

'Blacky-whites, cheechees and eight-annas'

The stereotypical portrayal of Eurasians in colonial and postcolonial novels

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Abstract

This article examines the stereotypical portrayal of Eurasians in colonial and postcolonial novels. Most analyses of this genre look at representations in one (post) colonial society. This article takes a comparative approach and looks at three groups from three former colonies: Indo-Europeans from the Dutch East Indies, Anglo-Indians from British India and *métis* from French Indochina. It seeks to explain similarities, differences and continuities in the representation of Eurasians in novels. I use an interdisciplinary approach, which uses methods from literary science and historical research. Although novels in all three cases were firmly embedded in their respective national contexts, in the end, this article shows that the hybrid group of Eurasians was portrayed in a strikingly similar way in colonial and postcolonial fiction, especially in relation to the phenomenon of mimicry. The novels both reflected and created colonial reality. This ethnic stereotyping, rooted in similar colonial hierarchies, persisted into the postcolonial period in the three cases analysed.

1 Introduction

There was a young lady called Starkie, who had an affair with a darkie. The result of her sins, was an eight some of twins, two black and two white and four khaki.¹

¹ J. Masters, *Bhowani Junction* (London 1954) 170. This is based on an older limerick: *There once was a lady named Starkie, who fell in love with a Darkie. The result of her sins, were triplets not twins; one Black, one White and one Khaki.*

Victoria Jones, the Anglo-Indian protagonist of John Master's novel *Bhowani junction*, recited this limerick. The 'sin' that the 'young lady' committed was having a mixed relationship with a 'darkie'. Victoria Jones identified with Starkie. She was, what was commonly labelled, Anglo-Indian in late colonial British India. She tried to pass herself off as 'white'. After she had a relationship with a 'darkie' (Anglo-Indian Patrick Taylor), she wanted to marry Colonel Savage, a white British man, and hoped that this would lead to upward social mobility. If she married Colonel Savage she would have 'whiter' children instead of the 'khaki' children she would have with an Anglo-Indian.

In this article, I analyse the fictional portrayal of these 'khaki' children, Eurasians, who were the result of unions between European men and Asian women in the colonial period.² Eurasians occupied a complicated 'in-between' position in the colony, belonging both to the coloniser's sphere and to the colonised. On the one hand colonisers benefitted from using Eurasians' knowledge about indigenous people. On the other hand, colonial rulers felt that they represented a threat to the colonial system. Colonisers feared they would either lead an uprising against the colonial regime in the future or that Eurasian women would distort the colonial hierarchy by working as prostitutes. In the Asian colonies I study in this article, there were extensive debates about this so-called 'Eurasian problem' and how it should be solved.³ Analysis of Eurasians' portrayal in colonial and postcolonial novels helps us to understand how colonial hierarchies were created and maintained. Though these novels were mostly meant to be commercially successful, they were also informative for (future) colonists and were read in both the colonies and the mother countries.

2 Relationships between European women and Asian men also occurred but were rare: B. de Hart, "De verwerpelijste van alle gemengde huwelijken". De Gemengde Huwelijken Regeling Nederlands-Indië 1898 en de rijks wet op- het Nederlandschap 1892 vergeleken', *Jaarboek voor Vrouwengeschiedenis* 21 (Amsterdam 2001) 60-81.

3 S.P. James, 'The Anglo-Indians: Aspirations for Whiteness and the Dilemma of Identity', *Counterpoints* 3:1 (2003) 50-60, 51; E Saada, *Empire's children. Race, Filiation and Citizenship in the French colonies* (Chicago 2012) 16; P. W. van der Veur, 'The Eurasians of Indonesia: A problem and challenge in colonial history', *Journal of Southeast Asian History* 9:2 (1968) 191-207, 201.



Illustration 1: Screenshot of Colonel Savage (Stewart Granger, left) and Victoria Jones (Ava Gardner) in the movie *Bhowani Junction* (1956).

Most analyses of this genre look at representations in one (post) colonial society. Although, providing interesting results, this article goes beyond one case study and compares the fictional portrayal of Indo-Europeans from the Dutch East Indies, Anglo-Indians from British India and *métis* from French Indochina in order to clarify national specificities and general patterns in stereotyping of Eurasians in (post) colonial literature. Such a comparative perspective can provide a broader, more nuanced view of the way groups in colonial societies were portrayed. A national perspective makes it impossible to see similarities and differences between colonies. The terms Indo-Europeans, Anglo-Indians and *métis* are used in this article for specific groups while the term 'Eurasians' is used for all groups taken together. Policy makers, academics and people who self-identified as such, widely used this term in the late colonial and postcolonial period.⁴ The Dutch East Indies, British India and French Indochina were important

4 In sources as diverse as: S. Mizutani, 'The "Eurasian Question"', in: id., *The Meaning of white: Race, class and the domiciled community' in British India 1858-1930* (Oxford 2011); C. Fisher, 'The Eurasian question in Indonesia', *International Affairs* 23:4 (1947) 522-530; P.W. van der Veur, 'The Eurasians of Indonesia: Castaways of colonialism', *Pacific Affairs* 27:2 (1954) 124-137; J. Gelman Taylor, *The social world of Batavia. European and Eurasian women in Dutch Asia* (London 1983); C. Firpo, 'Shades of whiteness: Petits-blancs and the politics of military allocations distribution in World War I colonial Cochinchina', *French Historical Studies* 34:2 (2011) 279-297.

European colonies in South and South East Asia. All three were exploitation colonies that had a small number of permanent European residents. Until 1900, the vast majority of the settlers were men.⁵

According to postcolonial studies theorist Homi Bhabha, the objective of colonial discourse is to construe the colonised as a population of degenerates so as to justify colonisation. The stereotype, according to Bhabha, is a form of knowledge and identification that must be anxiously repeated, and which did not need proof but can never be proven.⁶ Bhabha explained the role of fantasy or fiction in the demarcation between the coloniser and the colonised. The in-between category of the Eurasians destabilised this carefully constructed but frail colonial balance. From the perspective of colonial theory, it is interesting to see which role fantasy or fiction played for the people in-between (Eurasians).

Two factors, derived from the academic literature on (post)-colonialism may explain why there might be similarities and differences in the stereotypical fictional portrayals of Eurasians in three colonies, and why these may have continued after decolonisation. In the first place, there were clear differences in the legal and social categorisation of Eurasians between the colonies. Nevertheless, the proximity of the colonies to each other and their efforts to grapple with similar issues meant that similarities can also be expected. (They are discussed in detail below).

Secondly, in the immediate post-colonial years many Eurasians and Europeans had not yet decided on leaving or staying in the former colony. They hoped to keep their privileged status in the newly independent country and they searched for stability in an effort to retain something from the old colonial world. The American anthropologist Renato Rosado labelled this 'imperialist nostalgia'; for these groups the former colonies continued to be the framework for defining civilised identity.⁷ It also signifies a longing for the colonial past, which was seen as stable, while the decolonised future was feared. Decolonisation was a period of dramatic change. In order to compensate for this loss, colonial discourse, including the stereotyping of Eurasians after decolonisation, may have persisted.⁸ Based on the notions presented above, my hypothesis is that the social and legal cate-

5 P. Pattynama, *Bitterzoet Indië. Herinnering en nostalgie in literatuur, foto's en films* (Amsterdam 2014) 55.

6 H. K. Bhabha, *The location of culture*. (London 1994) 94.

7 R. Rosaldo, 'Imperialist nostalgia', *Representations* 26 Special Issue: Memory and Counter-Memory (1989) 107-122,108.

8 S. de Mul, *Colonial memory contemporary women's writing in Britain and the Netherlands* (Amsterdam 2011) 33.

gorisation was reflected in stereotyping, and that the fictional portrayal did maintain and reinforce these categorisations from the colonial into the postcolonial period.

