

Paul Bijl

Emerging Memory

Photographs of Colonial Atrocity in
Dutch Cultural Remembrance

Amsterdam
University
Press

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Introduction

Icons of Memory and Forgetting

In the Dutch East Indies – the group of islands that is now part of the Republic of Indonesia – a number of photographs of colonial atrocities were taken in 1904. This study investigates the subsequent appearances of these photographs in Dutch cultural memory, i.e. the way in which groups of people remember the past through all kinds of representations.¹ The photographs, which depict the results of massacres in villages in the Gajo and Alas lands on the island of Sumatra, were taken by the Royal Netherlands East Indies Army (KNIL) during a military expedition as part of the Atjeh War, which lasted from 1873 to 1908.² This study follows these photographs over the course of the last century as they were framed by texts, other images, and discourses within Dutch cultural memory by a variety of mnemonic communities: groups that produce cultural memories and are themselves shaped by these.³ The most important of these communities in this book is the nation of the Netherlands as an imagined community, while important other communities include the Dutch military (chapters 1 and 2) and the *Indische* Dutch – those Dutch adults and children who had lived in the Dutch East Indies (chapter 3). All in all, these photographs reappeared more than seventy times in a wide variety of contexts.⁴

The two photographs that stand at the heart of this study were taken on 14 June 1904 by a Dutch medical officer named H. M. Neeb of the Dutch colonial army. They were taken after the massacre of 561 adults and children of the village of Koetö Réh in the Alas land, south of the area called Atjeh (now: Aceh) on the island of Sumatra (Figures 0.1 and 0.2, henceforth

1 For the most complete overview of the field of cultural memory studies, see Erll 2011. In this study, I follow Frederick Cooper in defining a colonial empire as a “political unit that is large, expansionist” and which subjects people to “coercive incorporation into an expansionist state and invidious distinction”. What distinguishes *colonial* empires in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries from other types of empires, Cooper writes, was the fact that “[s]ubordination was no longer a fate to which anyone might be subject, but a status assigned to specific people, whose marking therefore became an issue” (2005, pp. 27-8). Dutch policies and operations are called “imperial” when I focus on the expansionist aspects of the Dutch colonial empire (especially the many local wars between 1870 and 1914, which from an international perspective can be characterized as the period of “modern imperialism”), and “colonial” in all other cases.

2 On the Atjeh War, see Van 't Veer 1969; Reid 1969, 1979; Groen 1983; Siegel 2000.

3 For the concept of mnemonic community, see Zerubavel 2003.

4 See “List of where the 1904 photographs have appeared” at the back of this book.



Figure 0.1. H. M. Neeb. KR2. Koetö Réh, 14 June 1904. Photograph, 12.1 x 17.1 cm. Royal Tropical Institute, Amsterdam, inv. no. 60011258.



Figure 0.2. H. M. Neeb. KR3. Koetö Réh, 14 June 1904. Photograph, 11.6 x 17 cm. Royal Tropical Institute, Amsterdam, inv. no. 60009090.

referred to as KR₂ and KR₃). During a military expedition that was part of efforts around 1900 by the Dutch to subjugate all the islands of what is now the Republic of Indonesia, a number of villages in the Alas and neighboring Gajo lands were stormed by the army, which kept on shooting until all resistance had stopped.

KR₂ shows the walled village in which the bodies of murdered villagers form a diagonal line that runs like a river from the lower right corner all the way to the left side of the image and then upwards to a group of soldiers who are preparing the burial of the dead. In KR₃, soldiers of the colonial army and their commander (lieutenant-colonel G. C. E. van Daalen, standing all the way to the left) stand on the palisade of Koetö Réh, while killed Alas lie scattered on the village ground. In the center of the image, next to the soldier standing on the village ground and sitting in a cage-like construction of poles, a surviving child can be seen. In chapter 1, these two images will be more elaborately analyzed and contextualized.

By investigating these specific images, this study seeks to change thinking on the nature of cultural memory and forgetting in general and Dutch colonial memory in particular.⁵ In the Netherlands, commentators have claimed over and over again that the colonial past – especially its violence – has been “forgotten” in the sense that it has vanished without a trace. Uncovering “lost” photographs has thereby become a regularly returning theme aimed at unmasking a hidden truth. There was, moreover, always someone to blame for the supposed amnesia, from politicians and historians to the press and the military.

In my view, there are two problems with this analysis: on the one hand it supposes a binary opposition between memory and forgetting, while on the other hand it starts from the assumption that cultural memory is a phenomenon brought about or thwarted by the intentions and actions of specific human actors. Against this either/or, intentionalist perspective on cultural memory, which is also the dominant approach within the broader field of memory studies, this book argues that memories can also have a more ambiguous – and in this case, haunting – presence in society and that it is not always possible to pinpoint specific actors who are to blame (or praise) for cultural memory being the way it is. Building on the work of Ann Laura Stoler, Michel Foucault, and Paul Ricoeur, in particular, I will show that rather than being absent, the 1904 photographs have consistently been present in the Dutch public sphere, but that they have sometimes

5 “Colonial memory” means “memory of colonialism”, and I use it as an umbrella term for all cultural memories of colonialism in both the colonial and postcolonial periods.

appeared as absent because they were not meaningful within established frameworks. The problem with these photographs, therefore, is not one of being lost or found but one of semanticization, i.e. the production of meaning. One concept that will be crucial throughout this book is Ann Laura Stoler's "cultural aphasia" (2009a, 2011), which can be described as the inability of a mnemonic community to find appropriate words to name events in the world.

This book introduces the concept of "emerging memory" to characterize the type of memory that is produced in a situation of cultural aphasia. Emerging memories are those representations of the past that are periodically rediscovered while retaining their shady presence. They keep on irritating a culture's self-conception because they prove hard to integrate into the existing narratives that a mnemonic community tells about itself and its past. That they nevertheless regularly re-emerge proves their durable relevance for the community in question.

Icons of Memory and Forgetting

A number of recent publications accompanied by photographs of Dutch colonial violence illustrate the current understanding of these images. One is a 2010 book by István Bejczy on the history of the Netherlands from prehistory to 2009. Bejczy writes that because of his book's scope and the limited number of pages, he offers only "elementary knowledge": of all phases in Dutch history, only the basics are given (5). The two short sections on the Dutch East Indies survey the most important events from that period⁶ and include two images: one of the signing of the transfer of sovereignty in 1949 (233)⁷ and KR2, taken after what Bejczy calls the destruction of Koetö Réh by the Dutch colonial army during the Atjeh War (209). In the book, the latter image works on different levels, but one of these is that it sums up the whole of the history of the Dutch in the Indies in one photograph of colonial atrocity.

In another overview of Dutch history by Geert Mak et al. entitled *Past of the Netherlands*, KR3 is called an icon of the Dutch colonial past (2008: 376). Robert Hariman and John Lucaites describe photographic icons as

6 The Dutch East Indies fell into Dutch hands again in 1816, after a British interregnum from 1811. From the perspective of the Dutch state, the Dutch East Indies came to an end in 1949. Indonesia declared itself independent in 1945.

7 This well-known film still shows Queen Juliana sitting between Indonesian Prime Minister Mohammad Hatta and Dutch Prime Minister Willem Drees.

[those] photographic images appearing in print, electronic, or digital media that are widely recognized and remembered, are understood to be representations of historically significant events, activate strong emotional identification or response, and are reproduced across a range of media, genres, or topics. (2007: 27)

The authors of *Past of the Netherlands* compare the 1904 photograph to Picasso's *Guernica* (1937) and Nick Ut's photograph *Napalm Girl* (1972) from the Vietnam War. In the same way that those images represent not only the bombing of the Basque town of Guernica and a girl running down the road after a napalm attack but also the Spanish and Vietnam Wars respectively, the 1904 photograph, these historians claim, represents in the Netherlands the Atjeh War, colonial warfare, or even the Dutch colonial past.⁸ As a widespread representation of a historically significant event, the photograph of Koetö Réh is produced here as an icon of memory.

In contrast to these two history books, there is a publication that appeared in 2010 in a one-off magazine published on the occasion of Memorial Day and Liberation Day on 4 and 5 May respectively (Figure 0.3).⁹ Since the purpose of the organizing committee of these holidays was "to place the memory of and discussion on the Second World War and discussion about it in a broad context" (back matter), the magazine includes, among others, articles on the Srebrenica massacres, iconic war photographs, contemporary wars in Africa, war in video games, and – importantly for the present discussion – Dutch colonial warfare. This last article is entitled "The (Not to Be) Forgotten War in Atjeh", and in it, author Lucia Hogervorst offers an account of how the Atjeh War was represented in Dutch high school history books from the 1950s onwards. Although the war was discussed in these books, she argues that in public memory the war is largely forgotten and that "[i]t is quite possible that the Atjeh War will be removed from the list of subjects [taught in high school], which is overcrowded anyhow" (56). She illustrates

8 See Peirce 1955 on iconic signs.

9 C. van der Heijden 2010. The magazine was freely distributed "at manifestations on the occasion of the commemoration of the [Second World] war at Dutch public libraries, service clubs, museums, and educational institutes" (back cover). Copies could be found in the so-called "liberation train" which housed an exhibition, and which was part of a larger program which included lectures, film screenings, and debates. The motto for the commemoration and celebration as a whole was "*Stilstaan bij vrijheid*", which means both "Dwelling upon Freedom" and "Not Taking Freedom for Granted". See: www.stilstaanbijvrijheid.nl. Retrieved on 17 June 2010. The 4th and 5th of May commemorate the deaths in the Second World War and the liberation of the Netherlands (and the Dutch East Indies) respectively.



Figure 0.3. Lucia Hogervorst. “De (niet te) vergeten oorlog in Atjeh.” Detail. From *Voorbij maar niet verdwenen: Oorlog: 65 jaar na de Tweede Wereldoorlog*. Ed. Chris van der Heijden. N.p.: n.p., 2010. 54-55. NIOD Library.

her article with two photographs, one of which is from 1898 from the Pedir expedition, which was also part of the Atjeh War (Figure 0.4, henceforth referred to as PD). It shows Dutch colonial soldiers standing around and on top of killed Atjehnese opponents as if they were hunting trophies. Within the context of the article, the photograph emerges as a revelation: the reader is told s/he is observing something that is important but that has nevertheless been forgotten. In the context of the magazine, the photograph becomes something of an indictment, for the Atjeh War is the only subject presented as no longer being where it properly belongs: in Dutch cultural memory. Whereas in the two history books discussed above, a photograph of colonial violence was an icon of memory, here it is an icon of forgetting.

The paradox produced by these publications is that although these photographs are, in the words of Hariman and Lucaites, historically significant, emotionally charged, and widely reproduced, they are nevertheless considered to be hidden. What I argue in this book is that this is the case not because these images have actually been unavailable or are part of a cover-up but because they have failed to become meaningful within a national framework for most observers, while for others they cannot be viewed in any other manner.



Figure 0.4. C. B. Nieuwenhuis. PD. Pedir, 1898. Photograph, 16.8 x 23 cm. Royal Tropical Institute, Amsterdam, inv. no. 60054676.

Dutch Colonial Memory¹⁰

In the last fifteen years, an impressive amount of literature has emerged on Dutch cultural memory of the Dutch colonial empire in Asia, as well as on the periods of the Japanese occupation of Indonesia (1942-1945) and the Indonesian struggle for independence (1945-1949).

How has Dutch colonialism and especially its violence been remembered by Dutch colonial historians?¹¹ According to Cees Fasseur, the dominant perspective in Dutch history books from the colonial period was the colonial gaze. The only exceptions, he writes, were the works of J. C. van Leur who had argued that the Dutch image of the Indies was limited to what was visible “from the deck of the ship, the rampart of the fortress, the high

10 I limit myself here to the cultural memory of Dutch colonialism in Asia.

11 There are several publications that primarily address the historiography of Dutch colonialism during both the colonial and postcolonial periods. See Cribb 1994; Van Doorn 1994, pp. 11-17; Fasseur 1995, pp. 252-73; Wesseling 1995; Houben 2002; Raben 2007. On military colonial historiography of the Netherlands; See Groen 1983. On the history exams in Dutch high schools, of which colonial history was a part in 1976, 1988, 2001, and 2007, see Sutherland 2000 and Locher-Scholten 2006.

gallery of the trading-house".¹² Until the end of the colonial period, there was little nuance in the Dutch image of the Indies, as illustrated by the 1941 collaborative study *Something Great Was Achieved There... The Dutch East Indies in the XXth Century* (Fasseur 1995: 255).¹³ All in all, early Dutch colonial historians were part and parcel of the national project of Dutch colonialism.

In the first decades after decolonization – the Dutch acknowledged Indonesia's independence in 1949 after two so-called police actions in 1947 and 1948-1949, while the last Dutch colony in Asia, New Guinea, was annexed by Indonesia in 1962-63 – several non-Dutch scholars such as the American George McTurnan Kahin (1952) and the Swiss Rudolf von Albertini (1966) wrote critical studies of both Dutch colonialism and its ending, to which historians in the Netherlands gave a dismissive response (Fasseur 1995). These Dutch historians themselves, in the meantime, were mostly silent about the colonial past. To counter the foreign critiques, in 1961 H. Baudet and I. J. Brugmans edited a volume entitled *Taking Stock of Policy (Balans van beleid)* in which Dutch repatriates from the Indies looked back positively on the colonial period, while from 1963 onwards S. L. van der Wal and others published twelve volumes of source material on Dutch colonial policy in the period 1900-1942.¹⁴ From 1957 onwards, moreover, plans were made for another collection of sources, namely on the decolonization period (1945-1950). Twenty volumes were eventually published between 1971 and 1996.¹⁵ Elsbeth Locher-Scholten notes that source publications can be a way to write about contested issues, as the suggestion is made that no interpretations are offered and the sources "speak for themselves" (1997: 256). According to Fasseur (1995: 259), the outcome of these source publications was a much less positive image of Dutch policies, especially vis-à-vis Indonesian nationalism, than the editors had hoped for. Around 1970, a number of studies were published that focused specifically on Dutch colonial violence.¹⁶ The early twenty-first century saw renewed scholarly

12 See Fasseur 1995, pp. 252-73; see Van Leur 1939. The English translation of the quote by Van Leur is derived from Wertheim 1954, p. 168.

13 The Dutch title is *Daar werd wat groots verricht...Nederlandsch-Indië in de XXste eeuw*. See Van Helsdingen 1941.

14 See Van der Wal 1963; Van der Wal 1964-1965; Van der Wal 1967; Creutzberg 1972-1975; Kwantes 1975-1982.

15 On the history and reception of this series, see Locher-Scholten 1997.

16 The 1969 *Memorandum of Excesses* which listed excessive violence used by Dutch soldiers during the first and second police actions (also called the Dutch-Indonesian Wars); Paul van 't Veer, *The Atjeh War* (1969); and J. A. A. van Doorn and W. J. Hendrix, *The Derailment of Violence: About the Dutch/Indisch/Indonesian Conflict* (1970), which was about Dutch violence in the

interest in this latter topic with Stef Scagliola's book (2002) on what she called the "working through" of Dutch war crimes committed during the police actions and with Henk Schulte Nordholt's article (2002) on the Dutch East Indies as a "state of violence". Both authors positioned themselves as breaking through a scholarly silence.

What we can conclude is that, except for the first decade after decolonization, Dutch historians have published extensively on the Dutch colonial past, including its violence, but that there has been a sustained difficulty matching events and categories. The endless volumes with source material point to the struggle experienced by Dutch historians in writing about this subject, while the ever-present need to unveil the truth shows that within professional history, colonial violence is unfinished business. What is telling in this respect is the debate about the concept of imperialism: it was only in the 1980s and 1990s that it became an acceptable concept among Dutch colonial historians, with the longstanding tradition of seeing Dutch colonialism as a benign exception to the rule being abandoned.¹⁷ At the same time, Schulte Nordholt's thesis of the Indies as a state of violence has been further developed in a number of key historical publications on Dutch colonial violence towards the end of the colonial period, for instance in Marieke Bloembergen's history (2009) of the police in the Indies and in the special edition of *Journal of Genocide Research* on mass violence and the end of the Dutch colonial empire in Indonesia (Luttikhuis & Moses 2012; Raben 2012). Still, in the same issue, Remco Raben writes that "Dutch historiography has demonstrated... an indifference to the humanitarian disasters wrought by colonial assertion" (488). In Dutch colonial history, colonial violence is both a topic of regular debate and frequently experienced as forgotten.

Dutch colonial memory in the broader social scene has been studied in many books and articles. An important part of these studies addresses the memory of the Japanese occupation, during which many Dutch suffered both inside and outside the Japanese camps, and the memory of the years of violence between 1945 and 1949.¹⁸ According to Gert Oostindie (2010: 79), the

late 1940s. See Bank 1995 (the memorandum was compiled by Cees Fasseur); Van 't Veer 1969; Van Doorn and Hendrix 1970. See also chapter 4.

17 See Kuitenbrouwer 1985; Wesseling 1988; Wesseling 1989; Kuitenbrouwer 1991; Locher-Scholten 1994b.

18 The chronologically ordered list of these publications is Van Doorn 1995, pp. 63-77; Gouda 1995, pp. 237-42; Kennedy 1995, pp. 69-73; Locher-Scholten 1995; Meijer 1995; Houben 1997; Legêne 1998, pp. 13-24; Locher-Scholten 1999; Raben 1999; Van Vree 1999; Vos 1999; Captain 2002; Locher-Scholten 2002; Scagliola 2002; Locher-Scholten 2003; Oostindie 2003; Coté and Westerbeek 2005; Oostindie 2005; Gouda 2007; Pattinama 2007; Van Leeuwen 2008; Oostindie

final phase of the Dutch presence in Asia – the period between 1942 and 1949 – has received much more attention in the Netherlands than the 350 years that preceded it, i.e. the period of the Dutch East India Company (1602-1799) and the Dutch colonial state (1816-1942). The most important explanation for this is that those who suffered during the Japanese occupation or during the late 1940s are present and vocal within postcolonial Dutch society, but those that made up the largest group under Dutch colonialism – then legally called “natives”, now Indonesians – are not. Next to whites and natives there was a third group that was identified within the racial classificatory system in the Dutch East Indies, namely the mixed-race *Indische* Dutch or Indo-Europeans. Legally, these people were Europeans. Together with *totoks* or white *Indische* Dutch, they form the group of 300,000 repatriates from the Indies usually referred to as “*Indische* Dutch”. Although Indo-Europeans suffered from racial discrimination in the Indies, they generally did not publicly identify themselves as victims of Dutch colonialism. As Lizzy van Leeuwen has shown, differences of color within the *Indische* community were ignored as much as possible. In order for this color blindness to be maintained, there was an increasing tendency among the members of this group to identify themselves as victims of the Second World War, during which all Dutch had been “equally” victimized (2008: 345). In short, Indonesian victims of the colonial period did not have spokespersons from

2010; Bijl 2011; De Mul 2011; Scagliola 2012; Bijl 2012; Van Ooijen and Raaijmakers 2012; Raben 2012; Pattynama 2014. A rich source on Dutch cultural memory of decolonization is Remco Meijer's collection of interviews *East-Indisch Deaf: The Dutch Debate on the Decolonization in Indonesia* from 1995, in which Meijer took up interviews with eighteen Dutch historians and authors who reflected on the Dutch cultural memory of Indonesia's decolonization. Stef Scagliola's 2002 *Burden of War: Coming to Terms with the Dutch War Crimes in Indonesia* relates how Dutch politicians, historians, and veterans from the Dutch-Indonesian Wars have remembered Dutch violence during those wars. A milestone for reflection on the Japanese occupation is historian Remco Raben's edited volume *Representing the Japanese Occupation of Indonesia: Personal Testimonies and Public Images in Indonesia, Japan, and the Netherlands* from 1999, specifically because in this book not only Dutch but also Indonesian and Japanese perspectives are elaborately discussed. In 2002, Esther Captain published her dissertation on the experiences and recollections as recounted in the journals and memoirs of (former) internees of Japanese camps. Lizzy van Leeuwen's 2008 book *Our Indian Heritage* on the cultural heritage of repatriates from the Indies and the dissemination of this heritage in Dutch society includes an elaborate account of the nostalgia towards the Indies in Dutch colonial memory, centered around the term “tempo doeloe” which in the Netherlands means “the good old days” (99-167). In 2010, Gert Oostindie published *Postcolonial Netherlands: Sixty-five Years of Remembrance, Commemoration, Repression* in which he gives an overview of the immigration, struggle, and gradual integration in the Netherlands of migrants from the Indies, Suriname, and the Dutch Antilles. This book also has a section on Dutch colonial memory (148-58).

within their own midst to make their case in the Netherlands and could only be spoken *for* by Dutch people, while there was little room for people who were not identified as white to speak up.¹⁹

Elsbeth Locher-Scholten has described the long journey and the many efforts on the part of the *Indische* Dutch to have the Japanese capitulation commemorated in the Netherlands. It has only been since 1999 that a special commemorative ceremony is held each year on 15 August at a monument built for this very purpose in The Hague. She emphasizes the diversity within the group of 300,000 people who came to the Netherlands in the period between 1945 and 1964: former soldiers; those who had been imprisoned by the Japanese; those who were children during the Japanese occupation (*kampkinderen*); and the group of Indo-Europeans who had not been imprisoned but still had to endure many hardships (*buitenkampers*) (1999). In addition, there were Moluccan soldiers who had fought for the Dutch against the Indonesian Republic and who had been brought to the Netherlands under misleading pretexts. They had been told that their stay in the Netherlands would only be temporary, as they would soon be returning to their own Republic of the South Moluccas (RMS), and were dismissed from the army as soon as they arrived (see Smeets and Steijlen 2006). Race had far-reaching effects on the groups coming from the Indies: Gert Oostindie (2010: 83) writes that the concerns of *totoks*, for instance, often supplanted those of Indo-Europeans, so that white suffering was more visible within Dutch society.

In the 1940s and 1950s, these groups were given very little attention. Victimhood was not an acknowledged category in the Netherlands at this time, and people were expected to completely adapt to mainstream Dutch society (see Van Leeuwen 2008: 47-98 and chapter 3). (The same was true for the victims of German National-Socialism.) As Esther Captain has shown in the case of former internees of Japanese camps, however, people did speak *within* their communities – though “in a whisper”, as she emphatically calls it (2002: 189). Moreover, a small group of Indo-Europeans around Tjalie Robinson cherished “Indo culture” and kept the memory of the Indies alive (Van Leeuwen 2008: 47-98).

At the end of the 1960s, the colonial past began to be hotly debated once again as a result of the 1969 television appearances of Dutch colonial army soldier Joop Hueting in which he discussed acts of violence committed by

19 On the notion of spokespersonship in relation to cultural memory, see De Haan 1997, pp. 151-4, 229. See also Spivak 1988. On colonial memory in Indonesia, see Zurbuchen 2005; Siegel 2009; Bijl 2012; and Raben 2012.

Dutch soldiers during the Indonesian revolution. These facts, positioned as revelations, led to widespread debate in the Dutch media all throughout 1969 (see chapter 4 of this book). During the 1970s, increasing attention was paid to the psychological effects of war, resulting in the growing conviction among a large part of the population that victims of war should be taken care of in the context of the welfare state (Locher-Scholten 1999: 62-3). The same decade also saw a number of violent actions by Moluccans, for instance the hijacking of trains in 1975 and 1977. Meanwhile, *tempo doeloe* culture – the Dutch variant of postcolonial nostalgia – became increasingly popular in the Netherlands, making *Indische* culture available to all Dutch, whether they came from the Indies or not (see Van Leeuwen 2008; Bijl 2013; and chapter 3 of this book).

In the 1980s, migrants from the Indies became more organized and put pressure on a very reluctant Dutch state to acknowledge their suffering and to compensate them financially. However, as Hans Meijer concluded in a 2005 study, the so-called backpay has been too late and, to this day, too little. Gert Oostindie (2010: 79) writes that the *Indische* and Moluccan memories of the Second World War in the Pacific and its aftermath are marked by bitter grievance. Other things were successfully established, however, such as the *Indische* Monument in The Hague (1988), the *Indische* Remembrance Centre Bronbeek in Arnhem, and the financing of a research project on the history of Dutch people from the Indies by the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO).²⁰ Over the years, moreover, other groups of victims and periods of violence also came into view, such as the *Bersiap* period (1945-1946), a chaotic time of Indonesian violence after the Japanese capitulation during which many Indo-Europeans and Chinese were murdered (Bussemaker 2005); members of the resistance against the Japanese (Immerzeel and Van Esch 1993); girls and women who had been forced to work as prostitutes for the Japanese (Ars 2000; Banning and Janssen 2010); and African soldiers who had been recruited by the KNIL (Van Kessel 2005). The *romusha* – Indonesians who were forced to work for the Japanese and died in great numbers – were also recognized as having suffered.

Emerging Memory is the first book-length study to analyze Dutch colonial memory during both the colonial and postcolonial periods in the Indies and the Netherlands, making it possible to gain insight into its continuities and discontinuities across decolonization. Most importantly, it seeks to offer

20 Willems 2001; Bosma and Raben 2003; Meijer 2004; Bosma, Raben and Willems 2006. See also Willems and Raben 1997; Meijer 2005; Keppey 2006.

a fresh perspective on Dutch colonial memory and to explain why Dutch colonial violence is rediscovered again and again and exposed as “forgotten”.

Dutch Colonial Forgetting

What role does the notion of forgetting play in the literature and debates on Dutch colonial memory? The publication by Hogervorst discussed above is a variant on a narrative that goes back more than a century in the Netherlands in which the violence of Dutch colonialism is rediscovered time and again. Photographs often play a central role in the argument that is being made. In a 2009 photo book on the Dutch-Indonesian Wars, René Kok, Erik Somers, and Louis Zweers write:

For a long time the official image of the war in Indonesia was determined by romantic images of ‘our boys overseas’, who, beneath the palm trees, were warmly greeted by a population which turned out in massive numbers... Before everything else, readers of newspapers had to be reassured... Intentionally a colored and misleading image was given. (7)

By contrast, the authors write that the reader will find in their book the product of “[r]ecent research in archives in the Netherlands, the study of private collections, but also research of unknown collections of hard-to-access archives in Indonesia”, which yielded “a selection of photographs which gives a more unfiltered view on what happened” (7-8).

“Lost” photographs are not only presented as revelations in themselves but also set against other images that allegedly represent a dominant yet false image of the Indies in Dutch cultural memory (see also Vanvugt 1993). In his 2009 article “A Photograph (Sometimes) Says Less than a Thousand Words”, for instance, photo historian Hans Rooseboom discusses Dutch photo books from the postcolonial era with photographs from the Indies. These books, he writes, “have had a great influence on our image of the Dutch East Indies”, and “chiefly radiate harmony and serene quiet...: nostalgia and rest all around, nothing to see” (28). The article is accompanied by two photographs from the archives of the Deli Company and the Rubber Culture Company Amsterdam which show “large pieces of land where all trees have been cut, the trunks are lying around like matches and broad, deep roads have been dug out. Photographs like these we hardly ever find in books” (29). One of the photographs reminds Rooseboom of battle scenes from the First World War: “You could easily be mistaken, until on one of the photographs

a car enters the picture with two men in spotless white tropical outfits. Then you know for sure that you are not in Flanders, but in the Indies” (ibid).

Historians, moreover, have described this sequence of events – the Indies are hidden; the Indies are exposed – as already taking place during the colonial period, for instance all the way back in 1904. In a 1996 book, historian Martin Bossenbroek contrasts two of the most reproduced photographs from the Dutch East Indies. He captions the first photograph (Figure 0.5) “Van Heutsz and his staff at Batoe Iliq. *Eigen Haard*, 23 November 1901”. The photograph shows the governor of Atjeh, J. B. van Heutsz, calmly observing his troops during the Atjeh War. This photograph had been published in the magazine *Eigen Haard* (“Sweet Home”) aimed at Dutch Protestant families. Bossenbroek writes that “that was the kind of violence everybody wanted to believe in, because it expressed the self-evident superiority of the Dutch rulers” (46; see also Bossenbroek 2001). The other photograph is a picture of the soldiers standing on the palisade of Koetö Réh (KR3). Bossenbroek writes: “That there were also other images was a shock, and especially a deep, personal disappointment for those who believed in a sanctified war... that kind of violence, no, that was not supposed to be part of it” (47). In Bossenbroek’s account, efforts to prevent Dutch colonial violence from falling into oblivion were already being undertaken in 1904.



Figure 0.5. C. B. Nieuwenhuis. General van Heutsz and Staff at Baté Ilië, 1901. Postcard, 7.5 x 14 cm. KITLV/Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies, Leiden, inv. no. 1403896.

Many contemporary Dutch historians are not too fond of the critique that the Dutch have yet to uncover their own colonial history. Bossenbroek's argument can be read as unmasking the unmaskers by showing that colonial violence was already "discovered" in 1904. In a 1995 interview, historian Jan Bank criticized those who only accused without offering an analysis of Dutch colonialism. Typical in this respect, he claimed, was a discussion on the front page of a national newspaper (*de Volkskrant*) of a 1994 book on the first Dutch police action against the Republic of Indonesia in 1947, which offered only data "which had already been known for a long time. Apparently, the new generation of *Volkskrant* editors saw something very new in it" (Bank 1995: 82). Locher-Scholten (2002: 669) also argues that the media have a weak memory. Fasseur, responding to accusations that he himself had covered up certain aspects of Dutch colonial history, writes that some participants in the debate "seem to possess the memory of a three-year-old child", as almost all aspects have already been taken up in historical studies: "Those who wish to refresh their memory this year are therefore recommended to pay a trip to the book store or the remaindered books of De Slegte [the Dutch Strand]" (1995: 273). And J. A. A. van Doorn noted in 1995 that "Those who are now still asking for a debate on the Indies, as happened again at the beginning of this year, have not read a newspaper or watched television for thirty years" (72).

The "unmaskers", in the meantime, are often surprised that their revelations do not lead to anything. Rudy Kousbroek, who published a number of books and articles intended to expose Dutch colonialism, admits to having been surprised that "there were hardly any responses. No polemics, no letters to the editor" (1992: 241). Scagliola, who can be identified as one of the few "unmasking" historians, writes that while investigating what she saw as a "cover-up culture" concerning the Dutch colonial past, she came across "an unexpected factor": "Not only me, but also [others] apparently have the misplaced expectation that a disclosure about a significant case would automatically lead to a debate" (2002: 244). In a 1995 interview, Joop Hueting, the Dutch colonial soldier who had revealed Dutch war crimes back in January 1969, remarked that when the My Lai case in Vietnam became known in November 1969, "the Dutch stood up front to cry shame over it" as if they had learned nothing and nothing had changed (57).

A similar argument is present in the debate on the role of the media: some argue that the media do not show enough of the Dutch colonial past, especially its violence, while others hold that this is the only thing they show. Locher-Scholten (1994a, 1997) sees an important role for the media in "closing the gap between scholarship and the public" concerning knowledge

of the police actions in the late 1940s. Historians, she says, have done their job. Media historian Chris Vos (1994, 1999) challenges the assumption that the media have not paid enough attention to the Dutch violence back then and writes that since 1969 there have been dozens of television documentaries on the police actions that were critical about the role the Dutch played. On the other side of the spectrum are those who hold that the media pay too much attention to colonial violence. Historian P. J. Drooglever, for instance, claims that in the media “a moralizing approach rules, in which the past is seen in terms of good and evil, and attention is concentrated on a few moments” (quoted in Blokker 1997: 304), leading to an overemphasis on the violence of colonialism.

All in all, everybody has found somebody else to blame for what Bank (1995: 86) has called the remarkable fact that the results of historical research do not seem to be coming across to the general public. The photographs are simultaneously said to be on the table and under the carpet. This study seeks to explain this contradiction and to show the complexity behind what has been presented as a binary opposition between memory and forgetting. I argue that rather than focusing on a lack or surplus of documents, this problem can best be analyzed by looking at the way in which these documents have been framed.

Forgetting in Cultural Memory Studies

A comparable opposition between memory and forgetting as it figures in the Dutch debate on colonial memory is sometimes operative in the field of cultural memory studies. Astrid Erll gives a sketch of the broad field of memory studies, which in her account ranges from “individual acts of remembering in a social context to group memory (of family, friends, veterans, etc.) to national memory with its ‘invented traditions,’ and finally to the host of transnational *lieux de mémoire* such as the Holocaust and 9/11” (Erll & Nünning 2008: 2). In the last decades, the nexus of intentional remembering, narrative, and identity has been central to the field.

In cultural memory studies, less has been written about forgetting than about memory, though when forgetting is brought up, it is usually given great importance.²¹ One of the first who pointed to the importance of forgetting

21 See, for instance, overviews of the field provided by Olick and Robbins 1998; Misztal 2003; Erll 2005; Erll and Nünning 2008; Radstone and Schwarz 2010; Olick, Vinitzky-Serouss and Levy 2011; Erll 2011.

in a national context was Ernest Renan, who in his 1882 lecture “What is a Nation?” asserted that “[f]orgetting, I would even go so far as to say historical error, is a crucial factor in the creation of a nation” (1990: 11; see also Anderson 1991). Literary scholar Harald Weinrich wrote about the word “forgetting” (*vergessen* in German):

Etymologically, the element *-gessen* (compare to the English *-get* in *forget*) expresses a movement towards me: I “receive” something. However, through the prefix *ver-*, this movement... changes in the opposite direction. Now the word expresses “to receive away”. There is an element of irritation in this turnabout movement which is also expressed in the fact that in German *vergessen* is an active verb... while our observation of events of forgetting indicates rather that forgetting happens to us without our active doing. (1997: 11-12)

Following historian Luisa Passerini, we can point to a paradox in forgetting: we cannot look for something we forgot unless we remember it at least in part (2003: 239).

While in the word “forgetting”, there is a tension between presence and absence, this is much less the case in the metaphors used to discuss forgetting. As Weinrich (1997: 16-18) shows, a binary logic is operative: metaphors of space and landscape represent forgetting as a wilderness, a desert where it does not matter whether you write in the wind or the sand; metaphors of the storehouse or the archive represent forgetting as what is hidden: it is in an abyss, in the dark, or even in a crypt or grave; metaphors of writing represent forgetting as a *tabula rasa*, an erasure, a lack.

This binary logic can also be found in a number of publications in cultural memory studies. Aleida Assmann, for instance, uses the metaphor of the storehouse in the distinction she makes between storage memory (*Speichergedächtnis*) and functional memory (*Funktionsgedächtnis*) in her 1999 *Erinnerungsräume*:

On the collective level, storage memory consists of what has become unusable, obsolete and strange; the neutral, factual knowledge alien to identity, but also the repertoire of missed possibilities, alternative options and unused chances. In the case of functional memory, however, it is all about appropriated memory, which emerges from a process of selection, connecting, and construction of meaning. (137)

While functional memory is “inhabited”, storage memory is “uninhabited”, and “radically separates the past from the present and the future” (133). The dichotomy between remembering and forgetting and the metaphor of the storehouse return in a more recent article from 2008, in which Assmann writes that “[i]n order to remember some things, other things must be forgotten” (2008: 97). Forgetting is thus associated with neglect, destruction, and trash. While the distinction Assmann has made is in many respects fruitful, it cannot account for the type of case in which there is a simultaneity of memory and forgetting.

