

**"Sexual Affronts and Racial Frontiers:
National Identity, 'Mixed Bloods'
and the Cultural Genealogies of
Europeans in Colonial Southeast Asia"**

Ann Stoler

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"SEXUAL AFFRONTS AND RACIAL FRONTIERS: NATIONAL IDENTITY,
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IN COLONIAL SOUTHEAST ASIA

Ann Stoler
Departments of Anthropology and History
University of Michigan

This paper 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 I begin with a story about métissage (interracial unions) and the sorts of progeny to which it gave rise ("indos", "métis", "mixed-bloods") in French Indochina at the turn of the century. It is a story whose multiple versions are 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

¹ An much shorter and earlier version of the paper was originally presented at a session in honor of Eric Wolf at the Annual Meetings of the American Anthropological Association, New Orleans, December 1990. This version was prepared for the TNI Conference "The Decolonization of Imagination: The New Europe and Its Others", Amsterdam, 3-5 May 1991.

was in the conflation of racial category, sexual morality, cultural competence and national identity that the case was contested and politically charged. More broadly, it allows me to address one of the tensions of empire which this paper only begins to sketch; the relationship between the rhetorics 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, co-existent 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 French Indochina and the Netherlands Indies. French Indochina was a colony of commerce, occupied by the military in the 1860s, 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 borne in the Indies numbering in the tens of thousands in 1900, making 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 In conventional historiography, French colonialism is frequently defined by its assimilationist policy and "acceptance of racial equality" in contrast to the British "colour bar", with the Netherlands Indies standing somewhere in between.⁵

What is striking is that similar discourses were mapped on to such vastly

² I owe this particular formulation to Uday Mehta ("Liberal Strategies of Exclusion" Politics and Society 18(4):427-54) who 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.

³ Cochinchine's European population only increased from 594 in 1864 to 3,000 by 1900 (Charles Meyer, De Francais en Indochine, 1860-1910, Paris:Hachette, p.70). By 1914 there were only 149 planters qualified as electors in the Chamber of Agriculture of Tonkin and Annam; on Java alone there were several thousand. See John Laffey's "Racism in Tonkin before 1914" French Colonial Studies (1977):65-81.

⁴ See Jean Taylor's (1983) historically and conceptually rich gendered analysis of the mestizo features of colonial culture in the Netherlands Indies.

⁵ See Martin Lewis' "One Hundred Million Frenchmen: The "Assimilation" theory in French colonial policy" Comparative Studies in Society and History (1961)4:129-51.

different racial and political landscapes; that 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, a threat to white prestige, an embodiment of European degeneration and moral decay.⁶ I would suggest that both 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 only 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 the contradictory connotations it implies. As Etienne Balibar has noted, a frontier locates both a site of enclosure and contact, of surveilled passage and exchange. Coupled with the word "interior" it carries the sense of internal distinctions within an territory (or empire); at the level of the individual, it marks the moral predicates by which a subject retains her/his national identity despite location (outside the national frontier) and despite heterogeneity within the nation-state. As Fichte deployed it, an "interior frontier" raises two problematics: that the "purity" of the community is prone to penetration on its interior and exterior borders, and that the essence of the community is an intangible "moral attitude", "a multiplicity of invisible ties".⁸

Viewing late 19th century representations of a "national essence" in these terms, we can trace how métissage emerges as a powerful trope for internal contamination and

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, ed. Micaela di Leonardo, University of California Press, forthcoming.

⁷ In the following section I draw heavily on Etienne Balibar's highly informed and subtle discussion of this concept in "Fichte et la Frontiere Interieure: A propos des Discours a la nation allemande", Cahiers de Fontenay (forthcoming).

⁸ Fichte quoted in Balibar, *ibid.*, p.4.

challenge, morally, politically, and sexually conceived.⁹ The changing density and intensity of its 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 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 rejected, 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. As Paul Rich suggests, 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. The profusion of French juridical tracts in the 1930s as to whether métis should be made a separate legal category (distinct from "European" and "indigene"), and the political effects of doing so, were forged in the tense environment in which Vietnamese nationalists were making their opposition most

⁹ See my "Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power" on métissage and contamination. Also see Andre-Pierre Taguieff's La Force du Préjugé (1987), where he discusses "la hantise du métissage" and argues that the metis problem is not a question of mixed-blood but a question of the indeterminate "social identity" which metissage implies, pp. 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 (1932). La condition juridique des métis dans les possessions françaises. Paris:Domat-Montchrestien.

¹¹ Paul Rich. Race and Empire in British Politics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1986), where he 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.

strongly felt.¹² But anti-colonial challenges in Indochina, contrary to the discourse which characterized the métis as a potential subversive vanguard, was never predominantly led, nor peopled, by them. In the Indies on the other hand, 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.

While the content of the metis problem was in part responsive to popular threats to colonial rule, I would suggest that 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 where state authority could be secured or irreparably undermined.¹³

In both metropole and colony, the liberal impulse for social welfare, representation and protective legislation at the turn of the century focused enormous energy on domestic arrangements, sexual morality, parenting and more specifically on the moral environments 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

¹² See David Marr's two important studies of the Vietnamese nationalist movements, Vietnamese Anticolonialism, 1885-1925, Berkeley: California Press; and Tradition on Trial, 1920-1945, Berkeley: California Press. It is noteworthy that Marr makes no reference to the metis 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 more than about future criminals and prostitutes, but 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 debatten over ongehuwd moederschap, afstamming en huwelijk in Nederland 1870-1900, Amsterdam: Stichting Beheer IISG) to R. Kleyn's "Onderzoek naar het vaderschap" Het Recht in Nederlandsch-Indie 67 (1896):130-50.

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 (1978)5:9-57.

imported to the periphery from the metropolitan core. As Eugene Weber has argued for late 19th 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 Frenchification of France and its colonies through compulsory education, moral instruction and language was not a one way process, with an consensual template for that identity forged in the metropole and later transported by new metropolitan recruits to colonial citizens. Between 1871 and 1914, as Raoul Girardet has noted, French authorities were preoccupied with the threat of national diminishment and decline--external and interior frontiers were in question at home and abroad.¹⁷ For France, the issue was complicated (and distinguished from the situation in the Netherlands), by a declining natality throughout the 19th century whose acceleration in the 1880s placed a premium on state strategies that would allow a wider membership in the French national community while protecting the cultural contours of what it meant to be French.¹⁸

¹⁵ See Eugene Weber's Peasant into Frenchmen (1976) Stanford:Stanford University Press, p.114. While Weber's argument that much of France's rural population neither considered itself French nor embraced a national identity has been strongly refuted by many scholars, for my purposes his ancillary argument holds; namely, that debates over the nature of French citizenship and identity were heavily contested at the time.

¹⁶ Weber, *ibid.*, p.110.

¹⁷ Raoul Girardet, Le nationalisme francais (1983) Seuil:Paris, 30-31. Also see Robert Nye's Crime, madness and politics in modern France: The medical concept of national decline where he notes that "the 'scientific' study of national character was a veritable industry in France in the thirty years before World War I", p.140.

¹⁸ French fertility rates began to decline in the late 18th century, much earlier than in other European countries but decreased most sharply after 1881 (See Claire Goldberg Moses, French Feminism in the 19th Century, 1984: Binghamton:SUNY, pp. 20-24). Demographic decline, as opposed to individual fertility per se, was particularly low in 1900 with the number of French citizens shrinking as those of Germany, following the loss of Alsace-Lorraine in 1870 increased (See Jan Romein's The Watershed of Two Eras: Europe in 1900, p.6).

