

ONE

Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power Gender, Race, and Morality in Colonial Asia

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Over the last fifteen years the anthropology of women has fundamentally altered our understanding of colonial expansion and its consequences for the colonized. In identifying how European conquest affected valuations of women's work and redefined their proper domains, we have sought to explain how changes in household organization, the sexual division of labor, and the gender-specific control of resources within it have modified and shaped how colonial appropriations of land, labor, and resources were obtained.¹ Much of this research has focused on indigenous gendered patterns of economic activity, political participation, and social knowledge, on the agency of those confronted with European rule—but less on the distinct agency of those women and men who carried it out.

More recent attention to the structures of colonial authority has placed new emphasis on the quotidian assertion of European dominance in the colonies, on imperial interventions in domestic life, and thus on the cultural prescriptions by which European women and men lived (Callan and Ardenner 1984; Knibiehler and Goutalier 1985, 1987; Callaway 1987; Strobel 1987). Having focused on how colonizers have viewed the indigenous Other, we are beginning to sort out how Europeans in the colonies imagined themselves and constructed communities built on asymmetries of race, class, and gender—entities significantly at odds with the European models on which they were drawn.

Feminist attempts to engage the gender politics of Dutch, French, and British imperial cultures converge on some strikingly similar observations; namely that European women in these colonies experienced the cleavages of racial dominance and internal social distinctions very differently than men precisely because of their ambiguous positions, as both subordinates in colonial hierarchies and as active agents of imperial culture in their own right

(Callan and Ardener 1984; Knibiehler and Goutalier 1985; Reijs et al. 1986; Callaway 1987). Concomitantly, the majority of European women who left for the colonies in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries confronted profoundly rigid restrictions on their domestic, economic, and political options, more limiting than those of metropolitan Europe at the time and sharply contrasting with the opportunities open to colonial men.²

In one form or another these studies raise a basic question: in what ways were gender inequalities essential to the structure of colonial racism and imperial authority? Was the strident misogyny of imperial thinkers and colonial agents a by-product of received metropolitan values (“they just brought it with them”), a reaction to contemporary feminist demands in Europe (“women need to be put back in their breeding place”), or a novel and pragmatic response to the conditions of conquest? Was the assertion of European supremacy in terms of patriotic manhood and racial virility an expression of imperial domination or a defining feature of it?

In this chapter I explore some of the ways in which imperial authority and racial distinctions were fundamentally structured in gendered terms. I look specifically at the administrative and medical discourse and management of European sexual activity, reproduction and marriage as it articulated with the politics of colonial rule. In this initial effort I focus primarily on the dominant male discourse (and less on women’s perceptions of those constraints), on the evidence that it was the way in which women’s needs were defined, not *by*, but *for* them which most directly accounted for specific policies.³

Focusing on French Indochina and the Dutch East Indies in the early twentieth century but drawing on other contexts, I suggest that the very categories of “colonizer” and “colonized” were secured through forms of sexual control that defined the domestic arrangements of Europeans and the cultural investments by which they identified themselves. In treating the sexual and conjugal tensions of colonial life as more than a political trope for the tensions of empire writ small, but as a part of the latter in socially profound and strategic ways, I examine how gender-specific sexual sanctions and prohibitions not only demarcated positions of power but prescribed the personal and public boundaries of race.

Colonial authority was constructed on two powerful but false premises. The first was the notion that Europeans in the colonies made up an easily identifiable and discrete biological and social entity; a “natural” community of common class interests, racial attributes, political affinities, and superior culture. The second was the related notion that the boundaries separating colonizer from colonized were thus self-evident and easily drawn (Stoler 1989). Neither premise reflected colonial realities. Settler colonies such as those in Rhodesia and Algeria excepted—where inter-European conflicts

were violent and overt—tensions between bureaucrats and planters, settlers and transients, missionaries and metropolitan policy makers, *petits blancs* (lower-class whites), and monied entrepreneurs have always made Euro-colonial communities more socially fractious and politically fragile than many of their members professed (see, e.g. Cooper 1980; Drooglever 1980; Ridley 1981; Comaroff and Comaroff 1986; Kennedy 1987; Prochaska, 1989). Internal divisions developed out of competing economic and political agendas—conflicts over access to indigenous resources, frictions over appropriate methods for safeguarding European privilege and power, competing criteria for reproducing a colonial elite and for restricting its membership.

The shift away from viewing colonial elites as homogenous communities of common interest marks an important trajectory in the anthropology of empire, signaling a major rethinking of gender relations within it. The markers of European identity and the criteria for community membership no longer appear as fixed but emerge as a more obviously fluid, permeable, and historically disputed terrain. The colonial politics of exclusion was contingent on constructing categories. Colonial control was predicated on identifying who was “white,” who was “native,” and which children could become citizens rather than subjects, designating who were legitimate progeny and who were not.

What mattered was not only one’s physical properties but who counted as “European” and by what measure.⁴ Skin shade was too ambiguous; bank accounts were mercurial; religious belief and education were crucial but never completely sufficient. Social and legal standing derived from the cultural prism through which color was viewed, from the silences, acknowledgments, and denials of the social circumstances in which one’s parents had sex. Sexual unions based on concubinage, prostitution, or church marriage derived from the hierarchies of rule; but in turn, they were negotiated relations, contested classifications, which altered individual fates and the very structure of colonial society (Martinez-Alier 1974; Ming 1983; Taylor 1983). Ultimately inclusion or exclusion required regulating the sexual, conjugal, and domestic life of *both* Europeans in the colonies and their colonized subjects.

POLITICAL MESSAGES AND SEXUAL METAPHORS

Colonial observers and participants in the imperial enterprise appear to have had unlimited interest in the sexual interface of the colonial encounter. Probably no subject is discussed more than sex in colonial literature and no subject more frequently invoked to foster the racist stereotypes of European society (Pujarniscle 1931: 106; Louth 1971: 36). The tropics provided a site of European pornographic fantasies long before conquest was underway with

lurid descriptions of sexual license, promiscuity, gynecological aberrations, and general perversion marking the Otherness of the colonized for metropolitan consumption (Loutfi 1971; Gilman 1985: 79).⁵ Given the rigid sexual protocols of nineteenth-century Europe some colonial historians have gone so far as to suggest that imperial expansion itself was derived from the export of male sexual energy (Hyam 1986*b*) or at the very least “a sublimation or alternative to sex [for European men]” (Gann and Duignan 1978: 240). The more important point, however, is that with the sustained presence of Europeans in the colonies, sexual prescriptions by class, race, and gender became increasingly central to the politics of empire and subject to new forms of scrutiny by colonial states.

The salience of sexual symbols as graphic representations of colonial dominance is relatively unambiguous and well-established. Edward Said, for example, argues that the sexual submission and possession of Oriental women by European men “fairly *stands for* the pattern of relative strength between East and West, and the discourse about the Orient that it enabled” (1978: 6, my emphasis). He describes Orientalism as a “male perception of the world,” “a male power-fantasy,” “an exclusively male province,” in which the Orient is penetrated, silenced, and possessed (1978: 207). Sexuality, then, serves as a loaded metaphor for domination, but Said’s critique is not (nor does it claim to be) about those relations between women and men. Sexual images illustrate the iconography of rule, not its pragmatics. Sexual asymmetries and visions convey what is “really” going on elsewhere, at another political epicenter. They are tropes to depict other centers of power.

If Asian women are centerfold to the imperial voyeur, European women often appear in male colonial writings only as a reverse image—insofar as they do not fulfill the power fantasies of European men.⁶ Whether portrayed as paragons of morality or as parasitic and passive actors on the imperial stage, these women are rarely the object of European male desire (Loutfi 1971: 108–109). In assuming that European men and women participated equally in the prejudices and pleasures which colonial privilege bestowed upon them, such formulations obscure the fact that European women engaged in the construction and consequences of imperial power in ways that imposed fundamentally different restrictions on them.

Sexual domination has been carefully considered as a discursive symbol, instrumental in the conveyance of other meanings, but has been less often treated as the substance of imperial policy. Was sexual dominance, then, merely a graphic substantiation of who was, so to speak, on the bottom and who was on the top? Was the medium the message, or did sexual relations always “mean” something else, stand in for other relations, evoke the sense of *other* (pecuniary, political, or some possibly more subliminal) desires? This analytic slippage between the sexual symbols of power and the politics of sex runs throughout the colonial record—as well as through contemporary com-

mentaries on it. Some of this may be due to the polyvalent quality of sexuality; symbolically rich and socially salient at the same time. But sexual control was more than a convenient metaphor for colonial domination; it was, as I argue here, a fundamental class and racial marker implicated in a wider set of relations of power.

Kenneth Ballhatchet's work on Victorian India points in a similar direction (1980). By showing that regulations on sexual access, prostitution, and venereal disease were central to segregationist policy, he links issues of sexual management to the internal structure of British rule. He convincingly argues that it was through the policing of sex that subordinate European military and civil servants were kept in line and that racial boundaries were thus maintained. This study then is about the relations of power between men and men; it has little to say about constraints on European colonial women since its emphasis is not on the relations of power between women and men.

As a critical interface of sexuality and the wider political order, the relationship between gender prescriptions and racial boundaries is a subject that still remains unevenly unexplored. Recent work on the oral history of colonial women, for example, shows clearly that European women of different classes experienced the colonial venture very differently from one another and from men, but we still know relatively little about the distinct investments they had in a racism they shared (Van Helten and Williams 1983; Knibiehler and Goutalier 1985; Callaway 1987; Strobel 1987).

In confronting some of these issues, feminists investigating colonial situations have taken a new turn, relating the real-life conditions of European and colonized women to imperial mentalities and to the cultural artifices of rule. Such efforts to sort out the distinct colonial experience of European women examine how they were incorporated into, resisted, and affected the politics of their men (Taylor 1983; Knibiehler and Goutalier 1985; Callan and Ardener 1984; Callaway 1987). Studies showing the intervention of state, business, and religious institutions in indigenous strategies of biological and social reproduction are now coupled with those that examine the work of European women in these programs, the influence of European welfare programs on colonial medicine, and the reproductive constraints on colonial women themselves (Knibiehler and Goutalier 1985; Hunt 1988).

Most of these contributions have attended to the broader issue of gender ideologies and colonial authority, not specifically to how sexual control has figured in the fixing of racial boundaries per se. Although feminist research across disciplines has increasingly explored the "social embeddedness of sexuality," and the contexts that "condition, constrain and socially define [sexual] acts" (Ross and Rapp 1980: 54), this emphasis has not been dominant in feminist studies of empire, nor has it refocused attention on the *racial* "embeddedness of sexuality" in colonial contexts as one might expect. Important exceptions include recent work on Southern Africa where changing

restrictions on colonial prostitution and domestic service were explicitly class-specific and directly tied racial policy to sexual control (Gaitskell 1983; Van Heyningen 1984; Schmidt 1987; Hansen 1989; White 1990; also see Ming 1983 and Hesselink 1987 for the Indies, and Engels 1983 for India).

The linkage between sexual control and racial tensions is both obvious and elusive at the same time. Although we can accept Ronald Takaki's (1977) assertion that sexual fear in nineteenth-century America was at base a racial anxiety, we are still left to understand why it is through sexuality that such anxieties are expressed. Winthrop Jordan contends that in the nineteenth-century American South, "the sex act itself served as a ritualistic re-enactment of the daily pattern of social dominance" (1968: 141). More generally, Sander Gilman (1985) argues that sexuality is the most salient marker of Otherness and therefore figures in *any* racist ideology; like skin color, "sexual structures such as the shape of the genitalia, are always the antithesis of the idealized self's" (ibid., 25). If sexuality organically represents racial difference as Gilman claims, then we should not be surprised that colonial agents and colonized subjects expressed their contests—and vulnerabilities—in these terms.

This notion of sexuality as a core aspect of social identity has figured importantly in analyses of the psychological motivation and consequences of colonial rule (Mannoni 1956; Fanon 1967; Nandy 1983). In this focus, sexual submission substantiates colonial racism, imposing essential limits on personal liberation. Notably, among colonized male authors, questions of virility and definitions of manliness are politically centerstage. The demasculinization of colonized men and the hypermasculinity of European males represent principal assertions of white supremacy. But these studies are about the psychological salience of women and sex in the subordination of men by men. They only incidentally deal with *sexism* and racism as well as racism and sex.⁷

An overlapping set of discourses have provided the psychological and economic underpinnings for colonial distinctions of difference, linking fears of sexual contamination, physical danger, climatic incompatibility, and moral breakdown to a European national identity with a racist and class-specific core. In colonial scientific reports and the popular press we repeatedly come across statements varying on a common theme: "native women bear contagions"; "white women become sterile in the colonies"; "colonial men are susceptible to physical, moral and mental degeneration when they remain in the tropics too long." To what degree are these statements medically or politically grounded? We need to unpack what is metaphor, what is perceived as dangerous (is it disease, culture, climate, or sex?), and what is not.

