

## BETWEEN TWO WORLDS: RACIAL IDENTITY IN ALICE PERRIN'S *THE STRONGER CLAIM*

---

*By Melissa Edmundson Makala*

LIKE MANY ANGLO-INDIAN NOVELISTS of her generation, Alice Perrin (1867–1934) gained fame through the publication and popular reception of several domestic novels based in India and England. However, within the traditional Anglo-Indian romance plot, Perrin often incorporated subversive social messages highlighting racial and cultural problems prevalent in India during the British Raj. Instead of relying solely on one-dimensional, sentimental British heroes and heroines, Perrin frequently chose non-British protagonists who reminded her contemporary readers of very real Anglo-Indian racial inequalities they might wish to forget. In *The Stronger Claim* (1903), Perrin creates a main character who has a mixed-race background, but who, contrary to prevailing public opinion of the time, is a multi-dimensional, complex, and perhaps most importantly, sympathetic character positioned between two worlds.<sup>1</sup> Even as Victorian India was coming to an end, many of the problems that had plagued the British Raj intensified in the early decades of the twentieth century. Perrin's novel is one of the earliest attempts to present a sympathetic and heroic mixed-race protagonist, one whose presence asked readers to question the lasting negative effects of race relations and racial identity in both India and England.

Alice Perrin's novel also represents a shift in the thematic concerns of the Anglo-Indian domestic novel during the last decades of the nineteenth century. According to Nancy L. Paxton, "racial differences gradually replaced religious identity as the dominant sign of difference in colonial epistemologies in the postmutiny period" (193). These novels provide "an alternative perspective on the restrictiveness and arbitrariness of the sex, gender, and racial boundaries that colonizing women transgressed when they dared to cross the literal and figurative barriers that were supposed to separate the 'races' in colonial culture" (Paxton 195). Paxton goes on to say that "many critics in the past have dismissed these novels as convention-bound romances, relegating them to the dustbin of literary history, often without reading them" (199). Likewise, Alison Sainsbury asserts that the earlier characterization of Anglo-Indian romance novels as a superficial "woman's genre" led to these works being critically ignored as having little or no literary value, "as sub-literature, monolithic and narrow: judged, that is, as minor and uninteresting, or, if interesting, interesting only in the offensiveness of the Anglo-Indian sensations, attitudes or psychology" (166). Only recently have these novels been read for "particular narrative strategies, locating these strategies in relation to specific historical and ideological currents in colonial discourse" (Sainsbury 166).

This reappraisal of Anglo-Indian domestic novels has also fostered greater critical interest in the figure of the British woman both inside and outside the text. As Jenny Sharpe claims, women (real and fictionalized) were “instrumental in shifting a colonial system of meaning from self-interest and moral superiority to self-sacrifice and racial superiority” during the Raj (7). Mary A. Procida has also noted that “the rise in popularity of the Anglo-Indian romance novel coincided with Anglo-Indian women’s growing involvement in imperial politics” (5). As British women closely observed inter-cultural relations during their years living in India, they increasingly began to have a more vocal role in critiquing the successes and failures of the imperial mission. Indeed, their own subaltern status as women gave these writers a sympathetic perspective on the plight of minorities in India, and their marginal status between the official male realm of government and the non-official environment of the bungalow gave them the ability to recognize and appreciate other instances of liminal existence around them. They used the non-threatening form of the popular romance in order to voice their concerns about the effects of imperialism. Hsu-Ming Teo claims that women novelists beginning in the 1890s and continuing into the first decade of the twentieth century preceded male authors in their examination of cross-cultural relations between the British and Indians (5). Teo argues, “Despite the predictability arising from a loosely formulaic plot structure geared towards resolution in marriage and domesticity, a case can be made for the ways in which the genre of the female romance lent itself to more profound explorations of interpersonal and interracial relations than did masculine epic or adventure romances of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries” (5). Yet, while Anglo-Indian women’s involvement with gender issues during the Raj has received increasing attention over the past few years, few critics have examined the presence of mixed-race communities in their novels. In *The Stronger Claim*, Alice Perrin presents a sympathetic hero who challenges popular negative assumptions of Eurasians while she also critiques those in British society whose prejudice impedes understanding between the two cultural groups. While her narrative is not without flaws, and ultimately upholds the values of the British colonial mission, Perrin complicates the typical Anglo-Indian romance plot by presenting her readers with an exploration of a doomed marriage and the gradual disintegration of the domestic ideal.

#### *Late Victorian Debates about the Eurasian Community*

IN ORDER TO UNDERSTAND the value of Alice Perrin’s fiction, we should consider her work in light of late Victorian understandings of the place of the mixed-race community. Numerous negative descriptions of mixed-race people appear in contemporary accounts of daily life in Anglo-India. In the opening chapter of *The Tourist’s India* (1907), a guidebook for British travelers, Eustace Reynolds-Ball briefly mentions the Eurasian community during a discussion of how different races interact in India, and refers his readers to fiction for a more elaborate treatment of the subject. He says, “Much light is thrown on the native question, so far as regards the relations between Anglo-Indians and Eurasians, though in the guise of fiction, in Mrs B. M. Croker’s “Her Own People,” and Miss Alice Perrin’s “The Stronger Claim,” and in the romances of Mrs Frank Penny and Miss Sydney Grier. These illuminating novels should be read by all interested in this difficult question” (Reynolds-Ball 12).<sup>2</sup> However, in a later chapter on Bombay, Reynolds-Ball comes down more harshly on the “Eurasians” as a social group. While describing the educated Parsi merchants of

the city, and the extent to which they have Anglicized themselves, Reynolds-Ball asserts: “[The Parsi] occupies, in short, a somewhat anomalous position between the Asiatic and the European. In this respect, and in this only, he may be compared to the Eurasian, though of course in character, intellect, standing, etc., there is no comparison between the Eurasian (the counterpart of the mean white in the Southern States of America) and the Parsee” (63–64). This comment reflects the extent of race prejudice against Eurasians at the turn of the century and is just one example of how they were frequently described as the lowest cultural group in India because of preconceived racist notions of deficiency or degeneration.<sup>3</sup>

The anxiety over the social consequences of racial “commingling” is a recurring issue in periodicals of the time. In 1904, the *Imperial and Asiatic Quarterly Review* published a letter by R. A. Butterfield, who described such mixing as a potentially uncontrollable force that would ultimately hurt the job prospects of “pure” Europeans (i.e., British) seeking opportunities in India. By taking European names and adopting what he considers to be false identities “as a handsomely paying artifice,” this group will seek to “form alliances with those of more or less remote European descent, the offspring claiming to be Euro-Asians, and blatantly asserting their right to appointments reserved for the ‘European class’ of the natives of India in the Medical, Telegraph, Police, and other departments. Many of such pedigree have already been all too successful in securing these appointments” (Butterfield 407–08). Butterfield’s solution to the “problem” of Eurasians claiming white privilege is stricter documentation measures for would-be employers and a rejection of anyone who appears to have “doubtful origin” (409); in other words, the burden of proof would be on the applicant. This proposal, of course, is designed as a convenient excuse to keep those of mixed-race ancestry out of official government positions.<sup>4</sup> Butterfield goes on to suggest more definite boundaries between the two groups in all social settings: “The white section of the community could also resist the incoming tide of dark blood by refusing to form alliances with any but those of their own racial standard. Guilds should be formed all over the country, having for their social creed and conduct, ‘No more Indianization; no more mésalliances’” (409–10). On the chance that any reader had not fully realized the seriousness of the problem, Butterfield ends the letter with an image of the possible consequences of this racial peril:

