"Children on the Imperial Divide:
Sentiments and Citizenship in
Colonial Southeast Asia"

Ann Stoler

CSST Working   CRSO Working
Paper #78   Paper #474
                  May 1992

CHILDREN ON THE IMPERIAL DIVIDE: SENTIMENTS AND

CITIZENSHIP IN COLONIAL SOUTHEAST ASIA

Ann Stoler
Department of Anthropology and History
University of Michigan

"What goes for our cigars and furniture,
holds for our children. They can remain
in good condition here, but it is more
difficult to do so"[1]

In a pamphlet published in 1849 advocating educational reform in the Netherlands Indies, A. Wilkens, a government civil servant offered the following picture of what childrearing in some European colonial families entailed:

It is not possible for us to sketch all the nuances of the ways in which children in the Indies are raised. We will limit ourselves

---

[1] Lekkekerker. 1920. "Lichamelijke opvoeding en onderwijs hervorming in Nederlands-Indie", p.518.

to the darker (not the darkest) colored, and those households
where the parents and the children speak Malay.

At six or six-thirty in the morning the children usually get up,
neither say good morning to the father nor mother, and meander
around in the garden in a <u>sarong</u> and <u>kebaya</u> until their grumbling
nursemaid with threats pushing and pinching them takes them to the
well, washes them, brings them to their rooms and thrusts each
into their clothes. Next, they receive some money from the mother
for breakfast, consisting of rice with condiments; a native rice
seller comes to the backdoor of the garden and serves the children
with her rice, or the nursemaid goes to the corner of the street
and buys it in a foodstall. Before the clock strikes 8, the
nursemaid brings the children to school with slates and books
under her arm and repeats this again when school is out. They come
home to eat, sometimes with the parents, sometimes separately,
before or after them. Prayer and thanks are sometimes said, if
the children eat with the parents, otherwise it depends on the
desire of the children themselves, and some do not know what it
[prayer] is. After they eat they dress themselves under the
direction of the nursemaid.

Some parents will let their children play in the streets so that
the parents can take their midday naps and the children are kept
engaged, or they spend their time with the servants while they
wait. Others give the child money to buy snacks more out of
tradition that out of fear that in an hour they would starve of
hunger. In the evening, when it is time for the children to be
dressed it is the nursemaid as in the morning who does it again.
When they are dressed, they sit in front of the door playing on
the street or in the garden or go wandering around at their
pleasure and receive some money again. In houses where there is a
fixed hour for the children to eat, they sit at the table
together; otherwise they do it irregularly, one after the other,
and go to the pantry to ask for food. After the evening meal, they
undress. Then they play again in their <u>sarong</u> and <u>kebaya</u> until
they are taken to sleep and go finally to bed, neither mother nor
father wishes them goodnight. Neither afternoon or morning prayers
accompany going to bed or getting up.[2]

The passage is compelling on several counts. The children are getting
something wrong and it is assumed that the reader knows what it is. Wilken's
confirms the credibility of his "day in the life" narrative with a footnote
that it is based on "his own life as a youth and that of his children". There
are no boldfaced signposts as to how the passage should be read. For Wilkens,
and for his Dutch contemporaries, the message was clear. Parental neglect is
evident at every turn. He condemns Indies parents for relinquishing the
material maintenance of their children to native domestics, and for neglecting

---

[2] A. Wilkens. 1849. <u>Het Inlandsche Kind in Oost-Indie en Iets over den
Javaan</u>. Amsterdam:Van Kampen, pp.22-24.

the moral upbringing of their young. The children are not taught parental respect ("they neither say "good morning" to their mother or father"), nor religious observance (they say no morning or bedtime prayers). They are left to their own whims and worse to those of a servant's.

Neglect comes in oblique forms. The dispension of money punctuates the child's days, replacing parental care. The children are as it were 'bought off' to forage for their breakfasts, to distract them during the parents' midday nap, and in the evening again as they "wander" in the streets. The norms transgressed are also clear: children are neither learning self-reliance, respect for convention nor to whom respect should be given. Neither prayers nor parental guidance are there to convey the attachments in which should children should share. In contrast, the affectless, "grumbling" native nursemaid administers to their physical needs: she dresses and grooms them. It is she who "directs" their shift from sarong to Dutch attire and back to native dress again. It is her hands who tend to their their physical needs, and in whose quarters they retreat to spend their time.

The passage was used to indict the Indies educational system, but the dangers identified are those found in the home. The passage arrests our attention for another reason. While such commentaries on the domestic milieu are numerous in colonial sources throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries, this one is ambiguous about whose behavior is condemned. Wilkens' pamphlet is titled the "inlandsche" child. Were we reading this in a late 19th century context, the reference without doubt would be to a "native" child of indigenous inhabitants of the Indies--to Bataks, Sundanese or Javanese. But in the mid-19th century, when a mestizo culture dominated the colonial landscape of the Indies, the racial lines were not yet drawn with such clarity. Wilkens is neither talking about Javanese village children, European born Dutch, nor even those Europeans borne and bred in the Indies (usually referred to as "Indische") who lived in a Dutch speaking milieu. These "darker tinted (but not darkest) children" whom he describes seem to be those nativized Europeans of long residence in the Indies, Malay-speaking Dutchmen with native women, whose cultural dispositions and "gehechtheid" ("attachments") are later questioned in his text, who have never seen the "moederland" nor have the appropriate knowledge to respect its civilities.

This was certainly the group to which the Indies Commissioner of Education referred in a circular sent to his regional offices in the same year that Wilkens wrote. In it he made a urgent call for the establishment of European nurseries to protect those

> "young children [who] were running into so much danger
> of entirely degenerating and being unsuitable for learning
> and civilization in later life because of the way in which they
> are reared".[3]

---

[3] Algemeen Schoolversalg onder ultimo 1849, quoted in Het Pauperisme onder the Europeanen in Nederlandsch-Indie. Eerste Gedeelte. Algemeen Overzicht [Pauperism among Europeans in the Netherlands Indies. Part I. General Overview]. 1902. Batavia:Landsdrukkerij, p.56-57.

But, here too, the lines are not yet fixed explicitly by race.[4] The shift from ambiguous cultural and racial affiliations to a European colonial culture in which the boundaries of European membership were more carefully drawn was most marked in the late 19th and early 20th century. Consider A. de Braconier's version of this scenario in a oft-quoted pamphlet from 1918 on the causes of "child criminality" among the children of the "degenerated" Indo-European poor:

> In the morning, the European kampung [village] child was given a
> few cents to buy their breakfast in a local village food stall
> that he or she ate along the side of the road. After getting
> dressed, the mother sent the child to school. However the little
> 'njo' [Indo boy] or 'nonnie' [Indo girl] did not carry the school
> bag, but was followed by a babu [native nursemaid] or young native
> girl who carried the things for them...As school is out at one in
> the afternoon and the child is at home, the most dangerous time
> begins. There [the child] plays with his friends in the village or
> in the gardens. There we see both native and European boys playing
> brother-like [broederlijke] together and so begins hooliganism and
> small thefts.[5]

The scene captures a site of Dutch anxieties about Indies colonial culture that survives the social transformations of those 70 years. Why is this such a powerful image in the repetoire of stories that Dutch-born elites told themselves? At one level, the answer is obvious and on the face of it, the two accounts appear to be much the same. Jean Taylor has argued that

> there exists in the colonial history of the Dutch in Indonesian an
> unbroken tradition of promoting the Dutch language and of
> attributing defects of character to the habit of leaving
> childrearing to Asian subordinates.[6]

---

[4] In the mid-19th century earlier social and legal distinctions that distinguished members of the Dutch Reformed church, on the one hand, from "pagans" or Muslims, on the other, were reframed in a government regulation of 1854 to more clearly divide "Europeans" from "natives". Even then, however, it was cultural markers rather than physiology per se, that determined where specific individuals of mixed-origin fell on the colonial divide. See C. Fasseur. n.d. "Racial classification and the late colonial state in Indonesia", paper delivered at the NIAS conference on the late colonial state in Indonesia, June 1989. Also see, W. Prins. 1933. "De bevolkingsgroepen in het Nederlandsch-Indische recht" [Population grous in the Netherlands Indies law"[Koloniale Studien 17:652-688.

[5] Braconier, A. de. 1918. Kindercriminaliteit en de verzorging van misdadig aangeledge en verwaarloosde minderjarigen in Nederlandsch Indie. Baarn: Hollandia-Drukkerij, pp.20-21.

[6] Taylor. 1983, ibid.,p.144.

But I am not sure that this is an "unbroken tradition", nor that this shared image was prompted by the same fears. The focus on children and the issue of "opvoeding" crescendoes in the late nineteenth century with a new emphasis on bourgeois civility in ways that we can find little evidence of in earlier years. It comes with a more intensive preoccupation in colonial and metropolitan politics with European national identity and with a quest for the criteria by which citizenship will be defined. It is not that the issue of "opvoeding" ("upbringing") suddenly emerges as a new site of cultural anxiety, but rather that cultural competence and the acquisition of certain cultural dispositions taps a different political cord. Concerns about the European domestic "surroundings" ("omgeving") in which children might be shaped into citizens surfaces in the context of a new racial politics in which the harnessing of people's sentiments--and thus the milieus in which those sentiments are to be formed--becomes of direct concern to the maintenance of empire and the viability of European rule.