This binary way of thinking is also present in Paul Connerton’s book *How Modernity Forgets* in which he argues that in modernity (which he defines as the capitalist world since 1850) the “art of memory”, featuring both “a stable system of places” and “a human scale”, is undermined by “processes that separate social life from locality and from human dimensions: superhuman speed, megacities that are so enormous as to be unmemorable, consumerism disconnected from the labor process, the short lifespan of urban architecture, the disappearance of walkable cities”. All these transformations threaten “the meaning of life based on shared memories” (2009: 5). Connerton offers a bleak image of a hostile world in which everybody is an everlasting victim of forgetful modernity, while the pre-modern world was one full of embodied, territorialized memory. The same dichotomous thinking about memory and forgetting can be found in his 2008 essay “Seven Types of Forgetting” in which he claims that forgetting is usually seen as failing. He goes on to offer a typology of forgetting in which memory is again and again “eliminated”, “consigned to oblivion”, “forbidden”, and “discarded”. In Connerton’s perspective, there is either memory or forgetting. How easily his argument can be turned around, however, becomes apparent if we look at Viktor Mayer-Schönberger’s argument (2009: 241) that in the digital age we have lost the capacity to forget, as everything is stored in the digital realm. The easy shifting of “the age of forgetting” from modern to pre-digital times alone is indicative that something more complicated is going on than studies like these suggest.

Objects: The 1904 Photographs as Portable Monuments

This study investigates the complexity of memory and forgetting by looking at the subsequent appearances of a number of photographs of colonial violence from 1904. According to Hariman and Lucaites, photographs are

evoked in public debates, and their history of appropriation is also a history of public culture (2007: 173). As this study will show, the 1904 photographs have indeed functioned as such and have from their first public appearance onwards been framed as icons which formed important points of social encounter for debates on Dutch colonialism and Dutch colonial memory.²² They form an example of what Ann Rigney has called the workings of the “scarcity principle” in cultural memory, by which she means:

the fact that everything that in theory might be written or said about the world does not actually get to be said in practice. Culture is always in limited supply, and necessarily so, since it involves producing meaning in an ongoing way through selection, representation and interpretation. (2005: 16)

Scarcity in cultural memory, Rigney argues, leads to the selection, convergence, and repetition of memories. As will be shown, the 1904 photographs have gone through all such processes.

The social biography of photographs such as those from 1904 provides a good case study to investigate the complexity of cultural memory and forgetting because in it we find a set of relatively stable cultural artifacts together with a history of widely differing semanticizations.²³ Photographs are “portable monuments”, a concept I derive from the work of Rigney to denote sites of memory that “can be carried over into new situations” (2004: 383).²⁴ Rigney builds on the concept of a *lieu de mémoire* as developed by Pierre Nora (1996) and defined by Astrid Erll as “any cultural phenomenon, whether material, social or mental, which a society associates with its past and with [its] identity” (2011: 25).

The 1904 photographs have been reproduced regularly: in the Indies and the Netherlands more than seventy times, and in media that are connected to crucial events and tendencies in Dutch colonialism and its aftermath. Few photographs from the Indies have been reprinted that often or have

22 I use the term “icon” primarily as it was developed by Charles Sander Peirce, not as it was developed by Hariman and Lucaites. This means that the concept of icon, in this study, is first of all an indication of a photograph’s *likeness* to its object and not so much of its wide reproduction, dissemination, recognition, and remembrance.

23 For the notion of the social biography, see Appadurai 1986; Kopytoff 1986; Edwards 2001.

24 Rigney distinguishes these portable monuments, which in her case are primarily literary texts, from *lieux de mémoire* in a more literal sense, e.g. stone monuments that are “fixed in a particular site”.

been invested with so many different meanings.²⁵ Unlike artifacts from later periods, moreover, these photographs enable a significant stretch of the colonial period to be dealt with. That they are photographs from the Atjeh War is no coincidence, for as Petra Groen writes, “about the expeditions in Atjeh more has been published than on all the military operations in all the other areas of the Dutch East Indies combined” (1983: 93).

The study of the 1904 photographs can be seen as exemplary for the debate on Dutch colonial memory and forgetting as a whole as it has been conducted over the last century.²⁶ This debate covers most of the colonial period in the Indies, from the period of modern imperialism (1870-1914) to the Dutch-Indonesian Wars of the late 1940s. There are, of course, many differences between the expeditions around 1900 and the police actions, but within the debate as such they have similar positions. As military historian Petra Groen said in an interview: “from the Dutch perspective... the [police] actions were in line with what were once called ‘expeditions’ to Atjeh and Lombok” (1995: 114). Most important, however, is my own finding that the model I have developed in this book to explain the ambiguous, shifting position of these photographs has proven to be productive for many other cases of and debates on Dutch colonial memory (see Bijl 2012).

Method: Frame Analysis

The complexity of memory and forgetting in the subsequent appearances of the 1904 photographs is analyzed by investigating the ways in which these images were framed. Since Maurice Halbwachs's 1925 book *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire*, the concept of the frame has been used in cultural memory studies to describe the reciprocal relationship between individual memory and the social scene.²⁷ An important source for the contemporary analysis of framing in culture studies is Jacques Derrida's *The Truth in Painting* in which Derrida writes about the frame as the *parergon* (literally in Greek: “by the side of the work”), which is “neither work (*ergon*) nor outside

25 Other “candidates” include the three photographs mentioned above: the photograph from the 1890s of the soldiers standing on and around the killed Atjehnese as reproduced in Hogervorst 2010 (one could argue that this image is the same “type” as the 1904 ones); of Juliana at the transfer of sovereignty; and of Van Heutsz standing at Batoe Iliq.

26 There are a number of photo-historical studies on the 1904 photographs by Anneke Groeneveld (1991, 2001).

27 See Halbwachs 1925; Halbwachs 1992, pp. 35-189; Irwin-Zarecka 1994; Erll 2005, pp. 34-35. Irwin-Zarecka bases her book on Goffman 1974.

the work [*hors d'oeuvre*], neither inside nor outside, neither above nor below, [and] disconcerts any opposition but does not remain indeterminate and... *gives rise to the work*" (1997: 9). Mieke Bal, in discussing the verb "framing", prefers it over "context" since framing "produces an event" and involves "time in interpretation and analysis" (2002: 135-7). Framing should therefore not be seen as placing a frame that already existed in itself around an object or practice that already existed in itself, but as an event in which *frame and framed produce each other*. However, when there is no operational closure in the reciprocal production of frame and framed, the latter may exceed the former, leading to fissures of meaning. In such cases, as Judith Butler writes, "the frame never quite determined what it is we see, think, recognize and apprehend" (2009: 9). So while people perceive photographs in a certain manner because of certain frames, photographs can also have the power to question frames that are produced by a mnemonic community. This questioning may be a sign of a more fundamental ambiguity in a mnemonic community's self-conceptions. It is this situation of photographs exceeding their framing that can produce cultural aphasia and emerging memory.

In this study, framing is seen as operating on several levels, namely on the level of the photographic image, on the level of the accompanying texts and other images, and on the level of discourses. The frame of the physical border of the photograph is shaped during the photograph's production and reproduction.²⁸ Technologically, cameras and printing technologies in 1904 had certain possibilities, and the same goes for the technologies by which the photographs were reproduced at later moments. Due to longer shutter times in the early twentieth century, for instance, movement could not be registered on camera, which yielded a rather static impression of the scenes depicted. Compositionally, the positioning of the frame (e.g. through cropping or enlargement) and the resulting constellation of volumes and lines related the image to certain genres and visual cultures (i.e. the ways in which the visual is part of social life) (Rose 2007: 4). The positioning of conquerers above the vanquished, for instance, had been an iconic way to portray victory in Europe in 1904, while in the early twenty-first century – one century later – such images are seen with rather different eyes. Economically, not everyone had the means to buy a camera or the skills to take photographs, certainly

28 In the 1980s, critics placed much emphasis on the institutional and discursive framing of photographs (see Burgin 1982; Sekula 1986; Tagg 1988). Their distrust of photography is also strongly present in Sontag 1973. After the trenchant critiques of photography by critics in the 1980s, however, others have returned to the photographic image as an object of analysis (see Mitchell 1994; Batchen 1997; Edwards 2001; Hight and Sampson 2002; Mitchell 2005). On comparable tensions between image and language in art history, see Ginzburg 1990.

not in 1904. In the Indies, photography was primarily a technology owned and used by Europeans, as in most colonial situations.²⁹ Also today, the 1904 photographs are unevenly accessible: though widely reproduced in print and on the internet, not everyone has access to these media or the means or skills to reproduce or disseminate the photographs. Finally, discourses – the implicit systems that structure the way in which we perceive and produce reality – also condition the physical frame of the photograph. In 1904, imperial discourse – i.e. a discourse focused on expansion of the colonial empire – was the most important in this respect, but later on other discourses, e.g. anti-colonial ones, reproduced the photographs, framing them differently.

The frame of the photographic image creates an active awareness of a “blind field”: the space beyond the frame and the moments before and after the one that the single photograph asks the viewer to imagine (Scott 1999: 26). The frame of the photographic image both stops and suggests the flow of time; it both delimits and suggests a space. This makes photographs both richly provocative and susceptible to texts and other images that can overwrite this blind field. As Clive Scott writes: “a language appropriate to the photograph is difficult to find... [and] the photograph is vulnerable to inappropriate languages” (ibid: 37). Because of the blind field, the same photograph can be semanticized, i.e. given a meaning in many ways depending on the way in which it is framed.

The photographic image can be framed by a variety of texts and other images, a composition that forms what has been described by W. J. T. Mitchell as an “imagetext” (1994: 89): a mixed medium in which there is no strict division between texts (which can also be seen) and images (which can also be read) (2005: 343). A title or caption can relate to the photograph in three ways: it can label where and when a photograph was made, it can describe its contents, or it can take some distance from it so that the meaning of the photograph and its title or caption are in their “point of convergence” (Scott 1999: 47). These three relations roughly correspond to the semiotic triad index-icon-symbol as developed by the philosopher Charles Sander Peirce (1955). Photographs have a direct *physical* relation with the people and things in front of the lens

29 On European photography in the Indies, see Zweers 1988; Faber et al. 1989; Reed 1991; Vanvugt 1993; Wachlin 1994; Nieuwenhuys 1998; Mrázek 2002; Theuns-de Boer and Asser 2005; Van den Berg and Wachlin 2005; Groeneveld 2007; Jansen 2007; Bijl 2009. On the Javanese photographer Kassian Céphas (1845-1912), see Knaap 1999. On the relation of Kartini (1879-1904) to photography, see Mrázek 2002, pp. 92-93. On Chinese photographers in the Indies, see Strassler 2008. On the relation of Atjehnese to photography, see Siegel 2009. On colonialism and photography, see Edwards 1992; Pinney 1997; Ryan 1997; Poole 1997; Edwards 2001; Hight and Sampson 2002; Pinney and Peterson 2003; Schwartz and Ryan 2003; Edwards 2004.

at the moment the photosensitive plate was uncovered, which makes them *indices*. Indices indicate: if there is no object, there is no index. An indexical caption is, for instance, “Koetö Réh, 14 June 1904”. Photographs also have a *likeness* to their objects, which makes them *icons*. The photographs of atrocity, for instance, have a likeness to the massacred village in Atjeh, but as icons they can also be seen as having a likeness to bigger things, such as the Atjeh War, or Dutch imperialism, or the Dutch East Indies as a whole. Photographs are particularly convincing icons, as they are also indices and appear to have this direct physical relation with their objects. Symbols, finally, work through convention: they are arbitrary. Placing your foot on top of a killed enemy, as happens in photograph PD for instance, is a symbol for victory, and “Victory” would be a symbolic caption for that particular photograph. In the case of iconic and symbolic captions, Scott writes, we are “a step away from the image towards its assimilation by, and interpretation through, language” (49), and the blind field of the photograph is overwritten.

The grammar and syntax of captions is crucial to their interpretation: deictic elements, verb tenses, and other aspects can suggest acts and events or predicaments and conditions, direct the viewer’s focus towards acts or agents, and frame the photograph as a solitary image or part of a narrative (*ibid*: *passim*). With respect to narrativity: it is only through the frame of an imagetext that a single photograph, to which narrative is alien (*ibid*: 60), can be understood or viewed in a spatial-temporal continuity with a certain development.³⁰ The same photograph can therefore become part of a victorious narrative of colonial conquest, an exceptional narrative of one officer’s bloodlust, or an uncertain questioning of national identity, to name just three of the narratives (or lack thereof) of which the Atjeh photographs have been a part.

Once part of an imagetext, photographs are part of a semiotic channel through which a possible world can be accessed by a reader-viewer.³¹ Each imagetext in which a photograph is taken up provides access to a different possible world in which different protagonists in different times and spaces

30 The importance of narrative framing of photographs in a familial context is the topic of Hirsch 1997 and Langford 2001.

31 See Doležel 1998, pp. 12-24; Ryan 2001, pp. 99-105. Marie-Laure Ryan writes: “The basis of PW [possible-world] theory is the set-theoretical idea that reality—the sum total of the imaginable—is a universe composed of a plurality of distinct elements, or worlds, and that it is hierarchically structured by the opposition of one well-designated element, which functions as the center of the system, to all the other members of the set. The central element is commonly interpreted as “the actual world” and the satellites as merely possible worlds. For a world to be possible it must be linked to the center by a so-called accessibility relation”.

perform different actions. To give one example of space: in different imagetexts, the villages in the 1904 photographs of atrocity have been framed as lying in the Gajo and/or Alas lands, which was positioned either inside or outside of Atjeh. Atjeh itself has been framed as either always a part of the Republic of Indonesia (e.g. by Indonesian nationalists) or always independent (e.g. by members of the Free Aceh Movement GAM); it either never became part of the Dutch East Indies or did so without a doubt; and was sometimes, because of its historically strong ties with the Middle East, thought closer to Southwest Asia than to Java, the neighboring island. The villages have been framed as villages, or fortifications, or fortified villages, etc.

What is specific of a possible world entered through an imagetext which includes documentary photographs is that it is mostly experienced as part of the actual world (i.e. an individual's representation of reality): we read history, journalism, and comparable "realistic" genres as descriptions of (a past) reality, unless we feel the world they depict does not coincide with our actual world, in which case we resist accessing it. In short, all observers of the 1904 photographs have used them to tell a realist story about a past, present, or future world which somehow had spatial and temporal contiguity with their own world.

Discourses are the implicit rules that condition how people observe the world and therefore how they interact with it (Foucault 1981). In this study, the concept of discourse is understood in terms of Jacques Rancière's concept of *le partage du sensible*, in which *partage* means both "separation" and "distribution", and *sensible* means "perceptible". The distribution of the perceptible refers to "the implicit law governing the [perceptible] order that parcels out places and forms of participation in a common world" (2004: 85). In the colonial and postcolonial situations studied in this book, class, race, and gender are crucial elements in this distribution. Certain forms of participation in the world were only available to certain people, because the distribution of the perceptible places different bodies in different spaces and times. Natives in the Indies, for instance, were mostly seen as living in a time preceding (and thus more backward than) Europeans, making it impossible for them to achieve high-end positions within the colonial system or even to attain citizenship. Like Foucauldian discourses, the distribution of the perceptible conditions what is apprehended by the senses: "It is a delimitation of spaces and times, of the visible and the invisible, of speech and noise, that simultaneously determines the place and the stakes of politics as a form of experience" (ibid: 13). The implicit rules of the distribution of the perceptible lead to a particular "perceptible order": how the social

field is visually constructed, or in more simple terms, what the world looks like at a certain moment.³² The 1904 photographs, produced by what I call an “imperial distribution of the perceptible” (see chapter 1), themselves exhibit an “imperial perceptible order”. What happened as they moved from frame to frame was that their perceptible order was reprinted in a variety of later distributions of the perceptible which were not compatible with the photograph, such as an ethical, a nostalgic, and an anti-authoritarian distribution of the perceptible (see chapters 2, 3, and 4). Such a confrontation between a distribution and an order that are at odds with each other can cause disturbances such as cultural aphasia.

To summarize: in this study, a photograph, as part of an imagetext, is understood as a portable monument that provides access to a past possible world that is temporally and spatially related to the viewer’s actual world and, itself displaying a particular perceptible order, can create moments of irritation in relation to the distribution of the perceptible in which it is semanticized.

Emerging Memory: Between Semanticization and Cultural Aphasia

According to Judith Butler, “frames structure modes of recognition” (2008: 24) and “produce certain subjects as ‘recognizable’ persons and... others decidedly more difficult to recognize” (6): “there is no life and death without a relation to some frame” (7). Cultural memory is also dependent on the availability of frames. Yet, as was explained above, Butler also pointed out that there can be “[s]omething [which] exceeds the frame that troubles our sense of reality” (9). It is at such a moment that “other possibilities for apprehension emerge” (12).³³ The instability caused by the 1904 photographs hinges on the question whether the dead they depict are part of a national narrative or not, and what the recognizability and memorability of these

32 I see Rancière’s “distribution of the perceptible” and “perceptible order” as running parallel to W. J. T. Mitchell’s “the social construction of the visual field” and “the visual construction of the social field”: “it is not just that we see the way we do because we are social animals, but also that our social arrangements take the form they do because we are seeing animals” (Mitchell 2005: 345). See also Mirzoeff 2009, pp. 15-20.

33 The circulation of photographs has been the subject of a number of anthropological studies such as Pinney (1997), Poole (1997), and Edwards (2001), several of which build on the concept of the social biography of objects as developed by Arjun Appadurai and Igor Kopytoff in the 1986 collection *The Social Life of Things*.

bodies means for the imagined and mnemonic community that is the Netherlands. The problem with these images is that they are at the same time a part of and outside of the national frame, as they can be neither incorporated nor expelled.

Framing, other than a binary opposition between memory and forgetting, directs attention towards the *conditions* of memory: not *if* there is memory but how, where, and for whom. Silences, moreover, do not always indicate absences. Passerini points out that while silences can indicate oblivion (unlike forgetting, oblivion is not a process but a state of mind), they can also point to the fact that “conditions for... expression no longer (or do not yet) exist” (238). This latter type of silence does not indicate a repression of “the event nor the memory nor even single traces, but [of] the very connection between memories and traces” (240). Paul Ricoeur has made a similar distinction between “forgetting through the erasing of traces” (Passerini’s oblivion) and “forgetting kept in reserve (*oubli de réserve*)” (2004: 414). In the latter case, “it is... no longer oblivion that materiality begets, forgetting by the effacement of traces, but forgetting in terms of a reserve or a resource” (440). These latter memories are “the birds in the dovecote... which I ‘possess’ but do not ‘hold’” (441). So even when the photographs and their semanticizations seem to have submerged at moments, this does not necessarily imply that they have sunk into oblivion but rather that they are kept “in reserve” (see also Edwards 2001: 1-23).

When a photograph proves hard to frame, its observers can be confronted with what Derrida calls its “*passe-partout*”: the blank spaces between these frames and the image.³⁴ Normally when we look at a photograph, it functions as a window on the world, yet when we are confronted with its materiality, we see it *as a photograph* and will therefore also observe its material surroundings: the *passe-partout*. This *passe-partout* is the *craquelure* of an old photograph, the white between the caption and the image, the air between the photographs as they are archived in a filing cabinet, the cinema between a reel of film with a documentary on the Indies and the projection of that film on screen, the staircase and the corridors of the institute that reproduced the 1904 photographs in a book, and what is in between the

34 In *The Truth in Painting*, Derrida writes about the *passe-partout*: “One space remains to be broached... Neither inside nor outside, it spaces itself without letting itself be framed but it does not stand outside the frame. It works the frame, makes it work, lets it work, gives it work to do... *Between* the outside and the inside, between the external and the internal edge-line, the framer and the framed, the figure on the ground, form and content, signifier and signified, and *so on* for any two-faced opposition” (11-12).

parts into which the perceptible is divided. It is exactly these spaces that produce meaning, for as art historian Rosalind Krauss writes:

spacing is not an exteriority that signals the outside boundaries of meaning: one signified's end before another's onset. Rather, spacing... is the precondition of meaning as such, and the outsideness of spacing is revealed as already constituting the condition of the 'inside'. (1985: 106)³⁵

Spacing makes visible the *passe-partout*: the white and the air between signifiers that make meaning possible. This moment, Butler holds, has a critical dimension, for it is “when a frame breaks with itself... that taken-for-granted reality is called into question” (2009: 12).

This is the position of the 1904 photographs: alternating between silence and sound, between semanticization and cultural aphasia when there is a confrontation with their *passe-partout*. The mediated memories of the 1904 photographs can therefore be described as emerging memories: whereas Ann Rigney (2008b) has argued that memory sites only stay alive as long as people invest them with meaning, this study seeks to conceptualize those sites of memory that have become icons of both memory and forgetting. The notion of e-merging has a comparable ambiguity as for-getting, for it means “un-dipping” or “un-sinking”. One of the meanings of the verb “to emerge” in the *Oxford English Dictionary* is “to come up out of a liquid in which (the subject) has been immersed”: things can only emerge if they are first immersed. The present participle *emerging* indicates the continuity and repetitiveness of the process.

The difficulty in the Netherlands to find a frame that was considered appropriate for these images, leading to an inability to put the photographs into language, will be addressed in this study through the concept of “cultural aphasia”. Contrary to ideas about a “colonial amnesia” which supposedly prevented France from talking about colonialism for a number of decades, Ann Laura Stoler has suggested the concept of “colonial aphasia”. In neurolinguistics, aphasia is a cover term referring to a number of acquired language disorders due to cerebral lesion which leads to the affliction of comprehension and production in the oral and written modalities (Busmann 1996: 27). Stoler transposes this concept from the medical to the social scene:

not to pathologize historical loss as an organic cognitive deficit but rather to emphasize two features: that it is not so much a loss of memory, but an

35 Krauss follows the lead of Derrida 1976.

occlusion of knowledge that is at issue. Aphasia is rather a dismembering, a difficulty speaking, a difficulty generating a vocabulary that associates appropriate words and concepts to appropriate things. Aphasia in its many forms describes a difficulty retrieving an available vocabulary, and most importantly, a difficulty comprehending what is spoken. (2009a; see also 2011)

Aphasia in culture studies can be traced back to the pioneering work of linguist and literary theorist Roman Jakobson in what we now call “linguistic aphasiology” (Tesak & Code 2008: 179-90). Building on the linguistic work of Ferdinand de Saussure, Jakobson described two types of linguistic difficulty caused by aphasia: the similarity and the contiguity disorder: “The former affliction involves a deterioration of metalinguistic operations, while the latter damages the capacity for maintaining the hierarchy of linguistic units... Metaphor is alien to the similarity disorder, and metonymy to the contiguity disorder.” (1971b: 254). For patients suffering from a similarity disorder, problems lie in choosing the right word when the context offers little help: they lack paradigmatic capacity and the ability to link metaphorically. Jakobson gives the example of a patient saying “I can hear you dead plain but I cannot get what you say... I hear your voice but not the words... It does not pronounce itself” (249). When another patient was shown a picture of a compass, he said he knew what it was, but could not come up with the represented object’s name. According to Jakobson, the problem for this patient was that “a verbal sign [was] supplanted for a pictorial sign” (247). Patients suffering from a contiguity disorder, on the other hand, are affected by a condition that “diminishes the extent and variety of sentences” (251).

The examples Jakobson gives are of people with “medical” aphasia. But not finding a common vocabulary, not retrieving a certain word, or not being able to connect things to each other (grammatically or logically) happens to every speaker for whom certain frames are not available. This lack of a frame leads, according to Stoler, to “the irretrievability of a vocabulary, a limited access to it, a simultaneous presence of a thing and its absence, a presence and the misrecognition of it”. In the case of emerging memory, cultural aphasia can be caused by both a lack and an excess of frames: in the case of both the unavailability of language and of conflicting frames of interpretation, confusion can arise about the meanings of the 1904 photographs and whether they have been part of cultural memory in the first place, leading to them being discovered again and again.

A Lack of Interest?

Framing and cultural aphasia can help put an often drawn conclusion into perspective, namely that the Dutch were not interested in their colonies and are not interested in colonial memory and that this is the reason that information on the colonial period is unevenly distributed.³⁶ Historical records prove the fallacy of the idea of a lack of Dutch interest in colonialism. During the period in which the Dutch subjugated the islands of the Indies (1870-1914), for instance, there were several discursively produced moments (e.g. during the “struggle” over the island of Lombok in 1894, and the “betrayal” of Atjehnese ally Teukoe Oemar in 1896) in which “the Netherlands fell under the spell of unprecedented nationalistic sentiments” (Van den Doel 1996: 126).³⁷ Susan Legêne writes that the Colonial Museum (*Koloniaal Museum*) in Haarlem, which opened its doors in 1871, “can be regarded as the direct expression of the economic interest of the Dutch colonial elite at a time when colonialism was widely accepted and had become an inherent part of Dutch national identity” (2002: 638). A survey from December 1948 about the military operations the Dutch were undertaking to prevent Indonesia’s independence showed that 62% of the Dutch were in favor, 19% opposed, while 19% had no opinion (Locher-Scholten 1994a). Also later on, colonial affairs swayed Dutch national politics and public debate, for instance around the transfer of New Guinea – the last Dutch colony in the East – to Indonesia in 1962; the 1969 Hueting affair; the Moluccan actions in the 1970s; the question raised in 1994 whether a deserter from the Dutch colonial army, Poncke Princen, should receive a visa or not (see Houben 1997); the debate following the disclosure in 1998 of the excessive violence used in the Atjeh War under the command of Hendrik Colijn, who later became Prime Minister;³⁸ or the debate in recent years around the Javanese village of Rawagedeh, which was massacred in 1947. When this book was defended as a PhD thesis, five Dutch national newspapers (*Nederlands Dagblad*, *Reformatorisch Dagblad*, *De Telegraaf*, *Trouw*, and *de Volkskrant*) and several national public radio stations reported on it. Vincent Houben wrote in 1997: “What stands out is that Holland’s colonial past, the period 1945-1949 in particular, is as much taboo today as it was earlier” (64). Silences, in other words, do not always point to absences.

36 See for example Kennedy 1995 and Blokker 1997. For a comparable argument, see Raben 2012.

37 See also Van Goor 1986; Van 't Veer 1969.

38 See Langeveld 1998-2004; Eickhoff, Henkes and Van Vree 2010.

The idea of a disinterest in colonialism, moreover, puts the Dutch in a position of standing outside their own colonial history. This is false not only because the Dutch actually colonized other lands (separating colonizing Dutch from those who stayed “at home” is simply turning a blind eye), but also because today the Netherlands is at all levels a country situated in a world where the effects of colonialism are profound. The word “interest” comes from “inter esse”, which means “being in the middle”, and the Dutch, like most people, live in a world thoroughly shaped by European colonialism. Remco Raben writes that “colonialism was seldom *experienced* as an indispensable daily reality” but also that “the most important contribution of colonialism was (and is), except materially, the conviction that the West was (and is) the source of all progress” (2007: 1227; emphasis added). This means that even if people found themselves uninterested in colonial matters, these were still of vital importance to the formation of national identity. What happened was that people did not always have language available to directly address this history and legacy.

Frames, like Foucauldian discourses, should first of all be seen as productive, not as restrictive: they enable as much as they limit thought. Instead of looking for limitations, we should, as Foucault writes, search “for instances of discursive production (which also administer silences, to be sure)” (1998: 12). Sounds and silences should not be seen as standing in a binary opposition, for as Foucault writes:

[silence is] an element that functions alongside the things said, with them and in relation to them within over-all strategies. There is no binary division to be made between what one says and what one does not say; we must try to determine the different ways of not saying such things, how those who can and those who cannot speak of them are distributed, which type of discourse is authorized, or which form of discretion is required in either case. (ibid: 27)

This means that we should not look upon the first decades after decolonization, for instance, when there was relative silence in the Netherlands concerning the colonial period, as a time characterized by a lack of interest, but rather, as Susan Legêne has pointed out, as a time marked by “a deeply felt crisis in thinking about the Dutch nation” (2009: 239).³⁹

39 On silences in Dutch colonial memory, see also Captain 2002; Scagliola 2002.

Overview

In both the academic and the broader social scene, this study seeks to change thinking about memory and forgetting. It does so in two ways: by interrogating the logic of dominant accounts of memory and forgetting – a logic I see defined by a binary opposition between these two terms – and by moving away from a perspective on cultural memory in which specific groups in society cover up (undesirable) aspects of the past which then have to be unveiled to become visible and memorable. Conspiracies exist, but the case of the 1904 photographs is not one of them. Rather than looking for intentions, this study emphasizes how the production of cultural memory is dependent on discourses that are beyond the reach of individual actors, making it impossible for certain memories to become shared, as they do not fit existing distributions of the perceptible.

The photographs have been given meanings by various mnemonic communities, the most important of which are the Dutch communities in the Indies, various groups of migrants in the Netherlands from the former Indies, and the Dutch as a group of people produced by nationalist discourse. The analysis of the ways in which these images have been used within this latter, national framework provides insight into how the Netherlands has remembered the violence committed in colonial Indonesia. What this study shows is that an analysis of the framing of these portable monuments is just as revealing when they are put into discourse as when they prove to be hard to semanticize. The basic question asked by all the photographs' observers within the national framework – "Is what these images depict Dutch?" – has not only led to, on the one hand, strategies of denial and compartmentalization (see chapter 3) and, on the other hand, an incorporation of these images into larger critiques of colonialism (see chapter 4), but also induced moments of cultural aphasia. While the persistence of their presence in the Dutch public sphere is an indication that these images produce affective responses in their observers that make it hard for them to ignore these photographs, the difficulties in naming what these images depict also points towards their sustained uncomfortable position in Dutch cultural memory as well as a continuous uncertainty about what it means to be Dutch. One crucial finding of this study is that the position of these photographs within the Netherlands can be characterized not by their regularly claimed absence but by their continuous probing of established national self-conceptions.

Emerging memories arise when there is a lack of language in a community to give meaning to a particular site, leading to a recurring series

of events. First, such a site is discovered and semanticized as overlooked or neglected; next, different groups within the mnemonic community, using different frames of semanticization, give conflicting meanings to the site; and finally the site disappears from everyday public debate, after which a new discovery can be made and the cycle starts anew. There is, as it were, a periodical return to the scene of the crime without it ever being solved. Whereas, for instance, Bloody Sunday is a contested site of memory that is not discussed in terms of amnesia, Dutch colonial violence is a site that regularly emerges and submerges again, in the same way as German suffering during the Second World War⁴⁰ or the fact that Algerian soldiers fought on the French side during that same war.⁴¹ Emerging memory can be seen as a special type of contested memory, for not all contested pasts are regularly semanticized as “forgotten”.⁴²

This study is structured chronologically, beginning with the production of the photographs in 1904 and ending with their position in Dutch cultural memory in recent years. Chapter 1 discusses the production and first semanticizations of the 1904 photographs, which both took place within the social frame of the Dutch colonial army. Chapter 2 examines the social biography of the 1904 photographs during the colonial period in the Indies and the Netherlands (1904-1942) and discusses the anxieties and strategies of denial that the images elicited. Chapter 3 analyzes the Atjeh photographs as they were compartmentalized in Dutch postcolonial nostalgia and became sites of multidirectional memory in Dutch national history in the period 1942-1966. Chapter 4, finally, makes clear how in the postcolonial Netherlands after 1966 the photographs increasingly became focal points where discussions on the Dutch colonial past converged and how they became portable monuments of remembrance and amnesia.

40 See Röger 2009.

41 See Rosello 2010, pp. 109-13.

42 For the concept of “contested pasts”, see Hodgkin and Radstone 2003.

1 Imperial Frames, 1904

Introduction

This chapter discusses the production of the 1904 photographs and the first frames which semanticized them. The distribution of the perceptible within which they were produced and first given a meaning was that of the Royal Dutch-*Indisch* Army (KNIL), and accordingly this chapter will primarily observe the photographs from the army's perspective. What the army, concretely, produced were eight photographs of atrocity (i.e. photographs which depicted the corpses of Gajo and Alas villagers) as part of a larger photographic project during the expedition which yielded 173 photographs. In terms of imagetexts it made a list of captions which it sent along with the photographs to the Royal Batavian Society for Arts and Sciences (*Koninklijk Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen*) – a highly esteemed and very influential ethnological institute located in the colonial capital Batavia that covered ethnological, linguistic, archaeological and historical research and collections – as well as a number of narrative texts on the expedition by officers who had participated in it, several of which address the photographs and their production.⁴³ The photographs were reproduced and donated to several institutes, next to the already mentioned Royal Batavian Society also to the Royal Military Academy (*Koninklijke Militaire Academie*) in Breda, the Museum of Ethnology in Rotterdam (*Museum voor Land- en Volkenkunde*, now *Wereldmuseum*), and the National Museum of Ethnology (*Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde*, now *Museum Volkenkunde*) in Leiden.⁴⁴ In this study, the eight photographs of atrocity are coded so that they can be more easily traced: TT, PE, KR1, KR2, KR3, KL1, KL2, and KL3. Each acronym denotes a massacred Gajo or Alas village: Tjané Oekön-Toenggöl (TT), Pènòsan (PE), Koetö Réh (KR1, KR2, and KR3), and Koetö Lengat Baroe (KL1, KL2, and KL3). Although the production of the photographs was already mentioned in a newspaper article in the *Deli Courant* from June 1904 (see chapter 2), their first physical public appearance was on 5-12 February 1905, when they were exhibited

43 The narrative texts include the military report Van Daalen 1905 by commander G. C. E. van Daalen; the medical report Neeb 1905 by medical officer and maker of the photographs H. M. Neeb; the book Kempees 1905 by lieutenant J. C. J. Kempees; and a number of fragments from diaries by lieutenant J. W. Ebbink (quoted in Zentgraaff 1936: 197), and lieutenant-surveyor G. E. Hoedt (quoted in Zentgraaff 1936: 196-7). On the Royal Batavian Society, see Groot 2009.

44 See Stevens 2007; Groeneveld 2001.

in Batavia.⁴⁵ The first appearance of some of the photographs (namely TT, PE, and KR2) in a publication was in a 1905 book on the expedition by lieutenant J. C. J. Kempees.⁴⁶ I have gathered a list of where the photographs can be – or were – found, or where they were discussed or transmediated (see pp. 247-251).

As Susan Legêne argues, it was impossible in the Indies in the nineteenth century to think outside colonial discourse. This was still the case for the KNIL in 1904 (2005: 134; see also Said 2003: 240). The physical and the imagetextual frames of the photographs that the army produced were all conditioned by an imperial distribution of the perceptible, i.e. the implicit law conditioning a perceptible order in which the European power of the Netherlands was positioned as the future subjugator and ruler of all the islands of the Indonesian archipelago. Because of this framing by imperial discourse, this chapter is called “Imperial Frames”.⁴⁷

One of the consequences of this imperial framing was that for the army, the massacres had only one meaning: they were an inevitable step in the greater imperial project in which it was participating.⁴⁸ The army could not frame the 1904 photographs outside imperial discourse, which was the only frame it had at its disposal: it did not have language available to discuss the massacres in any other way. It was only later, in the confrontation with other frames of semanticization, that the *passé-partout* of the photographs became visible and multiple meanings started to emerge, making the photographs contested and emerging potable monuments.

