

CHAPTER

1

Affective States

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Much of colonial studies over the last decade has worked from the shared assumption that the mastery of reason, rationality, and the exaggerated claims made for Enlightenment principles have been at the political foundation of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century colonial regimes and should be at the center of critical histories of them. We have looked at what colonial authorities took to be indices of reasoned judgment and the political effects of policies that defined rationality in culturally narrow and prescribed ways – at the epistemological foundations of received categories as much as the content of them. Students of the colonial consistently have argued that the authority to designate what would count as reason and reasonable was colonialism’s most insidious and effective technology of rule – one that, in turn, would profoundly affect the style and strategies of anticolonial, nationalist politics.

Viewed in this frame, colonial states would seem to conform to a Weberian model of rationally minded, bureaucratically driven states, outfitted with a permanent and assured income to maintain them, buttressed by accredited knowledge and scientific persuasion, and backed by a monopoly of weaponed force. Similarly, they have been treated as contained if not containable experimental terrain for efficient scientific management and rational social policy, “laboratories of modernity,” information-hungry machines that neither emergent European states nor capitalist enterprises in Europe could yet realize or afford. In either account, it is the conceit of reason and the celebration of rationality on which imperial authority has been seen to rest – and eventually to fail and fall.

It is precisely confidence in this model and the genealogy of that claim that I question here. If a homage to reason was a hallmark of the colonial, it was neither pervasive, persuasive, nor empire’s sole guiding force. As striking in the nineteenth-century Dutch archives of colonial Indonesia – in its more public as well as its secret documents, official and private correspondence, commissioned reports, guides to good health, economic reform, household management, primary education, and belles-lettres – is not the rule of reason but what might be (mis)construed

as its very opposite: namely, a discursive density around issues of sentiments and their subversive tendencies, around “private” feelings, “public moods,” and their political consequences, around the racial distribution of sensibilities, around assessments of affective dispositions and their beneficent and dangerous political effects.

Dutch colonial authorities were troubled by the *distribution* of sentiment, by both its excessive expression and the absence of it; of European fathers too attached to their mixed-blood offspring, of Indies-born European children devoid of attachment to their (Dutch) cultural origins, of European-educated children who, upon return to the Indies, held sympathies and sensibilities out of order and out of place. Administrative debates over social policy were strained over the extent to which the affective attachments colonial agents and subjects held for family, language, and homeland were at odds and whether they should – and could ever – be under the state’s control. What states of mind and sentiment might be considered concerns of state were questions revisited by those who governed from up close and afar. It pitted governor-generals against ministers of colonies, local officials against their superiors, and city police charged with enforcing state directives against the colony’s most prominent European city fathers. Here, I argue that the “political rationalities” of Dutch colonial authority – that strategically reasoned, administrative common sense that informed policy and practice – were grounded in the management of such affective states, in assessing appropriate sentiments and in fashioning techniques of affective control.

The formal and formulaic styling of the official archives of the nineteenth-century Dutch East Indies may be read as discourses devoted to the supremacy of reason, but in the first part of this essay, I suggest they yield a different sense of the colonial when read for the sensibilities to which they were attuned, through impassioned as well as disinterested stories, through a fuzzier set of conceptual distinctions, through a blurred rather than a sharp Cartesian lens. I outline how sentiment has been situated in colonial studies and why it has been treated as an embellishment to, rather than the substance of, governing projects.

The second part offers a challenge to that analytic convention. It looks at an unprecedented protest on Java, in Batavia – the seat of Dutch authority in the Indies – in May 1848 (not coincidentally a cataclysmic revolutionary moment in European history), a protest remarkably organized and attended by both European-born and creole whites – many of whom were themselves agents of the state. The demonstration, its staging, its aftermath, and the arresting accounts of it that circulated in the colony, the Netherlands, and among empire-watchers beyond opens a set of broader questions: how colonial authorities imagined a shrinking world with global resonance, in which riots in Paris could unseat Dutch rule in Java; what they saw as the relationship between the parental and political sensibilities of their agents and potential adversaries and what urgent efforts they made to educate the affective habits of both. The demonstration and subsequent analyses of it pitted parental sentiments against the security of rule, and in so doing forced civil servants to choose between loyalty to Dutch metropolitan authority and a close-knit family – and ultimately to choose a Netherlands fatherland or an Indies homeland with which they would ally themselves.

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY IN COLONIAL STUDIES

If a discourse that both speaks of, and expresses, sentiment is everywhere in the colonial archives, why then has that relationship between its management and colonial governance been so easily side-stepped and so awkward to pose? At one level the answer may seem obvious. Critical analyses of colonial authority have often treated the affective as a smokescreen of rule, as a ruse masking the dispassionate calculations that preoccupy states, persuasive histrionics rather than the substance of politics, the moralizing self-presentation of the state as itself a genre of political authority.

