

CULTURAL ASPECTS OF THE EURASIAN COMMUNITY
IN INDONESIAN COLONIAL SOCIETY

Paul W. van der Veur

The first Eurasians of Indonesia were the issue of European fathers and Asian mothers. Subsequently, they were born of European fathers and Eurasian mothers, Eurasian fathers and Asian mothers, and Eurasian parents. The European fathers were usually of Dutch, but sometimes of German, Belgian, or other (European) nationality. Asian mothers were usually Indonesian, although there were Chinese and other Asian nationalities as well. A Eurasian informant once lamented to the author that one of the causes of the "Eurasian inability to stick together" was the great variety of their ethnic background.

Broadly speaking, the issue of Dutch-Indonesian unions tended to exhibit biological traits intermediate between "Nordic" (a subgroup of the Caucasoid division) and "Indo-Malay" (a subgroup of the Mongoloid division). This intermediate position is clearest with respect to skin color, hair color, presence of the Mongoloid fold, shape of the nose, and nostrils. Maternal traits are dominant in eye color, cephalic index, and shape of the nose bridge. Probably a very distinctive characteristic is the "Mongoloid" sacral spot. These bluish-grey birthmarks were found by Dr. J. K. W. Neuberger among all Javanese new-born. He also claimed to have observed them regularly among Eurasian children and considered their presence in any "European" infant to be indicative of mixed racial descent.¹

To the layman, skin color was the easiest and most widely used criterion for identifying Eurasians. Such expressions as *koffie met melk* (coffee with cream), *kwart over zes* (a quarter past six), *half zeven* (half past six), *bijna zeven uur* (almost

-
1. J. K. W. Neuberger, "Ueber den Mongolenfleck," Wiener Klinische Wochenschrift (XXXXI), 1928, pp. 1410-1411. Material on the physical characteristics of Eurasians is limited. A thorough study of the offspring of East India Company soldiers and local women on the little island of Kisar (northeast of Timor) is presented by E. Rodenwaldt, Die Mestizen auf Kisar (Batavia: Mededeelingen van den Dienst der Volksgezondheid in Nederlandsch-Indië, 1927), two vols. Smaller, general studies are G. W. Kiewiet de Jonge, "Over het Lichaamsgewicht van Europeanen, Indo-Europeanen en Chineezzen in Nederlandsch-Indië," Geneeskundig Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsch-Indië (LXIV), 1924, pp. 83-96; and P. K. Roest, "Raskruising op Java," Geneeskundig Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsch-Indië (LXX), 1930, pp. 897-914.

7:00 p.m.) and *zo zwart als mijn schoen* (as black as my shoe) were commonly used to indicate various (deepening) shades of skin color. If skin color left a doubt, other physical characteristics might reveal the Asian ancestry. Many Eurasians, moreover, betrayed their mixed descent and birth in Indonesia by their speech.

Membership in the Eurasian community was never closely specified. A Eurasian with a Dutch education and a prominent position might identify himself with the "Dutch group," a choice which was facilitated when the person involved was of light complexion. Others were almost completely Indonesian in appearance, behavior, and standard of living, and they were considered to belong to the "Indonesian group." Some "white Europeans" were more Eurasian in behavior than some persons of mixed descent; while at the same time it was occasionally possible for pure Indonesians to pass as (mixed-blood) "Europeans."²

Relations between persons of European status and Indonesians varied widely. Mixed marriages constituted between 10 to 13 per cent of the total number of European marriages in the latter part of the nineteenth century; by 1925 they reached a peak of 27.5 per cent.³ An analysis of the number of mixed marriages during 1929-1931 reveals regional differences. Expressed in percentage of 100 European bachelors over 20 years of age, it was 1.2 in East Java and Sumatra; 1.9 and 2 in West and Central Java; 2.8 and 3.1 in Surakarta and Jogjakarta; and 3.3 and 5.8 in Celebes and the Moluccas.⁴ These differences tend to correspond with observations made by a number of authors and to what one would expect from historical circumstance. In the Moluccas and in the Minahasa region of northern Celebes, for example, Christianity brought about close relations between those termed "Christians

-
2. See, for example, A. Djajadiningrat, Herinneringen van Pangeran Aria Achmad Djajadiningrat (Amsterdam and Batavia: G. Kolff, 1936), p. 68. Djajadiningrat recounts how the principal of the Dutch Elementary School urged him to assume the name "Willem van Bantam" to facilitate his acceptance. When he entered high school and had to reveal his true name, his "European friends, especially girlfriends," turned their backs upon him.
 3. A. van Marle, "De Groep der Europeanen in Nederlandsch-Indië, iets over Ontstaan en Groei," Indonesië (V), 1951-1952, pp. 319-322. This increase was related to the sharp decline in concubinage following the arrival of increased numbers of Dutch women and the rise of Indonesian national consciousness.
 4. Van Marle, "De Groep der Europeanen," p. 327.

