
Seductive Landscapes: Gender, Race and European Representations of Nature in the Dutch East Indies during the Late Colonial Period

Susie Protschky

Gender, race and nature: the 'porno-tropics' revisited

More than a decade ago Anne McClintock coined the term 'porno-tropics' to evoke an historical European discourse about gender, race and (male) colonial expansion through indigenous landscapes, with associated pleasures and anxieties.¹ In her book *Imperial Leather* (1995) McClintock described indigenous women as 'imperial boundary markers', claiming that 'as European men crossed the dangerous thresholds of their known worlds, they ritualistically feminized borders and boundaries.'² The result, for European identities, was 'both paranoia and megalomania': a 'fear of engulfment' by the Other co-existing uneasily with a sense of incorrigible desire, superiority and entitlement.³ In McClintock's view 'the feminizing of the land is both a *poetics* of ambivalence and a *politics* of violence.'⁴

Here the Dutch East Indies, a Dutch colony in tropical Southeast Asia, provides the basis to test McClintock's notion of the porno-tropics beyond (though adjacent to) the British purview that she described, albeit in frequently universalist terms. In deference to the paradoxical logic of colonial culture that McClintock's brilliant psycho-historical analysis unveiled, this paper offers both a confirmation and disavowal of her vision of the porno-tropics. A selective comparison of literary and visual media from the Indies does indeed reveal the operation of a 'poetics of ambivalence' in colonial views of nature, race and gender, but one that is situated in visions of landscapes that were not consistently *feminised*. In the particular geographical and historical context of the Dutch East Indies, the 'otherness' of tropical landscapes was most strongly associated with native women in visual media, namely painting and photography. It was in images made for the eye that a colonial discourse was constructed around the possibility of (male, European) pleasure through voyeurism and fantasies of seductive exploits among native women and landscapes. In literature, nature – a more inclusive notion than 'landscape',

in that it denotes climate as well as topography – was not so strictly gendered. In writing, the tropics were *raced* and it was this characteristic, independent of gender, that was construed as a threat to the maintenance of colonial identities: as an anxiety rather than a source of titillation.

The reasons for these differentiated meanings are grounded in the peculiarities of each genre of representation, as well as in a crucial historical shift in imperial ideology that characterised the late colonial period. In the Dutch East Indies, the dangers of racial miscegenation gained scientific currency through the rise of eugenic discourses during the late nineteenth century.⁵ Intimate relationships between European men and Asian women were increasingly subject to official censure. Colonial anxieties about being (and remaining) European in a tropical context gained an outlet in colonial fiction, the proliferation of which had begun in the same period. It is no surprise, then, that race dominated writers' concerns on all subjects colonial. Further, writers in the Indies had established a tradition of social criticism and of excavating controversies that were buried in the foundations of Dutch colonial society.⁶ Where painters and photographers were generically limited to describing topography,⁷ writers were able to explicate more complex notions of environment, like climate and seasons, which were difficult to render visually. These intangible aspects of nature were of enduring concern to Europeans in the tropics, and are all but absent in visual representations of landscape. Visual images, then, were prone to description, and commonly positioned the image-maker/viewer as observer. Literature, on the other hand, fashioned analytical associations and positioned the writer/reader as a participant in broader contexts, like 'nature'. It is not coincidental that colonial literature provides the clearest sense of the European 'fear of engulfment' in the tropics that McClintock has identified.

For painters and photographers, it was not as though race was an unimportant association in marking tropical landscapes as different from those of the Netherlands: it was an *Asian* femininity that was linked to representations of Indies landscape. However, the strongest expression of a female-gendered association was found in colonial paintings. Indeed, throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, painters in the Indies were consistently prone to idealisation. They produced unproblematised images of colonised landscapes that were remarkably repetitive in their portrayal of exoticism devoid of danger.⁸ Asian women and Asian landscapes alike were viewed as though from afar, from the leisurely distance afforded by an imagination conducting work that required no subject to be physically present. In photography, as will be demonstrated, subjects were not so uniformly constrained by the imaginative limits of the colonial observer – indeed, the subject often behaved in unexpected ways, particularly after the candid photograph was enabled by the invention of the hand-held camera in the late nineteenth century. In colonial photography, the heterosexual connection between male European viewer, tropical landscapes and Asian femininity was sometimes diluted by other concerns, including homoerotic attractions. As the nineteenth century progressed, then, it was largely painters who adhered most faithfully to a vision of a feminised porno-tropics.

In focusing on landscape and nature as sources of racial and gender anxiety in Dutch colonial culture, this paper diverts attention away from the study of private lives and sexual intimacy in *domestic* spaces that has dominated recent scholarship on Dutch colonial society and advocates a re-evaluation of the neglected issue of associations between sexuality and public, *outdoor* spaces in colonial culture.⁹

A tropical test case: the Dutch East Indies

The Dutch East Indies (now the Republic of Indonesia) was a colony of islands subject to formal Dutch rule from 1816 to 1950. The violent interruption of the Japanese occupation between 1942 and 1945 signalled the beginning of the end of Dutch control over the region.¹⁰ It is impossible and unnecessary to trace here all the political, social and economic changes that punctuated this long colonial century: a very brief outline of the most important developments for the purposes of this paper will have to suffice.

Colonial rule of the Dutch East Indies was characterised by significant expansion from the historical base of Dutch power on Java to the 'Outer Islands'; from coastal entrepôts to hinterlands; from mercantile extraction to large-scale agri-business. Technological advances facilitated this expansion. In 1839, photography was invented, dispensing with the draughtsman's monopoly on mapping and image-making, extending the arms of both art and the state. Thirty years later, the Suez Canal was opened and traffic by steamship between Europe and Asia increased in speed and volume, with important consequences for the politics and demography of the colony. By the late nineteenth century, Dutch society in the Indies had transformed from a largely male enclave with strong links to indigenous communities through concubinage and inter-marriage to one characterised by increasing distance between Europeans and Asians, coinciding with a growing influx of European women. In this respect the Dutch followed the example pursued by British colonists in South Asia, which was impressed on the Indies in a brief but enduring blueprint left by the British Governor-General, Thomas Stamford Raffles, during an administrative interregnum in the early nineteenth century.¹¹ By the close of this century, European women were being counselled by popular guidebooks, policy-makers and public opinion to assume roles that distinguished them, by race and by class, from the indigenous women who had formerly provided the sole female contact for male Dutch colonists – and who, as it turned out, they continued to marry, cohabit and have children with, to increasing official censure. Legislative, medical and social policing of boundaries between Europeans and Natives was grounded on colonial fears about the debilitating effects of 'miscegenation' on Dutch identities, bodies and the body politic.¹²

The Dutch East Indies was a vast empire characterised more by heterogeneity than uniformity, so selectivity in choosing sources for this study has been necessary. The Javanese, Balinese and East Sumatran contexts are most relevant here because their landscapes attracted the artistic attention of Europeans in large numbers. Dutch settlement on Java began in earnest in 1617 with the establishment of Batavia on the foundations of a pre-existing Asian port whose original appellation, 'Jayakarta', resonates in its contemporary name (Jakarta).¹³ The epicentre of colonial culture was on Java, where the highest concentration of Europeans was consistently found, mainly in urban areas, and where the centre of administrative gravity rested. It was here that the largest number of colonial images of the Indies was generated – until, that is, Europeans 'discovered' Bali.

It is one of the ironies of history that some of the most famous and idyllic images of the Dutch East Indies originate from Bali, whose integration into the Dutch colonial state was punctuated by violence. Bali was brought into the expanding sphere of the Java-centric colonial state relatively late, in a period of brutal conquest between 1906

and 1908. It was surrendered only three decades later during the Japanese occupation that signalled the death knell of the Dutch empire. During that relatively brief period, Bali attracted an inordinate amount of attention from colonial officials and western scholars as a cultural and historical exception par excellence. The colonial state zealously protected and nurtured the Hindu practices that distinguished Bali from its Islamic neighbours in the region, who were increasingly associated with rebellion in European minds during the late colonial period.¹⁴ Artists and scholars too saw Balinese customs as worthy of preservation, largely because they figured in the western imagination as anachronistic: living cultural antiques that were best consumed by connoisseurs before the doom of extinction befell them.¹⁵

Sumatra also makes a brief appearance in this paper, as a 'wild' frontier where colonial identities were challenged and placed in great anxiety over bodily and psychological safety. Sumatra, like Bali, was colonised late. From the 1870s onwards, its eastern parts were transformed into a patchwork of commercial plantations that fed the growing western appetite for consumer goods and industrial materials like tea and rubber. Its urban European centre was in Medan, but a satellite system of small, isolated colonial communities, surrounded by wilderness and immersed in Asian populations (imported Chinese and Javanese coolies, and diverse local ethnic groups), were a more common feature of the countryside.¹⁶ The contrasting geo-historical contexts of Java, Bali and Sumatra each nourished unique observations among their European populations, but all were united by a strong association between landscape and nature with gender and race.

This association is not unique to Dutch colonial culture in the Dutch East Indies. The sultry climate and vegetative exuberance of the tropics quickly passed in historical European judgement from admiration for the region's ability to support a diversity of life to sustained ambivalence over the possibility of advanced civilisation springing from tropical soils.¹⁷ This ambivalence was often located in European anxieties about their own ability to survive in the tropics. Illnesses like malaria, poorly understood before the late nineteenth century, occasionally threatened to decimate Europeans in the tropics.¹⁸ Even in the late colonial period, when tropical medicine had made some advances, colonists continued to subscribe to the health benefits of an environment more similar to Europe: hence the widespread popularity of mountain resorts and hill stations throughout the colonial tropics.¹⁹ Fears about the tropical onslaught against colonial bodies had their counterparts in anxieties over the effect of the climate on European morals, particularly sexual mores. Here ambivalence once again framed a variety of colonial attitudes. On the one hand, the tropics were celebrated by European men as a locale rife with erotic opportunity, peopled by naked goddesses in primal tune with 'nature' (both environmental and human). The same libertine atmosphere was, however, routinely credited with the erosion of the bourgeois morals that were so carefully constructed and maintained, both in Europe and in the colonies, around the control of sexuality.²⁰

And so we return to the problematic terrain of the porno-tropics, and the role of gender in defining European notions of expansion through tropical landscapes. The following section argues that, at first *glance* (where the intimation of 'looking' is not an accidental one), Asian femininity, landscape and sensuality were intimately connected in colonial visions of the Indies.