2 'Eurasians'

Around 1800, the term 'Eurasian' was first used in colonial debates in British India after the British rulers had implemented repressive acts against people of mixed ancestry. These repressive acts contributed to their stereotypical portrayal in colonial discourse, including in fiction.⁹ Eurasians formed a heterogeneous group in all three colonial contexts, especially according to class. This heterogeneity makes it impossible to speak of 'the Eurasians' or 'the Eurasian group' although many people did. In 1932, the journalist H.C. Zentgraaff said Indo-Europeans in the Dutch East Indies cut across all layers of society. The lowest ranks equalled the indigenous people and the highest ranks the Europeans.¹⁰ This was also true in the British and French contexts.¹¹ Their constructed 'whiteness' was linked to skin colour, but also to education, employment, Christianity and the privileges they secured during the colonial period.¹² Europeans, as well as indigenous people, reinforced this construction by ascribing stereotypical characteristics to Eurasians, but it was also reinforced by Eurasians' self-identification with such constructions.

The Eurasian population of the Dutch East Indies was larger (in absolute and relative terms) than that in British India and in French Indochina. According to the census of 1931, there were 119,000 Anglo-Indians out of a population of 338 million people living in British India and 220,000 Indo-Europeans in a population of 70 million people living in the Dutch East Indies.¹³ In Indochina, the *métis* group was considerably smaller. Indochina was only established as a colony at the end of the nineteenth century.¹⁴ In

9 G. D'Cruz, *Midnight's orphans. Anglo-Indians in post/colonial literature* (Bern 2006) 46.

10 H.C. Zentgraaff, 'De Indo-Landsdienaar', *Koloniale Studiën* 16: 1 (1932) 280-289, 287.

11 P. J. Simon, *Un village franco-indochinois en Bourbonnais. Aspects de la colonisation et de la décolonisation de l'Indochine orientale* (Lille 1974) 11, 66-67; L. Caplan, *Children of colonialism. Anglo-Indians in a postcolonial world* (Oxford 2001) 13, 21.

12 A.J. Lopez, *Postcolonial whiteness: A critical reader on race and empire* (New York 2005).

13 C. Bagley, *The Dutch plural society. A comparative study in race relations* (Oxford 1973) 41.

14 P. Brocheux and D. Hémerly, *Indochine; la colonisation ambiguë, 1858-1954* (Paris 2004) introduction.

1940, 34,000 French people lived in Indochina, including *métis*.¹⁵ It is estimated that after decolonisation in 1954, between 20,000 and 30,000 *métis* were living in Vietnam. More precise statistics are not available.¹⁶ Although, it could be assumed that the strength of stereotypes for Eurasians depended on the number of Eurasians living in each colony, this is not the case when studying stereotypical symbolic portrayals. As long as the group that is stereotyped is large enough to be visible in the public sphere, exact numbers were not that important. It must be noted that in official data, exact numbers of Eurasians were not always clear, but unofficially it was acknowledged that there were more Eurasians than Europeans. This was a feature of the Eurasian group: people of mixed ancestry easily escaped the census' grasp by disappearing into the indigenous environment or returning themselves as Europeans 'if they were not handicapped by excessive pigmentation, were educated and had enough money to uphold a European lifestyle.'¹⁷

In the Dutch East Indies, three legal categories existed: 'Europeans' (including Dutch people but there were also other European people – mostly Germans – in the Dutch colony), 'natives' and 'foreign Orientals', such as Chinese.¹⁸ Indigenous people were Dutch subjects but they did not hold Dutch nationality.¹⁹ They could apply for the status of the so-called 'equalised' if they spoke Dutch, were Christians and lived in the Dutch sphere.²⁰ Indo-Europeans belonged to the legal European category if their European fathers had acknowledged them as their offspring.²¹ In Indochina, *métis* were also regarded as Europeans, as long as their European fathers had

15 K. Robson and J. Yee (eds.), *France and 'Indochina' cultural representations* (Lanham 2005) 2-3.

16 T.A. Bass, *Vietnam: The war comes home* (New York 1996) 86.

17 E. Buettner, *Empire Families Britons and Late Imperial India* (Oxford 2004) 83; H. Gidney, 'The future of the Anglo-Indian community', *The Asiatic Review* 30:1 (1934) 27-42, 31-32.

18 B. Luttkhuis, 'Beyond race: constructions of 'Europeanness' in late-colonial legal practice in the Dutch East Indies', *European Review of History* 20:4 (2013) 539-558, 540.

19 G. Jones, *Tussen onderdanen, Rijksgenoten en Nederlanders. Nederlandse politici over burgers uit Oost & West en Nederland 1945-2005* (Amsterdam 2007) 58.

20 J. van der Meer, *'Dag Pa, Ik wil er in, bij Van der Steur.'* *De opvoeding door Johannes van der Steur van verweesde, verlaten en verwaarloosde Indo-Europese kinderen in het Oranje-Nassau Gesticht te Magelang, Java (1893-1945)* (Unpublished masterthesis, Universiteit van Amsterdam 2008) 37; C. Laarman, *Oude onbekenden. Het politieke en publieke debat over postkoloniale migranten* (Hilversum 2013) 36.

21 H.G. Surie, 'De gerepatriceerden', in: H. Verwey-Jonker (ed.), *Allochtonen in Nederland. Beschouwingen over de: gerepatriceerden, Molukkers, Surinamers, Antillianen, buitenlandse werknemers, Chinezen, vluchtelingen, buitenlandse studenten in onze samenleving* (The Hague 1973) 47-110, 56.

acknowledged them, according to the *Code de la Nationalité* from 1889.²² This law was broadened under a *décret* of 1928, which regulated the criteria *métis*, who were not recognised by their French fathers, had to meet, before they could apply for French citizenship. *Métis* had to prove that they had had a French education and followed French cultural practices. Physical features and behaviour were also judged.²³ None of the other colonies had a similar arrangement.

In British India, the status of Anglo-Indians was less favourable. In 1925, the Secretary of State for British India noted that:

For the purposes of employment under government and inclusion in schemes of Indianization, members of the Anglo-Indian and Domiciled European Community are statutory 'Natives of India'. For purposes of education and internal security, their status, in so far as it admits of definition, approximates to that of European British subjects.²⁴

Anglo-Indians were frequently classified by one colonial institution as Europeans, and by another as 'native', since these institutions used different criteria to classify people as Europeans. For example, to be included in the European category in the railway colonies, one had to prove European parentage in the male as well as in the female ancestral lines.²⁵ Most Anglo-Indians worked for the Indian railroad services and they formed railway colonies where they lived separately from Indians.²⁶ This segregation was strong. For example, Indian Christian wives could not attend social events organised by railway colonies, even if their Anglo-Indian or European husbands attended.²⁷

22 S. Ravi, 'Métis, métisse and métissage: Representations and self-representations', in: S. Ravi, M. Rutte and B. L. Goh (eds), *Asia in Europe, Europe in Asia* (Leiden 2004) 299-317, 309-310.