While French anxieties over national identity during this period are most commonly attributed to the loss of Alsace-Lorraine, of equal import and perhaps more saliency was the collective assimilation of over 100,000 Algerian Jews under the Crémieux Decree in the same year. Debates over who was "really" French and who was not strongly intensified over the next twenty years as increasing numbers of working-class Italians, Spanish and Maltese in Algeria were accorded French citizenship. Thus, of the 200,000 "Francaise d'Algerie", more than half were of non-French origin. Coupled with the 20,000 Parisian political undesirables deported there by the 2nd 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 Francais d'Algerie (1961) Paris:René Julliard.

The convergence of domestic and colonial social reform in the Netherlands is even more striking, if of a somewhat different order. The two decades before and after the turn of the century are marked by two newly formulated sociopolitical projects: on the one hand, by a middle-class preoccupation with the childrearing practices of Dutch working-class families, and with a more general "civilizing offensive" that focused on moral "uplift" in both locales.

As Ali de Regt argues, middle class energies and state interventions were focused, not on popular education per se, but on the small minority of "neglected" and "delinquent" working class children whose "opvoeding" (upbringing) ill-prepared them for "their future place in the social system" and thus marked them as a danger to the state.¹⁹ In tandem with this domestic "civilizing" impulse was also an imperial one: issues of upbringing and education brought metropolitan class and imperial visions together in new sorts of ways.²⁰ The securing of Dutch influence in South Africa just prior to the outbreak of the Boer War centered on a specific set of cultural strategies; here too education, language and a cultural belonging were to mark the new boundaries of a "Greater Netherlands" that would embrace Flanders, South Africa and the Indies.²¹ The point is that in both metropolitan class and imperial projects, education, childrearing and national belonging were intimately tied.

Thus, who might be considered "truly" French or Dutch resonated from core to colony and from colony to core.²² In the Indies and Indochina, it was cultural milieu, both upbringing and education, that were seen to demarcate which métis children would

¹⁹ See Ali de Regt's "De vorming van een opvoedings-traditie: arbeiderskinderen rond 1900" in Geschiedenis van opvoeding en onderwijs. B. Kruithof, J. Nordman, Piet de Rooy, eds. (1982). Nijmegen.

²¹ See M. Kuitenbrouwer, 1985. Nederland en de opkomst van het modern imperialisme: klonen en buitenlandse politiek, 1870-1902. Amsterdam, pp.176-177.

²² For the Netherlands, compulsory education was only instituted in 1900 at about the same time it was introduced to the Indies (see Jan Romein [1978] The Watershed of Two Eras: Europe in 1900. Wesleyan, p.278. 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 (1979) that traces state interventions in family life and childrearing practices to a half century earlier.

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".²³ Métis education was about retaining colonial boundaries and regenerating the nation. At issue were the means by which European beschaving, (civilization/ culture) would be disseminated without undercutting the criteria by which Europeans 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; what Gerald Sider, in another context, identified as the tension between a form of domination predicated on both incorporation and distancing at one and the same time.²⁴ This tension expressed itself in "the métis problem" in quintessential form: some métis were candidates for incorporation, to others it was categorically denied. In either case, the decision that a métis should be granted citizenship or subject status, could not be made on the basis of race alone, since some degree of European descent was, by definition, what all métis shared. How then to mark out the candidates for exclusion from the national community while retaining the possibility that some individuals would be granted the rights of inclusion because French and Dutch "blood prevailed in their veins?" I explore that question in this paper by working off a 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 one and the same time. We cannot determine which of these

²³ See T.H. Marshall, Class, Citizenship and Social Development. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, p.81.

²⁴ See 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 (1987):3-23.

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.²⁵ However, on the issue of métissage, there is 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. Nor were patriarchal principles always applied to shore up government priorities. Colonial authorities with competing agendas only agreed on two premises: that children had to be taught both their place and race, and that the family was the crucial site in which future subjects and loyal citizens were to be made. Given this, it is not surprising that the domestic life of individuals was increasingly subject to the public scrutiny of a wide range of private and government organizations who charged themselves with the task of policing the moral borderlands of the European community and the psychological propensities of its marginal, as well as supposedly full-fledged, members.

CULTURAL COMPETENCE AND METISSAGE

In 1898 in the French Indochinese city of Haiphong, the 19 year old son of a French minor naval employee, Sieur Icard, allegedly without provocation assaulted a German naval mechanic, struck his temple with a whip, attempted to crush his eye, and was sentenced by the tribunal court to six months in prison.²⁶ Subsequent to the sentence and spurred by the father's efforts to make an appeal for an attenuated prison term, some higher officials questioned whether the penalty was unduly severe. Clemency

²⁵ See Mary Poovey's Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

²⁶ Archives d'Outre-Mer, Protectorat de l'Annam et du Tonkin, no.1506, 17 December, 1898.

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 (Eurasian) the child of a man who was a French citizen and a woman who was a colonial subject, his concubine and Vietnamese.

How the boy was referred to in the exchange of letters and reports between the Governor-General, the father, and the court, imparted very different evaluations of his cultural identity, giving substance to their separate claims. For the Governor-General, the boy was "Nguyen van Thinh dit Lucien" (thereby invoking not only the double naming of the son, privileging first Nguyen van Thinh over Lucien, but suggesting the dubious nature of his cultural affinities--his real name was Nguyen van Thinh, although he answered to the name "Lucien"). For the father, Icard, the boy was simply "Lucien", (Nguyen van Thinh erased, thereby affirming the Frenchness of his son); and to an angry president of Haiphong's tribunal court, the boy was only "Nguyen van Thinh" with Lucien dropping out all together. Icard was named as his "alleged father", thereby putting the very kinship between the two in question.

Icard's plea for pardon was carefully conceived, invoking his own patriotic sentiments as well as those of his son's; he protested that the tribunal, instead of seeing Lucien as that which he was--the son of a Frenchman--rather, treated him as a "vulgaire annamite" (common annamite) despite Icard's legal recognition of Lucien as his own. Not only, he claimed, had his son been provoked and only then struck the German in retaliation, but more importantly, Lucien had been raised in a French patriotic milieu, in a household in which Germans were held in "mépris et dédain" (contempt and disdain). He pointed out that their home was full of drawings of the 1870 (Franco-Prussian) war and that like any impressionable [read French] boy of his age, these images struck and excited Lucien's imagination.

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 to what extent he could be and was inculcated with the patriotic feelings and nationalist sentiments which might have provoked such a loyal response. The tribunal argued that Icard was 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. The non-French inclinations of Icard's child, however, were most firmly established with the court's observation that Lucien was illiterate and only familiar with a few words in French. Icard's argument was thus further undermined since Icard himself "spoke no annamite" and therefore had no language in common with his offspring.

While these counter-arguments may have been sufficient to convince the Governor-General not to grant leniency, there was another vague, unclarified, scandalous and therefore decisive reason invoked to deny the son's case and the father's appeal; namely that there were

"immoral relations which could have existed between the detainee and the one who declared himself his father".
 ["relations immorales qui ont pu exister entre le
 détenu et celui qui s'est déclaré son père"]

Or as put by Villeminot, the City Attorney in Haiphong, charged with further investigating Icard's appeal, there were no circumstances under which the boy should be accorded leniency on the grounds that (1) "his morality was always detestable" and (2) that the police reports permitted one "to entertain the most serious suspicions concerning the nature of the relations which Nguyen van Think maintained with his alleged father".²⁷

Whether this was a coded allegation of homosexuality or a reference 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.²⁸ What is clear is that perversion and patriotism specifically, and immorality and nationalist sentiments, were considered mutually exclusive categories. As George Mosse describes for 19th century Germany, adherence to a middle-class European sexual morality

²⁷ ADM, No. 1792, 12 December 1898.