Gendered visions: race, class and erotic opportunity in colonial painting and photography

In the Dutch East Indies, as elsewhere in the colonial world, photography proliferated quite soon after its invention. Initially, photographers functioned in similar ways to draughtsmen: as specialised, technically-trained adjuncts to scholarly, scientific and military expeditions. The first use for photography in the Indies, in fact, was in association with an archaeological project in 1840.²¹ It was also employed as a form of visual reportage in the service of government, business and science, and in the founding of new western scholarly disciplines during the late nineteenth century, notably anthropology and ethnography.²² As postcards and items in souvenir albums, photographs were also an important commodity associated with the growth of imperial tourism.²³ Studios servicing European and Asian clients proliferated throughout the archipelago from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. Many, like the famous Woodbury and Page studio, produced commissioned portraits as well as popular views of colonial cities and sites of leisure in highland retreats.²⁴ By the end of the nineteenth century, the invention of the hand-held camera had made everyone a potential photographer. Photographs appeared as illustrations in books, as well as in private, family-owned photo albums.²⁵

Women, differentiated by race and class, were frequently seen through the lens of European photographers. The most prestigious group of these to people Indies landscapes were Dutch, who were commonly portrayed in roles that emphasised their higher status relative to most native women *and* their subordination to European men. The privileges of leisure and mobility were among the most salient aspects of advantage that European status bestowed upon Dutch women in the Indies. Photographs from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries show Dutch women as automobile and train passengers, cyclists and ocean travellers, as well as participants in pleasure excursions to tourist spots like beaches, waterfalls and mountain resorts.²⁶ Such images showed Dutch women taking advantage of the new transport and communications technologies of the late nineteenth century, and indicated that these women were free to move through (and beyond) colonial landscapes in ways that few other classes of Indies women were able to pursue.

Upon closer inspection, however, late colonial photographs also suggest that the movements of Dutch women were determined by the strictures of respectability. Women travellers were usually shown accompanied by men, particularly on long journeys or through dangerous regions.²⁷ European men, on the other hand, appeared in photographs in various intrepid, exclusively male manifestations – as explorers, scientists and hunters, for example – that emphasised their authoritative freedom within Indies landscapes.²⁸ Photographs from the late colonial period suggest that even though Dutch women were able to travel further and more frequently through Indies landscapes than the majority of their Asian counterparts, the most familiar places to them remained those seen from their veranda or garden. This was where Dutch women were most often photographed, usually with their family and servants around them. A photograph of the De Vries family, taken on the threshold of the family home, provides a representative example (Figure 1).

The dominant colonial image of European women, then, was as inhabitants of highly localised landscapes and guardians of domestic spaces. Ann Laura Stoler's work on race, sex and class in the Dutch East Indies shows that European women occupied



Figure 1: ‘The De Vries Family, Batavia’, c.1915 (KITLV Leiden, Netherlands, No. 13287; Album 247).

subordinate positions in colonial society; that they (together with European children) were under more or less constant surveillance, even in the home; and that their segregation from indigenous women was upheld wherever possible (except, importantly, in the home, where they relied on Asian servants).²⁹ The position of Dutch women

in Indies landscapes was therefore a reflection of their place in elite colonial society: as veranda-dwelling family women, privileged but confined to socially reproductive, 'inside' roles.

Dutch women shared this in common with their elite Javanese counterparts, who were sometimes portrayed from the late nineteenth century onwards in portraits that emphasised their function as progenitors of aristocratic dynasties. In such photographs, women might be grouped with the children and grandchildren of royal houses.³⁰ Since commissioned photographs were still costly, notable Asian women who sat for such portraits were also signalling their membership of an affluent social class that considered itself a patron of the arts, and educated in technological developments like photography.³¹ Indeed, photo-portraits of elite Javanese women often communicated the authority and respect that they commanded.³² The fine costumes, dignified postures and regal glare with which many of these women returned the camera's gaze suggest that they were as determined to have their rank and power commemorated as their male counterparts, both Asian and European. In one such photo, the wife of a Javanese district head (regent) is shown presiding over a large retinue of female retainers seated on stairs beneath her. Showing her elevated rank, she monopolises the only chair, placed in the middle of the group. Some of her servants have their eyes lowered but she returns the camera's gaze. Her hair is dressed and her collar is hung with necklaces; her hands rest splayed in her lap, the better to present all her rings.³³

Significantly, high-ranking Javanese women were rarely photographed out of doors. They were associated instead with the civilised, domestic space that behoved their aristocratic status. Indeed, as upper-class Muslims they would not have been encouraged to venture far beyond the confines of their domestic quarters without an escort. Women formed an important component of official processions and special occasions in royal courts, but it would have been considered beneath them to be seen unaccompanied on public modes of transport like trains or trams.³⁴

Elite Javanese women, then, were perhaps even more distantly associated with Indies landscapes in colonial minds than Dutch women were. Indeed, colonial photographs suggest that it was ordinary indigenous women from the lower classes who left their mark on Dutch images of Indies landscapes, for the outdoors was the domain of commoner (particularly rural) women who had to work in order to provide for themselves and their families.³⁵ Commoner women laboured in rice fields and on plantations, commanded market stalls, and jostled on streets and river banks. Like their male counterparts, commoner women were also the subject of photographic explorations into 'ethnic types' that blurred the boundaries between scholarly anthropology and souvenir tourism.³⁶

The 'othering' of native women among colonial policy-makers, as Elsbeth Locher-Scholten has cogently argued, occurred more with reference to rural women than to any other class of Indonesian.³⁷ In the sphere of visual culture, lower-class Javanese women were also marked out in ways that distinguished them from women of higher status. Unlike both European and Asian elite women, and distinct from their male fellows, commoner women were more often subject to the probing gaze of photographers and painters in pursuit of erotic images. This is also true for lower-class and rural Muslim women in other colonial contexts.³⁸ In the Indies, pornographic photographs of native women (usually prostitutes) were intended for the consumption of male European clients who purchased such images, often discretely concealed within a paper sheath, as

components of souvenir albums.³⁹ Some of these images suggest that photographers did not always rely upon the enthusiastic consent of the models they chose. The expressions of indifference, fear and aversion that mark their faces are among the most striking features of such pictures, although some others show women with cheeky, if not defiant, expressions.⁴⁰ The simple intent of these photographs, most of them taken indoors or in confined spaces, is suggested by the fact that few accoutrements competed for attention with the models themselves. Surroundings were often starkly propless, emphasising the complete focus of the camera on the figure.⁴¹

Rarely did photographers explore the painterly inclination, investigated below, to obscure bald titillation at the sight of nude native women with scholarly references to classicism. It may be that practical issues – a reluctant model, the fear of interruption or discovery – prevented them from experimenting much with symbolic associations. An exception, perhaps, presents itself in the photographic work of Walter Spies (who was more commonly known for his paintings) on Bali, undertaken during the 1930s in collaboration with Beryl de Zoete, an eccentric and talented dance specialist and scholar. Spies (1895–1942) took a candid but artful approach to his nude subjects. His three Balinese women bathing were photographed discreetly from above so that only their bare top halves could be seen, while their nether regions remained modestly obscured beneath the water.⁴² Spies was less discreet in an accompanying image of boys bathing on the other side of the pool (Figure 2). The youths were photographed at eye level and completely naked, providing a striking example of homoeroticism in

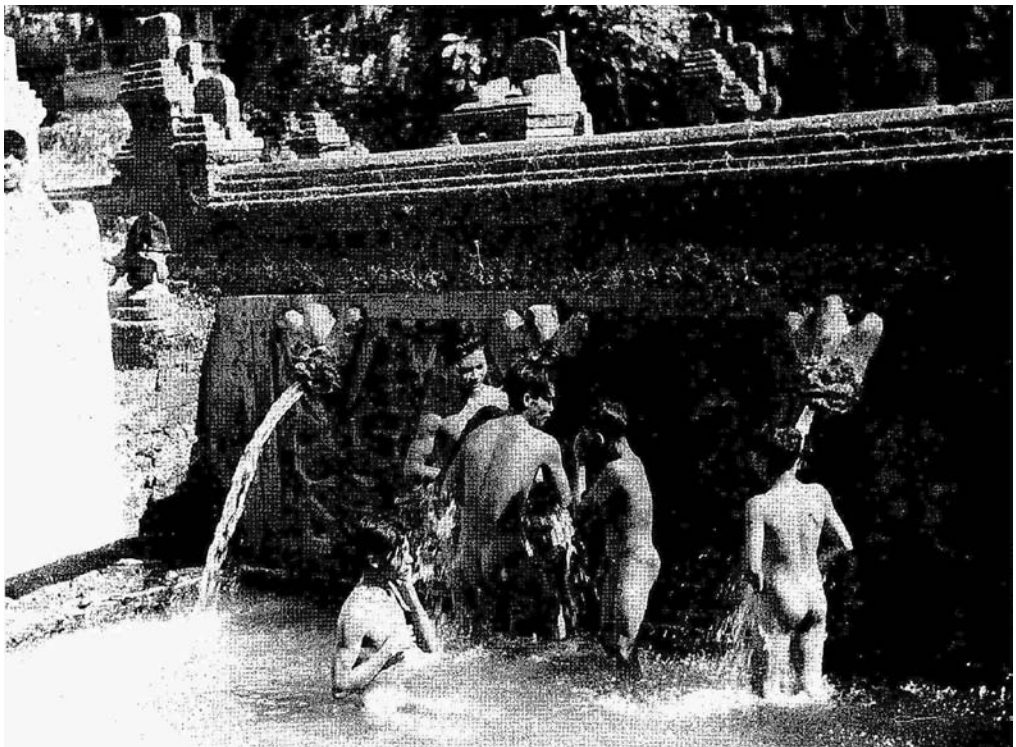


Figure 2: Walter Spies, 'Balinese Boys Bathing', 1930s (Courtesy Horniman Museum, London).

colonial imagery. Indeed, Spies's sexual preferences were well known on Bali and resulted in his arrest on charges of paedophilia in 1938.⁴³ Even in his photographs, however, Spies was unable to curb his artistic inclinations. Figure 2 shows an assistant standing by with a white sheet to control the distribution of light, a concern that often manifested in Spies's dramatic use of light in his paintings.⁴⁴