A Eurasian of the class whom I have already described despises the womenkind of his own pedigree as a rule, and literally thirsts for a white wife. Unfortunately, he too often succeeds in obtaining one from an indigent family, or with greater facility from an orphan asylum, as the clergy seem indifferent who a suitor is, so long as the orphanage is relieved of the burden of a marriageable girl. A white man with a dark wife clinging to his arm is not a refreshing sight, but a cadaverous Othello leading a blonde, or even a brunette, to the hymeneal altar is a spectacle that might move an angel to tears. (410)

The difficulties Eurasians faced regarding identity and social acceptance extended into the actual naming of this increasingly prominent cultural group. According to Christopher Hawes, as early as 1818, there was a petition to Lord Hastings in Calcutta to use “Eurasian” instead of “half-caste” in official documents, and in 1827, another group of two hundred Eurasians petitioned British officials in Madras to end the use of “half-caste” in government documents (89). During the same period, several other names for the community were suggested, including “Anglo-Asian,” “Indo-Briton,” and “East Indian,” but “Eurasian” remained the most popular for the rest of the nineteenth century (Hawes 89).<sup>5</sup> Despite efforts

to give the community an acceptable name, social prejudice continued. As late as 1914, *The Century Dictionary* included the following definition for “Eurasian,” which, far from helping to “define” the group, only advanced current stereotypes: “A half-caste, one of whose parents is European, or of pure European descent, and the other Asiatic: originally restricted to one born in Hindustan of a Hindu mother and a European (especially a Portuguese) father, but now applied to all half-breeds of mixed Asiatic and European blood, and their offspring. Also called *chee-chee*.” Then follows this example from George Aberigh-Mackay’s *Twenty-One Days in India, being the Tour of Sir Ali Baba* (1880): “The shovel-hats are surprised that the *Eurasian* does not become a missionary, or a schoolmaster, or a policeman, or something of that sort. The native papers say, ‘Deport him’; the white prints say, ‘Make him a soldier’; and the *Eurasian* himself says, ‘Make me a Commissioner, give me a pension’” (qtd. in “Eurasian” 2030).

In *Things Indian* (1906), William Crooke attempted to define people of mixed ethnicity as a racial group, saying that “Eurasian . . . is the modern term for persons of mixed European and Indian blood, more euphemistic than ‘Half-caste,’ and more precise than ‘East Indian’ or ‘Anglo-Indian,’ which last is the title adopted by members of this community” (188). Although he admits that Europeans were initially responsible for the inter-mixing, Crooke betrays his racial bias by classifying the descendants of these earlier unions as “the Eurasian problem” (188). He describes the mixed-race people of India, giving them credit for having some ability, but ultimately coming to a similar conclusion as other contemporary accounts: “Among Eurasians, as a whole, there is no uniform standard of character or ability. Some of them are very respectable and intelligent, and have reached a high position in Government service, the learned professions, and commerce; others, again, are mere helots in the slums of native bazaars, for whom there is no present and no future. Their worst faults are instability of character, extravagance, and a contempt for the native races, which the latter return with interest” (Crooke 191–92).

A recurring theme in Crooke’s account is what he sees as the affected attitude of the Eurasian group, who, above all, desire assimilation into British society:

An important Eurasian centre in South India is Vepery, a suburb of Madras, of which Captain Hervey, in the early part of last century, gives a lively account. He describes some of them as “rolling in wealth, and aping all the airs and following all the customs of consequential importance which that wealth can command. . . . They try, however, all they can to induce European gentlemen to enter within the precincts of their houses, by holding out to them all manner of allurements to join their company. Those, however, who are known to associate with these sable-browed individuals are kept at arm’s length by respectable people, and never allowed to enter the circles of the select community of the place” . . . He says that they were called “Vepery Brahmins,” and he speaks of the danger to officers who “are frequently among these dark-eyed bewitching syrens, and are very liable to become smitten with their charms.” (190–91)

Crooke also notes the difficulty in measuring the actual size of the Eurasian population due to inconsistencies in official reporting. He again displays the racial anxieties of the British at the time by commenting that “Firingis, or half-caste Portuguese” and “native Christians, who have taken to European ways and dress” are also listing themselves as “European,” making the exact number of these “foreigners” difficult to estimate.<sup>6</sup> Despite the lack of official

numbers, Crooke assumes that “they are exceedingly fertile and are probably increasing” (190).

Others sought to raise awareness of the social prejudices against Eurasians, although these voices represented a minority of public opinion on the matter. Graham Sandberg’s “Our Outcast Cousins in India,” published in the *Contemporary Review* (1892), discusses the marginal status of the Eurasian (as well as the racism that accompanies such a status): “In the politest parlance, and by themselves, the strange race are denominated *Europeans*; officially they are termed *East Indians*; in general they are spoken of as *Eurasians*; while the genus Snob, unhappily now so plenteous in India, delight to apply such names as ‘half-caste,’ and even ‘darky,’ to folk at least superior to themselves” (880). According to Sandberg, this marginality bars the group from being completely accepted by either the British or the Indians: “being wholly neither of one nor of the other, they bear the disabilities of both. Their colour and antecedents disqualify them for employment as Europeans; their religion and social system debar them from participation in native industries. Despised by both races, their condition is thus often most pitiable” (882). However, even Sandberg’s treatise in favor of better opportunities for those of mixed race soon falls into the trap of stereotypical categorization of the group. He divides “the lower and always impecunious classes of Eurasians” into two groups: 1) those roving families who never stay in one place long enough to settle down and who constantly beg for money from the local missionaries, and, 2) those who live in poverty in the larger cities of India. Sandberg describes the first group as “uncanny creatures” and the latter group as “deplorable creatures” (888, 891). And though he urges his readers to recognize and examine this problem of racial inequality, his answer to the question of why this poverty exists among the group relies on the very same prejudicial judgments that he complains of in the opening paragraphs of the essay: “First, let it be known, there are a want of energy and an hereditary languor which have become almost a disease in the half-caste. Secondly, they have not, of a surety, either the physical strength or the stamina to encounter unremitting manual toil day after day beneath a tropical sun, such as the Hindu lower classes readily undertake” (Sandberg 895). He then states that the general problem of debt among the group is owing to their refusal to do manual or domestic labor.