Thus, despite the similarities in these two accounts, Braconier's description of the scene is framed by a different set of associations. It is not primarily Christian duties that are underscored, but the absence of a bourgeois morality. It is child neglect by poor,"degenerated Indos" that "incites" children to crime.[7] In Wilken's story, the money passed between mother and child signals neglect; in Braconier's version, it is "weak, immoral European paupers without occupation" that feed the environments in which delinquents thrive. For Wilkens, "opvoeding" (rearing/nurturing/ breeding) is the problem, not the legality of sexual union. For Braconier, the sexual depravity of concubinage thwarts any semblance of "family life" (gezinleven); parent and child wallow in crime. In addition, Braconier's target is made explicit in a way that Wilken's was not. Where Wilkens condemned both parents, Braconier focuses on those debased "native mothers" as the source of European poverty. It is they who sap the energy of boys and men; their partners and their own sons by procurring "native concubines" for the latter ."at a very early age".[8] "Both [Indo] European as well as native mothers" leave their children "on their own".[9] The altered emphasis parallels major shifts in the domestic politics of Dutch rule at the turn of the 20th century from a condonation of concubinage and a social world in which mixed-unions were the rule, to one in which white endogamy became the prescribed norm. With this shift the native woman as domestic servant and/or as mother of mixed-blood children conveys moral, sexual and cultural contamination in varied forms.

This paper is part of a broader project to examine how liberal impulses and inclusionary rhetorics of colonial regimes at the turn of the 20th century were coupled with a newly refined set of exclusionary, discriminatory cultural

---

[7] Braconier. 1918, p.20.

[8] Braconier. 1918.

[9] Braconier, ibid.,p.20.

practices that were both reactive to and inscribed in liberalism itself.[10] In the Indies, as in French Indochina, a humanitarian liberal concern for mass education and representation prompted a newly recast set of social prescriptions for maintaining separatist and exclusionary cultural conventions regarding how, where and with whom European colonials should live. Elsewhere I have sought to show how these differentiating practices were worked through a psychologizing and naturalizing impulse that embedded gender inequalities, sexual privilege, class priorities and racial superiority in a tangled political field. Colonial liberalism joined with a rethinking of the "interior frontiers" of the metropolitan nation-state that opened the possibilities of representation for some while it set out moral prescriptions and affixed psychological attributes that partially closed those possibilities down. Cultural competence and cultural literacy provided the new salient criteria for marking out eligibility for European membership in a context where an increasing number of interstitial "wavering classes"--particularly "mixed-bloods" and poor whites--called into question how "Europeanness" would be identified, how citizenship should be accorded and nationality assigned.

In pursuing these connections, I have been drawn to a recurrent feature of this political discourse that I have only begun to explore. This is the extent to which state and civil authorities, bureaucrats, lawyers, doctors and other professional elites were concerned with sentiments. They used measures of cultural competence to access what seemed to have been far more important to them; namely the psychological dispositions and affective attachments of their subjects. A discourse of sentiment figured prominently in their decisions about who would have access to the European community, while misguided sentiments provided the rationale for excluding even legally classified Europeans (usually those impoverished or of mixed-blood origins) from practical membership in the European colonial community at all.

It seems to me that there are a number of paradoxes that the issue of sentiment raises in relationship to the colonial state. If Foucault is correct that the supervisory state proclaims a visual surveillance as its triumphant mode in the late 19th century, it is striking that state authorities become increasingly invested in controlling the non-visual domain; not only the secreted domestic arrangements of their European agents and colonized subjects, but in directing the persons to which appropriate sentiments should be expressed. Similarly, at precisely the time when universal and objective principles of citizenship are being declared, we find a pervasive discourse on national identity that rests on the identification of "liens invisibles" ("invisible bonds") of shared history, of specific cultural referents and of attachments to the "fatherland" that distinquish "real Frenchmen" and the "echte Dutch" from their suspect psuedo-compatriots. The question is how these "invisible ties" of "moral essence" were assessed and what cultural constructions of sentiment and sensibility granted some candidates European membership rights and not others.

---

[10] See my "Sexual Affronts and Racial Frontiers: European Identities and the Politics of Exclusion in Colonial Southeast Asia" Comparative Studies in Society and History (forthcoming).

An example: in 1884 access to European equivalent status in the Indies included as a legal requirement "complete suitability [geschiktheid] for European society" defined by among other things a "training in Europeans morals and ideas. In the absence of an upbringing in Europe, district authorities were charged with evaluating whether the candidate was "brought up in European surroundings as a European". But European equivalence was not granted simply on the display of a competence and familiarity with European norms. It rquired that the candidate "no longer feel at home" ("niet meer thuis voelt") in native society, and have already "distanced" himself from his "native-being" ("inlander-zijn")--in short that s/he neither identify nor retain inappropriate sense of belonging or longing for the milieu form which s/he came.[11] It was the mental states of potential citizens that were at issue, neither their material nor cultural accoutrements alone.

A paradox is apparent in the relationship between science and sentiment as well. Late 19th century colonial authorities sharpened their tools of scientific racism, cataloguing and measuring the physiological attributes that defined racial type. But these cultural and physiological attributes only signaled the non-visual, non-verifiable, more basic distinctions of exclusion on which racism and nationalism rest. Outward attributes provided the observable conduits to inner dispositions; they were, in this heavily medicalized discourse, symptomatic of psychological propensities and moral susceptibilities that were seen to shape which individuals were suitable for inclusion in the national community and whether those of ambiguously mixed descent were to be classified as subjects or full-fledged members. In the Indies and Indochina this tension between the visible and the hidden markers of difference emerge clearly in debates over the legal status of abandoned mixed-blood children. Thus, French colonial authorities charged with fixing the legal status of "children of unknown parents" in the 1920s wrestled with the question as to whether somatics or morality should be the criteria applied. "Presumed" Frenchness rested on two sorts of criteria: (1) the child's "physical features" or "race" as evaluated by a "medico-legal expert", and (2) on the moral judgement that the child was decidely "non-indigene". Lurking behind these evaluations was the sustained fear that children of mixed-parentage would always remain "natives in disguise", "fictive Europeans", "fabricated" Dutchmen, affectively bound to the sentiments and cultural affiliations of their native mothers.

The question I pose here is whether we can tease out the nature of the relationship between the strategies of exclusion and assessments of affect, of rights to citizenship and condemnations of sentiments that placed culture at the center of racial and national politics during these years. How do these appeals to affect build on a prior set of cultural arguments persuasive to a middle-class colonial and metropolitan audience engaged in, what Norbert Elias has called a protracted "civilizing process" of their own? What is the relationship between the sites of rearing, the habitus in which children lived and the sentiments they were imagined to share? How are children's cognitions tied to the categories of rule? And how do we get at anxieties over affect when it is not sentiments but cultural styles that are discussed? What do

---

[11] Prins,1933, op.cit.,p.677.

these discourses tell us about the exclusionary principles of cultural racism
in late colonial rule?

References to sentiment take different forms: as familiar statements
about inner "feeling", moral "character" and disposition on which race, class
and gendered constructions of difference so frequently rely. Familial
sentiments, not surprisingly pervade legal debates over paternity, child
neglect and custody rights. But a discourse of sentiment appears in less
obvious places as well: in debates over mixed-marriage laws, constitutional
reforms of nationality, and in virtually all the discussions of educational
reform. Thus, for example, we find officials' assessements of the maternal
sentiments of native women who refused to give "up" their children to European
institutions and were thus refused the aid of the state; or legal discussions
of a European father whose misguided affection for his mixed-blood son could
provide the very grounds on which his son's bid for clemency in a criminal
case was denied by a court of law. But the concern over sentiments structures
a much wider discourse in which a language of affect is not expressed.
Wilkens' and Braconier's accounts are examples where the description of a
certain milieu maps out sensibilities and sympathies of class, racial and
gender membership that are embedded in quotidien cultural practice itself.

If sentiment is a somewhat elusive domain of colonial discourse,
children are not. In tracing the ambiguous allegiances and affiliations of
adults to European culture and the colonial state, and the contradictory
locations of some adult groups with them, I have been struck by the amount of
discursive energy and political attention placed not on adults, but on
children by government functionaries, medical and legal experts, novelists and
the popular European press. Efforts to identify children's experiences of the
colonial cultures in which they lived crop up in both obvious and counter-
intuitive ways. Wilken's diatribe against the educational system that begins
with a day in the life of a child is no exception. The major government
commission on the welfare of European paupers in the Indies in 1902 identified
children and their "upbringing in the parental home" as the prime object of
concern. It is not the attention to children that is jarring, so much as the
dense web of linkages tying nursery schools to European citizenship,
illegitimate children to political order, grade school absenteeism to racial
degeneration, toddler babblings to native subversions, and the upbringing of
children to the security of the colonial state. For individuals and
associations of diverse political persuasion, the moral and physical
contaminations to which children were subject, served to measure how
effectively domestic arrangements were confirming or undermining the moral
tenets of European privilege and thus the categories marking ruler from ruled.