Earlier photographic work on Bali illustrates more overt interest in bathing customs. Gregor Krause's *Bali: Volk, Land, Tänze, Feste, Tempel* documented two years' worth of observations during his employment at a hospital in Bangli, Central Bali. It was widely read by other westerners who later ventured to Bali, and contains some thirty pages of bathing nudes, men and women, washing alone or in groups segregated by sex.⁴⁵ Krause (1883–1960) used a hand-held camera to impose himself on lone bathers who sometimes bared their whole bodies and at other times seemed to seek a limit to the photographer's intrusions by twisting their bodies away from him or covering themselves. Indeed, a telling insight into his subjects' expectation of privacy is provided by Krause's group portraits. In every such instance, wherever a figure, male or female, is turned towards the prying lens on the perimeter of the group, a hand is employed to cover the genitals: hands that are absent from bodies *within* the group that face each other.⁴⁶ Krause's subjects seem therefore to have pursued means to guard against his presence, giving the lie to his claim that his intention in taking such photographs was to document the 'undisturbed' lives of the Balinese 'without their noticing'.⁴⁷

It may be one of the defining features of colonial photography from the Indies, as distinct from that of the classical Orient (the Middle East and North Africa delineated by Edward Said), that the tropical context lent itself more readily to homoerotic voyeurism.⁴⁸ Certainly, lesbianism was a recurring fantasy in photographs from French Algeria, as well as in late nineteenth-century harem paintings, but male homosexual fantasy rarely found direct expression in visual media. On the other hand, there were many literary references to male homosexuality in the French colonies, from North Africa through to Indochina.⁴⁹ In the Dutch East Indies, the reverse was perhaps true. With the possible exception of Louis Couperus's *The Hidden Force* (1900), explicated so well by Robert Aldrich, few instances of homoerotic themes in Dutch colonial literature are readily apparent (although homosociality was clearly a strong feature of Dutch colonial culture).⁵⁰ On the other hand, there is evidence that homoerotic opportunities were sometimes pursued through visual media. As the photographs of Spies and Krause (both of whom were German) suggest, Bali may well have constituted an exception in the colony: for the opportunity that was afforded artists who were attracted to the beauty of men (or, as was more often the case, boys). The painter Rudolph Bonnet provides a Dutch example. Many of his works dwelt on the beauty of Balinese boys. Bonnet, like Spies, was homosexual, although he eluded the fate of imprisonment (and untimely death) that befell Spies. Indeed, Bonnet remained a leading figure on the Ubud (in south-central Bali) arts scene until his death in 1978.⁵¹

It was the immediacy of the colonial photographer's presence in the image-making process that heightened the sense of voyeurism implicit in some representations of female and male bodies in Indies landscapes. Photographers physically intruded into private and public spaces; they elicited responses from their subjects that demonstrated how invasive their camera-pointing could be. Images of Asians washing and bathing in streams and river shallows frequently illustrated this point. One photograph of women bathing in the Molenvliet, a major canal in Batavia, shows how the camera was able to



Figure 3: Photographer unknown, 'Women Bathing at a River', c.1910 (Tropenmuseum, Amsterdam, No. 10006748/613.41 N20).

'capture' an image of women going about their business washing clothes, some partly submerged, others squatting on the canal's banks, perhaps oblivious to the intrusion that was about to be visited upon them because the photographer was hovering over them from a height rather than confronting them directly.⁵² The photograph was taken from an elevated and slightly askew perspective, quite close and cropped, which gives the impression of a hurriedly aimed apparatus thrust into a throng of women. A similar photograph taken around 1910 shows the startled and slightly angry expressions on the faces of the women interrupted at their task (Figure 3).

Dutch visitors to the Indies frequently expressed their fascination upon observing what was considered in Europe to be a private affair conducted indoors and away from public view. The Dutch writer Augusta de Wit held that 'one of the most fascinating scenes is that of the bath in the river, soon after sunrise'.⁵³ De Wit observed that such practices among the 'Malays' (as she uniformly – and erroneously – referred to the Asians of Batavia) might seem 'strange to us Northerners', but that it was perfectly natural for natives 'to live in this manner'.⁵⁴ Indeed, De Wit could barely refrain from partaking in the colonial penchant for voyeurism. She included in her book a photograph of 'A laundry in the river', showing three partly submerged women glancing warily at the photographer,⁵⁵ and made the following admiring comment on the young girls whom she observed 'making believe to bathe, as they empty little buckets made of palm leaf over each other's head and shoulders, until their black hair shines, and the

running water draws their garments into flowers, clinging folds, that mould their lithe little figures from bosom to ankle'.⁵⁶ That indigenous women bathed in public clearly seemed, to some Europeans, to invite observation. Indeed, the tone of vicariousness that pervades many colonial images of bathing men and women suggests that titillation was a crucial part of the experience of looking. Little consideration seems to have been given to the fact that indigenous bathers may have retained a certain expectation of privacy from one another and from bystanders *because* they bathed in the open.

Photographers were not the only observers who stopped to watch native men and women bathing publicly. Painters were equally captivated by the subject. Indeed, this preoccupation represented one of the most distinctive associations between native *women* and Indies landscapes in colonial art. Many Indies painters were dilettantes, who worked for their own pleasure and perhaps that of their acquaintances, for there was no art market to speak of in the Indies and few institutions that encouraged painting. The Batavian Society of the Arts and Sciences (*Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen*), founded in 1778, was oriented towards the science end of the spectrum. It was not until the early twentieth century that *kunstkringen* (art circles), composed of mainly European enthusiasts, began to emerge in large colonial cities.⁵⁷ Before then, Europeans with an inclination for painting were usually employed in full-time occupations like planting, administration, trade, or in military professions. It was not until the twentieth century – when permits to enter the Indies were given more freely, and improvements to transport and communications facilitated a growth in travel and tourism – that significant numbers of Europeans were able to travel to the Indies to pursue artistic or intellectual pursuits.

Thematically and stylistically, European painters in the Indies produced a remarkably cohesive body of work in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Whether they were working in 1824 or 1924, Indies painters were frequently given to idealise colonial landscapes and the indigenous women who populated them. Painterly images of bathing scenes were more deliberately constructed, consciously artful representations than those of their photographer counterparts. Painters did not need physically to intrude (at least, not for long) on their subject's awareness in order to create images. They had the luxury of composing at their own leisure, from imagination or surreptitious observation. It is perhaps no coincidence that paintings of Indies women bathing were often viewed as though from a distance.⁵⁸ Painters rarely explored the awkward moments of bathing. Clumsy scrubbing and convoluted postures were absent from their work. Instead, figures were usually shown in leisurely, graceful poses that flattered and accentuated the figure. Painters also tended to intersperse their images with classical references that dignified their voyeurism and indulged the notion of communion between native women and Indies landscapes.

Abraham Salm's *De Badplaats Wenditt* (The Bathing Spot at Wenditt) serves to illustrate (Figure 4). Salm (1801–1876) was a planter and administrator on Java who, like many of his Dutch countrymen in the nineteenth century, painted idyllic landscapes in his leisure time.⁵⁹ His conservative inclinations prevented him from depicting naked women without embellishing their image with the standard tools of nineteenth-century official art – hence Salm's improbable predilection, in this instance, for Grecian robes and academic poses.⁶⁰ The painting, situated at a popular lakeside resort near Malang in East Java, includes a curious melange of tropical and classical markers. Palm trees and thatched huts crowd the banks of a lake that is littered with Asian women in various

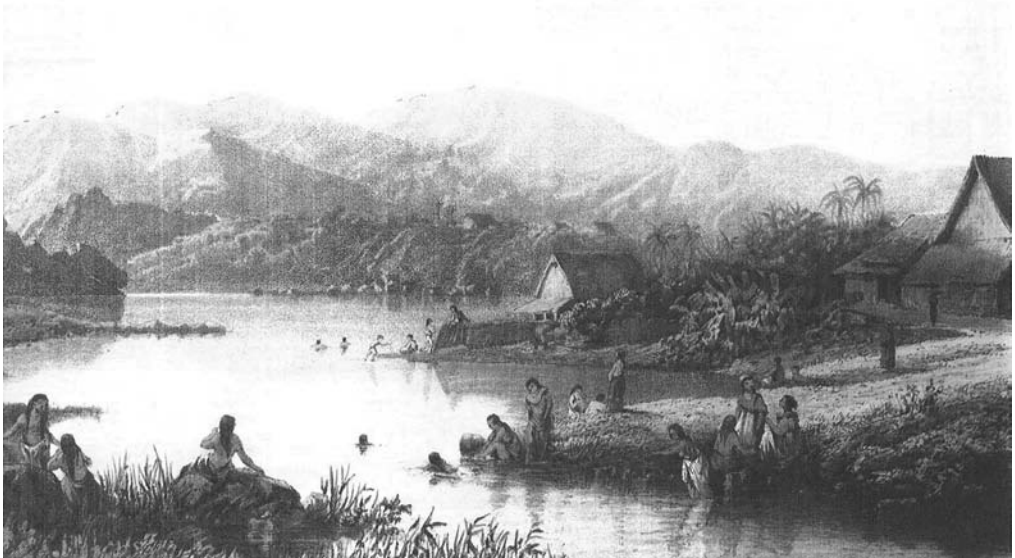


Figure 4: Abraham Salm; lithograph by J. C. Greive, 'The Bathing Spot at Wenditt' in *Java naar schilderijen en tekeningen van A. Salm; op steen gebracht door J. C. Greive*, nineteenth century (Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales, Australia).

states of undress, some in flowing robes and contrived postures that would perhaps have been better suited to an Italianate pastoral landscape.⁶¹

The prudery of nineteenth-century amateur artists on Java was replaced on Bali in the early twentieth century with the unfettered bohemian fantasies of professional artists. The latter freely indulged a partiality for images of bare-breasted Balinese women that gripped many European observers in the 1920s and 1930s.⁶² It was here that colonial painting distinguished itself, for the first time in Indies history, as a relatively lucrative venture. The artists who travelled to and settled on Bali were a new breed of tourist, often from wealthy families, who turned their backs on the functional role that painters had once occupied in the Indies, and began to make art for art's sake. In the first half of the nineteenth century, painters had been employed as draughtsmen to accompany expeditions and supplement government records. The artists participating in the government-sponsored peregrinations of C. J. C. Reinwardt, who toured the Indies in the 1820s, were of this ilk. Antoine Payen, Jan Bik, and the other painters who accompanied these expeditions may well have been lauded for their technical skill and deftness at evoking picturesque ideals: ultimately, however, they were commissioned to document topography, not to create pretty paintings for their own sake. The hand-drawn descriptions of landscape that were produced in this era were made all but obsolete by the invention of photography. Thereafter, in the Indies as in Europe, painters had to come to terms with what the future function of their art would be if it were not to capture a likeness. In the Indies, unlike in Europe, naturalism and realism prevailed until the end of the colonial period, eschewing (with a few exceptions) modernist and abstract experiments.⁶³ Painting developed into a nostalgic art form than defined itself as a vehicle for idealisation.