of European descent" and the "native Christians." Bakker reported in 1887 that marriages between educated Indonesians and Europeans had been taking place for several decades in the Minahasa. There was little difference between "Europeans" and "Natives" in dress, in first names, and in family names. One was never sure, therefore, "where the European ended and the Eurasian began."⁵ Van der Chijs made the same observation in 1867 about the Ambonese in the Moluccas.⁶ In Central Java and in the Principalities of Jogjakarta and Surakarta, relations between the various groups were somewhat closer than in the rest of Java. Similarly, relations were closer in the rural areas and small towns than in the cities. A contrast was provided by the situation in East Sumatra: there the rough and tumble life of the Dutch planters and the influence of British Malaya's example in race relations placed the Eurasians in low esteem.

General Characteristics

A colonial environment is notably inhospitable to cultural achievement, and both the Eurasians' peculiar position in colonial society and the scarcity of works dealing with Indies cultural affairs make it difficult to discuss the cultural life of this group adequately; however, some general comments may be made.

Close family ties were characteristic of the Eurasians, and few of them would forego the numerous get-togethers with their immediate or distant relatives. This bond was not due entirely to the noted Eurasian *gastvrijheid* (hospitality). Children called visitors who were not relatives *oom* (uncle) or *tante* (aunt). *Paatje* (daddy) was one's own father, but the term could also be attached to the last name of any respected person. Within the family, one's younger brother or sister was *broertje* or *susje* (little brother or sister) and remained thus regardless of age.⁷ The Eurasian traveller stayed with "Tante Noes" and

5. H. Bakker, "Voldoet de Wetgeving betreffende Huwelijken tusschen Personen Behoorende tot de Beide Staatkundige Categoriën der Indische Bevolking. . .," Handelingen der Nederlandsch-Indische Juristen-Vereeniging (III, 1), 1887, pp. 72-73.
6. As cited in "Historisch Overzicht van het Regeeringsbeleid ten aanzien van het Onderwijs voor de Inlandsche Bevolking," Publicaties Hollandsch-Inlandsch Onderwijs-Commissie (No. 9, part 2), 1930, p. 54.
7. E. Allard, "Laporan Sementara tentang Penjelidikan Kemasjarakatan dari Golongan Indo-Eropah yang Dilakukan di Bogor Tahun 1953," Bahasa dan Budaya (III, 5), April 1955, p. 19.

"Oom Piet" rather than in a "European" hotel.

The Eurasians tended to have common favorite activities and to observe special celebrations. They deeply appreciated the tropical nights, moonlit rivers, and majestic mountains. The *jacht* (hunt)--described by the Eurasian writer Tjalie Robinson in some sparkling stories--strongly appealed to the men. He pictures the Eurasian household on Sunday, when "Pa and his oldest son come home from snipe-shooting" and recount the events of the day, while Ma, daughter, and cook get down to work.⁸ Another particular interest of the Eurasian male, especially the lower-class one, was *pentjak* (or *poekoelan*), the Indonesian art of self-defence.⁹ Setting off fireworks was a special excitement for Eurasian children in the weeks before New Year's Eve. The fathers ensured that this festival was celebrated in a way befitting a true Eurasian: "Without considering costs: richly, royally, and exuberantly."¹⁰ Finally, there was the kite season in which many young (and old) males participated. The kites were not the dull Western kites but "fighting" kites, which searched for their prey with string which had been specially sharpened by running it through a concoction of *kah* (Chinese wood glue) and mashed glass.

Religion and Beliefs

The 1930 census indicated that the 170,000 persons of European status born in Indonesia were predominantly Christian; less than one per cent (0.8) were Muslim, and some of these may have been Indonesian women who were married to Europeans. Fifty per cent of the Europeans were listed as Protestant; Catholics were second with 36 per cent. About 6 per cent gave no church affiliation, while the religion of another 6 per cent was unknown.¹¹ It is interesting to note in this connection

-
8. Vincent Mahieu (Pseud. of J. Boon), "De Nazaten van Baron von Munchausen," Oriëntatie (No. 32), May 1950, pp. 32-33.
 9. Apart from a sketchy reference in J. Th. Koks, De Indo (Amsterdam: H. J. Parris, 1931), pp. 152-153, there was little written on this subject until mid-1962, when some articles appeared in Tong-Tong. See, for example, J. W. K., "'Het Spel' en zijn Achtergronden," (No. 22-24), May 30, June 15, June 30, 1962, pp. 10, 22; 8, 17; 10, 22.
 10. Tjalie Robinson (pseud. of J. Boon), Piekerans van een Straatslijper, (Bandung: Masa-Baru, n.d., 2nd edition), II, pp. 162-163.
 11. Departement van Landbouw, Nijverheid en Handel-Departement van Economische Zaken, Volkstelling 1930 (Batavia: 1933-1936), VI, Table 18, pp. 394-402.