²⁸ According to the procureur-general, Raoul Abor, these "fraudulent acknowledgements" were threatening "to submerge" the "French element" by "a deluge of naturalised natives". See Raoul Abor (1917) Des Reconnaissances Frauduleuses d'Enfants Naturels en Indochine. Hanoi: Imprimerie Tonkinoise, p.25.

was one implicit requisite for full-fledged citizenship in the European nation-state.²⁹

But with all these allusions to suspicious and duplicitous behavior perhaps what was more unsettling in this case was another unspeakable story; namely, the power of the sentiment between father and son, the fact that Icard had 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 within the prevalent colonial episteme therefore could have none of the interior attributes--of being French at all. What was scandalous and immoral in their relationship was that 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 which 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 not lauded by the lower courts or 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, sentence was passed 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 Think" in cultural sensibilities and "Lucien" to his father. Or from a somewhat different perspective that Lucien's physical and cultural otherness 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 a French 'cultural genealogy' on which racist pedigrees and colonial power were contested and maintained.

ON METIS CHILDREN AND THE QUESTION OF ABANDONMENT

²⁹ George Mosse. Nationalism and Sexuality. (1985). Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

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 "metis question" at the turn of the century as a problem of "abandonment", of children culturally on the loose, sexually abused, economically impoverished, morally neglected, and politically dangerous. The consequences of mixed unions were collapsed into a singular moral trajectory, one which, without state intervention, would lead to a future of Eurasian paupers and prostitutes--an affront to European prestige and contribute to national decay.

If we look more closely at what was identified as "abandonment"--and by whom--the cultural and historical peculiarities of this definition became more apparent. "Abandonment" had several distinct meanings that diverged significantly from its European usage in the pre-modern period and at the time. In John Boswell's comprehensive history of child abandonment in western Europe, he defines the term as "the voluntary relinquishing of control over children by their natal parents or guardians", commonly used for children who were exposed at the doors of churches or in other public spaces, and less frequently intentionally exposed to death.³⁰ Boswell argues that ancient as well as contemporary commentators have conflated abandonment with infanticide far more than the evidence suggests. Nevertheless, perceptions and policies to do with abandonment were integrally tied to issues of child mortality. Jacques Donzelot argues that in 19th century France, abandonment often led to high rates of child mortality, and that the intensified policing of families was morally justified in those, among other, terms.³¹ This is not to suggest that abandonment always led to death, or 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.

³⁰ John Boswell's The Kindness of Strangers: The Abandonment of Children in Western Europe from Late Antiquity to the Renaissance. New York: Pantheon (1988): 24. According to Boswell, this relinquishment might occur by "leaving them somewhere, selling them, or legally consigning authority to some other person or institution" *ibid.* As we shall see, abandonment in colonial practice did not fit this definition at all.

³¹ See Jacques Donzelot's The Policing of Families. New York: Pantheon, p. 29.

What the abandonment of métis children invoked, in the colonial context, was not a biological but a social death--a loss to European society, a forced banishment from the European cultural milieu in which these métis children could potentially thrive.³² "Exposure" in the colonial context was not to the natural elements, but to the native milieu, and to those kind of native women whose debased character would have inclined them to succumb to a concubinary relationship in the first place. Moreover, abandonment, as we shall see, was not necessarily voluntary, nor participated in by both parents as Boswell's definition implies. 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 sons, she seeks out a scholarship in a school with the certainty that when her child obtains an 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 procurs his means of existence by extortion and theft.

Abandoned metis 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 they 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.³³

Here, "abandonment" has specific race, class and gender coordinates. It refers primarily

³² 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.

³³ ADM, Amiraux 7701, Statute of the "Société de protection et d'éducation des Jeunes Métis Français de la Cochinchine et du Cambodge".

to the abandonment of métis children by European men, by way of abandoning the child's native mother with whom the man had co-habited outside of marriage. Secondly, the gaze of the colonial state was not directed at the abandonment of children by native men, but only with the progeny of mixed unions. Third, and most significantly, the child was considered "abandoned" whether or not s/he remained cared for by the mother and was most frequently classified as "abandoned" precisely because s/he was left to the Annamite mother and to the cultural surroundings in which she lived. "Abandonment" those encoded several messages: that a proper French father would never allow his offspring prolonged contact and/or 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.

If abandonment of métis offspring by European men was considered morally reprehensible, what was worse were the depraved motives of colonized women who categorically refused to give up their children to the superior environment of state institutions at all. 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".³⁴ 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 give up 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 base given the mother's character".³⁵ Resistance also came from the children themselves: in 1904, Thi-Ba, the 17 year old métisse daughter of an Annamite woman and French man who herself was cohabiting with a native man, declared that she "volontairement" accepted and preferred her own situation over what the Society for the Protection of Métis Youths, could offer her. Numerous reports are cited of métisse

³⁴ AOM, #164 11 May 1904, my emphasis.

³⁵ AOM, November 13, 1903.

girls forced into prostitution by "concubin", i.e., by native men who were the subsequent lovers of the girls' native mothers. These cases expressed another sexual and cultural transgression that colonial authorities feared: namely, that there was a "traffic in filles francaises" for the Chinese and Annamite market, not for Europeans.³⁶

The portrait of abandonment and charitable rescue is seriously flawed; 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 and shaped into very special colonial citizens; by one scenario, the bulward of a future white settler population, acclimatized to the tropics but loyal to the state.³⁷ As proposed in the 1931 French Feminist National Assembly, métisse young women could

"marry with Frenchmen, would accept to live in the bush where young women from the metropole would be hesitant to follow their husbands, ... [would form] the foundation of a bourgeoisie, attached at one and the same time to their native land and to the France of Europe" (Etats-Generaux du Feminisme, 1931: 139).

This perspective on mixed-marriages was more optimistic than some, but echoes a commonly held view that if métisse girls were rescued in time, they could be educated in special institutions to become "bonnes menageres" (good housekeepers) of a settled Indochina, wives or domestics in the service of France. As we shall see, a similar proposal was put in the Indies in the same period. While, neither proposal was realized, the question they entertained was as fundamental to colonial thinking as those proposals which met with more success: what to do 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 METISSAGE

The question prompted a number of different responses, each of which hinged on

³⁶ Archives d'Outre-Mer. Letter (No.151) to the Governor-General in Hanoi from Monsieur Paris, the President of the Société de Protection and d'Education des Jeunes Métis Français abandonnés, 29 February 1904.

³⁷ See Brou, Gossard, Douchet, Mazet for such recommendations.

whether metis 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 to Java as a government emissary to report on the status of métis in the Indies and on the efficacy of Dutch policy towards them. Chailley-Bert came away 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 rivalling those of many Europeans. He argued that the Dutch policy of not segregating those of mixed-descent, nor distinguishing between illegitimate and legitimate children was the only humane and politically safe course to pursue. He urged the government to adopt several Dutch practices: (1) that abandoned métis youth be assigned European status until proof of filiation was made, (2) that private organizations in each legal grouping (i.e. European and native) be charged with poor relief, rather than the government and 3) 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 since 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".³⁸

Monsieur A. July, writing from Hanoi in 1905 similarly applauded "the remarkably successful results" of the Indies government policy which rejected 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 far less sanguine that France's political system could permit a similar scale of naturalisation 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

³⁸ ADM, Amiraux 7701, Report on Metis in the Dutch East Indies (1901).