This chapter starts with a narrative overview of the 1904 expedition on the basis of the writings of several of the officers who took part in it as well as a positioning of the expedition within the Atjeh War. Next, I will offer a close visual analysis of two of the 1904 photographs. The photographs will be connected to two pictorial genres (that of the captured local leader and that of the imperial massacre) to show that they were part of a larger visual culture in which these images did not disturb the distribution of the perceptible. Finally, I will discuss how the army semanticized the photographs. What

45 See *Notulen* XLII (1905), p. 127; XLIII (1906), p. 10; *Nieuws van den dag voor Nederlandsch-Indië* 2 February 1905, p. 4; 6 February 1905, p. 2; 7 February 1905, p. 2.

46 On 9 April 1955, the newspaper *Nieuwe Leidsche Courant* wrote that on the following day, former lieutenant J. C. J. Kempees, 82 years old, would be celebrating the fact that he was given a high military honor fifty years ago for brave behavior during the Atjeh War.

47 As indicated above, I use the term “imperial” when focusing on the expansionist aspects of the Dutch colonial empire.

48 See Groen 2002 on the normalization within Dutch colonial army circles of this type of violence.

will become clear in the course of this chapter is that the cultural aphasia and present absentness that are so characteristic of the social biography of the 1904 photographs in the Netherlands were not yet present within the imperial frames of colonial army circles. The army in the Indies, at least in this case, did not search for words: it either recognized the things it observed as belonging to the only world it perceived as possible, or it violently adjusted reality to meet the imperial perceptible order it envisioned. Operational closure is all that is to be found in the army's documents.

The 1904 Expedition and the Atjeh War

The expedition to the Gajo and Alas lands took place from 8 February to 23 July 1904 under the military command of the Dutch lieutenant-colonel G. C. E. van Daalen. In 1905, Van Daalen published an extensive military report on the expedition, structured day by day as a diary, and with meticulous mappings of the route that was taken and of all the fortified villages that were attacked. A second important source is the 1905 book by Kempees.⁴⁹ During the expedition, two groups of fortified villages were attacked and their inhabitants massacred: one in Gajo-Loeös, part of the Gajo land, and one in the Alas land. In 1904, both areas had been declared part of the government of Atjeh and Dependencies, while their conquest took in the last phase of the Atjeh War.

The Atjeh War had started in 1873, when a first expedition of the Dutch was fought off by Atjehnese resistance.⁵⁰ In 1874, the Dutch misread the political situation in Atjeh, thinking that their conquest of the palace of the sultan meant that Atjeh had been subjugated. The sultan, in fact, had little political power outside his *kraton* (palace). In 1879, Dutch troops devastated large parts of Atjeh, killing thousands of people and burning 400 to 500 villages to the ground. In 1880, victory was declared for the second time but once again too soon, as the Atjehnese guerilla war only intensified. In 1884, the Dutch created a "concentrated line" of forts around the town of Koetaradja and retreated behind it, waiting for better times which did not come. In the 1890s, the tide started turning for the Dutch. First, the Orientalist Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje published a book in 1892, *The Atjehnese*, explaining the social and political structures in Atjeh as well

49 Detailed information on the Gajo and Alas societies in the early twentieth century can be found in Bowen 1991 and Iwabuchi 1994.

50 On the Atjeh War, see Van 't Veer 1969; Reid 1969; Reid 1979; Siegel 2000.

as who needed to be targeted if the area was to be subjugated. Also in 1892, Major J. B. van Heutsz wrote an article in which he forcefully argued for the establishment of a counter-guerilla army that could move around quickly and effectively fight the enemy. In 1898, Van Heutsz got his chance when he was appointed governor of Atjeh. Snouck Hurgronje became his personal adviser, and with the Corps Marechaussee – crack troops of the KNIL specially trained for counter-guerilla operations during the Atjeh War – at his disposal, Van Heutsz started systematically subjugating the territories of Atjeh. Local leaders were forced to sign documents in which they accepted Dutch authority, and every “pacified” area was placed under civilian supervision, overseen by military officers. In 1904, the Gajo and Alas lands were one of the few independent areas left and had in the eyes of the Dutch become the new center of the Atjehnese resistance, leading Van Heutsz to send Van Daalen with ten regiments of the marechaussee to subjugate them.

At the beginning of the expedition, Van Daalen’s troops numbered about 200 soldiers and officers of the marechaussee and 433 forced laborers. All of the soldiers were natives; they were recruited in Ambon and other islands of the Moluccas, North Celebes (Menado), and Java. All of their superior officers were Europeans (Bossenbroek 1992: 209-10).⁵¹ The forced laborers were mostly Javanese who were convicted; they had to carry equipment. During the expedition, about twenty-five soldiers were killed or died of wounds or diseases, while fourteen forced laborers died. As mentioned above, 173 photographs were produced during the expedition, taken by medical officer H. M. Neeb.

Before arriving in Gajo-Loeös, the troops first marched through other areas of Atjeh and the Gajo land. Van Daalen writes about arrests made, fines levied (e.g. paid in the form of a number of water buffalos), village leaders who did or did not report when ordered to do so, the purchasing of rice and other materials from the population, and villages that were cleared so that the soldiers could make a bivouac. The differences between Van Daalen’s report and Kempees’s book are sometimes illuminating: in the latter’s narrative there are many more details on the exact character of the events that are often only mentioned as procedures in Van Daalen’s account. When Van Daalen writes, for instance, that “about 150 kilograms

51 Three legal classifications were used in the Indies: Europeans, natives, and foreign Orientals. In general, Europeans were white or of mixed race, Natives were brown or of mixed race, and foreign Orientals were Chinese. It was possible to change legal categories, but this happened only rarely. See Fasseur 1994.

of rice was bought from the population” on 14 February in the Kètol area (1905: 15), Kempees mentions that “though they did not resist, [they] were not very willing, so that the bags of rice had to be taken from the houses by the marechaussees themselves” (1905: 17). Another example of the level of detail and different perspective in Kempees’s book relates to the events of 22 February. While Van Daalen records that “a part of the houses was cleared by the population” in the village of Koetö Rajang (19), Kempees takes over this sentence almost literally but then adds:

That this does not come about without some struggle, especially on the part of the Gajo ladies, goes without saying, and it sometimes yields amusing scenes. All women who appear make their faces unrecognizable with chalk and soot. What their purpose was did not become clear to us, maybe they feared that we or our troops would fall in love with them otherwise. If this supposition is correct, then I dare declare, also on behalf of my fellow travelers, that even without chalk and soot there was not the least ground for such a fear. (19)

This is a telling example of the way in which both Van Daalen and Kempees “read” the Gajo and Alas lands and their inhabitants: they either fit the imperial distribution of the perceptible or, if they do not, they are violently adjusted. Signs that are irrelevant to this dichotomy, such as the women covering their faces, are at most sources of amusement.

On 10 March, when the troops arrived in Gajo-Loeös, the fighting began. Along the way, the troops came across many abandoned villages and were increasingly attacked and shot at. Due to their superior weapons, few soldiers were killed, while Gajos were killed in increasing numbers: three on 10 March, another the following, eight the day after, forty-one on 14 March, and so on. Inhabitants of Gajo-Loeös, hearing of the Dutch advance, had built stockades around their villages and had amassed weapons and supplies (Bowen 1991: 65). On 14 March, the fortified village of Pasér was stormed, and twenty-seven people were killed in that village alone. As always, both Van Daalen and Kempees are very particular when it comes to the gender of the murdered, in this case twenty-five men and two women (who were dressed up as men, according to Kempees). The villagers had defended themselves by throwing stones and spears, and by spraying chili pepper water.

On 18 March, a large fortification that had been built by the villagers of Pèparéq Göip was attacked. To test if the villagers would fight back, the troops shot at it and when they heard shouting, they concluded that those

inside it were hostile. During the attack, the villagers used outdated fire-arms such as blunderbusses and other fire weapons that had to be reloaded after each shot. The Dutch troops, on the other hand, had repeating rifles (carbines) with multiple rounds of ammunition, and klewangs (machete-style swords). Once past the parapet, Kempees writes, the marechaussees “saw with horror, how the defenders had locked themselves inside *with* their women and children. In Atjeh, as one knows, the bentengs [fortifications] are only occupied by men” (40). He continues:

The enemy fought very fanatically, which was disclosed by the loud praying perceived continuously all through the attack as well as by the fact that all, including women and children, were dressed in ceremonial outfits to prove that the fighters had devoted themselves to death... The men wore colorful *hadji* coats, and the white turban or *kupia*; the women in their new sarongs... and jackets... are, just like the children, covered with silver jewellery. Consistent with this fanaticism was the mode of defense, which did not end when the parapet was conquered, but only after every last hideout was taken away. Men, women and children, all armed with one or more pieces of cold steel, milled around, and made desperate individual attacks. Sometimes the men hid between women and children and darted out unexpectedly to strike. To save their own lives our troops were obliged to continue fighting until no resistance was offered anymore, and this ended with the last man. (41)

According to Kempees, the loud prayers and the *hadji* clothes “prove once more that they trust that those who fell in fighting us would count as witnesses of faith for Mohammed” (59). During the massacre of the villagers of Pèparéq Göip, a total of 308 Gajo adults and children were killed. Twenty-eight adults and twenty children were wounded, while three adults and nine children remained unharmed (42). The army lost three men in the battle. Later, when the troops arrived in the village where the dead had lived, they saw that “most of the houses had been partly taken down to build accommodations in the fortification” (Van Daalen 1905: 34).

From then on, Van Daalen sent out a letter to the village heads before each attack “to urge them to report themselves to me and to advise them in any case to bring the women and children to safety” (35). On 22 March, a huge complex of the kampongs of Doeren, Rödjö Silo, Koetö Lintang, and Koeto Blang was attacked and stormed. Van Daalen writes:

Step by step the kampong had to be taken; during the very dangerous work it was often possible to spare women and children... However, several times the marechaussees had to shoot women and children out of self-defense if they stabbed with lances or attacked with cold steel. Even children of at most 7 years old walked towards the soldiers with a big knife. (147)

No soldiers were killed, but 164 Gajos were (38). In the days that followed, several kampongs surrendered to the Dutch. Kempees writes that Van Daalen “in secret tried another means to make the rest of the population stop their resistance”, namely by letting authoritative Quran experts declare that the superior strength of the “Gömpèni” – the Atjehnese name for the Dutch, derived from the Dutch East Indies Company – was evident, for “only in case of total superior strength does the Quran allow the submission of Mohammedans to dissidents” (Kempees 1905: 59).

In April the troops were still in the same area, and the massacres continued. On 4 April, the fortified village of Badaq was attacked (122 people killed), and on 21 April, the village complex of Tjané Oekön-Toenggöl was taken (181 dead). In the latter village, the first photograph of atrocity was taken. On 11 May, 285 people in Pènsan were killed, a village of about 1,200 inhabitants in Kempees’s estimation. The photograph labelled PE was taken here. Between fights, many Gajos were shot, while others were arrested and fined. Certain Gajos approached the Dutch and asked them to attack other Gajos (55). In between fights, Van Daalen attended a wedding banquet of a Gajo who worked for the Dutch and had Neeb take pictures (64). Villages were given ultimatums, and when that of Tampèng expired on 18 May, 176 people were massacred. When all resistance in Gajo-Loeös was quelled, Van Daalen installed a Gajo as head of the region (Rödjö Bédén), forbade wars between the different Gajo groups, forbade slavery, and moved on to the Alas lands, where the troops arrived on 10 June.

On 14 June, 561 inhabitants of Koetö Réh were murdered in their fortification next to the village. About the aftermath of this massacre, Kempees writes: “it turned out that we could recover 61 unharmed children from among the piles of people. In cases like these the good heart of a soldier resurfaces. It was nice to see the care with which the marechaussees treated these little ones” (161). It was here that KR₁, KR₂, and KR₃ were taken. On 20 June, the fortified village of Likat was massacred, with 432 dead, among whom 88 children. Finally, on 24 June, Koetö Lengat Baroe was massacred, with 654 dead (of whom 130 were children). Afterwards, KL₁, KL₂, and KL₃ were made. Kempees writes:

Upon our inquiry, people told us that the population had sworn an oath to fight to the last man, and that they themselves, while sending up prayers, had dug their pits of death in which they and the families wanted to stand their ground or die. (180)

Van Daalen's report mentions more than 3,000 Gajo and Alas deaths. The Gajo-Loeös expedition killed 5-12% of the population, while in the Alas lands about 20% was murdered.⁵² The army lost about 12% of its soldiers, while about 3% of the forced laborers died. For every dead colonial soldier, there were 120 dead Gajos and Alas.

The Surface of the 1904 Photographs

This section examines the surface of the 1904 photographs and how they were technologically produced. I will discuss how the photographs' potential for multiple semanticizations is already operative at the level of the photographic image as it is physically framed by the camera. It is because of this dynamic that the 1904 photographs could change meaning during their social biography as they were framed and reframed.

In photographic production, light reflects on the people and objects in front of the camera, is broken by the lens, and marks the photosensitive plate. Only a few elements of the world fit within the frame; the camera is oblivious to the rest. Depicting only one moment and one particular spot, the photograph, once it is part of an imagetext, can form a semantic channel to many different possible worlds. The photograph's content, form, and what might be called "the content of the form" (White 1987) produce a reservoir of potential meanings which over time forms a dynamic pattern of mediated memories and silences. At different moments, different elements in the photograph are visible and others invisible (these latter are then kept as *oublis de résevere*).

The 1904 photograph that has been most often reproduced, KR3, was taken on 14 June 1904 in the conquered fortified village of Koetö Réh in the Alas land. Its first printing was on matte collodion printing-out paper, which meant that the support was paper, the binder collodion, while the

⁵² These figures are based on Van Daalen's 1905 report and estimations of the population numbers in the Gajo and Alas lands in Bowen 1991 and Iwabuchi 1994.

emulsion was made light-sensitive with silver chloride.⁵³ Collodion printing-out paper was invented in 1865 and had its heyday from 1880 to 1910. The matte variants of these prints were rich in shades and tones, with sometimes artful effects (*chiaroscuro*). These photographs were contact prints: the light-sensitive paper was placed directly beneath a glass negative, and the paper was then positively marked with the help of daylight. The negatives were dry gelatin plates which were prepared before the journey or bought from a company. They were placed in a view camera which had flexible bellows between the lens and the photosensitive plate and was placed on a tripod. The photographer stood beneath a dark cloth, and afterwards had to develop and fixate the negative in a dark room which was brought along. Exposure times could be as long as thirty seconds, too long to register movement. This meant that everybody in the frame had to stand still. All in all, making a photograph was laborious, and moments had to be carefully selected. During the 1904 expedition, nine forced laborers carried the photographic equipment (Van Daalen 1905).

In KR3, the men on the village wall are *marechaussees* and their officers. On the left, behind the two sitting European officers, stands commander van Daalen. On the village ground, just in front of the palisade, stands a *marechaussee* with a child sitting to his right in a cage-like constellation of poles. Scattered across the ground lie the bodies of six villagers who were shot or cut down. Two are in the central foreground: one with the head hidden behind some tree stumps, and one below to the left with only a lower leg and foot visible; another one is also barely visible and lies in front of the *marechaussee* standing on the ground (a foot can be seen from a frog's perspective); three lie in the lower left corner. Of these three, the one most to the right has put a clenched fist over his mouth and appears to still be alive. Not only defeated bodies are on display, for against the bush right of the *marechaussee* and the child, captured weapons are positioned.

The frame of the photograph produces a closed and rather shallow space. The surface of the photograph consists of two main planes. The vertical lines of the upper plane are arranged against the sky: the split and pointed bamboo shafts of the palisade and the uniformed men standing on the earthen wall make for a rigid and vigorous stability. The lines of the lower plane, standing out against the village ground, are mostly diagonal:

53 All the information on photography is based on Van Dijk 2012. I want to thank Jan van Dijk for teaching me how to identify photographic processes. Collodion is a transparent solution of highly flammable nitrocellulose (guncotton), alcohol, and ether.

bodies, spears, trunks, and a gun lie scattered and give a chaotic impression. Between these two planes, functioning as a transition zone, is the palisade. Yet on closer inspection, the lower plane has lines that suggest a triangle: several lines suggested by poles and a branch from the right and bodies from the left cross at the lone *marechausee*'s right elbow, while the horizontally oriented body in the center foreground suggests a base. The top of the triangle is formed by the *marechausee* and the caged child, placing them at the center of attention. The photograph has a strong *chiaroscuro*, with Van Daalen standing in the darkest corner, while the *marechausee* and child and the spot in front and to the right of the bush are highlighted. The light is coming from the right rear (see the shadows of the weapons against the bush); the large shadows are cast by trees.

There are four possible focalizers from whose perspective we can look at the situation: the soldiers, the child, possibly the villager who is still alive, and the photographer. Adopting any one of their perspectives produces different possible worlds. The viewer is positioned at the intersection of several of the gazes of these focalizers. The camera was placed at eye level with the one *marechausee* standing on the ground, creating a sense of equality with him. Looking upwards, the viewer is stared down by the dozens of soldiers on the wall, who look down on everybody in the photograph and have visual access to the blind field behind the camera. They block, moreover, the view of the world outside the village. Looking downwards, the viewer sees the child and the bodies of the villagers. The latter are looked at but do not look themselves at the outside world: even if some are alive, their eyes are not visible and at most their gaze is directed inwards. The viewer stands between the soldiers and the villagers and is both owner and object of the look. If we take into account the fact that the photographer was one of the soldiers, the camera starts sharing vicariously in the soldiers' panoptic gaze. While the adults are dressed according to their social role, the child is naked. This makes the child somewhat of an outsider to the conflict: it seems untouched by discourse, race, gender, and class. Within the context of Dutch ethical policy (i.e. the Dutch white man's burden) and the strong Dutch missionary tradition, however, a naked brown child was the perfect object of paternalist care and conversion.⁵⁴

A second photograph of Koetö Réh, KR2, is different from the first in several ways but retains the ambiguity of the first. Instead of a fortified

54 On the rise of missionary activity in the Netherlands from the late nineteenth century onwards, see Van Vree 2005. For more on the child, see Bijl 2014.

village, Koetö Réh is now a village with fortifications. The photograph's frame here produces a space that is deeper and more open, much less patterned by lines and therefore less directive for the viewer. Several trees in the village, the forest beyond the village wall, and a soft inclination of the terrain suggest a landscape. The scorching sun and the shadows of the trees again create a strong *chiaroscuro* effect. A range of objects denote domesticity: houses, storage pots, many water jars made of gourds, and other household equipment indicate that people lived here. The soldiers now stand in the upper left corner and just above the roof of the house in the center. One has his sword raised as if to compensate for being in the image's margin. The *marechausées* have created a river of bodies running across the image and then upwards. Light picks out the curves of heads, elbows, knees, and abdomens in what is a mass of fifty to sixty bodies. Again, not everybody seems dead: all the way at the end of the line, opposite the soldiers, a man has raised his upper body, his back turned towards the camera. The soldiers no longer dominate the scene, also because the camera is now itself in an elevated position. Not under the proximate gaze of anyone, the viewer is less caught between the focalizers represented, but can still adopt multiple perspectives on the situation.

Of the eight photographs of atrocity made during the 1904 expedition, these two were reproduced most often and on the most important occasions. This is partly the case because of the scarcity principle in cultural memory (Rigney 2005) through which one reproduction leads to another: people reproduced the photographs from each other's publications, converging on these specific images to debate the 1904 expedition and its remembrance. Yet the content and form of these two specific photographs also contributed to their wider circulation. The ambiguous position of the viewer and the many intersecting focalizers make the first image (KR₃) in particular rich and suited as part of various imagetexts that provide access to a variety of possible worlds. KR₃ also shows most clearly the soldiers, the villagers, and the power relations between them. The other image (KR₂) shows most clearly the scale and effects of the expedition due to the large number of bodies in a mostly civilian environment. The other six photographs either lack clearly visible bodies or soldiers or bring out the colonial relationship less evidently.

Photographs have the effect of both closing down and opening up what is available to sense perception. KR₃ is, for instance, oblivious to what is outside its physical frame or directly behind the village wall, but it also adds to the photographed scene, since its frame facilitates a composition of volumes and lines which direct the photograph's semanticization. In

the photograph's social biography, elements that are semanticized at one moment are silences at another, remaining nevertheless *oublis de réserve* which can become visible again at later moments.

Genres of Empire

The physical frame of a photograph delineates a surface in which volumes and lines are positioned in a certain composition. This composition can be shown to be part of a visual culture through placing the image in genres which connect it to other images. Framed by different genres, the pattern of mediated memories and silences in a photograph is differently articulated. Genres, according to literary theorist John Frow, "offer frameworks for constructing meaning... in one or other medium" (2006: 72). "Genre", for Frow, is a near-synonym of "frame": both give "structure to the delimited [pictorial surface] and at the same time [situate] it in meaningful relation to a context which is other than the [image]" (147). Genres therefore direct the semanticization of a photograph. Frow writes that they both shape a "historically specific pattern of organization" as well as constrain meaning (73), in other words: they open up and close down meanings. If the same set of images is called "still lives", "object inventories", or "set tables", their meanings change. Genres, moreover, can point to a certain distribution of the perceptible: if a certain type of image is widely produced and disseminated, it can tell us something about the social construction of the visual field. Genres both reflect and produce the perceptible order. In this section, the 1904 photographs of atrocity will be placed in two genres in the Dutch and global imperial visual culture of 1904: that of the captured local leader and that of the imperial massacre.

Images of Captured Leaders

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the Dutch subjugated all the islands of the Indonesian archipelago, after having already installed themselves in Java and Madura much earlier. As Locher-Scholten has shown, the establishment of authority was the main reason given for the conquest of these "outer territories" (1994b). In this conquest, the subjugation of local leaders was seen as a key event and an occasion to make images that were icons of these captured leaders and symbols of Dutch authority. This was certainly the case during the 1904 expedition. Several photographs taken during the expedition depict local leaders reporting to Van Daalen to show

they would not fight Dutch authority. Also, Van Daalen's report shows great interest in the leaders, where they are, and whether they are killed or conquered. One of the most important outcomes of the expedition for the Dutch was the arrangement of who ruled the Gajo and Alas lands and how successors could be appointed.

One incomplete list of the army's actions in the Dutch East Indies between 1816 and 1926 includes seventy-four expeditions and wars against the local population, from Atjeh (all the way in the west) to the Aru islands in the Moluccas (all the way in the east) (Zwitser 1977: 13-15).⁵⁵ This is the same distance as Dublin to Baghdad. In 1898, the KNIL had 43,000 soldiers, the most it had during the period 1814-1909: 26,000 were natives while 17,000 were Europeans, most of them Dutch (Bossenbroek 1992: 285, 358). Until the beginning of the twentieth century, the Indies formed a military state (Bosma and Raben 2003: 28-9). Historian H. L. Wesseling writes about what we now refer to as "many wars" and "expeditions" in the Dutch East Indies up to 1914:

In fact, it was a permanent war that intensified at certain moments into a series of spectacular acts of violence that appealed to the imagination of the European public and are therefore now known as wars. What these data [a list of colonial wars and expeditions] thus offer is a European perspective, based on data from the European history of battle. (1988: 73)

Many battles ended (temporarily at least) when the leaders of the uprising or resistance were caught or killed. Some were exiled. That these moments were seen as important by the Dutch, also by those living in the Netherlands, can be seen from the images of the Dutch conquest of the islands.

The first image of a captured leader is from the 1860s and part of a collection of 253 oil sketches drawn between 1850 and 1863 by various artists that depicted high points in the history of the Netherlands. The collection was commissioned by a man from Amsterdam named Jacob de Vos who exhibited it in his garden in a pavilion with the name "Museum of the History of the Fatherland" (see Carasso 1991). This history, which ran from 40 CE to the second half of the nineteenth century, was divided into ten periods of varying lengths, each period being represented by about twenty-five sketches. In the series devoted to the seventeenth century, there were three

55 For an overview of Dutch military history in the Indies, see Moor 1989, 2003.

sketches of the Indonesian archipelago,⁵⁶ after which the Indies disappeared from sight until an event in 1821.⁵⁷ Situated in that year, sketch number 246 is called “The Victory at Palembang” and shows how the Sumatran leader Mohamed Badar, Sultan of Palembang, is escorted by the Dutch to a boat that will bring him to Batavia where he will be kept as a prisoner. The artist was Barend Wijnveld Jr., who contributed 55 paintings to De Vos’s museum (Jacobs 2000). De Vos wrote:

The prestige of the Netherlands had suffered much due to the reign of the English [1811-1816], and our slowly reburgeoning power had to suppress dangerous uprisings before the disadvantageous effect of our humiliation had been removed.

The man pointing out the boat to Sultan Badar is the Dutch general Hendrik Merkus de Kock. Badar is at the edge of the land he once ruled, just moments before he has to leave it. The Dutch are now omnipresent: the waters are full of their ships and Palembang is filled with their soldiers. On a building to the right, a Dutch flag is waving along with the flags on the ships. De Kock points Badar towards exile, but he looks at the sultan. Badar’s hands are empty: he had to leave the sultanate’s jewels – a symbol of his power – to his nephew, the new sultan.⁵⁸

Another artist commissioned by De Vos is Nicolaas Pieneman, well known in those days for his historical paintings.⁵⁹ His painting *The Submission of Prince Diponegoro to Lieutenant-General De Kock* (Figure 1.1) was commissioned by the De Kock family to celebrate De Kock’s victory in Java (Thiel 1976: 443). There are a number of resemblances to Wijnveld’s sketch of Palembang. Again, De Kock is pointing his finger towards exile: for Badar, this meant going on the boat to Java, while Diponegoro is to be carried away by a coach. Diponegoro is surrounded by defeated Javanese: some are on their knees begging him not to leave, some have sunk to the ground, holding their heads; a woman is crying on a man’s shoulder and one child is hugging another in comfort. Military defeat is signified by the pile of lances lying on the ground.

56 In De Vos’s words: “an Atjehnese delegation visiting the Netherlands in 1602; the hero’s death of Dutchman Reinier Claeszen in 1606 who tried to prevent the Portuguese fleet from setting sail for the Indies; and the foundation of Batavia [present-day Jakarta] in 1619”.

57 There are, however, depictions of episodes on Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), Formosa (now Taiwan) and “the West coast of Africa”.

58 The painting is currently in the collection of the Amsterdam Museum, inv. no. SA 5039. See www.amsterdammuseum.nl.

59 See Jacobs 2000; Haks 1995.



Figure 1.1. Nicolaas Pieneman. *The Submission of Prince Diponegoro to Lt.-General De Kock*, n.d. Oil on canvas, 77 x 100 cm. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, inv. no. SK-A-2238.

Diponegoro appears resigned. His hand points towards his people, but he has accepted his departure from them. This is not an image of victorious revenge but of chivalry and paternalism. The scene of Diponegoro and his defeated people is at the center of the painting, though the Dutch, standing mostly above it, clearly are its directors. Only De Kock's path is clear, though narrow, and of the Dutch he is the one who stands in the full light of the afternoon sun with his face in view, just as Diponegoro is the only unshaded Javanese. De Kock, in his moment of glory, is not very victorious. Like Diponegoro, he is not looking at the carriage or the people around him, but in the distance. This facilitates an inner connection between the two men: both are pondering the fate of the universe and their position in it. De Kock seems to suffer just as much as the captive. It is a regularly recurring way of representing the defeated opponent in images of defeated leaders: they are worthy yet sadly misguided opponents that have been captured in a battle among gentlemen (see Carey 2007: 677-99).

Sultan Badaruddin and Prince Dipanegara (as they are called today in Indonesia) had been captured before the invention of photography. As photography became a technique that could be used by many, and as the Dutch started more and more military expeditions, the number of photographs of captured leaders grew steadily. Often, not much is known about



Figure 1.2. Demang Leman, Bandjermasin, 27 February 1864. Photograph, 9 x 5.5 cm. KITLV/Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies, Leiden, inv. no. 16019.

the circumstances in which these images were produced or about how they functioned. They can be found in image archives in the Netherlands, often without much context. The Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies (KITLV) has a photograph of the last local leader of a war in Bandjermasin, Demang Leman, ten minutes before he was executed on 27 February 1864 (Figure 1.2).⁶⁰ One place where this photograph has been found is in an album from a Dutch family from the Indies, as a *carte de visite* (Thomassen à Thuessink van der Hoop 1958). The head of this family, John Francis Loudon, was a Dutch civil servant in Benkoelen on Sumatra. H. G. J. L. Meynders observed in 1886 that “During the days of his imprisonment Demang Leman’s behavior was very calm and resigned... He did not resist having his photograph taken, on the contrary, he rather seemed pleased with this”.⁶¹ For this Dutch observer, Demang Leman shares in the feeling that history has taken its proper course.

Many other photographs of captured leaders can be found in the Dutch colonial archives. The KILTV collection includes several photographs of the

⁶⁰ Inv. no. 7253.

⁶¹ Meyners 1886; Van Rees 1865. See also Siegel 2009 for a different interpretation of Demang Leman’s gaze.

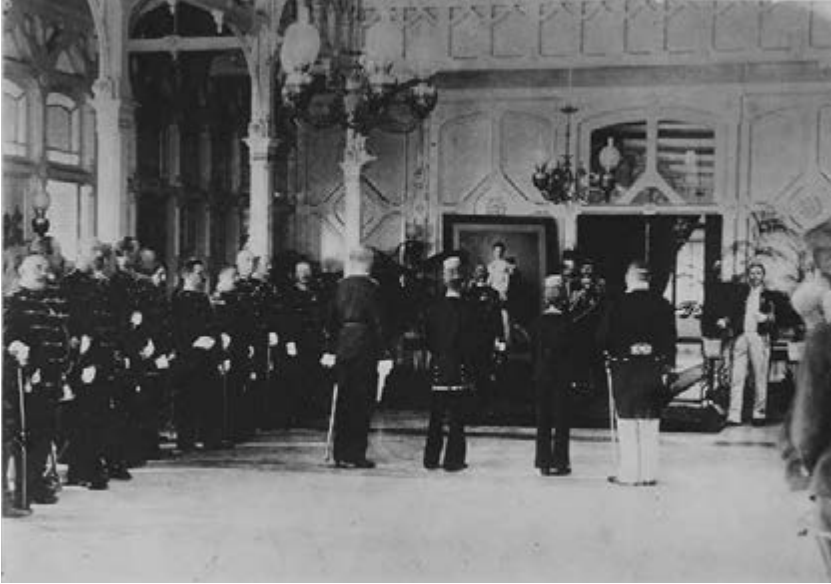


Figure 1.3. C. B. Nieuwenhuis. Submission of Sultan Muhammad Daud of Atjeh to the Dutch authorities, 1903. Photograph, 11 x 15,5 cm. KITLV/Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies, Leiden, inv. no. 27250.

exiled leaders of an 1866 uprising in the Pasumah lands, near Palembang.⁶² There is a photograph of six captured leaders of an 1892 rebellion on the Aru islands, the most eastern part of the Moluccas.⁶³ Images of subjugated leaders were also common in the Atjeh War. A 1903 photograph shows the sultan of Atjeh, Muhammad Daud, and his son surrounded by Dutch officials as they subject themselves to the governor of Atjeh (Van Heutsz), captain adjutant H. Colijn (who later became prime minister of the Netherlands) and Queen Wilhelmina, who is represented by a huge portrait (Figure 1.3).⁶⁴ KITLV also has a photograph that shows the transfer of the jewelry (*pusaka*) of the subjugated empire of Djambi to the Dutch on 26 March 1904.⁶⁵ There is a photograph of Cut Nya' Diën, a famous Atjehnese resistance leader and widow of Teuku Umar, and some of the members of her group, who were captured by the Dutch in Atjeh in 1905 (Figure 1.4).⁶⁶ There are two photographs

62 KITLV inv. no. 36317, 36318, 36319, and 36320.

63 KITLV inv. no. 11716.

64 KIT inv. no. 10001514. The photograph was taken by C. B. Nieuwenhuis. See also Van 't Veer 1969, p. 241.

65 KITLV inv. no. 27644. See Locher-Scholten 1994b: 253-54.

66 KIT inv. no. 10018822.



Figure 1.4. Cut Nya' Diën, the wife of Teuku Umar, captured by Lieutenant E. van Vuren, 1905. Photograph, 12 x 16,5 cm. KITLV/Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies, Leiden, inv. no. 4356.

from 1905 of the captured Teukoe Johan and Teukoe Keumangan, showing one and three Dutch military men respectively.⁶⁷

The number of this type of images, the fact that they had been around for a longer time, and their wide dissemination and public availability (in family albums and exhibitions) makes it likely that they were representative for the distribution of the perceptible around 1900. Both the production and the first semanticization of the 1904 photographs can be placed within the frame of this genre: they were modeled after these images and given meaning in relation to them. This is not to say that these images are all the same or essentially the same as a photograph like KR3. Images can be placed in a variety of genres at the same moment. It is therefore necessary to construct a second genre, one that is part of the global imperial visual culture: that of the imperial massacre.

Images of Imperial Massacres

In this particular section, the concept of imperialism is used in a somewhat looser sense than in the rest of this study and refers to actions around 1900 in which Western powers enforced their will violently on Asian and African

67 KITLV inv. no. 2646, 2647.

areas and not per se those actions related to the expansion of colonial empires. Many of these actions were part of imperialism “proper” and led to colonial rule; others were shorter interventions.

There are many photographs in colonial history which depict massacres. A striking number of these were made by the same man: Felice Beato, a British photographer of Italian descent who traveled the world, including the Dutch East Indies. In Beato’s first photographs of massacre, taken in 1855 during the Crimean War in collaboration with James Robertson, dead bodies were absent. Nevertheless, as Ulrich Keller writes, these images did give “proof of the *battle once having raged there*”, for they show the leveled city space of Sebastopol and the fallen, battered interior of two Russian bastions. According to Keller, “[t]he bodies that lay in the Redan and Malakoff [both Russian bastions] have been removed, but the fortifications and weaponry of the siege remain completely assembled” (2001: 165-6; emphasis in original). Three years later, Beato photographed the last embers of the Indian Rebellion of 1857. In Lucknow, he depicted rebels swinging from the gibbets and skeletons strewn in front of a battered, cannonball-pockmarked Secundra Bagh (Figure 1.5)



Figure 1.5. Felice Beato. Interior of the Secundra Bagh after the Slaughter of 2,000 Rebels by the 93rd Highlanders and 4th Punjab Regiment: November 1857, Lucknow, 1858. Photograph, 26.2 x 29.8 cm. Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University Library, Providence.



Figure 1.6. Felice Beato. Angle of North Taku Fort at which the French entered, 1860. Photograph, 22 x 30 cm. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, Partial gift from the Wilson Centre for Photography, inv. no. 2007.26.112.

(Masselos and Gupta 2000; Dehejia 2000). In 1860, Beato joined the French and the British in the Second Opium War against the Qing Dynasty in China. On August 21 he took a series of eight photographs of the fort of Taku that was captured that same day. After several views of the outside of the fort he took three photographs inside it, showing the dead and mutilated bodies of the Chinese who did not survive the Anglo-French attacks (Figure 1.6). In 1871 he traveled with the United States military who were on a naval expedition to Korea and photographed some of the 350 men who lay dead after the American attack on a Korean garrison (Wanaverbecq 2005).