Despite these racial assumptions and generalizations, Sandberg does manage to highlight several ways that those of mixed race could find increased opportunities for work and financial stability; he calls for an end to the race preferences in certain professions. One obstacle to financial success for men of mixed ethnicity lies in the fact that members of a mixed-race group are subordinate to Indian natives when it comes to employment in government offices. Countering this practice, Sandberg argues, “the Eurasian has an equal claim with the Hindu and Mussulman for fair treatment. Nay, his claim comes first, for not only is he a son of the Indian soil, but he is also a descendent from those who won India for England” (Sandberg 898). According to Allen D. Grimshaw, it was this earlier denial of professional opportunities within British society that put Eurasians at an increasing financial disadvantage: “Never having developed enterprises of their own and having no foothold in the commercial life of India, Anglo-Indians became increasingly dependent upon government employment” (230). To make matters worse, Eurasians were also falling victim to the Indian caste system and what Sandberg calls the “Hindu’s preference” (898). Since the eighteenth century, most Hindus refused to work with (or be supervised by) Eurasians, a group they viewed as the offspring of outcast Indian women. This “preference” was supported by the

British government's desire to establish and promote a middle-class, educated native Indian workforce, to the exclusion of Eurasians. Likewise, military service was open to Indian "natives" but not to those of mixed race who were also natives of India. This exclusion of Eurasians from military service remained a much-debated issue throughout the nineteenth century. The British Army felt that the community lacked the discipline and courage needed to serve in their ranks, the most notable exception being the Indian Uprising of 1857, when Eurasians were allowed to temporarily join the army.<sup>7</sup> According to Sandberg, "the discipline and regular habits involved in a soldier's career would be as true an earthly salvation as the food and clothing and pay" (898).

These issues were by no means new to the British reading public, and throughout the nineteenth century Eurasians themselves were painfully aware of their unequal status. During the 1820s, they increasingly called for greater social, political, and financial equality within the British Empire. In Calcutta, the mixed-race poet and teacher Henry Derozio complicated many stereotypes with his solid educational background and energetic teaching style at the Hindu College. Derozio tried to foster better relations between the races by establishing the Academic Association as a means to bring together Indians, Eurasians, and the British in order to promote the educational advancement of his students. As editor of the new daily paper, the *East Indian*, Derozio also aimed to represent all races (Chaudhuri xlii-xliii; Hawes 124–25).

In 1830, the East Indians' Petition was presented to Parliament by the leading Eurasian spokesman of the time, John William Ricketts, a civil servant and son of an English father and Indian mother (Hawes 91). In the petition, a majority of the educated Eurasians in Calcutta formally requested that they be granted full legal status as British subjects. They also asked for increased opportunities to serve as civil servants in India, an opportunity, they argued, that would save the British money in the long run because British civil servants would not need to be imported from England (Hawes 134, 135). Much like a previous petition made in 1818, the new petition was unsuccessful and did little to influence the way Eurasians were treated within the colonial system. If anything, according to Christopher Hawes, the Petition of 1830 marked a new era in which Eurasians had to increasingly fight for opportunities among a growing population of British émigrés: "Between 1830 and 1859 the non official British population of British India increased fivefold from just over 2,000 to around 10,000. The value of an educated Eurasian work force to Government was effectively marginalised. Little, if anything, was achieved by their Petition of 1830" (149). The Eurasian's call for equality and increased opportunities was echoed in 1825 by a writer in the *Asiatic Journal*, who proclaimed, "There can be no doubt that they are entitled to all the civil privileges and functions of both parents" ("On the Policy" 307).

In Allan John Macdonald's *Trade Politics and Christianity in Africa and the East* (1916), there is another call for greater equality for mixed-race Indians, which brings attention to the fact that the "problem" was not decreasing in Anglo-Indian society, almost one hundred years after the first Eurasian petition. He contends that "the Eurasian, so long as he exists, and is not absorbed by one race or the other, must be treated, if not as a social equal by the members of either dominant race, at least as a man and a brother in the great Christian community" (Macdonald 246). Macdonald sees the problem of mixed-race ancestry as originating with racist attitudes on the part of the colonizing British and the failure of Westerners to take responsibility for their part in the creation of such a community: "The white man has mingled his blood with that of the native races, and . . . has turned upon his action, and



scorned the victims of his blandishments. That constitutes the problem: What is to become of the ‘coloured people’ in Africa, and the great Eurasian community in India?” (233). He goes on to blame the British for a problem of their own making, saying that “the exclusive attitude of the white people caused them, from sheer self-respect, to refuse recognition to a community tainted by the blood of the white man, who regarded the fruit of his connections with native women with a contempt even greater than that which he showed for the pure-blooded native” (Macdonald 233). It is not surprising then that in this contentious climate, the “Eurasian problem” found its way into Anglo-Indian fiction.

#### The Stronger Claim and the Tragedy of Paul Vereker

IN HIS STUDY OF ANGLO-INDIAN POPULAR ROMANCE, Hsu-Ming Teo asserts that the novels of Fanny Farr Penny and Maud Diver, though ultimately “timid and unsatisfactory” (11), provide the most daring explorations of relations between the British and Eurasian communities. Teo goes on to claim that “Indians and Eurasians rarely served as heroes or heroines; they were far more likely to be the villains or the seductive Other Woman of the story” (11). Likewise, Allen Greenberger suggests that Eurasians were “uniformly presented as unfavourable with no attempt at understanding [their] complexities” (53). He goes on to say that this consistently negative portrayal was largely caused by “an element of sexual guilt” (53–54) because the British essentially brought this community into existence. This anxiety was heightened by the fact that “in an age such as this one when the British were basing their superiority purely on racial lines, the Eurasians were a threat to their unique position . . . The Eurasians broke down the clean lines which divided the races in India offering the possibility that some group might be able to rise up and become like the British without the ‘necessary’ racial purity” (Greenberger 54). According to Greenberger, the sympathetic treatment of Eurasians in Anglo-Indian novels did not start until the late 1930s. He says that during this period there was an increased effort to understand the members of this community, and that “the difficulty of existing in a never-never-land between two cultures” became “a major theme” (Greenberger 183, 184).

Alice Perrin’s daringly sympathetic portrayal of the mixed-race Paul Vereker complicates both Teo and Greenberger’s assertions. In *The Stronger Claim* (1903), Perrin provides a much earlier instance of trying to portray mixed-race people in a positive light, even as she questions and refutes contemporary negative opinions of Eurasians.<sup>8</sup> Her sympathetic and tragic portrayal of the novel’s main character, Paul Vereker, also places him within a larger tradition of Indian characters who cannot live fully in either cultural world. As a fictional protagonist of mixed ethnicity, Vereker functions as an important link between the mysterious Ezra Jennings of Wilkie Collins’s *The Moonstone* (1868), whose mixture of East and West make him a marginalized character, despite his role in proving Franklin Blake’s innocence, and continuing beyond Indian independence, and Hari Kumar in Paul Scott’s *The Jewel in the Crown* (1966), whose English education distances him from his Indian heritage.