Dutch domination".³⁹ Based on the account of a friend who administrated 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.

What is so curious about these appeals to Dutch wisdom, is how little these descriptions reflected what administrative quandries were actually facing the Dutch administration on the ground. At precisely the moment of Chailley-Bert's visit to Batavia, a massive government investigation of the recent proliferation of European pauperism and its causes was underway. Between 1901 and 1903 several thousands of pages of government reports outlined the precarious economic conditions and political dangers of a legally classified "European" population that was riddled with impoverished widows, beggars, vagrants, and abandoned children who largely were made up of Indo-Europeans. 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 members of the native population who were willing to work for lower pay in more menial jobs.⁴⁰ While the investigation was in part about Indo-European adult life and labor, the principal object of the commissions' consideration was children and their "opvoeding in de ouderlijke woning" ("upbringing in the parental home").⁴¹

The causes of the situation were found in the continued prevalence of concubinage, not only among subaltern European military barred from legal marriage, but among civil servants and European plantation supervisors for whom marriage to European women was made an economically difficult option. While government and private company policies significantly relaxed the restrictions they had imposed on the entry of women

³⁹ "Courte notice sur les métis d'Extreme Orient et en particulier sur ceux de l'Indochine", Firmin Jacques Montagne, AOM, 1896-1909.

⁴⁰ Rapport der Pauperisme-Commissie (1902) Batavia: Landsdrukkerij; Uitkomsten der Pauperisme-Enquete: Algemeen Verslag (1902): Batavia: Landsdrukkerij; Het Pauperisme onder de Europeanen in Nederlandsch-Indie (1901) Parts 3, 5. Batavia: Landsdrukkerij; Uitkomsten der Pauperisme-Enquete: Gewestelijke Verslagen (1901) Batavia: Landsdrukkerij; De Staatsarmenzorg voor Europeanen in Nederlandsch-Indie (1901) Batavia: Landsdrukkerij.

⁴¹ See Petrus Blumberger's De Indo-Europeesche Beweging in Nederlandsch-Indie (1939) Haarlem: Tjeenk Willink, p. 26.

from Europe after the turn of the century, mixed-unions, and the gendered and racist assumptions on which they were based, were not about to disappear by government fiat alone. In Indochina, French officials had to issue repeated warnings against concubinage from 1893 to 1911 (precisely the period in which the societies for protection of métis youth were most active), suggesting that there was a future generation in the making who threatened not to know where they belonged.⁴² The commission condemned the moral environment of the Indies at large, with concubinage targeted as the source of a transient "rough" and "dangerous pauper element" who lived off the native population when they could, who disgraced European prestige, and were a financial burden to the state.⁴³

But Indo-European pauperism in the Indies could not be accounted for by concubinage alone. The commission's enquiry starkly revealed a local educational system that categorically barred Indies-educated European youths from high-level administrative posts and middling Indo-Europeans from even a passable knowledge of Dutch, a basic requisite for any white collar job.⁴⁴ Although concubinage and poor education could be, and were responded to, with a concrete set of reforms, European pauperism was also attributed to a more unsettling problem: a surreptitious penetration of inlanders into the legal category of European.⁴⁵ Because European legal standing both exempted men 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 were allegedly engaged in a profitable racket: "falsely recognizing" native children who were not their own for an attractive fee. Thus, it was argued that 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", who might register as

⁴² Archives d'Outre Mer, Archives Centrales de l'Indochine, nos. 9147, 9273, 7770, 4680.

⁴³ Encyclopedie van Nederlandsch-Indie 1919: 367.

⁴⁴ In 1900, an educational survey carried out in Dutch elementary schools in the Indies among 1500 students found that only 29% of those with European legal standing knew some Dutch and more than 40% knew none at all (Paul van der Veur, "Cultural Aspects of the Eurasian Community in Indonesian Colonial Society" Indonesia (1968) 6:45.

⁴⁵ See J.F.Kohlbrugge "Prostitutie in Nederlandsch-Indie" Indisch Genootschap, 19 February 1901, p. 26-28.

many as thirty to forty children as their own without the latter having proper rights to Dutch or French citizenship at all.⁴⁶

The issue of "fraudulent recognition", like that of concubinage, hinged on children who ambiguously or falsely crossed the cultural and racial divide, 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, one shared by many in the European community at large; that there were illicit incursions into the Dutch and French citizenry that were far more pervasive than those cases labelled it by name. We should remember that Nguyen van Thinh dit Lucien's condemnation was never explicitly argued on the basis of his suspicious parentage, but on the more general contention that his behavior had to be understood as that of a indigene 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 assuring that their souls and sentiments remained firmly entrenched in native culture.

Colonial officials thus expressed a profound fear 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 francaises" when arguing for their redemption, but when supporting segregated education, as "the fruits of a regrettable weakness", youths physically marked and morally marred with "the faults and mediocre qualities of their [native] mothers."⁴⁷ Thus, abandoned métis children not only represented the sexual

⁴⁶ See "Ons Pauperisme" Mededeelingen der Vereeniging "Soeria Soemirat" (1892) No. 2: 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.

⁴⁷ See Jacques Mazet (1932) La Condition Juridique de Métis and Douchet (1928) Métis et congaies d'Indochine. Hanoi.

excesses and indiscretions of European men, but signified the "degenerate" (verwildereren) dangers of the "absence of paternal discipline" ("gemis aan vaderlijke tucht"), of a world in which mothers took charge.⁴⁸ 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, seriously entertained and debated in international colonial fora through the 1930s, was rejected on explicitly political grounds; French jurists argued most persuasively that such a legal classification would infest the colonies with a "destructive virus", with a "class of déraciné, déclassé, ..."nos ennemis le plus dangereux... des révoltés, ennemis irréconciliables de notre domination" (Mazet 1932:37,42). 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 more finely honed and carefully defined.

This was nowhere clearer than in the legal discussion about whether "children of unknown parents" should be assigned French or native nationality, and if so, by what criteria.⁴⁹ Under a 1928 decret, all persons born in Indochina (i.e. on French soil) of unknown parents, of which one was "presumed to be French" could obtain recognition of "la qualité de français"⁵⁰. "Presumed" Frenchness rested on two sorts of "certainty": (1) the child's "physical features" or "race", to be evaluated by a "medico-legal

⁴⁸ Kohlbrugge, 1901, op.cit., p.23. To what extent the concern over neglect of métis children was not only about the "negative influence" of the native milieu, but about the dangers of single-mother families as in Europe and America during the same period is difficult to discern. What is clear is that the absence of patriarchal authority in households of widows and abandoned concubines was seen as a threat to the proper moral upbringing of children and therefore demanded the intervention of the colonial state. See Linda Gordon's discussion of this issue for early 20th century America in Heroes of their own lives: the politics and history of family violence. 1988: New York: Vintage.

⁴⁹ 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: Bibliotheque Coloniale Internationale.

⁵⁰ Mazet 1932:114.

expert"; and (2) 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".⁵¹ Thus, French citizenship was not open to all métis, but heavily restricted by an "interior frontier" based on the "scientific" and moral judgement that the child was decidedly "non-indigene".⁵² As we have seen in the case of "Nyugen van Thinh dit Lucien", 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 had written into them an implementation based on exclusionary principles and practices.