In the sections that follow I look at the relationship between the domestic arrangements of colonial communities and their wider political structures. Part I draws on colonization debates over a broad period (sixteenth–

twentieth c.) in an effort to identify the long-term intervention of colonial authorities in issues of “racial mixing,” settlement schemes, and sexual control. In examining debates over European family formation, over the relationship between subversion and sex, I look at how evaluations of concubinage, and of morality more generally, changed with new forms of racism and new gender-specific expressions of them.

Part II treats the protection and policing of European women within the changing politics of empire. It traces how accusations of sexual assault related to new demands for political rights and restricted demarcations of social space in response to them. Part III examines what I call the “cultural hygiene” of colonialism. Taking the early twentieth century as a breakpoint, I take up the convergent metropolitan and colonial discourses on health hazards in the tropics, race-thinking, and social reform as they related to shifts in the rationalization of rule. In tracing how fears of “racial degeneracy” were grounded in class-specific sexual norms, I return to how and why racial difference was constituted and culturally coded in gendered terms.

PART I: SEX AND OTHER CATEGORIES OF COLONIAL CONTROL

Though sex cannot of itself enable men to transcend racial barriers, it generates some admiration and affection across them, which is healthy, and which cannot always be dismissed as merely self-interested and prudential. On the whole, sexual interaction between Europeans and non-Europeans probably did more good than harm to race relations; at any rate, I cannot accept the feminist contention that it was fundamentally undesirable. (Hyam 1986a: 75)

The regulation of sexual relations was central to the development of particular kinds of colonial settlements and to the allocation of economic activity within them. Who bedded and wedded with whom in the colonies of France, England, Holland, and Iberia was never left to chance. Unions between Annamite women and French men, between Portuguese women and Dutch men, between Spanish men and Inca women produced offspring with claims to privilege, whose rights and status had to be determined and prescribed. From the early 1600s through the twentieth century the sexual sanctions and conjugal prohibitions of colonial agents were rigorously debated and carefully codified. It is in these debates over matrimony and morality that trading and plantation company officials, missionaries, investment bankers, military high commands, and agents of the colonial state confronted one another’s visions of empire, and the settlement patterns on which it would rest.

In 1622 the Dutch East Indies Company (VOC) arranged for the transport of six poor but marriageable young Dutch women to Java, providing them with clothing, a dowry upon marriage, and a contract binding them to five years in the Indies (Taylor 1983: 12). Aside from this and one other short-lived experiment, immigration of European women to the East was

consciously restricted for the next two hundred years. VOC shareholders argued against female emigration on several counts: the high cost of transporting married women and daughters (Blussé 1986: 161); the possibility that Dutch women (with stronger ties than men to the Netherlands?) might hinder permanent settlement by goading their burgher husbands to quickly lucrative but nefarious trade, and then repatriate to display their newfound wealth (Taylor 1983: 14); the fear that Dutch women would enrich themselves through private trade and encroach on the company's monopoly;⁸ and the prediction that their children would be sickly and force families to repatriate, ultimately depleting the colony of permanent and loyal settlers (Taylor 1983: 14).

The Dutch East Indies Company enforced the sanction against female migration by selecting bachelors as their European recruits and by promoting both extramarital relations and legal unions between low-ranking employees and imported slave women (Taylor 1983: 16).⁹ Although there were Euro-Asian marriages, government regulations made concubinage a more attractive option by prohibiting European men with native wives and children from returning to Holland (Ming 1983: 69; Taylor 1983: 16; Blussé 1986: 173). The VOC saw households based on Euro-Asian unions, by contrast, as having distinct advantages; individual employees would bear the costs of dependents; children of mixed unions were considered stronger and healthier; and Asian women made fewer demands. Finally, it was thought that men would be more likely to settle permanently by establishing families with local roots.

Concubinage served colonial interests in other ways. It permitted permanent settlement and rapid growth by a cheaper means than the importation of European women. Salaries of European recruits to the colonial armies, bureaucracies, plantation companies, and trading enterprises were kept artificially low. This was possible not only because the transport of European women and family support was thereby eliminated, as was often argued, but because local women provided domestic services for which new European recruits would otherwise have had to pay. In the mid-nineteenth century, such arrangements were *de rigueur* for young civil servants intent on setting up households on their own (Ritter 1856: 21). Despite clerical opposition (the church never attained a secure and independent foothold in the Indies), by the nineteenth century concubinage was the most prevalent living arrangement for European men (van Marle 1952: 485). Nearly half of the Indies' European male population in the 1880s was unmarried and living with Asian women (Ming 1983: 70). It was only in the early twentieth century that concubinage was politically condemned (van Marle 1952: 486).

The administrative arguments from the 1600s invoked to curb the immigration of European women, on the one hand, and to condone sexual ac-

cess to indigenous women, on the other, bear striking resemblance to the sexual politics of colonial capitalism three centuries later. Referred to as *nyai* in Java and Sumatra, *congai* in Indochina, and *petite épouse* throughout the French empire, the colonized woman living as a concubine to a European man formed the dominant domestic arrangement in colonial cultures through the early twentieth century. Unlike prostitution, which could and often did result in a population of syphilitic and therefore nonproductive European men, concubinage was considered to have a stabilizing influence on political order and colonial health—a relationship that kept men in their barracks and bungalows, out of brothels and less inclined to “unnatural” liaisons with one another.¹⁰

In Asia and Africa corporate and government decision-makers invoked the social services that local women supplied as “useful guides to the language and other mysteries of the local societies” (Malleret 1934: 216; Cohen 1971: 122). The medical and cultural know-how of local women was credited with keeping many European men alive in their initial confrontation with tropical life (Braconier 1933). Handbooks for incoming plantation employees bound for Tonkin, Sumatra, and Malaya urged men to find a bed-servant as a prerequisite to quick acclimatization (Nieuwenhuys 1959: 19; Dixon 1913: 77). In Malaysia, commercial companies encouraged the procurement of local “companions” for psychological and physical well-being; to protect European staff from the ill-health that sexual abstention, isolation, and boredom were thought to bring (Butcher 1979: 200, 202).¹¹ Even in the British empire, where the colonial office officially banned concubinage in 1910, it was tacitly condoned and practiced long after (Hyam 1986*b*; Callaway 1987: 49; Kennedy 1987: 175). In the Indies a simultaneous sanction against concubinage among civil servants was only selectively enforced; it had little effect on domestic arrangements outside of Java and no perceptible impact on the European households in Sumatra’s newly opened plantation belt where Javanese and Japanese *huishoudsters* (as Asian mistresses were sometimes called) remained the rule rather than the exception (Clerkx 1961: 87–93; Stoler 1985*a*: 31–34; Lucas 1986: 84).

Concubinage was a contemporary term which referred to the cohabitation outside of marriage between European men and Asian women. In fact, it glossed a wide range of arrangements that included sexual access to a non-European woman as well as demands on her labor and legal rights to the children she bore. Thus, to define concubinage as cohabitation perhaps suggests more social privileges than most women who were involved in such relations enjoyed.¹² Many colonized women combined sexual and domestic service within the abjectly subordinate contexts of slave or “coolie” and lived in separate quarters. On the plantations in East Sumatra, for example, where such arrangements were structured into company policies of labor control,

Javanese women picked from the coolie ranks often retained their original labor contracts for the duration of their sexual and domestic service (Lucas 1986: 186).

Although most of these Javanese women remained as servants, sharing only the beds of European staff, many *nyai* elsewhere in the Indies combined their service with some degree of limited authority. Working for wealthier men, these *huishoudsters* managed the businesses as well as the servants and household affairs of European men (Nieuwenhuys 1959: 17; Lucas 1986: 86; Taylor 1983).¹³ Native women (like European-born women in a later period) were to keep men physically and psychologically fit for work, that is, marginally content without distracting them or urging them out of line (Chivas-Baron 1929: 103). Live-in companions, especially in remote districts and plantation areas, thus met the daily needs of low-ranking European employees without the emotional, temporal, and financial requirements that European family life were thought to demand.¹⁴

To say that concubinage reinforced the hierarchies on which colonial societies were based is not to say that it did not make those distinctions more problematic at the same time. In the first place, in such regions as North Sumatra grossly uneven sex ratios often made for intense competition among male workers and their European supervisors for indigenous women. *Vrouwen perkara* (disputes over women) resulted in assaults on whites, new labor tensions, and dangerous incursions into the standards deemed essential for white prestige (Stoler 1985a: 33; Lucas 1986: 90–91). In the Netherlands Indies, more generally, an unaccounted number of impoverished Indo-European women, moving between prostitution and concubinage, disturbed the racial sensibilities of the Dutch-born elite (Hesselink 1987: 216). Metropolitan critics were particularly disdainful of these liaisons on moral grounds—all the more so when these unions *were* sustained and emotionally significant relationships, thereby contradicting the racial premise of concubinage as an emotionally unfettered convenience.¹⁵ But perhaps most important, the tension between concubinage as a confirmation and compromise of racial hierarchy was realized in the progeny that it produced, “mixed bloods,” poor “Indos,” and abandoned *métis* children who straddled the divisions of ruler and ruled and threatened to blur the colonial divide. These *voorkinderen* (literally, “children from a previous marriage/union,” but in this colonial context usually marking illegitimate children from a previous union with a non-European woman) were economically disadvantaged by their ambiguous social status and often grew up to join the ranks of the impoverished whites (Nieuwenhuys 1959: 21).

Concubinage was a domestic arrangement based on sexual service and gender inequalities which “worked” as long as European identity and supremacy were clear. When either was thought to be vulnerable, in jeopardy, or less than convincing, at the turn of the century and increasingly through

the 1920s, colonial elites responded by clarifying the cultural criteria of privilege and the moral premises of their unity. Structured sex in the politically safe context of prostitution, and where possible in the more desirable context of marriage between "full-blooded" Europeans, replaced concubinage (Taylor 1977: 29). As in other colonial contexts as we shall see, the ban on concubinage was not always expressed in boldly racist language; on the contrary, difference and distance were often coded to mark race in culturally clear but nuanced terms.¹⁶

RESTRICTIONS ON EUROPEAN WOMEN IN THE COLONIES

Colonial governments and private business not only tolerated concubinage but actively encouraged it—principally by restricting the emigration of European women to the colonies and by refusing employment to married male European recruits. Although most accounts of colonial conquest and settlement suggest that European women chose to avoid early pioneering ventures, the choice was rarely their own (cf. Fredrickson 1981: 109). In the Indies, a government ordinance of 1872 made it impossible for any soldier below the rank of sergeant major to be married; and even above that rank, conditions were very restrictive (Ming 1983: 70). In the Indies army, marriage was a privilege of the officer corps, whereas barrack-concubinage was instituted and regulated for the rank and file. In the twentieth century, formal and informal prohibitions set by banks, estates, and government services operating in Africa, India, and Southeast Asia restricted marriage during the first three to five years of service, while some simply prohibited it altogether. In Malaya, the major British banks required their employees to sign contracts agreeing to request prior permission to marry, with the understanding that it would not be granted in fewer than eight years (Butcher 1979: 138).

Many historians assume that these bans on employee marriage and on the emigration of European women lifted when specific colonies were politically stable, medically upgraded, and economically secure. In fact marriage restrictions lasted well into the twentieth century, long after rough living and a scarcity of amenities had become conditions of the past. In India as late as 1929, British employees in the political service were still recruited at the age of twenty-six and then prohibited from marriage during their first three probationary years (Moore-Gilbert 1986: 48). In the army, marriage allowances were also denied until the same age, while in the commercial houses restrictions were frequent but less overt (*ibid.*: 48; Woodcock 1969: 164). On the Ivory Coast, employment contracts in the 1920s also denied marriage with European women before the third tour, which meant a minimum of five years' service, so that many men remained unmarried past the age of thirty (Tirefort 1979: 134).¹⁷

European demographics in the colonies were shaped by these economic

and political exigencies and thus were enormously skewed by sex. Among the laboring immigrant and native populations as well as among Europeans in the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the number of men was, at the very least, double that of women, and sometimes exceeded the latter by twenty-five times. Although in the Netherlands Indies, the overall ratio of European women to men rose from 47:100 to 88:100 between 1900 and 1930, representing an absolute increase from 4,000 to 26,000 Dutch women (Taylor 1983: 128), in outlying islands such as Sumatra the ratios were kept far more uneven. Thus on Sumatra's plantation belt in 1920 there were still only 61 European women per 100 men (*Koloniale Verslag* quoted in Lucas 1986: 82). On Africa's Ivory Coast, European sex ratios through 1921 were still 1:25 (Tirefort 1979: 31). In Tonkin, European men sharply outnumbered European women as late as 1931 when there were 14,085 European men (including military) to 3,083 European women (Gantes 1981: 138). While these imbalances are most frequently attributed to the physical hazards of life in the tropics, there are political explanations that are more compelling. In controlling the availability of European women and the sorts of sexual access allowed, colonial state and corporate authorities avoided salary increases as well as the proliferation of a lower-class European settler population. Such policies in no way muted the internal class distinctions within the European communities; they simply shaped the social geography of the colonies by fixing the conditions under which European privileges could be attained and reproduced.

