial History.” On the importance of Indo individuals in the early Malay press and nationalist movement, see Takashi Shiraishi’s *An Age in Motion: Popular Radicalism in Java, 1912–1926*, especially 37, 58–59 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990). Neither account addresses the class differences within Eurasian groups and where their distinct allegiances lay.

(class-based association) to support the interests of the larger Indo-group."¹¹⁵ This organization, eventually called the Indo-Europeesch Verbond (IEV), with more than 10,000 members in 1924, continued to plead the cause of the Indo poor while remaining unequivocally loyal to the Dutch colonial state. This truncated version of a much more complicated story, nevertheless, illustrates the unsettling point that the poor Indo constituency never achieved a political voice. However large their numbers, they were silently rejected from the early Indonesian nationalist movement and could only make their demands based on claims to a cultural and racial alliance with those Dutch who ruled.¹¹⁶

Questions of cultural, racial, and national identity were particularly charged around proposals for Indo-European agricultural settlements. This utopian project for white settler colonies peopled with those of mixed descent joined persons of widely disparate political persuasions in curious ways. In 1874 and 1902 state commissions on European pauperism had begun to explore the agricultural possibilities for the Indo poor. Their proposals focused on beggar-colonies, self-sufficient rural confinements in which (Indo)European paupers would be housed, fed, and kept out of sight. Other, more ambitious schemes advocated intensive horticultural and small-scale estates that would neither compete with native peasant production nor the agribusiness industry. These rural solutions to the mixed-blood problem, entertained in both the Indies and Indochina, were based on a common set of premises: that native blood ties would make them more easily acclimatized to tropical agriculture, while their European heritage would provide them with the reason and drive for success. Thus brawn and brains, tropical know-how and European science, and government assistance and private initiative were to come together to produce an economically self-sustaining, morally principled, and loyal *volk*. The Indische Bond first, and the IEV later, made land rights and agricultural settlements for needy Indos one of its principal platforms. Conservative and fascist-linked organizations concerned with European unemployment in Holland and European prestige in the colonies also proposed a New Guinea settled by white people that would serve their imperial plan. As a province of a *Groter Nederland*, New Guinea might absorb an economically weak underclass in the metropole, alleviate Dutch unemployment, and foster a settler colonialism in the Indies for continued rule.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵ Blumberger, *De Indo-Europeesche Beweging*, 50.

¹¹⁶ According to the historian, Rudolph Mrazek, the early silent rejection of the Indo-European community from the Indonesian nationalist project turned explicit under Soekarno in the mid-1920s, when Indo-Europeans were categorically barred from membership in nationalist political organizations. Mrazek suggests that this silence among Dutch-educated nationalist leaders on the Indo question should be understood as a response from their own cultural formation and identification as cultural hybrids themselves (personal communication).

¹¹⁷ See P. J. Drooglever's discussion of this failed effort in *De Vaderlandse Club*, 193–208 (Franecker: T. Wever, 1980).

The vision of turning potential patricides into pastoral patriots never worked, but its discussion raised critical national issues for different constituencies. The state viewed the poor Indo population as *déraciné*, rootless and therefore dangerous. The Indisch movement clearly could not claim a fatherland without territorial rights and roots within it (since many Indo-Europeans had European standing, they could not own land). The movement's appeal to an *Indisch* nationalism lacked a proper mass-based constituency, a folk, and a homeland to make its claims. For the conservative Vaderlandse Club, rural settler colonies in the 1930s were part of a wider effort to ward off a Japanese invasion while reducing overpopulation in the Netherlands. The Fatherlands' Club and the IEV joined in a short-lived alliance to support the settler schemes, to oppose the *ontblanking* (unwhitening) of the Indies, and to attack the ethical policy that had fostered the increased entry of educated Javanese into subaltern civil service jobs. However, as the IEV became increasingly anti-Totok, their conflicting images of the future fatherland became difficult to deny.¹¹⁸

For the Indo-European movement, their *vaderland* was an Indisch fatherland independent of Holland. For the Indies fascists, who defined their task as the self purification of the nation (*zelfzuivering der natie*), their notion of the vaderland juxtaposed images of "a tropical Netherlands," uniting the Netherlands and Indies into a single state.¹¹⁹ Neither of these imaginings concurred with that of the native nationalists who were to oppose them both.