that the Masonic Order's mysticism and fraternalism held a strong attraction for some Eurasians, including a number of influential leaders. Most of those belonging to the lowest layer of European society had, according to the Pauper Commission of 1900, "only a very faint notion of Christian principles and dogmas."¹² Its report from Besuki (East Java) mentioned that the majority of lower-class Europeans "believed all the Indonesian superstitions." Usually the subjects denied the charge, believing it would be construed as a sign of their intellectual inferiority.¹³

In marriages between Europeans and Indonesians, many Indonesian beliefs were transmitted to the children, even when the mothers were Christian. As Ernst Rodenwaldt stated in his study of the offspring of East India Company soldiers on Kisar:

From the very beginning . . . everything that was specifically female derived exclusively from the colored ancestral race. Down to the present day the adat of the Natives continues to govern everything closely connected with womanhood--birth, child-rearing, the deportment of girls, courtship, and marriage.¹⁴

There are numerous accounts in Eurasian literature of the *babu*--the Indonesian servant who tells the children about the spirits which move about at night. Belief in lucky and unlucky days, in houses or flowers that are *sial* (portending bad luck) and in forests and mountains that are *angker* (haunted) was common. R. Nieuwenhuys tells the story of the *babu* who warns her employer that "Mrs. Sophie has such dry hands," hands which are *panas*, (hot) and "will scorch the happiness."¹⁵ He further relates how Aunt Sophie, in trying to become a mother, drinks various sorts of *djamu* (a concoction of Indonesian herbs), takes flower sacrifices to the churchyard, and burns *manjan* (incense) every Thursday night to please the evil spirits.¹⁶ *Selamatan* ceremonies

12. Departement van Onderwijs, Eeredienst en Nijverheid, Uitkomsten der Pauperisme-Enquête, Algemeen Verslag (Batavia: 1902), p. 21.

13. Uitkomsten der Pauperisme-Enquête, Gewestelijke Verslagen, II, Besoeki, p. 6.

14. Rodenwaldt, Die Mestizen auf Kisar, Vol. I, p. 439.

15. E. Breton de Nijs (pseud. of R. Nieuwenhuys), Vergeelde Portretten (Amsterdam: E. M. Querido, 1954), p. 103.

16. Breton de Nijs, Vergeelde Portretten, p. 147.

served Eurasians as well as Indonesians in bringing relatives and friends together and warding off the spirits; thus they, too, held a special religious feast forty days after the birth of an infant.

Indonesian herbs were familiar to many Eurasians, and Mrs. J. Kloppenburg-Versteegh's book on Indonesian plants and their curative power was widely referred to,¹⁷ although most doctors considered the reputation of these herbs to be pure superstition.¹⁸ They had even less regard for the *dukun*, or healer, but observed with regret that such individuals continued to play important role "in many households, especially the old-fashioned ones."¹⁹ *Guna-guna* (black magic) was also resorted to, winning fame in Indies literature as the result of lurid descriptions by Dutch writers of the power of certain potions to cause one bad luck or to fall in love.²⁰

-
17. J. Kloppenburg-Versteegh, Indische Planten en haar Geneeskracht (Semarang: Van Dorp, 1907). As E. Breton de Nijs (pseud. of R. Nieuwenhuys) puts it in Tempo Doeloe; Fotografische Documenten uit het Oude Indië 1870-1914 (Amsterdam: E. M. Querido, 1961), p. 128: "We should see the significance of her [Mrs. Kloppenburg's] activities in a time of insufficient medical provisions and poor means of communication, when the development of tropical medicine as such was still in its infancy. We also cannot imagine the influence which she exercised and the esteem in which she was held without the *Indische* belief in the magical power of herbs and plants."
 18. Whether they did so justly is another matter. Basically, the properties of the local curatives have not yet been explored, though it has been found that the Indonesian herb *kumis kutjing* (*orthosiphon grandiflorus*) contains important medicinal elements. For a general discussion, see H. A. C. Boelman, Bijdrage tot de Geschiedenis der Geneeskruidcultuur in Nederlandsch Oost-Indië (Leiden: 1936), pp. 96ff.
 19. W. A. Betz, "Hygiënische Wenken voor het Huisgezin," Onze Stem, (IV), 1923, p. 745. Onze Stem was the journal of the Eurasian League (Indo-Europeesch Verbond, or IEV).
 20. It is possible that some of the magical effect attributed to *guna-guna* was the result of potions mixed into the victim's food. Furthermore, the "absolute thought control" and development of "auto-suggestion," which were often recommended *guna-guna* practices, may not have been as impossible as some Westerners depict them. For a general description see H. A. van Hien, De Formulieren voor de Stille Kracht (Weltervreden, 1924), passim. Although few educated Eurasians believed in *guna-guna* it is of interest that the IEV journal Onze Stem printed without comment an article in which the subject was discussed. The essay noted that "the human hair and nails contain the most vital force of all parts of the human body," and that they, therefore, should never be thrown away "indifferently." Hitzka, "Over de Magie in Indië," Onze Stem (XI) 1930, p. 1163.