Figure 5: C. J. Taillie, 'Ni Pollok in the Garden', 29.03.1949 (Tropenmuseum, Amsterdam, No. 10028528).

On Bali, perhaps the most prolific producer of idyllic scenes was Adrien Jean Le Mayeur de Merprès (1880–1958), the Belgian artist based at Sanur beach whose beautiful wife, a Balinese dancer named Ni Pollok, frequently served as his artistic inspiration.⁶⁴ Le Mayeur is today perhaps not among the best known of the Bali artists, possibly because he rarely mixed with the more famous painters of Ubud. To his credit, however, and in contradistinction to most other Bali artists, Le Mayeur's paintings were studies in movement and vibrant colour: his figures, glimpsed enticingly through a veil of riotous vegetation, seem always to be in mid-motion. These figures were always women, often bare-breasted or completely naked and positioned around or within a pool, or in his garden. Ni Pollok often acted as the inspiration for such paintings, as well as numerous photographs (Figure 5). The exotic cluster of scantily-clad women gambolling among pools and flowers was Le Mayeur's domestic life and also his fantasy, for it excluded everything beyond his garden wall, such as more diverse kinds

of Balinese women (and Balinese men, who are invisible in his work), not to mention economic hardship and war. Le Mayeur lived at Sanur during the 1930s depression and the Japanese invasion of the Indies a decade later, yet steadfastly worked at his idyllic, semi-erotic images throughout these periods, even when his supply of paints ran out.⁶⁵

Some indigenous artists took exception to such privileged fantasies. In general, landscape paintings from the Indies were renowned for their idealised formulation of cliché ingredients: the smoking volcano, palm trees and undulating rice fields, perhaps with a tiny peasant figure or two and a traditional thatch-roofed village. By the 1930s, in the context of a growing indigenous nationalist movement against colonial rule, politically aware Indonesian artists like S. Sudjojono were labelling such images pejoratively as *mooi Indië* ('beautiful Indies') scenes. Colonial painters omitted state intervention in Indies landscapes from their work, romanticised the lives of the rural poor and edited conflict and resistance out of their canvases. In the Netherlands and at international colonial exhibitions, such paintings found a ready audience. The work of artists like Sudjojono did not, concerned as he was to ground his painting in some appreciation of the daily life and hardship of the ordinary person living under colonial rule. Sudjojono particularly objected to the portrayal of women in colonial art. In 1939, he exhorted Indonesians to reject such depictions of their country that reduced its complexities to idyllic landscapes featuring 'half-naked women'.⁶⁶

The eroticisation of indigenous women at the hands of colonial artists was, of course, not restricted to those Europeans painting in the Dutch East Indies. French and British Orientalists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries made an art form, quite literally, of projecting their own fantasies of the exotic and the sensual onto the women of the Middle East and North Africa. It is important to distinguish between these artistic practices, however, and the qualitatively different themes that inspired European painters in the Indies. While both groups of artists employed voyeuristic perspectives in their works, the Indies artists much preferred to spy on their subjects outdoors and explicitly associated tropical nature with female sensuality. The Orientalists commonly located their erotic fantasies indoors, with deference to the fact that women in the Middle East and North Africa were more often obscured from western view – both by their clothing and through the segregation of public and private spaces – than Indonesian women of the same period were likely to be. In the British and French colonies, this was particularly true of women from elite Muslim households living in urban areas.⁶⁷ Peasant women were depicted rather more freely, in keeping with their more public and instrumental role in the rural economy and with regional differences in sartorial practice, including the fact that rural women were less likely than urban ones to wear Islamic head coverings.⁶⁸ The harem fancies of Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (1780–1867), on the other hand, imagined the interiors of wealthy houses and fetishised barriers behind which 'men reigned supreme, living in a sexual paradise'.⁶⁹ Ingres's painted fantasies were viewed through doors and even keyhole frames (Figure 6), the object being to reveal – at least with the mind's eye – the enticing rooms that were, in reality, concealed from most European men.⁷⁰ The domestic interior of urban elites, then, was the specific site of the Orientalist fetish north of the tropics.

In the Dutch East Indies, Muslim women were only beginning to cover more parts of their body from the second half of the nineteenth century onwards, and the *jilbab* or headscarf was rarely seen in photographs before the twentieth century.⁷¹ On Hindu Bali,



Figure 6: Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, *The Turkish Bath*, 1862 (Musée du Louvre, Paris).

women indeed went about bare-breasted at the onset of Dutch rule, but not for long. Within decades of the final subjugation of the island in 1906–8, European mores had begun to prevail and a clothed torso became respectable attire for Balinese women.⁷² The climate of the tropics perhaps encouraged an outdoor existence that was less possible for people of the Orient.⁷³ Certainly, Indonesian buildings, including mosques, are generally more open to the elements: the *pendopo* (pavilion) structure is apparent throughout the archipelago.⁷⁴ European artists in the Indies, then, encountered very different landscapes and contexts in which to imagine indigenous women compared to their French and British counterparts in the Orient. In the Indies, it was nature that seemed to conjure erotic opportunity in the minds of European artists, and the tropical landscape rather than the private interior that was most strongly associated with sensuality.

The frequent European observation of public bathing among the indigenous people of the Dutch East Indies confirmed widespread colonial views that native women

lived in closer connection with nature and were more overtly sexual in their inclinations than their Dutch counterparts.⁷⁵ Late nineteenth-century European thought commonly positioned women closer to nature because of their susceptibility to biological rhythms.⁷⁶ Certainly, it was widely held in the Indies that European women suffered from the heat and humidity more than their male counterparts. In the 1930s novel *Rubber*, by Madelon Lulofs (1899–1958), a young Dutchwoman's arrival in Sumatra direct from the Netherlands elicits wistful admiration from the men on the plantation, who expect her beauty and vitality to fade eventually in the punishing climate.⁷⁷ Permanent and uncharacteristic indolence or general apathy, particularly after a Dutch woman's first pregnancy, were further deleterious effects believed to follow from long exposure to the tropics.⁷⁸ Such conceptions of how Dutch women fared in Indies landscapes emphasised their desexualisation upon immersion in the tropics. The sexuality of indigenous women, on the other hand, was believed to be heightened by their environment.⁷⁹ Dutch colonists considered native women in general to be sexually precocious compared to their European counterparts.⁸⁰ Practices like polygamy among wealthy Muslims, together with concubinage and prostitution around male enclaves, further undermined bourgeois European opinions of sexual morals in the Indies.⁸¹

'Rac(e)y' literature: sensuality, gender-neutrality and the primacy of race in colonial writing

Taken on their own, visual media like paintings and photographs appear to suggest a colonial discourse of nature and landscape that is gendered female and classed in a manner that left European women and Javanese elites out of male Dutch fantasies about the erotic opportunities to be encountered in the tropics. However, once colonial literature is taken into account, race enters more strongly into the mix, even to the point of effacing the rhetorical power of gender. Readers of Dutch were a small and cosmopolitan audience, scattered throughout the Netherlands, Europe and America. In the Indies themselves, colonial novels reached a relatively small population as there were only around 360,000 readers of Dutch by 1930.⁸² However, the material for these books was often grounded in evaluations of 'real' life and moral dilemmas in the colonies, and it is for this reason that they comprise a valuable historical source. Colonial writing also constitutes interesting material for evaluating the construction of colonial memory in a post-colonial context. Many Dutch writers who had lived in the Indies continued to write about their memories and experiences after decolonisation, as though this political rupture had never happened. 'Colonial' writing from the Indies therefore persists after 1950, its content remarkably consistent with the novels that were published before Indonesian independence.

Of the necessarily small sample of writers mentioned here – Louis Couperus, Madelon Lulofs and Vincent Mahieu – it is only Lulofs (significantly, a woman writer) whose perspicacious treatment of colonial sexuality and tropical nature concurs with the image propagated in visual culture of a feminised nature corrupting male colonial sexuality. The other writers, men working a generation either side of Lulofs (which hints at a broad historical continuity across the early twentieth century), suggested in their work that it was the ungendered racing of Indies nature as *native*, rather than its designation as *female* and native, that was the most powerful notion underpinning cultural associations between nature and colonial sexuality. Landscape as topography recedes

into the background in such literary discussions, and nature in its broadest incarnation as an environment experienced by all the senses assumes primary importance.

In literature, Europeans were susceptible to the general seductiveness of Indies nature at large. Indies landscapes viewed in this light seem to have been racialised – more specifically, construed as native – but remained gender-neutral, in that nature was attributed with seducing European men and women indiscriminately. Not only were European men in danger of being debased by the Asian women whom they allowed into their homes, but European men and women were believed to be corruptible by the landscapes at their doorstep. The threat of seduction, then, was omnipresent, subtle and relentless, and required constant vigilance. In terms of sexual mores, colonial literature from the Dutch East Indies suggests that Europeans seem to have felt conquered by tropical nature. This fear of being overpowered by nature stands in direct contrast to the visions of triumph that routinely figured in colonial postcards and in other photographic images: men in their colonial whites astride feats of European engineering like railway lines and steam engines, suspension bridges and irrigation ducts, and meticulous rows of rubber trees within giant, scientifically managed commercial plantations (worked, of course, by Asians with white male figures looming over them).⁸³ These visual images, which had their counterparts in literature, constructed a view of colonial men penetrating interiors and bring disparate possessions within a single purview.