One view has described an age of empire in which imperial states and their bourgeois subjects celebrated the story that humanitarian social reform was empire's *raison d'être* and driving force. In empires at home and abroad, "compassion," "pity," and "empathy" – imposed and unsolicited – motivated reformist zealots who swarmed in the underworlds of Amsterdam, London, Paris, and their colonial "Other Worlds" overseas. Echoing Bernard Shaw in his 1907 play *Major Barbara*, students of colonialism have waged a political assault on such moralizing missions and their "do good" bourgeoisies, mocking "uplift" projects and their redemption-seeking advocates. Impatient with benevolent, sentimental imperialisms and their self-serving justifications, we have looked more at the "rational" categories behind panics and the strategic disciplinary social reforms that followed.

Others have turned away from a focus on sentiment altogether, dismissing both the denigrating irrationalities and charged passions attributed to colonized peoples as transparent features of colonialism's reductive racist ideologies. In this view, a more rational actor better captures the nature of agency across the colonial divide: attachments and affections – tender, veiled, violent, or otherwise – get cast as compelling flourishes to historical narratives, but as distractions from the "realpolitik" of empire, its underlying agenda, and its true plot.

Some might (rightly) argue that this caricatures or, at least, overstates the case. Early students of colonialism who have identified the psychic injuries of empire, what Frantz Fanon and Homi Bhabha, following him, referred to as the "weeping wounds" imposed on the colonized. Aimé Césaire, Albert Memmi, and George Orwell have singled out the anxieties and insecurities of those taught to rule and the violence that followed from the prescriptions imposed on and weakly or fiercely embraced by them. Still, *how* sentiments figured in and mattered to statecraft remains marginal, and what habits of the heart and what *redistribution* of sentiments were produced by colonial states (as distinct from the trauma of postcolonial conditions) and what dissensions existed between the order of families and that of states is barely addressed.

Again colonial print culture points in a different direction: official archives, novels, the press, and epistolary history register "structures of feeling" of political import – emergent critique, inchoate common and unarticulated expectations, what Raymond Williams (in his influential work *Marxism and Literature*) describes as interpretive labor barely within the semantic and political reach of their authors. We might even ask whether affect versus reason, feeling versus thinking, were familiar and current distinctions to which administrative expertise could then be addressed. The categories may have been available and relevant but, as we shall see, confidence in their clarity and content was not.

It is not just that private passions had public consequences, a point that has been made often and well. Nor is it that the metaphors of feeling culled from other intimate, trusted, and well-established communities of sentiments shored up the ties between ruler and ruled, as Lynn Hunt cogently argues in her analysis of the “family romance” of the French Revolution (see her classic work, *The Family Romance of the French Revolution*). Nor is it, as US historian Melvin Yazawa contended, to account for the model of governance in the early American Republic, that “the conception of a polity that combined restraint with affection... [drew on] the traditional familial paradigm of patriarchal authority” (Yazawa 1985:19). These analyses focus on the practical power of paternalistic *metaphor* and familial *analogy*, less on the sorts of governing practices that directed and reworked those family affections.

My argument is rather that the Dutch colonial state’s concern over sentiment, the state’s assessment of the intensity of “feelings,” “attachments,” and senses of belonging – that prompted loyalties to race over family, or family over state – were not metaphors for something else but instrumental as “dense transfer points of power” in themselves (a term Michel Foucault uses to describe, not “structures of feeling,” but the power inherent in discourses of sexuality). Such concerns informed virtually every aspect of social policy, political calibrations, and the tone and tenor of the archives produced about them. The philosopher William Connolly’s claim that public reason depends on “a visceral register,” “on culturally formed moods, affects, sensibilities,” begins to address the issue: management of the agents and subjects of colonial rule depended on reformatting the visceral and mediating the ties that bound families as well (1999:27).

Debates in the Dutch East Indies over educational reform, orphanages for abandoned “mixed-blood” children, citizenship requirements, marriage laws, and the entrance requirements for civil servants were charged with a common tension. Each was riveted on what sorts of institutions, policies, and environment would produce *sensibilities* that were fitting, *aspirations* that were appropriate, *dispositions* that would confirm the explicit and implicit entailments of social membership and the truth-claims that distinguished ruler from ruled.

While evidence of rationality, reason, and progress were invoked to confirm privilege and station, European colonials policed their borders by other criteria, attended to with equal and studied care. As I have long argued, access to European legal status for the Indies born of mixed parentage was accorded on the display of a familiarity and proficiency with European cultural styles that required proofs of estrangement of other kinds – evidence of feeling “distanced” from that “native part of one’s being” – of “feeling no longer at home” in a native milieu. That racial membership was as much about the cultivation of cultural competencies, moral virtues, and character as it was about the hue of skin produced a quest for measures of those competencies and how they might be obtained.

Investment in the distribution of sentiment showed up in other registers of governance as well, in the “emotional standards” that policy-makers imagined were needed to rule. Evaluations of internal comportment – evidence of integrity, reserve, and trustworthiness – generated and motivated the density of the colonial state’s archival production and bureaucratic labors. In *A Social History of Truth* (1994), Steven Shapin argues that “good character” measured one’s degree of civility and

respectability in the world of seventeenth-century science – precisely because it appraised one’s claims to be convincing and worthy of trust. It economically signaled whether one could speak the truth – and therefore whether one was competent to assess the character and truth statements of others. In the nineteenth-century Indies, assessments of sentiment similarly determined how truth-claims were made and whose accounts were reliable. Appeals to sacrifice, social empathy, family honor, and parental affections guided the rhetorical strategies of bureaucratic reports, both their credibility and the future advancement of their authors.