There are number of literatures that both intersect with the relations
between sentiment and citizenship (and affect and power more generally) and
inspire us to look more carefully at the positioning of children with it. Why
our attention should be drawn to issues of sentiment and power is at one level
obvious. Nationalism speaks in a language of love, attachment and familial
affections. By Ben Anderson's account it is that imagining of community and
the shared experience of pilgrimage that draws those <u>fraternal</u> sentiments into

a coherent political field. But his work is focused on the shared affect of a circuit of western educated, literate, peripatetic youths, not on those domestic sites where Malay mixed with Dutch, on that preparatory milieu before these culturally-hybrid boys were turned into nationalist men. George Mosse's work on nationalism and sexuality suggests some of the ways in which sexual preference and subversion, family attachments and political order were envisioned as intimately bound by the architects of European nation-states. Bougeois respectability was one requisite for citizenship, sanctioning certain kinds of sentiments to be expressed only in the confines of the nuclear middle-class home. But as Mosse himself states, we know little about how national ideals "penetrated" the family and articulated with principles of patriarchial power.

A new direction in anthropology is suggestive, that of the ethnography of emotion.[12] Catherine Lutz and Lila Abu-Lughod in <u>Language and the Politics of Emotion</u> offer a persuasive set of strategies for countering the essentializing of sentiment that redeems emotion as an historically constructed set of social relations and cultural phenomena. They call for a "genealogy of emotion", guardedly connecting their project to, among others, Norbert Elias' work on transformations in affective life in Europe and to constructionist perspectives on the modern self inspired by Michel Foucault. Elias's venture is probably the most explicit effort to link the animation of specific sentiments to state power, but, as we shall see in a moment, it largely assumes that children acquire those affects by mere proximity to adults.

Foucault's engagment with affect and power is beguiling precisely because it seems even more direct. For him, the discourse on children converges around the political economy of population and the pedagogization of sex. This is certainly part of the story in the colonial Indies where the sexual precocity of mixed-blood youths was seen as a source of danger to European adolescents. But children had to learn more than not to touch their own bodies; they had to learn which hands and bodies could not touch them. European children raised by native servants were seen to harbor dangerous affinities and affections for the smells, stories and textures of a cultural milieu that, in adulthood, they were required to treat with distance and charitable disdain as they became the new agents of empire themselves. It was protection from these cultural sentiments that shaped the biopolitics toward children and that informed the social reforms and educational policies of the European colonial elite.

Some of these questions are already suggested in the feminist research on the cultural construction of affect and power, in studies of the gender-specific ways in which social institutions invest in the sentiments of their subjects, and particularly in that work that focuses on the early history of the welfare state. Linda Gordon's studies of family violence directly engage

---

[12] See Catherine A. Lutz and Lila Abu-Lughod's <u>Language and the Politics of Emotion</u>.1990. New York: Cambridge. See especially the introduction and references cited therein.

how gendered and class assessments of child neglect and maternal sentiments shaped the policies of U.S. social reform.[13] Others, such as Sonya Koven and Sonya Michel, have shown that maternalist discourses in Europe and the U.S. at the turn of the century devolved on evaluations of the affective roles of women as "mothers of citizens", and were used by feminists to carry through important welfare reforms of their own.[14] These accounts refocus on arenas in which sentiment plays a central role, where adult affect toward children is directly linked to whether children will become wards or citizens of the state. They not only tie assessments of sentiment to social control, but more importantly suggest that assertions of maternal sentiment can themselves be subversive of state control.

Carolyn Steedman's focus on childhood sentiments of "longing" and "belonging" captures how affect and class identity come together in ways that reach beyond either Elias or Foucault. In Landscape for a Good Woman, a study of the psychological bearings of class and gender in working-class England, she suggests that we take "a perception of childhood experience and understanding...as the lineaments of adult political analysis".[15] I find this an intriguing challenge and one that prompts hard questions about both the intimate injuries of empire and its public countenance. She forces us to focus on the learning of place and race, to ask about the elements of difference that were considered necessary to teach--and why agents of empire seemed so convinced that the lessons were hard to learn. By looking at the domains in which children were thought to transgress racial, class and sexual norms, we probably learn less about children's perceptions than that adults read into the lives of children what they feared to say about themselves. In the following section, I discuss a set of discourses about language, nurseries and servants. I trace how colonial thinkers attempted to isolate the cultural referents that marked the formation of a "European character", and where they thought the dangers to their children's identities might lie.

---

[13] Linda Gordon.1989. Heroes of their Own Lives:The Politics and History of Family Violence. London: Virago.

[14] "Womanly Duties: Maternalist Politics and the Origins of Welfare States in France, Germany, Great Britain, and the United States, 1880-1920" in American Historical Review (October 1990) 95:1076-1108; also see Melvin Yazawa [1985. From Colonies to Commonwealth: Familial Ideology and the Beginnings of the American Republic. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins] who argues that that an "affectionate authority" based on a familial order shaped the filial responsibilities of citizens to the state. However, in the racially charged colonial context of the Indies, these associations could not be drawn so directly. Only white endogamous familial orders were candidates for emulation, not others.

[15] Carolyn Steedman.1986. Landscape for a Good Woman. New Brunswick:Rutgers University Press., p.14.

PART II: LEARNING ONE'S PLACE, LEARNING ONE'S RACE

> "The fears which grown-ups consciously or unconsciously
> induce in the child are precipated in him and henceforth
> reproduce themselves more or less automatically. The
> malleable personality of the child is so fashioned by fears
> that it learns to act in accord with the prevailing standard of
> behaviour, whether these fears are produced by direct physical
> force or by deprivation, by the restriction of food or pleasure.
> And men-made fears and anxieties from within or without finally
> hold even the adult in their power".[16]

Children are obviously bearers of adult culture, but unlike Norbert
Elias's statement above, only in partial and imperfect ways. They learn
certain normative conventions and not others, and frequently defy the
divisions that adults are wont to draw. Contra Elias' notion of an
"automatically" channeled production of fear, European children in diverse
colonial contexts seemed often to have gotten their categories "wrong"; they
chose Malay over Dutch, chose to sit on their haunches not on chairs, chose
playmates who were Indo and Javanese. Clearly socialization is not as
straightforward a process of transmission as Elias would have it. Children's
cognitions undergo complex reorganization as they acquire the social
representations in which adults share.[17]

Children were seen to be particularly susceptible to degraded
environments and it is no accident that the major architects of Dutch and
French colonial law focused their energies on upbringing and education, on
schools and homes, on the placement of servant quarters, and thus on the
quotidien social ecology in which children lived. Medical guides,
housekeeping manuals, educational periodicals and women's magazines explicitly
posed questions about how, where, and by whom European children should be
schooled and raised. As prescriptive texts, they outlined the formulas for
psychological, physical and moral well-being for adults as well as for the
children whose European identities they were designed to mold and protect.

In the late 19th century, childhood and children became the subjects of
legislative attention and formed the basis of various accounts of social

---

[16] Norbert Elias. 1982 (1939). Power and Civility. New York:Pantheon:328.

[17] See Lawrence Hirschfeld.1988. "On acquiring social categories:
cognitive development and anthropological wisdom" Man 23: 611-38, where he
argues against the common view that children's cognitions are "ready-made from
previous generations" (Bloch, quoted in Hirschfeld, p.613). Also see William
Corsaro and Donna Eder's "Children's Peer Cultures" American Review of
Sociology 16:197-220, who persuasively argue that children's socialization is
a process of altering and reshaping the cultural environments of their parents
and peers.

development as they had not done before.[18] In the metropole and colony, the liberal impulse for social welfare and political representation focused enormous energy on the preparatory environment for civil responsibility; on domestic arrangements, sexual morality, parenting and more specifically on the moral milieu of home and school in which children lived. This is not to suggest that child welfare was a "new" issue, but rather problematized in a new way. As students of European state formation have noted, childhood socialization was already seen as a key to adult character by the 18th century, with child welfare in Europe linked to national interest by the early 19th century.[19] But child welfare discussions in the late 19th century colonial contexts seem to embrace a different set of elements: first, they focus more directly on proper mothering as crucial to how citizens would be made. Second, child neglect is not linked to child mortality, nor to the prospect of a future generation of undesirables alone; but, more importantly, to a generation of cultural hybrids whose sensibilities threatened to defy the prescribed affiliations of the bourgeois nation-state.

Colonial officials 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. The concern over child neglect focused on the "negative influence" of the native milieu, but more so on the fact that European children of mixed-blood origin were often being raised in single-mother families. As in Europe and the U.S. at the same time, it was the absence of patriarchal authority that was under attack. Households of widows and abandoned concubines were seen as a breeding ground of subversives. But even in households where fathers were ostensibly present, similar concerns were raised. This was particularly the case in poor European households located in native villages, where the cultural values of lower-class European men were seen to be dominated by those of the native women with whom they lived.