Madelon Lulofs's work celebrated the colonial conquest of nature, but also explored the theme of seductive landscapes. Lulofs was born in Surabaya, Java, and spent almost the first thirty years of her life in the Indies, often in remote locations where her father carried out his duties as a government official.⁸⁴ She was twice married to planters in Sumatra, the second time in notorious circumstances that involved elopement and abandonment of her first husband in favour of a Hungarian colonist, László Székely, who had a similar penchant for writing to Lulofs.⁸⁵ Her works frequently (and controversially) explored the vagaries of plantation life, often to the detriment of the Europeans whom she described. In the novel *Koelie (Coolie)*, set among the rubber plantations of East Sumatra in the 1920s, a balmy evening becomes the setting for a 'seduction' scene involving a Dutch planter and a young Javanese woman (who happens to be an indentured labourer, and is therefore all but powerless to resist him).⁸⁶ On the one hand, Donk,⁸⁷ the planter, adopts a perversely methodical, even callous approach to his courtship of Karminah, the coolie. He has her brought from the barracks, makes her wait outside his house while he consumes his meal and sips his drink on the veranda, and when he finally calls her in it is only to send her immediately to the bedroom, where she is told to wash and anoint herself with any fragrance that she fancies in order to purge the smell of coconut oil from her hair.⁸⁸ Meanwhile, Donk sinks into a pleasant stupor of expectation where his perception of the dimly lit landscape outside his bungalow plays a determining role in his decision to take a concubine:

How grand and serene the night was here, too majestic almost for love . . . for love of the body. Or . . . precisely for this kind of love that is the same for every higher form of life? Was not perhaps the lowly love of the flesh the only one possible amidst these splendours of the earth?⁸⁹

Lulofs adds that Donk is 'conscious of little else' at this moment. Instead, 'he felt a vague relationship between his physical desire and . . . the stillness of the tropical night.'⁹⁰

In the frosty Netherlands, Donk's musings imply, love and the body are concealed inside and behind closed doors, and complex rules apply as to how men enter into sexual relationships and cohabitation with women. In Sumatra, the seductive landscape authorises what Donk's constrained natal environment has forbidden him – the 'lowly love of the flesh'. Such aspirations remained possible in the tropics, it is implied, because nature here retained its pre-eminence over culture and love was 'the same for every higher form of life'. Were Donk in a European landscape, Lulofs implies, his reason and sense of decorum would no doubt prevail. Instead, the thoughtlessness that Lulofs attributes to his actions represents a regression to his simple, savage, *natural* self in Sumatra's permissive frontier landscapes.

Even more controversial than Lulofs's suggestion that European men would regress in the tropics was Louis Couperus's suggestion thirty years earlier in *The Hidden Force* that European women were equally susceptible to the seductive qualities of Indies landscapes. Couperus (1863–1923) arguably remains one of the best-known authors of Dutch colonial literature. His *Hidden Force* has attracted frequent scholarly analysis,⁹¹ notably for its treatment of racial themes but also, more recently, for the way in which Couperus (who was homosexual) may have inserted musings on sexuality and homosexuality into the text.⁹² A sensual evocation of nature opens the chapter in which Léonie van Oudijck, the Dutch wife of a government official, seduces Addy de Luce, the Eurasian son of local sugar barons. The scene unfolds beneath a 'down of velvet' (that is, nightfall) that obscures the scandalous events.⁹³ Though relations between Europeans and Eurasians were not necessarily always considered scandalous by colonists – as long as the latter were legitimised as Europeans by marriage or official registration – Léonie's affair with Addy represents the last in a series of betrayals of her entire family.⁹⁴ Léonie manages to cuckold her husband *and* her stepson (with whom she is having a quasi-incestuous affair); she also crosses her stepdaughter, who has had her own sights set upon Addy. Significantly, later in the novel Otto van Oudijck reflects upon his wife's shocking behaviour and, rather than attribute blame to a fellow European, concludes that her moral laxity must be due to the prolonged effects of exposure to Indies nature. Van Oudijck locates his wife's poor self-control over her bodily urges in the landscapes outside her door – in 'the soil of the Indies'.⁹⁵

In other fictional texts, Indies nature assumed the power to corrupt European sexual mores in the notable absence of a tempting indigenous human presence of either sex. In a short story by Vincent Mahieu published in 1955, after the Indies had ceased to exist as a colonial space, the author conjured a memory of the powerful sensual lure of a river to a European normally confined to stuffy interiors and respectable behaviours. Mahieu was a pseudonym that the Eurasian writer and activist Jan Boon adopted when writing for Dutch audiences. Boon's other alias was Tjalie Robinson, a pen name that he used in association with his work to preserve 'Indo' (Eurasian or Indies-born) culture in the Indies and, later, in the Netherlands.⁹⁶ Mahieu began publishing his work relatively late in life, after his banishment to the Netherlands in the late 1950s as part of Sukarno's efforts to expunge colonial remnants from the newly independent Indonesia.⁹⁷ By birth and by choice, then, Mahieu inhabited the ambiguous cultural and temporal space between Asian and European cultures in the Indies, a position that provided him with acute insights into the standards and practices of both groups.

Mahieu's 'Vivere Pericolosamente' (Living Dangerously) illustrates a case of sexual corruption through submersion in an Indies landscape – in this instance, the

Ciliwung River that flowed through Batavia. The story subverts the usual colonial association between water and eroticism by revolving around a male European character (rather than a female native) and begins with the tantalising question ‘How many people lead double lives?’⁹⁸ Mahieu suggests that even the most outwardly respectable Europeans in the Indies did, often because they had succumbed to the sensual attractions of nature. In the Batavia that Mahieu’s protagonist, a Dutch official named Barkey, inhabits, the Ciliwung River is associated with all that is *not* Dutch. To him it appears as ‘the symbol of everything in the Indies that was dirty and vulgar’.⁹⁹ Barkey, like his European neighbours, lives on a verge that overlooks the river and never ventures down to its banks – until one hot afternoon, when the rest of European Batavia has settled down within relatively cool interiors for the siesta, and Barkey finds himself unable to sleep. Mahieu mischievously describes to his readers the pedestrian context of Barkey’s life up to this moment: his dull office job, his ‘stout, pleasant wife’, whom he affectionately names his ‘Pompelmoesje’ – in other words, a round, sweet, juicy fruit – ‘since she was so fat’.¹⁰⁰ Barkey is comfortable with these passionless roles, and proud of the respect that he commands in them. And yet, the river abruptly entices him away from his humdrum seclusion: ‘He saw a narrow strip of *kali* [river]. Brown, powerful, irresistible, exciting, colossal. Behind him, he felt the quiet dead things of his home. . . .’¹⁰¹

Gingerly at first and then with increasing abandon Barkey discovers, to his surprise, the sensual pleasures of the grubby river. Its refreshing coolness and perpetual motion provide a rousing alternative to his monotonous, sedentary existence. He surrenders to its swarming life, brimming with fish, plants and refuse, the ‘primitive disorderliness of broken crockery and wild growth’¹⁰² that cluster in its shallows, subverting the domestic tidiness to which he is accustomed. The river’s playful meandering seems to give him license to frolic ‘like a child’¹⁰³ rather than adhere to the dignified adult role that he has cultivated: ‘Playing in the [river] had all the sweetness of what was forbidden and the charm of what was completely private. What office manager swam in the [river]? Not even a clerk third-class.’¹⁰⁴ Barkey also relishes the renewed awareness of his own physicality, taking pride in the strengthening of his body through daily exercise. His voluntary submersion beneath the Ciliwung’s muddy surface becomes a metaphor for his growing disdain for distinctions he once relied upon: ‘The residents of the *kampong* [village] further up the river had become accustomed to the sight of that queer swimming *Blanda* [white person] . . . [He] had become a phenomenon of the [river], like the other people bathing in it, like the floating filth, carcasses and turds’.¹⁰⁵

Predictably, perhaps, disaster eventually strikes. While on expedition one day, Barkey’s outer layer of underwear is tugged free by the river and he is left with only a flimsy remnant of clothing covering his nakedness. He makes for the nearest house on the bank in the hope that some sympathetic servant will run home and fetch him his clothes before his wife awakes and finds him missing. No such luck is visited upon him. Barkey’s first encounter is with Mevrouw Aubrey, a cheeky Dutch widow with a ‘famous naughty laugh’ and sparkling eyes.¹⁰⁶ She teases Barkey about his transparent underpants, torments him by making him wait before sending for his clothes, and befuddles him with a glass of cognac so that he won’t ‘catch cold’ from the river.¹⁰⁷ During his agonising wait in the naughty widow’s bathroom, Barkey catches a glimpse of his newly-acquired, strapping physique in the Mevrouw’s mirror. Then he notices her enticing lingerie (a jarring contrast to the practical undergarments belonging to his

wife), and begins to indulge in private reveries about his flirtatious saviour.¹⁰⁸ When finally he ventures out onto Aubrey's veranda to collect his clothes, he finds her draped suggestively on the divan. The last vestiges of his resolve dissipate: 'He was afraid, and he felt attracted to the object of his fear. *There was in her something like swimming in the [river]*' (my emphasis).¹⁰⁹ Barkey's infidelity is brief and, Mahieu leads us to believe, isolated; but the damage is done, and our (anti-)hero knows it. Upon returning to his house, Barkey seals the back exit leading down to the river, shutting the profligate landscape out forever and confining himself once again to his respectable bourgeois domesticity.

Mahieu's clever and amusing narrative explicitly links the sensual qualities of Indies nature with the sexual transgression of two Europeans. The female party, Mevrouw Aubrey, is notably unruffled by the moral implications of her encounter. Indeed, her seduction of Barkey is a metaphor for the amoral power of Indies landscapes, which encourage indulgence and the entertainment of sensual, if fleeting, pleasures. In Mahieu's tale there is no indigenous mediation in Barkey's demise other than nature itself, which, significantly, is imbued with the seductive qualities that are usually attributed to promiscuous native women or lascivious indigenous men.

We should perhaps add nature and landscape, then, to the body and the home as spaces where Ann Laura Stoler and others have suggested that race, gender and the production of European desires were negotiated.¹¹⁰ Indeed, natural landscapes contained both of these contested sites, unifying bodies and domestic spaces within a larger, specifically indigenous and tropical context.

Conclusions

In the arts and culture of the Dutch East Indies, it was in visual images of landscape that the tropics were most strongly associated with gender: more particularly, with Asian femininity and eroticism, and most obviously in colonial paintings. However, some ambiguity over the importance of gender in organising European notions of tropical sensuality was already hinted at in the homoerotic photographs that were taken on Bali in the 1920s and 1930s. Here, the (almost) invisible European conqueror of the tropics who lurked behind the lens remained male, but his voyeuristic energies were as likely to be homosexual as heterosexual. Further, the equivocal colonial interest in male as well as female Asian bodies laid bare in lush surroundings begins to suggest at the overarching importance of race in sensualising tropical nature. In the nineteenth century, it had been native women who overwhelmingly dominated visual associations between landscape and erotic opportunity. This trope persisted most strongly in painting, the most conservative of Indies art forms. By the early twentieth century, the broad shift towards racial segregation in the Indies was making itself most evident in literature, where dissenting opinions were more readily expressed than in painting or photography. In literature, a nature experienced – felt and smelt – evoked more complex associations that arguably only writing could do justice to: hence the literary theme of an indigenous, sensual (ungendered) tropics that threatened to deracinate European interlopers. Here the politics of violence that underscored colonial imagery of women and nature was bilateral: colonists might try to possess their desired objects (women, landscape) through photography or painting, but in writing, colonists

sometimes confessed to feeling conquered (seduced, defiled) by nature. 'The tropics', then, had a dangerous resonance outside the voyeuristic bounds of visual media. In print, the sensual experience of nature was, so to speak, black and white: it emphasised the opposition between European and Native space, with gender figuring as a secondary complication, if at all.