SEX, SUBVERSION AND WHITE PRESTIGE: A CASE FROM NORTH SUMATRA

The marriage prohibition was both a political and economic issue, defining the social contours of colonial communities and the standards of living within them (Butcher 1979). But, as importantly, it revealed how deeply the conduct of private life and the sexual proclivities individuals expressed were tied to corporate profits and the security of the colonial state. Nowhere was the connection between sex and subversion more openly contested than in North Sumatra in the early 1900s. Irregular domestic arrangements were thought to encourage subversion as strongly as acceptable unions could avert it. Family stability and sexual "normalcy" were thus linked to political agitation or quiescence in very concrete ways.

Since the late nineteenth century, the major North Sumatran tobacco and rubber companies had neither accepted married applicants nor allowed them to take wives while in service (Schoevers 1913: 38; Clerkx 1961: 31-34). Company authorities argued that new employees with families in tow would be a financial burden, risking the emergence of a "European proletariat" and thus a major threat to white prestige (*Kroniek* 1917: 50; *Sumatra Post* 1913).

Low-ranking plantation employees protested against these company marriage restrictions, an issue that mobilized their ranks behind a broad set of demands (Stoler 1989a: 144). Under employee pressure, the prohibition was relaxed to a marriage ban for the first five years of service. This restriction, however, was never placed on everyone; it was pegged to salaries and dependent on the services of local women that kept the living costs and wages of subordinate and incoming staff artificially low.

Domestic arrangements thus varied as government officials and private businesses weighed the economic versus political costs of one arrangement over another, but such calculations were invariably meshed. Europeans in high office saw white prestige and profits as inextricably linked, and attitudes toward concubinage reflected that concern (Brownfoot 1984: 191). Thus in Malaya through the 1920s, concubinage was tolerated precisely because "poor whites" were not. Government and plantation administrators argued that white prestige would be imperiled if European men became impoverished in attempting to maintain middle-class life-styles and European wives. Colonial morality and the place of concubinage in it was relative, given the "particular anathema with which the British regarded 'poor whites'" (Butcher 1979: 26). In late-nineteenth-century Java, in contrast, concubinage itself was considered to be a major source of white pauperism; in the early 1900s it was vigorously condemned at precisely the same time that a new colonial morality passively condoned illegal brothels (*Het Pauperisme Commissie* 1901; Nieuwenhuys 1959: 20–23; Hesselink 1987: 208).

It was not only morality that vacillated but the very definition of white prestige—and what its defense should entail. No description of European colonial communities fails to note the obsession with white prestige as a basic feature of colonial mentality. White prestige and its protection loom as the primary cause of a long list of otherwise inexplicable colonial postures, prejudices, fears, and violences. As we have seen, what upheld that prestige was not a constant; concubinage was socially lauded at one time and seen as a political menace at another. White prestige was a gloss for different intensities of racist practice, gender-specific and culturally coded. Although many accounts contend that white women brought an end to concubinage, its decline came with a much wider shift in colonial relations along more racially segregated lines—in which the definitions of prestige shifted and in which Asian, creole, and European-born women were to play new roles.

Thus far I have treated colonial communities as a generic category despite the sharp demographic, social, and political distinctions among them. Colonies based on small administrative centers of Europeans (as on Africa's Gold Coast) differed from plantation colonies with sizable enclave European communities (as in Malaya and Sumatra), and still more from settler colonies (as in Algeria) with large and very heterogenous, permanent European populations. These "types," however, were far less fixed than some students

of colonial history suggest. Winthrop Jordan, for example, has argued that the “bedrock demographics” of whites to blacks, and the sexual composition of the latter group, “powerfully influenced, perhaps even determined the kind of society which emerged in each colony” (Jordan 1968: 141).¹⁸ North Sumatra’s European-oriented, overwhelmingly male colonial population, for example, contrasted sharply with the more sexually balanced mestizo culture that emerged in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in colonial Java. As we have seen, however, these demographics were not the bedrock of social relations from which all else followed. Sex ratios themselves derived from the particular way in which administrative strategies of social engineering collided with and constrained people’s personal choices and private lives. While recognizing that these demographic differences, and the social configurations to which they gave rise, still need to be explained, I have chosen here to trace some of the common politically charged issues that a range of colonial societies shared; that is, some of the similar—and counterintuitive—ways in which the construction of racial categories and the management of sexuality were inscribed in new efforts to modernize colonial control.¹⁹

PART II: EUROPEAN WOMEN AND RACIAL BOUNDARIES

Perhaps nothing is as striking in the sociological accounts of European colonial communities as the extraordinary changes that are said to accompany the entry of white women. These adjustments shifted in one direction; toward European life-styles accentuating the refinements of privilege and new etiquettes of racial difference. Most accounts agree that the presence of European women put new demands on the white communities to tighten their ranks, clarify their boundaries, and mark out their social space. The material culture of European settlements in Saigon, outposts in New Guinea, and estate complexes in Sumatra were retailored to accommodate the physical and moral requirements of a middle-class and respectable feminine contingent (Malleret 1934; Gordon and Meggitt 1985; Stoler 1989a). Housing structures in the Indies were partitioned, residential compounds in the Solomon Islands enclosed, servant relations in Hawaii formalized, dress codes in Java altered, food and social taboos in Rhodesia and the Ivory Coast codified. Taken together these changes encouraged new kinds of consumption and new social services catering to these new demands (Boutilier 1984; Spear 1963; Woodcock 1969; Cohen 1971).

The arrival of large numbers of European women thus coincided with an embourgeoisment of colonial communities and with a significant sharpening of racial categories. European women supposedly required more metropolitan amenities than men and more spacious surroundings to allow it; they had more delicate sensibilities and therefore needed suitable quarters—discrete and enclosed. Women’s psychological and physical constitutions were con-

sidered more fragile, demanding more servants for the chores they should be spared. In short, white women needed to be maintained at elevated standards of living, in insulated social spaces cushioned with the cultural artifacts of "being European."

Thomas Beidelman, for example, writes for colonial Tanganyika that "European wives and children created a new and less flexible domestic colonialism exhibiting overconcern with the sexual accessibility or vulnerability of wives, with corresponding notions about the need for spatial and social segregation" (1982: 13). Whether women or men set these new standards and why they might have both done so for different reasons is left unclear. Who exhibited "overconcern" and a "need for" segregation? In Indochina, male doctors advised French women to have their homes built with separate domestic and kitchen quarters (Grall 1908: 74). Segregationist standards were what women "deserved," and more importantly what white male prestige required that they maintain.

RACIST BUT MORAL WOMEN, INNOCENT BUT IMMORAL MEN

Recent feminist scholarship has challenged the universally negative stereotype of the colonial wife in one of two ways: either by showing the structural reasons why European women were racially intolerant, socially vicious, abusive to servants, prone to illness and bored, or by demonstrating that they really were not (Gartrell 1984; Knibiehler and Goutalier 1985; Callaway 1987). Several recent works have attempted to confront what Margaret Strobel calls the "myth of the destructive female" to show that European women were not detriments to colonial relations but were in fact crucial to the bolstering of a failing empire, and charged with maintaining the social rituals of racial difference (Strobel 1987: 378–379).

Colonial rhetoric on white women was full of contradictions. At the same time that new female immigrants were chided for not respecting the racial distance of local convention, an equal number of colonial observers accused these women of being more avid racists in their own right (Spear 1963; Nora 1961). Allegedly insecure and jealous of the sexual liaisons of European men with native women, bound to their provincial visions and cultural norms, European women, it was and is argued, constructed the major cleavages on which colonial stratification rested. Thus Percival Spear, in commenting on the social life of the English in eighteenth-century India, asserted that women "widened the racial gulf" by holding to "their insular whims and prejudices" (1963: 140). Writing about French women in Algeria two hundred years later, the French historian Pierre Nora claimed that these "parasites of the colonial relationship in which they do not participate directly, are generally more racist than men and contribute strongly to prohibiting contact between the two societies" (1961: 174). Similarly, Octavio Mannoni

noted “the astonishing fact” that European women in Madagascar were “far more racist than the men” (1964 [1950]: 115). For the Indies “it was jealousy of the dusky sirens . . . but more likely some say . . . it was . . . plain feminine scandalization at free and easy sex relations” that caused a decline in miscegenation (Kennedy 1947: 164).

Such bald examples are easy to find in colonial histories of several decades ago. Recent scholarship is more subtle but not substantially different. In the European community on the French Ivory Coast, ethnographer Alain Tirefort contends that “the presence of the white woman separated husbands from indigenous life by creating around them a zone of European intimacy” (1979: 197). Gann and Duignan state simply that it was “the cheap steamship ticket for women that put an end to racial integration in British Africa” (1978: 242; also see O’Brien 1972: 59). Lest we assume that such conclusions are confined to metropolitan men, we should note the Indian psychiatrist Ashis Nandy’s observation—tying white women’s racism to the homosexual cravings of their husbands—that “white women in India were generally more racist because they unconsciously saw themselves as the sexual competitors of Indian men” (1983: 9–10).

What is most startling here is that women, these otherwise marginal actors on the colonial stage, are charged with dramatically reshaping the face of colonial society, imposing their racial will on, as in the case of Africa, a colonial world where “relatively unrestrained social intermingling . . . had been prevalent in earlier years” (Cohen 1971: 122). Similarly, in Malaya the presence of European women put an end to “free and easy social intercourse with [Malayan] men as well,” replacing “an iron curtain of ignorance . . . between the races” (Vere Allen 1970: 169). European women are not only the bearers of racist beliefs but hardline operatives who put them into practice. European women, it is claimed, destroyed the blurred divisions between colonizer and colonized, encouraging class distinctions among whites while fostering new racial antagonisms, formerly muted by sexual access (*ibid.*: 168).²⁰

Are we to believe that sexual intimacy with European men yielded social mobility and political rights for colonized women? Or even less likely, that because British civil servants bedded with Indian women, somehow Indian men had more “in common” with British men and enjoyed more parity? Colonized women could sometimes parlay their positions into personal profit and small rewards, but these were *individual* negotiations with no social, legal, or cumulative claims. European male sexual access to native women was not a leveling mechanism for asymmetries in race, class, or gender (Strobel 1987: 378; Degler 1986: 189).

Male colonizers positioned European women as the bearers of a redefined colonial morality. But to suggest that women fashioned this racism out of whole cloth is to miss the political chronology in which new intensities of

racist practice arose. In the African and Asian contexts already mentioned, the arrival of large numbers of European wives, and particularly the fear for their protection, followed from new terms and tensions in the colonial contract. The presence and protection of European women was repeatedly invoked to clarify racial lines. It coincided with perceived threats to European prestige (Brownfoot 1984: 191), increased racial conflict (Strobel 1987: 378), covert challenges to the colonial order, outright expressions of nationalist resistance, and internal dissension among whites themselves (Stoler 1989a: 147–149).

If white women were the primary force behind the decline of concubinage as is often claimed, they did so as participants in a much broader racial realignment and political plan (Knibiehler and Goutalier 1985: 76). This is not to suggest that European women were passive in this process, as the dominant themes in many of their novels attest (Taylor 1977: 27). Many European women did oppose concubinage—not because they were categorically jealous of, and threatened by, Asian women as often claimed (Clerkx 1961), but, more likely, because of the double standard it condoned for European men (Lucas 1986: 94–95). Although some Dutch women in fact championed the cause of the wronged *nyai*, urging improved protection for nonprovisioned women and children, they rarely went so far as to advocate for the legitimation of these unions in legal marriage (Taylor 1977: 31–32; Lucas 1986: 95). The voices of European women, however, had little resonance until their objections coincided with a realignment in racial and class politics in which they were strategic to both.