23 *Archives Nationales d'Outre-Mer* (hereafter: ANOM), Aix-en-Provence, *Pupilles de la Société d'assistance aux enfants abandonnés franco-indochinois*, zone générique: FM, zone cote: 12SLOT-FOM/1.

24 N. P. Gist and R.D. Wright, *Marginality and identity. Anglo-Indians as a racially-mixed minority in India* (Leiden 1973) 18.

25 L. Bear, *Lines of the nation. Indian railway workers, bureaucracy and the intimate historical self* (New York 2007) 146.

26 C. Younger, *Anglo-Indians. Neglected children of the Raj* (New Delhi 1987) 38.

27 Bear, *Lines of the nation*, 79, 210.

In all three colonies, colonisers feared poor Eurasian men might become a revolutionary anti-colonial force.²⁸ Therefore, authorities used 'othering' strategies. This term refers to the social, linguistic and psychological mechanism that distinguishes 'us' from 'them'.²⁹ Colonial rulers created and used negative stereotypes of their colonised subjects and labelled them as uncivilised and lazy.³⁰ Eurasians challenged this othering strategy, because they simultaneously belonged to the category of coloniser and the colonised. They embodied the 'tensions of empire' according to historians Frederic Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, who argued that colonial empires could only exist by emphasising the shared culture of their colonial subjects, including Eurasians, while at the same time stressing their 'otherness'.³¹ Eurasians were simultaneously included and excluded: in a legal way, socially and discursively. This construction was never stable and depended on a shifting set of local criteria. The colonial rulers needed the Eurasians and their knowledge of native society to maintain their rule.³²

According to Homi Bhabha and Frances Gouda, Eurasians tried to improve their position by imitating the colonisers. Some Eurasians succeeded in this mimicry and passed as white, seemingly becoming part of the European colonial elite, although they never had the same status as 'real' Europeans.³³ If Eurasians could pass as white, they could apply for better jobs and distinguish themselves from indigenous people.³⁴ As the colonies were relatively near to each other and had a similar demographical profile

28 C. Firpo, 'Crises of whiteness and empire in colonial Indochina: The removal of abandoned Eurasian children from the Vietnamese milieu, 1890-1956', *Journal of Social History* 43: 3 (2010) 587-613; H. Baudet and I.J. Brugmans, *Balans van beleid. Terugblik op de laatste halve eeuw van Nederlandsch-Indië* (Assen 1961) 89; S. Mizutani, *The meaning of white: race, class and the 'domiciled community' in British India, 1858-1930* (Oxford 2011) 155.

29 A. Taket et al. (eds.), *Theorising social exclusion* (New York 2009) 166.

30 H.K. Bhabha, 'The other question'; Homi K. Bhabha reconsiders the stereotype and colonial discourse', in: F. Barker (ed.), *The politics of theory* (Colchester 1983) 18-36, 18.

31 F. Cooper and A. L. Stoler (eds.), *Tensions of empire: Colonial cultures in a bourgeois world* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1997) 3, 4, 10.

32 Buettner, *Empire families*, 73; J.E. Ellemers and R.E.F. Vaillant, *Indische Nederlanders en gerepatrieerden* (Muiderberg 1985) 19.

33 H. Bhabha, 'Of mimicry and man: The ambivalence of colonial discourse', *October 28 Discipline: A Special Issue on psychoanalysis* (1984) 125-133, 130, 132. For Mimicry defined as 'projection', see: F. Gouda, 'Mimicry and projection in the colonial encounter: The Dutch East Indies/Indonesia as experimental laboratory, 1900-1942', *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 1: 2 (2000) 1-21, 2.

34 J. Dewulf, 'Framing a deterritorialized, hybrid alternative to nationalist Essentialism in the postcolonial era: Tjalie Robinson and the diasporic Eurasian 'Indo' community', *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 16: 1/2 (2007) 1-28, 10.

(including the 'in-between' position of Eurasians), authorities looked at the policies of countries in the vicinity for inspiration and solutions. Archival sources show that the director of the *Union Coloniale Française*, Joseph Chailley-Bert, for instance, studied how the Dutch treated its Indo-European population in 1900.³⁵

There were also differences between the positions of Eurasians in the three colonies. In the British colony, the position of Anglo-Indians within the colonial system was subjected to sharper racial boundaries than in the Dutch East Indies and French Indochina.³⁶ Anglo-Indians could pass themselves off as white less easily and continually had to prove their European ancestry.³⁷ During the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857, Anglo-Indians proved their loyalty to the British by continuing their service. After that uprising, Anglo-Indian men were employed in protected jobs at the railways, the mail and telegraph department, the customs and excise services.³⁸ However, Anglo-Indians experienced discrimination, despite their jobs being guaranteed by government. As a result, they increasingly started to marry amongst themselves, and as a result became more visible as a group. From the end of the nineteenth century onwards, they founded organisations to protect their interests. Eventually, most of these were merged into one overarching association in 1929: the All India Anglo-Indian Association (AIAIA).³⁹

Throughout the nineteenth century, a separated Anglo-Indian group existed in British India. In the Dutch East Indies there was no such group until the twentieth century. Mixed and European people were living in one shared Dutch East Indies cultural sphere.⁴⁰ With the arrival of more newcomers at the beginning of the twentieth century, Indo-Europeans were marginalised and started establishing their own organisations. In 1919, the most influential one was founded: the *Indo-Europeesch Verbond* (I.E.V., Indo-European League).⁴¹

35 ANOM, *Pupilles de la Société d'assistance aux enfants abandonnés franco-indochinois*, zone générique: FM, zone cote: 12SLOTFO/1.

36 A.L. Stoler, 'Making empire respectable: The politics of race and sexual morality in 20th-century colonial cultures', *American Ethnologist* 16:4 (1989) 634-660, 643; A. Blunt, *Domicile and diaspora. Anglo-Indian women and the spatial politics of home* (Oxford 2005) 9.

37 Netherlands Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies (NIOD) entry number 400, Indische Collectie (Further NIOD IC), inventory no. 4844, 'Typoscript door C.G. Toorop: 'De Indo-Europeaan - Maatschappelijk, politiek, sociaal', z.d.'

38 Blunt, *Domicile and diaspora*, 9-10.

39 Gist and Wright, *Marginality and identity*, 156.

40 Gelman Taylor, *The social world of Batavia*.

41 U. Bosma, 'The Indo: class, citizenship and politics in late colonial society', in: J. Coté and L. Westerbeek (eds.), *Recalling the Indies. Colonial culture & postcolonial identities* (Amsterdam 2005) 67-97, 67.

Historians consider French colonial rule of Indochina to have been more coercive than what occurred in the Dutch East Indies and British India, probably due to the late French colonial settlement.⁴² The French founded the *Union Indochinoise*, consisting of modern day Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, in 1887.⁴³ Until the First World War, *métis* were not considered 'white' in Indochina. During the war, and because of French anxiety about depopulation in France, French colonists stressed the 'whiteness' of *métis* children. This construction of whiteness was narrowed to those children with 'white features' during the Second World War. The child protection organisation *Fédération des Oeuvres de l'Enfance Française d'Indochine* (FOEFI) forcibly removed *métis* children from their indigenous mothers to raise them as French citizens in orphanages and to eventually move them to France.⁴⁴

Despite the heterogeneity of the Eurasian group, Eurasians formed their own associations geared towards representation. The ambivalent, special situation of Eurasians was kept intact by a widely shared discourse of colonial ideas that supported the hierarchy of the colonial rulers, mixed ancestry people and the colonised.⁴⁵

3 Historiography

There is a wealth of literature about Eurasians and their position in the former European colonies in Asia.⁴⁶ There are also a lot of publications on colonial and postcolonial fiction. In the first type of literature, the national perspective of the former colonisers is usually the point of departure, and the focus is either on the period before or after independence. Very few authors pay attention to both periods.⁴⁷ Most studies on (post) colonial literature provide a broad overview of the colonial and postcolonial literary landscape of a nation. Only a few authors have analysed stereotypes of

42 E. T. Jennings, *Vichy in the Tropics. Pétain's national revolution in Madagascar, Guadeloupe and Indochina, 1940-1944* (Stanford 2001) 135.