It would seem, then, particularly in late colonial writing (but also in photography on Bali, where Europeans felt at their most uninhibited), that the eroticisation of native women and their association with Indies landscapes – McClintock's 'porno-tropics' – was only one component of the more general *sensualisation* of nature in the colonial imagination. The 'porno-tropics' might perhaps be better understood as a conceptual landscape that gained currency in certain colonised places at particular historical moments, rather than as a set of associations that held true across the tropics and for all (imperial) time. In the Dutch East Indies, the late colonial shift away from picturing landscapes as gendered and tamed towards portraying nature as raced and dangerous, even as Dutch power was in its final stages of expansion, had its broader counterpart in official attempts to police sexual relations between Asians and Europeans and consolidate colonial control at a time when indigenous nationalism and regional revolt were posing a threat to the empire. Class played a historically important part in determining which Asians were most vulnerable to colonial intrusions. The chastity and moral dignity of upper-class Javanese women was preserved in colonial images, whereas lower-class native women were fair game for probing cameras and fantasising painters. To colonial image-makers, erotic opportunities were captured with impunity, since no apparent violation of private spaces was necessary: native women bathed outdoors, in public, and made their bodies available to the common viewer. In photography especially, the fallacy of this belief was frequently laid bare in acts of subtle defiance against scopical invasion. It was this candid indigenous resistance against objectification, captured in the very moments in which Europeans sought to forge an association between nature and native sexuality, that distinguished Dutch colonial art from its Orientalist counterparts.

Notes

I would like to thank the editors of *Gender & History* and two anonymous readers for suggesting improvements to this paper. Thank you also to Professor Raelene Frances, Monash University (Australia) for providing me with the unexpected opportunity to research more widely in this field.

1. Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York and London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 21–2.
2. McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, pp. 24–5.
3. McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, p. 27.
4. McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, p. 28. Emphasis in original.
5. Ann Laura Stoler, 'Making Empire Respectable: The Politics of Race and Sexual Morality in 20th Century Colonial Cultures' in Jan Breman (ed.), *Imperial Monkey Business: Racial Supremacy in Social Darwinist Theory and Colonial Practice* (Amsterdam: Free University Press, 1990), pp. 35–70.
6. In the Dutch East Indies, the invention of the modern colonial protest novel is usually attributed to Multatuli (alias Eduard Douwes Dekker), author of *Max Havelaar* (1860). On Dutch colonial writers see Rob Nieuwenhuys, *Mirror of the Indies: A History of Dutch Colonial Literature* (1972; repr. Singapore: Periplus, 1999); E. M. Beekman (ed.), *Fugitive Dreams: An Anthology of Dutch Colonial Literature* (1988; repr. Singapore: Periplus, 2000).
7. See Svetlana Alpers on the influence of empiricism in seventeenth-century Dutch painting, *The Art of Describing: Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983). I do not

- mean to suggest an unbroken link between seventeenth-century Dutch art and later colonial painting; note, however, that most Dutch painters in the Indies aimed for realism in their portrayal of tropical landscapes and were largely untouched by movements towards abstraction in European art from the late nineteenth century onwards.
8. Susie Protschky, 'Cultivated Tastes: Colonial Art, Nature and Landscape in the Dutch East Indies' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of New South Wales, 2007). Landscape has long been the subject of idealisation in Dutch painting and even the erasure of evidence of modernisation and human intervention: see Ann Jensen Adams, 'Competing Communities in the "Great Bog of Europe": Identity and Seventeenth-Century Dutch Landscape Painting' in W. J. T. Mitchell (ed.), *Landscape and Power* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1994), pp. 35–76.
 9. Ann Laura Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1995), pp. 156–7. See also Ann Laura Stoler, 'A Sentimental Education: Native Servants and the Cultivation of European Children in the Dutch East Indies' in Laurie J. Sears (ed.), *Fantasizing the Feminine in Indonesia* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1996), pp. 71–91, here pp. 73, 77–8. See also Elsbeth Locher-Scholten, 'Colonial Ambivalencies: European Attitudes Towards the Javanese Household (1900–1942)' in Juliette Koning, Marleen Nolten, Janet Rodenburg and Ratna Saptari (eds), *Women and Households in Indonesia: Cultural Notions and Social Patterns* (Richmond: Curzon Press, 2000), p. 31.
 10. Before 1816, the Indies had been administered by a series of rulers who marked the changing fortunes of the Netherlands in Europe: from the agents of the United East Indies Company (Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie, or VOC), who expanded their mercantile empire from the time of the 'Golden Age' in the seventeenth century until the dissolution of the Company during a time of revolution at close of the eighteenth century; to Governor-General Herman Daendels, appointed by the French in 1808 as reward for his participation in a (doomed) partisan Dutch alliance with its revolutionary neighbour; and finally, to Stamford Raffles, steward of the Indies from 1811 to 1816, whose rule marked the victory of Britain over France and its allies in Europe, and the punitive dismantling of the greater Dutch empire stretching from South Africa to the Malay Peninsula. Thereafter, and until the Japanese occupation in 1942, the agents of the Dutch Crown governed over the Netherlands' last colonies. See M. C. Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia Since c. 1200* (3rd ed.) (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 144–5, 147–8. On Daendels see Simon Schama, *Patriots and Liberators: Revolution in the Netherlands 1780–1813* (1977; repr. London: Harper Perennial, 2005), pp. 342–3.
 11. See Jean Gelman Taylor, *The Social World of Batavia: European and Eurasian in Dutch Asia* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983). On the British example in India, see E. M. Collingham, *Imperial Bodies: The Physical Experience of the Raj, c. 1800–1947* (Cambridge: Polity, 2001).
 12. See Ann Laura Stoler, 'Sexual Affronts and Racial Frontiers: European Identities and the Cultural Politics of Exclusion in Colonial Southeast Asia', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 34 (1992), pp. 514–55.
 13. Jean Gelman Taylor, *Indonesia: Peoples and Histories* (New Haven and London: Routledge, 2003), p. 146.
 14. For the Dutch, this was heightened by the war in Aceh (1873–1903). For Europeans generally, the rise of a form of Islamic revivalism in Southeast Asia, with connections to the Arab world, was of regional concern, especially to the British: see Michael L. Laffan, "'A watchful eye": The Meccan Plot of 1881 and Changing Dutch Perceptions of Islam in Indonesia', *Archipel*, 63 (2000), pp. 79–108.
 15. See generally Adrian Vickers, *Bali: A Paradise Created* (Singapore: Periplus, 1989). Numerous European artists on Bali expressed the same view including, to cite one example, Hendrik Paulides, 'Oude en nieuwe kunst op Bali, tegen den achtergrond van het Westen', *Cultureel Indië*, 12 (1940), pp. 169–85.
 16. For histories of European colonisation of Sumatra see Anthony Reid, *An Indonesia Frontier: Acehness and Other Histories of Sumatra* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2005); and Ann Laura Stoler, *Capitalism and Confrontation in Sumatra's Plantation Belt, 1870–1979* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995).
 17. See Victor R. Savage, *Western Impressions of Nature and Landscape in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1984), pp. 24–5, 69, 93–100, 114, 121–2.
 18. See Pieter van der Brug, 'Unhealthy Batavia and the Decline of the VOC in the Eighteenth Century' in Kees van Grijs and Peter J. M. Nas (eds), *Jakarta-Batavia: Sociocultural Essays* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2000), pp. 43–74.
 19. For the Dutch East Indies, see Stoler, 'Making Empire Respectable', pp. 55–6. For the British in India, see Collingham, *Imperial Bodies*, p. 7.
 20. For examples of climate linked to sexuality, see Liesbeth Hesselink, 'Prostitution: A Necessary Evil, Particularly in the Colonies: Views on Prostitution in the Dutch East Indies' in Elsbeth Locher-Scholten