Entrance exams for the Indies civil service, like those for the British in India, measured character as much as bookkeeping skills – “self-denial, diligence, temperance, and self-control” were coveted bureaucratic traits. Sympathy and compassion may have defined “masculine sensibility” in the eighteenth century, as students of that period argue, but it extended to nineteenth-century political life as well. Thomas Haskell’s subtle argument that the market gave rise to “new habits of causal attribution that set the stage for humanitarianism” by making trust and breach of promise central to the character of social relations on which capitalism would rest suggests another (Haskell 1985); namely, that racialized categories of colonial rule depended on an implicit causal argument that affective states (rather than physiology alone) so well measured reliability, morality, and the habituated “invisible bonds” of race, that they could serve as the basis for citizenship as well. “Men of character” *were* by definition men of reasoned feeling – qualities that both indexed social origins and were built into racial grammars. As Amat Rai contends, “the rule of sympathy” both marked and created colonial inequalities of the British empire in India (Rai 2002). But one could go further: it also produced structures of feeling, comportment, and taste that distinguished the quality of citizens from subjects and their disparate entitlements.

Nor were emotional excess and its inappropriate display imagined as confined to the colonized side of the imperial divide, with reason and rational action on other. If sentiments may be taken as “settled dispositions,” and reason as “the internalization of public procedure,” as various students of the social history of emotions suggest, then both shared a coveted space of governance – for it was through these settled dispositions and practices of European officials and their families that colonial regimes *reordered* relations within those families themselves.

Historian of South Asia, Christopher Bayly, in a thoughtful study of British India’s information order, argues that the mastery of “affective knowledge” was an early concern of the colonial state that diminished throughout the nineteenth century as that state became more hierarchical and governing became a matter of routine (1996). Here, I argue the very opposite: that affective knowledge was at the core of political rationality in its *late* colonial form.

The accumulation of affective knowledge was not then a stage out of which colonial states were eventually to pass. Key terms of the debates on how best to support poor whites and alter their child-rearing practices through the 1930s (just before the overthrow of Dutch rule in the 1940s) make that point again and again. When architects of colonial social policy argued against “care by the state” (*staatszorg*) for support of abandoned mixed-blood children and for “mother care” (*moederzorg*) instead, they were putting responsibility for the formative production of sentiment at the heart of their political agendas. When these same high officials

disputed how best to secure “strong attachments” to a Dutch homeland among a disaffected and expanding European Indies population, “feeling” was the word that cropped up again. Deliberations over the quality of upbringing and rearing were disquieted reflections on what it took to make someone moved by one set of sensory regimes – of sounds, smells, tastes, and touch – and estranged from another. Dutch authorities never agreed on how to cultivate European sensibilities in their young, nor just how early in a child’s development they imagined they needed to do so. But as a broader view of the history of child-rearing would show, these were not idiosyncratic colonial concerns. They were shared by a range of macropolities as well as seventeenth-century philosophers, eighteenth-century medical experts, and nineteenth-century purveyors of domestic science who harped on similar questions: whether affective dispositions were transmitted through a wet nurse’s milk, in the moral ecology of an infant’s home, through playmates, or in the social comportment of one’s mother. In the mid-nineteenth century Indies too, enormous administrative time and energy were expended on devising education and social policy that would provide European-born children and those of their creole counterparts with proper “feelings” and “attachments” to things Dutch and with a “disaffection” for that which was native – or preferably a disinterested sympathy for it.

Preoccupation with the making of virtuous selves prompted recurrent debates over where it should take place and who should be charged with responsibility for it: state institutions or families – isolated rural reformatories or carefully cordoned urban orphanages, European parents (however impoverished or ill-educated) or rather surrogate providers, those in the colonies or instead in Europe, in proximity to parents or removed from the home. Social planners, parents, doctors, and teachers stumbled repeatedly over the same question: whether what it took to be European required the instilling of specific formal knowledge or less tangible ways of being and feeling in the world. For nearly a century, between the 1830s and 1930s, Dutch authorities called on experienced counsel and expert knowledge to determine how to provide European children in the Indies with a sense of national and racial affiliation and to gauge how much an education of the sentiments was critical to both. They understood what anthropologist Janis Jenkins has underscored in a different context: that states do more than control emotional discourse, they attempt to “culturally standardize the organization of feeling” and produce as well as harness emotional discourse within it (1991:139–165).

Such a focus opens another possible premise: that the role of the state is not only as Antonio Gramsci defined it, in the business of “educating consent.” More basically, such consent is made possible, not through some abstract process of “internalization,” but by shaping appropriate and reasoned affect, by directing affective judgments, by severing some affective bonds and establishing others, by adjudicating what constituted moral sentiments – in short, by educating the proper distribution of sentiments and desires. As a starting point, such a premise anticipates questions that much current literature on state formation dissuades one from exploring. What makes it easier to imagine that millions of people willingly die for nations but not for states (as Benedict Anderson asks in his classic work, *Imagined Communities*)? How is it that a citizenry can accrue virtue by sacrificing their lives for nations, but people are killed not by nations but by states? How is it that states are commonly viewed as institutional machines that squelch and counter passions, while nations are envisaged

as culturally rich producers of them. Why does the pairing of “state” and “sentiment” read as an oxymoron?