Other images present colonized people as already close to death anyway. A Dutch monument from circa 1900 in the garden of Bronbeek in Arnhem has a centerpiece that features three mustached Dutch soldiers fighting off four skeleton-like Atjehnese men (Figure 1.7). The Dutch soldiers are wearing their KNIL uniforms and helmets, the Atjehnese men their ribs, sinews, and skulls. The fight is situated in a jungle environment with high grass and a palm tree. From left to right, the first Dutch soldier is keeping a fallen Atjehnese fighter at bayonet point, while the other two are holding off three Atjehnese with raised klewangs. The monument is dedicated to the Atjeh War “1873-1896” and is one of the many examples of “preemptive



Figure 1.7. Lodewijk Henzen. Memorial tablet Atjeh War, ca. 1900. Sandstone. Bronbeek estate, Arnhem.

memory” during the Atjeh War, which from the perspective of the Dutch was always already over. Left and right of this battle scene are two portraits of a Dutch and an Atjehnese man. With his hollow eyes, strongly emphasized face bones, and two front teeth sticking out of his mouth, the Atjehnese man looks obscure and deluded. The monument, made as a memorial tablet for a façade, was made by Lodewijk Henzen, who also designed gargoyles for the restoration of Gothic churches.

Orientalist art in the nineteenth century had many topics, one of which was Oriental massacre. In these paintings, Europeans massacre Asians, Asians massacre Europeans, and Asians massacre each other. Especially because Atjeh with its strong Islam was often positioned in the same imaginative geography as the Middle East, these paintings of the Muslim Orient can be connected to the 1904 photographs. One painter of Oriental massacre was Eugène Delacroix. His *La mort de Sardanapale* depicts the legendary Oriental ruler Sardanapalus as he has his surroundings destroyed in what art historian Petra ten-Doesschate Chu calls “a delirious mass of bodies, painted in hot, feverish colors” (2003: 212). The painting was first exhibited at the salon of 1827-8 and accompanied by the following text:

Les révoltés l'assiégèrent dans son palais... Couché sur un lit superbe, au sommet d'un immense bûcher, Sardanapale donne l'ordre à ses eunuques et aux officiers du palais, d'égorger ses femmes, ses pages, jusqu'à ses chevaux et ses chiens favoris; aucun des objets qui avait servi à ses plaisirs ne devait lui survivre... *Aïsheh*, femme bactrienne, ne voulut pas souffrir qu'un esclave lui donnât la mort, et se pendit elle-même aux colonnes qui supportaient la voûte... *Baleah*, échanton de Sardanapale, mit enfin le feu au bûchet et s'y précipita lui-même. (Daguerre de Hureaux 1993: 76)

The theme of Delacroix's *Scènes des massacres de Scio* (1824) is the slaughter of tens of thousands of Greeks on the island of Chios by Ottoman troops. In this case, it is the Orient that has come to Europe to massacre. Ten-Doesschate Chu observes that the painting shows:

a group of Greek prisoners huddled under the watchful eye of a Turkish soldier. An Ottoman officer, mounted on a white stallion, abducts a half-naked woman, while others try to hold him back. The prisoners... cling to one another in despair, since they expect that they are about to be separated forever. (2003: 210)

In this sense, Delacroix's paintings can also be placed in another genre, that of the miseries of war, of which the first examples were made in the seventeenth century (see chapter 2). Before Delacroix, suffering due to war had been the subject of many prints, but Ten-Doesschate Chu writes that this was the first painting in modern art that showed victims of war with unapologetic pessimism (ibid: 211).

Another painter of Oriental massacre was the Russian V. V. Vereshchagin. His painting *Apotheosis of War* (1871) was part of the Turkestan series that he made under the protection of the Russian army. From the mid-1860s onwards, Russia was on a "civilizing" and expansionist mission in Turkestan. Vereshchagin dedicated the work

to all great conquerors, past, present and future... Tamerlane and many other heroes raised such monuments of their battlefields, leaving the bones to be cleansed and whitened by the sun and rain, by wolves, jackals and birds of prey. (quoted in Barooshian 1993: 44)

Vereshchagin made several other paintings that depict the Orient as a site of massacre: *After Defeat* (1868) features two piles of dead Muslim soldiers; in



Figure 1.8. *Big Lady Germania*. From *De Amsterdamer*, 15 May 1904. Royal Library, The Hague.

Presenting the Trophies (1872), “a small group of Muslim warriors has placed a collection of blackened Russian heads between two pillars for inspection by the Emir of Bukhara and his retinue” (ibid: 335); in *By the Fortress Wall: They Have Entered* (1871), there is a pile of dead Muslim warriors and a row of dead Russians after an attack on a Russian fortress; and in *English Suppression of an Indian Rebellion* (1884), Indians are tied to canons that were soon to be fired. In 1882, *Apotheosis of War* and other Vereshchagin paintings were exhibited in Berlin, after which they traveled the world and were shown in other cities in Germany as well as in Belgium, France, Austria-Hungary, Denmark, Sweden, the United States, and in the Netherlands in Amsterdam (Barooshian 1993: 93).

Dutch newspapers in 1904 had several cartoons on the violence of imperial expeditions all over the world, next to many written reports.⁶⁸ *De*

68 It was, incidentally, not only Asians and Arabs who were depicted as killed in large numbers, for there were also images circulating of working class people in Europe being subjected to military

Amsterdammer of 15 May 1904, for instance, had an image of Germania, an allegorical woman representing Germany, wearing an expensive dress with a long train from which German soldiers with raised swords are beating small and thin, pitch-black people from the German colony of South-West Africa (now Namibia). The caption is: “That long train looks beautiful and rich, but beating it out is terribly expensive” (Figure 1.8).⁶⁹ A cartoon by Johan Braakensiek from 14 August 1904 in *De Amsterdammer* shows two allegorical figures for the Netherlands and Britain (the Dutch Virgin and John Bull) standing in front of two images of British and Dutch colonial massacre, disputing whose colonial subjects are worse off (Figure 1.9). This is a particularly telling drawing, for it shows – being an image of images – the importance of pictures in European debates about colonialism. It demonstrates that, at least for Braakensiek, there was in fact such a thing as a genre of images of imperial massacre. The debate between the two personifications makes clear that these images were props which functioned as places for social encounter to discuss imperial policy.

Finally, turning back to photography, Dutch imperialism had yielded several photographs of the result of massacres and other atrocities before 1904. An 1894 photograph of a medical officer of the KNIL named C. J. Neeb (H. M. Neeb’s half-brother), for instance, shows the half-burnt corpse of a Balinese man next to the destroyed village of Pagesangan on the island of Lombok.⁷⁰ A photograph from August 1897 shows a young Van Heutsz and his troops posing next to an Atjehnese house and a number of dead Atjehnese.⁷¹ There is an often reproduced photograph (PD) from the 1898 military expedition to Pedir in which KNIL soldiers are standing on dead

violence. Jean-Louis Ernest Meissonier’s *La barricade, Rue de la Mortellerie, juin 1848* (1848) shows a group of rebels who were shot dead during the 1848 revolution in Paris, piled up between the cobblestones that were dug up to form a barricade. A recent study on military assistance in restoring or maintaining public order in the Netherlands shows that between 1840 and 1918 the army had assisted local Dutch government and police no less than 747 times (see Van der Wal 2003). The occasions varied from “the prevention of wood robbery” in Groesbeek in 1842 to “unrest after the abolishment of the fair” in Bodegraven in 1871 to “strikes by ground workers” in Slotervaart in 1909. On fifteen occasions, Dutch people were killed by soldiers. Illustrated magazines in the Netherlands such as *Hollandsche Illustratie* (*Dutch Illustration*) and *Geïllustreerd Politienieuws* (*Illustrated Police News*), for instance, featured images of the 1886 “eel revolt” in Amsterdam, in which 26 people died.

69 This drawing was taken over by *De Amsterdammer* from the German satirical magazine *Ulk: Illustriertes Wochenblad für Humor und Satire*.

70 KITLV, inv. no. 114356. C. J. Neeb took photographs (not of atrocities, though) during an 1894 expedition to Lombok, which he published in the Protestant family magazine *Eigen Haard* and in a book. See Neeb 1897.

71 KIT inv. no. 60029845.



Figure 1.9. Johan Braakensiek. *The Old History of the Mote and the Beam*. From *De Amsterdamer*, 14 August 1904. Royal Library, The Hague.



Figure 1.10. C. B. Nieuwenhuis. 'Baté Iliq' on Fire, 1901. Photograph, 21 x 28 cm. KITLV/Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies, Leiden, inv. no. 27179.

Atjehnese just as hunters would stand on animals they have just shot.⁷² That images like these also circulated can be seen from the fact that the family magazine *Eigen Haard* published a photograph by C. B. Nieuwenhuis of an Atjehnese fortification which was massacred in 1901 (Figure 1.10).⁷³ Like KR₃, this photograph shows KNIL soldiers standing on the wall of a fortress, though the latter is less visible because it is on fire and full of smoke.

The conclusion to be drawn from this analysis is that the 1904 photographs of atrocity did not emerge from a cultural vacuum. It was the imperial distribution of the perceptible that made both these massacres and the production of images of them possible. Knowledge of these earlier and simultaneous massacres and vanquished leaders affected both the production and semanticization of photographs like KR₂ and KR₃. It is likely that Neeb modeled KR₃ after a number of images discussed above. The formal similarities with photographs such as PD and Figure 1.10, for

72 The photographer is C. B. Nieuwenhuis. KIT inv. no. 60054676; World Museum Rotterdam, inv. no. 91072. It was shown in the Dutch parliament in 1907 (see chapter 2), and published in Nieuwenhuys 1961, De Jong 1966, Jacobs et al. 1970, Witte 1976, Van Kessel 2005, Hogervorst 2010, among others. See also the introduction to this study and chapters 2, 3, and 4.

73 Nieuwenhuis 1901. See also KITLV inv. no. 27179. It was published in Nieuwenhuis 1901 and Nieuwenhuys 1961.

instance, are striking: in all these images, KNIL soldiers stand above or even on top of defeated Atjehnese. The semanticization in relation to these genres went different ways. The imperial expeditions of other European nations which were depicted, for instance, were for some proof that the Netherlands were not better than other colonizing nations, while others maintained that there was a qualitative difference between the Dutch and other nations' colonial policies.⁷⁴ In the case of the KNIL, however, such discussions were absent, as for the army in 1904 the production of these images had been common practice for years, and the violence itself was seen as standard operating procedure.⁷⁵

Times of Empire

The question then arises what the exact meanings of these photographs were within the discursive frames of the army. In this section I analyze the first semanticizations of the photographs. What I will show is that within army circles the photographs from 1904 had multiple meanings, which meant that they functioned like the duck-rabbit, a *Kippbild* that one can see either as a duck or as a rabbit. When one image is seen, the other is kept in reserve (see Wittgenstein 2009; Gombrich 1960). Most importantly, the imperial distribution of the perceptible simultaneously placed the photographs' perceptible order in different frames of time. These multiple temporal meanings, however, did not contradict each other in the eyes of the army but were mutually reinforcing.

The distribution of the perceptible causes only certain spaces, times, and subject positions to be visible and therefore possible. However, the distribution of the perceptible can have multiple effects. A good example of the effects and complexities of the distribution of the perceptible in the Dutch East Indies is formed by the system of racial classification as described by Fasseur. The Dutch colonial state had three legal categories: Europeans, natives, and foreign Orientals (the latter were mostly Chinese). According to Fasseur, the race criterion was both the cornerstone and stumbling block for the colonial government. On the one hand, the Utrecht professor of colonial

74 See e.g. *Nieuws van den dag voor Nederlands-Indië* 12 July 1904, in which Van Daalen is compared to Lord Kitchener, who is called the brute of Omdurman and the bloodthirsty butcher of Sudan (following the British Sudan expedition from 1898, which was also photographed by Beato).

75 On the unproblematic status in Dutch army circles of violence such as during the 1904 expedition, see Groen 2002.

law J. de Louter concluded in 1914: "Between Europeans and natives exists an almost complete distinction in legal status... Legislation, administration, judiciary, taxation, in brief each form of state authority differs considerably" (quoted in Fasseur 1994: 37). Until the end of the colonial period, "the Dutch colonial state remained in fact a state without citizens", as the natives were never granted citizenship (ibid: 54). On the other hand, the classification was contested by several groups (Dutch progressives and various Chinese and Indonesian groups), complicated by all kinds of groups which blurred distinctions (e.g. by the Japanese, who were equated with Europeans in 1899) and were racially not water-tight: although unusual, natives could become European, while on the other hand there were Indo-European people with very light skin who were legally native, for instance because they were not acknowledged by their European father.

The distribution of the perceptible, in this example, conditioned a perceptible order in which only certain subject positions were available for certain people and these positions affected their lives in fundamental respects, including matters of life and death. That in the Indies there was indeed such "a system of self-evident facts of perception" (Rancière 2004: 85) will be shown in chapter 4, where I analyze accounts of Dutch people who, after decolonization, looked back on their time in the Indies and said they did not notice racial difference, while others said they did see it but did not think about it. Culturally aphasiac, these people had no language available to address their own situation. At the same time, however, the produced perceptible order was, as Fasseur has shown, ad-hoc, contested, and unstable. According to Ann Laura Stoler, "[c]olonial administrators were prolific producers of social categories", yet at the same time this production of rules of classification "was an unruly and piecemeal venture at best" (Stoler 2009b: 1). The distribution of the perceptible produces a perceptible order, but this order can be ambivalent and contradictory, even if those who live in it do not perceive it as such. This was also the case with the imperial distribution of the perceptible.

Within the imperial distribution of the perceptible, the Dutch were produced as the future subjugator and ruler of all the islands of the Indonesian archipelago. The word "future" is important, for it implies a timeline, a crucial condition to be able to create a narrative. In this imperial narrative, the protagonists were the Dutch, the location was the Indies, while the plot was the subjection and subsequent rule of the islands. This imperial narrative was a typical project of modernity in the sense that it was driven by a philosophy of historical progress which led to a future with an unknown quality (Koselleck 2004: 22). In other words: the imperial distribution of the

perceptible created a perceptible order which, paradoxically, still had to be realized. The KNIL walked through the Indies as if the land had already been subjugated with only one “chore” left to do: subjugation itself.

The 1904 expedition should be seen in the context of what Andreas Huyssen has called “the privileging of the future so characteristic of earlier decades of twentieth-century modernity” (2003: 11). Yet if especially the larger project of which these photographs were a part is taken into account, it turns out that the army officer who took them not only framed what Huyssen calls “present futures”, but also “present pasts” (ibid): the photographs were not only semanticized by the army as showing the Dutch imperial future but also the Gajo and Alas past. According to Reinhardt Koselleck, European modernity was announced by the “temporalization [*Verzeitlichung*] of history” in the sixteenth century (2004: 11). From the second half of the seventeenth century onwards, Koselleck writes, the concepts of antiquity, the Middle Ages, and modernity became established (ibid: 17), and when in the eighteenth century the philosophy of historical progress emerged, modernity was inaugurated, detached from its past, and given a new future. However, the emergence of a new future also liberated a new past, of which “the increasingly alien quality... rendered it a special object of historical-critical science. Progress and historicism, apparently mutually contradictory, offer the face of Janus – the face of the nineteenth century” (ibid: 60). It is this Janus-faced quality that also characterized the first meanings of the photographs.

By seeing the 1904 photographs as conditioned by the imperial distribution of the perceptible, they no longer come into view as a product of the colonial army alone but of the project of Dutch imperialism, in which many parties were involved. The 1904 expedition to the Gajo and Alas lands was an integral part of modern imperialism – i.e., the period between 1870 and 1914 in which Western powers conquered large parts of the non-Western world, particularly in Africa and Asia. Locher-Scholten maintains that the only thing that was specific to Dutch imperialism in the Indies was that the colonial empire expanded “within its own borders”: as the Dutch had already laid claims on all the islands of the archipelago, for instance through the 1871 Sumatra Treaty with the British, the idea of a “scramble” as in Africa is not applicable in their case (1994b). Dutch imperialism was a transition from imperialism on paper to imperialism on the ground through the subjugation of the outer territories. The subjugation of these territories went hand in hand with the build-up of a colonial state. In the conception of “imperialism within the own borders”, the present future could already be found: the Indies emerged like a white map that just needed to be colored.

What was the position of the 1904 expedition in the Dutch imperial project? Locher-Scholten has analyzed the documents of civil servants and military officers to distinguish the reasons given for the many projects of military subjugation in the Indies between 1870 and 1914. She argues that there are four main categories: fear of foreign competition, money, the Ethical Policy,⁷⁶ and the establishment of Dutch authority (1994b: *passim*). In the official documents concerning the 1904 expedition – a set of instructions by Van Heutsz from 1904 and the report of the expedition by Van Daalen from 1905 – fear of foreign competition was, as in most of the cases Locher-Scholten has analyzed, not a factor. Concerning monetary matters, Locher-Scholten contradicts the widespread idea that “Dutch rule was extended or consolidated with the overall economic expansion in mind” (*ibid*: 284). She argues that almost every deed of expansion had economic aspects, but that economic problems first had to be politicized before they led to expansion (*ibid*: 10). In the 1904 documents, economics is indeed not an explicit theme. “Ethical” reasons were also hardly ever given to subjugate an area and also absent in the 1904 case. In Van Daalen’s report, there is no talk about protecting the population (for instance against its own leaders), about civilizing it, or providing it with health care and education. According to Locher-Scholten, “[t]he ethical argument was stronger in the Netherlands than in the Indies” (*ibid*: 285), and she follows the Indonesian historian G. J. Resink in characterizing Dutch imperialism as *post hoc* “ethically rationalized and legitimized” rather than ethically motivated (*ibid*: 290). Lastly, the reason of the need to establish authority and order, which Locher-Scholten says was “constantly present”, is indeed ubiquitous in the writings surrounding the 1904 expedition (*ibid*: 287). Van Heutsz in his instructions to Van Daalen writes about “breaking the resistance of all the heads” in the Gajo land and “ending the fragmentation of authority and the internal wars”. He proposes the same procedure for the Alas lands, all in all aiming at “the establishment of our authority in those landscapes” (Van Heutsz 1905: 121-2).

Although economic and ethical reasons are not explicitly given in the official documents, these two factors were certainly involved. Monetary factors, next to scientific ones, probably played a role in Van Heutsz’s decision to send a mining engineer and a delegate of the state botanical gardens along with the troops (*ibid*). It is not the case that Van Heutsz or the army

76 The Ethical Policy is a set of welfare policies since 1901 that was aimed at natives. They are the Dutch version of what Rudyard Kipling called the “white man’s burden” or the French imperial “*mission civilisatrice*”. See Locher-Scholten 1981.

directly profited from these people's findings, but the colonial empire had to be paid for, and exploring the land's resources was a necessary condition to be able to exploit it. Moreover, the establishment of Dutch authority in the region was important for the bordering Deli region, profitable because of its rubber and tobacco plantations.

Ethically motivated utterances can be found in Kempees's 1905 book. After the massacre of one of the villages, he is critical of a woman who killed her child and herself while the KNIL soldiers were walking through the village killing off the last men. Kempees calls this "sad proof of how strongly normal human feelings can deteriorate under the influence of swept up fanaticism" (1905: 161). Just before this, he describes the care with which a number of soldiers collected the children who lived under a small roof, giving them some drinking water. This was the micropolitics of ethical policy: though his superiors Van Daalen and Van Heutsz made no mention in their official reports of any ethical motivation for the expedition, for a soldier "on the ground" the idea that he and his fellow *marechaussees* were better caretakers of the population proved nevertheless to be of importance. Locher-Scholten has pointed out the intimate relation between ethical policy and imperialism by arguing that ethical policy aimed "at acquiring *de facto* political control of the entire Indonesian archipelago and the development of both country and people under Dutch leadership and after Western example" (1981: 213). After the rough work of subjugation, it was thought, the elevating work of cultivation could begin. The journalist Paul van 't Veer called the Dutch imperial project "ethical imperialism" (1969).

What was the position of the 1904 photographs in this imperial expedition? As mentioned above, all 173 photographs were taken by Henri Neeb, a medical officer who had been trained as a doctor in Leiden and went to the Indies in 1896: to Soerabaja, Lombok, Saparoea, Semarang, and in 1903 to Atjeh (Groeneveld 2001: 44-48). During the 1904 expedition, Neeb's main function was as head of medical care for the army. Posted just outside a village that was attacked, he took care of the wounded soldiers during battle. When there were no fights, or when everyone was attended to, he could take photographs. In 1905, he published a thick medical report on the expedition (Neeb 1905). In response to the critique of the expedition that emerged in the Netherlands (see chapter 2), Neeb defended his commander Van Daalen (Neeb 1908). He later became a professor of Technical Hygiene in Bandoeng.

Photographic historian Anneke Groeneveld distinguishes four categories of photographs taken by Neeb: topographical (53 photographs), ethnographic (64), medical (12), and military (41). The topographic photographs

provided overviews of the landscapes of the Gajo and Alas lands, hitherto unknown to the Dutch. The ethnographic photographs were made to create local physiognomies and types, and to give an overview of the local culture. Among other things, Neeb photographed rice fields, fishery activities, traditional weapons, mosques, a marriage, burial places, coffins, and the construction of houses. The medical photographs show wards, transport of the wounded, stretchers, and local diseases such as leprosy, smallpox, and goiter. Of the forty-one military photographs, half (20) depict reinforced villages that were stormed and massacred during the expedition. Eight of these twenty are photographs of atrocity.⁷⁷ The other military photographs show, among other things, the barracks, officers in their residences, soldiers marching through a river, a military cemetery, and the transport of provisions (2001: 53-9).

What was the function of these photographs? Firstly, from KR3 and other group portraits it becomes clear that their production had a social function during the expedition: the taking of such photographs formed official moments of celebration and represented the army to the army as a whole. A second function of the photographs was the pleasure the photographer had in taking them. Kempees, for instance, describes how Neeb made a cheerful impression when he took photographs (1905: 206-7). A third factor was that the photographs produced knowledge, most importantly for the army and for the various institutes to which they were donated. The word “expedition” (“expeditie”) is, also in Dutch, used for both military and scientific explorations. With a botanist and a mine engineer on board, the KNIL was the first European body to travel throughout Gajo-Loeös and the Alas land and therefore became the representative of a number of knowledge-gathering institutes. The historian Harm Stevens writes:

Van Daalen had been recommended as the perfect potential officer ‘to carry out the heavy-handed task of suppressing rebellious indigenous populations’. He had also been praised for his ‘knowledge of the country, language and the people of Aceh’. (2007: 115)

These recommendations came from the colonial government’s advisor on native affairs Snouck Hurgronje, who had been General van Heutsz’s right

77 In Groeneveld 2001, the photographs TT, PE, KR1-3, and KL1-3 are numbered 52, 75, 106, 107, 108, 114, 115, and 116. In the collection of the Royal Tropical Institute in Amsterdam (KIT), they respectively have inv. no. 60011259, 60039106, 60009304, 60011258, 60009090, 60011256, 60009303, and 60009305.

hand in the Atjeh War. Already during a 1901 expedition to a different part of the Gajo land (Van Daalen 1902), Van Daalen had taken objects on the basis of which Snouck Hurgronje wrote his 1903 *The Gajo Land and its Inhabitants*, an extensive ethnological study (Snouck Hurgronje 1903). After the 1904 expedition, Van Daalen sent two chests of ethnographic objects and data as well as the photographs of the expedition to the Royal Batavian Society for Arts and Sciences, of which Snouck Hurgronje was the president (Stevens 2007: 117).⁷⁸ Van Daalen was made an honorary member of the Society, and the objects and photographs were exhibited in Batavia. Snouck Hurgronje further distributed the objects among Dutch ethnological institutes,⁷⁹ and the photographs were given to several archives.⁸⁰

The 1904 photographs were from the start socially framed not only by the army but also by a scholarly institute that produced ethnological knowledge (which the army in turn used). However, not only the military and ethnography were involved. There were various other knowledge-producing institutes for which the photographs could be of interest. This allowed botanists and zoologists, for instance, to acquaint themselves with the nature and landscape of these areas, and doctors could study the local diseases.⁸¹ In the

78 The texts written by members of the expedition address how Van Daalen got his objects. Kempees regularly writes about “the booty” which fell into the army’s hands after a fight. As the written instructions for Van Daalen by Governor van Heutsz explicitly stated that food and objects from the population could only be exchanged for money and not robbed, Van Daalen had to either buy things from people who offered them, or take them and give money in return. The texts make no mention of theft or plunder, though of course there is only a subtle difference between stealing and buying when you are pointing your rifle at the sales person.

79 Namely the Royal Batavian Society for Arts and Sciences (*Koninklijk Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen*; this collection was taken over by the *Museum Nasional* in Jakarta), the Royal Military Academy in Breda (*Koninklijke Militaire Academie*, which until the 1950s had an Ethnographic Museum), the Museum of Ethnology in Rotterdam (now *Wereldmuseum*), and the National Museum of Ethnology (now *Museum Volkenkunde*) in Leiden. See Stevens 2007.

80 At the present time, nearly all of Neeb’s photographs of the 1904 expedition (158) can be found in the collection of the World Museum Rotterdam, though they will soon move to the Dutch Photo Museum, also in Rotterdam. Smaller collections can be found at the Royal Institute for the Tropics in Amsterdam (KIT), the Museum for Ethnology in Leiden (this collection has no military photographs), and the Museum Bronbeek in Arnhem. In 1906, the museum in Rotterdam received the photographs from Van Daalen, who had a great interest in ethnology and spoke Atjehnese fluently. Kempees donated a collection to the museum in Leiden in 1905, while Bronbeek was bequeathed photographs from the Kempees legacy in 1994. See Groeneveld 2001: 64-67.

81 Later Dutch publications on the flora and fauna of Gajo and Alas and the diseases found in the Alas land such as goiter and cretinism include Hoogerwerf 1939 and Van Bommel 1930 respectively.

early twentieth century, the Dutch East Indies' government was occupying itself with more and more aspects of everyday life, and the information provided by the photographs could therefore help build up the colonial state. Photographs of military campaigns and actions, moreover, can be placed in a military-historiographical tradition in which representations of military operations were meant to increase respect for the KNIL in the Netherlands and to inform new generations of soldiers on earlier experiences, meaning that the photographs could also serve educational purposes (Groen 1983: 115).

If, moreover, we consider not only the photographs' epistemic functions but also their communicative functions, even more imperial processes come into view. Economically, the photographs of the subjugated Gajo and Alas lands sent out the message that the Dutch colonial state was providing stability and claiming more lands for economic exploitation. Stability was especially important for the bordering Deli region, where the local newspaper the *Deli Courant* kept a close track of the expedition and the subjugation of Sumatra as a whole. In ethical terms, the photographs could communicate that, for instance, the child in KR₃ was better off under the Dutch colonial regime than with his mother (see the example from Kempees above). Finally, the photographs could also fulfill a communicative function in the Netherlands, where in recent years there had been an upsurge of nationalism concerning the imperial cause. This had become particularly apparent with the Lombok expedition of 1894 and the treason committed by the Netherlands' Atjehnese ally Teukoe Oemar in 1896. Kempees, who took up several 1904 photographs of atrocity in his book, knew this, for he wrote in his introduction that his book was meant to satisfy the public interest which, as he put it, had flared up following Van Daalen's expedition.

The imperial distribution of the perceptible within which the photographs were produced and semanticized, in short, was not only that of the Dutch military but of a whole set of scholarly, educational, economic, ethical, and nationalist institutes and enterprises. This diverse range of "participants" in the expedition had one element in common: all aspired to build up a colonial empire.

Crucial for the emergence of the photographs as depictions of both the present future of the Dutch colonial empire and the present past of Gajo and Alas culture was the use of different verb tenses with which imperial narrative was told: on the one hand the future perfect tense (futurum exactum or future anterior), and on the other hand the present and the past tense. The main reference work on Dutch grammar, the *Algemene Nederlandse Spraakkunst* or ANS, distinguishes between various temporal functions in Dutch. Each function has a different relation between effect (E; the time

when the action denoted by a verb occurs), the moment of utterance (U), and the point of reference (R; e.g. “now” or “at the time”). In the present tense (“Sumatra is subjugated.”), E, U, and R coincide. In the future tense (“We will subjugate Sumatra.”), U and R coincide, while E lies somewhere in the future. In the perfect tense (“Sumatra has been subjugated.”), U and R also coincide, but E now lies in the past. Finally, in the future perfect tense, (“We will have subjugated Sumatra.” or “Sumatra will have been subjugated.”) R lies in the future, while E lies between U and R. The future perfect is the future as past: while in fact a future is predicted, it is presented as if it had already happened. The effect is the closure of the temporal horizon, or as conservative politicians sometimes say: There Is No Alternative (TINA). An example of the future perfect concerning the 1904 expedition can be found in the *Deli Courant* of 21 April 1904. In the first of a series of nine articles entitled “The Gradual Subjugation and Development of Sumatra”, editor-in-chief Willem Mulier wrote:

Like this then the whole government of Atjeh will presently be known and *will have been entered* by the rapid feet of our marechaussee and infantry. Now, in a few years’ time, the gaps will also disappear that still exist between the various parts that have already been mapped and the few parts on Atjeh’s West coast that have still remained unknown and unvisited, and the whole of Atjeh will be known and in touch with our rule. (emphasis added)

The construction “[n]ow, in a few years time” (*nu over een paar jaar tijds*) shows that indeed R, the point of reference, lies in the future. On 7 May, the *Deli Courant* had included a map on which Sumatra was divided into two types of areas: those that “already” had been subjugated and those that had “not yet” been subjugated (Figure 1.11). According to Mulier, the latter would be under Dutch rule within five to ten years’ time. The effect of framing Sumatra in a narrative that was told in the future perfect was that it was represented as *already* a part of the Dutch colonial empire. It was, in a sense, not looked *at*, but looked *through*: behind the villages, the bodies of the Gajos and Alas, and the landscape, the imperial distribution of the perceptible already positioned the Dutch colonial empire. In this narrative, both the Gajo and Alas past and present were gradually replaced by a Dutch imperial future.⁸²

82 On the “future anterior” in photography, see Barthes 1981.

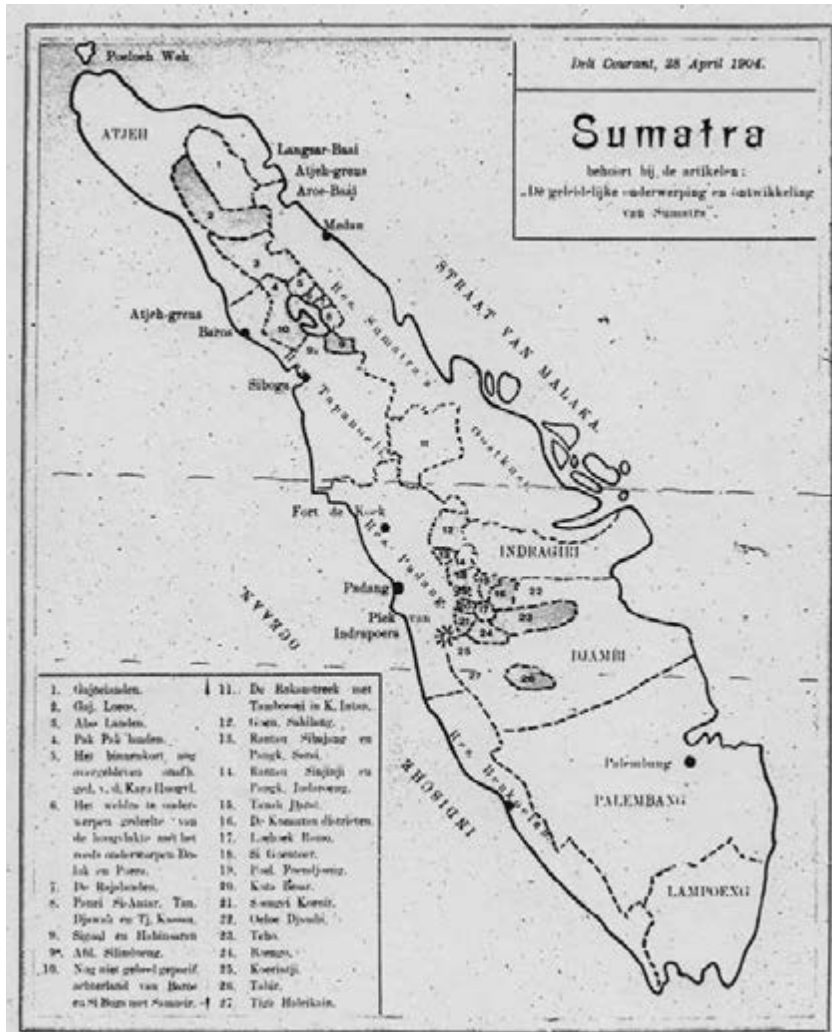


Figure 1.11. Sumatra. From *Deli Courant*, 28 April 1904. Royal Library, The Hague.

The future perfect, however, was not the only tense of the imperial perceptible order. As was shown above, Van Daalen and the Royal Batavian Society for Arts and Sciences had great interest in the archipelago's past and present. Dutch interest in the history of the islands was not something new. From the late eighteenth century onwards, Europeans had investigated the archipelago's past. From the early 1840s onwards, photography was strongly involved in these projects: the two first photographic projects in the Indies were on Hindu-Buddhist temples and statues (stemming from

what the Dutch called “Javanese Antiquity”), and were followed by various others (Bijl 2009; Lunsingh Scheurleer 2007; Anderson 1991). Ethnographic research on Atjeh had started in the nineteenth century: the National Museum of Ethnology in Leiden, for instance, had been building up a collection on Atjeh and the Gajo and Alas lands since the 1860s, with a steep increase in its gathering taking place from the start of the Atjeh War in the 1870s. Most of the donors were military officers (Fischer 1912). The books of Snouck Hurgronje are impressive collections of data and analyses of the Atjehnese and Gajo past and (political) present. This interest was primarily scholarly but was also related to questions of government: the Dutch studied the natives in order to be better able to rule them. Often, colonial historical and ethnographical researches were collapsed in the sense that the native past, present, and future were conflated into an eternal present (Said 1978). In the case of the imperial distribution of the perceptible, however, the Gajos and Alas were not positioned outside of time; rather, they were imagined to have a past that was still present as “experience”: Gajo and Alas culture. Next to the genres of captured leaders and colonial massacres, the 1904 photographic project can thus also be framed by the genres of ethnographic, antiquarian, and archaeological photography.⁸³

What emerged from these time frames was a double perspective on the Gajo and Alas lands in 1904: on the one hand they were positioned in a past that was still visible in the Gajo and Alas present, but on the other hand they were also placed in the Dutch imperial future. While the second positioning erased memory, the first constructed it. What emerges is what Koselleck called the “contemporaneity of the noncontemporaneous”: the Gajos and Alas lived in a different time *and* at the same time as the Dutch.

I will now turn to the first semanticizations of the 1904 photographs, in particular to a textual frame provided by a list of captions made by the army. In December 1904, Van Daalen gave 165 of Neeb’s photographs to the Royal Batavian Society for Arts and Sciences. A numbered list of captions, probably written by Neeb, was published in the Society’s notes. This is the 1904 photographs’ first imagetext: they are placed in chronological order and each of them has its own text.