43 M. Osborne, *Southeast Asia. An introductory history* (Crows Nest 2000) 122.

44 Firpo, 'Crises of whiteness', 605-606; Simon, *Un village franco-indochinois*, 68.

45 Cooper and Stoler, *Tensions of empire*, 200.

46 See for example: H. Meijer, *In Indië geworteld. De twintigste eeuw* (Amsterdam 2004); U. Bosma, R. Raben and W. Willems, *De geschiedenis van Indische Nederlanders* (Amsterdam 2008); Caplan, *Children of colonialism*; Brocheux and Hémery, *Indochine; la colonisation ambiguë, 1858-1954*; N. Cooper, *France in Indochina. Colonial encounters* (Oxford 2001); F. Gouda, *Dutch culture overseas. Colonial practice in the Dutch-Indies, 1900-1942* (Amsterdam 1995).

47 A rare exception is: Laarman, *Oude onbekenden*.

Eurasians in literature.⁴⁸ These studies examine the stereotypical portrayal of Eurasians but never compare colonies. Literary studies commonly focus on one or two novels from one (former) colonial context.⁴⁹ These novels are critically analysed for many meanings in one text. For this article several sources have been used, as is common in a historical approach.⁵⁰ Novels are seldom used as a single source in historical studies, but they have been used as part of the source material in similar qualitative studies in this journal.⁵¹ In this article I combine these two approaches: the novels are analysed as a conventional historical source while taking into account the specific features of the source.

48 Studies that examine stereotypes in literature and other cultural spheres: A. Cottaar and W. Willems, *Indische Nederlanders. Een onderzoek naar beeldvorming* (Den Haag 1984); D'Cruz, *Midnight's orphans*; N. Cooper, *French discourses of colonialism: The case of French Indochina 1900-1939* (Warwick 1997). Other more general literary studies are: R. Nieuwenhuys, *Oost-Indische spiegel. Wat Nederlandse schrijvers en dichters over Indonesië hebben geschreven vanaf de eerste jaren der Compagnie tot op heden* (Amsterdam 1978); B. Hué (ed.), *Indochine. Reflets littéraires* (Rennes 1992); H. Copin, *L'Indochine dans la littérature Française des années vingt à 1954* (Paris 1996); W. Jones, 'Gender as colonial exploitation in French Indochina: Concubines in selected pre-1965 novels published in or translated to English', *War, Literature and the Arts journal* 24:1 (2012) 1-15; D. Sherzer, 'French colonial and postcolonial hybridity: condition métisse', *Journal of European history* 28 (1998) 103-120; This study uses a broader scope by incorporating several European colonial literatures without making comparisons: T. D'Haen (ed.), *Europa buitengaats. Koloniale en postkoloniale literaturen in Europese talen* (Amsterdam 2002) (two volumes).

49 R. Steadman-Jones, 'Colonial fiction for liberal readers: John Masters and the Savage Family Saga', in: R. Gilmour, B. Schwarz and E. Boehmer (eds.), *End of empire and the English novel since 1945* (Manchester 2012) 74-91; I. Diala, 'Colonial mimicry and postcolonial Remembering in Isidore Okpewho's call me by my rightful name', *Journal of Modern Literature* 36:4 (2013) 77-95, and most articles that appear in the Dutch journal *Indische Letteren*.

50 G. Spiegel, 'History, historicism, and the social logic of the text in the Middle Ages', *Speculum* 65: 1 (1990) 59-86, 75.

51 I. Matthey, 'Lieve jongens, stoere meiden. Het matrozenpakje in genderperspectief, 1770-2000', *TSEG* 3 (2004) 53-81; M. Altena, 'Een Haagse dame en een indiaan. Representaties van een gemengd huwelijk in Nederlandse en Canadese nieuwsmidia (1906-1928)', *TSEG* 3 (2006) 91-117.

4 Material and method

For this article I analysed twenty novels (listed in table 1).

Table 1. Novels analysed in this article

	Colonial period		Decolonisation		Postcolonial period		
Colony	Novel 1	Novel 2	Novel 3	Novel 4	Novel 5	Novel 6	Novel 7
Dutch East Indies	L. Couperus, <i>De Stille Kracht</i> (Amsterdam 1900)	J. Treffers, <i>Schuim van Goud Indische zedenroman</i> (Amsterdam 1934)	J. Fabricius, <i>Halfbloed</i> ('s Gravenhage 1946)	G.J. Vermeulen, <i>Dagboek van een halve mens</i> (Leiden 1951)	B. Vuyk, <i>Gerucht en geweld</i> (Amsterdam 1959)	L. Nobel, <i>Gebroken Rijst</i> (Baarn 1978)	S.M. Jalhay, <i>Tussen blank en bruin, Indo in Nederlands-Indië</i> (Breda 1996)
British India	E.M. Forster, <i>A passage to India</i> (Harmondsworth 1924)	R. Godden, <i>The Lady and the Unicorn</i> (London 1938)	J. Godden, <i>The city and the wave</i> (New York 1954)	J. Masters, <i>Bhowani Junction</i> (London 1954)	M. Malgonkar, <i>Combat of Shadows</i> (Delhi 1962)	P. Scott, <i>Staying on</i> (Harlow 1977)	K. Desai, <i>The Inheritance of Loss</i> (London 2006)
Indo-china	Cl. Chivas Baron, <i>Confidences de Métisse</i> (Paris 1927)	J. Cendrieux, <i>Francois Phuoc Métis Roman Indochinois</i> (Paris 1929)		J. Hougron, <i>Les Asiates</i> (Paris 1954)	M. Duras, <i>L'amant</i> (Paris 1984)	K. Lefebvre, <i>Métisse Blanche</i> (Paris 1989)	K. Lefebvre, <i>Retour à la saison de pluies</i> (Paris 1990)

Colonial fiction and postcolonial fiction are complex literary genres which are rooted in the colonial experience, and critically engage with (former) colonial relationships.⁵² Since the sixteenth century, in the case of the Dutch East Indies and British India, and since the nineteenth century in the case of Indochina, works of fiction, including travel journals, memoirs, letters, songs and novels communicated information about the colonies to the European mother country. Later, they were also read in the colonies themselves. The colonial novel was a recognised literary genre. For example, 'Raj Fiction' was seen as a source of information about the British colony. These texts provided readers (including future colonists) with insights into colonial life.⁵³ At the same time, by cherishing European hege-

⁵² B. Ashcroft, G. Griffiths and H. Tiffin, *The empire writes back* (London 1989); E. Boehmer, *Colonial and postcolonial literature. Migrant metaphors* (Oxford 2005).