RACE AND THE POLITICS OF SEXUAL PERIL

The gender-specific requirements for colonial living, referred to above, were constructed on heavily racist evaluations, which pivoted on images of the heightened sexuality of colonized men (Tiffany and Adams 1985). Although, as we have noted, in novels and memoirs European women were categorically absent from the sexual fantasies of colonial men, the very same men deemed them to be desired and seductive figures to men of color. European women needed protection because men of color had “primitive” sexual urges and uncontrollable lust, aroused by the sight of white women (Strobel 1987: 379; Schmidt 1987: 411). In some colonies that sexual threat remained an unlabeled potential; in others it was given a specific name. The “Black Peril” referred throughout Africa and much of the British Empire to the professed dangers of sexual assault on white women by black men.

In Southern Rhodesia and Kenya in the 1920s and 1930s preoccupations with the “Black Peril” gave rise to the creation of citizens’ militias, ladies’ riflery clubs, and investigations as to whether African female domestic servants would not be safer to employ than men (Kirkwood 1984: 158; Schmidt

1987: 412; Kennedy 1987: 128–147; Hansen 1989). In New Guinea alleged attempted assaults on European women by Papuan men prompted the passage of the White Women's Protection Ordinance of 1926, which provided "the death penalty for any person convicted for the crime of rape or attempted rape upon a European woman or girl" (Inglis 1975: vi). And in the Solomon Islands authorities introduced public flogging in 1934 as punishment for "criminal assaults on [white] females" (Boutilier 1984: 197).

What do these cases have in common? First, the rhetoric of sexual assault and the measures used to prevent it had virtually no correlation with actual incidences of rape of European women by men of color. Just the contrary: there was often no *ex post facto* evidence, nor any at the time, that rapes were committed or that rape attempts were made (Schmidt 1987; Inglis 1975; Kirkwood 1984; Kennedy 1987; Boutilier 1984). This is not to suggest that sexual assaults never occurred, but that their incidence had little to do with the fluctuations in anxiety about them. Moreover, the rape laws were race-specific; sexual abuse of black women was not classified as rape and therefore was not legally actionable, nor did rapes committed by white men lead to prosecution (Mason 1958: 246–247). If these accusations of sexual threat were not prompted by the fact of rape, what did they signal and to what were they tied?

Allusions to political and sexual subversion of the colonial system went hand in hand. The term "Black Peril" referred to sexual threats, but it also connoted the fear of insurgence, of some perceived nonacquiescence to colonial control more generally (van Onselen 1982; Schmidt 1987; Inglis 1975; Strobel 1987; Kennedy 1987: 128–147). Concern over protection of white women intensified during real and perceived crises of control—provoked by threats to the internal cohesion of the European communities or by infringements on its borders. Thus colonial accounts of the Mutiny in India in 1857 are full of descriptions of the sexual mutilation of British women by Indian men despite the fact that no rapes were recorded (Metcalf 1964: 290). In Africa too, although the chronologies of the Black Peril differ—on the Rand in South Africa peaking a full twenty years earlier than elsewhere—we can still identify a patterned *sequence* of events (van Onselen 1982). In New Guinea, the White Women's Protection Ordinance followed a large influx of acculturated Papuans into Port Moresby in the 1920s. Resistant to the constraints imposed on their dress, movement, and education, whites perceived them as arrogant, "cheeky," and without respect (Inglis 1975: 8, 11). In post-World War I Algeria, the political unease of *pieds noirs* (local French settlers) in the face of "a whole new series of [Muslim] demands" manifested itself in a popular culture newly infused with strong images of sexually aggressive Algerian men (Sivan 1983: 178).

Second, rape charges against colonized men were often based on perceived transgressions of social space. "Attempted rapes" turned out to be

“incidents” of a Papuan man “discovered” in the vicinity of a white residence, a Fijian man who entered a European patient’s room, a male servant poised at the bedroom door of a European woman asleep or in half-dress (Boutillier 1984: 197; Inglis 1975: 11; Schmidt 1987: 413). With such a broad definition of danger in a culture of fear, all colonized men of color were threatening as sexual and political aggressors.

Third, accusations of sexual assault frequently followed upon heightened tensions within European communities—and renewed efforts to find consensus within them. Rape accusations in South Africa, for example, coincided with a rash of strikes between 1890–1914 by both African and white miners (van Onselen 1982: 51). As in Rhodesia after a strike by white railway employees in 1929, the threat of native rebellion brought together conflicting members of the European community in common cause where “solidarity found sustenance in the threat of racial destruction” (Kennedy 1987: 138).

During the late 1920s when labor protests by Indonesian workers and European employees were most intense, Sumatra’s corporate elite expanded their vigilante organizations, intelligence networks, and demands for police protection to ensure their women were safe and their workers “in hand” (Stoler 1985a). White women arrived in large numbers during the most profitable years of the plantation economy but also at a time of mounting resistance to estate labor conditions and Dutch rule. In the context of a European community that had been blatantly divided between low-ranking plantation employees and the company elite, the community was stabilized and domestic situations were rearranged.

In Sumatra’s plantation belt, subsidized sponsorship of married couples replaced the recruitment of single Indonesian workers and European staff, with new incentives provided for family housing and *gezinvorming* (“family formation”) in both groups. This recomposed labor force of family men in “stable households” explicitly weeded out politically “undesirable elements” and the socially malcontent. With the marriage restriction finally lifted for European staff in the 1920s, young men sought wives among Dutch-born women while on leave in Holland or through marriage brokers by mail. Higher salaries, upgraded housing, elevated bonuses, and a more mediated chain of command between colonized fieldworker and colonial staff served to clarify both national and racial affinities and to differentiate the political interests of European from Asian workers more than ever before (Stoler 1985a). With this shift, the vocal opposition to corporate and government directives, sustained by the independent Union of European Estate Employees (*Vakvereniging voor Assistenten in Deli*) for nearly two decades, was effectively dissolved (*Kroniek* 1933: 85).

The remedies sought to alleviate sexual danger embraced new prescriptions for securing white control; increased surveillance of native men, new laws stipulating severe corporeal punishment for the transgression of sexual

and social boundaries, and the creation of areas made racially off-limits. These went with a moral rearmament of the European community and reassertions of its cultural identity. Charged with guarding cultural norms, European women were instrumental in promoting white solidarity. It was partly at their own expense, as they were to be nearly as closely policed as colonized men (Strobel 1987).

POLICING EUROPEAN WOMEN AND CONCESSIONS TO CHIVALRY

Although native men were the ones legally punished for alleged sexual assaults, European women were frequently blamed for provoking those desires. New arrivals from Europe were accused of being too familiar with their servants, lax in their commands, indecorous in their speech and in their dress (Vellut 1982: 100; Kennedy 1987: 141; Schmidt 1987: 413). In Papua New Guinea "everyone" in the Australian community agreed that rape assaults were caused by a "younger generation of white women" who simply did not know how to treat servants (Inglis 1975: 80). In Rhodesia as in Uganda, sexual anxieties persisted in the absence of any incidents and restricted women to activities within the European enclaves (Gartrell 1984: 169). The immorality act of 1916 "made it an offence for a white woman to make an indecent suggestion to a male native" (Mason 1958: 247). European women in Kenya in the 1920s were not only dissuaded from staying alone on their homesteads but strongly discouraged by rumors of rape from taking up farming on their own (Kennedy 1987: 141). As in the American South, "the etiquette of chivalry controlled white women's behavior even as [it] guarded caste lines" (Dowd Hall 1984: 64). A defense of community, morality, and white male power was achieved by increasing control over and consensus among Europeans, by reaffirming the vulnerability of white women, the sexual threat posed by native men, and by creating new sanctions to limit the liberties of both.

European colonial communities in the early twentieth century assiduously controlled the movements of European women and, where possible, imposed on them restricted and protected roles. This is not to say that European women did not work; French women in the settler communities of Algeria ran farms, rooming houses, and shops along with their men (Baroli 1967: 159; O'Brien 1972). On the Ivory Coast, married European women worked to "supplement" their husbands' incomes (Tirefort 1979: 112), while in Senegal the "supplementary" salary of French wives maintained the white standard (Mercier 1965: 292). Among women who were posted throughout the colonial empires as missionaries, nurses, and teachers, some openly questioned the sexist policies of their male superiors. However, by and large their tasks buttressed rather than contested the established racial order (Ralston 1977; Knibiehler and Goutalier 1985; Callaway 1987: 111; Ramuschack n.d.).

Particularly in the colonies with small European communities as opposed to those of large-scale settlement, there were few opportunities for women to be economically independent or to act politically on their own. The “revolt against chivalry”—the protest of American Southern white women to lynchings of black men for alleged rape attempts—had no counterpart among European women in Asia and Africa (Dowd Hall 1984). French feminists urged women with skills (and a desire for marriage) to settle in Indochina at the turn of the century, but colonial administrators were adamantly against their immigration. They not only complained of a surfeit of resourceless widows but argued that European seamstresses, florists, and children’s outfitters could not possibly compete with the cheap and skilled labor provided by well-established Chinese firms (Lanessan 1889: 450; Corneau 1900: 12, 12). In Tonkin in the 1930s, “there was little room for single women, be they unmarried, widowed or divorced” (Gantes 1981: 45). Although some colonial widows, such as the editor of a major Saigon daily, succeeded in their own ambitions, most were shipped out of Indochina—regardless of skill—at the government’s charge.²¹

Firmly rejecting expansion based on the “poor white” (*petit blanc*) Algerian model, French officials in Indochina dissuaded *colons* with insufficient capital from entry and promptly repatriated those who tried to remain.²² Single women were seen as the quintessential *petit blanc*; with limited resources and shopkeeper aspirations, they presented the dangerous possibility that straitened circumstances would lead them to prostitution, thereby degrading European prestige at large. In the Solomon Islands lower-class white women were overtly scorned and limited from entry (Boutilier 1984: 179). Similarly, an Indies Army high commander complained in 1903 to the governor-general that lower-class European-born women were vastly more immodest than their Indies-born counterparts and thus posed a greater moral threat to European men (Ming 1983: 84–85). State officials themselves identified European widows as among the most economically vulnerable and impoverished segments of the Indies European community (*Het Pauperisme onder de Europeanen* 1901: 28).

Professional competence did not leave single European women immune from marginalization (Knibiehler and Goutalier 1985). Single professional women were held in contempt as were European prostitutes, with surprisingly similar objections.²³ White prostitutes threatened prestige, while professional women needed protection; both fell outside the social space to which European colonial women were assigned: namely, as custodians of family welfare and respectability, and as dedicated and willing subordinates to, and supporters of, colonial men. The rigor with which these norms were applied becomes more comprehensible when we see why a European family life and bourgeois respectability became increasingly tied to notions of racial survival, imperial patriotism, and the political strategies of the colonial state.

PART III: WHITE DEGENERACY, MOTHERHOOD, AND THE
EUGENICS OF EMPIRE

de-gen-er-ate (adj.) [L. *degeneratus*, pp. of *degenerare*, to become unlike one's race, degenerate < *degener*, not genuine, base < *de-*, from + *genus*, race, kind; see *genus*]. **1.** to lose former, normal, or higher qualities. **2.** having sunk below a former or normal condition, character, etc.; deteriorated. **3.** morally corrupt; depraved- (n.) a degenerate person, esp. one who is morally depraved or sexually perverted- (vi.) *-at'ed, -at'ing*. **1.** to decline or become debased morally, culturally, etc. . . . **2.** Biol. to undergo degeneration; deteriorate. (*Webster's New World Dictionary* 1972: 371)

European women were essential to the colonial enterprise and the solidification of racial boundaries in ways which repeatedly tied their supportive and subordinate posture to community cohesion and colonial security. These features of their positioning within imperial politics were powerfully reinforced at the turn of the century by a metropolitan bourgeois discourse (and an eminently anthropological one) intensely concerned with notions of "degeneracy" (Le Bras 1981: 77).²⁴ Middle-class morality, manliness, and motherhood were seen as endangered by the intimately linked fears of "degeneration" and miscegenation in scientifically construed racist beliefs (Mosse 1978: 82).²⁵ Degeneration was defined as "departures from the normal human type . . . transmitted through inheritance and lead[ing] progressively to destruction" (Morel quoted in Mosse 1978: 83). Due to environmental, physical, and moral factors, degeneracy could be averted by positive eugenic selection or, negatively, by eliminating the "unfit" and/or the environmental and more specifically cultural contagions that gave rise to them (Mosse 1978: 87; Kevles 1985: 70–84).