It is certainly not because the dissonance of that pairing has always been the case. Attending to the relationships between affective disposition and political control, between the art of governance and the passions, between politics and sentiment were defining concerns of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century statecraft, and of those moral and political philosophers of the “long” eighteenth century, so deeply intent on identifying the relationship between the two. The relationship between “private vices” and “public benefits,” between affective life and political life, between individual passions and social welfare was central to the philosophical queries and concrete agendas of the most familiar figures – Bacon, Spinoza, Locke, and Hume – and lesser luminaries such as Mandeville, Hutcheson, and Shaftesbury. As students of seventeenth-century philosophy such as Susan James are increasingly prepared to argue, not only have the passions been systematically ignored as “a central topic in the heartland of early modern philosophy” (1997:2). It is precisely the fact that the passions were seen as directed in the interests of political power that captures a critical impulse of European society in that period.

It was Francis Bacon (philosopher *cum* civil servant) who argued with such clarity that the governance of states should be conceived of as something not dissimilar to “the government within.” Both, he claimed, required knowing “how affections are kindled and incited; how pacified and refrained . . . how they disclose themselves, how they work, how they vary, how they gather and fortify, how they are enwrapped one within another” (quoted in Hirschman 1977:16). For Bacon, the role of the state was clear: namely, to curtail the dangerous and combustible passions of ordinary men. Statecraft was not opposed to the affective, but about its mastery. Like Foucault’s notion of governmentality – statecraft joined the care and governing of the polity to the care and governing of the affective self.

These earlier philosophers debated not only the state’s responsibility to check unruly passions but to harness them in the interests of the public good. Albert Hirschman’s observation that the nineteenth-century modern state would later be “called upon to perform this feat . . . as a civilizing medium” alerts us to a crucial point: that what is now taken as intuitively incompatible in the heyday of colonialism – namely, a state devoted to reason *and* defined by its efficacy in dealing with sentiment and affective knowledge – was once not so. We may credit Foucault with reminding us that all sentiments have their histories, but it was Hirschman’s unique insight that a sentiment’s history is an inspired way to trace the changing form and content of what constitutes the subject and terrain of politics. The seventeenth-century notion that states should be called upon to harness individual passions, to transform and civilize the sentiments of their subjects, as Hirschman recognized, was “to prosper as a major tenet of 19th-century liberalism” (1977:16).

Hirschman’s compelling history of the passions suggests another historical frame for understanding what made up colonial rule; not one that starts with the supremacy of reason in the nineteenth century and then traces it back to the roots of rationality in the Enlightenment. Rather one that sets out another genealogy of equal force – and of as long a *durée*. Such a genealogy might register the incessant flux in political theory in the seventeenth and eighteenth century over what morality was (either a “natural sense” or a “cultivated taste” as it was for Shaftesbury). It would look to

that eighteenth-century “culture of sensibility” that tied material power and moral weight to the taste and character of cultivated men. It would register that sustained oscillation between reason and sentiment rather than the final dominance of the one and their definitive severance. It might take up William Reddy’s case (in *The Navigation of Feeling*) that modernity’s early moments in the “age of reason” could as accurately be characterized as an “age of sentiment.” It would register the recurrent attack on what constituted reason in the eighteenth century. Nor would such a genealogy track a rule of reason (veering on or off course) with an undercurrent of emotional strain. Rather it might resituate the art of governance as one modeled after an earlier genre that took as its project the art of knowing oneself as part of the “art of knowing men” (James 1997:2–3). As Alasdair MacIntyre (1984:149) writes, “Virtues are dispositions not only to act in particular ways, but also to *feel* in particular ways. To act virtuously is not to act against inclination; it is to act from inclination formed by the cultivation of the virtues. Moral education is an ‘*éducation sentimentale*.’”

Indies’ colonial authorities would have agreed. Placing colonial governance in such a frame makes more sense. A joint commitment to reason and to affective knowledge was central to nineteenth-century imperial politics and a basic tension within them. Gary Wilder refers to “colonial humanism” as a new way of exercising political authority in the early twentieth-century Greater France (1999:33–55). But in the Indies, the fact that men of force were men of feeling intervenes earlier: by the 1830s and 1840s in debates over social projects, public welfare, and in concerns over the viability of Dutch authority.

Thus to return to an earlier question: Why can students of colonialism declare with such conviction that “colonialism became the mode of universalizing the rule of reason” in the nineteenth century? Why have those who study colonial authority and its representations ignored Hirschman’s observation? As we shall see, it is not official archives that bracketed sentiment from their cultures of evidence and documentation, but our preemptive readings of them.

PARENTAL FEELINGS AND TORN HEARTS

Education is used to train members of a class and to divide them from other men as surely as from their own passions.