⁵³ L. van Leeuwen, *Ons Indisch erfgoed. Zestig jaar strijd om cultuur en identiteit* (Amsterdam 2008) 107; D'Cruz, *Midnight's orphans*, 71; M. Ha, *French women and the empire. The case of Indochina* (Oxford 2014) 87.

mony they legitimised the colonial project.⁵⁴ In the postcolonial period readers were those who had lived in the former colony for a longer or shorter period or just those interested in the colonial past and good fiction. According to Edward Said, novels were 'immensely important in the formation of imperial attitudes, references and experiences.' Furthermore, they enabled colonised people 'to assert their own identity and the existence of their own history.'⁵⁵

Colonial and postcolonial fiction are, in essence, part of one literary genre as they were rooted in the colonial sphere. Both literary forms could be critical of the colonial project, and criticise the imperial power. Postcolonial literature could also use stereotypes that traditionally belonged to the colonial discourse. Interestingly, only in the British case, an Indian variety of postcolonial literature developed, written in the language of the coloniser, English.⁵⁶ In Indonesia and Vietnam, postcolonial literature in the indigenous language written by indigenous authors appeared next to the postcolonial literature written by Europeans relating to all three former mother countries.⁵⁷ Authors used images from colonial discourse in their novels, and these images influenced and reinforced stereotypes in colonial and postcolonial reality by means of intertextuality with other sources such as newspapers. For example, in the justification of the criteria for admission to the mother country after decolonisation, arguments were used that drew upon colonial discourse. Eurasians were discouraged from moving to Europe because they would not find a job as their work pace was perceived to be too slow and too 'eastern'.⁵⁸

It is difficult to say how large the pool is from which my selection of novels is made: the size of the pool differs according to the definition that is used. The genre began in principle with the start of colonisation, but it

54 M. Keith Booker, *Colonial power, colonial texts. India in the modern British novel* (Ann Arbor 1997) 44.

55 E. Said, *Culture and imperialism* (New York 1993) xii.

56 D'Cruz, *Midnight's orphans*, 166, 170-171.

57 In these novels, portrayals of Eurasians also appeared, but they are beyond the scope of this article. See for example: P. Ananta Toer, *Child of all nations* (Jakarta 1980); on this website http://vietnamlit.org/wiki/index.php?title=Category:Fiction_writers_composing_in_Vietnamese, (04-01-2016) a list of Vietnamese authors is given, whose works are translated into English and/or French. Note that I have excluded the literature emerging from Vietnamese people who fled the American war by boat in the 1970s.

58 Ph. H.M. Werner, *Verslag van de commissie ter bestudering van het Indo-Europese vraagstuk in Indonesië* (The Hague 1952) 32; British Library, London, India Office Records 4854; Passports: Anglo-Indians and domiciled Europeans: guarantees of maintenance and repatriation, Reference: IOR/L/PJ/7/11848: Oct 1947-Mar 1949.

became popular when civilian (rather than only military) migration to the colonies increased at the end of the nineteenth century. In each colonial setting hundreds of novels appeared. Key to my selection of twenty novels were that Eurasians had to be the protagonist or a main character, and the date of release (around the time of decolonisation, or at least during the late colonial period). The novels had to be published or concern a period when Eurasians formed a clearly demarcated group in all three colonies. They had to be written either by Eurasians or by Europeans who were familiar with the colony. Approximately 50 novels fitted these criteria.⁵⁹ Excluded were novels with a Eurasian protagonist that appeared at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth.⁶⁰ This was too early for this study because I wanted to focus on novels that appeared during the decolonisation period. In that period, when independence was approaching, it is particularly interesting to see what happened to the stereotypes when power was transferred to indigenous people. I expect that the stereotypes would change or become stronger. I have made an exception for *De stille kracht* (1900) by Louis Couperus, because it was the quintessential colonial novel in the Dutch East Indies context. More information on this novel follows in the next section. Furthermore, also the 'Deli' novels from the Dutch East Indies, situated in the newly constructed rubber plantations on Sumatra were excluded, because they were about one particular area and dealt with the negative consequences of the rapidly expanding pioneering plantation business.⁶¹ Lastly, works that did not belong to the realistic literary genre (but were for instance magical realistic) were excluded. This applies to the famous postcolonial novels of Salman Rushdie and I. Allan Sealy.⁶²

59 I reduced this number to 20 by selecting only one novel per author, and by omitting those books that were not available (primarily in the French case).

60 Examples of these excluded novels for the Dutch East Indies context: P. A. Daum, *'Ups' and 'downs' in het Indische leven* (Amsterdam 1892); P.A. Daum, *Nummer elf* (Leiden 1893); T. Hoven (pen name Adinda), *Vrouwen lief en leed onder de tropen* (Utrecht 1892); A. de Wit, *Orpheus in de dessa* (Amsterdam 1903); A. Foore, *Bogoriana* (Amsterdam 1900); M. van Zeggelen, *Koloniaalije* (Amsterdam 1920). For British India: R. Kipling, *His chance in life* (London 1888); R. Kipling, *Kim* (London 1901) (although the protagonist is a poor white, he encountered similar problems as Eurasians); M. Diver, *Candles in the wind* (New York 1909); F. A. Steel, *From the five rivers* (London 1884); H. Bruce, *The Eurasian* (London 1913). For Indochina: C. Farrère, *Les civilisés* (1905); H. Daguierchers, *Le kilomètre 83* (Paris 1913); A. Malraux, *Les conquérants* (Paris 1928).

61 Amongst others: M. Székely-Lulofs, *Rubber* (Amsterdam 1931); M. Székely-Lulofs, *Koelie* (Bussum 1931); C. van Bruggen, *Goenong-Djatti* (Amsterdam 1909).

62 S. Rushdie, *Midnight's children* (New York 1981); I. Allan Sealy, *The Trotter nama: A chronicle* (New York 1988).

The selection includes memoirs and biographical stories (such as the books of Kim Lefebvre, S.M. Jalhay and G.J. Vermeulen). They appeared in the last decades of the twentieth century, as did a couple of other novels (written by Kiran Desai, Paul Scott, Loes Nobel and Marguerite Duras). These postcolonial stories were influenced by later developments. Therefore, similarities between these novels can be later constructions, which were not directly rooted in the colonial experience. Nevertheless, these literary works do provide important insights into continuities in stereotypical representation of Eurasians between the colonial and postcolonial period. It can be argued that not all publications belong to the same genre: a memoir is a different kind of story than a novel and therefore might attract a different readership. However, because they are describing Eurasians in a colonial or postcolonial context in a stereotypical way using tropes from the colonial discourse, they are part of the same broad genre of (post) colonial literature.

The novels are examined by means of literary discourse analysis, using ideas from the French philosopher Michel Foucault. According to Foucault, discourse is about the way knowledge is created by power strategies hidden in texts.⁶³ In this study, those power strategies were the stereotypes since they served to identify people as Eurasian, which led to simultaneous inclusion and exclusion from the dominant European group in the novels and in reality. The stereotypes in novels did not only reflect stereotypes found in colonial and postcolonial reality, but gave them a prominent place in novels, which also reinforced those same stereotypes as a performative power in reality.⁶⁴

Glenn D'Cruz identified 'seven deadly stereotypes' in the representation of Anglo-Indians in British (post) colonial novels.⁶⁵ These seven stereotypes form the starting point for my analysis. I merged them into four markers because three of them are consequences of the four I did include. For example, 'the Big Shot' (showing off to hide uncertainty) is an exaggerated form of 'the Mimic'. The four stereotypes are listed in table 2.