A typical example of a photograph of the Gajo present past is number 68, captioned “Different ways of carrying loads of Gajo women and men”

83 For these photographic genres in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, see Groeneveld 1989; Roberts 1993; Hamber 1996; Edwards 2001, pp. 51-79; Bijl 2009.



Figure 1.12. H. M. Neeb. Different ways of carrying loads of Gajo women and men, 3-5 May 1904. Photograph, 10 x 14 cm. Museum Volkenkunde, Leiden, inv. no. A17-25.

(Figure 1.12). Against the backdrop of a village setting, one man and three women stand spread out from left to right across the surface of the image. Each carries a different load in a different manner. The photograph is not framed as an icon of these four Gajos carrying something but rather as an icon of “Gajo carrying”, with the effacement of both people and objects. This effacement is reinforced by the photograph blocking almost every possibility to position these people as focalizers: they are looked at from the side, they have their eyes closed, and their heads are slightly bowed. Neeb’s caption frames this photograph as a typology, especially through the words “Gajo ways”. Many of Neeb’s captions are similarly without verbs, for instance for photograph number 60: “Gajos, ready for battle, armed with blunderbuss, shield, rifle (cock), the real Gajo *amanremoe* [sword], *rentjong* [dagger] and lance”.

An example of the present future of the colonial empire can be found in the caption of number 108, which is KR3 of the soldiers standing on the village wall: “Koetö Réh; the place where the *marechausées* penetrated”.⁸⁴ The caption frames the photograph as an icon of a specific location, but through the verb “penetrated” also summons up the action that took place there at a specific historical moment, namely the soldiers tearing down

84 “Lijst van fotogrammen” 1904.

the barricades surrounding the village wall and climbing it. This caption frames the soldiers as resting at the moment they came in, emphasizing the image's dynamics despite its long exposure time and its obvious posing. It now becomes visible how behind Van Daalen the pointed bamboo stops, only to begin again about a dozen soldiers further on. Moreover, the uneven rhythm of the soldiers is semanticized: the two men standing right above the child, who come only half as high as the other soldiers, now not only indicate the place where the army climbed the village wall but also the many men still standing on the outside. Another set of dynamic elements emphasized by the caption are the blurs that occurred because some of the soldiers did not stand still: the man sitting in front of Van Daalen has a blurred hand in front of his neck, and the soldier behind him has only half a head. Not only does the photograph rehearse this crucial moment in the downfall of Koetö Réh, it also shows the result of it by depicting the killed villagers lying on the village ground. However, because the caption brings out the dynamics of the image, its motionlessness becomes less visible. More than that, the caption does not even mention the villagers, and this is the same with the captions of the other seven photographs of atrocity. Barbie Zelizer writes that:

the visual, unlike the verbal, might best tell a story by strategically catching things in the middle. It depicts for its onlookers a moment in an event's unfolding to which they attend while knowing where that unfolding leads. This means that visual work often involves catching the sequencing of events or issues midstream, strategically freezing it at its potentially strongest moment of meaningful representation. (2004: 158)

The sequencing of events in the case of the 1904 expedition was the subjugation of Koetö Réh as part of the subjugation of Sumatra. The potentially strongest moment was the breakthrough of the soldiers past the village wall. It was this central moment that Neeb's caption transformed the photograph into, positioning it midstream in the imperial narrative of which onlookers already knew the ending. The story unfolding had in fact already been told and emphasized the forward movement of the Dutch colonial empire, not the elements and people it met on the way that belonged to the past anyway.

In Neeb's captions, it is only the colonial empire that is described with verbs that suggest an intervention in the present: the colonial empire not only penetrated but also attacked (number 29) and entered (number 84). Gajos and Alas are only described with verbs when they perform rituals (e.g. dance in number 71, or sacrifice in number 149), or when they come to

surrender themselves to the Dutch (“report” or “appear” in numbers 31, 61, and 123). An image like 107 (KR2), in this imagetext, can go both ways and forms an example in which the present future and past come together as in a *Kippbild*. Its caption indicates only a location: “Koetö Réh: View along the Western Facade”, making it possible to see the photograph as depicting what was inevitable, namely the present future of the colonial empire, or as depicting the Gajo present past with its village structure and cooking equipment. In KR2, memories are both erased and created.

Conclusion

In this first phase of the social biography of the photographs from 1904, the dominance of the imperial frames of semanticization meant that their meaning was unproblematic for people within the army. As language was readily available, the photographs functioned as windows onto the world: their *pas-se-partout* did not become visible. The fact that the photographs were semanticized as depicting various times does not alter this conclusion, because for the KNIL these times did not cancel each other out as in a contradiction but were each other’s logical pendants. The unproblematic status of the photographs, which were in line with various widely spread genres in imperial visual culture, can also be seen from their wide dissemination, e.g. among various archives and museums, and in an exhibition and a book. The army could thus distribute them widely because it did not perceive them as inadmissible within the imperial distribution of the perceptible. That in the Indies there indeed was such a perceptible order is confirmed by historian Henk Schulte Nordholt’s argument that the Dutch East Indies were a state of violence. Schulte Nordholt discusses the period of modern imperialism as one of two “waves of unprecedented Dutch violence” which swept over the archipelago – the first having occurred in the later seventeenth century – heralding “a new colonial state which had an unprecedented supply of modern artillery at its disposal” (2002: 36). He traces this state of violence, and the accompanying regime of fear which lasted until the end of the colonial period, on various terrains. Around 1900, the Dutch colonial military killed between a hundred and a hundred and twenty thousand people during the subjugation of the outer territories. On many plantations and in several mines, there was a repressive labor regime which Schulte Nordholt characterizes as “terror imposed on laborers by the state itself. Miners felt they were being sucked into hell each time they were forced to go down into the mine” (ibid: 37). The colonial state also responded with

excessive violence to local resistance – for instance to a farmer’s revolt in Java in 1886 of which Schulte Nordholt writes that it was “a colonial carnival with a shooting match on live targets” (ibid: 39). Lastly, Schulte Nordholt discusses the existence of local criminals in the Javanese countryside who in exchange for their services were given freedom by colonial administrators to develop their own criminal activities so that, for the population, power and crime became synonymous. Violence, in short, was in the capillaries of the Dutch colonial state (see also Groen 2002).

In 2004, Slavoj Žižek discussed Donald Rumsfeld’s 2002 speech about knowns and unknowns concerning the situation in Iraq. Rumsfeld had said:

There are known knowns. These are things we know that we know. There are known unknowns. That is to say, there are things that we now know we don’t know. But there are also unknown unknowns. These are things we do not know we don’t know.

What Rumsfeld forgot, Žižek pointed out, were the unknown knowns, the things of which you do not know you know them (2004). The perceptible order is made up of these unknown knowns. Violence in army circles in 1904 was just such an unknown known. Social scientist Michael Billig has discussed the unknown knowns of the nation through his concept of banal nationalism, which he describes as:

the ideological habits which enable the established nations of the West to be reproduced. It is argued that these habits are not removed from everyday life... Daily, the nation is indicated, or “flagged”, in the lives of its citizenry. Nationalism, far from being an intermittent mood in established nations, is the endemic condition. (1995: 6)

In Billig’s account, “the metonymic image of banal nationalism is not the flag which is being consciously waved with fervent passion; it is the flag hanging unnoticed on the public building” (8). Seeing the ease with which the 1904 photographs were made and distributed in the Dutch East Indies, their production can be called part of a “banal imperialism”.

In this chapter, the moment of production and the first frames of the 1904 photographs were discussed. As was shown above, all kinds of imperial institutes were implicated in the expedition, and from none of them a word of protest was heard. This situation is, in a sense, the opposite of one of cultural aphasia and emerging memory, for in this case memory is more like what Pierre Nora called a *milieu de mémoire*: unnoticed and lived. How

then did the 1904 photographs turn into contested and emerging portable monuments caught between memory and forgetting? In the next chapter I argue that this transition occurred when the reports and photographs of the 1904 expedition moved outside colonial army circles, particularly to the Netherlands, and the 1904 expedition shifted from being part of a *milieu de mémoire* into an individual and contested *lieu de mémoire*.

2 Epistemic Anxiety and Denial, 1904-1942

This chapter investigates the social biography of the 1904 photographs as they were semanticized during the colonial period from the moment they had emerged from the social frame of the military. Although in the Indies their existence was already publicly known due to a June 1904 article in the newspaper *Deli Courant* (see below) and through the exhibition in Batavia in February 1905, in the Netherlands it was only in the summer of 1905 that a number of them (TT, PE, and KR2) became part of the public debate due to the publication of Kempees's book.⁸⁵ After 1905, the photographs were published two more times during the colonial period: KR2 was printed in a 1907 booklet (Wekker 1907), while a 1938 book included three photographs, namely KR2, KR3, and KL1 (Zentgraaff 1938). What I will show in this chapter is that the perceptible order they displayed was at odds with the Dutch distribution of the perceptible within which they were semanticized, causing disturbances and irritations of what it meant to be Dutch and to have an empire. Crucial in this respect was that, in colonial matters, a distribution of the perceptible was dominant in the Netherlands in the early twentieth century which can be characterized as "ethical", i.e. a set of implicit laws that produced the Dutch not only as subjugators but also as caretakers of the natives in the Indies.

This chapter will also show that images of colonial atrocity, and even the *idea* of such photographs, played a vital part in Dutch debates on colonial policy, as could already be grasped from Braakensiek's drawing in *De Amsterdammer* discussed in chapter 1. In a parliamentary debate in November 1904, the idea of photographs of atrocity of the 1904 expedition was invoked by Member of Parliament Victor de Stuers without him seeming to know that they actually existed. PD, a photograph of atrocity of the 1898 Pedir expedition, was shown and discussed in parliament by MP L. W. J. K. Thomson in November 1907. Socialist cartoonist Albert Hahn, moreover, made several drawings about the 1904 expedition which shared important formal characteristics with the photographs and can therefore be read as commentaries on them. As the framing and semanticization of the photographs were also strongly influenced by the other mediations of

⁸⁵ Kempees's book had been published by August 1905, as can be seen from an ad in *Het Nieuws van den dag* 4 August 1905.

the 1904 expedition circulating at the time – primarily newspaper articles, and military and governmental reports – a substantial part of this chapter will be devoted to these mediations.

As we have seen in the previous chapter, imperialism tried to design the past and future it needed and subsequently produce them, in this case through photography. In fact, of course, the Dutch could not control the future, nor was the imperial distribution of the perceptible the only factor in the production of the perceptible order. Addressing the insecurities and hesitations of colonial administrations, Stoler writes that, within them, “[g]rids of intelligibility were fashioned from uncertain knowledge, disquiet and anxieties registered the uncommon sense of events and things, epistemic uncertainties repeatedly unsettled the imperial conceit that all was in order” (2009b: 1). In this chapter I take from Stoler’s work this perspective on colonial knowledge to investigate how the photographs and other mediations of the 1904 expedition were framed in both the Indies and the Netherlands during the colonial period. In contrast to the previous chapter, emphasis will be put here not on how the photographs *were framed* but on how they threatened *to become frames themselves*, i.e. how they threatened to become icons of Dutch colonialism and even of the Dutch nation. This chapter examines the moments when certain undesired *oublis de réserve* loomed to haunt their observers, and how these viewers developed strategies to negotiate the meanings of the images in such a way that these silences-turned-sounds became manageable. It is in this chapter that I will describe the first signs of Dutch cultural aphasia vis-à-vis the photographs and analyze the search for appropriate concepts that their observers were undertaking. Here is also where, for the first time in their social biography, these images can be described as emerging (and submerging) portable monuments, for it is already in the colonial period that observers framed them – together with the 1904 expedition and colonial violence in general – as “absent”, despite these images and other documents of atrocity being widely available.

Epistemic anxiety has been an important subject in colonial studies. Homi Bhabha has pointed out the paradoxical nature of colonial (and other) stereotypes, arguing that they, anxiously repeated as they are, connote “rigidity and an unchanging order as well as disorder”. On the one hand they betray the uncertainty within the colonial regime about whether the validity of these stereotypes can ever be proven, yet on the other hand it is exactly “the force of ambivalence that gives the colonial stereotype its currency: ensures its repeatability in changing historical and discursive conjunctures” (Bhabha 2004: 94-95). Stoler’s work corroborates this insight:

“if there is anything we can learn from the colonial ontologies of racial kinds, it is that such [racial] ‘essences’ were protean, not fixed, subject to reformulation again and again” (2009b: 4). She sees colonial regimes as “uneven, imperfect, and even indifferent knowledge-acquiring machines” (2002: 206), and investigates the colonial archives “as condensed sites of epistemological and political anxiety rather than as skewed and biased sources” (2009b: 20).

In photographic and visual studies, epistemic uncertainty is thematized in accounts in which photographs resist semanticization. Roland Barthes’s concept of the photograph’s third meaning addresses moments when the photograph exceeds the limits of knowledge, as does his concept of the punctum (1977, 1981). W. J. T. Mitchell suggests that we:

see the picture not just as an object of description or ekphrasis that comes alive in our perceptual/verbal/conceptual play around it, but as a thing that is always already addressing us (potentially) as a subject with a life that has to be seen as “its own” in order for our descriptions to engage the picture’s life as well as our lives as beholders. This means the question is not just what did the picture mean (to its first historical beholders) or what does it mean to us now, but what did (and does) the picture want from its beholders then and now. (2005: 49)

In the study of colonial photography, it is particularly the work of Elizabeth Edwards that has thematized pictorial excess through her concept of photographs as “raw histories”: unprocessed and painful, they are “ultimately uncontainable, there is an incompleteness and unknowability of photographs” (2001: 5-6).

In memory studies, the disturbance of frames of remembrance by cultural artifacts has gained most attention in relation to works of art (Van Alphen 1997; Bennett 2005), while against presentist and instrumentalist conceptions of memory it has been argued that there are limits to “the malleability of the past”, meaning that memory is not only dependent on social frames but also on traces from the past such as can be found in photographs.⁸⁶ This can lead to unprocessed traces that do not fit the distribution of the perceptible and are like specters: present and absent at the same time. In her book *Ghostly Matters*, which is also very much about memory, Avery Gordon has developed a concept of haunting as:

86 Olick 1998, p. 128. See also Schudson 1989; Misztal 2003, pp. 67-47; Olick 2007, pp. 55-56.

an animated state in which a repressed or unresolved social violence is making itself known, sometimes very directly, sometimes more obliquely... [T]he term *haunting* [describes] those singular yet repetitive instances... when the over-and-done-with comes alive... The ghost... is not the invisible or some ineffable excess [but] a real presence and demands its due, your attention. (2008: xvi)

Being haunted by ghosts is an experience inextricably connected to anxiety. Moreover, Gordon holds, a ghost can also have a “seething presence” on the level of the state, which sometimes becomes engrossed in “exorcizing the ghosts it believes are ruining the nation” (ibid: 126).

Whereas for some observers discussed in this chapter, the photographs produced epistemic anxiety and aphasiac moments, as their perceptible order did not fit an ethical distribution of the perceptible, others who were confronted with their raw histories employed various types of denial to manage these images’ meanings. Sociologist Stanley Cohen has distinguished three types of denial in the case of states that do not want to acknowledge what they did and caused: literal, interpretive, and implicatory denial. In the case of literal denial, “the fact or knowledge of the fact is denied” (2001: 7). In interpretive denial:

the raw facts (something happened) are not being denied. Rather, they are given a different meaning from what seems apparent to others... In the public realm: this was population exchange, not ethnic cleansing; the arms deal was not illegal and was not really an arms deal. Officials do not claim that “nothing happened”, but what happened is not what you think it is, not what it looks like, not what you call it. (ibid: 7-8)

Finally, in the case of implicatory denial:

there is no attempt to deny either the facts or their conventional interpretation. What are denied or minimized are the psychological, political or moral implications that conventionally follow... This is not a refusal to acknowledge reality, but a denial of its significance or implications. (ibid: 8)

Denial can be found among a number of strong defenders of Dutch imperialism, though literal denial was less of an option, as the military had paraded its deeds everywhere it could. The other two types of denial, however, are both encountered in the debate in the Netherlands on the 1904 expedition.

All these denials can be interpreted as attempts to prevent the photographs from being semanticized in a certain manner: these were not simple lies but strategies that helped the Dutch deal with what were also troubling recognitions.

This chapter continues with an analysis of the uncertain responses to the 1904 expedition by Queen Wilhelmina and others in a discussion of the ethical distribution of the perceptible. Next, I discuss how supporters of the expedition – among whom Van Heutsz and Prime Minister Kuyper – had various strategies to contain its meanings and depict it as in some way inevitable. Subsequently, I show how a number of outright critics discussed the 1904 expedition and photographs precisely in terms that others tried to prevent, namely as icons of everything that was wrong with Dutch colonialism. This is followed by an analysis of the deft political cartoons of Albert Hahn in which the expedition is depicted as haunting Dutch politics. The last two sections deal with the two occasions in which one or more of the 1904 photographs were reprinted during the colonial period. In the first of these instances, a former soldier of the KNIL tried to turn the photographs into icons of his former commander's cruelty, while the second occasion is the use of the 1904 photographs by conservative journalist H. C. Zentgraaff to sing the colonial army's praise but simultaneously revealing his discomfort with what they depicted.

The Ethical Distribution of the Perceptible

On 20 September 1904, Queen Wilhelmina mentioned the 1904 expedition in her Queen's Speech (the Dutch equivalent of the US State of the Union address), which opened the Dutch parliamentary year of 1904-1905. In one of two paragraphs devoted to the Indies in her speech of some five hundred words, she said in a rather awkward manner:

The further confirmation of what till now was achieved in Northern Sumatra moved forward again in a not unimportant manner. In view of this, a more forceful action in the Gajo and Alas lands could not fail to occur. That with this also unarmed ["ongewapenden"] fell is regretted by Me, though it was not preventable.⁸⁷

87 *Verslag der Handelingen* 20 September 1904. The Queen's Speech was taken up in the minutes of the Dutch parliament.

With its modifiers (“further”, “till now”, “more forceful”), negations and double negations (“not preventable”, “could not fail”, “not unimportant”), this paragraph makes the situation in Sumatra visible and invisible at the same time, smoothing things over while also suggesting a number of alternatives: *Could* the more forceful action have failed to occur? *Was* the death of unarmed people not preventable? There is still an echo of the imperial future perfect (“confirmation of what till now was obtained”) but without pride, for the passive constructions make the Dutch nation invisible. The speech reflects a certain uneasiness with what had happened and a difficulty in finding the right words. It is this struggle that will be thematized throughout this chapter, for the disquiet perceptible in this speech lurks in the background of many of the responses that will be discussed.

How did this search for words occur? Whereas in the army circles discussed earlier, the expedition was a self-evident fact of perception, outside of these circles this was no longer the case: other frames generated other meanings and made visible the *passe-partout* of the representations of the expedition. This means that these representations became visible *as signs* and *as media*: they were detached from certain meanings to which people in the army had not even consciously known they were attached. This can be seen from the amount of cultural production surrounding the Gajo expedition, and specifically from the many justifications: whereas the army felt it needed no explanation, the newspapers back in the Netherlands were filled with attempts to explain what had happened. In Pierre Nora’s terms: the 1904 expedition was no longer a part of a *milieu de mémoire*. According to Nora, people only start talking about memory when it is no longer there, i.e. when it is no longer a given. “*Milieu de mémoire*” means “lived memory” (i.e. a memory that people do not even know they have), and it is exactly this “lived memory” that became impossible (1996: 1). Crucial in this respect was the rise of “ethical policy” in the Netherlands and of an ethical distribution of the perceptible which did not permit the Dutch to act as ruthless killers of the natives.

Neither Van Daalen nor Van Heutsz used ethical arguments in their writings about the 1904 expedition. In the Netherlands, however, ethical reasons were an important part of the debate. In the Queen’s Speech of 1901, “ethical policy” had been officially announced by the administration of Prime Minister Abraham Kuyper by declaring that the Netherlands had a “moral calling” in the Indies. Locher-Scholten, who has investigated the many usages of the term “ethical policy”, defines it as a “policy aimed at acquiring *de facto* political control of the entire Indonesian archipelago and the development of both country and people under Dutch leadership and

after Western example" (1981: 213). As the Dutch version of the British "white man's burden" and the French "*mission civilisatrice*", ethical policy combined military subjugation with the penetration of the state into the population's everyday lives through policies of what Foucault has called disciplining (the surveillance, training, and punishment of man-as-body) and biopolitics (the management of the population as a whole, or man-as-species), though in practice the colonial state was mostly far too fragmented to effectively implement its policies (Foucault 2003).⁸⁸

While in 1904 the word "imperialism" already smacked of power and self-interest, "ethical policy" was the showpiece of Dutch colonialism: "the elevation of the peoples of the archipelago" became a convincing argument for the establishment of authority (Locher-Scholten 1981: 194-200). People who considered themselves "ethicists" or had a partly ethical argumentation could be found on both sides of the debate on the expedition. Kuyper was one, as well as the state advisor for native affairs Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje, and also the Minister of the Colonies A. W. F. Idenburg. In the eyes of the latter, "imperialist politics, in the evil sense of the word, is completely alien to the colonial policy of the Government".⁸⁹ This was a well-known conviction in the Netherlands at the time, finding its source in the idea that the country, as a small or middle power, did not participate in the power play exercised by the big nations (Johannes 1997: 93-4). Guiding Idenburg's policies was "not thirst for power, profit, and money... but a serious belief in our duty as a colonial Power".⁹⁰ "Imperialism" was simply un-Dutch, and with that the matter was settled.

While ethical policy fit the ethical distribution of the perceptible, the 1904 photographs and other reports about the expedition did not. This disturbance led to both critical and anxious responses from various observers. Socialist MP H. H. van Kol, for instance, called the expedition a stream of blood on the map and worse than the bloodiest months during the Spanish reign of terror under Alva, a Spanish duke who had many Dutch killed during the Dutch Revolt against the Spanish at the end of the sixteenth century.⁹¹ Victor de Stuers, a Catholic MP, compared the 1904 expedition to warfare by the Huns, the Tartars, Tamburlaine (see also Vereshchagin's

88 Biopolitics seeks to control "processes such as the ratio of births to deaths, the rate of reproduction, the fertility of the population", its prime effect being a healthy, productive population (243).

89 *Bijlagen van het Verslag der Handelingen* 1904-1905. Kamerstuknummer 4, ondernummer 40: 23.

90 *Verslag der Handelingen* 25 Nov. 1904: 253.

91 *Verslag der Handelingen* 27 Sep. 1904: 50-53.

Apotheosis of War in chapter 1) and Genghis Khan, and called the soldiers a gang of bloodhounds.

Van Kol characterized the paragraph in the Queen's Speech on the expedition as hypocritical cant where he would rather have seen "words, in which indignation resounded". He directly attacked Kuyper who, seven years earlier, had spoken about how "Atjeh should enjoy to a rich extent the blessings of the Gospel".⁹² Van Kol called the Gajo and Alas lands "the deepest and darkest part of Sumatra", where "a more or less uncivilized people" was trading slaves and stealing water buffalos (ibid: 52). Though he held that in both respects (thievery and condoning slavery), the Dutch themselves were worse, he argued not so much against the principle of taking action against these "abuses" as against the violent way in which the government had gone about it. In his opinion, the same goal should have been achieved "in a peaceful manner" (ibid), and he argued for better contacts with the locals, perhaps through missionaries or a tactically operating civil servant (ibid: 74-75). Even better would be not to try and solve all abuses in the *Indische* archipelago but to concentrate solely on Java, for "every further expansion of our authority is an unforgivable folly, a crime against the 26 million Javanese" (ibid: 53). This was in line with Van Kol's ideas about selling most of the Dutch possessions in the East to other colonial powers. Van Kol claimed that history had placed a noble task, namely taking care of the Javanese, on the shoulders of the Dutch.⁹³ He discussed the natives in empathetic terms but at the same time positioned them as irrational and helpless.

De Stuers positioned the Dutch as "parental guardians" who should patiently let their civilization "penetrate those primitive tribes" in order for the latter to become "softer and better" and Christianized (ibid: 225): "primitive peoples should be somewhat seen as children who should be treated with gentleness and patience".⁹⁴ He argued that "the Dutch flag, the

92 Ibid.

93 *Verslag der Handelingen* 23 Nov. 1904: 210. Van Kol's views were in line with the official point of view of the Social Democratic Workers Party (SDAP), which was that "the colonies exist and will exist for centuries; they are inextricably bound up with world history... In most cases it will not be possible to abandon the old colonies since they, not suited for self-governance and weakened by centuries of guardianship, would be at the mercy of anarchy and misery. Where the weak or unconscious child cannot do without our support, abandoning it completely would be the same as giving it up for maximum exploitation as a victim or handing it over to our rulers." *Het Volk*, 30 June 1904.

94 *Verslag der Handelingen* 25 Nov. 1904: 273.

old, honest, and honorable Dutch flag has been spattered with the blood of hundreds of women and children” (ibid: 223).

It is not a coincidence that both Van Kol and De Stuers picked icons of the Dutch nation: in Van Kol’s case, a time of misery (Alva’s regime of terror); and in De Stuers’s case, a soiled symbol of pride (the blood-spattered flag). Their anxieties concerned the Dutch nation and whether it was fulfilling its “historical task” vis-à-vis the colonies.⁹⁵ A politician like De Stuers, together with many other ethicists, saw violence only in terms of direct physical violence, not in terms of what Gayatri Spivak has called “the epistemic violence of imperialist law and education supplementing an earlier economic text” (1988: 283). In the pursuit of their biopolitical agendas, however, military violence was often needed and seen by them as a necessary evil that had to be contained as much as possible. For Van Kol, on the other hand, sticking to Java and Madoera was exactly a means to evade military violence.

This expedition had “raised eyebrows” and brought to the fore the question whether the Dutch were in fact better than Alva and could be as proud of their flag as they were. Above, I quoted Stoler who clarified that in colonial administrations, “disquiet and anxieties registered the uncommon sense of events and things”. Such disquiet was also present in the speeches of Van Kol and De Stuers, who like Wilhelmina were confronted with information that exceeded their frames of semanticization and therefore caused anxiety and anger. Their outrage, aimed at the production of a perceptible order that fit their ethical frame, was met with a rather different response from those who defended the mission, namely denial and justification.

Managing Established Frames

Supporters of the expedition tried to contain the meanings of its mediations as much as possible. Just like Wilhelmina, Van Kol, and De Stuers, they sensed that certain established frames were threatened by these mediations, yet their response was one of semantic management and damage control. The four defenders discussed here – various journalists of Dutch newspapers that supported the expedition, the Governor of Atjeh Van Heutsz, Prime Minister Kuyper, and the reporter M. T. V. of the *Deli Courant* – all developed strategies to frame the expedition and its outcomes as in some way inevitable.

95 Jos Perry’s biography of De Stuers is called *Our Decency as a Nation*. See Perry 2004.

Inevitable Imperialism

Between February and August 1904, more than two hundred articles relating to the military actions in the Gajo and Alas lands were printed in nine Dutch newspapers.⁹⁶ From beginning to end, the Christian and liberal newspapers were enthusiastic, while their writings repeatedly pointed out the inevitability of the expedition. In the case of these supportive newspapers, this idea of inevitability boiled down to the conclusion that the expedition and everything it caused were just. Yet what is most striking about these articles is their defensive tone, indicating that the story they wanted to tell was contested from the start. These articles form a good illustration of both the slipperiness and persistence of colonial categories, particularly with respect to the question of whether the Dutch, formally at war with “Atjehnese”, could attack “Gajo and Alas”.

On 5 April, the liberal *Algemeen Handelsblad* wrote that the Gajo land was a vassal state of Atjeh. As the Netherlands were at war with Atjeh, the expedition could therefore be seen as just. However, on 18 July the same newspaper admitted that this insight was of recent date and wrote that although “[t]he Gajo and Alas lands used to be seen as independent, recent years have clearly shown that they belonged to Atjeh”. It then offered a “simile”:

After a long struggle, we suppose, X-land was brought down, yet it is now revealed that, by virtue of a connection which was kept secret for a long time, it had been supported in all kinds of ways, with money and men, by Q-land... Shall [the conqueror] then leave Q-land alone! No, to be able to count on a lasting peace in the future, he will also fight the enemy over there and bring him down.

The basic message here is that it did not really matter whether the Gajo and Alas lands were independent or not. However, when it was reported in all newspapers that a member of the British parliament had asked critical questions about the 1904 expedition, Van Heutsz said in the same newspaper ten days later and without being contradicted that “[t]he places named by the British are not in the Atjeh, but in the Alas lands”. *De Maasbode* of 18 May

96 These newspapers were the liberal *De Arnhemsche Courant*, *Algemeen Handelsblad*, and *De Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant*; the Protestant *De Standaard* and *De Rotterdammer*; the Catholic *De Maasbode* and *De Tijd*; the socialist *Het Volk*; and the anarchist *De Vrije Socialist*. See Mal-Bouwman 1980.

also had a solution of its own, stating that “the Atjehnese are in charge in the Gajo lands” and that the “old jahats [evil-doers]... changed the Gajos into Atjehnese”. According to this article, the Gajos were in fact good-natured, “childishly simple”, and they never fought a lot. So even if the Gajos were not Atjehnese, they certainly acted as such. Articles that positioned the Gajos as always already Atjehnese, on the other hand, emphasized their long history of warfare.

As Stoler has argued, colonial categories were “not fixed, [but] subject to reformulation again and again” (2009b: 4). The Dutch newspapers used such flexible categories, as they were anxious about how to justify the expedition. This is because they, unlike most in the army, functioned in a social scene in which other frames of interpretation were also emerging which semanticized the expedition in a different manner. The expedition, in other words, was being reframed and therefore became vulnerable to critical scrutiny, as it turned out that the reports of the 1904 expedition were troubling the Dutch sense of reality.

Inevitable Violence

When General van Heutsz was in the Netherlands in the summer of 1904 to be promoted to governor-general of the Indies, he was interviewed by *Nieuwsblad van het Noorden*. The anonymous interviewer started by noting that the killing of large numbers of women and children had “raised eyebrows” in the Netherlands and abroad. Van Heutsz responded that the list of losses was also “personally painful” to him. Asked whether no other course had been possible, Van Heutsz answered:

Under the given circumstances impossible... Be assured that commander Van Daalen is not the type of leader to order his troops to shoot at women and children. Doing such a thing would, moreover, not only be in defiance of the explicit order to act in a peace-loving manner, but also of the character and nature of our soldiers. There may be rough customers among the fusiliers, but precisely that would go against the grain with the roughest of the roughest... By the way, women and children are not shot at in the way we shoot at men. Women and children are not spotted, aimed at, and if possible, hit. Not even when they used firearms and fired at our soldiers.⁹⁷

97 *Nieuwsblad van het Noorden* 22 July 1904.

In short, the Dutch *did* kill women and children, but they did not *shoot to kill* them. Shooting to kill women and children was simply not in the army's wiring. Asked how it was then possible that so many women and children were nevertheless killed, Van Heutsz said:

the Gajos use their women as a living bastion... They know we do not shoot at women and children and that is why they do not only believe themselves to be safe behind the backs of their women, but they shoot at our troops from behind that safe parapet... But you have to realize that sometimes during this expedition a few thousand Gajos opposed 200 soldiers at the same time... This is why we are obliged to let off some volleys into the crowds which are piling up and because of that, because of that *alone* it is that also women and children are hit... it is impossible to retreat because he [the enemy] chooses to hide behind his women and children.

The women and children in Van Heutsz's story have a double position: on the one hand, they are passive parts of a living bastion, yet on the other hand they are active and have firearms themselves (Van Heutsz even says in the same interview that they "are mostly no less armed than their men"). The Dutch soldiers also have a double position: they are active agents when it comes to shooting men but passive instruments when it comes to shooting women and children. In Van Heutsz's reasoning, the people who actually killed the Gajo women and children were the Gajo men. The Dutch were sucked in, as it were. Also, given the ratio (thousands of Gajos versus two hundred Dutch), it was clear who was attacking and who was defending, according to Van Heutsz. He held, moreover, that there were at least 300,000 Gajos and Alas, and that "seeing the numbers that fell in relation to the total population, we cannot speak of 'extermination' as I read somewhere". Asked next by the interviewer if it had not been possible to enter the villages with cold steel instead of firearms, Van Heutsz said:

Completely right, and this also happens... once we are *inside* the kampong the carbine is put over the shoulder and there are exclusively man-to-man fights with the klewang. You will be able to understand that this means fewer dead enemies, but as a rule all the more dead on our side compared to shooting. However, we undergo this bigger loss if we do not want to make more victims among the women and children.

In this interview, Van Heutsz claimed a number of things that differed strongly from the military writings of Van Daalen and Kempees (see

chapter 1). First of all, in both military accounts it is not the case that the army stopped shooting once the village was entered – on the contrary. Moreover, at no point did it appear as if Van Daalen took any risks to “save” women and children by jeopardizing his men. And finally, the number of 300,000 Gajos and Alas is about ten times too high.

Van Heutsz was put in a defensive position here, another sign that the expedition was being critically scrutinized. The reporter asked him to respond to “raised eyebrows” and he himself brought up the accusation of “extermination”. These conversations about what the killings in Atjeh meant were the effects of reframings of the expedition which led to the *pas-partout* of imperialism becoming visible. Simply put: what was self-evident in military circles had become contested in other social frames. Imperialism, in this interview, was spaced through all kinds of doublings. This begins with Van Heutsz’s first words “[u]nder the given circumstances”. Things that had been matter-of-fact within army circles now had to be explicitly contextualized. Doubling was also present in this interview in the fact that there was no longer one but two possible worlds: one in which Van Daalen let women and children be shot, and one in which he did not. Of the first, Van Heutsz held, readers should be assured that it was a fictional world. The character of the rough fusilier should not be placed in the wrong narrative. Finally, there was also doubling at the word level, as can be seen in the two meanings of “shooting”. The meanings given to the expedition had to be actively and carefully managed so as not to run wild. Van Heutsz achieved this mostly through interpretive denial: the raw facts were not denied, but apparent meanings were adapted.

Inevitable Responsibility

The Dutch Prime Minister also proved himself very capable at this management of meaning. On 28 September 1904, Prime Minister Abraham Kuyper defended the Queen’s speech.⁹⁸ He was head of a cabinet formed by his own orthodox Calvinist Anti-Revolutionary Party (ARP), the conservative Christians (CHU), and Roman-Catholics. After these confessional parties, which had a majority in parliament (fifty-eight seats out of one hundred), the second biggest group were the liberals, including the “radical democrats” (thirty-five seats), followed by the up-and-coming social-democratic party (seven seats).⁹⁹ In 1904, women did not have the right to vote, while the right

98 *Verslag der Handelingen* 28 Sep. 1904.

99 These and other data on the Kuyper cabinet (1901-1905) are derived from Oud 1987, pp. 175-186.

to vote for men was connected to property, meaning that only 50% of the adult male population were eligible to vote in the last elections in 1901.