Child protection agencies in the colonies were not directed at "uplifting" these native mothers who were considered beyond redemption, but with removing métis children from their care.[20] In Europe and the U.S.,

---

[18] Carolyn Steedman. 1990. Childhood, Culture and Class in Britain. London: Virago, p.62.

[19] See Francisco Ramirez and John Boli's "The Political Construction of Mass Schooling: European Origins and Worldwide Institutionalization" in Sociology of Education (1987) 60:2-17 where they provide an excellent review of this debate.

[20] The "uplifting" of native women was a central aim of many colonial governments and European women's organizations. See, for example, Nancy Hunt's discussion of the "foyer sociaux" (social homes) that were Belgian domestic training institutions for African women, targeting specifically those who were part of the urban elite or "evolué" ("Domesticity and Colonialism in Belgian Africa: Usumbara's Foyer Social, 1945-1960" Signs 15(3):447-74. My point here is that there is a notable absence of any interest in the "uplifting" of the mothers of illegitimate métis children; virtually all of the discussion is

corresponding agencies placed children in institutions for limited periods of time, and then usually returned them to the natal homes and to their mothers.[21] But the Indies colonial state could not decide whether such families were worthy of poor relief or welfare aid in any form because they could not decide whether the children should be classified as European or Javanese. Debates over public vs. private support for European indigents were shot through with classificatory conundrums about what constituted national identity and citizenship rights. Whatever the funding sources, the education offered in private and public institutions for such children had a shared aim: as stated in 1900, "to remove the child as early as possible from the influence of native and malay speaking mothers", and in 1941 again to, "withdraw the child from the milieu in which it was raised".[22]

LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE, CULTURAL ATTACHMENTS AND NURSERIES

> Would not such a nursery school be a godsent for children of
> the Indische popular class that frequently vegetate in
> a village house in the midst of chickens and dogs, tended--
> not raised--by a mother who does not know what rearing is?[23]

One characteristic feature of the Indies discourse on European children in the colonies was the direct line drawn between language acquisition, motherhood and bourgeois morality. Numerous authorities noted that European children were more comfortable speaking Malay than Dutch and naturally "chose" the former over the latter. While this was easily explained by the fact that Malay was a "simple, childlike language" and easier to master than the more difficult pronunciation and more highly developed lexicon of Dutch, the fact remained that a fully civilized, cultured comportement was considered only possible in a European language. Language was seen to provide the structure, idioms and cultural referents in which children's "character formation" and internal dispositions would be shaped.

Given this logic, the concern about language competence and the sites in which it would be taught at an early age placed political attention on

---

about the <u>removal</u> and uplifting of the children alone.

[21] This distinction was suggested to me by Linda Gordon. See her discussion of this issue for late 19th century and early 20th century America in <u>Heroes of their own lives: the politics and history of family violence</u>. 1988. New York:Vintage.

[22] See Horst, "Opvoeding en onderwijs van Kinderen van Europeanen en Indo-Europeanen in Indie" <u>De Indische Gids</u> (1900,II):989-996. Also see W. Coolhaas, "Zorg voor bepaalde bevolkingsgroepen" in <u>Insulinde: Mensch en Maatschappij</u>. 1944. Deventer: Van Hoeve, p.147.

[23] Th. J.A. Hilders and H. Douma. 1908. <u>De Insiche Lagere School toegepaste opvoedkunde en methodeleer ten dienste van onderwijzers en kweekelingen</u>. Weltevreden, p.11-12.

household environments, on servants, on the language in which parents communicated at home, on whether children played in streets or courtyards, on what they saw and heard in their own homes. If early language training was the ticket to a European education, high rank employment and full-fledged citizenship, then from whom toddlers took their first linguistic and cultural cues, it was argued, had to be of public concern. The damaging effects of contact with native servants and native mothers in both poor and middle-class European _Indische_ homes was, in short, an affair of state.

The conflict between home environment and school milieu informed much of the discussion of child welfare in the Indies in the second half of the 19th century. The social anxieties that knotted childrearing to European identity were nowhere more clearly expressed than in the debate surrounding the establishment of nursery schools for colonial European children. Contrary to the notion that such institutions were the concern and domain of women, in the Indies these debates were dominated by men. Thus, in 1900, a prominent Indies physician devoted his keynote address at the opening of a high school in Batavia to nurseries and early childhood development. Similarly, the European Pauperism Commission's reports from the same years focused on nurseries and the morally degraded domestic environment in which the children of poor whites were raised. On the face of it these associations are not surprising nor do they seem so different from that which prompted the U.S. campaign for nurseries in the 1890s, namely as a part of a urban social reform to eradicate prostitution and crime.[24] The Indies debate on preschools chronologically paralleled the European discourse and echoed some metropolitan class concerns, but these gender and class issues were recast as they converged with the colonial politics of race.

Nursery schools in England, Germany, Holland and France first spread on a large scale in the 1830s and again after 1848. Strongly associated with liberalism, they were envisioned as "training grounds" where children of the working class residuum could be saved from an adult life of moral destitution and crime.[25] From their inception then, nurseries reflected the class and gender politics of the time. In Holland, as in Germany they took on two distinct forms: the early _bewaarscholen_ in the 1840s were confined to children whose mothers could show proof of their need to work. The middle-class kindergarten crusade a decade later had a somewhat different orientation, inspired by the German educator Frobel who argued that preschool education should foster intellectual creativity, not through rigid discipline, but through perceptual stimulation and play.[26]

---

[24] Allen, op.cit., p.446.

[25] See Ann Taylor Allen's "Gardens of Children: Gardens of God: Kindergartens and Daycare Centers in 19th century Germany" _Journal of Social History_: 433-50.

[26] For a detailed history of Froebel's theories that informed kindergarten movements through Europe and the U.S. see, Michael Shapiro's, _Child's Garden: The Kindergarten Movement from Froebel to Dewey_. 1983. University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press.

Middle-class nurseries were attacked as subversive institutions, aimed at replacing rather than supplementing familial authority, but nurseries for the poor were viewed (by the middle-class) as disciplinary institutions where children would receive the physical and moral instruction that working mothers could not otherwise provide.[27] While the froebelschoolen were designed to have a much wider class appeal than the earlier bewaarscholen, they both shared a common source: namely, the conviction of reformers that women from the popular classes, either as mothers or nursemaids, were neither providing the intellectual nor moral requisites for child development and childcare.[28] Froebel explicitly argued that children were better off in kindergartens than with unschooled nursemaids and servants with whom most middle-class mothers left their infants and toddlers.[29]

For different reasons, both middle-class and working-class women were not seen as doing their proper maternal jobs. Nurseries were designed to alleviate poor women and to provide discipline and moral instruction to their children by trained young women from the middle and respectable working-class. These nurseries were envisaged as custodial laboratories in which children injured by the psychological deficits of a neglected upbringing might be redeemed as useful citizens, and avert becoming future wards of the state. For the middle-class they were to provide the intellectual stimulation that childcare by an underclass of servants would harm, stifle or not allow. In the Netherlands, the first bewaarscholen of the 1840s targeted children from the urban working class, with middle-class women slower to embrace them. While accepting the admonishments of educators that uneducated nursemaids were unsuited to raise future burgers (middle-class citizens), middle-class women responded by seeking and promoting a trained cohort of young women from their own class (kinderjuffrouw), "better equipped" to take over childcare. In the colonial context, fears of racial degeneration reshaped the crusade and who were to be its advocates.

The dating of nurseries in the Indies follows that of Europe, but the political principles that motivated their emergence were of a very different kind. In the Indies, nurseries were manifestations of a colonial liberalism but not part of a popular social reform. There, the primary concern was with

_____

[27] For England, see Nanette Whitbread. 1972. The Evolution of the Nursery-Infant School: A History of Infant and Nursery Education in Britain, 1800-1970; for the Netherlands, see "De Kinderjuffrouw: Opvoedster en dienstbode tussen ouders en kinderen" in Sociologisch Tijdschrift (February 1984) 10 (4):671-715; for Germany, see Allen, op.cit.; for the U.S. see Elizabeth Dale Ross. 1976. The kindergarten crusade: the establishment of preschool education in the United States. Athens;Ohio University Press.

[28] Michael Shapiro makes a similar point that for Frobel, "ironically, women from diverse social backgrounds came to share the same misfortune: poor child management" (1983. Child's Garden: The Kindergarten Movement from Froebel to Dewey. University Park: Pennslyvania State University Press, p.25.

the domestic environment of the European and Indo-European populations in the Indies, and with those "habits of the heart" taught in the home. The nursery debate addressed a set of concerns about sexual, moral and cultural contamination. These were seen to be caused by (1) the large number of legally classified "Europeans" with virtually no verbal or written knowledge of Dutch; (2) the preponderance of single-mother households in which native and Indo-European women had the sole reponsibility for childrearing in the absence of the European father, (3) the moral degradation of "European" homes in which the progeny of concubinage or mixed-racial unions were learning cultural styles unacceptable to the European-born elite. In short, the nursery question in the Indies was a European affair that condemned the influence of Asian women who were servants, concubines, nursemaids, and mothers.