63 M. Foucault, *Power/knowledge* (Brighton 1980) 131; E. Said, 'The problem of textuality: two exemplary positions', *Critical inquiry* 4:4 (1978) 673-714, 673, 704-705; S. Hall (ed.), *Representation. Cultural representations and signifying practices* (New York 1997) 6.

64 S. Maza, 'Stories in history: Cultural narratives in recent works in European history', *The American Historical Review* 101:5 (1996) 1493-1515, 1514.

65 D'Cruz, *Midnight's orphans*, 29-39.

Table 2. Stereotypes that determined the representation of Eurasians in novels

Stereotypes	Examples
1. The Mimic	The attempt to pass oneself off as white that results in boasting and mockery.
2. The Half-caste Pariah	Alienated outsider who struggles to keep both sides of his mixed heritage in balance.
3. The Ditherer	Acting stupid, weak, passive. This behaviour results in having low status occupations.
4. The Waster	Always following the pleasure principle, driven by passions, too lazy to get a job.

5 Analysis

Below, I present quotes that illustrate whether and how the four stereotypes of Eurasians are used in novels from the three Asian colonial contexts. The results of the analysis of the fictional portrayal of Eurasians are given in table 3. The quotes I used for the analysis are crucial parts of the stories. Table 3 shows that the stereotype of ‘the Mimic’ was prominent in nineteen of the twenty novels. As mentioned above, ‘mimicry’ was a powerful colonial mechanism. Therefore, the way that Eurasians were represented in the novels as ‘mimickers’ was recognisable and enhanced the stereotype.

Table 3. Analysis of the novels with help of stereotypes

Novels	The Mimic	The Half-caste pariah	The Ditherer	The Waster
1.De Stille Kracht	x	x		
2.Schuim van Goud	x			
3.Halfbloed	x	x		
4.Dagboek van een halve mens	x	x		
5.Gerucht en geweld	x	x		
6. Gebroken Rijst	x	x		
7.Tussen blank en bruin, Indo in Nederlands-Indië	x	x		
8. A passage to India	x	x		
9.The Lady and the Unicorn	x	x	x	
10.The City and the Wave	x	x	x	x
11.Bhowani Junction	x	x		
12.Combat of Shadows	x			
13.Staying on	x	x		x
14.The Inheritance of Loss	x			
15.Confidences de Métisse	x	x	x	
16.Francois Phuoc Métis	x	x		
17.Les Asiates	x	x	x	x
18.L'Amant			x	
19.Métisse Blanche	x	x		
20.Retour à la saison de pluies	x	x		

A first example of the use of this stereotype is the Anglo-Indians' obsession with wearing a *topi*, a tropical type of headgear which was mostly associated with the British⁶⁶, but which also appeared in the two other colonial contexts. If Anglo-Indians did not wear such a hat, they would get tanned and they would look more Indian than British, while they sought to look and act as British as possible. This point is made explicitly in the novel *Bhowani junction*, written by John Masters, which is about the Anglo-Indian community of the imaginary railway colony of Bhowani Junction, some years before independence.

The Anglo-Indian woman Victoria Jones is the protagonist of *Bhowani Junction* and she has affairs with a British man and an Indian man before finding her true love, the Anglo-Indian Patrick Taylor. In the following quote, Patrick warns Victoria: 'Where is your *topi*? You will get all sunburned.' 'I never wear one' she told me. 'But the sun!', Patrick Taylor cried. 'It is the hottest time of the day! You will get all brown!' [...] she said: 'It isn't sunburn that makes us brown, is it?'⁶⁷

Masters was born to British parents in Calcutta in 1914. He attended Royal Military College and served in the army in India. After leaving the army, he moved to the United States and started writing novels.⁶⁸ *Bhowani Junction* was published in 1954, shortly after independence. It is loosely connected to a series of other novels, in which members of the Savage family act as main characters, but only in the novel *Bhowani Junction* is an Anglo-Indian the protagonist.⁶⁹

The stereotype 'The Mimic' was also found in the famous Dutch novel *De stille kracht* (The Hidden Force) by Louis Couperus, published in 1900. Couperus was from a family with a rich history in the Dutch colony. He lived in the Dutch East Indies for a period (1873–1878) and later often travelled there.⁷⁰ *De stille kracht* presents the Dutch-born colonial official Otto van Oudijck and his household, consisting of his Indies-born Dutch wife Leonie and her Indo-European stepchildren Doddy and Theo. Leonie

66 D'Cruz, *Midnight's orphans*, 31.

67 Masters, *Bhowani*, 13-14.

68 G. Stade, K. Karbiener and C.L. Krueger (eds.), *Encyclopedia of British writers. 19th and 20th centuries* (New York 2003) 248.

69 The whole series includes: J. Masters, *Nightrunners of Bengal* (London 1951); J. Masters, *The deceivers* (London 1952); J. Masters, *The lotus and the wind* (London 1953); J. Masters, *Far, far the mountain peak* (London 1957); J. Masters, *To the coral strand* (London 1962); J. Masters, *The Ravi lancers* (London 1972).

70 R. Nieuwenhuys, 'De Indische wereld van Couperus', *Hollands maandblad* 5: 192-193 (1963-1964) 18-21.



Illustration 2: Still from the series De stille kracht with Addy (Hans Dagelet), Doddy (Astrid Ceuleers), Theo (Willem Nijholt) and Leonie (Pleuni Touw), (geheugenvannederland.nl/NIBG).

seduces her stepson, Theo, son of her husband's previous relationship with a Javanese woman, and Addy, the Indo-European fiancé of her stepdaughter, Doddy. Her husband is ignorant about her affairs while attempting to maintain European habits in his household. Van Oudijck was confronted with an indigenous rebellion which in part sprang from his lack of tact with the native population. At the end of the novel, he had gone 'native' and was living with an indigenous woman in an indigenous village (*kampong*).⁷¹ The following quote describes the exaggerated mimicking 'European' behaviour of the Indo-European inspector Van Helderer, with whom Van Oudijck works. He and his wife banned all things associated with indigenous lifestyle:

Ida van Helderer was a stereotypical white Indo-European lady. She always tried to act very European, to speak Dutch perfectly. She pretended to speak Malay badly, and she neither liked rice-table, nor roedjak (both typical Indisch dishes) [...] Her husband, the inspector, had never been in Holland. [...] And it

⁷¹ J. Coté, 'Romancing the Indies: The literary construction of tempo doeloe, 1880-1930', in: J. Coté and L. Westerbeek, *Recalling the Indies. Colonial culture and postcolonial identities* (Amsterdam 2005) 133-165, 138.

was very odd to see, this Creole, apparently fully European, speak Dutch so correctly, that it would almost be genteel compared to the sloppy 'slang' of the mother country.⁷²

In the French novels, examples of 'The Mimic' can be found in Jean Hougron's *Les asiates*. Hougron was born in 1923 in France and he started his career as an English teacher at a French boarding school. He only came to Indochina in 1947. There, he worked at the American consulate and for a French radio station before his return to France in 1951.⁷³ He is the author of a series named *La nuit Indochinoise* (The Indochina Night) and the bestseller *Tu récolteras la tempête* (Reap the whirlwind). *Les Asiates* appeared in 1954, the year of the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu and the French withdrawal from Indochina.⁷⁴ The book describes the household of the French man Pierre Bressan, his French wife and his children in Indochina. The novel is about the way the colonial situation affected the life of these people in a negative way comparable to the story of *De stille kracht*. Bressan's French wife became an alcoholic, his oldest son was regularly in jail for committing crimes and Bressan himself had numerous mistresses. One of his Eurasian mistresses is depicted as a mimic in the following quote: 'Pauline [...] attempts to pass as a white lady, and never misses an opportunity to gossip about native people.' And subsequently, the point is made more generally: 'Here, one recognises a mixed ancestry person because of the simple fact that he criticises without cessation, those who are native.'⁷⁵