(Williams 1977:137)

On May 23, on a Monday evening in 1848 when most members of Batavia’s European community would otherwise have been just stirring from their late afternoon naps, there was an extraordinary meeting of an extraordinary mix of society, unprecedented in the history of the Dutch Netherlands Indies. From 500 to 600 people (that authorities later identified as “European,” “Creoles,” and “Colored,”) gathered on the steps of the exclusive European Harmonie Club, to register their dissatisfaction with a specific set of government policies and to make a specific set of demands. At the top of their strategic list was growing resentment at a decree of 1842, that produced a monopoly on senior posts in the colonial civil service, exclusively for those who would pass their exams at the Delft Academy in the Netherlands. The

many who could not afford to send their sons to Delft (those with too many children to support or who chose not to do so) were barred from the higher administration and confined to minor posts with meager salaries and 50 percent lower pensions.

In practice the ruling sent a confused message about privilege and race for while it blatantly discriminated against the middling Indo-Europeans whose sons were confined to the lowliest civil service jobs, it was also perceived as an unjust assault on those Dutch-born and creole Dutch who were unwilling to send their sons off to Europe for a decade of their lives. Those gathered at the Harmoniehof charged the government with discriminatory pension allocations to civil servants trained in the Indies, and condemned an educational policy that forced estrangement from their sons. Among those gathered were several hundred “colored” who were “well-to-do,” but equal numbers of senior Dutch civil servants, high-placed administrators of justice, finance, and religion, and respected “city fathers.”

It was an extraordinary event but not a spontaneous one. Not only was the Governor-General informed several days earlier when, why, and where the gathering would take place – after negotiation he grudgingly granted permission for it, in part because the organizers (among whom was the influential, high-placed, religious leader Baron van Hoevell and Vice-President of the High Court Ardesch) persuaded him that “parental feelings” were really “social” rather than political matters, unlike their other shelved demands for parliamentary representation, a reduction of the autocratic power of the Minister of Colonies, and freedom of the press – which he thought were decidedly not.

Still the 15-page petition addressed to the king in the name of the Indies’ *inboorlingen* (natives) was uncompromisingly bold in its claim. *Inboorlingen* for them did not refer to the native population but those of European descent with attachments to the Indies, whether or not they were Indies born. The petition called for the dismissal of a virulently anti-creole member of the Indies Advisory Council, abolition of the existing civil service exam (the *Radikaal*) and improved higher education in Java for those of European descent. The gathering took place without incident, ended a few hours later, and was never to be repeated again. In Dutch colonial historiography (that so shies from evidence of white sedition) it has rarely received more than a paragraph.

On the face of it, this was neither a radical nor a particularly revolutionary event. But if the gathering was tempered and contained, the events that surrounded it, the interpretations of what it represented, and the sentiments that motivated and were attributed to those who took part were not. Reports were filed of *liplaps* (those of mixed blood) in the crowd, armed with hidden daggers and walking sticks concealing their swords. Over 1,300 artillery and infantry troops were ordered by the Governor-General to wait on the outskirts of Batavia ready with arms, on the ostensible fear of what such a gathering might encourage among the wider Javanese and Chinese population. The Minister of Colonies Baud urged that the gathering’s organizers immediately be dismissed from their posts and banned from ever returning to Java. In subsequent months, thousands of pages of government reports assessed the social make-up of the Indies’ European community and its liberal political currents – identifying those already affiliated and which others might potentially join. By the time news of the event reached Minister Baud in The Hague some seven weeks later (the Suez Canal had not yet been opened), secret government missives were

steeped in talk of treason, the dangerous threat to peace and order that this backhand stab at metropolitan rule inspired. What was at issue was the sustainability of Java as a Dutch colony – and the jewel of its empire.

But who and what was the threat was not clear, certainly not to Governor-General Rochussen in his letter to Baud four days after the gathering: Was it subversion (led by such liberal “hotheads” as van Hoevell and his cronies) among the European-born, well-to-do city fathers? A creole revolt among the Europeans who were Indies born and bred? Or a bid for total rupture from the Netherlands among the impoverished “coloreds” with nothing to lose? Rochussen reported an “extremely agitated” public mood and his outrage at Van Hoevell’s betrayal and audacity in publishing a “disobligingly rude” article from confidential government documents in the most widely read Indies European press. And interspersed with these comments, he would circle back to the rumors in white Batavia, to the stir among educated people in the literate city about revolution in Europe and what the Marseille mailboats would bring to Java.

Why did the gathering generate the fervor it did and what were the stakes? Was it, as some authorities thought, the prelude to a revolutionary overthrow among liberal-minded colonials with a communist bent, influenced by the events in Paris two months earlier, or a refusal to accept the racialized terms of educational policy? Or was the threat more local, immediate, and more threatening still, generated not by an impassioned outburst but by a critique lodged in the sustained distress of parents who refused to allow their sons’ careers to be contingent on an education in Europe, on 4,000 miles of distance and at least eight years of separation from their mothers and fathers? Whatever the answer (and it was partly *how to frame the question* that the administrative alarm was about), on the line was the Dutch regime’s ability to assess sentiment – to predict and manage its visceral – and what Hume understood so well as its “contagious” quality.