Like Van Heutsz, Kuyper was under attack concerning the 1904 expedition, in his case from a small number of members of the Dutch parliament who argued that Kuyper's (and Van Heutsz's) story of women as living fortresses had not been reported anywhere else, and that instead reports suggested that the women fought alongside the men. Kuyper countered this objection by saying that he was talking about "two types of women": those used as shields and those who fought along (*Verslag der Handelingen* 28 Sept. 1904, 79). As in Van Heutsz's account, women and children in the Prime Minister's speech doubled as both active and passive agents.¹⁰⁰ Kuyper argued, moreover, that a failure to be thorough now would only mean more slaughter later on, as resistance would only grow stronger: the Gajo and Alas men would be given the impression that they could hide between their families. It was precisely the shooting of women and children *now* that could prevent shooting women and children *later*.

Nevertheless, it seemed that Kuyper was not comfortable with this defense alone. This becomes apparent if we look at his elaborate strategies to discredit his opponents by arguing that they were not informed and therefore had no ground to stand on, or that they were not in the right position to have an opinion that mattered. Kuyper argued that the Gajo and Alas lands were indeed part of Atjeh and that therefore their subjugation was justified. He did this by pointing out that "the Gajos" paid a certain tax (*hassil*) to the sultan of Atjeh:

[s]omeone who is acquainted with Eastern affairs knows that this fact determines that indeed between these Gajo lands and the sultan a relationship of subject and sovereign exists. Furthermore I cannot emphasize enough that when you try to apply criteria which are in force in Europe to the situation there, like the respected representative continuously did, you necessarily come to totally confused legal conceptions. (*Verslag der Handelingen* 28 September 1904, 65)

In fact, Kuyper held, ask any Gajo and he will say the sultan of Atjeh is his sovereign. He asked the parliament to respect Gajo culture, which because of its difference from Europe merited special treatment (which in

100 "One should not imagine those children as exceptionally sweet" versus "It even happened repeatedly that a Gajo grabbed his wife with two hands and turned her as a shield in front of him to make the shot hit her".

practice meant violent subjugation). Moreover, after an elaborate account of how much patience the Dutch had shown since 1898 and after stating that newspaper reports on bloody scenes had no effect on him as these were part of all wars, Kuyper claimed that those who bore responsibility for the expedition (meaning the members of the cabinet) “have felt that painful awareness [of the bloody scenes] all the more deeply” (ibid: 67). In other words, those not directly involved had no right to doubt the cabinet members’ intentions, as the latter suffered the most.¹⁰¹ Kuyper held, finally, that unlike the Members of Parliament, *he* had his information by word of mouth from Van Heutsz who had been present in Atjeh during the expedition and was now in the Netherlands. This boiled down to stating that his sources were more valuable than those of MPs, while they moreover had no access to them.

Like Van Heutsz, Kuyper had to deal with the *passee-partout* of the expedition which because of reframing was not invisible anymore. In the Netherlands, the same elements were differently semanticized and gained different, critical meanings with which those who defended the expedition had to cope. What Kuyper and Van Heutsz did was take up the positive values behind these critical meanings and connect the facts of the expedition not to the criticisms but to these values. Shooting women and children became the prevention of needless bloodshedding and a noble act of sacrifice on the part of the Dutch military. Massacring Gajo villages became an expression of respecting Gajo culture. The visibility of the *passee-partout* had turned the facts of the expedition into signs, and Kuyper used this new freedom to redistribute characters, storylines, and meanings. His denial was also of the interpretive kind. At the same time, as if still unconvinced by his own frames, he attempted to silence his opponents by discrediting their contributions to the debate. This move, however, can also be explained with reference to the *passee-partout*, for if indeed signs were up for grabs, the best way to secure meaning was to try and fix the frame.

Inevitable Suffering

As indicated above, the first public mention that photographs were taken of the villages after their conquest was in June 1904 in a newspaper article. This article was written under the acronym M. T. V. and appeared on 23 June in

101 This is the figure of the colonial masochist who suffered for empire which was also encountered in chapter 1 in the sketch and painting by Wijnveld and Pieneman.

the *Deli Courant*. From the moment that the expedition was announced in December 1903, the *Deli Courant* reported on it. It was the most important newspaper at the time for Northern Sumatra and published in the profitable area of Deli, more specifically in the town of Medan on Sumatra's east coast, 150 kilometers away from Gajo-Loeös and 100 kilometers from the Alas land.¹⁰² The newspaper wrote about the glory the expedition would bring, including promotions for Commander van Daalen and Governor van Heutsz. On 12 January 1904, the *Deli Courant*'s local correspondent in Kota Radja, the capital of Atjeh, published an overview of the year 1903 in which the main theme was what he called the "pacification" of Sumatra, next to some economic and public health considerations. He wrote: "By making commander Van Daalen responsible for the contacts with the Gajo and Alas lands, a start has been made with the extension of our authority in the interior." The expedition is presented here as simply another stage in the inevitable work in progress, and therefore in line with the imperial narrative. As discussed in chapter 1, editor-in-chief Mulier used the future perfect in his nine-part series "The Gradual Subjugation and Development of Sumatra" to summon a present future. This series also included the map with all the "not yet" subjugated areas of the island.

M. T. V. was a reporter who traveled with the so-called "Pedeng Column" which was on its way from Sumatra's east coast to the Gajo and Alas lands to reinforce Van Daalen's troops. On 16 June, M. T. V.'s account of the fight near Pèparéq Göip from 18 March was published. Many elements in it were the same as in the military reports, for instance how the entire village fought alongside each other and the numbers of parentless children walking through it afterwards. Where M. T. V.'s reports departed from the writings of Van Daalen and Kempees, however, was in the detailed descriptions of the horrors of the expedition. This was especially the case in two articles from 23 June and 4 July on the fights over Tjané Oekön-Toenggöl on 21 April and Koetö Lengat Baroe on 24 June. Regarding the aftermath of the latter massacre, M. T. V. wrote under the subtitle "The Misery of War":

In the trous-de-loup behind the earthen wall... corpses and wounded lay in a jumble and on top of each other, in all kinds of positions. Old and young men, very old women and young mothers, boys and girls, older children and infants; the younger naked, the elderly half dressed, all

¹⁰² Termorshuizen 2001. All data offered here on the *Deli Courant* are from Termorshuizen's book.

covered in blood that dried up brown, all with more or less big wounds, almost all shot dead.

In a big pit 10 to 12 dead bodies, straight up, an apparently blind boy of 10 years, but with wide glassy eyes, unharmed, listening to our steps and movements [sic]. In another pit we passed one of the wounded pulled a sarong over his head. Somewhere else against the wall an unharmed child, naked, whining.

Again somewhere else on the stairs of a house a number of children, the elder staring around, the younger crying. In the middle of the square here and there a male corpse, arms and legs spread out widely. The saddest image, however, was provided by the *trous-de-loup* and the north-eastern salient, where the defense had been the most powerful. 20 to 30 corpses and wounded all mixed up and on top of each other, colorful through clothing, naked skin, open wounds, blood stains and blood stripes on the sandy subsoil. Here and there a half burnt corpse with a stomach torn open as a result of hitting the supply of gunpowder of the defender.

M. T. V. describes the KNIL soldiers as “calm, icy, and composed, with horror on their faces, speaking softly”. Regarding the aftermath of the massacre at Tjané Oekön-Toenggöl on 21 April, M. T. V. wrote:

The next day dr. Neeb took photographs with his apparatus in and around the benteng. Then the destruction could be observed calmly.

Before the gates the largest piles of bodies were lying. At the entrance, a man whose half chest they had ruptured and whose intestines one could see lying, all dried out. A terrible smell of blood and bodies was all around. Another man, who in his fear of death had wanted to jump over the pointed fence, had spiked himself. His corpse hung on the bamboo shafts, his head backwards, his legs warped; in the position of his desperate flight he found death... A wounded enemy with shattered breastbone and shot-through chest was dying while rattling and groaning.

A child of about two years with a thick belly laughingly walked around his grandmother who could not go on anymore.

A heavily wounded woman still waved with a sabre and called out to us to kill her...

A horrible scene! Dogs had already gnawed off some of the corpses, chickens pecked in the clotted blood of the wounds... and corpses were lying everywhere: behind the bulwark, at the gates, beneath the houses, in the pits, at the rice sheds, everywhere you found dead bodies. Also in the paddy fields outside the kampong, corpses were scattered[;] all the

way up to the Tripö river one kilometer away from the benteng there was even a corpse of a man who had dragged himself to there.

By first mentioning Neeb's photographic activities, this description starts functioning as an ekphrasis of the 1904 photographs. M. T. V.'s judgment on these scenes remains unclear, but seeing the newspaper he was writing for, it is most likely that these articles were not meant as an indictment of Dutch imperialism. In 1904, the *Deli Courant* (Mulier) had also written about coolie abuses in the area, but certainly not to denounce the plantation owners.

The title "The Misery of War" explicitly reframes the photographs in another pictorial genre. In chapter 1, Delacroix's *Scènes des massacres de Scio* (1824) was discussed as the first painting showing victims of war in an unembellished manner. Prior to this, however, there had been such depictions in prints. Francisco Goya's *Los Desastres de la Guerra* (1810-15) depicts horrors from the Peninsular War between France, Spain, Great Britain, and Portugal. From the end of the sixteenth century onwards in the Netherlands, there had been a large number of prints on the reign of terror of the Spanish Duke of Alva, when whole cities were massacred (Horst 2003). In 1633, Jacques Callot published the eighteen prints of his *Les Grandes Misères de la guerre* on suffering and dead during the Thirty Years' War in which most European countries were involved. After Delacroix, Henri Rousseau's *La Guerre* (1894), for instance, depicted the monstrosity and alienation of war. In photography, *Photographic Sketch Book* (1866) by Alexander Gardner depicted the bodies of killed soldiers lying on the battlefield of the American Civil War.

Though pictures of the miseries of war are often interpreted as a protest against war, their makers and framers mostly gave them different meanings. For Goya, for instance, his prints depicted "what happens when mankind abandons reason, and hatred and revenge take control of human behavior" (Tea-Dasschate Chu 2003: 15). According to art historian Anthony W. Lee, Gardner's *Photographic Sketch Book* "is composed of anecdote, interruption, serendipity, and pure contingency", has no overarching narrative, and gives only a sketchy answer to its central question "What is war?" (Lee and Young 2007: 36). M. T. V.'s articles do not give an explicit verdict on what the photographs depict; what they do is place these images within a genre that makes them icons of human suffering in a general sense. "The Misery of War" was a genre that had existed for many centuries and which was, moreover, seen as Art. Both these facts meant that framing the photographs within that genre produced these images less as pictures of specific victims of Dutch

colonial aggression, and more as pictures of a universal (and therefore inevitable) human experience.

M. T. V. was not the only one who saw things this way. Kuyper had argued that bloody scenes were part of all wars. The leader of the conservative Christian party A. F. de Savornin Lohman said on 5 November 1908, when the expedition had returned on the political agenda: “[W]hich means were used to accomplish this? / Horrible means, mister Chairman. This I admit. Because it is accomplished through war and war is horrible.” (quoted in Idema 1924: 218). Kuyper had connected the values of his opponents to exactly those elements of the expedition that they attacked. In Cohen’s terms, his denial was interpretive: the raw facts were not denied, but given a different meaning (1991, 7-8). De Savornin Lohman, however, not only said that the means were indeed ugly but admitted that the results were ugly as well. He told the critics they were completely right: war is terrible, yet what did they expect? De Savornin Lohman, in Cohen’s terms, employed implicatory denial: he did not deny the facts or their interpretation, yet he also did not draw any conclusions, for instance that the Dutch should stop engaging in such expeditions. Articles like those of M. T. V. had a comparable meaning.

Icons of the Nation

This management of meaning was necessary because the 1904 photographs threatened to become icons not of a specific Alas village or of general human suffering, but of the Dutch nation. The social-democrat P. J. Troelstra, for instance, sensed that the 1904 expedition was pushing the boundaries of the distribution of the perceptible (words were hard to find and questions about the nation were asked), and noticing the deftness of Van Heutsz and Kuyper, he told a story which ridiculed all attempts to limit the expedition’s meanings. In it, the main character is a “Christian burglar” who at the end of his break-in had murdered the inhabitants of the house and had to defend himself before the judges:

Your Honors, I did not burgle with the goal to kill. In fact, I am a particularly good-natured, Christian burglar: but, you see, after I had almost finished my break-in which took me a lot of trouble – after I had taken up the silver and gold tied in my handkerchief and stored the stocks and bank-papers in the inside pocket of my coat, I had to go through the bedroom where the inhabitants were sleeping. While I went through

that bedroom, the man woke up; if he had woken up alone, I could have settled the matter with only him, because he wanted to take the stolen goods away from me again; but the woman also woke up and she appeared to feel quite a bit for the man, because she positioned herself in front of him. I told her: Madam, clear off, for truly my Christian burglar's courage urges me not to harm you, but like a fury she grabbed a pair of tongs and wanted to fly at me. In self-defense I was also obliged to do something. Now as a burglar one is always more or less prepared for such incidents and so I had taken the precaution of taking along a considerable knife and this I used. I would have preferred to only have given the man a prod, for I told the woman repeatedly that she should go away; but when she did not do this, I was forced to give them both a prod which did something. I could have been gentler, but from philanthropy I hit them hard straight away, putting them out of their misery. Thereupon a number of children came from the box bed and they seemed to have the same mind as their parents for they each grabbed one of my legs to keep me there and then I was forced to... In short, I am surprisingly sorry, it really was not my intention, but, Your Honors, I was burgling, you see?¹⁰³

Troelstra did not have to look far to find words for the expedition, nor was the question of what it said about colonial politics in the Netherlands hard to answer for him. In his eyes, the expedition and the hypocritical way in which it was defended had exemplified this politics and Christian-capitalist politics in general. Rather than framing the expedition in such a way that its meanings became containable, he used it as a frame of interpretation itself to characterize Dutch capitalism and imperialism, and the Netherlands as a nation.

What becomes clear here is that from the very start, the photographs could gain meanings that irritated received self-conceptions. While this was welcomed by someone like Troelstra, others like De Stuers and Van Kol were decidedly less enthusiastic. What they and Troelstra have in common is that all three were critical of what had happened, yet what separated them was that for Troelstra the expedition showed the rottenness of the whole system, while for someone like De Stuers it was an ugly aberration.

A closer look at De Stuers's response, moreover, will also show that from their earliest public existence onwards the 1904 photographs had been framed as "hidden documents" which would sway public opinion and cure Dutch colonial amnesia. De Stuers, who had argued that the expedition had

103 *Verslag der Handelingen* 24 Nov. 1904: 249.

spattered the Dutch flag with blood, made a long speech which was for an important part a reflection on the media. In this speech he brought up the idea of the existence of photographs like the 1904 ones, seemingly unaware of them actually having been made. Arguing against the mediations of the expedition that were issued by the government, he positioned photography as the medium that would produce self-evident facts.

As De Stuers was from an army family, his words made a great impression and received a considerable amount of attention in the press. All those in favor of the expedition strongly opposed him; the other Catholics in parliament distanced themselves from him.¹⁰⁴ On 25 November 1904, he said:

During that expedition, a mine engineer and a botanist were present, but no photographer. If I had been able to get photographs of the hecatombs that had occurred there, I would not have spoken a word; I would simply have shown the photographs to the Members and I would have been eloquent through my silence! These photographs would have worked stronger on the nerves than my description.¹⁰⁵

De Stuers's suggestion was that, through photography, the Gajos and Alas would present themselves directly, both in a political and a sensory manner. Just before this passage, he said that "on occasions like these it is such a pity that the case can always only be viewed from one side. We cannot let Gajos or Alas perform here to tell us about the impression which this occurrence made on the native" (ibid: 270). It was the photographs that were supposed to achieve this in their place.

From the start, De Stuers talked as much about the expedition's mediations as about the expedition itself: "Mister Chairman! I would like to say a word on the last pages with which the annals of our famous Dutch-*Indische* history have been enriched."¹⁰⁶ The first problem De Stuers addressed was the lack of words on these pages. After enumerating the given numbers of dead and wounded, he said: "These are the official numbers. What else was hit or died in the bushes, history does not tell. What we did with the wounded is also not reported... What we did to save the infants, whose mothers had been shot, is also not mentioned" (ibid). He thus positioned the governmental reports as mediations with all the attributes so often ascribed to texts: they reported, told, and mentioned, but they did not make

¹⁰⁴ *Verslag der Handelingen* 24 Nov. 1904: 241.

¹⁰⁵ *Verslag der Handelingen* 25 Nov. 1904: 270.

¹⁰⁶ *Verslag der Handelingen* 23 Nov. 1904: 223.

present; more often than not, they did not show but obscured. Outside the frame of the text, he suspected more casualties, hidden in the forests of Atjeh, mentioned as wounded but not deceased and left helpless and without proper care.

Following his critique of the official mediations, De Stuers constructed his own mediations of the expedition. This occurred in three shifts: 1. While he positioned the official reports as texts, De Stuers framed his own mediations as images. 2. Related to this, there was a shift from reading to seeing: De Stuers had emphasized that the report had been read by him (“Let me first recall the facts, which we have been able to read...”), but in his own mediations the emphasis is on visual perception. 3. There was a shift in verb tenses. In his critique, De Stuers had used the present tense to describe the report (“How is an operation like this qualified?” or “These are the official numbers.”); and the present perfect simple and the simple past to talk about what happened in Atjeh (“What more has been hit or died in the bushes...” and “What we did to the infants...”). In other words: what happened in Atjeh belonged to the past, while reading the report belonged to the present. But after the turn to the visual, what happened in Atjeh belonged to the present. These three shifts (from text to image, from reading to seeing, and from past to present) came together when De Stuers said that what struck him was that, for a certain sense of horror to emerge, “we have to see bleeding women and children in front of us”.

De Stuers was possibly influenced by the rise of photography as a genre of social indictment (also called “documentary photography”), such as Jacob Riis’s *How the Other Half Lives* (1890) about slums in New York, or August de Winne’s *A Travers les Flandres* (1904), in which photographs by M. Lefébure depicted poverty in Flanders, Belgium. In the 1910s, the Dutch photographer Tonnis Post photographed poverty in the rural areas of the province of Groningen in the north of the Netherlands (Figure 2.1) (Coppens 1982).

De Stuers summoned the frame of ethical policy which he thought should be the guideline for Dutch colonial policy. The 1904 expedition simply did not fit this frame: in it, the army’s actions were semanticized such that they became unacceptable. Implicitly he argued that the army and the cabinet knew this, as there was a gap between their mediations and what had happened on the ground in Atjeh. He basically accused the government of cultural aphasia: it did not have the right vocabulary at its disposal to recount what had happened in the Gajo and Alas lands. His speech was a plea to stick to “ethical” forms of imperialism and to prevent the further production of documents of atrocity that could start functioning as icons of the nation.



Figure 2.1. Tonnis Post. De Lethe: A box bed in the barn of Fr. Smit and J. Kuiper, 1914. Photograph. State Archive Groningen, inv. no. 818-2413.

Haunting Memories

From the summer of 1904 onwards, political cartoonists also responded to the expedition. In the previous chapter, I discussed a Johan Braakensiek cartoon, but here I will focus on a number of drawings in the oeuvre of Albert Hahn, who contributed to the socialist newspaper *Het Volk* (*The People*). Contrary to their positioning in De Stuers's speech, for instance, the Gajos and Alas in Hahn's work were not only voiceless objects killed and spoken for by Dutch soldiers, journalists and MPs, but also explicitly shown as sources of anxiety for these same groups. Between the lines of the military reports, newspaper articles, and parliamentary debates, this already became apparent when the women, for instance, proved hard to position. The Dutch were struck by the armed resistance of the women and tried to deal with this by calling them hysterics and fanatics. Hahn's drawings provide further insights into the role of the Gajos and Alas in Dutch representations of the 1904 expedition. What Hahn thematized in his political cartoons is that in the years after 1904, the memory of the expedition was not confined to established frames, despite the attempts described above to settle it.

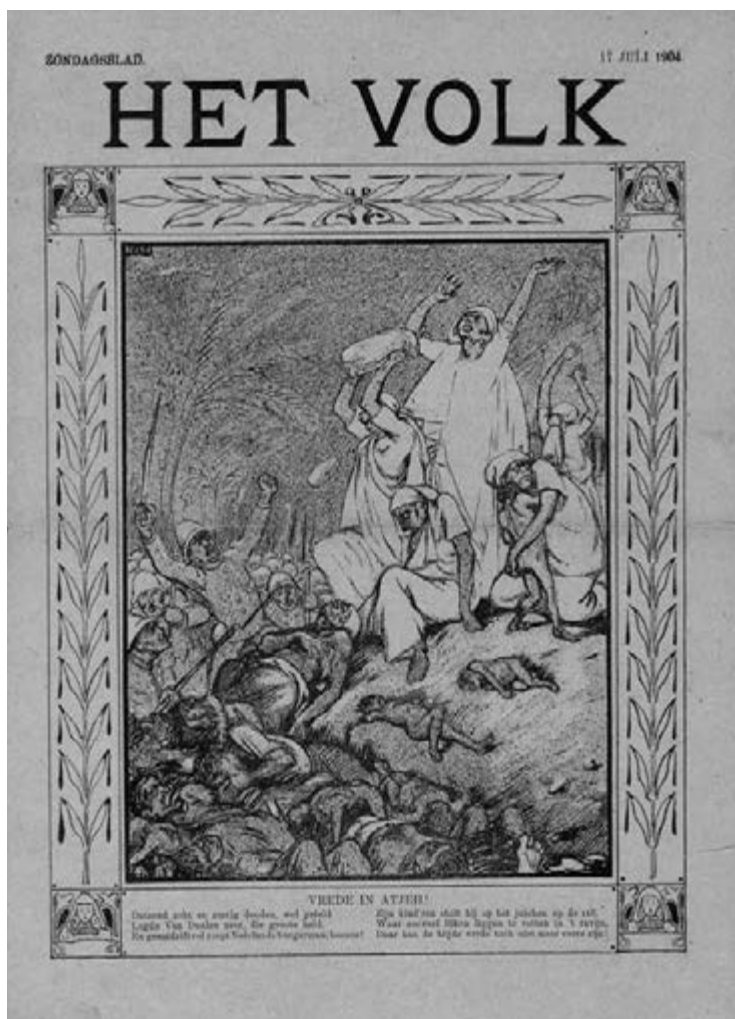


Figure 2.2. Albert Hahn. *Peace in Atjeh!* From *Zondagsblad. Het Volk*, 17 July 1904. Relief print, 30.5 x 22 cm. International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam, inv. no. BG C5/184.

Between 1902 and 1917, Hahn published over thirty drawings on the Indies, half of which were on the massacres committed during the Atjeh War. These drawings are part of an oeuvre of about 3,600 drawings that Hahn published between 1902 and 1918 in the Sunday supplement of the socialist newspaper *Het Volk*. Hahn was the main illustrator of this weekly, creating almost 800 front pages and many smaller drawings for the inside pages (Van der Heijden 1993: 79). His drawings addressed many of the core targets of the Dutch Social-Democratic Workers Party (SDAP), which had

been founded in 1894: social inequality, capitalism, militarism, religion, the monarchy, and democracy, especially universal suffrage. All of Hahn's drawings of the Indies are critical of the Dutch colonial regime and of the way it was perceived in the Netherlands. Together they form a visual essay on Dutch colonialism and are part of a larger oeuvre in which Hahn sketched the essential lines that in his view ran through Dutch society and the larger world. Hahn's drawings offered subject and object positions with the help of which people could identify themselves and others. The people in his cartoons were icons and symbols for larger structures and relationships that, once visualized, could be recognized by his audience. In fact, one important purpose was for the audience to recognize *itself*, namely as the working class that was oppressed by the capitalist system (see also Hahn 1929).

On 17 July 1904, Hahn published a drawing entitled *Peace in Atjeh!* in the Sunday supplement of *Het Volk* (Figure 2.2). The direct occasion for this drawing was Van Heutsz's visit to the Netherlands in July. The ship on which Van Heutsz traveled was welcomed by singing school children, and he was honored in hagiographic special editions of newspapers such as *Het Vaderland* which had an illustrated, four-page Van Heutsz special.¹⁰⁷ The text below *Peace in Atjeh!* reads:

One thousand sixty-eight deaths all-in-all
 Van Daalen put down, that great hero.
 And enthusiastically the Dutch bourgeois shouts, hurray!
 He lines up his children to cheer in the roadstead.
 Where so many corpses are rotting in the ravine,
 Happy peace surely cannot be far anymore!

At the four corners of the drawing, neatly dressed children with eyes closed decently and mouths opened with composure sing for Van Heutsz. In the picture, against a background of tropical plants and trees, Dutch soldiers and a group of women and children standing on an elevation are enveloped in a fight. Though a pile of dead people lie at the bottom of the drawing, the women are far from helpless. This is emphasized by their position: they are standing higher, are larger than the soldiers, and do not form the grey mass that their male opponents form. In the background, a stone is making its way towards the soldiers while one of the women is ready to throw a second, particularly big one. This is an image of courageous women defending

¹⁰⁷ *Het Vaderland* 10 and 11 July 1904.



Figure 2.3. Albert Hahn. *How the Netherlands goes out civilizing again*. From *De Notenkraker: Zondagsblad van Het Volk*, 30 July 1905. Relief print, 30.5 x 22 cm. International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam, inv. no. BG C5/188.

themselves and their children against military-imperialist aggression: unlike in De Stuers's account, they are not reduced to blood spatters. Yet what does this military aggression look like? Though the most prominent Dutch soldier has raised his sword and roars like a lion, around him stand three cowering colleagues with worried expressions on their faces and hunched shoulders. They are hiding behind their bayonets. Dutch ambiguity is also present in the embellishing frame of this drawing, where the sweet children are counterbalanced by bleeding leaves. The ornamentation proves less



Figure 2.4. Albert Hahn. *The Atjeh report*. From *De Notenkraaker: Zondagsblad van Het Volk*, 28 June 1908. Relief print, 34.5 x 25.5 cm. International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam, inv. no. BG C13/644.

innocent than it may seem. In this image, Hahn has thematized both the anxieties in the Netherlands about the expedition and the fact that it proved hard to frame without the frame itself being affected by the bloodshed.

Of the thirty drawings on the Indies made by Hahn, seventeen (more than 50%) show natives in victim positions. They are chained, fleeing from Dutch soldiers, mourning their dead loved ones, or are murdered themselves. At the same time, many of these drawings critically investigate the way in which the Dutch had framed events in the Indies. A drawing

from 30 July 1905 features a Dutch soldier who has just knifed an infant (Figure 2.3). The soldier's heartlessness is shown through his wide eyes fixed upon the infant's bleeding body and a smile on his face like that of the grim reaper. His mechanicalness is signified by the fact that he keeps on marching: nothing will stop him from making progress, and those in his path will be wiped out along the way. In the background, two women are fleeing. Compositionally, they have a double position in the image, for the line they are standing on is one of two lines that split off from the line the soldier is standing on. The women are both in the background and underneath the soldier's foot, ready to be trampled upon. The criticism of the government's framing is in the title: "How the Netherlands is out civilizing again." The combination of text and image shows that in language, as de Saussure pointed out, signifier and signified have an arbitrary relationship, and that everything can be framed as "civilizing". Between text and image there is a significant space, making visible the *passe-partout*: the image is ambiguous.

A drawing from 28 June 1908 shows Van Daalen as dog Dalia killing the inhabitants of Atjeh, while Van Heutsz who released him says with a flabbergasted look on his face: "Yes, I *did* let Dalia out, and I don't deny that the animal had a nasty temper. But how could I know that he would *keep on* biting?" (Figure 2.4). Hahn's drawing here addresses the complexity of the situation: on the one hand, Van Heutsz's bewilderment can of course be read as a façade (this is probably how Hahn himself interpreted it), but on the other hand, it indicates just how powerful the distribution of the perceptible can be. In the latter case, Van Heutsz and other Dutch observers knew that Van Daalen would employ extreme violence in the Gajo and Alas lands but could not see the 1904 photographs as possible depictions of the results, simply because the world of the Dutch empire did not look that way.

A similar theme is pursued in a drawing from 17 November 1907 of the Dutch Minister of the Colonies, Dirk Fock, standing on a pile of bodies (Figure 2.5). In that year, the debate on the many deaths in Atjeh had resurfaced. While the minister's black suit makes him stand out sharply against the white background, the bodies form a grey mass, not always clearly distinguishable from each other or the forest in the background. Certain areas in the pile could be anything, from bodies to objects such as tree trunks. Fock says: "I do not care about all those newspaper reports and private letters. My assistants report to me that we act humanely and I keep it at that." His hand is raised in defiance against those outside the frame who have accused him of something. The two quotes from Dutch MPs above the image read

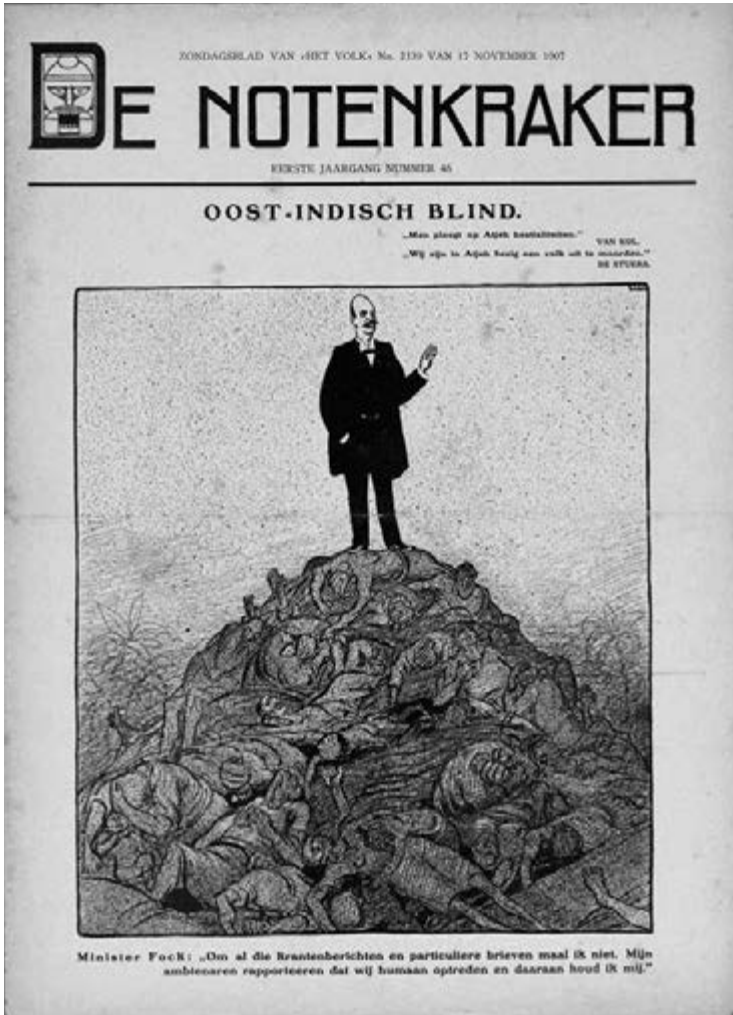


Figure 2.5. Albert Hahn. *East-Indisch Blind*. From *De Notenkraaker: Zondagsblad van Het Volk*, 17 Nov. 1907. Relief print, 30.5 x 22 cm. International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam, inv. no. BG C13/372.

“They commit bestialities in Atjeh.” Van Kol.

“In Atjeh we are massacring a people.” De Stuers.

The title of the image is *East-Indisch Blind*, a variation of the Dutch expression “*East-Indisch Deaf*”, which means that someone hears but pretends not to. A highly condescending expression usually aimed at natives is rebounded here. Just like the drawing of Van Heutsz and his dog, this drawing

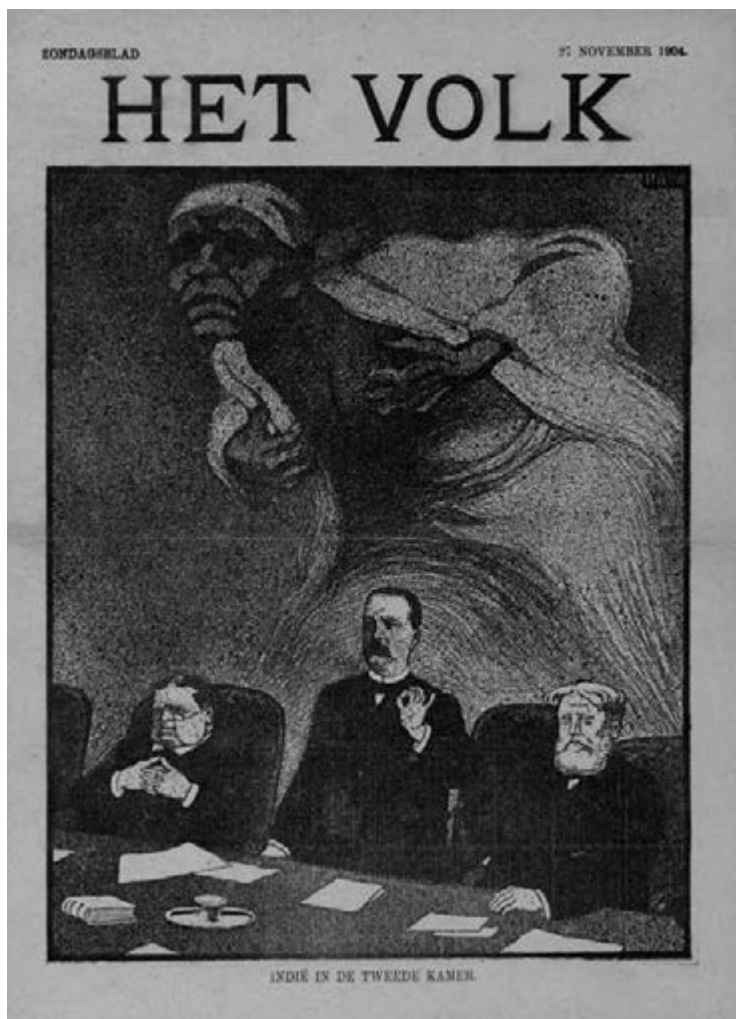


Figure 2.6. Albert Hahn. *The Indies in Parliament*. From *Zondagsblad. Het Volk*, 27 Nov. 1904. Relief print, 30.5 x 22 cm. International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam, inv. no. BG C5/186.

thematizes cultural aphasia, and in this case even cultural myopia: the difficulty seeing things that are before one's very eyes.

Finally, the contested nature of the Gajo and Alas expedition and specifically the anxieties surrounding it are thematized in a number of drawings in which Hahn represents natives as corporeal and incorporeal undead: as walking skeletons and ghosts (Figure 2.6). An example of the latter type depicts Kuyper, Idenburg, and Minister of Foreign Affairs Robert Melvil baron van Lynden sitting in parliament during the 1904

debates on the Gajo and Alas expedition. The three Ministers are self-satisfied: Kuyper sits slumped in his chair with his hands folded, and Idenburg gestures that things are epic. Outside their field of vision, a huge, hollow-eyed native clutches his chest, making a forward movement and threatening to flood the Dutch parliament. Whereas the Ministers believe they framed the expedition in such a way that it is neutralized, Hahn predicts this was not the end of it. An *oubli de réserve*, the mediations of the Gajo and Alas massacres had created, to borrow Derrida's words, a "habitation without proper inhabiting, call it a *haunting*, of... memory" (1994: 20).