The stereotype 'The Half-Caste Pariah' emerged in sixteen of the twenty novels. It refers to an isolated outsider who was distrusted by both European and indigenous society.⁷⁶ A clear example came in the form of the Anglo-Indian Mr. Harris in the famous British novel *A passage to India*, written by the British novelist E.M. Forster. Forster was born in the UK in

72 'Ida van Helderer was een typetje van blanke nonna. Zij probeerde altijd heel Europeesch te doen, netjes Hollandsch te spreken; zelfs gaf zij voor, dat zij slecht Maleisch sprak, en dat zij noch van rijsttafel, noch van roedjak hield. [...] Haar man, de controleur, was nooit in Holland geweest. [...] En het was zeer vreemd te zien, deze kreool, schijnbaar geheel Europeaan, sprak zijn Hollandsch zoo correct, dat het bijna stijf zou geweest zijn tusschen het slordige 'slang' van het moederland.' L. Couperus, *De stille kracht* (Amsterdam 1900) 54-55.

73 http://aejrsite.free.fr/goodmorning/gm75/gm75_JeanHougron.pdf (04-01-2016).

74 Robson and Yee, *France and Indochina*, 7.

75 'Pauline [...] tente de se faire passer pour une blanche, et ne manque jamais une occasion de dire du mal des indigènes. [...] Ici on reconnait un métis au simple fait, qu'il critique sans cesse ce qui est indigène.' J. Hougron, *Les Asiates* (Paris 1954) 454.

76 D'Cruz, *Midnight's orphans*, 37.

1879. He visited India twice, in 1912-13 and 1921.⁷⁷ This was a quintessential colonial novel about British India comparable to *De stille kracht*. The novel was set in the 1920s, when the nationalist movement gained momentum in India. Forster wrote this novel from a colonialist perspective using stereotypes for Indians and Anglo-Indians that confirmed the superiority of the British. These ideas were visible in the mysterious events that happened to the British woman Adela Quested in the Marabar Caves when she visited them with other British people. It is assumed that the Indian Dr. Aziz had attempted to assault her, but nothing was proven.⁷⁸ The atmosphere in which all these things happen is comparably mysterious and threatening like the entourage described in *De Stille Kracht*. The Anglo-Indian driver Mr. Harris, who brought the group to the caves, was characterised as growing self-conscious when British and Indian people were simultaneously present: 'because he did not know to whom he belonged. For a little while he was vexed by opposite currents in his blood, then they blended, and he belonged to no one but himself.'⁷⁹ Because of their controversial mixed ancestry, Anglo-Indians had many nicknames. As Patrick Taylor said in *Bhowani Junction* they were called 'half-castes, blacky-whites, cheechees and eight-annas.'⁸⁰

For the Indochinese case, the following quote from Kim Lefebvre's autobiographical novel *Métisse blanche* is a good illustration of how Eurasians were seen as 'half-caste pariahs' in French Indochina. This book is about Lefebvre's youth in colonial French Indochina. Her father was a French officer and her mother was of Vietnamese descent. She felt that she had a triple handicap: she was a woman, the result of an illegitimate union, and of mixed ancestry.⁸¹ She was removed from her mother and raised in several orphanages in Indochina:

77 <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/214006/EM-Forster> (04-01-2016).

78 M.A. Jajja, 'A passage to India: the colonial discourse and the representation of India and Indians as stereotypes', *Gomal University Journal of Research* 29:1 (2013) 38-48, 39.

79 Forster, *A passage*, 89.

80 Masters, *Bhowani*, 14. 'Cheechees' refers to the mixed language of Hindi and English, 'cheechee', Anglo-Indians often spoke. Eight-annas equalled 8/16 rupee. The value of one anna was 1/16 rupee (one rupee was 16 annas, 8/16 annas was half a rupee).

81 Interview with Kim Lefebvre in 'Intersections: gender, history and culture in the Asian context', 5 (2001) http://intersections.anu.edu.au/issue5/nguyen_interview.html (04-01-2016).

I did not stop to erase, since my childhood, the contempt, the abuse, the hatred sometimes, from a people I considered mine. That is what I reluctantly remember, the humiliating colonisation and the arrogance of white people. I was the impure fruit of the treason of my mother, a Vietnamese woman.⁸²

For the Dutch East Indies case, a striking example of the Eurasian as a 'half-caste pariah' and 'mimic' emerged in the book of G.J. Vermeulen: *Dagboek van een halve mens* (Diary of a half man). This book is part of a range of eyewitness accounts, which appeared in the 1950s, of Dutch soldiers who went to the Dutch East Indies to fight the Indonesian revolutionaries after the Japanese occupation in the late 1940s.⁸³ The main character, Jan Krijgsman (John the Soldier), met an old Indo-European head of a sugar factory in an area that Jan and his fellow soldiers had just 'liberated' from Indonesian nationalists. The old sugar factory boss told Jan and his companions his life story:

Realise what an Indo-European is: a descendant of a colonial ancestry [...] We became descendants who lead a life, just as half-hearted as our skin-colour. By God, we are aping the Europeans, since they are the civilised race and a native remains just a native, that is how it always was. We are mimicking the Europeans, although we distrust them as thoroughly as they do us. [...] Yet, we did like the Europeans, we drank cocktails and lived in stone houses and called ourselves intellectuals and we avoided the native villages like the plague.⁸⁴

The features of the colonial society and the position of Eurasians as stereotypical 'half-caste pariahs' were clearly described in this quote. The Indo-Europeans were continuously mimicking the Europeans, although they knew they would never attain the same status. The European colonial authorities and the Eurasians mutually distrusted each other. This image

82 Je n'avais cessé, depuis mon enfance, d'essayer du mépris, des rejets, de la haine parfois, de la part d'un peuple que je considérais comme mien. C'est que je rappelais, à mon corps défendant, l'humiliante colonisation et l'arrogance du Blanc. J'étais le fruit impur de la trahison de ma mère, une Vietnamiennne, K. Lefèbre, *Métisse blanche* (Paris 1989) 345.

83 Nieuwenhuys, *Oost-Indische spiegel*, 449-450.

84 Besef een klein moment, nu, wat een Indo-Europeaan is: een telg van een koloniaal voorgeslacht [...] Wij werden telgen die een leven leidden, even halfslachtig als onze huidskleur... Bij God, wij apen de Europeanen na, want zij zijn het beschaafde ras en een inlander is maar een inlander, zo was het toch altijd. Wij apen de Europeanen na, hoewel we ze even grondig wantrouwen als zij ons! [...] Toch deden wij als Europeanen: wij dronken splitjes en woonden in stenen huizen en noemden ons intellectueel en wij meden de kampongs als de pest, G.J. Vermeulen, *Dagboek van een halve mens* (Leiden 1951) 62-63.

clearly resonates with the quotes in which ‘the half-caste pariah’ emerges from the other contexts. Because this scene is enacted on the threshold of independence, one could imagine that this representation of Eurasians would persist in the minds of people after decolonisation.