In *The Stronger Claim*, Paul Vereker is the son of an English father and a Eurasian mother. After Paul’s father dies of cholera, his mother’s side of the family must decide whether to let Paul go back to England to join the family of his paternal aunt, Lady Jardine. During the discussion, Paul’s great-grandmother, Bibi Jahans, gives her daughter-in-law a dire warning about the boy’s future: “Keep the child in his own country if thou wilt, but give him back to the gods and his own people. With thy notions will he come to manhood

like my son, thy husband, neither a Hindu nor an Englishman, despising his birth on the one hand, and despised by the white people on the other. Thou mayest talk and pretend and mimic the ways of the white ones, but thou art a *kerani* (half-caste) and nothing will make thee aught else" (25; ch. 22). The Bibi<sup>9</sup> would prefer to take Paul away from both white and Eurasian influence, telling the Jahans family, "Send him to his father's country and he will in time curse the day he was born; keep him in this land and he will curse thee also; but give him back to the gods and to the dark race, yield him up to the stronger claim that is within him" (25; ch. 22). The Bibi's warning, and the Jahans family's subsequent decision to ignore it, is Perrin's warning to her readers that there can be no neat and tidy "happy ending" to her story, which in itself upsets one of the cardinal rules of colonial romance. The Bibi knows the inevitable difficulties that lie ahead for Paul because she is complicit in this cultural "problem" – her own son is a Eurasian. Perrin hints at this anxiety early in the novel when she says that the Bibi had given "liberal donations to the temples and promises of future benefactions" in an attempt to regain "the caste-position she had forfeited through her connection with the Englishman" (22, 23; ch. 2). What the Bibi is suggesting is a third option for Paul, where the Jahans family "give him back to the gods" as a kind of Hindu offering. Perhaps for the Bibi, this is penance for the problem that she helped to create. This option is never seriously considered, however, because of the racial divide that already exists within the family. As Eurasians, both Paul's mother and grandmother desperately cling to their English blood and tolerate the Bibi and "the black people" (23; ch. 2) she represents only because they hope to inherit her money.

After the Bibi's death a short time later, the family decides to send Paul to England. Once he joins the Jardine household, the wife of a local doctor immediately suspects that the boy is of mixed race and comments that the "child has black blood in his veins" (84; ch. 5). When her friend doubts her suspicions, remarking, "But he has lightish eyes and brown hair, and his skin isn't dark. He doesn't look like it" (84; ch. 5), the doctor's wife comments that Paul's "odd green eyes" are a sign that he is a "half-caste" (84; ch. 5). She also echoes the Bibi's previous warning, saying, "The boy will be all right as long as he stays in England, but Heaven help him if he ever goes back to India!" (84; ch. 5). Although she does not refer to racial difference, Paul's aunt notices his divided nature and sees certain biological connections to the Vereker side of the family: "His poor father was as pig-headed as he could be . . . and Paul inherits it, I suppose. His love of art and music and his dreamy, poetic temperament he must get from his mother's side, my brother never went in for anything of that kind" (121; ch. 7).

Nonetheless, it is Paul's appearance and "poetic temperament" which first capture the attention of Selma Neale, the local minister's daughter. The two knew one another when they were children, but when they meet a few years later at a dinner party after Paul's return from Oxford, Selma immediately notices his "clean-shaven, impassive face, with the large eyes, green, melancholy, inscrutable as ever, and the straight, handsome features, almost Greek in their severity of outline" (115; ch. 7). Later, she is likewise transfixed as Paul sings "The Love Song of Har Dyal" with "passionate despair" (122; ch. 7).<sup>10</sup> During the song, Selma feels "aroused" and "sensible of a vague elusive longing for something unattainable" (122; ch. 7), hinting at Paul's desirability, but also alluding to the insurmountable difference in their relationship when Selma is confronted by Paul's mixed racial background later in the novel. After the party, Selma tells her father about her feelings, admitting, "I can't explain why he attracts me so strangely, and against my will – unless it is because we are so unlike one



another . . . he fascinates me when I am with him, and he haunts me when I am not" (132; ch. 8). The attraction is mutual. When the two meet one night, Paul admits his own feelings: "I loved you from the moment I came into the room that evening, and saw you standing so sweet and slender with the light upon your hair. I sang only to you that night, dear love – did you feel it and know it? Ah! your hair, your lips, your sweet warm neck . . . mine is more than love – it is idolatry!" (143; ch. 9). Though there are numerous accounts of interracial relationships in the Anglo-Indian fiction of the time, this level of mutual attraction with no threat of dominance is rare. By presenting a female character who feels genuine passion toward a potential mate, Perrin signals an important cultural turn in romance narratives, one which connects gender to race.

According to Nancy Paxton, these post-1900 novels, such as *The Stronger Claim*, reexamined and revised the colonial romances of the last half of the nineteenth century. She says, "As a group, these little-known Anglo-Indian novels about cross-cultural marriages reveal some of the ideological changes at the turn of the century that undermined basic assumptions about women's sexuality and gender identity, assumptions that made the colonial rape script involving a white woman threatened with rape by an Indian man so meaningful in the period between 1857 and 1900" (Paxton 193–94). *The Stronger Claim* is one of the earliest examples of this literary revisioning of the Victorian colonial romance. Alison Sainsbury likewise describes how Anglo-Indian domestic novels of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries begin to shift focus from the more traditional rape narratives (which became popular after the 1857 Indian Uprising) to a more modern characterization showing women who could feel desire and passion without suffering violent consequences. In these narratives of married life (which include mixed marriages), "the overpowering of Englishwomen by Indian men – rape – is matched by Englishwomen's power to choose" (Sainsbury 170). Though readers do not get many details about Paul and Selma's eventual married life, the above exchange gives us no choice but to assume that their marriage is initially happy and full of both emotional and sexual satisfaction.

This happiness, however, soon diminishes when Paul passes into the Bengal Civil Service and the couple moves to Praggur. After learning that Paul is related to members of the local Eurasian Jahans family (news which she must then tell Paul), Selma initially tries to fight her aversion to the Eurasian community and is not helped by the race prejudice of her friend, Mrs. Watson, a local missionary's wife. She tells Selma, "You cannot, with any justice, compare East and West . . . the points of view are so utterly different; it is the polarity of race, and the two were never meant to mix" (190; ch. 13). The limited scope of Mrs. Watson's social views is in keeping with other portrayals of British missionaries in Perrin's fiction. These characters, if not outwardly dislikable, are usually ineffective, hypocritical, and meddling, often causing more problems than they solve. And indeed, Mrs. Watson's comments prove directly harmful to Selma's outlook. Immediately after this conversation, Selma's unconscious fears of any non-white person begin to surface, although she experiences no direct negative encounter with any Indian native: "Everywhere black faces. She had once said she would hate to be surrounded by them, and now that the instinct had asserted itself she must fight against it all her life long, she must never betray it, must always be on her guard, because the man she had married was partly 'black' himself" (191; ch. 13). It is as if the prejudiced comments of Mrs. Watson have unleashed Selma's own latent racial fears.

Likewise, Mrs. Goring, the wife of the head government official in Praggur, also warns Selma of the professional repercussions of Paul's mixed ancestry. She tells Selma that if

they remain in the same city as Paul's family, he will be accused of favoritism and denied advancement in his government appointment. But with Selma's support, Paul decides to stay, calling into question the prevailing attitudes against him: "Because a man has the blood of India in his veins, is he to be treated differently unless he proves himself incompetent? This is a country that is old in original wisdom, she is steeped in knowledge, and beauty, and mystery! I tell you, Selma, I am glad I belong to her – I am proud of it!" (200; ch. 13). Here, Paul shows only positive traits, again calling into question popular notions that Eurasians could only exhibit "the worst" of both races. In his ability to stand against the socially-imposed obstacles set before him, Paul also complicates Mrs. Watson's previous statement about the races never being "meant to mix." Sadly, though, the answer to his question will ultimately be "yes"; he will be treated differently despite his best efforts to prove common assumptions wrong. If the society around Paul would allow him to reach his potential, he would stand as an example to everyone.