The moral outrage and crusade against abandonment, however, attended to another underlying dilemma for those who ruled: it was not only that métis youth had to be protected from the "demoralisation of the special milieu" in which they were raised, but, as importantly, educated in a way that would not produce unreasonable expectations or 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 youths was "to inculcate them with our sense of honor and integrity, while only suggesting to them modest tastes and humble aspirations"⁵³ 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 doubled-edged: it obviously blamed those impoverished for their condition, but also suggested more subtly that if they were really Dutch in spirit and drive, pauperism would not be an issue at all.

THE CULTURAL FRONTIERS OF THE NATIONAL COMMUNITY:

Concern over white impoverishment was tied to a more general fear; that European men living in concubinary relations with native women would themselves lose their Dutch

⁵¹ Mazet 1932:80.

⁵² Mazet 1932:90.

⁵³ Statute of the "Société de protection des enfants métis", 18 May, 1904, Article 37.

or French identity, 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 colonial rule but waver in their allegiances to the metropolitan state. 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 which stripped them of their "zuivere" (pure) European sensibilities, which "could easily lead them to metamorphize into Javanese".⁵⁴ The discourse on "degeneracy" in which Kohlbrugge shared had specific colonial coordinates; it was directed at poor whites living on the cultural borderlands of the "echte" 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 co-resided with men of other nationalities and chose not to marry at all.

Kohlbrugge's specific fears may have had bearing in the new social movement at the turn of the century, coalescing around an Indisch population of mixed-bloods and "pure-blood" Dutch of Indies origin. Their distinct economic interests, cultural style and legal positioning produced equivocal and sometimes inimical loyalties to the colonial state. The Indische voice, manifest at the turn of the century in newspapers and organizations, 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 that would embrace the "uplifting" of the Indo-European poor, without linking their own fate to them. To do so, they resorted to principles of racial hierarchy (what Foucault might have called a "symbolics of blood" subsumed by an "analytics of sexuality"), that accorded those of a certain upbringing, sexual morality

⁵⁴ J. Kohlbrugge (1907) "Het Indische kind en zijne karaktervorming" Blikken in het zielenleven van den Javaan en zijner overheerschers. Leiden:Brill.

and cultural sensibility a right to privilege and to rule.⁵⁵

What underwrites this common discourse is a new tension 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.⁵⁶ But what is striking from this period is how critical the concept of cultural "surroundings" ("milieu" in French, omgeving in Dutch) 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" that permeated French colonial thinking in the late 19th century can only be understood in terms of the scientific episteme on which it relied.⁵⁷ Questions of "milieu" permeated the colonial field with respect to education, health, labor and sex. Medical guides to the acclimatization of Europeans in tropical regions frequently 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 equally attended to, what Bourdieu refers to in other contexts, as this "habitus"

⁵⁵ Foucault's notion that a "symbolics of blood" was superceded but not fully replaced by a "analytics of sexuality" in the mid- and late-19th century is problematic and has never been carefully explored in its colonial context where racial perceptions and policies dominated the configuration of power (see The History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction, esp. pp. 147-50). While a discussion of race and sexuality is notably absent from all but the very end of The History of Sexuality, Foucault once remarked in an interview that the end was "the fundamental part of the book" (see M. Foucault, Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and other writings, 1972-1977. New York: Pantheon, p. 222. While a proper "colonial reading" of The History of Sexuality is the subject of another paper, here I would only note that he was probably correct in suggesting that power based on a "symbolics of blood" could not be sustained where issues of métissage confounded the principles of European citizenship in ways I have already discussed and will elaborate more fully below.

⁵⁶ See, for example, the contributions of those in British cultural studies by Stuart Hall and Paul Gilroy; cf. the discussion of nationalism and racism in France by Etienne Balibar who, while not marking cultural racism as a recent phenomenon argues for a new intensification of the force of cultural difference in marking the "interior frontiers" of the modern nation-state (1988, forthcoming).

⁵⁷ See Paul Rabinow's French Modern. Cambridge: MIT Press, esp. pp. 126-67 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", pp. 51-101.

theme.⁵⁸ They 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. It was, however, in the colonial legal discourse on the criteria for European status, where the issue of "omgeving", and the linkages between national, racial and cultural identity were most thoroughly thought out 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.

JUS SOLI, JUS SANGUINIS, AND NATIONALITY

"In the civilized world, no one may be without a relationship to the state" (Beyen, 1890)⁵⁹

J.A. Nederburgh, one of the principal architects of Indies colonial law writing 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/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 assigned. Taking the nation to be those who shared "morals, culture, and preceptions", "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

⁵⁸ Pierre Bourdieu (1984) Distinction. Cambridge: Harvard. It was very much the "stylization of life", not economic impoverishment alone, that discussions of European degeneracy at the turn of the century directly addressed.

⁵⁹ "In de beschaafd wereld, niemand zonder staatsverband mag zijn" (K.H. Beyen, Het Nederlandschap in verband met het international recht. Utrecht (1890), quoted in J. A. Nederburgh. Wet en Adat (1898) Batavia: Kolff & Co., p.83). The word "staatsverband", which appears in no contemporary or colonial Dutch dictionary, 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", *ibid.*, p. 91. Native Dutch speakers, including scholars of colonial history, say the term is rarely used, but connotes citizenship.

"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".⁶⁰

He concluded that "surroundings" had an "overwhelming influence" with "the power to almost entirely neutralise the effects of descent and blood".⁶¹ While on the face of it, Nederburgh's claim may seem to suggest a firm dismissal of the principle of racial supremacy, we should note that he was among the most staunchly conservative legalists of his time, who firmly defended the superiority of Western logic and law.⁶² By Nederburgh's cultural account, Europeans who remained too long in the Indies "could only remain echte-Europeesch (really European) in thought and deed with much exertion", particularly children "who because of their age are most susceptible and often the most exposed" to native influence in school and at home where they are cared for by native servants.⁶³ While Nederburgh insisted that he was in no way "against Indische influence per se", in a footnote to this legal tract, he recommends that the state provide support for all European children to be brought up in Holland⁶⁴. Some eight years later at the height of the Indies ethical policy, another prominent member of the colonial elite made a similar but more radical recommendation; that all schools of higher education be closed in Batavia, replaced with state-subsidized education in Holland to improve the quality of the "colored" (kleuringen) in the civil servant ranks.⁶⁵ Both proposals were based on the same premise; namely, that it was "impossible for persons raised and

⁶⁰ Nederburgh, *ibid.*, p.87-88.

⁶¹ J. Nederburgh. Wet en Adat (1898), p.87.

⁶² See Willem Wertheim's incisive review of Prof. Mr. R. D. Kolléwijn's Intergentiel Recht in Indonesie 19 (1956): 169-73. Nederburgh's name comes up in this critique of Kolléwijn 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 on which it relied.

⁶³ Nederburgh, *ibid.*:88.

⁶⁴ Nederburgh, *ibid.*:90.