Language

The lingua franca among Eurasians during the early period of the Dutch East India Company was not Dutch but a pidgin Portuguese developed by the Portuguese settlers from Malacca and the *Mardijkers*, or freed slaves, most of whom had been taken originally from coastal India and Ceylon, where pidgin Portuguese was the medium of expression.²¹ In the eighteenth century this dialect was superseded by *pasar* (bazaar) Malay. The limited use of Dutch and the rise of Malay in this period is revealed in the 1745 governmental specification that instruction at a new seminary in Batavia be given in Portuguese, Malay, and Latin.²² In the 1780s it was publicly admitted that the majority of school-children in Batavia could not speak Dutch and that Portuguese and Malay were essential for instruction.²³

New arrivals from the Netherlands increased the use of Dutch, but they also adopted Malay terms for the many new things they encountered and were inclined to incorporate in their speech the more easily pronounced Malay words. It is no wonder that a *tjampur aduk* (hodge-podge) of Malay and Dutch developed.²⁴ Some of the linguistic difficulties encountered by Eurasians in speaking "correct" Dutch arose from the absence of similar sounds in the local languages, the great difference in sentence structure and idiom, and the importance of the accent in Dutch.²⁵ Constant transposition occurred between the soft Dutch *g* (and *ch*) and *h*, between the *f* and *v*, and the *s* and *z*; and the final consonants *d* and *t* frequently were dropped, as for example in *hond* (dog) which became *gon*.

Moreover, Dutch nouns can be masculine, feminine, or neuter; local Indonesian languages do not make this distinction. One might, therefore, hear: *Mijn zus, hij zo pienter*, My sister, he so smart. Typical is the story about the pupil who tells

-
21. F. de Haan, Oud Batavia (Batavia: Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen, 1922), I, p. 452; H. Yule and A. Burnell, Hobson-Jobson (London: J. Murray, 1886), pp. xvi-xvii.
 22. F. P. H. Prick van Wely, Neerlands Taal in 't Verre Oosten; eene Bijdrage tot de Kennis en de Historie van het Hollandsch in Indië (Semarang and Surabaya: 1906), p. 15.
 23. Nederlandsch-Indisch Plakaatboek 1602-1811 (Batavia: Landsdrukkerij, 1885-1900), X, pp. 849-850, and XI, p. 35.
 24. F. P. H. Prick, De Verindisching van ons Nederlandsch (Batavia and Den Haag: 1903), p. 14.
 25. Prick van Wely, Neerlands Taal, pp. 25-30; G. J. Nieuwenhuis, Bronnenboek voor het Nieuwe Taalonderwijs in Indië (Weltevreden: 1925), pp. 223-232.

his teacher that he shot *den varken* (the swine). Reprimanded that it is not *den* (male) but *het varken* (because *varken* is neuter), the boy sticks to his point exclaiming: "Oh, no, teacher, it was *den varken*, I saw it myself!".

Awkward sentence constructions and unidiomatic expressions often resulted from a straight translation of Malay. *Al, meneer*, already, sir, is the literal meaning of the Malay *sudah tuan*--in answer to the question whether one has completed a job--but is meaningless in Dutch. Similar errors occurred in the translation of Malay verbs which had more than one meaning in Dutch: *tanam*, for example, which means both to bury and to plant.

Accent plays an important role in Dutch, but it is weakly developed in Malay. *Indisch*, therefore, showed a strong tendency to overlook the niceties of Dutch accent, allowing it to fall where it would in Malay. In exclamations, sounds were stretched to a degree never done in Dutch: *vervelend*, annoying, became *verveeeeeeelend*. Again, Indies Dutch speakers often failed to pronounce the toneless and non-accentuated last syllable correctly in such verbs as *lopen*, walk.