Throughout the novel, Perrin does not hesitate to give Paul many positive characteristics that make him an immensely likeable and honorable person. This includes his potential to be a good, loving, supportive husband to Selma. Perrin describes him as being "devoted to her as ever . . . he was passionately grateful to her for voluntarily staying on at Pragnpur; he gave her a free hand in all money matters . . . he was unaffectedly relieved to find her apparently contented with her life" (228; ch. 15). He also fiercely defends Selma against an insult from his stepfather: "'Look here!' Paul advanced menacingly, the Englishman was rampant within him. 'Hold your tongue and get out of my house. I don't care whether you are my step-father or not – if you were my own father I'd break your neck if you said another insulting word to my wife'" (242; ch. 16). In this passage, Perrin betrays her racial bias as she describes Paul's actions. As an Englishman, he defends his wife in a Western, chivalrous manner. This description, of course, implies that the Eurasian/Indian side of him would treat Selma as an object whose honor is not worth the trouble of defending. Before the inhabitants of Pragnpur discover Paul's racial background, he also has seemingly unlimited potential to advance in the civil service because of his intelligence and ability. Despite all of these positive qualities, Paul nonetheless meets resistance from the British inhabitants, represented by the prejudice of Mrs. Watson, Mrs. Goring, and most notably, by his own wife. The Jahans family likewise turns against him when he refuses to grant his nefarious stepfather professional favors that the man clearly does not deserve. Mrs. Goring, as the wife of the highest ranking official in Pragnpur, has the best opportunity to affect change, but although she warns Selma about the repercussions of Paul staying in the area, she does not try to lead by example and show outward (official) support for him. She is much more sympathetic to Selma and what she considers her unfortunate marriage. By showing the shortcomings of both cultural groups, Perrin is able to make her hero all the more sympathetic. Being a hereditary part of both means he can never fully belong to either. Additionally, Vereker ends up being used by both the British and the Eurasian communities. Both social worlds, the British officials who run Pragnpur and the Jahans family, ultimately place more importance on Paul's material value as a civil servant than on his worth as a man (a respectable son and husband) who is a positive influence on the community. The idea of "servant" gains even more importance in Paul's case. The British are happy to utilize Paul's management capabilities, but they do not truly think of him as a social equal, despite his education and accomplishments. Likewise, the Jahans family only superficially accepts him back into their social group because of Paul's official capacity to confer professional favors on relatives.

The *Book Review Digest* (1910) commented on how futile Paul's struggle is, saying that he "unwisely puts up a fight against social and official prejudices" (310). This suggests that the battle Paul fights is larger than himself, making him doomed from the beginning no matter how much bravery he displays in trying to find a balance in his life. The hopelessness of the situation and the inability of Paul to succeed in such a prejudiced world are echoed in a January 1904 review published in the *Spectator*:

Mrs. Perrin takes as the theme of her story the effect of going back to India on a boy of Eurasian birth who has been brought up at an English public school, and who is in ignorance of the fact of his mother's extraction. It may be supposed that with this theme the story is not very cheerful reading. It is however, both interesting and powerful. . . . The earlier part of the book, which is concerned with Paul's upbringing, first in India, and then among his father's people in England, is excellently drawn; but from almost the first page the reader foresees the necessarily tragic ending. The book, both in the quality of the workmanship and the interest of the problem discussed, is a great deal above the average of contemporary novels. (189)

Other reviews of the novel reinforce the prejudiced attitudes toward Eurasians that Perrin brings to light, showing that although readers and reviewers praised her for writing about a sensitive subject, they still did not fully grasp the extent of the so-called "problem" and the British lack of sympathy toward mixed-race members of Anglo-Indian society. The *Athenaeum's* review of the novel in December 1903 begins:

This story is based on the contending claims of country, and the influences of East and West on human character. It opens up the always interesting question of temperamental contrast between the pure European and the mixed Eurasian blood. On this, as may be expected, hinge important racial and consequent social difficulties. The situations arising from these conditions are peculiarly fitted as a pivot for romance and fiction, and have lately been utilized for the purpose. Mrs. Perrin has treated the subject with some knowledge and feeling. Her suggestion is that to the European the inner nature – what there is of it – of the half-caste is a *terra incognita*, and *vice versa*. (823)

This description of Eurasians only adds to existing stereotypes of the cultural group. And though the author admits that Paul is "not a bad man" (823), the review ultimately claims that "the strains of birth do not work together for his good, nor for the good of those with whom he comes in contact" (823). This suggests that Paul's hereditary taint is somehow culturally contagious; he is bound to bring down others as he suffers his own necessary downfall. The December 1903 *Guardian* review approaches the novel in similar ways. It ultimately praises Perrin's effort by concluding, "There is evidence of much acquaintance with Anglo-Indian life, and the ways and speech of the Eurasian are skillfully presented and satirised" (5). However, the reviewer's description of Vereker is less than flattering:

No one at home knows the mother, and consequently the boy grows up in ignorance of the black blood in his veins. He wins the niece of the local rector through his Oriental warmth, which throws into the shade the more honest love of his cousin, and he carries his wife back to India. As a Civil servant he chooses the place where his father died through old association, and when the secret of his origin is revealed he refuses to exchange and becomes more and more of a native. (5)

There is a suggestion that Selma is mesmerized by the implied dangerous “Oriental warmth” of Paul, and the reviewer makes no mention of his Oxford education. The genuine love for Selma which Paul displays, and which Perrin is so careful to describe, can only be a lesser love than that of a British white man. Likewise, the description of Paul carrying Selma away from England implies a very real cultural anxiety over Eurasians and Indians using their “warmth” to lure innocent young women away from their safe homelands and away from the white men who love and would undoubtedly take better care of them. Consequently, the reviewer fails to recognize how complicit Selma is in the tragedy that unfolds.

In an effort to understand Paul’s heritage, Selma becomes involved in charity work within the Eurasian community. In so doing, Perrin is able to consider prevailing negative opinions of the group. The emphasis she places on the disagreeable qualities of the community only serves to distance Paul from them:

Selma began to explore the enormous half-caste colony in the station, among whom she had discovered . . . that charity was often badly needed. She was appalled at the squalid lives led by some of the very poor Eurasians, the dirt, the ignorance, the idleness, sometimes the deplorable immorality. Freely she gave of her sympathy, money, time, counsel. Occasionally she was rewarded by gratitude and efforts at improvement, more often she was baffled by the curious falseness of their pride, their want of energy and backbone, their morbid dread of forgetting the drop of white blood which, far from elevating them, was the excuse for their ridiculous reluctance to do anything that might be mistaken for a form of labour, and kept them perpetually on the defensive – an attitude that amused Selma intensely when it did not exasperate her beyond all patience. (226; ch. 15)

Later in the novel, as Selma is discussing conversion efforts with Mrs. Watson, she tries to promote a greater interest in Eurasians, saying, “The things one sees and hears amongst these half-castes are perfectly dreadful . . . I can’t help wishing that you mission people would turn your attention more to them instead of expending all your energies on the natives – who, after all, seem to disdain our ways and our religion” (234; ch. 16). To this, Mrs. Watson responds that people like Selma (with time and money to spare) should help the Eurasians, but the religious needs of the native Indian community should come first: “But you must remember that they are supposed to be Christians from their birth – either Roman Catholic or Protestant – and that a great deal *is* done for them by priests and the chaplains, only they are so numerous and their foolish pride and laziness makes them so difficult to deal with. No, I don’t think we ought to desert the native for the half-caste” (234; ch. 16).