Photographs can function as icons, in which case they have a likeness to what they are supposed to depict. The depicted can be concrete, like a massacred village in the Alas land, but it can also have a more abstract quality, like "Dutch colonialism". One can point at a 1904 photograph and say "this is Dutch colonialism" or even "this is the Netherlands in the modern era". It was this latter iconization that people like Kuyper denied, people like Troelstra embraced, and people like De Stuers were fearful of. What Hahn had depicted was that those killed in the 1904 expedition haunted the nation and had to be exorcized. One important way in which this was attempted was to blame them all on one man: G. C. E. van Daalen.

An Icon of One Man's Cruelty

After having been published in 1905 in Kempees's book, KR2 again appeared in 1907, namely in a booklet by a former officer of the marechaussee writing under the pseudonym *Wekker* (Wake Up Call) who wanted to denounce Van Daalen. Judging from the frame printed around KR2 in this booklet, it was directly copied from Kempees's book. Near the end of 1907, Van Daalen's expedition was put on the political agenda once again, though in a larger context than in 1904. In the intervening years, critics had not kept silent about it and had, for instance, responded to the reports published by Van Daalen and Neeb and Kempees's book, which all came out in 1905.¹⁰⁸ De Stuers in particular kept track of the ever-increasing number of natives

¹⁰⁸ See speeches by the liberal C.Th. van Deventer (1857-1915; *Verslag der Handelingen* 16 Nov. 1905:95); Van Kol (*Verslag der Handelingen* 17 Nov. 1905:105-6); De Stuers (*Verslag der Handelingen* 21 Nov. 1905: 127-33); De Stuers (*Verslag der Handelingen* 22 Nov. 1905: 156-8); De Stuers (*Verslag der Handelingen* 14 Nov. 1906: 293-4).

killed during the many expeditions, which by November 1907 had reached 17,953 since 1899.¹⁰⁹ Van Heutsz had in the meantime become Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies, and in 1905 he had appointed Van Daalen as governor of Atjeh, Van Heutsz's old job (Van 't Veer 1969: 280). In 1905, Kuyper's Christian cabinet was replaced by the liberal cabinet of Th. M. de Meester, a minority government supported by the six social-democrats in parliament and with Dirk Fock as Minister of the Colonies. This had three important consequences: the cabinet had to avoid conflicts with the social-democrats; Van Heutsz's position became weaker since Fock was less close to him than Idenburg had been; and the Ministry of the Colonies was powerless under the ineffective Fock (Van 't Veer 1969: 276-82).

In 1907, with the liberals C. Th. van Deventer and L. W. J. K. Thomson having joined Van Kol and De Stuers in their opposition to the government's Atjeh policies, critics in parliament acquired new ammunition. In October of that year, a small Dutch newspaper, *De Avondpost* (*The Evening Post*), began publishing a series of seventeen newspaper articles in which a writer using the pseudonym Wekker laid out a long list of accusations against the policies of Van Daalen. This series was entitled "How Civilized Holland in the Twentieth Century Creates Peace and Order in Atjeh". Wekker's identity was unknown, though he was presented by the editors of *De Avondpost* as a former officer of the marechaussee from Atjeh. According to Paul van 't Veer, Wekker was W. A. van Oorschot, a 27-year old former lieutenant who probably bore a grudge against Van Daalen because the latter had court-martialed him for killing Atjehnese prisoners (he was acquitted), after which his military career ended. In the same year, *De Avondpost* Press published a booklet in which all the articles and the parliamentary debates of 1907 were printed, together with KR2. On the cover of the booklet is a drawing of a KNIL soldier whose left foot is bent and resting on a dead infant (Figure 2.7). His sword is drawn and covered in red ink, indicating blood. From under the child's body, a stream of blood emerges that spells the word "Atjeh". The drawing strongly resembles the photograph of atrocity I have labelled PD from 1898 (Figure 0.4).

In the booklet, KR2 is used in an indictment against what Wekker calls "the Van Daalen system", which according to him led to gross misconduct such as the 1904 massacres. Prisoners were killed, women and children were shot during village searches, and there was a habit of murdering Atjehnese for fun. The photograph is positioned as proof of this. By putting the blame

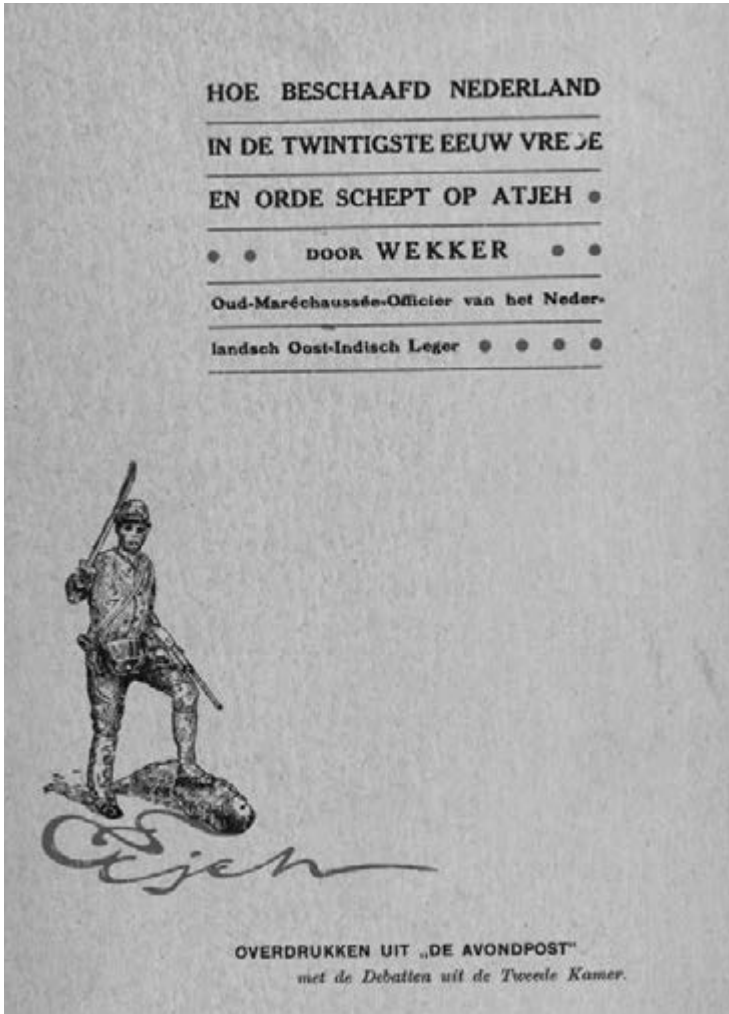


Figure 2.7. Wekker. *Hoe beschaafd Nederland in de twintigste eeuw vrede en orde scheidt op Atjeh*. The Hague: Avondpostdrukkerij, 1907. Private collection.

on Van Daalen's system, the text of the booklet has the effect of exculpating the soldiers and officers on the ground in Atjeh, including Wekker himself.

The main text of the booklet and its introduction by the editors of *De Avondpost* emphasize that its writer had been physically present in Atjeh to observe things there with his own eyes. After giving an account of how the Atjeh War had not been successful for the Dutch after thirty-four years, the editors write: "Then one asks oneself: how is it in Atjeh *indeed*; then one asks: are we given the information that is necessary to oversee

the situation on our own?" According to this introduction, the "official reports" have "a totally different spirit" from the articles of the author of the present booklet who is "a former marshal-officer in Atjeh", whose writings "give the impression of being completely true" and who will "shed more light" on Atjeh (Wekker 1907: vi-vii). A few pages further on, Wekker's own text reads: "Wake up, Dutch people, and step in!! / For too long a time you have satisfied yourselves with insufficient data and official truth. Lend your ear to someone who through a stay of many years in Atjeh and through experience from practice is capable of reporting the *real* truth" (ibid: 10). Wekker thus presents himself as someone with a perspective from nowhere who made media that offered unmediated truths. The photograph reproduced in the booklet supported this idea and represents the best of three media: it is a photograph, an index of reality; it is in a book, giving it cultural authority; and it is surrounded by texts from a newspaper, the medium thought to be as close to the present as one could possibly get. After De Stuers, Wekker's intervention is the second in a long sequence of emerging memories around violence in the Indies that supposes that photographs of colonial atrocity will in and of themselves change public opinion – in this case, not about the Dutch nation or Dutch colonialism but about his former boss.

Part of Wekker's strategy to put all the blame on Van Daalen and his system was to show that, unlike all Dutch media and most people involved in the Atjeh War, there were in fact only two people who had unmediated access to the events in Atjeh: Wekker himself, of course, but also Van Daalen. First of all, he positioned the soldiers as merely the performers of the Van Daalen system: they did not see for themselves, but the system saw and acted through them. Next there were, as De Stuers had pointed out, the official reports which by then had blinded everybody, including the Dutch population, parliament, and the Minister of the Colonies. Perhaps Governor-General van Heutsz, the highest official in the Dutch East Indies, knew what was going on? No, Wekker wrote, for "he does not have the disposal of better data than you [Dutch people!] and your representatives" – i.e., again, only the official reports and untruthful articles by journalists (ibid: 11). In Wekker's account, the only one to blame – both for the war and the false image people had of it – was Van Daalen, for whom Wekker coins the concept of "vandaalism". He and only he was the one who "[throws] you dust in the eyes" (ibid: 13).

Although Wekker's booklet claimed to be presenting the unmediated truth about Atjeh and was confident in its understanding of what had gone wrong, there were some indications of unease. He writes: "[I]t may appear

as if I want to cast a stain upon the army, upon the soldiers and officers, my loyal comrades" (ibid: 9). Wekker wondered if certain things that had never existed in the first place would become visible, or even whether things that had simply been there remained invisible. He seemed to be well aware of the fact that in his booklet the media of text and photography both showed and obscured what happened in Atjeh, and that by showing the soldiers as working within the Van Daalen system, his imagetext also stained them and took them away from view. He tried to correct his mediations in a moment of self-reflection in which he made clear that they were not reliable and gave a false impression, but that nevertheless behind them, or in them, or through them, the readers and viewers could glimpse the truth that was promised to them. He wrote: "you, comrades, among whom many with well-deserved, marvelous decorations, *you* I am not attacking; while reading this essay you should distinguish people and affairs well; it is the *honored system; the policy conducted and the ruling spirit in Atjeh* that I will harp on" (ibid: 10). In this sentence, the overly strong emphasis on one thing summons its opposite.

These anxieties – that nobody on the Dutch side, including the booklet, could see or show what was happening in Atjeh, while the atrocities of Atjeh might not be limited to Van Daalen after all – fly in the face of the booklet's title (*How Civilized Holland in the Twentieth Century Creates Peace and Order in Atjeh*), which put the civilization of the Dutch in opposition to the unnamed "other" society of the Atjehnese. The title suggests that the booklet was more concerned with the self-image of the Netherlands as a nation than with what was happening on the ground in the Dutch East Indies. At first glance, the title may seem sarcastic: the Netherlands considers itself a civilized nation but acts as a barbarian, as the Atjehnese. The booklet, however, shows no sarcasm whatsoever and is dead serious in reducing the Atjeh War to "the system" and the system to Van Daalen. Given this, the word "civilized" is not ironic but bitter: the Netherlands *was* a civilized nation, it simply did not *act* as such, and this was all Van Daalen's fault. The photograph, as Wekker himself argues, both shows the system and stains the army; it makes visible both the system and its dirt. Mary Douglas writes:

dirt [is] matter out of place... [This] implies two conditions: a set of ordered relations and a contravention of that order. Dirt, then, is never a unique, isolated event. Where there is dirt there is a system. Dirt is the by-product of a systemic ordering and classification of matter, in so far as ordering involves rejecting inappropriate elements. (2002: 44)

This unclassified residue, then, is a threat to the integrity of the system. Wekker tried to pass off the massacres in the Gajo and Alas lands as exceptions, as the work of a one-man system, but in the meantime ended up staining the whole army and Dutch civilization. Dirt and the system proved more difficult to separate than Wekker had hoped. Wekker wanted to present KR2 as an icon of the Van Daalen system, but as he also sensed himself, it became an icon for much more.

Still, Wekker got what he wanted, be it with a considerable number of twists. The articles began to come out two weeks before the debate on the budget for the Indies for 1908, so the timing was perfect. With a weakened Minister of the Colonies and the liberal Cabinet's hands tied behind its back by the social-democrats, the Wekker articles gave the critics their weapon in the form of the most gruesome details of the Dutch Atjeh regime. Basing themselves on Wekker's booklet, Van Kol recounted how soldiers placed bets on who could kill the most Atjehnese, how corpses were mutilated, and how an Atjehnese man was tied to the railroad tracks and run over by a train;¹¹⁰ De Stuers named the use of dum dum bullets, illegal in international law, and the fact that villages were riddled with such bullets (*ibid*: 200); and Thomson, himself an Atjeh veteran, related his own experiences:

I experienced it myself during my short stay in Atjeh; without any remorse I cooperated in burning whole kampongs, cutting down fruit trees, killing cattle that were left behind. What the people would feel if they found a heap of rubble instead of a house, we did not think about. I was not struck by a fusilier who kicked over a corpse to look for money in its pockets. A print like the one I took with me of marechaussees who let themselves be photographed in a conquered benteng, feet placed on Atjehnese children's bodies, did not fill us with horror. (*ibid*: 216)

Like De Stuers and Wekker, Thomson believed that the perceptible order of the photographs would not be tolerated in the Netherlands. Thomson is referring here to the 1898 photograph (PD) from the Pedir expedition, which just like the 1904 photographs has reappeared regularly throughout time. His account corroborates that things that were self-evident within the imperial distribution of the perceptible in the Indies were no longer unproblematic in 1907 in the Netherlands.

The debate ended with a motion by liberal J. W. IJzerman which said that:

¹¹⁰ *Verlag der Handelingen* 5 Nov. 1907: 197-8.

The House, trusting that the Governor-General will conduct an independent research concerning the actions of our troops in Atjeh, and that the results of this research will be handed over to the House as soon as possible, moves on to the order of the day.¹¹¹

This resulted in three reports being written: one by Van Heutsz on Van Daalen's civil policies as governor of Atjeh (Van Heutsz 1907), and two by the commander-in-chief of the KNIL, M. B. Rost van Tonningen, – one on Van Daalen's military policies and the other on the Wekker accusations (Rost van Tonningen 1907a, 1907b). The latter report acquitted Van Daalen of most of Wekker's charges, and Rost van Tonningen concluded that what remained could not be proven. Putting Wekker's argument on its head, he wrote: "That among the patrols sometimes bad deeds are done or cruelties are committed – which moreover, as 'Wekker' presents them, mostly lie outside the period during which general-major Van Daalen was in command – cannot be passed on to the commander" (1907b: 108).

Van Heutsz's report on Van Daalen's civil policies was, however, crushing. Van Daalen, Van Heutsz wrote, did not always act with the necessary moderation; his behavior was surly, rough, arbitrary, and strict; and the general impression was not very favorable. Van Heutsz's critique of Van Daalen had already led to the latter's resignation in December 1907, which was accepted in May 1908.¹¹² Van 't Veer notes that after his resignation, "[w]hat was supposed to be the main point [the military policies] became a side issue. The debate completely focused on the political policy of Van Daalen – and on the actions of Van Heutsz" (1969: 288). Van Heutsz, namely, had shown a remarkable change in his appraisal of Van Daalen, and the question arose whether he had not sacrificed Van Daalen to save himself. In January 1908, however, the liberal De Meester cabinet – which included the weak Minister Fock who was not on excellent terms with Van Heutsz – was replaced by the Christian cabinet under Heemskerk, and by the time of the next round of debates on the Indies, the Minister of the Colonies was again Idenburg who was particularly close to Van Heutsz. Idenburg successfully defended Van Heutsz, while Van Daalen was also not forgotten. In 1909 he was promoted to lieutenant-general and in 1910 to commander-in-chief in the Indies. Idenburg defended these decisions by stating that there was nothing wrong with Van Daalen himself and that he functioned perfectly

¹¹¹ *Verslag der Handelingen* 6 Nov. 1907: 247.

¹¹² See letters by Van Heutsz, Van Daalen, and the other main figures in this case in Naarding 1938.

before 1905, when Dutch policy in Atjeh was all about subjugation. But because pacification and consolidation had become the key issues since then, Van Daalen was not in the right place anymore (Idema 1924: 223). This meant that, officially it was still the case that nothing was wrong with the Gajo and Alas expedition. Van Daalen, in Idenburg's view, just did what he did, and sometimes his environment benefited from this, and sometimes it did not.

In the way the Dutch handled this case, a peculiar sequence of compartmentalization, expelling/purging, and re-incorporation becomes visible. The massacres had to be somehow dealt with but not head-on, as this would give them too much significance. First, their horrors were restricted to – or we could say the unease they caused were projected onto – Van Daalen's civil policies. Then there was another transfer of the horrors from the figure of Van Daalen to Van Daalen's relation to Dutch policy, the result of which was that he was pushed to resign not so much because he had done something wrong but because he was more or less in the wrong place at the wrong time. Finally, the cleansed Van Daalen could be reincorporated in the system and promoted to the highest rank.

Wekker had tried to bring Van Daalen down by investing the latter with the memory of the 1904 massacres and all other cruelties committed in Atjeh. The Dutch parliament and military, who were confronted every year with the attacks of De Stuers and other MPs, saw an opportunity to turn Van Daalen into a scapegoat. Through him, anxieties were deflected, and he was sent away as an intruder. In the meantime, KR2 had been reframed in a crucial manner: transposed from Kempees's book to Wekker's booklet, it moved from the social frame of the military to exactly those circles that criticized the army. While KR2 and also PD were once used by the army to communicate its progress, they were now being used to attack Dutch imperial policy, while the scenes they depicted were critically transmediated into political cartoons like Hahn's.

Uncomfortable Colonial Conservatism

From 1907, the photographs disappeared from sight, only to appear again in 1938. Between these two dates, the political situation in the Indies had changed considerably. Indonesian nationalism was growing strong, and the Dutch colonial regime, especially after 1918, had become more and more reactionary and had turned the Indies into a police state. It was in the context of this reactionary colonialism that three of the 1904 photographs (KR2,



Figure 2.8. H. C. Zentgraaff. *Atjeh*. Batavia: Unie, 1938. 22.6 x 29.9 cm. Private collection.

KR₃, and KL₁) were republished and resemanticized by a fierce opponent of the conservative course – without, however, losing their troubling effects.

In 1938, the Dutch journalist H. C. Zentgraaff published these three photographs in a book called *Atjeh* (Figure 2.8). It was a bestseller, with 13,000 copies sold in a short period of time (Bosma 2005: 61). *Atjeh* is a large book of coffee table format with three hundred pages, more than 150 photographs, and several drawings, facsimiles of texts, and maps. The photographs are printed in 25 groups of four pages that are spread throughout the book. All are captioned, but the text hardly ever directly refers to a specific image.



Figure 2.9. H. C. Zentgraaff. *Atjeh*. Batavia: Unie, 1938. Prints, 22.6 x 29.9 cm. Private collection.

Three of the photographs are of the massacred villages from 1904: KR3 (with Van Daalen standing on the wall), KR2 (with the river of bodies), and KL1. They are blown up to a size of 30.5 by 21 centimeters, a little bigger than A4 paper size (Figure 2.9).

The book is a collection of stories on the Atjeh War and on Atjeh in the mid-1930s, when Zentgraaff traveled through it. A number of chapters are devoted to the history and present state of the Gajo land, to which he also traveled. In his introduction, Zentgraaff says he wanted to write a different book on the Atjeh War than others had done before him, one that did not glorify the Dutch and treat the Atjehnese as evil traitors. He wrote:

The truth is: that the Atjehnese, men and women, in general had fought brilliantly for what they saw as their national or religious ideal. Among those fighters a large number of men and women are to be found that would be the pride of any people; they are not inferior to the most magnificent of our war figures. (1938: 1)

Offering an image of the Atjehnese as the brave and undaunted people that they are would only enhance the Dutch army's prestige, Zentgraaff wrote. Having gained access to the Dutch military archives, and having interviewed many Atjehnese as well, Zentgraaff made his readers enter a zone in which history was brought to them in a fair and balanced manner.

Between 1894 and 1896, Zentgraaff had himself been a soldier in Atjeh. Later he served again in Atjeh and in many other places in the Indies before leaving the army in 1907 (Drooglever 2006: 209). Already as a soldier, he had started writing for newspapers in the Indies. He was critical: in 1903, for instance, he wrote a series of articles in the *Java-Bode* entitled "Maltreatment of Government Workers" on the suffering of Chinese coolies in the Banka tin mines, which led to a government investigation. He was also critical of the living conditions of the KNIL soldiers (ibid). In 1912 he wrote in the *Nieuwe Soerabaja Courant* about a violent military expedition to the island of Soemba (ibid: 210). From 1917, he wrote mainly for the *Soerabaiasch Handelsblad*, becoming editor-in-chief in 1924. In 1932, he became editor in chief of the *Java-Bode*. From that moment onwards, he became more of an opinionmaker than a newshound. According to historian P. J. Drooglever, he catered mostly to the sugar planters in Java, while his opinions "showed little of the indignation of the young soldier at the injustice he observed" (ibid: 211). The older Zentgraaff campaigned against the government, Indonesian nationalism, ethical policy, and socialism. Between 1929 and 1931, he became the most visible spokesman for the National Society (*Vaderlandsche Club*), a reactionary political group that wanted to stand up for the *totoks* (the powerful group of white Dutch immigrants in the Indies) against what it saw as the weak attitude of the government with regard to Indonesian nationalism. On behalf of the National Society, Zentgraaff wrote in 1929 that

the government was concerned about all groups in the Indies except for the Dutch: "We ask for the preservation of our place beneath the *Indische* sun on historic, moral, and economic grounds. We especially want to encourage a more powerful Dutch national life as the best contraceptive against the mad demands of Eastern nationalists" (quoted in Drooglever 1980: 31). In the 1930s, Zentgraaff turned to fascism and national-socialism and is said to have asked the leader of the Dutch national-socialist party (NSB), A. A. Mussert, to be put on the party's list of candidates. He never became a member, however, and distanced himself from the NSB when it embraced anti-Semitism (Drooglever 2006: 212). Drooglever writes that Zentgraaff's fascism was primarily reactionary, aimed at preserving the status quo of the Dutch in the Indies. This went together with a certain vitalism in which there was a romance of enthusiasm, sturdiness, and optimism, and a celebration of irrationalism. In Zentgraaff's work, a glorification of authority was paired with anti-materialism, anti-individualism, and a wish to strengthen national ideals (1980: 110).

This vitalist attitude can also be found in the pages of his 1938 book *Atjeh*. In it, the nineteenth-century policy of not systematically conquering all the outer territories is described by Zentgraaff as "negativism" (1938: 3), the imperial thought is said to have been hampered by "weakness" (ibid: 4), while people who have "a pathological fear for battle" (ibid: 1) are criticized. In contrast, what Zentgraaff propagates is a "gloriously offensive spirit" (ibid: 2), "an energetic battle" (ibid: 6), and the "happiness... of the ecstasy of martial work" (ibid: 44). The book is filled with episodes of epic glory and tragic loss from the Atjeh War, with special attention for crypto-erotic relations between Dutch soldiers and Atjehese women warriors with their "deep cravings". The Atjehese are described as "a people in whom sexual longings work more strongly than in nearly all other peoples" (ibid: 63). While on the path of war, women bear children just as easily as they fight alongside the men. Zentgraaff creates a heady mixture of death, sexuality, blood, and fertility in which women's bodies are eroticized on one page and butchered on another.

Atjeh has the structure of a scrapbook. There is no build-up of a central argument; what is told is not told chronologically; and in several places the text is interrupted by reproductions of hand-written letters and drawings. Though most of the text is in Dutch, quite a few words and passages are in English, French, and Malay. Quotations are found throughout the book, some of which are many pages long from all kinds of sources including Atjehese. The photographs are often in the neighborhood of the texts to which they are most closely related but seldom next to them. The loose

structure of the book means that they can be connected to various other images and text passages.

The 1904 photographs have a rather slippery position in the book. Despite their large format, and despite their match with the book's tale of blood and heroism, it nevertheless seems as if Zentgraaff is uncomfortable with their presence. First of all, he elaborately justifies the 1904 massacres by positioning the photographs as icons of a past in which the Atjehnese, specifically the Gajos, brought the massacres upon themselves by their continued resistance – a past in which the army had no other option and in which what was done was actually good for the Gajos. He writes about the Gajo land:

A good thirty years ago the Blang [field where several of the massacred villages lay] slept as an unknown beauty in the forest; in this land no military force had set foot yet... People knew that the Company [the name given by the Atjehnese to the KNIL] waged a war in Big-Atjeh and the countries at the sea, [but] the Gajo did not yet know the power of our army, and he lived in the simple trust on his weapons and strong bentengs. (1938: 195)

Zentgraaff positions the Gajo landscape and its inhabitants as feminine, passive objects that are waiting for things to be done to it by the masculine, active subject of the army. The landscape has, he writes, the “alluring sensation of a world, free of all culture and conventions, as the urgent call of Mother Nature to her straying children” (ibid: 183), and the people who inhabit it are presented as an integral part of it. But Zentgraaff does more than position the landscape and its inhabitants as feminine, for he also eroticizes them:

The central Gajo lands with its dreaming blangs: plump grass lands in a frame of mountains, is as a jewel, cast in a setting of robust allure. It lies, with all the charm of its virginity and totally distinctive nature, protected against profanation by a belt of mountains and forests...

He deplores the fact that when he visited this landscape in the 1930s, it was so easily accessible, for instance by car: “everyone... takes possession of it, without even a modest attempt at conquest”. The landscape, according to Zentgraaff, is no longer a “noble amoureuse”, but a “girl of pleasure” (ibid: 187). Here, both the reluctance of the landscape to give itself, being “protected” by the mountains, and the conception that it has “given” itself

to so many are summoned as rationalizations for violence. The figure of the virgin and the slut serve the same purpose: to position someone or something as deserving aggression because s/he is not complying with the possessive sexual wishes of a (masculine) subject – the virgin cannot be possessed because she gives herself to no-one, while the slut cannot be possessed because she gives herself to everybody. Earlier, Zentgraaff had also turned the Atjehnese into rightful objects of massacre, and even into objects that willingly took on this role, by saying that “they wanted to resist and die, they did not want to listen to summation or counsel, they have resisted and fallen” (ibid: 175).

Pursuing the sexual imagery, Zentgraaff describes the army as a plow that “penetrated the old soil deeply” (ibid: 200). The phallic symbol of the plow emerges in a passage in which Zentgraaff describes just how strongly the Gajo land was affected by the 1904 expedition, but he soon gives a twist to this description to present these effects as productive:

Western peoples begin their chronology with the day of Christ’s birth; the older Gajos with the arrival of Van Daalen’s column. And they say: ‘When Obos Panalan [the name given to Van Daalen by the Gajos, according to Zentgraaff] came I was an eight year old boy’, or: ‘Our house was built three years *after* Panalan’. The column overturned the past, which became a thing outside the radius of attention. Thus deeply did the plow penetrate the old soil, and like that, against the background of blood and fire, stands the name of our leader: ‘I sometimes think that never blows so red / The rose as where some buried Caesar bled; / That every Hyacinth the Garden wears / Drops in its Lap from some once lovely Head’. (ibid: 200)¹¹³

Here, the coming of Van Daalen is equated with the coming of Christ, the savior and redeemer who “overturned the past” (original sin) and restored Man’s bond with God. His sacrifice led to new life. The blood sacrifice *of* Christ is equated with the blood sacrifice *by* Van Daalen: both are said to have led to a better life, in the latter case for the Gajos.

Next to justification, the second way in which Zentgraaff tries to smooth over the effects of the photographs is through liminalizing them. Writing about the Gajo land in the mid-1930s, he notes:

¹¹³ This last poem, quoted in English in *Atjeh*, is from Omar Khayyam (1084-1122) as translated by Edward FitzGerald.

At the moment everything is well and quiet on the Blang... It is well over a quarter century ago that here the last resistance was crushed, and a new generation was formed, that was not tied with blood and flesh to the horrible days of the big war, which it only knows from the stories of the elderly. This is how that bloody period every year sinks deeper into the past. (ibid: 194)

A bit further on, he emphasizes the forgetting of these events by asking “Did four thousand Gajos die here or were there more? Who knows exactly?” (ibid: 195). The Gajo land and the younger people are no longer tied to what happened thirty years ago, Zentgraaff suggests; a new generation has replaced the elderly and the past has sunk away. The quiet of the present is emphasized by a contemporary photograph of the Blang in which the massacred villages once lay, captioned “Pretty landscape in the ‘Blang’”. Taken together, this photograph and the 1904 ones form a narrative in which the first is both the ending and the beginning: Atjeh was like this before the KNIL came to it, and it is like that again. The “pretty” photograph shows both the essence of the Gajo land and what Van Daalen’s expedition had turned it into. It therefore overwrites the 1904 photographs and turns the massacres into rites de passage.

Next to strategies of justification and liminalization, Zentgraaff’s disquiet with the photographs is also apparent through his showing the photographs’ *passe-partout*, that is: the framing of the photographs *as media*. The book has two sentences in which a direct reference is made to the photographs of the massacred villages. The first one has as its central subject “the figure of Van Daalen”:

A tough and merciless fighter, but one who never himself tried to avoid any risk and who did not hesitate allowing photographs to be made of the benteng Koeta Lintang, conquered during the Gajo expedition, in which the bodies of 561 killed men, women and children lay. (ibid: 174)

The making of the photographs is presented as a heroic deed. In ascribing courage to this photographic production, Zentgraaff positions the photographs as possibly hazardous to Van Daalen, especially in relation to “folks that did not reach to his knees” who “painted a picture of him as a man without a heart, the personification of the most brutal violence” (ibid: 175). The massacres are described as “horrible, though not one centimeter outside the necessity of war.” Zentgraaff’s conclusion: “Despite his failures – who of us does not have bigger ones, without the compensation of his marvelous characteristics? – his figure stands radiant and undefiled in the history of

Atjeh" (ibid: 175). This is a much less assured tone than the one encountered in Zentgraaff's introduction, for instance.

On top of the doubts already expressed in these sentences, the photographs are also opposed to a medium that is supposed to show "how he [Van Daalen] really was", namely handwritten letters he wrote to his wife. Zentgraaff has photographed six passages from these letters and printed them on the pages of his book (ibid: 164-72; Figure 2.10). They function as visual counterparts to the photographs. He writes:

Through a fortunate coincidence, I have gained disposal of a number of private letters of Van Daalen, written in the years 1896 and 1897 to his wife, with authorization to quote what does not bear upon the private terrain of husband and wife. I will give several quotes that...can shed light on the figure of Van Daalen. (ibid: 162)

The opposition created here between the photographs and the letters is that the first are public and the second private. The photographs were made during a military operation by a staff member of Van Daalen, the second by Godfried and sent to Betsy, his wife. One of the fragments reads:

Bivouac Tamoen, 27 April 1897.

No news here. The longer it takes the tougher it gets. The population does not bring money, but buffalos, poor bastards. (ibid: 172)

The suggestion in *Atjeh* is that in the private sphere Van Daalen was true to himself, while in the public sphere he performed an identity and sometimes had to take harsh yet courageous action. The hand that killed was not the hand that wrote.

In a discussion of Heidegger's text *Parmenides*, Derrida comments on the opposition created by Heidegger between handwriting and machine-writing:

The typewriter tends to destroy the word: the typewriter 'tears (*entreisst*) writing from the essential domain of the hand, that is, of the word' of speech. The 'typed' word is only a copy (*Abschrift*)... Furthermore, the machine offers the advantage, for those who wish for this degradation, of dissimulating manuscripted writing and 'character.' 'In typewriting, all men resemble one another,' concludes Heidegger. (1987: 178-9)

In Zentgraaff's text, the handwritten letter is positioned as the locus of Van Daalen's character, while the products of the camera – the photographs – make him absent. In this chapter of the book, Zentgraaff

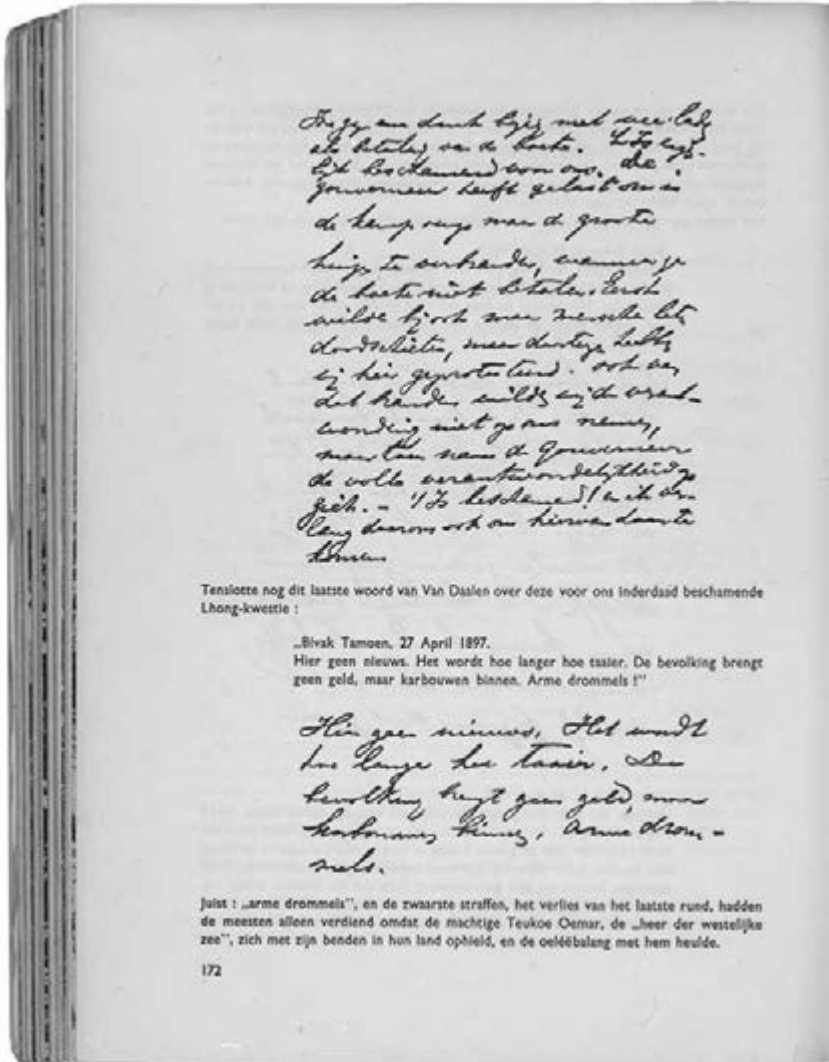


Figure 2.10. H. C. Zentgraaff. *Atjeh*. Batavia: Unie, 1938. 172. Private collection.

counters the threat that these photographs pose to his main argument (“the army is right in everything”) by overwriting these photographs with Van Daalen’s letters, which are supposed to show “how he really was.” Seen within the context of the book as a whole, the impact of the photographs is mitigated by the presence of other elements that work to diminish their importance: paradoxically, they are both displayed and neutralized.