⁶⁵ Kooreman 1906.

educated in the Indies to be bearers [draggers] of Western culture and civilization".⁶⁶

Attention to upbringing, surroundings and milieu did not disengage personal potential from the physiological fixities of race. Appeals to difference on the basis of "opvoeding" (upbringing), coded race distinctions concretely and decisively in legal, educational and medical domains. The focus on "milieu" naturalized cultural difference, sexual essence and moral fiber of Europeanness in new kinds of ways. I have discussed elsewhere how the turn of the century shift in the colonies to white endogamy and away from concubinage, an intensified surveillance of native servants, 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 the extent to which the private lives of its members were invested with the fate of the colonial body politic at large. Personal prescriptions for inclusion as citizens of the Dutch state were as stringent and intimate as those which defined the exclusion of its subjects.⁶⁷ The wide gap between prescription and practice suggests why the prescriptions were so insistently reiterated, updated and reapplied--precisely because they could not be agreed upon by those classed as "European", among whom they were contested if not openly defied.

In 1884, access to European equivalent status in the Indies included as a legal requirement "complete suitability [geschiktheid] for European society" defined by (1) a belief in Christianity, (2) fluency in spoken and written Dutch, (3) training in European morals and ideas.⁶⁸ 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".⁶⁹ But European equivalence was not granted simply on the display of a competence and comfort in European norms; it required that the candidate

⁶⁶ Kooreman, *ibid.*

⁶⁷ See my "Rethinking Colonial Categories: European communities and the Boundaries of Rule" Comparative Studies in Society and History 13(1):134-61 and "Carnal Knowledge", *op.cit.*

⁶⁸ (W.E. van Mastenbroek. De Historische Ontwikkeling van de Staatsrechtelijke Indeeling der Bevolking van Nederlandsch-Indie. (1934) Wageningen: Veenam, p.70.

⁶⁹ See W.F. Prins, "De Bevolkingsgroepen in het Nederlandsch-Indische Recht" Koloniale Studien 17 (1933):652-688, p. 677.

"no longer feel at home" in native society, and have already "distanced" himself from his "native being" (Inlander-zijn)--in short that s/he neither identify nor retain inappropriate senses of belonging or longings for the milieu from which s/he came. It is the mental states of potential citizens that are at issue, not their material assets alone. How could such evaluations be made? Who were to be its arbitrators? "Suitability" to which European society and to which Europeans? The questions are disingenuous because the coding is clear; cultural competence, cultural literacy, 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 equivalence became accessible to an ever broader population, the cultural criteria of privilege was more carefully defined. Some European women were made the custodians of a new morality, those who subscribed to the social prescriptions which included white endogamy--not, as we shall see, those "fictive" European women who rejected those norms.

Colonial practice undercut the moral highground of 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 bearings, lived with native women, bore métis children and departed for Europe unencumbered when their tours were done? Was it the morality of colonial officials who categorically barred the filing of paternity suits against European men by native women, or those such as Kohlbrugge who argued for it, on the grounds that it would hinder "fraudulent acknowledgements" by other European men? What can we make of the ruling on European equivalence for non-native residents which stipulated that one's place of origin had to follow a family law based on monogamy?⁷⁰ How did this speak to the thousands of Indisch Dutch 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 that a European woman upon marriage to a native man was legally reclassified to follow his nationality? As we shall see, these "invisible bonds" were those of men,

⁷⁰ See William Mastenbroek (1934) De Historische Ontwikkeling van de Staatsrechtelijke Indeeling der Bevolking van Nederlandsch-Indie, p.87.

bonds in which women had a conjugal share, by proxy to their husbands. The paradox is that native women married to European men were charged with the "opvoeding" ("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.

THE MIXED MARRIAGE LAW OF 1898

The mixed-marriage law of 1898 and the legal arguments which surrounded are an extraordinary set of documents 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.⁷¹ Nowhere is the danger of certain kinds of mixing so linked to national image while references to race are so carefully denied. This is a liberal discourse ostensibly about the protection of native (men's) rights, and later viewed as the paragon of ethical intent to equalize and synchronize colonial and metropolitan law. However, as Willem Wertheim pointed out nearly 40 years ago, it did far more to buttress the distinctions of difference than to break them down.⁷²

The term "mixed marriages" (gemengde huwelijken) had two distinct but overlapping meanings in the Indies at the turn of the century. In common usage, "mixed marriages" referred to contracts between a man and woman of different racial origin;⁷³ by the state, it was "a marriage between persons who were subject to different laws in the

⁷¹ 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 [JV]; "Voldoet de wetgeving betreffende huwelijken tusschen personen behoorende tot de beide 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) [VW]; Mr. J.A. Nederburgh. Gemengde Huwelijken. Staatsblad 1898, No. 158: Officiële Bescheiden met Eenige Aanteekeningen [GH].

⁷² Wertheim, op.cit.

⁷³ That is, between European men and Javanese women, between European women and inlander (native) men; between Chinese men and Javanese women.

Netherlands Indies" with no reference to race.⁷⁴ The distinction is significant for at least two reasons: (1) because the designations of legal standing as "inlander" vs. "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.

Legal attention to mixed marriages was not new in the Indies, but had never been formalized as it was to be now. Mixed marriages had been regulated by government decree and church council soon after the VOC company merchants began settling in Java in the early 17th 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 criterium was 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 concubinary arrangements with non-Christian native women, to legalize those unions and the children borne from them. Although the civil law of 1848 derived from the Napoleonic civil code, a dominant principle of it had been curiously ignored; namely that, upon marriage a woman's legal status was made that of her husband's. Retrospective explanation of the omission held that mixed-marriages were predominantly between European men and native women, and therefore who was to follow whom could be easily assumed. This, however, was no longer the case in the 1880s. Colonial officials were increasingly confronted with two dilemmas: first, that more women classified as European were choosing to marry non-European men; and second, that concubinage--for diverse groups of people and for diverse reasons--continued to remain the domestic arrangement of choice over legal marriage. Legal specialists argued that concubinage was a primary 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 chose cohabitation over legal marriage. What was perhaps more disturbing still was that some European, Indo-European and native women opted to retain their own legal standing

⁷⁴ Nederburgh, GH:1.

(thereby protecting their own material assets and those they could bestow on their children), and thus rejected marriage altogether.⁷⁵

Colonial lawyers were thus faced with a conundrum: how to implement a ruling that would allow certain kinds of mixed-marriage and not others. Two basic premises were accepted on all sides: (1) that the family was bulwark of state authority, and (2) that the unity of the family could only be assured by its unity in law.⁷⁶ Thus, legitimate children could not be subject to one law and their father's to another, nor could women retain "native" status while their husbands had that of Europeans.⁷⁷ Given this agreement there were two possible solutions: either that superior European standing of either spouse determine the legal status of both, or alternately, that the patriarchal principle that a woman follows the legal status of her husband (regardless of race) be applied. Principles of cultural superiority and patriarchy seem to be opposed: let's look at why they were not.

Those who argued that a European woman should not lose her European standing upon marriage to a native man did so on several grounds: one, and most importantly that European prestige would be seriously compromised. The liberal lawyer Abendanon cogently argued that European women would be placed in a "highly unfavorable and insecure position"; in being subject to adat, she risked becoming no more than a concubine should her native husband take a second wife, since divorce under Islamic law was not justified for reasons of polygamy. Others contended 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

⁷⁵ W.F. Prins "De bevolkingsgroepen in het Nederlandsch-Indische recht" Koloniale Studien 17, p.665. That some women chose cohabitation over legal mixed-marriages is rarely addressed in the colonial or secondary literature which categorically assumes that all forms of "cohabitation" are concubinary arrangements, with all the moral assessments of a woman "being kept" that the latter term implies. Obviously this issue needs further investigation.