Dutch was saved from complete hybridization in the Indies by the spread of Western education and the increasing emphasis on speaking "correct" Dutch. But this was a slow process. Even in 1900, for example, an educational survey found that of about 1,500 first-year pupils admitted to the Dutch elementary schools--the vast majority of whom were of European status--only 29 per cent knew a smattering of that language and over 40 per cent knew none at all.²⁶ A transformation had been brought about by 1920, however. By then, the speech of most upper- and middle-class Eurasians matched that of educated persons in the Netherlands and was distinguished only by its local intonation. *Indisch* (Indies) Dutch was still spoken as an almost separate dialect by lower middle-class Eurasians; but the younger members of this group, especially the girls, could speak standard Dutch quite well. *Indisch* remained alive on the playgrounds and the streets, however, and Dutch children were forced to adjust to it in their play.

The fact that *Indisch* was not tolerated in the schools made study difficult enough for the average Eurasian child; his problem was aggravated by the fact that the elementary school instruction was identical with that provided in the Netherlands. Tjalie Robinson describes the result:

We became acquainted with an animal world completely different from the one we knew outside. . . . In school one was taught to be industrious as ants,

26. I. J. Brugmans, Geschiedenis van het Onderwijs in Nederlandsch-Indië (Groningen: 1938), p. 295.

diligent as little bees, faithful as dogs, clean as cats, wise as owls and with all that to work as hard as a horse. Only then was one a useful human being. We counted with apples, pears, and nuts in Indonesia . . . and could give descriptions of nature including linden-trees and willows, birches, poplars, and oaks; with blackbirds, peewits, and starlings. . . We knew what it means when "the first leaves began to fall" and "the little crocuses showed their dainty faces," but it was all so terribly *tjemplang* [dead]. . . .²⁷

Robinson also notes that the discipline of school hours was made all the harder to bear by the fact that life outside the school was one of almost complete freedom. Many of the Eurasian boys probably realized that they never would be "good Dutch boys, anyhow":

If we could have had only one teacher who would go out with us, eat *gadoe-gadoe* [Indonesian vegetable salad] and *es gantung* [shaved ice], fly a "native" kite and know how to fight with it. . . . But, alas, *isternietmetchem* [he just wasn't there]. The school was the area where "East is East and West is West" and you could be sure that "when the twain shall meet" *ada ketabrak* [there is a collision]. But who is the one who always loses in the collision? *De kleieieieinste* [The weakest].²⁸

The constant criticism of Indisch as "bad Dutch" drew some counter-fire from the Eurasians. One, writing in the IEV (Eurasian League) journal *Onze Stem*, urged well-to-do Eurasians to abandon their "false shame vis-à-vis the import-Dutch." He emphasized that the average Eurasian preferred his "own language," especially among friends, and asserted that, as a Eurasian's most intimate feelings were expressed in Indisch, they could be discovered by an outsider only if he had mastered that particular medium.²⁹ V. W. Ch. Ploegman, the lawyer and fiery leader of the Surabaja branch of the IEV, was also a strong advocate of a "Netherlands Indies language": in his vision of the future, this tongue was to play an essential role in achieving "the homogenization of the different population groups in a Netherlands Indies cultural life."³⁰

27. Robinson, *Piekerans*, II, p. 63.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 59.

29. H. B. Meelhuysen, "De Aparte Taal voor den Indo-Europeaan," *Onze Stem* (XXI), 1940, pp. 1003-1004.

30. P[loegman], "Het Moeilijke Nederlandsch," *Onze Stem* (XX), 1939, p. 194.

But the movement towards standard Dutch was irresistible. Knowledge of that form was an important element in the assignment of prestige, and from a sociological viewpoint the use of Indisch constituted a class and group barrier. One often heard it claimed that "you can tell a Eurasian by the way he talks." Both job and school required mastery of the standard language, and increasingly it became a "social and psychological necessity"³¹ for persons of European status. On the other hand, their ability to speak Indisch perpetuated a special feeling of solidarity among the group of *blijvers*--those "Europeans" whose families made their homes permanently in the Indies--and among the Eurasians in particular.

Literary and Artistic Achievement

The Eurasians of Indonesia made few contributions to literature and art. This is not surprising, for their emancipation as a social group did not occur until early in the twentieth century. There was, moreover, neither an arts academy nor a conservatory in the Netherlands Indies, nor was there an opportunity to study literature at the university level. The Institute for the Javanese Language at Surakarta achieved brief fame under the eminent Eurasian scholar C. F. Winter in the 1830s, but it was abolished in 1843. Another Eurasian scholar, H. N. van der Tuuk, made an important contribution to the field of comparative linguistics in the latter part of the nineteenth century as a result of his determination to master the languages of Indonesia.³² But whatever contribution Eurasians made to other fields, they received little recognition from Dutchmen in Indonesia or the Netherlands. The few Eurasians who achieved fame did so after they left the colony and had come to participate in the cultural life of the Netherlands and Western Europe, where they were counted as Dutch artists and writers.