Eugenic discourse has usually been associated with Social Darwinian notions of "selection," with the strong influence of Lamarckian thinking reserved for its French variant (Schneider 1982). However, the notion of "cultural contamination" runs throughout the British, U.S., French, and Dutch eugenic traditions (Rodenwaldt 1928). Eugenic arguments used to explain the social malaise of industrialization, immigration, and urbanization in the early twentieth century derived from notions that acquired characteristics were inheritable and thus that poverty, vagrancy, and promiscuity were class-linked biological traits, tied to genetic material as directly as nightblindness and blonde hair. As we shall see, this Lamarckian feature of eugenic thinking was central to colonial discourses that linked racial degeneracy to the sexual transmission of cultural contagions and to the political instability of imperial rule.

Appealing to a broad political and scientific constituency at the turn of the century, Euro-American eugenic societies included advocates of infant welfare programs, liberal intellectuals, conservative businessmen, Fabians, and

physicians with social concerns. By the 1920s, however, it contained an increasingly vocal number of those who called for and put into law, if not practice, the sterilization of what were considered the mentally, morally, or physically unfit members of the British, German, and American underclass (Mosse 1978: 87; Stepan 1982: 122).²⁶ Feminist attempts to appropriate this rhetoric for their own birth-control programs largely failed. Eugenics was essentially elitist, racist, and misogynist in principle and practice (Gordon 1976: 395; Davin 1978; Hammerton 1979). Its proponents advocated a pronatalist policy toward the white middle and upper classes, a rejection of work roles for women that might compete with motherhood, and “an assumption that reproduction was not just a function but the purpose . . . of women’s life” (Gordon 1974: 134). In France, England, Germany, and the United States, eugenics placed European women of “good stock” as “the fountainhead of racial strength” (Ridley 1981: 91), exalting the cult of motherhood while subjecting it to the scrutiny of this new scientific domain (Davin 1978: 12).

As part of metropolitan class politics, eugenics reverberated in the colonies in predictable as well as unexpected forms. The moral, biological, and sexual referents of the notion of degeneracy (distinct in the dictionary citation above), came together in the actual deployment of the concept. The “colonial branch” of eugenics embraced a theory and practice concerned with the vulnerabilities of white rule and new measures to safeguard European superiority. Designed to control the procreation of the “unfit” lower orders, eugenics targeted “the poor, the colonized, or unpopular strangers” (Hobsbawm 1987: 253). The discourse, however, reached further. It permeated how metropolitan observers viewed the “degenerate” life-style of colonials, and how colonial elites admonished the behavior of “degenerate” members among themselves (Koks 1931: 179–189). Whereas studies in Europe and the United States focused on the inherent propensity of the impoverished classes to criminality, in the Indies delinquency among “European” children was biologically linked to the amount of “native blood” children born of mixed marriages had inherited from their native mothers (Braconier 1918: 11). Eugenics provided not so much a new vocabulary as a new biological idiom in which to ground the medical and moral basis for anxiety over the security of European hegemony and white prestige. It reopened debates over segregated residence and education, new standards of morality, sexual vigilance, and the rights of *certain* Europeans to rule.

Eugenic influence manifested itself, not in the direct importation of metropolitan practices such as sterilization, but in a translation of the political *principles* and the social values that eugenics implied. In defining what was unacceptable, eugenics also identified what constituted a “valuable life”: “a gender-specific work and productivity, described in social, medical and psychiatric terms” (Bock 1986: 274). Applied to European colonials, eugenic statements pronounced what kind of people should represent Dutch or

French rule, how they should bring up their children, and with whom they should socialize. Those concerned with issues of racial survival and racial purity invoked moral arguments about the national duty of French, Dutch, British, and Belgian colonial women to fulfill an alternative set of imperial imperatives: to “uplift” colonial subjects through educational and domestic management, to attend to the family environment of their colonial husbands, or sometimes to remain in the metropole and to stay at home. The point is that a common discourse was mapped onto different immediate exigencies of empire as variations on a gender-specific theme exalting motherhood and domesticity.

If in Britain racial deterioration was conceived to be a result of the moral turpitude and the ignorance of working-class mothers, in the colonies the dangers were more pervasive, the possibilities of contamination worse. Formulations to secure European rule pushed in two directions: on the one hand, away from ambiguous racial genres and open domestic arrangements, and on the other hand, toward an upgrading, homogenization, and a clearer delineation of European standards; away from miscegenation toward white endogamy; away from concubinage toward family formation and legal marriage; away from, as in the case of the Indies, mestizo customs and toward metropolitan norms (Taylor 1983; Van Doorn 1985). As stated in the bulletin of the Netherlands Indies’ Eugenic Society, “eugenics is nothing other than belief in the possibility of preventing degenerative symptoms in the body of our beloved *moedervolken*, or in cases where they may already be present, of counteracting them” (Rodenwaldt 1928: 1).

Like the modernization of colonialism itself, with its scientific management and educated technocrats with limited local knowledge, colonial communities of the early twentieth century were rethinking the ways in which their authority should be expressed. This rethinking took the form of asserting a distinct colonial morality, explicit in its reorientation toward the racial and class markers of “Europeanness,” emphasizing transnational racial commonalities despite national differences—distilling a *homo europeus* for whom superior health, wealth, and education were tied to racial endowments and a White Man’s norm. Thus Pujarnisclé, a novelist and participant-observer in France’s colonial venture, wrote: “one might be surprised that my pen always returns to the words *blanc* (white) or “European” and never to “Français” . . . in effect colonial solidarity and the obligations that it entails allies all the peoples of the white races” (1931: 72; also see Delavignette 1946: 41).

Such sensibilities colored imperial policy in nearly all domains with fears of physical contamination, giving new credence to fears of political vulnerability. Whites had to guard their ranks—in qualitative and quantitative terms—to increase their numbers and to ensure that their members blurred neither the biological nor political boundaries on which their power rested.²⁷

In the metropole the socially and physically “unfit,” the poor, the indigent, and the insane, were either to be sterilized or prevented from marriage. In the colonies it was these very groups among Europeans who were either excluded from entry or institutionalized while they were there and eventually sent home (Arnold 1979; Vellut 1982: 97).

In sustaining a vision that good health, virility, and the ability to rule were inherent features of “Europeanness,” whites in the colonies had to adhere to a politics of exclusion that policed their members as well as the colonized. Such concerns were not new to the 1920s (Taylor 1983; Sutherland 1982). In the 1750s the Dutch East Indies Company had already taken “draconian measures” to control pauperism among “Dutchmen of mixed blood” (*Encyclopedie van Nederland-Indie* 1919: 367). In the same period, the British East Indies Company legally and administratively dissuaded lower-class European migration and settlement, with the argument that it might destroy Indian respect for “the superiority of the European character” (quoted in Arnold 1983: 139). Patriotic calls to populate Java in the mid-1800s with poor Dutch farmers were also condemned, but it was with new urgency that these proposals were rejected in the following century as successive challenges to European rule were more profoundly felt.

Measures were taken both to avoid poor white migration and to produce a colonial profile that highlighted the manliness, well-being, and productivity of European men. Within this equation, protection of manhood, national identity, and racial superiority were meshed (Loutfi 1971: 112–113; Ridley 1981: 104).²⁸ Thus British colonial administrators were retired by the age of fifty-five, ensuring that

no Oriental was ever allowed to see a Westerner as he ages and degenerates, just as no Westerner needed ever to see himself, mirrored in the eyes of the subject race, as anything but a vigorous, rational, ever-alert young Raj. (Said 1978: 42)

In the twentieth century, these “men of class” and “men of character” embodied a modernized and renovated image of rule; they were to safeguard the colonies against physical weakness, moral decay, and the inevitable degeneration which long residence in the colonies encouraged, and against the temptations that interracial domestic situations had allowed.

Given this ideal, it is not surprising that colonial communities strongly discouraged the presence of nonproductive men. Colonial administrators expressed a constant concern with the dangers of unemployed or impoverished Europeans. During the succession of economic crises in the early twentieth century, relief agencies in Sumatra, for example, organized fundraisers, hill-station retreats, and small-scale agricultural schemes to keep “unfit” Europeans “from roaming around” (*Kroniek* 1917: 49). The colonies were neither open for retirement nor tolerant of the public presence of poor whites. During

the 1930s depression, when tens of thousands of Europeans in the Indies found themselves without jobs, government and private resources were quickly mobilized to ensure that they were not “reduced” to native living standards (Cool 1938; Veerde 1931; Kantoor van Arbeid 1935). Subsidized health care, housing, and education complemented a rigorous affirmation of European cultural standards in which European womanhood played a central role in keeping men *civilisé*.

THE CULTURAL DYNAMICS OF DEGENERATION

The *colon* is, in a common and etymological sense, a barbarian. He is a non-civilized person, a “new-man,” . . . it is he who appears as a savage. (Dupuy 1955: 188)

The shift in imperial thinking that we can identify in the early twentieth century focuses not only on the Otherness of the colonized but on the Otherness of colonials themselves. In metropolitan France a profusion of medical and sociological tracts pinpointed the colonial as a distinct and degenerate social type, with specific psychological and even physical characteristics (Maunier 1932; Pujarniscle 1931).²⁹ Some of that difference was attributed to the debilitating results of climate and social milieu, from staying in the colonies too long:

The climate affects him, his surroundings affect him, and after a certain time, he has become, both physically and morally, a completely different man. (Maunier 1932: 169)

People who stayed “too long” were in grave danger of overfatigue; of individual and racial degeneration (Le Roux 1898: 222); of physical breakdown (not just illness); of cultural contamination and neglect of the conventions of supremacy, and of *disagreement* about what those conventions were (Dupuy 1955: 184–185). What were identified as the degraded and unique characteristics of European colonials—“ostentation,” “speculation,” “inaction,” and a general “demoralization”—were “faults” contracted from native culture, which now marked them as *décivilisé* (Maunier 1932: 174; Jaurequiberry 1924: 25).³⁰

Colonial medicine reflected and affirmed this slippage between physical, moral, and cultural degeneracy in numerous ways. The climatic, social, and work conditions of colonial life gave rise to a specific set of psychotic disorders affecting *l'équilibre cérébral* and predisposing Europeans in the tropics to mental breakdown (Hartenberg 1910; Abatucci 1910). Neurasthenia was the most common manifestation, a mental disorder identified as a major problem in the French empire and accounting for more than half the Dutch repatriations from the Indies to Holland (Winckel 1938: 352). In Europe and America, it was “the phantom disease . . . the classic illness of the late 19th century,” encompassing virtually all “psychopathological or neuropathological

logical conditions,” and intimately linked to sexual deviation and to the destruction of social order itself” (Gilman 1985: 199, 202).

Whereas in Europe neurasthenia was considered to be a consequence of “modern civilization” and its high-pitched pace (Showalter 1987: 135), in the colonies its etiology took the *reverse* form. Colonial neurasthenia was allegedly caused by a *distance* from civilization and European community, and by proximity to the colonized. The susceptibility of a colonial (man) was increased by an existence “outside of the social framework to which he was adapted in France, isolation in outposts, physical and moral fatigue, and modified food regimes” (Joyeux 1937: 335).³¹

The proliferation of hill-stations in the twentieth century reflected these political and physical concerns. Invented in the early nineteenth century as sites for military posts and sanatoria, hill-stations provided European-like environments in which colonials could recoup their physical and mental well-being by simulating the conditions “at home” (Spencer and Thomas 1948; King 1976: 165). Isolated at relatively high altitudes, they took on new importance with the colonial presence of increasing numbers of European women and children who were considered particularly susceptible to anemia, depression, and ill-health.³² Vacation bungalows and schools built in these “naturally” segregated surroundings provided cultural refuge and regeneration (Price 1939).

Some doctors considered the only treatment to be *le retour en Europe* (Joyeux 1937: 335; Pujarnisclé 1931: 28). Others prescribed a local set of remedies, advising adherence to a bourgeois ethic of morality and work. This included sexual moderation, a “regularity and regimentation” of work, abstemious diet, physical exercise, and *European* camaraderie, buttressed by a solid (and stolid) family life with European children and a European wife (Grall 1908: 51; Price 1939; also see Kennedy 1987: 123). Guides to colonial living in the 1920s and 1930s reveal this marked shift in outlook; Dutch, French, and British doctors now denounced the unhealthy, indolent lifestyles of “old colonials,” extolling the energetic and engaged activities of the new breed of colonial husband and wife (Raptchinsky 1941: 46).³³ As women were considered most prone to neurasthenia, anemia, and depression, they were exhorted to actively participate in household management and child-care, and divert themselves with botanical collections and “good works” (Chivas-Baron 1929; Favre 1938).