The deplorable condition of the Jahans family home puts even more symbolic distance between the two social classes:

The furniture was dusty and decayed, and seemed to display a patient air of resignation, as though anticipating the day when the final and inevitable breakdown should take place. A large round table leant humbly towards the floor; a mouldy “suite” was arranged around it; some black and gold what-nots and two marble-topped chiffonniers propped themselves against the wall – remnants of the household possessions that had given such delight to Una [Jahans] in the early days of her first marriage. Some tattered Japanese fans were nailed to the harsh white-washed walls, which were spotted and stained by the excavations of white ants. (206; ch. 14)

This dilapidated state extends to the inhabitants of the house as well. Both Paul and Selma are inwardly repulsed by the appearance of his mother, Una. At their first meeting, as the

woman advances toward Selma in welcome, Paul's wife can only think, "How could she bring herself to embrace this dun-coloured mass of perspiring flesh? She glanced at Paul, and one look at his troubled face gave her courage" (207; ch. 14). According to Nancy Paxton, British characters' discomfort in these Eurasian houses symbolizes a larger racial and class difference: "These novels about mixed marriages typically contrast the arrangements of domestic space in the households of the colonizers with those of the colonized in order to dramatize the alienation of the heroines and heroes who, after being ostracized by 'their' culture, are forced to leave the domestic space where they feel at home and to enter a 'native' domain where intimacy, privacy, and sexuality are organized differently" (199). In her novel, Perrin extends this idea of cultural discomfiture to Eurasian households as well by describing both Paul and Selma's horrified "entrance" into Eurasian society. Significantly, it is also after this encounter with the Jahans family that Selma begins to emotionally distance herself from Paul.

During their initial visit to the Jahans, the household further denies Paul's British identity when he asks his mother for any "photographs, books, or pictures" (209; ch. 14) that belonged to his father. She fails to comprehend what such items would mean to her son, and flippantly replies that after his death, her husband's things were "stored in the go-down" and subsequently destroyed by white ants (209; ch. 14), thereby frustrating any chance that Paul has of gaining a greater connection with his English parent. Since the majority of Paul's life has been spent in England, he further complicates notions of what constitutes Eurasian identity. Christopher Hawes states that "Eurasians were seen to be doubly at risk. They were exposed to the direct influence of their Indian mothers, and they spent all their lives in India. Indolence and a loss of vigour, commonly attributed to Indians, was one important aspect of the Eurasian stereotype, male or female" (81). However, Paul suffers from neither of these "risks" because he lives away from both his mother and India. Perrin suggests that since her first husband's death (and thus going years without the direct English influence of Paul's father), Una has fully reverted back to her "natural" Eurasian ways. Being in England and away from such an influence, Paul has avoided what would have been the harmful effects of Una's parental involvement. When Paul returns to India, he, like Selma, is discouraged by his mother's stereotypically negative personality traits and is much more interested during this first meeting to learn about his deceased English father. In this way, Paul represents a troubled hybridity and is an early literary instance of what Homi Bhabha describes as a colonized people's "desire for recognition" (9). As a Eurasian, Paul embodies the binaries of black/white, upper/lower, self/other, and colonizer/colonized. And as a positive example of a mixed-race group, Paul is literally "in-between the designations of identity" (4) and represents the "possibility of a cultural hybridity" (Bhabha 4) that transcends racial and class difference, but only if he is given a chance by the culture around him (including his own wife). However, this "if" is never surmounted in the novel. Writing in 1903, Perrin can only question; she can offer no solution beyond her fictional "what if."

Ultimately, Selma's growing racial fears bring about Paul's tragic downfall. When she looks at Paul, she can only think about her own despair: "She shrank from the prospect of the months and years of self-repression that lay before her, . . . like the Gorings, she, too, hated India, recoiled instinctively from the natives" (215; ch. 14). However, Selma cannot keep these thoughts to herself, and later "thoughtlessly" asks Paul as she looks down the road outside their bungalow, "Are those people or natives coming along the road?" (228; ch. 15). She then is puzzled when Paul is upset with her for making the comment. Later, she questions

how she will “overcome her repugnance” (265; ch. 18) to Paul’s racial background. By the end of the novel, this “repugnance” amounts almost to hysteria, and, more importantly, Paul loses his last vestige of support in the struggle to overcome his fate:

She followed him into the lighted drawing-room, but she still trembled, and as she stood looking into his eyes, with his arm about her, and his face bent to hers, she found herself struggling horribly with a desperate and unexpected sense of revulsion. He had not changed his clothes and it seemed to her that he smelt like a native, indeed it was probable that he did, from having mixed throughout the day with the crowd at the fair, but to her excited imagination the strong spicy odour belonged to him personally. . . . By sheer effort she prevented herself from running back into the dark verandah, away from his touch, away from his eyes; she felt that her moral courage was deserting her, that her sense of duty, her loyalty to the man she had chosen as her husband, her desire to do the best by her life’s responsibilities, were all slipping beyond her reach. (280; ch. 19)

This description is significant because the very aspects of Paul’s appearance which once attracted Selma now repulse and scare her, although nothing is outwardly different in her husband’s appearance – the only difference is her knowledge of his racial background. Paul notices this change in his wife and “perceived as though by mental flashlight the abhorrence in which she held his Oriental blood” (281; ch. 19). This change leads to Paul’s first admission of the hopelessness of his situation: “he knew now that even though he should get a transfer to another province, though he should take her away from India altogether, though he should devote to her his whole being – this must always stand between them . . . the gulf lay between them for ever, wide, impassable” (282–83; ch. 19).

Though many reviews of *The Stronger Claim* reinforced Eurasian stereotypes, others were more sensitive in their appraisal and frequently praised Perrin for her examination of the problems faced by a mixed-race subject. Kiran Nath Dhar, in “Some Indian Novels,” which appeared in the *Calcutta Review* in October 1908, mentions Alice Perrin’s novels as some of the best which deal directly with mixed-race characters at the center of her narratives, instead of as superficial caricatures on the narrative periphery (581). The Pittsburgh Carnegie Library catalogue for 1908 gives the following description of *The Stronger Claim*: “Story of a boy of mixed English and Hindu blood, brought up in England in ignorance of his parentage, returning to India to live and experiencing the powerful influence of the old religion and customs. Good picture of half-caste life” (Rev. Carnegie 1049). Likewise, the *Academy and Literature* published a perceptive review in its fiction supplement for November 1903 that again shows how well the racial elements of the novel were identified by critics, who focused on Perrin’s social themes over the more traditional romance elements of the plot. The reviewer notes the effect of having a male protagonist whose indecisiveness regarding his place in India leads to his downfall: “We are made to feel very strongly the gulf between the matter-of-fact British temperament and the mystery-loving Indian’s and the inexorable repulsion of white by black” (507). The British are also held accountable for part of the “gulf” which exists between the two groups, as the reviewer notes that “Paul’s English wife, with superbly unconscious insolence, asks: ‘Are these people or natives coming along the road?’ and in a moment all the tragedy of India as a nation is explained. It is proper to add that Mrs. Perrin is sympathetic both with India and with Paul” (507).