Although the number of literary works by Eurasians was small, some were of above average caliber and conveyed an authenticity and understanding of Indonesian conditions which was lacking in many works by "pure" Dutchmen. Three such superior examples are *De Stille Kracht* [Black Magic] by Louis Couperus, *Het Boek van Siman den Javaan* [The Book of Siman the Javanese] by E. F. E. Douwes Dekker, and *De Paupers* [The Paupers] by Hans van de Wall. The detective novels of Ucee (pseudonym of S. H. Coldenhoff) introduce the reader to many typical Indonesian mystery tales, eventually solved by a Eurasian

31. H. Voskuil, "Verslag over het Indische Nederlands," Seminar Paper for Prof. W. F. Wertheim, 1949-1950, pp. 9, 15, 17.

32. An excellent description of Van der Tuuk's life is found in R. Nieuwenhuys, Tussen Twee Vaderlanden (Amsterdam: G. A. van Oorschot, 1959), pp. 104-158.

amateur detective. Perhaps the foremost contribution to the literary field, however, was made by Edgar du Perron, whose autobiographical novel *Het Land van Herkomst* [Country of Origin] received wide acclaim in literary circles in the Netherlands. Du Perron's residence in Indonesia from 1936 to 1939, just after the successful publication of his novel, had a considerable impact on both his Dutch and Indonesian literary contemporaries. Some of his friends became founders of the prewar journals *Kritiek en Opbouw* [Criticism and Construction] and *De Fakkel* [The Torch] begun in Batavia in 1938 and 1940 respectively, and the postwar cultural journal *Oriëntatie* [Orientation], which was established in Bandung in 1947.

In the period following World War II, several Eurasian authors made important literary contributions. Under the pseudonym of Breton de Nijs, R. Nieuwenhuys wrote *Vergeelde Portretten* [Yellowed Portraits] and *Tussen Twee Vaderlanden* [Between Two Fatherlands]. J. Boon (under the pseudonyms Tjalie Robinson and Vincent Mahieu) composed *Piekerans van een Straatslijper* [Thoughts of a Streetloafer], *Tjies*, and *Tjoek*; and Maria Dermoût, two of whose works were translated into English are *The Ten Thousand Things* and *Yesterday*. The poems of G. J. Resink, compiled in *Op de Breuklijn* [On the Line of Cleavage] and *Kreeft en Steenbok* [Cancer and Capricorn], show a remarkable identification with the Javanese environment, combined with a mastery of Dutch poetic form.

In the pictorial arts, the Eurasians have made a much smaller contribution. In the 1930s G. P. Adolfs, E. Dezentjé, and others specialized in landscapes employing flamboyant color combinations. Their pieces were popular, but they hardly reached the level of true art.³³ Others, such as E. Ch. L. Agerbeek, J. Frank, and P. Ouborg in particular, showed considerably greater talent; but the only outstanding painter was J. Th. Toorop (1858-1928), who was born in Purworedjo, Central Java, of a Norwegian father and Javanese mother. He was sent to the Netherlands in 1869 and began his artistic career in 1880. Stimulated by various schools of European painting he turned, nevertheless, to a more descriptive, impressionistic art than was the fashion of the time. In turn, he influenced Netherlands art, his paintings dropping "a precious bit of fire into the cold blood" of his Dutch contemporaries.³⁴

The Eurasians were generally interested in music, and piano and singing lessons were a part of the education of most Eurasian girls of moderately well-off families. Accomplishment

33. R. Nieuwenhuys, "Moderne Schilderkunst in Batavia," *Oriëntatie* (No. 6), March 1948, p. 41.

34. G. B. Brom, *Java in Onze Kunst* (Rotterdam: W. L. & J. Brusse, 1931), p. 231.

in this line was often combined with theatrical performance, for the stage played an important role in Indies cultural life at the turn of the century. Prominent among the Eurasian concert and theater singers of the day were Mrs. Witbols-Feugen and Mrs. Lange-Rijckmans. O. Knaap, a violinist of some repute, was also known as a music critic. Hans van de Wall wrote the play, *Paria van Glodok* [The Pariah of Glodok] among others; while C. van de Wall successfully introduced Malay and Arab songs to the European concert hall and saw his opera *Attima*, an episode of Javanese life set to Western music, performed in The Hague. This cultural activity declined during the subsequent decades, and, oriented increasingly toward the Netherlands and European music, it lost much of its distinctive quality. There remained, however, two Eurasian forms of music and drama, the *krontjong* and the *Komedie Stambul*, both of which had developed among the lower class of that community.