Several private nurseries for indigent European children were set up in Java's European-populated urban centers (notably Batavia, Semarang) in the 1830s (prior to their emergence in Holland). But it was only in the 1850s that the damaging influence of the "home milieu" prompted an effort to initiate a nursery campaign on a broader scale. The commissioner of education argued that a proper domestic upbringing was lacking in the European Indische homes, where European parents left their infants to the care and training of "uncultured and untrained" native servants, ill-suited to replace proper mothers whose "nature" prompted them to provide their children with "food for the body and for the soul"[30]. By his account, parental neglience meant that many children could speak no Dutch or only one "mixed with the verbasterd Malay" that they heard at home.[31] Worse still was exposure to a "verbasterd Dutch" of children whose parents worked in isolated government posts and estates. With their Dutch acquired in contact with the children of Indo clerks, they often had little idea of what a "pure" Dutch sounded like at all. "Negligence" (veronachtzaming) then was defined in specific cultural terms; namely by the absence of a Dutch-speaking environment and by exposure to and engagement with one that was dominated by Malay or Javanese.

The concerns of the commissioner of education was with preschool children for one important reason: the majority of the 3000 "European" children attending the public elementary schools in the 1850s arrived there with such rudimentary linguistic skills that Dutch-speaking teachers could neither communicate, discipline nor educate their charges, and school attendance was unacceptably low. On his instigation, several private bewaarscholen were set in Java's urban centers but most closed quickly when their initial subidies ran out. The one experimental bewaarschool set up in Batavia in 1850 (closed 5 years later) admitted children between the ages of two and seven with the specific aim of providing a Dutch language milieu and with removing the children from the influence of native servants. The few

---

[30] Dr. I.J. Brugmans. 1938. Geschiedenis van het Onderwijs in Nederlandsch-Indie. Batavia:Wolters, p.110. Also see Algemeen Schoolverslag onder ultimo 1849, quoted in Het Pauperisme onder de Europeanen in Nederlandsch-Indie. Eerste Gedeelte. Algemeen Overzicht.1902. Batavia:Landsdrukkerij, p.56-57.

[31] Brugmans, op.cit., p.110.

number of pupils who attended such schools suggests several possibilities:
that parents chose not to entrust their toddlers to the schools and either saw
little reason, need or promise in having their children schooled in Dutch.
The failure is not surprising, given that who the state classified as
"servants" could easily have been Asian women living with European men, who
were also the children's mothers.

Other efforts to establish preschool centers were made over the next
thirty years in at least seven other Indies cities, but here too attendance
was very low. In 1874 the educational commission again concluded that Indische
children were lacking a Christian upbringing and any basic knowledge of Dutch.
The commissioner pithily argued that children were only being fed (gevoed), by
their mothers, neither nurtured nor reared (opgevoed). Schools that had once
produced students at least suitable for rote officework were now yielding a
discontented class, "grumbling over their rights".[32] The age of seven was now
considered too late to begin education, but again formal education is not what
these stories are about. New recommendations prompted the opening of a number
of bewaarscholen with the expressed purpose of removing the children from the
"damaging influence of native servants or of undeveloped mothers"
["schadelijken invloed van Inlandsche bedienden of van te weinig ontwikkelde
moeders"]. These schools, alternately referred to as pratenschool (literally,
"schools for learning how to talk") were to have as their primary goal the
teaching of Dutch and the promotion of the healthy tendencies of
"truthfulness, love for order and sensibility" that marked the Dutch
character.[33]

Again in 1902, the European Pauperism Commission recommended the
establishment of nurseries as a weapon in the war against European poverty. In
reviewing the failure of past efforts to establish them, it profiled the Dutch
state's persistent refusal to provide more than moral support for preschool
education. State funds were withheld throughout most of the 19th century on
the argument that similar institutions were under private auspices in the
Netherlands and should remain so in the colonies as well. The Commission
criticized the state's narrow focus on the pedagogic problem of poverty,
"neglecting to begin at the beginning" with the "intimate cause of the
situation", with the fact that children needed to be removed "as early as
possible from an upbringing in the parental home".[34] The Commission thus
recommended that that if state funds were in short supply, resources for
"intellectual development" should be reassigned to "moral training"--a program
in which the preparatory nurseries were assigned a key role.

Discussions of linguistic fluency and moral training repeatedly focused
on the domestic domain. The social impetus for the bewaarscholen derived from

---

[32] Het Pauperisme onder de Europeanen. 1902. op.cit., p.57.

[33] Dr. D.W. Horst (1900) "Opvoeding en onderwijs van kinderen van
Europeanen en Indo-Europeanen in Indie" [The Upbringing and education of
children of Europeans and Indo-Europeans in the Indies].

[34] Het Pauperimse onder de Europeanen. 1902, op.cit., p. 61.

a cultural logic of race, that attributed the intellectual inferiority of Indo-European children to that part of their psychological and physical makeup inherited from their native mothers. But as in the account of the physician, Horst, mentioned above, the call for nurseries was part of a wider agenda. It included both a racial critique of mestizo culture, a gendered critique of proper motherhood, and a joint condemnation of native mothers and native servants at the same time. Horst argued that liberalism was allowing Indo-Europeans to enjoy legal Dutch equivalence with too much ease. Such a policy threatened the promotion of a "<u>Nederlandschen geest</u>". It risked creating a degenerate generation of Indies Dutchmen "that had to be resisted with all force". Horst's argument is racially fixed in way that Wilkens' of fifty years earlier was not. For Horst, the "Asiatic tint" of Indo-Europeans was not only "limited to their complexion, but to thoughts and feelings that made them feel themselves more <u>world citizens</u> than rightful citizens of Holland". The fear of misguided sentiments focused primarily on the indigent European population but on the middle-class well. Among them too, children were not only speaking Malay first but learning "to think and express themselves" in this "little developed" language. Having to choose between the language that his mother speaks and that of his native nursemaid (<u>babu</u>), a child would "always choose Malay". [35] Horst proposed that the choice itself be retracted and that the child, from its first stammering be forced to speak Dutch thereby "driving out the little devil of Malay" (<u>duiveltje van het Maleisch</u>).

The primary objectives of the nurseries was thus two-fold: to provide an environment where children would be strongly encouraged, if not compelled, to speak Dutch and to provide them with the moral environment that their parental homes neither fostered nor allowed. However, language training was about more than written and verbal Dutch fluency. Language was seen to fix the parameters of children's perceptions, ennabling the thinking of certain sentiments and not others. Thus, linguistic competence was a necessary, not sufficient condition for citizenship rights, and without the appropriate moral referents, of little use at all. Or as one French colonial official put it, French literacy was a subversive weapon if not accompanied and tempered by a French "<u>l'education du coeur</u>".[36]

The Pauperism Commission had some public support, but not enough to initiate the kind of kindergarten crusade that emerged in Europe and the U.S. at the same time. Strikingly absent was the support of middle-class <u>Indische</u> women, or for that matter, the support of the thousands of European-born Dutch women that were flooding the Indies at the time. As in Holland, <u>bewaarschoolen</u> may have been looked upon by these women as a lower-class institution,

[35] Horst, 1900, op.cit., p.990.

[36] M.G. Dumontier, "Du role politique de l'education dans l'enseignement francais en Indochine" <u>Congres Colonial International de Paris</u> 1889. Paris:Challamel.

designed for the "residuum" and not themselves.[37] But perhaps more importantly, the very shifts in colonial morality that brought Dutch women to the Indies in large numbers at the turn of the century, made the nursery issue less politically pressing than it had been before. The concerted "Dutchification" of colonial society, the encouragement of white endogamy, the increased density of a Dutch presence in urban centers and on interior agricultural estates, meant that more Dutch children were growing up in the "gezellig" ("cosy") and segregrated environments that would foster a "pure Dutch" competence and healthy distance from things Javanese.

Other alternatives to the nurseries were appearing as well. The Clerk-Methode for home education of European children was functioning by 1909 throughout the Indies. Its organization provided a guide for European mothers to teach their young children in the home. Based on letters of thanks from the "Clerk-mothers", it seems that home education was a option chosen by many European women who saw themselves stranded on distant plantations and outposts from the European urban centers, and that the reassuring lessons of the guide brought their children--and them--a little closer to "home".

Rather than taking up the Pauperism Commmission's recommendations, educational policy shifted in another direction. The concern for early childhood development of European children was being redirected to the scientific management of the home. More pervasive restrictions on servant-child relations accompanied a professionalization of childcare. Prospective brides and wives of men whose careers took them to the Indies were the harbingers of a new Dutch order: bearers of new prescriptions for becoming well-informed colonial household managers and mothers. The proliferation of housekeeping guides was both a manifestation of this trend in the Indies and a response to the many more European women there. Women's pages of the major Indies dailies did their part as well in counseling and guiding European mothers on issues of childcare. By the 1930s the Indies association of housewives had branches throughout the colonial heartland, from North Sumatra to East Java.