- and Anke Niehof (eds), *Indonesian Women in Focus: Past and Present Notions* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1987), pp. 205–24, here p. 208; Frances Gouda, *Dutch Culture Overseas: Colonial Practice in the Dutch East Indies, 1900–1942* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1995), p. 116; Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire*, pp. 156–7.
21. The project was commissioned by the Minister for the Colonies, and undertaken in Central Java. See Anneke Groeneveld, 'Photography in Aid of Science' in *Toekang Potret: 100 Years of Photography in the Dutch East Indies 1839–1939* (Amsterdam: Fragment, 1989), pp. 15–48, here p. 16. Monuments and landscapes were of similar early interest to photographers in the Middle East: see Sarah Graham-Brown, *Images of Women: The Portrayal of Women in Photography of the Middle East 1860–1950* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), p. 36.
 22. Anne Maxwell, *Colonial Photography and Exhibitions: Representations of the 'Native' and the Making of European Identities* (London and New York: Leicester University Press, 2000), especially Chapter 2, pp. 38–72; Elizabeth Edwards (ed.), *Anthropology and Photography 1860–1920* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992).
 23. See Leo Haks and Steve Wachlin, *Indonesia: 500 Early Postcards* (Singapore: Archipelago Press, 2004), p. 24; Stephen Grant, *Former Points of View: Postcards and Literary Passages from Pre-Independence Indonesia* (Jakarta: Lontar Foundation, 1995).
 24. See Steve Wachlin, *Woodbury & Page, Photographers: Java* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1994). For a list of other photographic studios in the Indies see *Toekang Potret*.
 25. The KIT Fotoburea in Amsterdam, at the Tropenmuseum, holds many samples of such family albums in its archives.
 26. See the photographs in Rob Nieuwenhuys, *Baren en Oudgasten* (Amsterdam: Querido, 1998), pp. 28, 123, 132–4, 136.
 27. Nieuwenhuys, *Baren en Oudgasten*, p. 118.
 28. See Peter Boomgaard and Janneke van Dijk, *Het Indië Boek* (Zwolle: Waanders Uitgevers, 2001), which includes photographs of European men in the following guises: a natural scientist pursuing butterflies in the wild (p. 14); an intrepid-looking J. C. Koningsberger on expedition (p. 17); one Professor Busgen exploring for plants (p. 18); and a hunter who has set his topi on a felled Sumatran elephant (p. 184). There are far fewer, if any, photographs of Dutch colonial women in similar poses and occupations, either in this particular collection or elsewhere.
 29. See Stoler, 'Making Empire Respectable', pp. 35, 45, 48.
 30. Such as a photograph of the mother of Pakubuwono IX with her grandchildren by his multiple wives, in Rob Nieuwenhuys, *Met Vreemde Ogen* (Amsterdam: Querido, 1988), p. 17; and a photograph of the infant Mangkunegoro VIII with his siblings and cousins, and their mothers, p. 55.
 31. Groeneveld, 'Photography in Aid of Science', p. 108; Wachlin, *Woodbury & Page*, p. 13.
 32. Maxwell, *Colonial Photography and Exhibitions*, p. 13.
 33. Nieuwenhuys, *Met Vreemde Ogen*, pp. 90–1. For further images of elite Javanese women see pp. 17–18, 29, 32–3, 35, 38, 41–2, 50–5 and Chapter 6, pp. 93–108.
 34. There are few (if any) images of elite Javanese women on trains. Rudolph Mrázek, in *Engineers of Happy Land: Technology and Nationalism in a Colony* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2002), p. 11, suggests that trains were generally less popular among upper class Javanese.
 35. On Java, rural women tended to work outside the home and to be financially autonomous. They were therefore important to rural households for their labour contribution. Europeans recognised peasant households as units of production, as opposed to upper-class Javanese households, which were associated in colonial minds with social reproduction. Policy-makers tended to differentiate peasant women and their elite counterparts: the former were more likely to be considered as 'other' by Europeans than the latter. See Locher-Scholten, 'Colonial Ambivalencies', pp. 28–44, here pp. 30, 33–4.
 36. See Boomgaard and Van Dijk, *Het Indië Boek*, for good examples of photographic 'ethnic types' who were often asked to pose in a studio surrounded by the accoutrements with which they were associated: Chinese and Javanese street vendors (pp. 92–3); a native teacher, student and servant (p. 175); Minangkabau and Karo Batak women in *adat costuum* (traditional costume) (pp. 236–7); a Dayak in war regalia (p. 344); and a Minahasa 'priest' or holy man (p. 399). Such images also appeared in popular travelogues, such as Augusta de Wit's *Java: Facts and Fancies* (1912; repr. Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1989); see pp. 17, 69, for example. On the use of photography in ethnography and colonial popular culture, see more generally Maxwell, *Colonial Photography and Exhibitions*, pp. 9, 14.
 37. Elsbeth Locher-Scholten, *Women and the Colonial State: Essays on Gender and Modernity in the Dutch East Indies 1900–1942* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2000), p. 29.

38. Graham-Brown, *Images of Women*, pp. 25, 27, 45, 54, 60, 73–5; Malek Alloula, *The Colonial Harem* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), p. 17. Alloula estimates that European portraitists relied on prostitutes to sit for them.
39. Nieuwenhuys, *Baren en Oudgasten*, pp. 109–10; Groeneveld, *Toekang Potret*, p. 87.
40. Nieuwenhuys, *Baren en Oudgasten*, p. 109, pp. 114–15.
41. See images in Nieuwenhuys, *Baren en Oudgasten*, in the chapter entitled ‘Dienaresen van Venus’ (Servants of Venus); see also the image of a Sundanese prostitute in *Toekang Potret*, p. 79.
42. In Michael Hitchcock and Lucy Norris, *Bali: The Imaginary Museum. The Photographs of Walter Spies and Beryl de Zoete* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), plate 83.
43. See Vickers, *Bali: A Paradise Created*, p. 106; and Robert Aldrich, *Homosexuality and Colonialism* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), pp. 163–4.
44. Compare the photographs (plates 83 and 84) in Hitchcock and Norris, *Bali: The Imaginary Museum*, to Spies’s better known paintings, in Hans Rhodius and John Darling, *Walter Spies and Balinese Art* (Amsterdam: Tropical Museum, 1980); and Ruud Spruit, *Artists on Bali* (Amsterdam and Kuala Lumpur: The Pepin Press, 1997).
45. See Gregor Krause, *Bali: Volk, Land, Tänze, Feste, Tempel* (Munich: Georg Müller, 1926), pp. 123–53. On the influence of Krause’s work in attracting other westerners to Bali, see Vickers, *Bali: A Paradise Created*, pp. 99, 114.
46. See Krause, *Bali*, pp. 123, 137, 141, 144, 149, 150, and 153.
47. In the introduction to *Bali*, Krause professed that the aim of the book was ‘as a document of humans living in a manner that, in certain places, continued undisturbed by time’. Further, ‘I undertook these projects with a hand-held camera so that no-one would notice having themselves photographed’: p. ix. Clearly Krause’s endeavours were noticed, and his documentary impulses thereby disrupted the very modes of life that he sought to preserve.
48. See Edward W. Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (1978; repr. London: Penguin, 1995).
49. Louis Couperus, *De Stille Kracht* (The Hidden Force), (1900; repr. Utrecht and Antwerp: L. J. Veen BV, 1982). For an English translation, see Couperus, *The Hidden Force* (London: Quartet Books, 1992). On homosexuality in French colonies, see Aldrich, *Homosexuality and Colonialism*; and Frank Proschan, ‘“Syphilis, Opiomania, and Pederasty”: Colonial Constructions of Vietnamese (and French) Social Diseases’, *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 11 (2002), pp. 610–36.
50. Aldrich, *Homosexuality and Colonialism*, pp. 119–22.
51. Spruit, *Artists on Bali*, pp. 40–4.
52. Nieuwenhuys, *Met Vreemde Ogen*, p. 137.
53. De Wit, *Java: Facts and Fancies*, p. 99.
54. De Wit, *Java: Facts and Fancies*, p. 98.
55. De Wit, *Java: Facts and Fancies*, p. 100.
56. De Wit, *Java: Facts and Fancies*, p. 99.
57. Marie-Odette Scalliet, ‘“Back to Nature” in the East Indies: European Painters in the Nineteenth Century East Indies’ in Marie-Odette Scalliet, Koos van Brakel, David van Duuren and Jeannette ten Kate, *Pictures from the Tropics* (Amsterdam: Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen, 1999), pp. 39–89, here p. 57; Koos van Brakel, ‘“For Evidently, the Fine Arts do not Thrive in the Indies”: The Artistic Climate in the Dutch East Indies in the First Half of the Twentieth Century’ in the same volume, pp. 103–28, here p. 103.
58. See, for example, two paintings by Maurits van den Kerkhoff (1830–1908) in Marie-Odette Scalliet et al., *Pictures from the Tropics: ‘View of the Brantas River near Malang (East Java)’* (p. 82), and ‘*The Brantas River and the Semeru Volcano near Malang (East Java)*’ (p. 83).
59. On Salm, see Scalliet, ‘“Back to Nature” in the East Indies’, pp. 39–89.
60. Martha MacIntyre and Maureen Mackenzie, ‘Focal Length as an Analogue of Cultural Distance’ in Elizabeth Edwards (ed.), *Anthropology and Photography 1860–1920* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), pp. 158–64, here p. 162. The classical pose and costume were also used in some ethnographic photography.
61. See Richard Hamblyn’s and Yu-Chee Chong’s comments in the reproduction of the original volume of plates by Salm, *Java. Naar Schilderijen en Tekeningen van A. Salm* (Singapore: Gallery Editions, 1991), p. 60.
62. Vickers, *Bali: A Paradise Created*, pp. 77, 87. This book also includes a tourist postcard of two rather stiffly posing women, characterised as inhabitants of ‘the island of bare breasts’ (p. 149).
63. First noted by Claire Holt, *Art in Indonesia: Continuities and Change* (Ithaca and New York: Cornell University Press, 1967), Chapter 9, pp. 211–54. Artists who experimented with abstract styles, like Pieter