The Krontjong. In discussing language, I mentioned the *Mardijkers* and their role in making pidgin Portuguese the lingua franca of the Eurasians during the early period of Dutch rule. The *Mardijkers* and the early *Mixtiezen* [mestizos] were also enthusiastic admirers of Portuguese dances and songs. Portuguese music had a special appeal, especially the melody known as *moresco* and the guitar-like instrument with which it was played. This guitar sound subsequently became known as *krontjong*, a Malay imitation of the sound made by its metal strings, and the melody as *lagu krontjong* or *krontjong moritsku*.³⁵ The music eventually ceased to be dance music, and the original instrument was simplified by the *Mardijkers* of the little village of Tugu, east of Batavia, to a five-stringed guitar. The instrument was accompanied by the singing of the performer, and to this there came to be added a violin and German flute.

The songs with Portuguese lyrics gradually lost favor to those using Malay words although some with Portuguese elements were still to be heard in Batavia as late as 1830.³⁶ The lullaby, *Nina Bobo* [Sleep, baby, sleep], is probably the one song which retains a trace of Portuguese, and it has remained popular down to the twentieth century among both rich and poor.

35. A. Th. Manusama, Krontjong als Muziekinstrument, als Melodie en als Gezang (Batavia: 1919), pp. 1-3. "Hawaiian music" had a similar background: the guitar was popularized in Hawaii by Portuguese immigrants from Madeira who arrived in 1879. The four-stringed guitar known in Portuguese as *cavaquinho* received the Hawaiian name of *ukulele*, or jumping flea.

36. De Haan, Oud Batavia, I, p. 528.

Nina Bobo (Sleep, baby, sleep)

Nina bobo nina bobo	Sleep, baby, sleep, sleep
Kalau tidak bobo digigit njamuk	If you don't go to sleep, the mosquitoes will bite you
Marilah bobo ja nonni nonni manis	Go to sleep, then, my girl, my sweet
Kalau tidak bobo digigit njamuk	If you don't go to sleep, the mosquitoes will bite you.

Initially, a large number of popular songs were developed from the single lagu krontjong melody, but with the introduction of texts in Malay, variations in the tune also occurred, and diverse krontjong melodies came into being.³⁷ The amorous krontjong songs corresponded closely to the Malay pantun verse, whose four-line stanzas could easily be adapted to krontjong melody. The simple tunes lent themselves to satire and naughty double meaning,³⁸ of which the love song *Terang Bulan* is an example:

Terang Bulan (Moonlight)

Terang bulan, terang bulan di kali	Moonlight, moonlight on the river
Buaja timbul di sangka mati	A crocodile comes drifting down seemingly dead;
Djangan pertjaja mulut lelaki	Never believe a man's word
Berani sumpah tapi takut mati	He dares to swear but he is afraid to die

Krontjong music was played at home among friends and relatives or by small bands who roamed the streets at night. In either case, it created a sentimental tie among the Eurasians. One woman described her reaction to krontjong in the following words:

Listening to krontjong music makes us simultaneously sad and glad. We let our thoughts and fantasy wander as on wings with the rhythm of the music. We love to hear it when the moon comes up. The sweet words of its sentimental melody tell a story of a boy and a girl in love. When we hear it our blood begins to flow quicker. . . .³⁹

37. W. G. Gilbert, Muziek uit Oost en West ('s-Gravenhage: 1942), pp. 64-65.

38. See Gilbert, Muziek, pp. 65-66.

39. Response to a questionnaire administered by the author and his wife during a participant-observer study in a Eurasian relocation center at Zandvoort, Netherlands (May-June 1953).

It has been charged by one prominent authority that while the texts of the krontjong songs often have considerable merit, the form is "musical hybrid" which often gives Westerners the impression "of a sentimental overloading which certainly is not healthy, of a sadness which approaches indolence, and of a musical lack of character which expresses itself in the continuous absorbing of new means. . . ." ⁴⁰ These views have been echoed by many others, but inasmuch as such criticisms could be applied with equal validity to Hawaiian music or cowboy music they perhaps suffer from an excess of seriousness, bringing the standards of the concert-hall too soberly to the village festival. Some krontjong melodies, moreover, have been stirring enough to arouse nationalistic fervor: Belloni's *Lief Indië* [Beloved Indies] spoke to the Eurasians; Indonesia's national anthem, *Indonesia Raya*, is based on a krontjong melody, and so is Malaysia's, which is set to the tune of *Terang Bulan*.