The idea of preparatory institutions for European toddlers of Indische and native mothers was replaced by a preparatory structure for Dutch-born mothers themselves. The Colonial School for Women that opened in the Hague in 1921 provided "knowledge of domestic and social issues of use to women in the colonies". Working with the support of Holland-based feminist and housewive associations, the school offered three-month courses that included infant care, sewing and cooking lessons, advice on home nursing and instruction in Malay. Government officials came to speak on select subjects ("prostitution" and "colonial education"), while retired colonial hands and their wives were invited to lecture on themes of their choice ("the Javanese women" and "Balinese dance"). Advertisements and propaganda for the courses emphasized

---

[37] Lily Clerkx has argued that many middle-class women preferred and chose to keep their children at home with "uncultured" servants rather than place them in the frobel schools because they associated them with the bewaarscholen that were designed to contain and discipline children of the unemployed and laboring poor, p.681.

the school's "national interest"; such courses were designed to ease the
cultural shock of life in the Indies for new wives and young mothers, and to
save their marriages. Letters of appreciation from some of the 700 women that
passed through the school between 1921 and 1932 suggests that it met with
great success. While the school was opened to "independent unmarried women",
the school's archives indicate that few issues other than domestic management,
servant relations and childcare were addressed.

ON PARENTING AND SCHOOLS FOR THE EUROPEAN POOR

The conflict between home environment and school milieu informed much of
the discussion by the Indies educational commission in the late 19th century.
Commissioners expressed exasperation with European parents of the poor and
middling classes who could neither provide the material circumstances (proper
clothing, shoes and food), nor a moral atmosphere and a Dutch-speaking
environment that would keep their children in school. Many educators blamed
the laxity with which parents allowed their children to mix with native
servants.[38] But the main issue that brought "European" school and "Indo" home
in open conflict was the troubling fact that if poor whites were living side
by side with members of the native population in urban settlements, they could
not sit side by side with "pure-blood" European children in European schools.

Educational policies for mixed-blood youths epitomized the colonial
project as one that was about incorporation and distancing at one and the same
time. Efforts to nurture their patriotic affinity to French, Dutch or British
culture were coupled with clear limits set on the access of "Indos" to the
privileges accorded the European-born elites. While various efforts were made
to incorporate mixed-blood children into European schools, this was often in
the face of strong resistance from those parents who categorically refused to
have their children in close proximity with these lower-class and "mixed-
blood elements". A two-tiered educational system developed in the 1860s,
accommodating "first-rank" European public schools designed for those who
could pay, and a "second rank" set of "armenschool" (schools for the poor) for
those impoverished (read: mixed-blood) Europeans who could not. None of this
educational policy was explictly discussed in racial terms. However, the
cultural criteria for admission, namely that only children with a good
knowledge of Dutch by the age of seven could be admitted to the "first-rank"
school, de facto excluded most Indo children since Malay was usually spoken in
their homes[39]

If nurseries were envisioned as early sites of social engineering, it
was because parenting among different segments of the European population was
under scrutiny in different ways. The brunt of the accusations of parental
immorality fell on Asian mothers of several sorts: on those who cohabited
outside of marriage in native kampungs with lower-class European men, as well

---

[38] Brugmans, op.cit.

[39] Dr. I.J. Brugmans. 1938. Geschiedenis van het onderwijs in
Nederlandsch-Indie. Batavia:Wolters.

as on those who assumed full custody of their mixed-blood children by choice, or force. However, the Indo-European woman living in legal marriage with a European man was subject to accusations of parental neglect as well. Educational reform was designed to structure a child's day and keep them out the village and the home: recommendations were made for two hours of mandatory and daily religious instruction, afternoon schools to prevent Indo boys from "loitering" and to keep Indo girls out of the villages and away from their homes. Thus, Mrs. Hissink-Snellebrand, adddressing the prestigious Indische Genootschap in 1910, argued that young Indo women of age 14 and 15 were not "safe" in their parental homes because "seduction, concubinage and prostitution" confronted them at every turn. References to a "white slave trade" were not infrequent; stories repeated of girls 'sold' to wealthy Chinese and Arab traders forcefullly suggested such an end. Hissink-Snellebrand called for the protection of Indische girls, recommending the establishment of special institutions to teach them how to be "good, solid mothers" ("goede degelijk moeders"). More pragmatic voices rejected her plan on the grounds that such palliatives would have little effect on the girls once they ventured home. Foster-care programs also met with little success on the curious argument that there were not enough families to go around.[40]

-- Moral critiques were directed at Asian mothers, but European fathers of certain classes were not exempt. Some authorities argued that child neglect and poverty among the European poor would be largely alleviated if concubinage was eradicated. But both conservative and socialist critics rejected the notion that marriage was the cure-all that some liberal reformers claimed. While conservatives urged a ban on miscegenation, socialists argued that marriage could have little moral force for a European soldier with four to six children living on 33 cents per day.[41] Others proposed that marriage requests by poor European men be contingent on a prior evaluation of the prospective groom's financial abilities to maintain his wife and children on his own.

Moral recriminations against European fathers of Indo children were indictments of lower-class values, of a lack of patriarchal sentiment, and an alleged lack of reponsibility not witnessed in proper middle-class European men. Advocates who argued that the ban on paternity suits in the Indies be abolished, did so on the belief that these runaway fathers should be forced to pay for their indiscretions and support the children they bore. However, the moral assault on lower-class European men was as frequently vented towards those who did not abandon their children as those who did. Mrs. Hissink Snellebrand characterized the "Netherlands Indies father as a moral weakling" who himself probably had no mother and thus never learned the real value of women in his youth. Such men were admonished for their desires and chosen styles of life as much as for their poverty, condemned as much for their lapse into "energyless" contentment in native villages, as were those who were discontent with their lot. Both represented political danger, confounding the categories in which European men belonged. Braconier's recommendation that the government take sharp measures against "the thousands of European paupers

---

[40] Braconnier, 1917: 24.

[41] Van Kol. 1903. Uit Onze Kolonien, p.770.

without occupation" who lived as parasites in native villages expressed another recrimination: namely that European men who "lived off" native women could not be counted as "family heads" and thus not as proper men.[42]

The moral attack on European mothers who left their children in the hands of native servants was particularly virulent at the turn of the century, marking a major shift in how European children in the colonies were to be raised. Mothering was now a full-time occupation, a vigilant supervision of a moral environment in which European women were to take full charge. The prescriptions for proper parenting detailed the domestic protocols for infant and childcare with regard to food, dress, sleep and play. Condemnation of concubinage and the centering on Dutch-born women as the custodians of morality understandably eclipsed the bewaarscholen debate, but it made no less pressing, and perhaps escalated, the related fear of contamination, transgression and dependence that servants inspired.

SERVANTS AND CHILDREN IN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

> If we take care that our children hear a cultured, pure speech
> there is no reason to despair of forming good Dutch speaking
> people; teach them that their place is in the family circle, and
> not in or near the servants' quarters; teach them, that our
> natives have moral beliefs that are vastly different from ours,
> but teach them to treat your servants as people... teach our
> children as quickly as possible to care for themselves,...to go to
> school on their own and never to let a servant carry their books
> and slates for them.[43]

To understand why the servants were such a charged site of European anxieties in the Indies is to understand how they both shaped and made up the habitus in which European colonials and their children lived. Servants policed the borders of the private, mediated between the 'street' and the home, occupied the inner recesses of bourgeois life, were in short the subaltern gatekeepers of gender, class and racial distinctions, that by their very presence they transgressed. There is nothing novel about these observations, nor were all these trangressions particular to the colonies alone.[44]

---

[42] Braconnier 1917, p.39.

[43] "Moeten onze kinderen naar Holland?" [Must we send our children to Holland?] 't Onderwijs 36 (15 September 1906), p.420.

[44] In a discussion of representations of domestic servants in 19th century European culture, Peter Stallybrass identifies themes familiar in the Indie as well:
> "a recurrent pattern emerges: the 'top' attempts to reject
> and eliminate the 'bottom' for reasons of prestige and status,
> only to discover, not only that it is in some way frequently
> dependent upon that low-Other, (in the classic way that Hegel

What does mark the Indies context as unique is the central fact that native women who served as domestic servants, mistresses and living partners of European men bore the children of those men in large numbers and continued to live with them. As such domestic servants as "huidhoudsters" (household servant/manager) represented more than the "domesticated outsiders of the bourgeois imagination",[45] and more than a symbolic displacement of social issues in late 19th century Europe as Stallybrass suggests. The servant issue in the Indies contained a social critique of mixed-unions, an anxiety about the security of European norms and a direct assault on native mothers. Up through the turn of the 20th century, more than half of the European men in the Indies lived in domestic arrangements with native women who were their servants, sexual partners, concubines, household managers and sometimes wives. In conflating servitude and sexual service, cohabitation and conjugality, domestic service and motherhood, these colonial domestic arrangements continually raised the fear that some European men living in fashions that represented a rejection of bourgeois civility, not a failed version of it.