⁷⁶ Nederburgh, GH:17.

⁷⁷ 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, pp.29-30.

constitution" was unsuited. Her native legal standing would do no less than cause an "outrageous scandal" in the European community at large.⁷⁸

The argument above rested on an important and contested assumption; that all women classified as European deserved the protection and privilege of European law. However, those who made the counter case 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".⁷⁹ Such mixed marriages "which were all but unthinkable in 1848" were now on the rise among "Indo-European and even full-blooded European women with native men", attributed to "the increasing impoverishment" and "declining welfare" of these women on the one hand, and of "intellectual and social development" among certain classes of native men on the other.⁸⁰ The latter issue, however, was rarely addressed since the gender hierarchy of the argument was contingent on assuming that women who made such conjugal choices were, for all intents and purposes, neither well-bred nor deserving of European standing at all.

One lawyer, Taco Henny, argued that the category European was a "legal fiction" that had little rapport with who actually participated in the cultural and moral life of the European community; that the majority of women who made such choices were outwardly and inwardly indistinguishable from inlanders (natives). Since these women tended to be both of lower-class origin and/or mixed racial descent, he held that they were already native in culture and inclination and needed no protection from the cultural milieu in which they rightly belonged. Similarly, the application of native penal code to such women would cause no scandal, since 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:

⁷⁸ Nederburgh, GH: 20.

⁷⁹ Nederburgh, GH: 13.

⁸⁰ Nederburgh GH: 13.

The European woman who wants to enter into such a marriage has already sank 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.⁸¹

Such arguments rested on an interior distinction within the category European, between "real" Dutch women and those in whom "very little European blood actually flowed in their veins". 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". This reasoning (which won in the end) marshalled the patriarchal tenets of the civil code to justify the exclusion of a certain class and race of women from Dutch citizenship rights, without invoking the underlying tenets of racial hierarchy in the legal argument.

But this gendered principle did more work still and could be justified on wider grounds. First, such legislation defined a "real" European woman in appropriate cultural terms; not by her own character but by her choice of (non-native) husband, and by the extent to which she, as a mother, took the fate of her children in mind since they would no longer be accorded automatic European standing under the new legislation. Second, it strongly dissuaded "real" European women from choosing to marry native men. This was its implicit and, according to some advocates, its explicit intent. Third, it spoke on the behalf of native men of standing, arguing that they would otherwise lose their access to agricultural land and other privileges, passed from fathers to sons under adat law. Fourth, it claimed to discourage concubinage, since native men would not have to relinquish their customary rights and would not be tempted to live with Indo-European and "full-blooded" European women outside of marriage. And finally, and perhaps, most importantly, this appeal to patriarchy prevented the infiltration of increasing numbers of native men into the Dutch citizenry, particularly those of the middling classes, with little to lose and much to gain by acquiring a Dutch nationality. Those who supported the "uplifting" of native man to European through marriage would in effect encourage

⁸¹ JV, p.39.

marriages of convenience, to the detriment of European women and Europeans at large.⁸² Here again, as in the "fraudulent recognitions" of métis children, what was at issue was the undesirability of an increase in "the number of persons who would only be European in name".⁸³

In the end, the mixed-marriage ruling and the debates which surrounded 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, evinced in a declining number both of acknowledgements of children born out of wedlock, and of single European men who now married their "huishoudster" ("householders", domestic/companion).⁸⁴ However, the impetus away from concubinage stemmed from broader shifts than legislation alone; the Pauperisme Commission had given added weight to the argument that concubinage was producing an underclass of Indos that had to be curbed. Also, the native nationalist movement, particularly the Sarekat Islam, had mounted a strong campaign against concubinage on religious principles which may have prompted more native women to reject such unions.⁸⁵ 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 four-fold.

Hailed as exemplary liberal legislation, the mixed-marriage ruling was class,

⁸² JV, p.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 Abendannon (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 where a native man preferred to retain his rights under adat law. Abendannon 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.

⁸³ Nederburgh GM, p.64.

⁸⁴ See A. van Marle's "De Groep der Europeanen in Nederlands-Indie, iets over ontstaan en groei" Indonesie (1950), p.322,328. Van Marle suggests that the much larger number of illiterate women of European standing in central Java and the Moluccas as compared to the rest of the Indies, indicates that the number of mixed-marriages in these regions were 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.

⁸⁵ S.S.J. Ratu-Langie (1913) Serikat Islam. Baarn:Hollandia Drukkerij, p.21.

gender and race-specific; 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.⁸⁶ 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 persuasion stated as much throughout the debate. These were discussed as "unproblematic" unions on the assumption that a native women would be beholden and proud of her "elevated" European status and comfortable with her legal dependence on a European man. Could native women, therefore, be granted European legal standing and Dutch citizenship because there was no danger they could or would fully exercise their rights? The point is never discussed because European supremacy and male privilege were in line.

But what about the next generation of métis? While the new ruling effectively blocked the naturalisation of native adult men through marriage, it granted a new generation of métis children a European standing by affixing their nationality to that of their fathers. 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. Why else would the Netherlands Indies eugenics society continue to conduct medical studies designed to test whether children of Europeans born in the Indies might display different "racial markers" than their parents?⁸⁷ Eugenecist 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 family, upbringing and parenting were critical in shaping who would be European only in name and who would be a true "citoyen".

Although the race criterium was finally removed from the Indies constitution in

⁸⁶ 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.

⁸⁷ Ernest Rodenwalt, "Eugenetische Problemen in Nederlandsch-Indie" Ons Nageslacht (1928), p.1-8.

1918 under native nationalist pressure, debates over the psychological, physical and moral make-up of Indo-Europeans intensified 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 (1) the influence of a sapping and warm, dank climate (2) by the bad influence of the "energyless Javanese race" on Indo-Europeans and (3) by the fact that "halfbloods" were not descended from the "average European" and the "average Javanese".⁸⁸ In the 1920s, the totok Dutch population were visibly closing its ranks, creating new cultural boundaries while shoring up its old ones. "Racial hate" (rassenhaat) and representation were watchwords of the times. A renewed disdain for "Indos" permeated a discourse which heightened in the Depression as the nationalist movement grew stronger and as unemployed "full-blooded" Europeans were found in native villages "roaming around", joining 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.⁸⁹

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 defined certain social segments of those of mixed descent as a class apart with the word "Indo" reserved for those who were "verindische" (indianized) and poor. But what is less clear is the cultural, political and racial criteria by which those of mixed descent identified themselves. The contradictory and changing criteria that were 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.

⁸⁸ Johan Winsemius (1936) Nieuw-Guinee als kolonisatie-gebied voor Europeanen en van Indo-Europeanen. Doctoral Dissertation, University of Amsterdam, p.227.

⁸⁹ 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.

It is not accidental that the term "Indo-European" is difficult to define. It applied to those of "mengbloeden" ("mixed blood") of European and native origin, to Europeans born in the Indies of Dutch nationality, not of native origin, and thirdly to those "pur sang" Europeans born elsewhere for whom the Indies was a "tweede vaderland".⁹⁰ 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 never 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, society⁹¹.

What is striking is that the Indisch movement often made its bids for political and economic empowerment by invoking Eurasian racial superiority to inlanders, while denying a racial criteria for judging their status vis-a-vis European-born Dutch at the same time. The subsequent effort in 1912 to form an Indische Partij (with the motto "Indies for the Indiers") was stridently anti-government, addressing native as well as poor Indo welfare in its platform. Despite an inclusionary rhetoric, its native and poor Indo constituency were categorically marginalized and could find no common political ground.⁹² 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" (class-based association) to support the interests of the

⁹⁰ J. Th. Petrus Blumberger (1939). De Indo-Europeesche Beweging in Nederlandsch-Indie. Haarlem: Tjeenk Willink, p.5.