ROOTLESSNESS AND CULTURAL RACISM

With rootedness at the center state of nationalist discourse, the notion of rootlessness captured a range of dangers about *métissage*.¹²⁰ Abandoned métis youths were generically viewed as vagrants in Indochina, as child delinquents in the Indies, as *de facto* stateless subversives without a patrie.¹²¹ In times of economic crisis "free-roaming European bastards" were rounded up for charity and goodwill in efforts to avert a racial disgrace. Liberal colonial projects spent decades creating a barrage of institutions to incorpo-

¹¹⁸ P. J. Drooglever, *De Vaderlandse Club, 1929–1942: Totoks en de Indische Politiek*, 285 (Franeker: T. Wever, 1980).

¹¹⁹ *Verbond Nederland en Indie*, no. 3, September 1926, 3. In the late 1920s, this publication appended the subtitle to the name above of "A Fascist Monthly."

¹²⁰ This issue of rootlessness is most subtly analyzed in contemporary contexts. Liisa Malkki explores the meanings attached to displacement and uprootedness in the national order of things ("National Geographic: The Rooting of Peoples and the Territorialization of National Identity among Scholars and Refugees," *Cultural Anthropology* (1992). André-Pierre Taguieff examines LePen's nationalist rhetoric on the dangers of the rootlessness of immigrant workers in France. See Pierre-André Taguieff's excellent analysis of LePen's rhetoric in "The Doctrine of the National Front in France (1972–1989)," in *New Political Science*, no. 16/17, 29–70.

¹²¹ See A. Braconier, "Het Pauperisme onder de in Ned. Oost-Indie levende Europeanen," *Nederlandsch-Indie*, no. 1 (1917), 291–300, at 293.

rate, inculcate, and insulate abandoned métis youths. But the image of rootlessness was not only applied to those who were abandoned.

In 1938, government officials in Hanoi conducted a colony-wide enquiry to monitor the physical and political movements of métis. The Resident of Tonkin recommended a comprehensive state-sponsored social rehabilitation program to give métis youths the means to function as real *citoyens* on the argument that with “French blood prevailing in their veins,” they already “manifested an instinctive attachment to France.”¹²² But many French in Indochina must have been more equivocal about their instinctive patriotic attachments. The fear that métis might revert to their natural inclinations persisted, as did a continuing discourse on their susceptibility to the native milieu, where they might relapse to the immoral and subversive states of their mothers.

Fears of métissage were not confined to colonial locales. We need only read the 1942 treatise, *Les Métis*, of René Martial who combined his appointment on the faculty of medicine in Paris with eugenic research on the *anthro-biologie des races*. For him, métis were categorically persons of physical and mental deformity. He saw métis descent as a frequent cause both of birth defects in individuals and of the contaminated body politic of France. As he put it,

Instability, the dominant characteristic of métis, . . . is contagious, it stands in opposition to the spirit of order and method, it generates indeterminable and futile discussion and paralyzes action. It is this state of mind that makes democracies fail that live with this chimera of racial equality, one of the most dangerous errors of our times, defended with piety by pseudo-French who have found in it a convenient means to insinuate themselves everywhere.¹²³

That Martial’s spirit continues to thrive in contemporary France in the rhetoric of Le Pen is not coincidental. The discourses on métissage in the early twentieth century and in LePen’s rhetoric on immigrant foreigners today are both about external boundaries and interior frontiers. Both discourses are permeated with images of purity, contamination, infiltration, and national decay. For both Martial and LePen, cultural identities refer to human natures and psychological propensities inimical to the identity of the French nation and a drain on the welfare state.¹²⁴

ON CULTURAL HYBRIDITY AND DOMESTIC SUBVERSIONS

These historically disparate discourses are striking in how similarly they encode métissage as a political danger predicated on the psychological liminality, mental instability, and economic vulnerability of culturally hybrid

¹²² Enquete sur Métissage, AOM, Amiraux 53.50.6.

¹²³ René Martial, *Les Métis*, 58 (Paris: Flammarion, 1942).