The other stereotypes of ‘the Ditherer’ and ‘the Waster’ featured less prominently in the novels. In short, these stereotypes depicted the Eurasians as stupid, weak and lazy. They appeared only in 5 and in 3 of the twenty novels respectively. In novels from the Dutch colonial context, these two stereotypes were not found at all, but ‘the Waster’ was found in two English novels and one French novel. ‘The Ditherer’ was found in two English novels and three French novels. The type of ‘colonial regime’ in place plays a role here. Although overall, the legal and social categorisation of Eurasians in all colonies was similar, in comparison to the English case, Indo-Europeans from the Dutch East Indies held a stronger legal position. As mentioned above, boundaries between Anglo-Indians and British people in British India were sharper than the boundaries between Indo-Europeans and Europeans in the Dutch East Indies. For example, Anglo-Indians did not have access to European social circles, while Indo-Europeans could go to European events if they could pass themselves off as white.⁸⁵ The use of other and more humiliating stereotypes kept these sharper boundaries in place and simultaneously reinforced them. Because of more rigid boundaries, Anglo-Indians in British India had to mimic the colonisers even more to prove that they were different from the stereotypical image.

In the French case, matters were more complicated, since *métis* had European status, just like the Indo-Europeans in the Dutch East Indies, if acknowledged by their fathers. In my view, the emergence of stereotypes like ‘the Ditherer’ and ‘the Waster’ in novels from the French colonial context could be explained by the more recent French settlement. Boundaries between local and European people still had to be drawn sharply in Indochina.

One of the few instances of ‘the Ditherer’ is the already mentioned mistress of Bressan, Pauline in *Les Asiates*. She is described as: ‘Pauline, who has chosen the Whites like a lot of Eurasians, and who is only a small stupid mule and who is despised in the circle of the haughty full bloods.’⁸⁶

85 Laarman, *Oude onbekenden*, 23.

86 ‘Pauline, qui avait choisi les Blancs comme beaucoup de métisses, et qui n’était qu’une petite mule sotte et dédaignée au milieu d’un troupeau de purs sangs orgueilleux.’ Hougron, *Les Asiates*, 455.

The Dutch novel, *Gerucht en geweld* by Bep Vuyk, consisted of a collection of stories that were set at the end of the Second World War in the Dutch East Indies. Vuyk was born in the Netherlands in 1905. Her mother was a Dutch woman and her father an Indo-European. When she was 25 years old, she left for the Dutch East Indies to work in an orphanage for Indo-European children in Soekaboemi. In 1950, she chose Indonesian citizenship. Five years later, however, her attitude towards the Indonesian Republic had dramatically changed.⁸⁷ She left Indonesia in 1958, after severe difficulties in gaining admission to the Netherlands, because of her former support of Sukarno.⁸⁸ In one of the stories, an Indo-European appeared who still had a fierce colonial attitude shortly after decolonisation. This Indo-European captain worked on the ship on which the protagonist and her husband travelled back to the Netherlands. The captain felt threatened by the new Indonesian rulers and did not want to conform:

At the moment I am captain for a year and they want to get rid of me. They say I am no good for the new relations; that I cannot conform. I do not wish to conform, I do not want to pretend nothing has happened towards those black blokes, those slow, indolent Asians with their stupid black mugs.⁸⁹

That last sentence also resembles the stereotype 'the Waster', but it does not describe Indo-Europeans but indigenous people in this context. The protagonist asks the captain: 'What do you have against those blacks, captain, you are black yourself, aren't you?'⁹⁰ This question touches the core of the 'half-caste pariah' dilemma after decolonisation.

He took his skin of his underarm between thumb and forefinger and screamed but not at me, with the head thrown far behind, while shrieking to the universe: 'This black skin, my own skin that I would tear off. It is the Asian within me who I hate.'⁹¹

87 B. Scova Righini, 'Bep Vuyk. Twee vaderlanden en twee werelden', *Indische Letteren* 20:1 (2005) 70-80, 72, 77.

88 Baudet and Brugmans, *Balans van beleid*, 25.

89 'Nu vaar ik een jaar als kapitein en ze willen me weg hebben. Ze zeggen dat ik niet deug voor de nieuwe verhoudingen, dat ik me niet kan aanpassen. Ik wens me niet aan te passen, ik wil geen aap-wat-heb-je-mooie-jongen spelen tegenover die zwarte kerels, die slome indolente Aziaten met hun stomme zwarte smoelen.' B. Vuyk, *Gerucht en geweld* (Amsterdam 1959) 57.

90 'Wat hebt u tegen die zwarten, kapitein, u bent toch zelf ook zwart?' Vuyk, *Gerucht*, 58

91 'Hij vatte het vel van zijn onderarm tussen duim en wijsvinger en schreeuwde, maar niet naar mij, met het hoofd ver naar achter geworpen het heelal toekrijgend: "Dit zwarte vel, mijn eigen vel dat ik zou willen afscheuren. Het is de Aziaat in mijzelf die ik haat.' Vuyk, *Gerucht*, 58.

6 Conclusion

This article compared the portrayal of Eurasians in colonial fiction in the Dutch East Indies, British India and French Indochina. I used a comparative perspective instead of a nationalist perspective to shed light on similarities and differences beyond national specificities. This article adds to the literature because it does not study (post) colonial novels from a perspective of literary science (as is common) but rather uses them as historical sources. The analysis shows how the stereotypical portrayal of Eurasians was firmly rooted in colonial society and was not an isolated literary artefact. There were differences between the colonies: for example British India and the Dutch East Indies were more established colonies than French Indochina. Furthermore, the juridical status of Eurasians was different across the three colonies. Despite these differences, Eurasians were regarded by colonial authorities in all three colonies in a remarkably similar manner: their in-between position was thought to represent a threat to the colonial system. As a reflection of that colonial reality, the similarities between the colonies in fictional portrayals of the hybrid group of Eurasians are striking. My hypothesis that the social and legal categorisation of Eurasians would be reflected through stereotyping, and that such fictional portrayal reinforced such categorisations, was confirmed by my analysis of twenty (post) colonial texts. This similar position led to a similar portrayal in all three colonies, as reflected in the texts studied.

Bhabha and others noted that stereotyping in fiction represented the sharp distinctions between colonised and coloniser, which was a crucial part of European colonial projects. This article, by contrast, focused on Eurasians, who challenged these perceptions regarding clear demarcations. Rather surprisingly, the ambivalent position that Eurasians occupied in all three colonies, led to the creation of stereotypes, which were as strong as those of the colonised and which characterised this in-between group, as my analysis of the novels showed. In all three colonies, comparable stereotypes in the fictional portrayal of Eurasians arose, with the most dominant proving to be that of 'the Mimic' and 'the Half-caste pariah'. The endless repetition of stereotypes in novels as a reflection of colonial reality ensured the recognisability of Eurasians for the readers and for the Eurasians themselves. At the same time, the stereotypes in fiction contributed to the creation and enforcement of stereotypes. Stereotypes of Eurasians came into being because of their gradual formation as a group, but the stereotypes in themselves also contributed to the creation of the group. The stereotypical fictional portrayal of Eurasians persisted from the colonial

into the postcolonial period in all three (former) colonies. Although decolonisation meant discontinuity in many respects, the stereotypical representation of Eurasians in novels was remarkably stable for the Eurasians who were in part clinging to the colonial past. Ascertaining how long such stereotypes endured, however, requires further research from historians and literary scholars.

About the author

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