CHILDREN ON THE COLONIAL DIVIDE: DEGENERACY AND THE DANGERS OF *MÉTISAGE*

[Young colonial men] are often driven to seek a temporary companion among the women of color; this is the path by which, as I shall presently show, contagion travels back and forth, contagion in all senses of the word. (Maunier 1932: 171)

Racial degeneracy was thought to have social causes and political consequences, both tied to the domestic arrangements of colonialism in specific ways. *Métissage* (interracial unions) generally, and concubinage in particular, represented the paramount danger to racial purity and cultural identity in all its forms. Through sexual contact with women of color European men “contracted” not only disease but debased sentiments, immoral proclivities, and extreme susceptibility to decivilized states (Dupuy 1956: 198).

By the early twentieth century, concubinage was denounced for undermining precisely those things that it was charged with fortifying decades earlier. The weight of competing discourses on local women shifted emphasis. Although their inherently dangerous, passionate, and evil characters previously had been overshadowed by their role as protectrices of European men’s health, in the new equation they became the primary bearers of ill health and sinister influences. Adaptation to local food, language, and dress, once prescribed as healthy signs of acclimatization, were now the sources of contagion and loss of (white) self. The benefits of local knowledge and sexual release gave way to the more pressing demands of respectability, the community’s solidarity, and its mental health. Increasingly, French men in Indochina who kept native women were viewed as passing into “the enemy camp” (Pujarniscle 1931: 107). Concubinage became the source not only of individual breakdown and ill-health, but of the biological and social root of racial degeneration and political unrest. Children born of these unions were “the fruits of a regrettable weakness” (Mazet 1932: 8), physically marked and morally marred with “the defaults and mediocre qualities of their mothers” (Douchet 1928: 10).

Concubinage was not as economically tidy and politically neat as colonial policymakers had hoped. It was about more than sexual exploitation and unpaid domestic work; it was about children—many more than official statistics often revealed—and about who was to be acknowledged as a European and who was not. Concubine children posed a classificatory problem, impinging on political security and white prestige. The majority of such children were not recognized by their fathers, nor were they reabsorbed into local communities as authorities often claimed. Although some European men legally acknowledged their progeny, many repatriated to Holland, Britain, or France and cut off ties and support to mother and children (Nieuwenhuys 1959: 23; Brou 1907; Ming 1983: 75). Native women had responsibility for, but attenuated rights over, their own offspring.³⁴ Although the legal system favored a European upbringing, it made no demands on European men to provide it. The more socially asymmetric and perfunctory the relationship between man and woman, the more likely the children were to end up as wards of the state, subject to the scrutiny and imposed charity of the European-born community at large.

Concubine children invariably counted among the ranks of the European

colonial poor, but European paupers in the late-nineteenth-century Netherlands Indies came from wider strata of colonial society than that of concubines alone (Het Pauperisme Commissie 1903). Many Indo-Europeans, including creole children born in the Indies of European parents, had become increasingly marginalized from strategic political and economic positions in the early twentieth century despite the fact that new educational facilities were supposed to have provided new opportunities for them. At the turn of the century, volumes of official reports were devoted to documenting and alleviating the proliferation on Java of a “rough” and “dangerous pauper element” among (Indo-)European clerks, low-level officials, and vagrants (*Encyclopedie van Nederland-Indie* 1919: 367). In the 1920s and 1930s Indies-born and educated youth were uncomfortably squeezed between an influx of new colonial recruits from Holland and the educated *inlander* (native) population with whom they were in direct competition for jobs (Mansvelt 1932: 295).³⁵

European pauperism in the Indies reflected broad inequalities in colonial society, underscoring the social heterogeneity of the category “European” itself. Nonetheless, concubinage was still seen as its major cause and as the principal source of *blanken-haters* (white-haters) (Braconier 1917: 298). Concubinage became equated with a progeny of “malcontents,” of “parasitic” whites, idle and therefore dangerous. The fear of concubinage was carried yet a step further and tied to the political fear that such Eurasians would demand economic access, political rights, and express their own interests through alliance with (and leadership of) organized opposition to Dutch rule (Mansvelt 1932; Blumberger 1939).

Racial prejudice against *métis* was often, as in the Belgian Congo, “camouflaged under protestations of ‘pity’ for their fate, as if they were ‘malheureux’ [unhappy] beings by definition” (Vellut 1982: 103). The protection of *métis* children in Indochina was a cause célèbre of European women at home and abroad. The French assembly on feminism, organized for the colonial exposition of 1931, devoted a major part of its proceedings to the plight of *métis* children and their native mothers, echoing the campaigns for *la recherche de paternité* by French feminists a half-century earlier (Moses 1984: 208). The assembly called for “the establishment of centers [in the colonies] where abandoned young girls or those in moral danger could be made into worthy women” (Knibiehler and Goutalier 1987: 37). European colonial women were urged to oversee the “moral protection” of *métis* youths, to develop their “natural” inclination toward French society, to turn them into “collaborators and partisans of French ideas and influences” instead of revolutionaries (Chenet 1936: 8; Knibiehler and Goutalier 1987: 35; Sambuc 1931: 261). The gender breakdown was clear: moral instruction would avert sexual promiscuity among *métisse* girls and political precocity among *métis* boys who might otherwise become militant men.

Orphanages for abandoned European and Indo-European children were a prominent feature of Dutch, French, and British colonial cultures. In the Netherlands Indies by the mid-eighteenth century, state orphanages for Europeans were established to prevent “neglect and degeneracy of the many free-roaming poor bastards and orphans of Europeans” (quoted in Braconier 1917: 293). By the nineteenth century, church, state, and private organizations had become zealous backers of orphanages, providing some education and strong doses of moral instruction. In India the military orphanages of the late eighteenth century expanded into a nineteenth-century variant in which European and Anglo-Indian children were cared for in civil asylums and charity schools in “almost every town, cantonment and hill-station” (Arnold 1979: 108). In French Indochina in the 1930s virtually every colonial city had a home and society for the protection of abandoned métis youth (Chenet 1936; Sambuc 1931: 256–272; Malleret 1934: 220).³⁶

Whether these children were in fact “abandoned” by their Asian mothers is difficult to establish; the fact that métis children living in native homes were sometimes *sought out* by state and private organizations and placed in these institutions suggests another interpretation (Taylor 1983). Public assistance in India, Indochina, and the Netherlands Indies was designed not only to keep fair-skinned children from running barefoot in native villages but to ensure that the proliferation of European pauper settlements was curtailed and controlled.³⁷ The need for specific kinds of religious and secular education and socialization of children was symptomatic of a more general fear; namely, that these children would grow into *Hollander-haters*, patricides, and anticolonial revolutionaries; that as adult women they would fall into prostitution; that as adult men with lasting ties to native women and indigenously society they would become enemies of the state, *verbasterd* (degenerate) and *décivilisé* (Braconier 1917: 293; Angoulvant 1926: 102; Pouvourville 1926; Sambuc 1931: 261; Malleret 1934).

EUROPEAN WOMEN, RACE AND MIDDLE-CLASS MORALITY

A man remains a man as long as he stays under the watch of a woman of his race. (George Hardy quoted in Chivas-Baron 1929: 103)

Rationalizations of imperial rule and safeguards against racial degeneracy in European colonies merged in the emphasis on particular moral themes. Both entailed a reassertion of European conventions, middle-class respectability, more frequent ties with the metropole, and a restatement of what was culturally distinct and superior about how colonials ruled and lived. For those women who came to join their spouses or to find husbands, the prescriptions were clear. Just as new plantation employees were taught to man-

age the natives, women were schooled in colonial propriety and domestic management. French manuals, such as those on colonial hygiene in Indochina, outlined the duties of colonial wives in no uncertain terms. As “auxiliary forces” in the imperial effort they were to “conserve the fitness and sometimes the life of all around them” by ensuring that “the home be happy and gay and that all take pleasure in clustering there” (Grall 1908: 66; Chailley-Bert 1897). The *Koloniale School voor Meisjes en Vrouwen*, established in The Hague in 1920, provided adolescent and adult women with ethnographic lectures and short childbearing courses to prepare them for their new lives in the Indies. Practical guides to life in the Belgian Congo instructed (and indeed warned) *la femme blanche* that she was to keep “order, peace, hygiene and economy” (Favre 1938: 217), “perpetuate a vigorous race,” while preventing any “laxity in our administrative mores” (ibid.: 256; Travaux du Groupe d’Études coloniales 1910: 10).

This “division of labor” contained obvious asymmetries. Men were considered more susceptible to moral turpitude than women, who were thus held responsible for the immoral states of men. European women were to safeguard prestige, morality, and insulate their men from the cultural and sexual contamination of contact with the colonized (Travaux . . . Coloniales 1910: 7). Racial degeneracy would be curtailed by European women charged with regenerating the physical health, the metropolitan affinities, and the imperial purpose of their men (Hardy 1929: 78).

At its heart was a reassertion of racial difference that harnessed nationalist rhetoric and markers of middle-class morality to its cause (Delavignette 1946: 47; Loutfi 1971: 112; Ridley 1981; Mosse 1978: 86). George Mosse has characterized European racism as a “scavenger ideology,” annexing nationalism and bourgeois respectability in such a way that control over sexuality was central to all three (1985: 10, 133–152). If the European middle-class sought respectability “to maintain their status and self-respect against the lower-classes, and the aristocracy,” in the colonies respectability was a defense against the colonized, and a way of more clearly defining themselves (ibid. 1985: 5). Good colonial living now meant hard work, no sloth, and physical exercise rather than sexual release, which had been one rationale for condoning concubinage and prostitution in an earlier period. The debilitating influences of climate could be surmounted by regular diet and meticulous personal hygiene over which European women were to take full charge. British, French, and Dutch manuals on how to run a European household in the tropics provided detailed instructions in domestic science, moral upbringing, and employer-servant relations. Adherence to strict conventions of cleanliness and cooking occupied an inordinate amount of women’s time, while cleanliness itself served as a “prop to a Europeanness that was less than assumed” (Ridley 1981: 77). Both activities entailed a

constant surveillance of native nursemaids, laundrymen, and live-in servants, while demanding a heightened domesticity for European women themselves.

Leisure, good spirit, and creature comforts became the obligation of women to provide, the racial duty of women to maintain. Sexual temptations with women of color would be curtailed by a happy, *gezellig* (cozy) family life, much as “extremist agitation” among Javanese plantation workers was to be averted by selecting married recruits and providing family housing so that men would feel *senang* (happy/content) and “at home” (Stoler 1985a: 42–44). Moral laxity would be eliminated through the example and vigilance of women whose status was defined by their sexual restraint and dedication to their homes and their men.

IMPERIAL PRIORITIES: MOTHERHOOD VS. MALE MORALITY

The European woman [in Indochina] can only fulfill her duties to bear and breast-feed her children with great hardship and damage to her health. (Grall 1908: 65)

The perceptions and practice that bound women’s domesticity to national welfare and racial purity were not confined to colonial women alone. Child-rearing in late-nineteenth-century Britain was hailed as a national, imperial, and racial duty, as it was in France, Holland, the United States, and Germany at the same time (Davin 1978: 13; Smith-Rosenberg 1973: 351; Bock 1984: 274; Stuurman 1985). In France, where declining birth rates were of grave concern, fecundity itself had become “no longer something resting with couples” but with “the nation, the state, the race. . .” (LeBras 1981: 90). Popular colonial authors such as Pierre Mille pushed the production of children as women’s “essential contribution to the imperial mission of France” (Ridley 1981: 90). With motherhood at the center of empire-building, pronatalist policies in Europe forced some improvement in colonial medical facilities, the addition of maternity wards, and increased information and control over the reproductive conditions of both European and colonized women. Maternal and infant health programs instructed European women bound for the tropics in the use of milk substitutes, wet nurses, and breastfeeding practices in an effort to encourage more women to stay in the colonies and in response to the many more that came (Hunt 1988). But the belief that the colonies were medically hazardous for white women meant that motherhood in the tropics was not only a precarious but a conflicted endeavor.

Real and imagined concern over individual reproduction and racial survival contained and compromised white colonial women in a number of ways. Tropical climates were said to cause low fertility, prolonged amenorrhea, and permanent sterility (Rodenwaldt 1928: 3).³⁸ Belgian doctors con-

firmed that “the woman who goes to live in a tropical climate is often lost for the reproduction of the race” (Knibiehler and Goutalier 1985: 92; Vellut 1982: 100). The climatic and medical conditions of colonial life were associated with high infant mortality, such that “the life of a European child was nearly condemned in advance” (Grall 1908: 65). A long list of colonial illnesses ranging from neurasthenia to anemia supposedly hit women and children hardest (Price 1939: 204).