In May 1848 Victor Hugo (2002:552) was to write from Paris, “From February to May, during these four months of anarchy in which the collapse was felt on all sides, the situation of the civilized world has been unparalleled/impossible. Europe feared a people, France; this nation feared a part of it, the Republic; and this part feared a man, [Auguste] Blanqui. The ultimate word for everyone has been fear of something or someone.” The revolutionary fervor that swept through France in February 1848 resonated throughout Europe, but as Victor Hugo observed, what was at risk and under attack was not always the same. Demonstrations, petitions, and pamphlets in Vienna, Prague, Milan, in Berlin, Frankfurt, and Dresden, among Italians and Czechs, were about civil rights, representation in parliament, workers’ councils, and workers’ benefits. What motivated disenfranchised middle classes in February was not what made the working classes take to the streets in May. People talked of revolution and the abolition of slavery in Guadalupe in late April, but at the very proclamation there was, as Hugo snidely observed, a white proclaiming it, a mulatto holding his parasol, and a man of color carrying his hat (Hugo 2002:551).

And what did this have to do with Batavia? Some authorities thought everything; some saw the Harmoniehof demonstration as local and localized with little to do with events in Europe at all. Authorities seemed to have feared less a revolution in the making, inspired by the vibrant and violent French and German models, but rather

one of another sort – a creole revolt against a metropolitan hold on power, against what one petition called “the Russian autocracy” of colonial rule, against a bureaucratic system that made advancement contingent on prolonged absence from family; and not least, protest among the respected and “respectable” against a system that assured loyalty to the Dutch state rather than the Indies through a careful design that valorized and required for promotion competence in a removed, Netherlands-filtered knowledge of Java.

If students of the colonial are now more ready to accept the argument that metropole and colony should be treated as one analytic field, there is less consensus on what those contingencies looked like on any specific historical ground. We remain confounded by the direct and indirect ways in which metropolitan practices shaped the face of empire and the other way around. But the conundrum is not ours alone: working out those contingencies of comparison and scale, what made up a “community of sentiment” and what did not, were the very dilemmas of rule and what the tools of statecraft were designed to assess.

Authorities in Batavia spent the next weeks and months after the May demonstration trying to work out whether it was a home-grown colonial liberalism that had seized white Java, parental sentiment that was turning the state’s very agents against it, ripples of constitutional reform in the Netherlands reverberating in the archipelago, or revolutionary fervor that traveled with the mailboat from Marseille. Rochussen’s report to Baud was confused about what was a risk, and what and who was to blame. When February’s overland post arrived in Java on March 23, he reported no mention of the “new popular revolution and the fall of the crown.” But by mid-April private French tradesmen came laden with news of increased “communist thinking” spreading among Europe’s working poor. Still, that news was almost two months out of synch with the quick-fire shift in political direction in France, where what had been accomplished in February and March “evaporated” by May. By June the workers’ national councils were abolished, thousands were killed or arrested, the bourgeoisie was in the ascendancy, and the workers’ movement was a shambles. Radicals did sing the *Marseillaise* in Amsterdam like they did in Paris, but revolution in the Netherlands was quickly turned into constitutional reform, the King abdicated, ministers resigned, and although the *burgerij* – the stolid bourgeoisie – came into partial power, over the next 25 years, 80 of the 100 government ministers were still of patrician origin.

Events in Java were clearly part of a global historical moment but the public mood was on a track of its own. In the narrative offered to the Minister of Colonies by the Governor General, generalized disquiet among the European population was evident in early May. By the 14th of the month – only nine days before the demonstration, hundreds of people gathered at the old city’s customs house to await the ship from Singapore carrying their subscriptions to the European press. The scene described is so dissonant with current historiography on Java, that it is almost hard to imagine what the Governor-General described as an alarming outburst on the dock, of people cheering, “the boom has fallen, the day of freedom has arrived for the colonies’ inhabitants to air their grievances and have their desires heard.” Police reports from the night before described something stranger still, a charivaresque cacophony in the colored quarters of the old city, where small groups were heard shouting, “*Samoanja radicaal*,” accompanied by music on copper kettles and rowdy groups throwing

stones at the house of that high official they labeled “an enemy of the people,” while calling for his deportation from Java.

But what was this outcry, “*Samoanja radicaal*,” which seems to capture a bilingual *jeu de mots*, a Dutch Malay play on words, embedded in the phrase? The Malay word *samoanja* [semuanja] literally means “they’re all,” or “everything is,” which is clear enough. But *radicaal* in mid-nineteenth-century Indies Dutch had two very different referents: one to “radical,” in the more familiar political sense that we know, and second to the “Radicaal/Radikaal,” the name for the despised diploma for entry into the elite ranks of the civil service, which spoke of metropolitan privilege and could be granted only if one passed through the academy in Delft. It was, of course, abolition of this very diploma that was the principal demand of the demonstration the next day. Whether “*Samoanja radicaal*,” on the streets of Batavia in 1848 meant “everything is about the diploma,” or “everyone should be able to get the diploma,” or “they’re all radical” is impossible to say without more context. But there was no further mention of the phrase. It disappears from the archive as does its rich ambiguity and bivalence from Indonesia’s historiography. Nor did the Governor-General bother to explain it to Baud, an ex-colonial himself, who (was it assumed?) knew what it meant.