Paul’s violent death at the end of the novel reinforces the hopeless cultural position he is in. While trying to control the crowds at an annual fair in Pragpur, a Christian missionary and



a Hindu priest cause a disturbance when their respective preaching becomes confrontational. Paul then finds himself between these two opposing forces: “[He] stood between the still preaching missionary and the fakir; he looked from one to the other as though doubtful what steps to take” (294; ch. 20). As he hesitates, the crowd suddenly presses in around him and he is trampled underfoot. His death, literally coming from his hesitation in choosing a side, allows Perrin to comment on the ultimate tragedy of Paul’s life. She knew she could go only so far with making Paul Vereker the hero of her novel. In her portrayal of Paul, Perrin could call into question those leading stereotypes that said Eurasians were lazy, uneducated, and gullible. Paul shows no signs of these perceived faults at any point in the narrative. But, at the same time, he cannot be fully English, and Perrin had to decide what qualities would lead to his demise without undercutting his good character. During the riot, Paul proves indecisive over which “side” to choose and fails to take action. Courageousness and activity are two of the most important qualities an Englishman could possess. Prior to the riot, Paul proves that he has these qualities because of the strong English influence of his father’s side that Perrin repeatedly mentions. However, in a crucial moment, Paul does not demonstrate enough “Englishness” to make a quick decision and quell the impending chaos. Perrin’s choice is subtle. Committing violence against the native people, she suggests, would be second nature to an Englishman – indeed, Goring wants Paul to use his cane on the crowd and yells to him, “Strike, you fool!” (294; ch. 20) – but Paul’s indecisiveness is linked to his overwhelming kindness and love for both sides. He inadvertently chooses to sacrifice himself rather than turn against the Indians or the British. This is Perrin’s comment that the Eurasian “problem” is not solely with the shortcomings of the group itself, but with the inability of all groups to coexist. In such an environment, any good qualities that might help foster better relations are simply crushed underfoot in the struggle for cultural dominance.

Allen Greenberger claims that this cultural suspension of being between two worlds, India and England, was one of the few places of common ground for the Eurasians and the British (180). Selma should be able to find some solace in her relationship with Paul because both are between these two worlds. However, she cannot overcome her own race prejudice and distances herself from her husband. In this way, she not only lets Paul down, but also disappoints her own country as she fails in her colonial responsibility as a British woman in India. The need to have women who are strong, supportive caregivers to their husbands in official colonial service is mentioned by Perrin frequently in her novels, as she repeatedly portrays the idealized memsahib figure. By allowing Paul such potential career success prior to his realization of Selma’s racial fears, Perrin hints that had Selma been brave enough to conquer her fears, the couple could have been a positive influence – socially, intellectually, and politically – in Praggpur. According to Nancy Paxton, romances which involved British women marrying Indian men tend to be more complex than conventional romances and usually eschew the happy ending that includes an endorsement of the colonial mission (194). Although not discussed in Paxton’s chapter, Alice Perrin’s *The Stronger Claim* is just such a novel. Paul’s ultimate failure to resist the opposing cultural forces around him is ultimately tragic and heroic, his is the tragedy of lost potential; Selma’s inability to withstand her social difficulty is only weakness and failure, linked to no heroism on her part. She leaves her husband to spend the holidays with friends and thus fails to be the supportive wife Paul needs her to be. This reading is supported by the conclusion of the novel. After Paul’s death, Selma remarries and moves back to England, but her final words and actions concern Paul. As she finds the sheet music to “The Love Song of Har Dyal,” the song that symbolizes

her initial romantic desire for Paul, Selma can only “sob” and whisper “Oh! Paul! . . . poor Paul!” (305; ch. 21). It is here that the song which had such meaning for the couple gains new significance. The tragic refrain, “Come back to me, Beloved, or I die,” could easily be read as a further comment on Selma’s failure. She indeed left Paul both physically and emotionally, and he was in turn emotionally weakened by her lack of support. Thus, Selma is denied the neat and happy new beginning that Perrin created for many of her main characters, who frequently return to England much happier than they were in India. Instead of a bright future, Selma has only regret about the past.

According to Hsu-Ming Teo, the decline in popularity of Anglo-Indian romances after Indian independence shows that the central interest in these novels was grounded in depictions of British life in the Raj instead of concern with India and its native inhabitants. Thus, India served as a convenient and exotic backdrop for “white love stories” (Teo 2). The novels of Alice Perrin complicate this assertion. Although she supported the imperial mission, Perrin was able to portray sympathetic mixed-race characters who are symbolic of British India’s own identity crisis. The portrayal of characters such as Paul Vereker also call into question the belief that these Anglo-Indian domestic novels only employ formulaic romance plots and that their authors never concern themselves (or readers) with serious socio-cultural issues. The unsettled ending of *The Stronger Claim*, a novel that refuses to provide easy answers, is Perrin’s comment on increasing interracial tensions caused by imperialism.

*University of South Carolina*

## NOTES

1. *The Stronger Claim* was first published by Eveleigh Nash in October 1903 (*The English Catalogue of Books, 1901–1905*, 843) and was published under Perrin’s full name. Both *East of Suez* (1901) and *The Spell of the Jungle* (1902) were published under “A. Perrin.” A second edition of *The Stronger Claim* was published by Chatto & Windus in February 1908. The first American edition was published by Duffield and Company in 1910. In June 1913, William Collins published another edition. In March 1925, Harrap published a “Cheap Edition.” The final edition published during Perrin’s lifetime was in April 1929 by the Literary Press. All citations in this essay are to the 1910 American edition.
2. The “Eurasian problem” is dealt with in several novels from the late Victorian period into the early twentieth century and beyond Indian independence. These include novels by Fanny Farr Penny and Hilda Gregg (writing under “Sydney C. Grier”), Mary Churchill Luck’s *Poor Elisabeth* (1901), Nina Stevens’s *The Perils of Sympathy* (1902), Bithia Mary Croker’s *Her Own People* (1903), and C. E. Phillimore’s *Two Women and a Maharajah* (1906). Post-independence novels include John Masters’s *Bhowani Junction* (1954) and Jon Godden’s *The City and the Wave* (1954).
3. Debates about inherited deficiencies in Eurasians continued throughout the nineteenth century. According to Christopher Hawes, notions of “Eurasian genetic inferiority” were widespread by the 1830s (82). As early as 1812, Dr. Alexander Bell, in his *Report of the Military Male Orphan Asylum at Madras*, described the mixed-race orphans in negative terms, coming to the conclusion that Eurasians were mentally and morally inferior to Europeans (Hawes 28, 83). Likewise, an 1838 *Asiatic Journal* three-volume series entitled, “Anglo-India, Social, Moral, and Political,” claims that “the intermixture of blood has limited both the corporeal and the intellectual stature of the race” (2: 135; qtd. in Hawes 82).