These perceived medical perils called into question whether European-born women and thus the “white race” could actually reproduce if they remained in the tropics for an extended period of time. An international colonial medical community cross-referenced one another in citing evidence of racial sterility by the second or third generation (Harwood 1938: 132; Ripley quoted in Stocking 1968: 54; Cranworth quoted in Kennedy 1987: 115). Although such a dark view of climate was not prevalent in the Indies, psychological and physical adaptation were never givens. Dutch doctors repeatedly quoted German physicians, not to affirm the inevitable infertility among whites in the tropics, but to support their contention that European-born women and men (totoks) should never stay in the colonies too long (Hermans 1925: 123). French observers could flatly state that unions among creole Dutch in the Indies were sterile after two generations (Angoulvant 1926: 101). Medical studies in the 1930s, such as that supported by the Netherlands Indies Eugenic Society, were designed to test whether fertility rates differed by “racial type” between Indo-European and European-born women and whether “children of certain Europeans born in the Indies displayed different racial markers than their parents” (Rodenwaldt 1928: 4).

Like the discourse on degeneracy, the fear of sterility was less about the biological survival of whites than about their political viability and cultural reproduction. These concerns were evident in the early 1900s, coming to a crescendo in the 1930s when white unemployment hit the colonies and the metropole at the same time. The depression made repatriation of impoverished Dutch and French colonial agents unrealistic, prompting speculation as to whether European working-classes could be relocated in the tropics without causing further racial degeneration (Winckel 1938; Price 1939).³⁹ Although white migration to the tropics was reconsidered, poor white settlements were rejected on economic, medical, and psychological grounds. Whatever the solution, such issues hinged on the reproductive potential of European women, invasive questionnaires concerning their “acclimatization,” and detailed descriptions of their conjugal histories and sexual lives.

Imperial perceptions and policies fixed European women in the colonies as “instruments of race-culture” in what proved to be personally difficult and contradictory ways (Hammerton 1979). Childrearing decisions faithfully followed the sorts of racist principles that constrained the activities of women charged with childcare (Grimshaw 1983: 507). Medical experts and women’s

organizations recommended strict surveillance of children's activities (MacKinnon 1920: 944) and careful attention to those with whom they played. Virtually every medical and household handbook in the Dutch, French, and British colonies warned against leaving small children in the unsupervised care of local servants. In the Netherlands Indies, it was the "duty" of the *hedendaagsche blanke moeder* (the modern white mother) to take the physical and spiritual upbringing of her offspring away from the *babu* (native nursemaid) and into her own hands (Wanderken 1943: 173).

Precautions had to be taken against "sexual danger," uncleanly habits of domestics, against a "stupid negress" who might leave a child exposed to the sun (Bauduin 1941; Bérenger-Féraud 1875: 491). Even in colonies where the climate was not considered unhealthy, European children supposedly thrived well "only up to the age of six" (Price 1939: 204) when native cultural influences came into stronger play. Thus in late-nineteenth-century Hawaii, for example, native nursemaids commonly looked after American children until the age of five at which point "prattlers" were confined to their mothers' supervision, prevented from learning the local language, and kept in a "walled yard adjacent to the bedrooms . . . forbidden to Hawaiians" (Grimshaw 1983: 507).

In the Netherlands Indies, where educational facilities for European children were considered excellent, it was still deemed imperative to send them back to Holland to avoid the "precocity" associated with the tropics and the "danger" of contact with *Indische* youths not from "full-blooded European elements" (Bauduin 1941: 63).

We Dutch in the Indies live in a country which is not our own. . . . We feel instinctively that our blonde, white children belong to the blonde, white dunes, the forests, the moors, the lakes, the snow. . . . A Dutch child should grow up in Holland. There they will acquire the characteristics of their race, not only from mother's milk but also from the influence of the light, sun and water, of playmates, of life, in a word, in the sphere of the fatherland. This is not racism. (Bauduin 1941: 63–64)

Such patriotic images culturally coded racial distinctions in powerful ways. Dutch identity was represented as a common (if contested) cultural sensibility in which class convention, geography, climate, sexual proclivity, and social contact played central roles.

In many colonial communities, school-age children were packed off to Europe for education and socialization, but this was rarely an unproblematic option. When children could not be left with family in the metropole, it meant leaving them for extended periods of time in boarding schools or, when they attended day-schools, in boarding houses catering to Indies youths. Married European women were confronted with a difficult set of

choices that entailed separation either from their children or husbands (Angoulvant 1926: 101). Frequent trips between colony and metropole not only separated families but also broke up marriages and homes (Malleret 1934: 164; Grimshaw 1983: 507; Callaway 1987: 183–184).

Not surprisingly, how and where European children should be provided with a proper cultural literacy was a major theme addressed in women's organizations and magazines in the Indies and elsewhere right through decolonization. The rise of specific programs in home education (such as the *Clerkx-methode voor Huisonderwijs*) may have been a response to this new push for women to accommodate their multiple imperial duties; to surveil their husbands and servants while remaining in control of the cultural and moral upbringing of their children. The important point is that such conflicting responsibilities profoundly affected the social space European women (not only wives) occupied, the tasks for which they were valorized, and the economic activities in which they could feasibly engage.

THE STRATEGIES OF RULE AND SEXUAL MORALITY

The political etymology of colonizer and colonized was gender- and class-specific. The exclusionary politics of colonialism demarcated not just external boundaries but interior frontiers, specifying internal conformity and order among Europeans themselves. I have tried to show that the categories of colonizer and colonized were secured through notions of racial difference constructed in gender terms. Redefinitions of acceptable sexual behavior and morality emerged during crises of colonial control precisely because they called into question the tenuous artifices of rule *within* European communities and what marked their borders. Even from the limited cases we have reviewed, several patterns emerge. First and most obviously, colonial sexual prohibitions were racially asymmetric and gender-specific. Sexual relations might be forbidden between white women and men of color but not the other way around. On the contrary, interracial unions (as opposed to marriage) between European men and colonized women aided the long-term settlement of European men in the colonies while ensuring that colonial patrimony stayed in limited and selective hands. Second, interdictions against interracial unions were rarely a primary impulse in the strategies of rule. In India, Indochina, and South Africa in the early centuries—colonial contexts usually associated with sharp social sanctions against interracial unions—“mixing” has been systematically tolerated and even condoned.

I have focused on late colonialism in Asia, but colonial elite intervention in the sexual life of their agents and subjects was by no means confined to this place or period. In sixteenth-century Mexico mixed marriages between Spanish men and Christianized Indian women were encouraged by the

crown until mid-century, when colonists felt that "the rising numbers of their own mestizo progeny threatened the prerogatives of a narrowing elite sector" (Nash 1980: 141). In eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Cuba mild opposition to interracial marriage gave way to a "virtual prohibition" from 1864 to 1874 when "merchants, slave dealers and the colonial powers opposed [it] in order to preserve slavery" (Martinez-Alier 1974: 39).

Changes in sexual access and domestic arrangements have invariably accompanied major efforts to reassert the internal coherence of European communities and to redefine the boundaries of privilege between the colonizer and the colonized. Sexual union in itself, however, did not automatically produce a larger population legally classified as "European." On the contrary, even in early twentieth-century Brazil where miscegenation had made for a refined system of gradations, "most mixing . . . [took] place outside of marriage" (Degler 1971: 185). The important point is that miscegenation signaled neither the presence nor absence of racial discrimination; hierarchies of privilege and power were written into the *condoning* of interracial unions, as well as into their condemnation.

Although the chronologies vary from one colonial context to another, we can identify some parallel shifts in the strategies of rule and in sexual morality. Concubinage fell into moral disfavor at the same time that new emphasis was placed on the standardization of European administration. Although this occurred in some colonies by the early twentieth century and in others later on, the correspondence between rationalized rule, bourgeois respectability, and the custodial power of European women to protect their men seems strongest during the interwar years. Western scientific and technological achievements were then in question (Adas 1989); British, French, and Dutch policymakers had moved from an assimilationist to a more segregationist, separatist colonial stance. The reorganization of colonial investments along corporate and multinational lines brought with it a push for a restructured and more highly productive labor force; and with it more strident nationalist and labor movements resisting those demands.

An increasing rationalization of colonial management produced radical shifts in notions of how empires should be run, how agents of empire should rule, and where, how, and with whom they should live. Thus French debates concerning the need to systematize colonial management and dissolve the provincial and personalized satraps of "the old-time colon" invariably targeted and condemned the unseemly domestic arrangements in which they lived. British high officials in Africa imposed new "character" requirements on their subordinates, designating specific class attributes and conjugal ties that such a selection implied (Kuklick 1979). Critical to this restructuring was a new disdain for colonials *too* adapted to local custom, *too* removed from the local European community, and *too* encumbered with intimate native

ties. As we have seen in Sumatra, this hands-off policy distanced Europeans in more than one sense: it forbade European staff both from personal confrontations with their Asian fieldhands and from the limited local knowledge they gained through sexual ties.

At the same time medical expertise confirmed the salubrious benefits of European camaraderie and frequent home leaves; of a *cordon sanitaire*, not only around European enclaves, but around each European man and his home. White prestige became redefined by the conventions that would safeguard the moral respectability, cultural identity, and physical well-being of its agents, with which European women were charged. Colonial politics locked European men and women into a routinized protection of their physical health and social space in ways that bound gender prescriptions to the racial cleavages between “us” and “them.”

It may be, however, that we should not be searching for congruent colonial chronologies (attached to specific dates) but rather for similar shifts in the *rhythms* of rule and sexual management, for similar internal patterns within specific colonial histories themselves.⁴⁰ For example, we know that the Great Rebellion in India in 1857 set off an entire restructuring of colonial morality in which political subversion was tied to sexual impropriety and was met with calls for middle-class respectability, domesticity, and increased segregation—all focusing on European women—nearly a half-century earlier than in colonies elsewhere. Looking to a somewhat longer *durée* than the colonial crises of the early twentieth century, we might consider British responses to the Mutiny not as an exception but as a template, thereby emphasizing the modular quality of colonial perceptions and policies that were built on new international standards of empire, specific metropolitan priorities, and that were always responsive to the local challenges of those who contested European rule.

I have focused here on the multiple levels at which sexual control figured in the substance, as well as the iconography, of racial policy and imperial rule. But colonial politics was not just about sex; nor did sexual relations reduce to colonial politics. On the contrary, sex in the colonies was about sexual access and reproduction, class distinctions and racial demarcations, nationalism and European identity—in different measure and not all at the same time. These major shifts in the positioning of women were not, as we might expect, signaled by the penetration of capitalism *per se* but by more subtle changes in class politics, imperial morality, and as responses to the vulnerabilities of colonial control. As we attempt broader ethnographies of empire, we may begin to capture how European culture and class politics resonated in colonial settings, how class and gender discriminations were transposed into racial distinctions and reverberated in the metropole as they were fortified on colonial ground. Such investigations should help show that

sexual control was both an instrumental image for the body politic, a salient part standing for the whole, and itself fundamental to how racial policies were secured and how colonial projects were carried out.

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NOTES

1. See, for example, Etienne and Leacock (1980), Hafkin and Bay (1976), Robertson and Klein (1983), and Silverblatt (1987). For a review of some of this literature in an African context see Bozzoli (1983), Robertson (1987), and White (1988).

2. This is not to suggest that there were not some women whose sojourns in the colonies allowed them to pursue career possibilities and independent life-styles barred to them in metropolitan Europe at the time. However, the experience of professional women in South Asia and Africa highlights how quickly they were shaped into "cultural missionaries" or, in resisting that impulse, were strongly marginalized in their work and social life (see Callaway 1987: 83–164; Ramuschack, n.d.).

3. In subsequent work, I focus explicitly on the contrasts and commonalities in how European women and men represented and experienced the social, psychological, and sexual tensions of colonial life.

4. See Verena Martinez-Alier's *Marriage, Class and Colour in Nineteenth-Century Cuba* (1974), which subtly analyzes the changing criteria by which color was perceived and assigned. For the Netherlands Indies, see Jean Taylor's (1983) exquisite study of the historical changes in the cultural markers of European membership from the seventeenth through the early twentieth centuries. Also see Van Marle's (1952) detailed description of racial classification, conjugal patterns, and sexual relations for the colonial Indies.

5. See Winthrop Jordan (1968: 32–40) on Elizabethan attitudes toward black African sexuality and Sander Gilman's analysis of the sexual iconography of Hottentot women in European art of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (1985: 76–

108). On colonial sexual imagery see Malleret (1934: 216–241), Tiffany and Adams (1985), and the bibliographic references therein. “The Romance of the Wild Woman,” according to Tiffany and Adams, expressed critical distinctions drawn between civilization and the primitive, culture and nature, and the class differences between repressed middle-class women and “her regressively primitive antithesis, the working-class girl” (1985: 13).