⁹¹ See Paul van der Veur's "The Eurasians of Indonesian: A Problem and Challenge in Colonial History" and his "Cultural Aspects of the Eurasian Community in Indonesian Colonial Society" Indonesia 6:38-53.

⁹² 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 Radicalisms in Java, 1912-1926. Ithaca: Cornell, esp. pp. 37, 58-59. Neither account, however, addresses the crucial class differences among Indos and where their distinct allegiances lied.

larger Indo-group".⁹³ It was this organization, eventually called the "Indo-Europeesch Verbond" (IEV), with more than 10,000 members in 1924, that continued to plead the cause of the Indo poor while remaining unequivocally loyal to the Dutch colonial state. While this is a very truncated version of a much more complicated story, it does illustrate an unsettling point; namely, that the poor Indo constituency, however large its numbers, could only articulate demands that were part contingent on their claims to a cultural and racial alliance with those who supported Dutch rule.

Questions of cultural, racial and national identity came together most starkly in proposals for Indo-European agricultural settlements. For various reasons these schemes rarely got off the ground, and when they were attempted, failed to work. But political currents of all persuasions and for different reasons took part in the campaign. In 1902 the Pauperism Commission had already recommended exploring the agricultural possibilities for the Indo poor. Their proposals focused on "beggar-colonies", rural confinements where (Indo)European paupers would be housed, fed, self-sufficient and out of sight. Other schemes were more ambitious, advocating intensive horticultural and small-scale estates which would neither be competitive with native peasant production or the agribusiness industry. This utopian project, entertained in both the Indies and Indochina, for a white settler colonies peopled with loyal métis, joined psychology to political economy in curious ways; it was argued 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, 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 principle platforms. Conservative and fascist-linked organizations concerned with European unemployment in Holland and European prestige in the colonies also envisioned a New Guinea of white settlers but in the context of an imperial plan. New Guinea was to be made a province of a "Groter Nederland" (Greater Netherlands) that might absorb and alleviate the political danger of an economically weak underclass from the metropole and help secure the Indies for Dutch

⁹³ Blumberger, *ibid.*, p.50.

rule at the same time.⁹⁴

The vision of turning potential patricides into pastoral patriots never worked, but its discussion raised critical national issues for different constituencies: from the state's perspective, the poor Indo population was déraciné, rootless and therefore dangerous; from the perspective of the Indisch movement, it was clear that they could not claim a fatherland without territorial rights and roots within it (since many Indo-Europeans had European standing they could not own land); their appeal to an Indisch nationalism was lacking a proper mass-based constituency, a volk and a homeland--to makes it claims. For the conservative Vaderlandse Club, rural settler colonies in the 1930s were part of a wider project: to create a Dutch wall against Japanese invasion in the Indies, while alleviating overpopulation "at home". In an unlikely and short-lived alliance, the Fatherlands' Club and the IEV joined efforts on several fronts: to support the settler schemes, to oppose the "ontblanking" ("unwhitening") of the Indies, and to attack an ethical policy that had fostered the increased entry of educated Javanese into subaltern civil service jobs. However, as the IEV became increasing anti-Totok their conflicting images of the future fatherland became difficult to deny.⁹⁵

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 landscaped images of "a tropical Netherlands", uniting the Netherlands and Indies as a single state.⁹⁶

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 stage of nationalist discourse, the notion of

⁹⁴ See P.J. Drooglever's discussion of this failed effort in De Vaderlandse Club (1980), pp.193-208.

⁹⁵ P.J. Drooglever, De Vaderlandse Club, 1929-1942: Totoks en de Indische Politiek (1980). Franeker: T. Wever, p. 285.

⁹⁶ Verbond Nederland en Indie, No.3, September 1926, p.3. In the late 1920s this publication appended to the name above: "A Fascist Monthly".

"rootlessness" captured a range of dangers about métissage.⁹⁷ Abandoned métis youths were generically viewed as vagrants in Indochina, as child delinquents in the Indies, as de facto stateless subversives without a patrie (Braconnier 1917). 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 incorporate, inculcate and insulate abandoned métis youths, but the image of rootlessness was not applied to those abandoned alone.

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 massive state-sponsored social rehabilitation that would give métis youths the means to function as real citoyen on the argument that with "French blood prevailing in their veins", they already "manifested an instinctive attachment to France".⁹⁸ 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 cultural lability and 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 Martial, métis were categorically persons of physical and mental deformity. He saw métis descent as the 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 indeterminate
and futile discussion and paralyzes action. It is this
state of mind that makes democracies fail that live with

⁹⁷ This issue of "rootlessness" is most subtly analysed 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", ms.). While André-Pierre Taguieff examines LePen's nationalist rhetoric on the dangers of the "rootlessness" of immigrants workers in France.

⁹⁸ Enquete sur Métissage, Archives d'Outre Mer, Amiraux 53.50.6.

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 (1938:58).

That René 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 20th century and that of LePen 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.⁹⁹

What is striking in these historically disparate discourses is how similarly they encode métissage as a political danger, predicated on the psychological liminality, mental instability and economic vulnerability of culturally hybrid minorities.¹⁰⁰ But could we not re-present these discourses by turning them on their heads, by unpacking what the "weakness" of métissage was suppose to entail? Recast, these discourses may be more about the fear of empowerment--and not about marginality at all; about groups who straddled and disrupted cleanly marked social divides and who, in their very persons, exposed the arbitrary logic by which the categories of control were made.¹⁰¹ These discourses are not unlike those about Indische women that, in disparaging their

⁹⁹ 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.

¹⁰⁰ 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 (December 1990)18(4):455-80.

¹⁰¹ Hazel Carby ("Lynching, Empire and Sexuality" Critical Enquiry 12(1): 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 U.S. 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, therefore, 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.

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".¹⁰² The final clause is critical because it is through these varied "sexual contracts" that citizenship rights were accorded and that métis identities were contested and remade.¹⁰³ The management of sexuality and the attendant moralities that were prescribed 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 varied sexual contracts were buttressed by pedagogic, medical and legal evaluations that together shaped the boundaries of European membership and the "interior frontiers" of the colonial state.

Metissage was first a name and made a thing. It was so heavily politicized because it threatened both to de-stabilize national identity and the Manichean categories of ruler and ruled. The "sexual affront" that it represented to family order and racial frontiers has specific historical bearings that I have tried to unpack. 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; one in which there were both contending visions and conflicting strategies of rule. Colonial liberalism opened up the possibilities of representation for some while it carefully stipulated a finely delimited moral posture which partially closed those possibilities down. It should not

¹⁰² Taylor, *op.cit.*, p.155.

¹⁰³ 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.

be surprising then that some of the most carefully formulated constructions of France's and the Netherlands' "interior frontiers" were honed in their "laboratories" of modernity--the colonies--not at home.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁴ See Gwendolyn Wright's "Tradition in the Service of Modernity: Architecture and Urbanism in French Colonial Policy, 1900-1930" in Journal of Modern History 59 (June 1987):291-316, where she discusses the ways in which Indochina, Madagascar and Morocco were discussed as champs d'experience, or experimental terrains, p.297.

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