¹²⁴ See Taguieff, “The Doctrine of the National Front.”

minorities.¹²⁵ But could we not re-present these discourses by turning them on their heads, by unpacking what the weakness of métissage was supposed to entail? Recast, these discourses may be more about the fear of empowerment, not about marginality at all; about groups that straddled and disrupted cleanly marked social divides and whose diverse membership exposed the arbitrary logic by which the categories of control were made.¹²⁶ These discourses are not unlike those about Indische women that, in disparaging their impoverished and hybrid Dutch and non-European tastes, eclipsed the more compelling reality that they could “sometimes pass between ethnic communities, cross lines drawn by color and caste and enter slots for which they had no birthright, depending on their alliance with men.”¹²⁷ The final clause is critical because through these varied sexual contracts citizenship rights were accorded and métis identities were contested and remade.¹²⁸ The management of sexuality, parenting, and morality were at the heart of the late imperial project. Cohabitation, prostitution, and legally recognized mixed marriages slotted women, men, and their progeny differently on the social and moral landscape of colonial society. These sexual contracts were buttressed by pedagogic, medical, and legal evaluations that shaped the boundaries of European membership and the interior frontiers of the colonial state.

Métissage was first a name and then made a thing. It was so heavily politicized because it threatened both to destabilize national identity and the Manichean categories of ruler and ruled. The cultural density of class, gender, and national issues that it invoked converged in a grid of transgressions which tapped into metropolitan and colonial politics at the same time. The sexual affront that it represented challenged middle-class family order and racial frontiers, norms of childrearing and conjugal patriarchy, and made it increasingly difficult to distinguish between true nationals and their sullied,

¹²⁵ On the recent British discourse on Britishness and the cultural threat of Islam to that identity, see Talal Asad’s rich analysis in “Multiculturalism and British Identity in the Wake of the Rushdie Affair,” *Politics and Society*, 18:4 (December 1990), 455–80.

¹²⁶ Hazel Carby (“Lynching, Empire and Sexuality,” *Critical Enquiry*, 12:1 (1985), 262–77) argues that Afro-American women intellectuals at the turn of the century focused on the métis figure because it both enabled an exploration and expressed the relations between the races, because it demythologized concepts of pure blood and pure race while debunking any proposition of degeneracy through amalgamation. Such black women writers as Pauline Hopkins embraced the mulatto to counter the official script that miscegenation was not the inmost desire of the nonwhite peoples but the result of white rape (p. 274). In both the Indies and the United States at the same time, the figure of the Indo-mulatto looms large in both dominant and subaltern literary production, serving to convey strategic social dilemmas and political messages. It is not surprising, then, that the portrayal of the Indo in fiction was widely discussed in the Indies and metropolitan press by many more than those who were interested in literary style alone.

¹²⁷ Taylor, *The Social World of Batavia*, 155.

¹²⁸ Carole Pateman argues that the sexual contract is fundamental to the functioning of European civil society, in that the principle of patriarchal right defines the social contract between men, and the individual and citizen as male (*The Sexual Contract* [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988]).

pseudo-compatriots. The issue of fraudulent recognition could be viewed in a similar light. Poor white men and native women who arranged legal recognition of their own children or those of others, defied the authority of the state by using the legal system to grant Dutch and French citizenship to a younger generation.¹²⁹

The turn of the century represents one major break point in the nature of colonial morality and in national projects. In both the Indies and Indochina, a new humanitarian liberal concern for mass education and representation was coupled with newly recast social prescriptions for maintaining separatist and exclusionary cultural conventions regarding how, where, and with whom European colonials should live. Virtually all of these differentiating practices were worked through a psychologizing and naturalizing impulse that embedded gender inequalities, sexual privilege, class priorities, and racial superiority in a tangled political field. Colonial liberalism in its nationalist cast opened the possibilities of representation for some while it set out moral prescriptions and affixed psychological attributes which partially closed those possibilities down.

But the exclusionary strategies of the colonial state were not meted out to a passive population, nor is it clear that many of those who inhabited the borderlands of European colonial communities sought inclusion within them. At the core of the métis problem were cultural contestations of gender and class that made these "laboratories of modernity" unwieldy sites of engineering.¹³⁰ The experiments were reworked by their subjects, not least of all by women who refused to give "up" their children to charitable institutions for European training and by others who chose cohabitation (not concubinage) over marriage. Women and men who lived culturally hybrid lifestyles intercepted nationalist and racist visions. Without romanticizing their impoverishment, we might consider the possibility that their choices expressed a domestic subversion, a rejection of the terms of the civilizing mission. For those who did not adhere to European bourgeois prescriptions, cultural hybridity may have affirmed their own new measures of civility.

¹²⁹ I thank Luise White for pressing me to think out this point.

¹³⁰ Gwendolyn Wright, "Tradition in the Service of Modernity: Architecture and Urbanism in French Colonial Policy, 1900–1930," *Journal of Modern History*, 59 (June 1987), 291–316, at 297.