6. Thus in Dutch and French colonial novels of the nineteenth century, for example, heightened sensuality is the recognized reserve of Asian and Indo-European mistresses, and only of those European women born in the colonies and loosened by its moral environment (Daum 1984; Loutfi 1971).

7. The relationship between sexual control, racial violence, and political power has been most directly addressed by students of American Southern social history: see Jordan (1968), Lerner (1972), Dowd Hall (1984), and the analyses by turn-of-the-century Afro-American women intellectuals discussed in Carby (1985). See Painter who argues that the treatment of rape as a symbol of male power was an interpretation held by both white and black male authors (1988: 59).

8. Fear of trade competition from European women is alluded to frequently in historical work on eighteenth-century colonies. In the French trading centers (factories) of the Middle East, for example, the Marseille Chamber of Commerce went to great lengths to ensure that no marriages would take place in their trading domain, fearing that European women and children would pose a threat to the French monopoly. In 1728 any French national married in a factory was prohibited from trading directly or indirectly with the royal government (Cordurie 1984: 42).

9. This exclusion of European-born women was also the case for much of the Portuguese empire from the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries (Boxer 1969: 129–130).

10. The references that Hyam (1986a) cites for homoerotic tendencies in British political biography are not, to my knowledge, paralleled for Dutch colonial officials in the Indies. Although the dangers of homosexuality are frequently invoked to justify prostitution among Chinese plantation workers and concubinage among common European soldiers, such arguments were rarely applied to higher-ranking European staff (Van den Brand 1904; Middendorp 1924: 51; Ming 1983: 69, 83).

11. The danger of sexual abstinence for young men was often invoked to license both concubinage and government-regulated prostitution at different times (Hesse-link 1987: 208–209).

12. As Tessel Pollman suggests, the term *njai* glossed several functions: household manager, servant, housewife, wife, and prostitute (1986: 100). Which of these was most prominent depended on a complex equation that included the character of both partners, the prosperity of the European man, and the local conventions of the colonial community in which they lived.

13. Some women were able to use their positions to enhance their own economic and political standing. In Indochina and in the Indies a frequent complaint made by members of the European community was that local women provided employment to their own kin. There is far more evidence, however, that concubines exercised very few rights; they could be dismissed without reason or notice, were exchanged among European employers and, most significantly, as stipulated in the Indies Civil Code of 1848, “had no rights over children recognized by a white man” (Taylor 1983: 148).

14. Although prostitution served some of the colonies for some of the time, it was medically and socially problematic. It had little appeal for those administrations bent on promoting permanent settlement (Kohlbrugge 1901, Ballhatchet 1980; Ming 1983) and venereal disease was difficult to check even with the elaborate system of lock hospitals and contagious-disease acts developed in parts of the British empire. When concubinage was condemned in the 1920s in India, Malaysia, and Indonesia venereal disease spread rapidly, giving rise to new efforts to reorder the domestic arrangements of European men (Butcher 1979; Ming 1983; Taylor 1977; Ballhatchet 1980).

15. In the mid-nineteenth century these arrangements are described as a “necessary evil” with no emotional attachments to native women, for whom “the meaning of our word ‘love’ is entirely unknown” (Ritter 1856: 21). This portrayal of concubinage as a loveless practical union contrasted sharply with the image of the *nyai* in Chinese literature in the Indies. Bocquet-Siak argues that it was precisely the possibility of romantic love that made concubinage with Javanese or Sudanese women so attractive to Chinese men (1984: 8–9). Cf. Genovese’s discussion of the categorical denial that love could enter into relations between slaveholder and slave in the American South: “the tragedy of miscegenation lay not in its collapse into lust and sexual exploitation, but in the terrible pressure to deny the delight, affection and love that so often grew from tawdry beginnings” (1976: 419).

16. In the case of the Indies, interracial marriages increased at the same time that concubinage fell into sharp decline (Van Marle 1952). This rise was undoubtedly restricted to *Indisch* Europeans (those born in the Indies) who may have been eager to legalize preexisting unions in response to the moral shifts accompanying a more European cultural climate of the 1920s (Van Doorn 1985). It undoubtedly should not be taken as an indication of less closure among the highly endogamous European-born (totok) population of that period (I owe this distinction in conjugal patterns to Wim Hendrik).

17. In British Africa “junior officers were not encouraged to marry, and wives’ passages to Africa were not paid” (Gann and Duignan 1978: 240).

18. Degler makes a similar point, contrasting the shortage of European women in the Portuguese colonies to the family emigration policy of the British in North America; he argues that the former gave rise to widespread miscegenation and a vast population of mulattos, the “key” to contrasting race relations in the United States and Brazil (1986: 226–238).

19. Similarly, one might draw the conventional contrast between the different racial policies in French, British, and Dutch colonies. However, despite French assimilationist rhetoric, Dutch tolerance of intermarriage, and Britain’s overtly segregationist stance, the similarities in the actual maintenance of racial distinctions through sexual control in these varied contexts are perhaps more striking than the differences. For the moment, it is these similarities with which I am concerned. See, for example, Simon (1981: 46–48) who argues that although French colonial rule was generally thought to be more racially tolerant than that of Britain, racial distinctions in French Indochina were *in practice* vigorously maintained. John Laffey also has argued that the cultural relativistic thinking tied to associationist rhetoric was used by Indochina’s French *colon* to uphold inequalities in law and education (1977: 65–81).

20. Degler also attributes the tenor of race relations to the attitudes of European

women who, he argues, were not inherently more racist but able to exert more influence over the extramarital affairs of their men. Contrasting race relations in Brazil and the United States, he contends that British women in the English settlements had more social power than their Portuguese counterparts, and therefore slaveholding men could and did less readily acknowledge their mulatto offspring (1986 [1971]: 238).

21. Archive d'Outre Mer GG9903, 1893–1894; GG7663 “Emigration des femmes aux colonies 1897–1904.”

22. See the Archive d'Outre Mer, Series S.65, “Free Passage Accorded to Europeans,” including dossiers on “free passage for impoverished Europeans,” GG 9925, 1897; GG 2269, 1899–1903.

23. European prostitutes and domestics-turned-prostitutes were not banned from South Africa, where at the turn of the century there were estimated to be more than 1,000. Van Onselen argues that their presence was secured by the presence of a large, white, working-class population and a highly unstable labor market for white working-class women (1982: 103–162). Also see Van Heyningen who traces the history of prostitution among continental women in the Cape Colony, arguing that its prohibition was led by white middle-class women “secure . . . in their respectability” and only came about with new notions of racial purity and the large-scale urbanization of blacks after the turn of the century (1984: 192–195).

24. On the intimate relationship between eugenics and anthropology see William Schneider on France (1982), H. Biervliet et al. on the Netherlands (1980), and Paul Rich on Britain (1984).

25. As George Mosse notes, the concept of racial degeneration had been tied to miscegenation by Gobineau and others by the mid-nineteenth century but gained common currency in the decades that followed, entering European medical and popular vocabulary at the turn of the century (1978: 82–88).

26. British eugenicists petitioned to refuse marriage licenses to the mentally ill, vagrants, and the chronically unemployed (Davin 1978: 16; Stepan 1982: 123). In the United States a model eugenic sterilization law from 1922 targeted among others “the delinquent, the blind, orphans, homeless and paupers” (Bajema 1976: 138). In Germany during the same period “sterilization was widely and passionately recommended as a solution to shiftlessness, ignorance, laziness in the workforce, . . . prostitution . . . illegitimate birth, the increasing number of ill and insane, . . . poverty; and the rising costs of social services” (Bock 1984: 27). However, in pronatalist France, the sterilization of social deviants was never widely embraced (Leonard 1985).

27. The articles published in the bulletin of the Netherlands Indies Eugenics Society give some sense of the range of themes included in these concerns: these included discussions of “bio-genealogical” investigations, the complementarity between Christian thought and eugenic principles, ethnographic studies of mestizo populations, and the role of Indo-Europeans in the anti-Dutch rebellions (see *Ons Nageslacht* from the years 1928–1932).

28. See Mosse (1985) for an examination of the relationship between manliness, racism, and nationalism in a European context.

29. The linkage made between physical appearance and moral depravity was not confined to evaluations of European colonials alone. Eugenic studies abounded with speculations on the constellation of physical traits that signaled immorality in the

European lower orders, while detailed descriptions of African and Asian indigenous populations paired their physical attributes with immoral and debased tendencies. See, for example, Simon (1977: 29–54) on French descriptions of physical features among Annamites in colonial Indochina.

30. Historical analyses of earlier colonial ventures followed the same explanatory convention. Thus a 1939 publication of the American Geographical Society used the Portuguese colonies to “illustrate the factors that defeated the whites in the eastern hemisphere”:

The unbridled passions of the lower types of invaders, who included outlaws and prostitutes, brought scandal upon the Portuguese name. As few European women came out to India, miscegenation was common, and even the higher classes *degenerated*. . . . [L]ife in Goa became *orientalized*. The whites left all hard work to slaves and fell into luxury, vanity, and sloth. . . . the whites adopted the enervating doctrines that trade disgraces a man and domestic work is beneath a woman's social status. These evils are still rampant in British India, as in most of the Eastern tropics where the Europeans hold sway. (Price 1939: 16)

31. Adherence to the idea that “tropical neurasthenia” was a specific malady was not shared by all medical practitioners. Those who suggested that the use of the term be discontinued maintained that tropical neurasthenia was a psychopathology caused by social, not physiological, maladjustment (Culpin [1926] cited in Price 1939: 211).

32. On the social geography of hill-stations in British India and on the predominance of women and children in them, see King (1976: 156–179).

33. Contrast this thinking on appropriate colonial life-styles to that of a Jamaican historian writing in 1793 on the physical characteristics of “tropical whites”:

The women lived calm and even lives, marked by habitual temperance and self-denial. They took no exercise. . . . and had no amusement or avocation to compel them to much exertion of either mind or body. . . . Their mode of life and the hot oppressive atmosphere produced lax fiber and pale complexions. They seemed to have just risen from a bed of sickness. Their voices were soft and spiritless, and every step betrayed languor and lassitude. Eminently and deservedly applauded for heart and disposition, *no women on earth made better wives or better mothers*. (quoted in Price 1939: 31; my emphasis)

34. When children were recognized by a European father, a native mother could neither prevent them from being taken from her nor contest paternal suitability for custody.

35. The term *pauperism* was only applied in the Indies to those individuals legally classified as “European” (Ming 1983). At the turn of the century it referred primarily to a class of Indo-Europeans marginalized from the educated and “developed” elements in European society (Blumberger 1939: 19). However, pauperism was by no means synonymous with Eurasian status since 75 percent of the “Dutch” community were of mixed descent, some with powerful political and economic standing (Bracoonier 1917: 291). As Jacques van Doorn notes, “It was not the Eurasian as such, but the “kleine Indo” [poor Indo] who was the object of ridicule and scorn in European circles” (1983: 8). One could pursue the argument that the denigration of “poor Indos” coincided with a political bid for increased civil liberties among Eurasians at large; that it was as much the danger of Eurasian *empowerment* as pauperism that had to be checked.

36. Lest we assume that such support indicated a liberalization of colonial policy, it should be noted that such conservative colonial architects as van den Bosch (who

instituted the forced cultivation system on Java) were among those most concerned that the government take responsibility for neglected European offspring (Mansvelt 1932: 292).

37. In colonial India, "orphanages were the starting-point for a lifetime's cycle of institutions" (Arnold 1979: 113). "Unseemly whites"—paupers, the sick, the aged, "fallen women," and the insane were protected, secluded from Asian sight, and placed under European control. In Indonesia, *Pro Juventate* branches supported and housed together "neglected and criminal" youth with special centers for Eurasian children. In French Indochina, colonial officials debated the advantages of providing segregated education for *métis* youth "to protect" them from discrimination.

38. Not everyone agreed with this evaluation. Cf. the following medical report from 1875: "[I]f the white race does not perpetuate itself in Senegal, one need not attribute it to the weakened reproductive properties of the individuals, but to the thousands of other bad conditions against which they fight a desperate and incessant battle" (Bérenger-Féraud 1875: 491).

39. In search for some alleviation for metropolitan unemployment, a surge of scientific reports appeared reassessing the medical arguments against European settlement in the tropics (as in the proceedings of the 1938 International Congress of Geography).

40. I thank Barney Cohn for pressing me to engage this issue which I attend to more fully in subsequent work.

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