4. The decision to exclude Eurasians from covenanted service in 1791, which, according to Hawes, meant that “Eurasians were classified with the vast majority of the Indian ruled rather than the British rulers” (55), resulted in limited employment opportunities for the group throughout the nineteenth century. Typically, British colonials and “native” Indians were favored over Eurasians for many positions (both official and non-official). These policy decisions were based on issues of control. As Hawes notes, “It was, paradoxical as it may seem, *because* [Eurasians] were of British paternal descent that it became expedient to deny Eurasians full British status, for experience showed all colonial powers the vital necessity of retaining the key levers of political control of subject territories in the hands of their own nationals and out of those of the indigenous populations of western descent” (56). For more information on the difficulties faced by Eurasians seeking employment with the British civil service and military, see Chapter Three of Christopher Hawes’s *Poor Relations: The Making of a Eurasian Community in British India, 1773–1833* (1996).
5. By 1910, Eurasians had begun to appropriate the term “Anglo-Indian,” a description that was previously used for the British living in India. In the 1911 census, the Government of British India officially replaced “Eurasian” with “Anglo-Indian” as the term used to describe people of mixed white and Asian ethnicity. Throughout this essay, I will use “Eurasian” to refer to people of mixed race living in India and “Anglo-Indian” to refer to the British resident in India.
6. Historically, the Portuguese presence was more prevalent in Goa and other parts of South India, less so in the north.
7. For more information on Eurasians and their involvement with the British Army, see Chapter Four of Hawes’s *Poor Relations* (1996), as well as Grimshaw’s 1959 essay, “The Anglo-Indian Community: The Integration of a Marginal Group.”
8. Though space does not allow its inclusion here, Alice Perrin would again make mixed-race identity a main theme in *The Charm* (1910), which concerns the sympathetic Teresa Nottage, a Eurasian woman who marries an Englishman. Though Teresa does not display all of Paul Vereker’s positive qualities, she is similar to Paul in that her husband, Mark Rennard, becomes physically and emotionally detached because of his inability to accept her mixed-race heritage. Teresa knows she is losing Mark’s affection, and becoming desperate, she asks her grandmother (the manipulative Bibi Klint) for a charm to win back his love. Unknown to Teresa, the “charm” is actually poison, and she almost kills her husband. She nurses Mark back to health, but during his delirium, overhears his confession of love for Eve Lancaster. Heartbroken, Teresa leaves to go back to Krabganj and kills herself with the remaining poison. Despite the fact that she almost kills her husband, Perrin manages to create a substantial amount of reader sympathy for Teresa, mainly through her pathetic attempts to fit into British society at Koranabad. *The Charm* quickly ran through five editions and was included in both Methuen’s Colonial Library Series and its shilling series. Like *The Stronger Claim*, *The Charm* also garnered positive reviews which acknowledged Perrin’s literary involvement with racial concerns of the day. For instance, *Country Life* claimed that “the tragedy that must follow on any attempt to break down that eternal barrier between ‘white’ and ‘dark’ has seldom been better treated than in Mrs. Perrin’s new book” (404).
9. A title of respect given to older Indian women.
10. “The Love Song of Har Dyal” was originally included in Rudyard Kipling’s story, “Beyond the Pale,” in *Plain Tales from the Hills* (1888). Another significant connection the song’s source has to Perrin’s novel is the Hindu proverb that serves as epigraph to Kipling’s story: “Love heeds not caste nor sleep a broken bed. I went in search of love and lost myself.”

## WORKS CITED

- Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994.
- Butterfield, R. A. “The Domiciled in India.” *Imperial and Asiatic Quarterly Review* 17 (April 1904): 407–10. Rev. of *The Charm*. *Country Life* 28 (17 Sept. 1910): 404.

- Chaudhuri, Rosinka. "Introduction." *Derozio: Poet of India*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008. xxi–lxxxii.
- Crooke, William. *Things Indian: Being Discursive Notes on Various Subjects Connected with India*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906.
- Dhar, Kiran Nath. "Some Indian Novels." *Calcutta Review* 127 (Oct. 1908): 561–83.
- "Eurasian." *The Century Dictionary: An Encyclopedic Lexicon of the English Language*. Vol. 2. New York: Century, 1914.
- Greenberger, Allen J. *The British Image of India: A Study of the Literature of Imperialism, 1880–1960*. London: Oxford UP, 1969.
- Grimshaw, Allen D. "The Anglo-Indian Community: The Integration of a Marginal Group." *Journal of Asian Studies* 18.2 (Feb. 1959): 227–40.
- Hawes, Christopher J. *Poor Relations: The Making of a Eurasian Community in British India, 1773–1833*. Surrey: Curzon, 1996.
- Macdonald, Allan John. *Trade Politics and Christianity in Africa and the East*. London: Longmans, Green, 1916.
- "On the Policy of the British Government towards the Indo-Britons." *Asiatic Journal* 20 (Sept. 1825): 305–08.
- Paxton, Nancy L. *Writing under the Raj: Gender, Race, and Rape in the British Colonial Imagination, 1830–1947*. New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 1999.
- Perrin, Alice. *The Charm*. London: Methuen, 1910.
- . 1903. *The Stronger Claim*. New York: Duffield, 1910.
- Procida, Mary A. *Married to the Empire: Gender, Politics and Imperialism in India, 1883–1947*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 2002.
- Reynolds-Ball, Eustace. *The Tourist's India*. London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1907.
- Sainsbury, Alison. "Married to the Empire: The Anglo-Indian Domestic Novel." *Writing India, 1757–1990: The Literature of British India*. Ed. Bart Moore-Gilbert. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1996. 163–87.
- Sandberg, Graham. "Our Outcast Cousins in India." *Contemporary Review* 61 (June 1892): 880–99.
- Sharpe, Jenny. *Allegories of Empire: The Figure of the Woman in the Colonial Text*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1993.
- Rev. of *The Stronger Claim*. *Academy & Literature Fiction Supplement* 65 (7 Nov. 1903): 507.
- Rev. of *The Stronger Claim*. *Athenaeum* (19 Dec. 1903): 823.
- Rev. of *The Stronger Claim*. *Book Review Digest*. Minneapolis: H. W. Wilson, 1910. 310.
- Rev. of *The Stronger Claim*. *Classified Catalogue of the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, 1902–1906*. Pittsburgh: Carnegie Library, 1908. 1049.
- Rev. of *The Stronger Claim*. *Guardian* (16 Dec. 1903): 5.
- Rev. of *The Stronger Claim*. *Spectator* (30 Jan. 1904): 189.
- Teo, Hsu-Ming. "Romancing the Raj: Interracial Relations in Anglo-Indian Romance Novels." *History of Intellectual Culture* 4.1 (2004): 1–18.