The fact that servants were identified in both metropole and colony as the "uncivilized" and "immoral" source of child corruption suggests that the nursery campaign in both contexts was provoked by a common concern--that of controlling the social environment in which children could be fashioned into citizens; and the milieu in which national identities were to be made. But here again, the distinct politics of the "servant problem" bear closer examination. While nursemaids in Holland were considered a damaging influence on middle-class children, in the Indies, Javanese nursemaids could effect the very formation of a child's racial and national character. Idioms of contamination and contagion were used in both contexts, but the susceptibility of European children in the Indies to degeneration was of a qualitatively different kind. It was not only that these children would not become "stolid burghers" as they risked in Holland, but that they might acquire cultural sensibilities and attachments that could compromise their practical ability to manage in a proper European milieu.

---

describes...) but also that the top includes that low symbolically, as a primary eroticized constituent of its own fantasy life. The result is a mobile, conflictual fusion of power, fear and desire in the construction of subjectivity; a psychological dependence upon precisely those Others which are being rigorously opposed and excluded at the social level. It is for this reason that what is socially peripheral is so frequently symbolically central. The low-Other is despised and denied at the level of political organization and social being whilst it is instrumentally constitutive of the shared imaginary repertoires of the dominant culture. (P. Stallybrass and Allon White. 1986. The Politics and Poetics of Transgression.Ithaca:Cornell, 5-6.]

[45] James Clifford. The Predicament of Culture, p.4.

SEXUALITY AND SENTIMENT

>"...[it] was not the child of the people, the
>future worker who had to be taught the disciplines
>of the body, but rather the schoolboy, the child
>surrounded by domestic servants, tutors and governesses,
>who was in danger of compromising not so much his
>physical strength as his intellectual capacity, his
>moral fiber, and the obligation to preserve a healthy
>line of descent for his family and his social class"
>   [M. Foucault. History of Sexuality:121]

By Foucault's account, it was in the "politically dominant classes" where the most rigorous techniques of the body were formed. But what complicated the colonial context was that the Indo-European poor occupied a social terrain that was not part of the echte middle-class but was nominally on the European side of the colonial divide at the same time. This meant that children were at risk in the presence of servants and parents. While colonial authorities admonished both the licentious native fathers of Indo girls, the ex-huishoudsters whose abandonment by a European man might drive her to prostitution, what was under attack was "mixing" itself, its threat to the making of abstinent, moderate, and tempered moral women and men.[46] Among poor whites, the "huiselijke milieu" (domestic milieu) was seen as unduly "verindische" (indianized) with the schools fighting a battle against the contaminating influence of mestizo culture and native infiltrations in the home.

Among Europeans of "good standing", colonial anxieties about European identity and sexual proclivities took another form. Here, the "babu", or native nursemaid, played a central role. Admonishing the negligence of an early generation of European colonial mothers, childcare manuals of the turn of the century warned of the "extremely pernicious" moral influence of babus and advised that "the children should under no circumstances be brought to bed by [them] and never allowed to sleep with [them] in the same room". The sexual accusations were not oblique: babus lulled their charges to sleep

>"by all sorts of unnatural means,...unbelievable practices,
>that alas occur all too often, damaging these children for
>their entire adult lives and that cannot be written here".[47]

---

[46] The notion of being "spoiled" in the colonies was expressed in sexual terms but also in other ways, "spoiled" by servants who taught the children dependence rather than self-reliance, children who learned to order about their servants, and did not learn to self-discipline themselves. Indo families, in particular, were criticized for having too many servants with whom they allowed their children too freely to play.

[47] Pigeaud. 1898. Iets over kinderopvoeding: raadgevingen voor moeders in Indie.

And some forty years later, a popular account of European life in the Indies, noted that "the babu has methods of quieting that are common in the native world, but which to us are revolting/repugnant and which I cannot futher describe here". Did babu's sexually caress the child to sleep, or encourage them to masturbate on their own? Or did this reference to sexual intimacy belie another story of personal contact and cultural familiarity that parents feared? In the 1930s, when many more European schools were open to native students, one of the hallmarks of a top-grade institution was the assurance that students "never come in contact with native personnel".[48] Thus the "Brestagi" school for the European children of North Sumatra's plantation managers prided itself on rigorous rules that forbid children from entering their own sleeping quarters if native servants were in their rooms. In 1941, contact with native servants was the "great danger for the physical and moral well-being of our children" (p.62). It was the duty of a "hedendaagsche blanke moeder" ("the modern white mother") to take the physical and intellectual rearing of her children away from the babu and into her own capable hands.[49]

ON CIVILITY, CITIZENSHIP AND SENTIMENT

Children are a quintessentially ambiguous social category, an interstitial group that we have not analytically exploited or fully explored. Children have not been all together absent from colonial historiography, but they have been treated differently from that which has interested me here.[50] I have been concerned with the dominant presence of children in debates that seem not to have been about them at all, with children as signifers of dissonance, as colonial citizens in the making, with why their behaviors were so carefully scrutinized in their own right. Some of these discourses on children seem to refract anxieties over cultural convention and political vulnerabilities in heigthened ways. In others, adult perceptions about children capture the visionary quality of social engineering, where the conflict between prescript and practice was often played out. These debates about nursemaids and nurseries suggest what was seen as subversive about the domestic domain, and why the production of sentiment in it was relevant to state control.

Cognitive psychologists increasingly concur that categorization is a mental process that proceeds not by identifying a set of specific attributes (e.g., that all Europeans in the colonies speak Dutch, eat voluminous amounts

---

[48] Plantersschoolvereeniging "Brastagi". De opvoeding van het Europeesche kind in Indie. 1934. Brastagi, p.10.

[49] Wanderken 1943:173.

[50] Children have been discussed in colonial contexts with respect to the fertility patterns and household strategies of colonized populations confronted with increasing extractions that altered their responses to production and exchange. My concern is much less with colonized children than with those mixed blood and "full-blood" Dutch children whose cultural affinities were the subject of extensive colonial debate.

of meat, and do no manual labor) nor by recognition of similarities alone ("they're all white") . Rather these attributes and similarities are "driven" by a "knowledge-based theory" about the world that prescribes which attributes will be singled out and to which similarities people will attend.[51] In anthropology we would refer to this as the "cultural logic" by which some categorizations are marked as more relevant than others.

While this line of psychological enquiry focuses primarily on mental representations, I think it is provocative for us to think about such processes in political terms. How do children learn which social categories are salient? How do they learn to attend to the politically relevant inclusions and exclusions that shape the imagined communities in which adults live? These are not our questions alone. The texts of official, professional and social commentators are permeated with just these concerns. Few members of the European colonial community seem to have taken socialization to be unproblematic. This is more than evident in the sustained efforts adults put into identifying those features of cultural life (language, dress, schooling and upbringing) that would guarantee children's easy access to the right sensibilities for remaining or becoming "true" Europeans.

What is striking is that the questions cognitive psychologists ask about children's acquisition of social categories (what social environmental conditions shape children's choices? what criteria do children use to distinquish "we" from "they"?) are not dissimilar from the very questions posed by 19th century government authorities in the colonies themselves.[52] Nor are their answers very different. Both posit theories of collective representations that rely on essences; essences that determine membership in a collectivity more reliably than, for example, the more available physical attributes typically attached to race. Whether or not we accept the current cognitive theory that humans categorize in essentialist ways, the fact remains that in late 19th century imperial thinking, this search for essences informed complex assessments of child development that were seen to have high political stakes.

It would be misleading, however, to assume that this notion of essence was based on a blanket belief in an immutability and fixity that could not be transformed. Discussions of native and mixed-blood "character" seem to have had a fixity that European "character" did not. Members of the European community worried openly that "mixed-blood" children of European fathers and native mothers, schooled and raised in a European cultural milieu, would turn their backs on those cultural acquisitions and "revert" to their native allegiances, becoming patricides, revolutionaries and enemies of the state. The warning of "Pa" van de Steur (a cherished hero of Indies colonial history

---

[51] See, for example, Douglas Medin's "Concepts and Conceptual Structure" American Psychologist (December 1989):1469-81.

[52] See, for example, Douglas Medin's "Concepts and Conceptual Structure" in American Psychologist (December 1989):1469-1481; and Dan Sperber's "Anthrpology and Psychology: Towards and Epidemiology of Representations" Man 20: 73-89.

who initiated institutions throughout Java for wayward, abandoned Indo children) was repeatedly invoked by Batavian officials and parliamentary members in the Hague: "they grow up bearing an indestructible resentment and rancour [toward us], as enemies of the Netherlands-Indies state".