It is not clear that the Governor-General himself did. His narrative moved from concerns over high officials “liberally expressing themselves in an unseemly manner,” to an understanding that more was at issue than a “momentary outburst of feeling.” His story jumped from Batavia to Paris and back again, lingering on a thumbnail sketch of the Indies population, so negative in its appraisal that it would suggest that the colony was already on the road to revolt and would not await the independence movement that would come in such a different guise and composition a hundred years later. In his breakdown were “the Javanese without any attachment to us,” the Arabs who “hate us,” “the Chinese who cherish money and sensual pleasures,” and a European population with increasing numbers of liberal thinkers, made up of “the most energetic but not the most moral part of the nation.”

But more disturbing to him still were increasing numbers of “coloreds” so reduced to poverty they could only hope for a change and had nothing to lose. Here was a population, he argued, growing in proportion to the number of Europeans, more dangerous in relation to the increased scientific knowledge that had filtered to them, and more discontented with regard to the low-ranking civil-service posts which they had long occupied, considered their own, and now saw threatened by more Dutch youths descending from Java. These “colored,” he insisted, were despised by natives and Europeans, but what most marked them, he held, was that they had been devoid in their youth of the language of parental love (*ouderliefde*) and were either nameless or with names that branded them as illegitimate by birth, and with souls full of hate for Europeans, among them those who were accounted their fathers.

Parental love, either too much of it, as among Creole whites, or not enough, as among mixed-bloods, seems to come up at every turn. Parliamentary representation in Holland was a problem, but the “more dangerous grievances” were those perceived as widely shared and broadly spread among Europeans, old-timers and newcomers, Creoles, and the Colored: what they all wanted was an end to the privileges of the Delft monopoly and the Radical certificate denied their offspring.

Worse still was this forced separation, what feelings it engendered, and what it did to people’s lives. Rochussen punctuates his narrative with three searing tales that were

plastered across the local European press: the case of a Dutch mother who went into shock and then was senseless or mad for several months after her small son's departure for Europe, knowing she would not recognize him, nor he her, upon his return a decade later; a father ruined by debt and broken by his efforts to send his son to school in Holland; and perhaps most poignant of all, the story of a well-groomed young man returning to Java after ten years' leave, poised on the dock as his ship landed, asking, "which of these ladies is my mother?"

Rochussen's defense of his actions, that he had granted permission for the gathering because these "fatherly hearts" (*vaderhart*) were bleeding too badly to be restrained or refused – was not as convincing to the king, who questioned his judgment and took the political bite of those parental sentiments to be what they were – directed against the metropolitan monarchy and the emergent colonial state.

Historians of the Indies have alluded to the "demonstration," but the machinations that surrounded it have been of little interest, and the political threat envisioned at the time is perhaps so unthinkable that it has been rendered irrelevant, minor, and erased. The prominent Dutch historian Cees Fasseur, one of the few to write about it, makes passing mention of the newspaper coverage of the maddened mother and ruined father as evidence that "pathos" was played upon and running high (1993:121). But government authorities at the time took more seriously the political force of affect and undoubtedly dismissed his dismissal and questioned his claim. For debates prompted by the event stayed focused for literally decades on two things: what sorts of domestic and pedagogic environments could instill loyalty to Dutch rule, and what sorts would nurture affective attachments dangerous to it?

In subsequent months, the Dutch administration hardened its conviction that a European education was critical to "the necessity for close ties between the motherland and the colony" and to counter a prevailing trend: namely, "that with European children raised in the Indies those ties had come unbound and European parents too had estranged themselves from the motherland." Family rearing was important but only if mediated by other sorts of apprenticeship defined by the interests of the state. While some proposals were made to establish secondary schools "in healthy highland areas of Java . . . separated from the Indies world" (on a "European footing" and with only European servants), more powerful voices did not agree. The latter argued that the neglectful and indulgent mothering styles of native and Indo-European women were turning their mixed-blood children toward native sensibilities rather than "cultivating" in them the energetic self-discipline that emerged in an authentic Dutch milieu. In the end, European higher education in the Indies was extended to Java but always limited on two foundational grounds: that Indies mothers were incompetent to rear their young as true Europeans; and that prolonged residence in the Netherlands would "awaken love of the fatherland" for those Indies-born children so sorely deprived of it. The Minister of Colonies succinctly made the latter case (AR/KV 1848/ no. 389, 22 September 1848):

Raising and educating Europeans in the Indies will stand in the way of a desirable civilizing of the native and this upbringing will have the result that these children so frequently suckled with the breast milk of Javanese wet nurses along with their own native children, at a more advanced age, will lack any sense of unity with Europeans. They become haughty, imperious, lazy and lascivious. They will learn from their youth to

mistreat and denigrate servants. They become, in male adulthood, still greater despots than now is the case with the native rulers themselves.

At issue was *not* the insubordinate sentiments of the colonized but rather the inappropriately expressed aspirations of those “out of character” and “out of place”: “haughty” referred to those mixed-bloods who refused to do manual labor: “imperious” to those creoles who claimed their right to the status of “full-blooded” Europeans: “lascivious” to those whose sexual interests were seen as misdirected toward those above their racialized standing and class. At issue was an “emotional economy” that not only “mirrored controversies about social status,” but tied affective expression to the worth of human kinds.