In the twentieth century, regard for krontjong declined owing to increasing economic differentiation within the Eurasian group, a growing Eurasian attempt to identify with Dutch culture, and the new popularity of jazz. When, moreover, krontjong began to be played more and more by Indonesians and Chinese, it found itself relegated to the status of "low class Eurasian" or "Indonesian" music. One author, writing in 1930, observed that krontjong was slowly disappearing among the Eurasians, who out of "false pride" no longer "play it publicly." ⁴¹

The Komedi Stambul. The origin and early development of another Eurasian cultural contribution, the Komedi Stambul or East Indian Opera, is connected largely with one person, A. Mahieu. ⁴² As a high school student in the late nineteenth century, he read and was inspired by the plays of Corneille, Racine, and Molière. He decided that a new art form could be developed by combining the talents of East and West in a "harmonious whole," understandable to all groups in Indonesia; and it also seemed obvious to him that the linguistic medium of expression should be Malay.

Thrilled by these ideas, Mahieu quit school and began to read widely about dramatic art. He acquired a (second-hand) copy

40. Gilbert, Muziek, p. 65.

41. J. Cuvreur, "Over Krontjongmuziek en Nog Wat," Onze Stem (XI), 1930, p. 737.

42. Two principal sources for this topic are A. Th. Manusama, Komedi Stamboel of de Oost-Indische Opera (Weltevreden: Favoriet, 1922), and O. Knaap, "De Indische Antoine," Bondsblad (IV), July 18 and 25, 1903. In addition, W. B. Peteri described his own reaction and that of others in the audience in "Stamboel," Nieuwe Gids (XXXVII), 1922, pp. 411-419.

of *Duizend en Een Nacht* [The Arabian Nights]. Knowing the Indonesian fondness for fairy-tales and fantasy, he adapted some of these stories as plays; and, since music was popular, he decided that his actors and actresses would have to sing at times. He himself mastered the guitar, violin, and flute. When Mahieu was ready with his plans (about 1892) he borrowed the requisite funds, had a bamboo playhouse built, acquired musical instruments, and personally trained eleven Eurasian paupers. The costumes of his performers were "Oriental," and their head-dress was the Egyptian fez. The orchestra, stage, and décor followed Western style. The orchestra's music was not specially composed for each play but consisted of dance music and popular *krontjong* songs. The lyrics and the dialogue were ad libbed. Mahieu named his "opera" the *Komedie Stambul*, after Istanbul.

The first plays offered by Mahieu's group were *Ali Baba* and *Aladdin*. He subsequently expanded his repertoire with shows based upon fairy-tales from the West, such as *Snow White* and *Sleeping Beauty*. The performances, begun in Surabaya, were an immediate success and captivated audiences there. It was the first time in Indonesia's colonial history that Eurasians, Indonesians, and Chinese had seen a cultural expression of this kind which they all enjoyed. Mahieu subsequently repeated his successes throughout Java, and his group even visited towns in Sumatra, Celebes, and the Moluccas. He trained several good actors and actresses, and some of these later started their own troupes. Originally, the *Stambul* relied almost exclusively on Eurasian players, but soon Indonesians and Chinese also began to be used; and by 1919 it was reported that many of the traveling bands (known as *bangsawan*) consisted entirely of Indonesians.⁴³

O. Knapp, who was a well-known Eurasian music critic at the turn of the century, argued that many of the *Stambul* performances could be severely criticized by European standards: the singing was "sticky and slurred," and some of the acting was poor. He added, however, that there was beauty in the tender movements of the girls, the smooth movements of the young men, the colorful Eastern costumes, the flowery language, the symbolism of some of the shows, and the simplicity of their resources. Mahieu's contribution as a Eurasian, he concluded, was his ability to fascinate people of diverse ethnic groups, for whom his plays opened a little window to the West.⁴⁴

The preceding pages have depicted some of the cultural characteristics of a people who held an important if dependent

43. Manusama, *Komedie Stamboel*, p. 9.

44. Knaap, "De Indische Antoine," July 25, 1903.

position in Indonesian colonial society. The local environment could not help but have a major influence upon Eurasians, especially those in lower-middle and lower class positions and those living in the smaller towns. Before the establishment of better communications and the arrival of increasing numbers of European women, their way of life had, therefore, a Mestizo style and such cultural expressions as the Indisch dialect and krontjong were an integral part of this Indies mode of living. With increasing Europeanization these aspects were relegated to the background, but since the Eurasians were not completely accepted into Dutch colonial society, and their schooling was also not adapted to the local culture, they experienced some of the disorientation to which Western-educated Indonesians were subjected, and continued to be conscious of themselves as a people apart.