Anxieties about the children of "full-blooded" European parents were expressed in other terms, suggesting that the "moral essence" of Europeans was more fragile and less secure. Did people such as the prominent lawyer, Nederburgh, or the physician Kohlbrugge really believe that in the absence of a properly controlled environment a European child could actually "metamorphise" into a Javanese?[53] In short, the child of a Javanese mother and European father presumably remained Javanese while the child born of European parents in the colonies might not. Thus educational authorities questioned whether European children could ever attain the "spirit of being Dutch" (Nederlandschen geest) if their first thoughts and babblings were not in that language.[54] In 1941 Dutch guides to the Indies still debated whether children raised in European colonial homes would not be contaminated in Indies schools by sexually precocious Indische adolescents, not of "full-blooded European" origin.[55]

. The social geography of empire underwent profound restructuring in the early 20th century as the lines between colonizer and colonized, and those between subject and citizen were redrawn. Gendered and class sentiments and attachments defined the exclusionary politics of European colonial communities and metropolitan nation-states. European colonial households harbored threats to those distinctions at every turn. Language was considered a crucial source of national belonging, but "European" children in the Indies were repeatedly missing their linguistic cues or getting them wrong. Servants were a marker of the "middle-class aristocratic" life style in which even low-rank civil servants shared. But they came bearing cultural practices that compromised what children needed to be burgerlijk Dutch, what children needed to keep the categories straight; namely, those bourgeois respectabilities and moral prescriptions that distinguished their national identity and personal character from what was native and Javanese. Mothers were the makers of moral citizens, but here too, the Indies home was contaminated at its core. Why did authorities think that Dutchness was at risk if children were cradled in native hands, or lulled to sleep by those who were not their mothers? If power is constituted in the forming of subjects, than it is clear that we need to look more carefully at the ambiguous identities that empires produced, at the cultural labor that went into the making of "communities of sentiment", and at the strategies of recruitment to them.[56]

---

[53] Kohlbrugge 1907 "Het Indische Kind", p.

[54] Horst. 1900.

[55] C. Bauduin. 1941. Het Indische Leven. 'S-Gravenhage: Leopolds, p.63.

[56] Arjun Appardurai uses this concept to a different end in "Topographies of the self: praise and emotion in Hindu India" in Language and the Politics of Emotion. op.cit.:92-112.

ॐ TRANSFORMATIONS
comparative study of social transformations

WORKING PAPER SERIES

CSST, an inter-disciplinary research program, draws faculty associates from the departments of Anthropology, History, and Sociology, and several other departments and programs in the humanities and social sciences. The program's mission is to stimulate new inter-disciplinary thinking and research about all kinds of social transformations in a wide range of present and past societies. CSST Working Papers report current research by faculty and graduate student associates of the program. Many will be published elsewhere after revision. Working Papers are available for $2.50 to cover copying and postage. The CSST working paper series is a part of the Center for Research on Social Organizations' working paper series.

1. "Program in Comparative Study of Social Transformations," William **Sewell**, Terrence **McDonald**, Sherry **Ortner**, and Jeffery **Paige**, May 87 (CRSO #344).

2. "Labor History, Uneven Development, and the Autonomy of Politics: The Dockworkers of Nineteenth-Century Marseille," William **Sewell**, Jul 87 (CRSO #346). (Now in print as "Uneven Development, the Autonomy of Politics and the Dockworkers of Nineteenth-Century Marseille," American Historical Review 93:3 (Jun 88), pp. 604-37.)

3. "Coffee, Copper, and Class Conflict in Central America and Chile: A Critique of Zeitlin's Civil Wars in Chile and Zeitlin and Ratcliff's Landlords and Capitalists," Jeffery **Paige**, Sep 88 (CRSO #347).

4. "In Search of the Bourgeois Revolution: The Particularities of German History," Geoffrey **Eley**, Sep 87 (CRSO #350).

5. "The Burdens of Urban History: The Theory of the State in Recent American Social History," Terrence **McDonald**, May 88 (CRSO #355).

6. "History, Sociology, and Theories of Organization," Mayer **Zald**, May 88 (CRSO #357).

7. "Have Social Historians Lost the Civil War? Some Preliminary Demographic Speculations," Maris **Vinovskis**, May 88 (CRSO #358).

8. "Revolution and the Agrarian Bourgeoisie in Nicaragua," Jeffery **Paige** (CRSO #363).

9. "Nationalism and Class as Factors in the Revolution of 1917," Ronald **Suny**, Oct 88 (CRSO #365).

10. "The Original Caste: Power, History, and Hierarchy in South Asia," Nicholas **Dirks**, Oct 88 (CRSO #367).

11. "The Invention of Caste: Civil Society in Colonial India," Nicholas **Dirks**, Oct 88 (CRSO #368).

12. "Sociology as a Discipline: Quasi-Science and Quasi-Humanities," Mayer **Zald**, Oct 88 (CRSO #369).

13. "Constraints on Professional Power in Soviet-Type Society: Insights from the Solidarity Period in Poland," Michael **Kennedy** and Konrad **Sadkowski**, Nov 88 (CRSO #371).

14. "Evolutionary Changes in Chinese Culture," Martin **Whyte**, Nov 88 (CRSO #372).

15. "World Market, Class Conflict, and Rural Coercion in Post-Colonial Buenos Aires," Karl **Monsma**, Nov 88 (CRSO #373).

CSST
4010 L S & A Building
The University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, Michigan
48109-1382

(313) 936-1595

16. "Ritual and Resistance: Subversion as a Social Fact," Nicholas **Dirks**, Dec 88 (CRSO #375).

17. "Social Transformations of Gender in Andean South America: A Working Annotated Bibliography," Janise **Hurtig**, Dec 88 (CRSO #376).

18. "Labour History--Social History--<u>Alltagsgeschichte</u>: Experience, Culture, and the Politics of the Everyday. A New Direction for German Social History?" Geoff **Eley**, Jan 89 (CRSO #378). (Now in print in <u>Journal of Modern History</u> 61 (Jun 89), pp. 297-343.)

19. "Notes on the Sociology of Medical Discourse: The Language of Case Presentation," Renee **Anspach**, Jan 89 (CRSO #379).

20. "World War Two and the Deradicalization of American Labor: A 'Deviant Case' Study," Howard **Kimeldorf**, Feb 89 (CRSO #383).

21. "Taking Stock: The First Year of CSST," Geoff **Eley**, Feb 89 (CRSO #384).

22. "Immigration Research: A Conceptual Map," Silvia **Pedraza-Bailey**, Feb 89 (CRSO #385).

23. "Culture/Power/History. Series Prospectus," Sherry **Ortner**, Nicholas **Dirks**, and Geoff **Eley**, Mar 89, (CRSO #386).

24. "A Feminist Perspective on Christopher Lasch, 'The Social Invasion of the Self'," Sherry **Ortner**, Apr 89 (CRSO #387).

25. "Does Rational Choice Have Utility on the Margins?" Akos **Rona-Tas**, Apr 89 (CRSO #388).

26. Research Fellows Conference Panel on "The Politics of Social Transformation," Seong Nae **Kim**, Joanne **Goodwin**, Kathleen **Canning**, Jun 89 (CRSO #389).

27. Research Fellows Conference Panel on "Struggle, Conflict, and Constraints on Social Change," Anne **Gorsuch** and Sharon **Reitman**, Jun 89 (CRSO #390).

28. Research Fellows Conference Panel on "Subordinate Actors and their Marginalization in Social Theory," Nilufer **Isvan**, Akos **Rona-Tas**, Cynthia **Buckley**, Theresa **Deussen**, and Mayfair **Yang**, Jun 89 (CRSO #391).

29. "Toward a Theory of Structure: Duality, Agency, and Transformation," William **Sewell**, Jun 89 (CRSO #392).

30. "The Power of Individual Subjectivity and the Subjectivity of Power in Education," Peter **Appelbaum**, Jul 89 (CRSO #396).

31. "Family Ideology, Class Reproduction, and the Suppression of Obscenity in Nineteenth Century New York," Nicola **Beisel**, Jul 89 (CRSO #397).

32. "Author Meets Critics: Reactions to "Theory and Anthropology since the Sixties," Sherry **Ortner**, ed., Aug 89 (CRSO #398).

33. "Does Social Theory Need History? Reflections on Epistemological Encounters in the Social Sciences," Margaret **Somers**, Aug 89 (CRSO #399).

34. "Gender, History and Deconstruction: Joan Wallach Scott's <u>Gender And The Politics Of History</u>," William **Sewell**, Aug 89 (CRSO #400).

35. "The Social Origins Of Dictatorship, Democracy and Socialist Revolution in Central America," Jeffery **Paige**, Sep 89 (CRSO #405).

36. "Max Weber Meets Feminism: A Reconstruction of Charisma," Cheryl **Hyde**, Sep 89 (CRSO #407).

37. "Understanding Strikes In Revolutionary Russia," William **Rosenberg**, Sep 89 (CRSO #408).

38. "Child Labor Laws: A Historical Case Of Public Policy Implementation," Marjorie **McCall-Sarbaugh** and Mayer **Zald**, Oct 89 (CRSO #409).