- Ouborg, were an unpopular exception among European painters in the Indies: see Léonie ten Duis and Annelies Haas, *Ouborg: Schilder* (Amsterdam: SDU/Openbaar Kunstgezet, 1990).
64. See Jop Ubbens and Cathinka Huizing, *Adrien Jean Le Mayeur de Merprès, Painter-Traveller* (Wijk and Aalburg: Pictures Publishers, 1995); Yati Maryati Wiharja, *Ni Pollok: Model dari Desa Kelandis* (Jakarta: P. T. Gramedia, 1976).
 65. This is true for a small opus of Le Mayeur's works dated 1942, based on my own observations made at the Museum Le Mayeur, Sanur (Bali), in May 2005. To my knowledge, only a few scholars have even noted Le Mayeur's lack of supplies during the war, and even then no mention has been made of his curious adherence, under the circumstances, to idyllic themes. See Spruit, *Artist on Bali*, p. 96, and Ubbens and Huizing, *Adrien Jean Le Mayeur de Merprès*, p. 143.
 66. On Sudjojono and nationalist art, see the pioneering study by Holt, *Art in Indonesia*, Chapter 9, pp. 211–54. See also Mrázek, *Engineers of Happy Land*, p. 37.
 67. See Alloula, *The Colonial Harem*, and Graham-Brown, *Images of Women*.
 68. Graham-Brown, *Images of Women*, pp. 25, 73, 74. It was also peasant women, paid or coerced, who sat for postcard portraits. Upper-class women were beyond the colonial photographer's gaze because they were more likely to live in seclusion, and less vulnerable to financial pressures; see pp. 54, 60. For discussion regarding how veiling was more common in urban than in rural areas; see p. 134.
 69. Graham-Brown, *Images of Women*, p. 9. On the fetishisation of boundary zones in colonial representation see McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, pp. 24, 33, 170–3, 184, 188.
 70. See *Head of the Grand Odalisque* (c.1814–18), which is framed within a tondo, as is *The Turkish Bath* (1862). See also *The Grande Odalisque* (1814) and *Odalisque with Slave* (1839), all in Roger Benjamin, *Orientalism: Delacroix to Klee* (Sydney: Art Gallery of New South Wales, 1997), pp. 67, 70, 68, and 69 respectively. Roger Benjamin comments in 'The Oriental Mirage' in *Orientalism* that few European artists would have seen a harem at first hand: pp. 7–31, here p. 15. For additional critical commentary, see Reina Lewis, *Gendering Orientalism: Race, Femininity and Representation* (London: Routledge, 1995); and Reina Lewis, *Rethinking Orientalism: Women, Travel, and the Ottoman Harem* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2004).
 71. In the early twentieth century, the issue of women wearing the *jilbab* was still controversial among Muslims in the Dutch East Indies. Some thought it a foreign, Arab custom, and most Indies women went unveiled: see Kees van Dijk, 'Sarongs, Jubbahs, and Trousers: Appearance as a Means of Distinction and Discrimination' in Henk Schulte-Nordholt (ed.), *Outward Appearances: Dressing State and Society in Indonesia* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1997), pp. 39–84, here p. 65. In the same volume, see Jean Gelman Taylor, 'Costume and Gender in Colonial Java, 1800–1940', pp. 85–116, here pp. 107–8, where she notes that ordinary Javanese Muslim women certainly covered their bodies with long sleeves and high necklines, but presents no evidence to suggest that veiling was widespread. Elite Javanese women usually wore variants of traditional and western costume, and only wore clothes (including headcoverings) associated with the Islamic Middle East on special occasions in the Muslim calendar. Veiling was only widely adopted in Indonesia from the 1980s, as part of the resurgence of Islamism in the region: see Theodore Friend, *Indonesian Destinies* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2003), p. 600. While covering the body was a value shared by the women of most foreign ethnic communities on Java (certainly the Europeans, Arabs and Chinese), Jean Gelman Taylor suggests that the headscarf was not widely adopted by indigenous Muslim women until perhaps the mid-twentieth century. Upper-class Javanese women wore variants of traditional and western dress; and those women involved in nationalist and independence movements from the 1920s onward were photographed bare-headed. Even during Sukarno's reign, the ideal dress for Indonesian women did not include the headscarf: Jean Gelman Taylor, 'Official Photography, Costume and the Indonesian Revolution' in Jean Gelman Taylor (ed.), *Women Creating Indonesia: The First Fifty Years* (Monash: Monash Asia Institute, 1997), pp. 91–126, here pp. 99, 100, 114, 117, 121.
 72. Photographs of Balinese women reflect that, by the mid-twentieth century, a widespread shift from undress (of the upper body) to dress had occurred.
 73. I use the term 'Orient' in the sense that Edward Said initially intended, who in turn followed the conventional geographical meaning of the word according to European scholars: it usually indicated the Middle East and North Africa, or 'the Islamic Orient': Said, *Orientalism*, pp. 74–5.
 74. On the structure of Indonesian mosques (and the Hindu origins of Indonesian sacred architecture), see Hugh O'Neill, 'Southeast Asia' in Martin Frishman and Hasan-Uddin Khan (eds), *The Mosque: History, Architectural Development and Regional Diversity* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1991), pp. 225–40, here pp. 225, 227–8. O'Neill notes that the mosques constructed by colonists in the nineteenth century often

- followed European concepts of what such a building 'ought' to look like, namely, the mosques of British India and the Arab Middle East: p. 225.
75. See, for example, Savage, *Western Impressions of Nature and Landscape in Southeast Asia*, p. 171.
 76. See, for example, Nicholas Green, *The Spectacle of Nature: Landscape and Bourgeois Culture in Nineteenth Century France* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1990), p. 147. Here Green discusses the feminisation of nature in nineteenth-century France.
 77. An older planter reflects upon the addition of a young Dutch woman to his social circle: 'John appreciated her fresh gaiety; her sparkling joyfulness, none of which was exhausted or paralysed yet . . . And he was overcome by a feeling of pity as he thought how quickly that would be extinguished! She would become tired and languid under the pressure of the perpetual heat': Madelon Lulofs, *Rubber* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1933), p. 63. (I have made my own translations from the original Dutch for Lulofs). Other colonials did not necessarily share such a view about tropical climates. See, for example, Eric Jennings, *Curing the Colonizers: Hydrotherapy, Climatology and French Colonial Spas* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006).
 78. Ann Laura Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire*, p. 186.
 79. See, for example, Hesselink, 'Prostitution: A Necessary Evil', p. 208.
 80. There is an extensive literature on the topic of European ideas about the hyper-sexuality of 'native' women, not only for the Indies but in contexts as far removed as Africa. In the Indies, Europeans commonly held that 'Malays' (a broadly defined category that included the women from diverse locales) had oversized sexual organs and were inclined to promiscuity: see, for example, Vickers, *Bali: A Paradise Created*, pp. 87–8. Sander L. Gilman has made similar observations for colonial Africa in 'The Hottentot and the Prostitute: Toward an Iconography of Female Sexuality' in *Difference and Pathology: Stereotypes of Sexuality, Race, and Madness* (Ithaca and New York: Cornell University Press, 1985), pp. 76–108.
 81. Taylor, *Indonesia*, p. 284. Concubinage (European men cohabiting with Asian women) was a common arrangement before the arrival of European women in the late nineteenth century, one that never entirely disappeared from colonial society, especially on 'frontiers' like East Sumatra where white women remained scarce. The practice was subject to increasing public and official scrutiny in the late colonial period in the context of a flourishing eugenics movement in Europe and a growing, increasingly impoverished and politicised Eurasian population in the Indies: see Stoler, 'Sexual Affronts and Racial Frontiers' and 'Making Empire Respectable'; see also Elsbeth Locher-Scholten, 'The Nyai in Colonial Deli: A Case of Supposed Mediation' in Sita van Bemmelen, Madelon Djajadiningrat-Nieuwenhuis, Elsbeth Locher-Scholten, and Elly Touwen-Bouwsma (eds), *Women and Mediation in Indonesia* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1992), pp. 265–80; Prostitution also flourished around military barracks in particular: see Hanneke Ming, 'Barracks-Concubinage in the Indies, 1887–1920', *Indonesia*, 35 (1983), pp. 65–94; John Ingleson, 'Prostitution in Colonial Java' in David P. Chandler and M. C. Ricklefs (eds), *Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Indonesia: Essays in Honour of Professor J. D. Legge* (Clayton, VIC: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1986), pp. 123–40; Hesselink, 'Prostitution: A Necessary Evil'.
 82. See the section on colonial literature by Jean Gelman Taylor in John H. McGlynn (ed.), *Language and Literature: Indonesian Heritage* (Singapore: Archipelago Press, 1999), p. 88. The figure provided includes Dutch and Indonesians.
 83. There are countless such images, too numerous to list here, but some examples of colonial triumph over engineering feats are to be found in Boomgaard and Van Dijk, *Het Indië Boek*, pp. 100, 258; and of plantation hierarchies, in the photographic sections of Jan Breman, *Taming the Coolie Beast: Plantation Society and the Colonial State in Southeast Asia* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1990).
 84. Between 1916 and 1919, Lulofs's father was an advisor on government policy in the Outer Islands: see Anthony Reid, 'Introduction' to László Székely, *Tropic Fever: The Adventures of a Planter in Sumatra* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1979), pp. v, viii.
 85. Székely's claim to fame was his book *Tropic Fever*, cited above.
 86. Madelon Lulofs, *Koelie* (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 1932).
 87. This is inexplicably given as 'Dunk' in some English translations.
 88. Lulofs, *Koelie*, p. 95.
 89. Lulofs, *Koelie*, p. 95.
 90. Lulofs, *Koelie*, p. 95.
 91. For recent studies of racial themes in Couperus's work, see Ian Buruma, 'Louis Couperus: The Eurasians of the Dutch East Indies' in *The Missionary and the Libertine: Love and War in East and West* (London and Boston: Faber and Faber, 1996); and Pamela Pattynama, 'Secrets and Danger: Interracial Sexuality in Louis Couperus's *The Hidden Force* and Dutch Colonial Literature Around 1900' in Julia Clancy-Smith and Frances Gouda (eds), *Domesticating the Empire: Race, Gender, and Family Life*

- in *French and Dutch Colonialism* (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 1998), pp. 84–107.
92. See Aldrich, *Homosexuality and Colonialism*, pp. 119–22; Louis Couperus, *De Stille Kracht* (The Hidden Force) (1900; repr. Utrecht and Antwerp: L. J. Veen BV, 1982).
 93. Couperus, *Stille Kracht*, p. 74. I have used my own translations from the original Dutch throughout.
 94. In the Dutch East Indies, the children of European fathers married to indigenous mothers were eligible for European-equivalent status, but only if (among other technicalities) they were declared legitimate and registered by the father. Children born outside marriage could be declared legitimate by the father, and could be registered as Europeans. Wives, by law, took the nationality of their husbands, so indigenous women who married European men also assumed European status: see Taylor, *The Social World of Batavia*, p. 156; Stoler, 'Sexual Affronts and Racial Frontiers', pp. 540, 543; and Gouda, *Dutch Culture Overseas*, p. 163.
 95. Couperus, *De Stille Kracht*, p. 172.
 96. Margaret M. Alisabah, 'Introduction: Jan Boon, Tjalie Robinson, Vincent Mahieu' in *The Hunt for the Heart: Selected Tales from the Dutch East Indies* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. viii, ix. Mahieu established the Indo/Eurasian journal *Tong-Tong*.
 97. Nieuwenhuys, *Komen en Blijven* (Amsterdam: Querido, 1982), p. xvi; Alisabah, 'Jan Boon', p. ix.
 98. Vincent Mahieu, 'Vivere Pericolosamente', in *The Hunt for the Heart: Selected Tales from the Dutch East Indies*, pp. 126–42, here p. 127.
 99. Mahieu, 'Vivere Pericolosamente', p. 129.
 100. Mahieu, 'Vivere Pericolosamente', p. 128.
 101. Mahieu, 'Vivere Pericolosamente', p. 142.
 102. Mahieu, 'Vivere Pericolosamente', p. 130.
 103. Mahieu, 'Vivere Pericolosamente', p. 130.
 104. Mahieu, 'Vivere Pericolosamente', p. 131.
 105. Mahieu, 'Vivere Pericolosamente', p. 132. The 'other people', swimming in the river are intimated to be natives.
 106. Mahieu, 'Vivere Pericolosamente', p. 135.
 107. Mahieu, 'Vivere Pericolosamente', p. 137.
 108. Mahieu, 'Vivere Pericolosamente', p. 138.
 109. Mahieu, 'Vivere Pericolosamente', p. 141.
 110. Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire*, p. 194.