This fear of contagious emotions prompted another fear: that those who remained too attached to the Indies would see themselves more as “world citizens” (the first time the term appears) than as partisans of Dutch rule. Over the next 70 years, Dutch authorities continued to battle over when and how to intervene in the education of school-age children and in the formative rearing of the very young. Crucial to this understanding was that local knowledge should never be too local and that familial attachments were to be mediated and reworked through concerns of state, filtered through a fine sieve, through the ears of Dutch categories, distilled into a typology, reconfigured as qualified knowledge in a usable form. While that could conceivably be done in Indies schools run on European principles by Europeans, success was easier to assure from a distance in the Netherlands – where racialized categories could be reduced to a number of traits, assuring that the colonial lens would color a world in which family ties between parents and their young would be reconstituted, where moral virtue would be defined by a muted attachment to one’s offspring, and where local knowledge would be digested through institutions of learning in Europe and re-served as qualified knowledge that was no longer local at all.

AFFECTIVE REGISTERS IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE

Colonial scripts prompt us, their distant readers, to imagine that concern with the affective was centered on unbridled passions, irrational outbursts, or at least the unpremeditated affective states their bearers embraced. They make it plausible to imagine that European authorities feared most what the Dutch novelist Louis Couperus referred to in 1900 as the “hidden force” to which the colonized had access and colonials unknowingly could be subject, to a display of sentiments that showed more powerful mystic and mental states. But, as the May 23 demonstration suggests, this may not have been the case. Stronger than extemporaneous passions was the fear of *sustained* sensibilities, and the political standards they called into question. Momentary outbursts were manageable. It was those sentiments – such as those of parental distress – that expressed tacit judgment, “settled dispositions,” and expectations with high political stakes. Sentiment mattered not because it was in conflict with reason but because it demanded specific sorts of reason that indicated social knowledge of expectations and a rich evaluative vocabulary of social critique.

What colonial officials feared was not the *economic* costs of educating Europeans in the Indies (undoubtedly cheaper for the state), but the disparate cultural, economic,

and political investments of those families that sought to bring up their children in the Indies and dared to think of the Indies as their “fatherland” and make it their home. If postcolonialism produces a faux nationalism as Ben Anderson suggests, colonialism produces its own distorted long-distance variant. Colonialism remains viable as long as the longings are for a European elsewhere, if colonial pleasures were seen as the hardship allowance but never a home. The colonial difference was key: in the colonies freedom of speech, press, and representation were inappropriate, and those Europeans that wanted them were advised to just go home.

Immanuel Kant’s reason-based account of moral thinking and practice may have informed imperial policy, but so did John Locke’s, that moral thinking was embodied in the dispositions of the everyday, in the habits of comportment that had to be learned. Like Locke, colonial experts debated the sensibilities that endowed certain individuals with the “capabilities” to exercise freedom, to be responsible as citizens capable of progress, to be deemed actors who were “rational men.” Those city fathers, government officers, men of class and character who gathered on the streets of Batavia in 1848 were deemed “unseemly,” unreasonable, and therefore unsuitable colonial men. To be reasonable was to master one’s passions, command one’s sensibilities, and abide by proper invocation and dispersal of them.

George Orwell’s futuristic fantasy, *1984*, of a thought-police staked out in an interior family space, was undoubtedly based on the specter of totalitarian European states, but it may have been equally motivated by another state Orwell knew more intimately and at least as well, the British imperial one. The colonial state could only be selectively panoptic; directed less on the internal dynamics in domestic space of the colonized than on the minute movements and psychological perturbations of their white and not quite white agents – in their clubs, offices, with their children and at home. Reading Orwell’s “Shooting an Elephant” up against *1984* suggests a colonial order of things in which sentiments (nostalgia, humiliation, and rage) were produced by political systems. They were not metaphors for them.

Sentiment is the ground against which the figure of reason is measured and drawn. Colonial documents carve out “structures of feeling” across dry reports that state agents passed among themselves. “Unseemly” sentiments indexed mismanagement of the polity and mismanagement of the self. A genealogy of colonial morality would not be a search for what is moral and what is not but rather a history that would address its changing vocabulary and political coordinates. It might look at imperial interventions in the emotional economy of the everyday, but also at why colonial authorities knew what we are only beginning to grasp, that the viability of colonial regimes depended on middling masters predicting and prescribing what sentiments, in whose hands, would be contagious – and which would not.

NOTE

Part II of this chapter is based on documents collected at the General State Archives (Algemeen Rijksarchief [AR]) in The Hague, the primary archive for nineteenth-century Dutch colonial state records. This account is based on the following: KV no. 317 (5 August 1848); KV no.158 (25 May 1848); KV no. 391 (8 September 1848), and the documents filed therein. Following the publisher’s format, I have not noted each of the specific documents throughout the text.

For detailed references to these documents see my forthcoming book, *Along the Archival Grain: Colonial Archives and their Affective States* (Princeton University Press).

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