Conclusion

As the colonial period progressed, several authors from different sides gravitated towards the 1904 photographs as focal points for the debate on the expedition and on colonial military violence in general. That Wekker took over KR2 from Kempees's book was partly because of the formal characteristics of this photograph, but most importantly because of the scarcity principle in cultural memory, which according to Ann Rigney leads to selection and convergence of memories. A photograph such as KR3, which in 1907 had not been published by Kempees or any other author, was simply not available to Wekker. Taking over KR2 from Kempees, moreover, framed it as a quote: because both books included the same photograph, they were, to borrow from Pamela Pattynama, "diachronically connected to each other" (2007: 6). For the informed viewer, this photograph carried with it traces of the army's semanticizations which could then all the more forcefully be criticized by Wekker. This process in which later semanticizations reframed earlier ones can be interpreted as yet another form of doubling: KR2 in Wekker's 1907 book not only recalled the 1904 expedition but was also a memory of the memory in Kempees's 1905 book.¹¹⁴ When Zentgraaff took up the 1904 photographs in his *Atjeh* in the late 1930s, he framed them in a text that explicitly debated their meanings, thereby attacking Van Daalen's critics among whom Wekker had been particularly prominent. Through reframings like these, the photographs became contested terrain around which larger struggles could be organized.

A further factor of importance was the significance attached to photographs of atrocity as such, as could be seen from De Stuers's speech and the showing of PD by Thomson. These two politicians framed such photographs as crucial cultural artifacts for the debate on the Atjeh War. This emphasis also led to a growing concentration of Dutch cultural memory on such images. Also the return of the figure of the soldier placing his foot on a dead Atjehnese (such as on the cover of Wekker's booklet, in several drawings by Hahn, in PD as shown by Thomson) points towards the workings of the scarcity principle. With the rising importance of photographs as icons of war and suffering (like in Ernst Friedrich's *Krieg dem Kriege!* from 1924-1926 or Robert Capa's work on the Spanish Civil War), this process of concentration and convergence would only intensify.

What also became apparent is that, already during the colonial period, photographs of colonial atrocity became icons of both memory and

114 On the memory of memory, see Olick 1998 and Pattynama 2007.

forgetting. De Stuers, addressing the idea of such photographs, framed them as images that showed what should be remembered but was in fact forgotten. Also Hahn, with his drawing of the Minister on a pile of bodies, and Thomson, showing a ten-year-old photograph to his colleagues as an icon of an ongoing practice, used depictions of colonial atrocity as weapons against amnesia.

The photographs and reports of the 1904 expedition elicited an impressive amount of cultural production in the Netherlands. What were the circumstances that made this production possible? I argue here that two factors came together. First, the Dutch colonial army was becoming more and more blatant in its violence. Looking back on the two genres of captured leaders and colonial massacres as discussed in chapter 1, there is a marked distance between Pieneman's painting of the banishing of Prince Dipanegara from the mid-nineteenth century and Neeb's photographs from the Gajo and Alas lands from the early twentieth century. There was a development in the type, amount, and public availability of images of colonial violence: as they started showing more severe violence, their numbers grew and they became more widespread. Second, certain new frames of semanticization were emerging, particularly those of Dutch guardianship for the natives and of social emancipation in the Netherlands. This rise of an ethical distribution of the perceptible is corroborated by a case from 1902 in which a brochure on coolie abuses in Deli had also been the subject of debate, though these abuses had been known about and discussed for years (Van den Doel 1996: 121; Breman 1987).¹¹⁵ It is precisely because these frames were emerging that is important for the way in which these abuses and the 1904 massacres were perceived, namely as something new and shocking. What happened was that discursive frames that had only recently become more dominant were confronted with an older perceptible order as visible in the photographs, which then came into view as depicting the inadmissible. The imperial perceptible order of the photographs clashed with an ethical distribution of the perceptible. My conclusion is that these violent colonial events became the objects of debate because they were perceived as something new, and that they were perceived as something new because their mediations forcefully pulled emerging frames to the center of attention.

It was exactly the gap between discursive frames in the Netherlands and the 1904 photographs that led to aphasiac moments such as in Queen Wilhelmina's speech, or the many other moments of hesitation and anxiety as described in this chapter. Among the supporters and the many critics of

115 The brochure is Van den Brand 1902, republished in Breman 1987.

the expedition, there was a constant anxiety that the photographs and other mediations of the 1904 expedition might be semanticized in ways that were at odds with the Dutch self-image, for instance as caretakers of the natives. An anxiety connected to this was spelled out by Thomson who said that when he himself had been in Atjeh, he did not think about the atrocities he committed: what if these things had been happening all along but were only now being observed? What else was happening and had happened in Atjeh that did not fit the Dutch frame of ethical policy?

These anxieties, however, did not indicate that the Dutch were confronted with something that was previously wholly unknown. According to Cohen, there is a paradox in denial, as what is denied first has to be somehow acknowledged. This brings him to define denial as follows:

A statement about the world... which is neither literally true nor a lie intended to deceive others but allows for the strange possibility of simultaneously knowing and not-knowing. The existence of what is denied must be 'somehow' known, and statements expressing this denial must be 'somehow' believed in. (2001: 24)

In denial, a comparable paradox is operative as the one Weinrich and Passerini identified in forgetting: we cannot deny/forget something unless we acknowledge/remember it in part. What critics like Albert Hahn pointed out was that the data (e.g. photographs) were available, the frames were available (e.g. that of ethical policy or the misery of war), and the meanings were available (given by himself and others), but that still there was this denial. Roman Jakobson writes that with aphasiacs who suffer from a similarity disorder:

the capacity for intersemiotic translation, i.e., transposition from one sign system to another, is missing. Therefore the patient finds it hard to name an object shown to him in a picture or pointed to by the examiner. (1971a: 45)

Hahn showed that even when standing on top of a pile of bodies, the Minister would not budge. This was probably true. In that sense, the waving around of (imaginary) photographs in Dutch parliament by De Stuers and Thomson missed the point: this was not a case of a lack of data, or frames, or meanings, but of what Passerini has called "the connection between memories and traces". Too much was at stake to allow these photographs to have those particular meanings.

3 **Compartmentalized and Multidirectional Memory, 1949-1966**

This chapter investigates the two ways in which the Atjeh photographs were framed in the first half of the 1960s. These framings proved to be fundamental for the functioning of these images in Dutch postcolonial memory. The two moments are analyzed here in one chapter to highlight the fact that, although they occurred in rather different contexts, they are intimately related to each other. In both cases, it was the same image that was used, namely KR₃ which shows soldiers and Van Daalen standing on the wall of Koetö Réh.

The first can be found in a 1961 photo book that forms the iconic starting point of Dutch postcolonial nostalgia, namely Rob Nieuwenhuys's *Tempo doeloe*. In the Netherlands, this nostalgia for the Indies can be called "tempo doeloe culture". Tempo doeloe is Malay and literally means "the old days", but in the Netherlands the phrase has come to mean "the good old days". Within tempo doeloe culture, a nostalgic distribution of the perceptible is active, meaning that a perceptible order is produced in which the Indies become visible as a lost home (in nostalgia, *nostos* means "the return home" and *algia* indicates "longing"). This perceptible order, which visualized the Indies as a tropical, carefree European paradise of fun and games, was produced through many media, including photo books with carefully selected images showing a time in which "gin... was free, as water", "the natives still knew their place", and "there was still real cordiality, and love", as the Dutch author Gerard Reve put it ironically in his poem *Tempo doeloe* (1966: 135).

As can be grasped immediately, the 1904 photographs did not fit this nostalgic distribution of the perceptible. That they nevertheless could be part of *Tempo doeloe* is due to the book's compartmentalized structure in which a nostalgic perceptible order and an imperial perceptible order, as described in chapter one, could exist next to each other.

The second moment I analyze in this chapter started in the same year, 1961, when one of the Atjeh photographs appeared in a documentary series on Dutch national television entitled *The Occupation*. The series, written and presented by the Dutch historian Loe de Jong, dealt with the German and Japanese occupations of the Netherlands and the Dutch East Indies during WWII. In line with Rigney's scarcity principle, De Jong showed KR₃ precisely by pointing it out in Nieuwenhuys's book. In one respect, this moment can also be analyzed in terms of compartmentalization in

the sense that, in the work of De Jong, European overseas and European continental history are discussed in separate chapters. But in the case of *The Occupation*, I will put more emphasis on cultural memory's potential for what Michael Rothberg has called "multidirectionality". Arguing against what he calls a zero-sum logic in which one memory necessarily excludes another, Rothberg suggests we "consider memory as *multidirectional*: as subject to ongoing negotiation, cross-referencing, and borrowing; as productive and not private." (2009: 3). In a site of multidirectional memory, there is an interaction of different historical memories, which can mutually enable each other. What makes the appearance of the 1904 photograph in *The Occupation* more multidirectional than compartmentalized is the structure of the series and of its accompanying series of books published between 1961 and 1966. Questions are raised about the relations of the different histories being told: between WWII in Europe and Asia, between colonial and national history, and between one massacre (that of the Gajo and Alas villages) and another (that of the European Jews).¹¹⁶

The two central concepts of this chapter, i.e. compartmentalized and multidirectional memory, should therefore not be seen in isolation. What this chapter discusses is how the 1904 photographs in Dutch colonial memory from the early 1960s onwards were both compartmentalized *and* multidirectionally semanticized in an ongoing negotiation about their relation to Dutch national history.

Compartmentalized Memory

The Nostalgic Distribution of the Perceptible

This section investigates the role of the photographs from 1904 in Dutch postcolonial nostalgia. After Indonesia's independence, it was in Nieuwenhuys's *Tempo Doeloe* that one of the photographs (KR3) was first reprinted.¹¹⁷ In 1988, Nieuwenhuys again printed a 1904 photograph (KR2) in the last volume of his acclaimed trilogy of photo books which he produced in the 1980s (reprinted as Nieuwenhuys 1998a, 1998b and 1998c).

The great importance of tempo doeloe culture for the position of the 1904 photographs in Dutch colonial memory is its highly influential distribution

¹¹⁶ On other interactions between postcolonial and postwar memory in the Netherlands, see Van Ooijen & Raaijmakers 2012.

¹¹⁷ Breton de Nijs 1961. Nieuwenhuys published this book under the pseudonym E. Breton de Nijs.

of the perceptible concerning the memory of the Indies.¹¹⁸ For *tempo doeloe* culture produced a nostalgic perceptible order with strictly separated public and private scenes which made it possible to compartmentalize colonial violence as depicted in the 1904 photographs and bracket it off from the celebration of everyday European life in the colony.¹¹⁹ I derive the concept of compartmentalization from Goffman's *Frame Analysis*. Frames organize experience, according to Goffman: they compartmentalize life and aspects of the self. In *tempo doeloe* culture, as I will argue, the 1904 photographs were semanticized as depicting scenes of public life, which was framed as separate from the private.

As Stoler has pointed out, there are “political stakes lodged in what is defined as public or private” (2002a: 10). Stoler discusses the work of Jean Taylor who investigated how colonial politics in Batavia between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries were located

in commonplaces, in markers of display and discretion in public and at home: how prominent Indies wives styled their verandas, what language they spoke in private, who slept in their beds, where they were born and buried, and where and by whom their children were raised. (ibid: 11)

Matters like these, which were produced as private, were central concerns of the colonial state and at the heart of colonial politics. Michel Foucault has pointed out how within biopolitics (the management of the population as a whole or man-as-species), racism can introduce a break in the biological continuum of the population between those who must live and those who must die. From this perspective, regulations of the intimate in Batavia in the “private” scene and a massacre in the Gajo and Alas lands in the “public” scene both emerge as aspects through which the colonial state managed its population to become healthy and productive (see Foucault 2003; Stoler 1995). Compartmentalization in *tempo doeloe* culture, however, produced these two aspects of colonial biopolitics as separate.

Nostalgia has generally received a bad press. Fredric Jameson criticized it as postmodern culture evading history and the present and saw it as essentially a conservative operation: “a history lesson is the best cure for

118 For a historical overview of *tempo doeloe* culture after decolonization, see Van Leeuwen 2008, pp. 99-167.

119 My analysis of *tempo doeloe* culture in this chapter borrows from Andrew Goss's analysis of *Tong Tong* and Nieuwenhuys's *Tempo Doeloe*. Goss uses the concept of “bracketing off”. See Goss 2000.

nostalgic pathos" (1991: 156). Renato Rosaldo, writing specifically about "imperialist nostalgia", noted that it "revolves around a paradox...[s]omeone deliberately alters a form of life, and then regrets that things have not remained as they were prior to the intervention" (1989: 69-70). Paul Gilroy coined the term "postcolonial melancholia" in explaining the British refusal to accept the loss of empire. Instead of working through this loss and acknowledging past horrors and feelings of shame, the British continue to act out their melancholia in popular culture and the debate on immigration (2005: *passim*).

Svetlana Boym offers a historical analysis of nostalgia. Following Reinhart Koselleck's analysis of modernity, she has identified nostalgia as a historical emotion of which the modern variant is intimately tied up to the shrinking space available for the present past (or: experience) in favor of the present future (or: expectation):

Nostalgic manifestations are side effects of the teleology of progress. Progress was not only a narrative of temporal progression but also of spatial expansion. Travelers since the late eighteenth century wrote about other places, first to the south and then to the east of Western Europe as "semi-civilized" or outright "barbarous." Instead of coevalness of different conceptions of time, each local culture therefore was evaluated with regard to the central narrative of progress. (2001: 10)

The production of a new future in modernity entails the production of a new past. As the present future is an always receding horizon, it does not offer a "home", and this is especially the case when the future is seen as doomed. Spaces such as colonies which were produced as embodying the present past could serve as locations to cure people from the ailments of nostalgia: a move to the colonies was a move to the past and thus a move back home.

On 17 August 1945, two days after the Japanese capitulation, Sukarno read the declaration of independence of the Republic of Indonesia he had written the night before with Mohammad Hatta. In 1957, the Indonesian government told all remaining Dutch (45,000) to leave the country, after large groups had already left in the periods 1945-1948 (44,000), 1949 (68,000), and 1950-1957 (72,000). Between 1945 and 1963 (when New Guinea was annexed), diverse groups of people numbering around 300,000 came to the Netherlands. All of them had literally lost their homes, making nostalgia a very concrete phenomenon for them. These groups and the many subgroups within them each had different memories of the Indies.

As will be shown below, tempo doeloe culture in the late 1950s turned towards photography, making the photo book one of its most important products. Today in every bookstore in the Netherlands you can find richly illustrated works which give a nostalgic depiction of everyday European life in the Dutch East Indies.¹²⁰ What distinguished these authors in the postcolonial era from those in the colonial period is that writing about the Indies meant writing about a country that no longer exists. They lived in a new reality, separated from the old one by the unbridgeable discontinuity that decolonization had created. For those who wrote about the 1904 expedition in the years directly following it, it was the recent past, while also for Zentgraaff in the 1930s it was part of a history he was still living. Because of decolonization, however, the expedition and the Indies as a whole moved from what Jan Assmann has called communicative to cultural memory, the former being proximate to the everyday and the latter distanced from it (1995: 126-9).

This section continues with a discussion of the history of the concept of tempo doeloe, especially as it emerged in the late 1950s in the magazine *Tong Tong*. This is followed by an analysis of Rob Nieuwenhuys's photo book. The main question running throughout this section is how tempo doeloe set the stage for a compartmentalized positioning of the 1904 photographs and colonial violence in general. Another aim is to show the complexity of memory and forgetting in tempo doeloe culture. Nostalgia is mostly seen as a naive mode of remembrance, and this is also an important conception of tempo doeloe culture in the Netherlands. Boym, however, makes a seminal distinction between restorative and reflective nostalgia: the former is one in which a return to the past is unproblematic, while the latter is one that is characterized by an awareness of nostalgia's mediated nature. She writes:

Restorative nostalgia stresses *nostos* [the return home] and attempts a transhistorical reconstruction of the lost home. Reflective nostalgia thrives in *algia*, the longing itself, and delays the homecoming – wistfully, ironically, desperately. Restorative nostalgia does not think of itself as nostalgia, but rather as truth and tradition. Reflective nostalgia dwells on the ambivalences of human longing and belonging... Restorative nostalgia protects the absolute truth, while reflective nostalgia calls it into doubt. (2001: xviii)

120 Recent examples of such books are Botermans and Tichler 2009; Zweers 2008; Aeckerlin and Schonenberg 2004.

One could say that whereas restorative nostalgia is all about proximity, in reflective nostalgia there is no escape from distance.¹²¹ What I will show is how Dutch tempo doeloe culture can indeed be partly characterized as restorative, but that it can also be seen as highly reflexive.

The History of Tempo Doeloe

In Dutch, “tempo doeloe” has the connotation of a slow, relaxed way of life. One racial slur aimed at Indo-European Dutch is that they are “tempo doeloe”, meaning they are languid. This perception of the Indies as languid is mirrored historically in the familiar photographs made of colonial life before the development of short-exposure film, in which figures appear frozen in permanent torpor. Tempo doeloe denotes the good old days when life was colonially luxurious and untouched by rapid modernity.

After decolonization, the concept of tempo doeloe first gained momentum in the early 1960s through the photo books of Hein Buitenweg and Nieuwenhuys, the latter writing under the pseudonym E. Breton de Nijs. In Buitenweg’s *There Is a House in Java* from 1960, for instance, the dedication reads that the book was made “in remembrance of TEMPO DOELOE” (1960: front matter). As Lizzy van Leeuwen has shown, the 1970s saw a tempo doeloe boom, including a successful television program (the *Late Late Lien Show*).

The concept, however, had already been used during the colonial period. In 1913, for instance, the newspaper *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* (NRC) wrote:

Residents in the outer territories sometimes imagine themselves on the Olympus, equipped with the power to decide about all sorts of things. These days this has become less the case than in the good days of tempo doeloe when it could take months before people here [in Batavia] got to know what happened over there. (10 June 1913)

Tempo doeloe is presented here as a time of slowness, in two ways: slow technology (no telegraph, inferior roads, slower ships) and therefore also a slow government that had not yet penetrated its centralizing powers as far as it would later on. The colonial state was still in the making, not yet in place. This also meant more freedom for individual European civil servants, and

121 See also Pattynama 2007 on reflectivity, especially on intertextuality and *her-herinnering* (re-remembering), in literary works on the Indies.

the example given in this article is of a resident hanging a murderer without permission from the governor-general in Batavia, the colonial capital. By 1921, tempo doeloe could already be imagined as belonging to a lost world, as in the following comment from *Het Vaderland* (30 July):

People should not forget that it is no longer the Indies of ‘tempo doeloe’, the land of loneliness, plant life, and what have you. In the last ten years the Indies have absolutely changed so that life for example in Bandoeng is already very little different from life here [in the Netherlands].

Life in tempo doeloe is presented here as lonely but independent, especially on the plantations where individual Europeans were largely autonomous. This lifestyle had first disappeared in the cities. On occasion, as in another article from *Het Vaderland* from 1930, a certain romantic adventurism is connected to it: in those days, one could more easily encounter “tigers, panthers, and other wild animals” (11 October). That the end of tempo doeloe was indeed often connected to the arrival of European modern technology and state intervention can be seen in 1939, when in response to the German invasion of Poland *Het Vaderland* wrote that “tempo doeloe returns to the Indies”, because the latter would be cut off from the Netherlands and “once again become real ‘tropics’” (12 September).

Other newspaper articles show that neither the term “tempo doeloe” nor its meaning was fixed. In 1923, *NRC* used the term *doeloe-doeleoe*, which also meant “the old days” (5 October; see also 30 September 1927). In 1927, *Het Vaderland* used the expression *lain doeloe lain sekarang* (“before different than now”) (25 August 1927), while *NRC* in 1926 narrated an episode from tempo doeloe which was located as long ago as 1744 (15 October; see also 6 September 1928). It is important to note that tempo doeloe was sometimes just as much an indication of a certain era as of a certain stage of life, namely childhood or youth. Often people placed childhood memories in tempo doeloe, such as an old widow about whom it was written in 1930 that she still had lively memories of the time of tempo doeloe when she “as the only daughter of an assistant-resident – from the good, old days! – got married with almost princely splendor.”¹²²

At various times, the relation between Europeans and the peoples and land of the Indies in tempo doeloe was a central issue. In 1927, *NRC* wrote about how “back then”, a Dutch civil servant would travel the Indies on

¹²² *Het Vaderland* 15 Jan. 1930. See also *Het Vaderland* 31 May 1938, where a planter looked back at “tempo doeloe”, starting when he was sixteen years old.

horseback, which brought him to the smallest *dessa* and *kampong*, and which meant that he was intimately acquainted with the people and the land (23 March). During the 1930s, the meaning of *tempo doeloe* as the age in which the European and Indonesian ways of life were more mixed up became stronger:

As the Indies came closer through air travel and telephone, the de-Indization of the Dutch also advanced. The *sarong*, the *kabaja* [type of blouse], the rice table, the old, spacious *Indische* house and the *Indische* hospitality are becoming more and more things from ‘tempo doeloe’, things which disappear. (*Het Vaderland* 7 November 1930)

This is the constellation that will be encountered below in the analysis of the work of Rob Nieuwenhuys. However, the opposite constellation was also created, namely how in *tempo doeloe* people were still unmixed, and the races and sexes were self-identical:

This is all *tempo doeloe*! Also art in the Indies, that delightful art of [native] women’s hands is doomed to disappear... [O]n the fairytale island of Bali the rulers are selling their treasures of gold and art in order to possess a car, show off with gramophones and what have you. There is nothing we can do about it!¹²³

In the 1930s, *tempo doeloe* acquired a stronger literary resonance, for instance through its connection to the work of the novelist Maurits (pseudonym of P. A. Daum) whose main subject was the life of Europeans and Eurasians in the Indies in the late nineteenth century.¹²⁴ In 1939 in the magazine *Groot Nederland*, Nieuwenhuys wrote an article about Maurits in which he calls him the “novelist of *Tempo Doeloe*” (1939: 201).

In the same article, Nieuwenhuys was also the first one to reflect on the meanings of the term. According to him, these Malayan words, more than their literal meaning, imply “for us a nuance... of kindheartedness and appreciation... despite everything”. He continues:

‘Tempo doeloe’: it is the time of pajama trousers and *kabaja* for the gentlemen, of the flattering *sarong-kabaja* for the ladies (also as evening clothes), it is the time of owning one’s own carriage with ‘Sydney horses’,

123 Professor J. A. Loebèr in *Het Vaderland* of 7 Jan. 1938.

124 See for instance the article by Henri Borel in *Het Vaderland* of 14 December 1930.

of 'nontoning' [attending a festivity as an outsider] in front of the theater and 'Concor' [Club Concordia in Batavia, now Jakarta], of listening to military music on Waterloo Square [in Batavia], of French and Italian operas (those of Balzofiore!), of big house parties, of the chatter and homber [a game of cards] table, of the free gin in hotels, etc.¹²⁵

Many elements already mentioned above return here, but Nieuwenhuys lards them with words that are only understandable for insiders, making tempo doeloe quite exclusive. He creates a luxurious world of leisure and arts, where soldiers are never far away but only making music, a world that is also eroticized by the "flattering" clothes for the women. He continues:

But as soon as we try to theoretically define the term 'tempo doeloe' it turns out to be elastic and every further limitation seems arbitrary. Why would one not consider the V.O.C. time as tempo doeloe? And why would one think of the eighties and nineties, but not Multatuli's time? Why the Regency period [*pruikentijd*] and not the beginning of the twentieth century? (ibid)

This suggests that in 1939, the concept of tempo doeloe could be used to describe various moments in Dutch colonial history.

After decolonization, tempo doeloe's meanings gradually became more extended, and as time progressed, the term no longer referred to a specific period in the Indies but to the colonial period as a whole. This is already the case in Buitengeweg's oeuvre published in the 1960s, in which tempo doeloe ends with the Japanese invasion (see Buitengeweg 1964: 7). What also changed is that tempo doeloe's primary medium was no longer literature but photography. The groundwork for this was laid by a Dutch magazine for (mainly) *Indische* Dutch called *Tong Tong*.¹²⁶

Tempo Doeloe in *Tong Tong*

Already in its first year, *Tong Tong* started publishing old photographs of the Indies. Editor-in-chief and Indo-European Tjalie Robinson (pseudonym of Jan Boon, who also used the name Vincent Mahieu) requested readers to send in pictures:

¹²⁵ Quoted in *Het Vaderland* of 10 September 1939.

¹²⁶ *Tong Tong* was a continuation of *Onze Brug* (*Our Bridge*, 1956-1958) and was itself renamed *Moesson* (1978-now).

from any time, as long as the atmosphere is brought into focus. For example: a school photo (not too small!), a photo at home or at a picnic, barbers, streethawkers, or *becak* drivers; typical street theater at a market, or whatever. Very old family-photos are also welcome, in short, any image which makes the reader cry out: 'Oh right!!' (quoted and translated in Goss 2000: 29)

Andrew Goss writes: "Within a very short time, photos, coming in from far and wide, became the primary discursive tools for demonstrating the power of the past over the present" (ibid: 30). In 1960, both Nieuwenhuys and Buitenweg made requests in *Tong Tong* for readers to send in photographs for a book and an exhibition. Nieuwenhuys wrote under his pseudonym E. Breton de Nijs:

From my publisher... I got the assignment to compile a photo book, large format, which will contain 200-300 photographs of the Indies of 'Tempo doeloe'... First of all this: so as not to drown in a mer à boire – especially concerning the later times – I have limited the period from which I want to select the photographs: between about 1860-1870 and the First World War.¹²⁷

Nieuwenhuys was primarily looking for family photographs, "the more curious the better", but he also asked for "photographs of the Atjeh War or other expeditions". His overall goal was:

to make a photo book that will make the people from Holland look up in amazement and which will make you and me experience that country again where we all spent 'the best years of our lives'.

Buitenweg wrote in that same year:

In Tempo Doeloe, professional photographers and amateurs have recorded the beauty of the Indies. Not only, we think, will it be a delight for old customers [*oud-gasten*, here people who were in the Indies] to enjoy once again that beauty image for image, but also compatriots who do not know the tropical paradise from their own observation will through such an exhibition have that opportunity and will better learn to understand why those who were driven from this paradise so often longingly recall it.¹²⁸

¹²⁷ *Tong Tong* 4.23 (1960): 7.

¹²⁸ *Tong Tong* 5.2 (1960): 10.

Robinson fully endorsed these projects. According to his biographer Wim Willems, Robinson's mission with *Tong Tong* was to create among his *Indische* reading public

a feeling of solidarity, as in Dutch papers *Indische* newcomers were not able to get a word in... According to him, people from the Indies had much too often let themselves be forced into a complex about being different. By this he meant the color of their skin, their love for *krontjong* [a type of music] or gibbering [*krompraten*] among each other... (2008: 372-3)

A few weeks after Buitengeweg's call for submissions, Robinson wrote:

Things are going excellently with the work of the writers E. Breton de Nijs and Hein Buitengeweg... [N]umerous letters have come in, dozens of old photo albums were brought out from *lotèngs* [attics] and *kolongs* [under the bed], and what slowly but surely is growing, readers, underneath their hands is a – well, to tell the truth: *a revelation*:

How big, how broad, how courageous, how princely, how humoristic, how human... our life in the tropics was! Regularly we look at the photographs with the three of us, Hein, Breton de Nijs and me (T.R.) and we experience precious moments.¹²⁹

In the meantime, the concept of tempo doeloe was appropriated by many in *Tong Tong*, and articles started appearing on all kinds of things related to that era, from soccer, tennis, and magic tricks in tempo doeloe to companies placing ads about how their food tasted just like tempo doeloe. Nieuwenhuys's book *Tempo Doeloe* was pronounced "the most important book in 1961",¹³⁰ and at the end of that same year Robinson mentioned that "[t]he sales are breaking all records." He hoped that "*Tempo Doeloe* is not a saying goodbye to the past, but a door to the future", in the sense that this piece of "grandiose Dutch history" would not be forgotten.¹³¹

What was the position of colonial violence in *Tong Tong*? The overall tone of the magazine concerning the colonial period is positive: it is considered a paradise lost. Occasionally, however, authors struck a different chord.

¹²⁹ *Tong Tong* 5.5 (1960): 2. Emphasis in original. Some months later, *Tong Tong* published a positive review of the exhibition, see *Tong Tong* 5.9 (1960): 12.

¹³⁰ *Tong Tong* 5.22 (1961): 13.

¹³¹ *Tong Tong* 6.11 (1961): 11.

In 1960, in a review of Rob Nieuwenhuys's book *Tussen twee vaderlanden* (*Between Two Native Countries*), Hein Buitenweg wrote:

We, coming from the old Indies, just have the perfectly human inclination to idealize that Tempo Doeloe and we like to forget its shadow sides. We are prone, Nieuwenhuys says, and in my view correctly, to forget the many conditions in those days that could not bear the light, as well as the frequently occurring dull boredom...¹³²

While here boredom is the worst thing to occur in the Indies, a letter in *Tong Tong* from the year before by the son of commander Pieter Lawick van Pabst, who had died during a military expedition to the island of Lombok, was followed by a note written by the editors which addressed more serious matters:

Here in the Netherlands war is more or less cultural literature. Impassioned talk about Dürer and Goya and Picasso (Guernica), citing strophes from Xenophon's 'The Persian Expedition'. Yet what was done in the Indies is considered an unworthy colonial war... *The colonial wars are no slaughters of defenseless brownies by cruel whites, but tragic clashes between an old and a new time on the border of two civilizations. What was wrong on our side cannot take away all that was good. TONG-TONG likes and is proud to write about the many good things.*¹³³

Tempo doeloe, though defended, clearly proved also to have been a period of violence. The same article also stated that while "the Netherlands crosses out its 'colonial history' in an exalted ethical manner, *Tong-Tong* may be the only magazine in the Dutch press which does talk about it" (ibid: 6). The most important reason to continue talking about the Indies in a country where in the 1950s they were generally not discussed was Robinson's wish to preserve Indo cultural heritage (Willems 2008: 382), which was essentially built up during the colonial period. Yet there were two other important impetuses for his readers to keep on addressing the colonial period. First of all, many readers were themselves in a way victims of colonialism, for instance because family members had died in colonial wars,¹³⁴ or because

¹³² *Tong Tong* 4.15 (1960): 11.

¹³³ *Tong Tong* 3.20 (1959): 7. Emphasis in original.

¹³⁴ See also *Tong Tong* 3.18 (1959): 9, where a certain Madam van Loon writes about the suffering of military families in the Indies (poverty, diseases, many soldiers dying).

they were discriminated against during the colonial period for being of mixed race. At one point the editors wrote:

And should we be ashamed of our 'brown blood'? The denial or rejection of the mixed race is more than stupidity, it is a shame!¹³⁵

The second reason to evoke the colonial period is related to the first in the sense that the often mixed-race readership of *Tong Tong* was not only slighted during the colonial period but also in postcolonial Netherlands. In a review of Hein Buitenweg's *Op Java staat een huis* (*There Is a House in Java*), Robinson defends *Tong Tong*, Buitenweg, and their readers against accusations of having a "National Society [*Vaderlandsche Club*] mentality" and being cursed with an "everything-was-so-good nostalgia" by pointing out that there were double standards when it came to (white) Dutch who stayed in the Netherlands and (brown or, as Robinson called it, "browned") Dutch who went to the Indies.¹³⁶ Robinson viewed the assimilation of Indos expected on the part of white Dutch people as a huge stumbling block: "[t]he crux of his vision was that the own background should not be denied" (Willems 2008: 375).

Though the writers in *Tong Tong* wanted to relive what they saw as the splendor of life in the Indies, they did not leave colonial suffering unmentioned, nor were they unaware of the exalted and nostalgic character of the images they sometimes created. As one writer puts it, adopting a meta-perspective on her own situation:

Maybe to understand that I looked at these images with some respect mixed with a touch of nostalgia, one has to have been a child, like me, in that tempo doeloe.¹³⁷

Yet precisely because they were told not to talk about it, because they were told that they were wrong in the Indies, and because they were considered wrong in the Netherlands, telling exalted stories of tempo doeloe became a tool not of unworldly nostalgia but of political resistance, especially in the hands of Robinson. When a reader asked *Tong Tong* why it kept on dragging up old matters since the Indies were definitively lost anyway, Robinson answered:

¹³⁵ *Tong Tong* 3.18 (1959): 9.

¹³⁶ *Tong Tong* 5.24 (1961): 13.

¹³⁷ *Tong Tong* 4.2 (1959): 2.

Every human being, wherever in the world, likes to talk about his 'tempo doeloe'. Sometimes sentimentally, sometimes with the hope that with lessons from the past a new future can be served... My God, sir, we cannot help it that our youth happened to be in the Indies. Our youth is as dear to us as yours is to you. Moreover, you have had the good fortune to live in the land of your youth. That luck we are already missing. And on top of that to please you we have to keep our mouths shut about the only joy we are left with?... That devilish colonial forcing of other people, under all kinds of pretexts, will it never stop?¹³⁸

Dutch postcolonial nostalgia in *Tong Tong* was both reflective and restorative. In *Tong Tong*, attempts were made to remember the colonial past, yet there were also moments when authors showed they were aware that forgetting was necessarily a part of this remembrance. Crucial for this constellation to emerge was that the makers and readers of *Tong Tong* had moved from what Pierre Nora has called a *milieu de mémoire* (the Indies), where memory was an unknown known, to the Netherlands where they had only *lieux de mémoire*. Memory had turned into a sign, a medium, an object of reflection. This can also explain why in later years *Tong Tong* advertised its photographically illustrated calendars with the slogan "Now even more nostalgic!". Tempo doeloe and its photographs in *Tong Tong* should not only be seen as conservative cultural production, it also produced spaces of relative autonomy through which the readers of *Tong Tong* could ward off attempts to seamlessly incorporate them into the nation. A final important element was that in the magazine, colonial violence was not consigned to oblivion but regularly addressed. However, as colonial violence did not fit the empowering strategy of *Tong Tong*, it was also compartmentalized, making it a story in itself rather than an integral part of the memory of the Indies. This distribution of the perceptible would be of great importance not only for the framing of the 1904 photographs within the *Indische* community but also for colonial memory in the broader social scene in the Netherlands.

Rob Nieuwenhuys's *Tempo Doeloe*

The full title of Nieuwenhuys's book was *Tempo Doeloe: Photographic Documents from the Old Indies, 1870-1914*. In the 1980s, he expanded this book and turned it into a trilogy. Whereas Buitenweg was mostly read by the (*Indische*) readers of *Tong Tong/Moesson*, Nieuwenhuys's work had a

¹³⁸ *Tong Tong* 4.17 (1960): 8.

much broader reading audience. It has been widely received, also by the white Dutch cultural elite. For instance, while a 1992 anthology of Buitengeweg's work was published by two relatively unknown authors (Wassing & Wassing-Visser eds. 1992), a tribute to Nieuwenhuys's work from 1998 had contributions from many well-known literary authors, from Hella Haasse to J. Bernlef (Paasman et al. 1998). In addition, Nieuwenhuys's books were published by Querido, one of the country's most prestigious publishers. Nieuwenhuys is not only known for his photo books, he is also considered an important author on Dutch colonial literature from and on the Indies.

Nieuwenhuys was born in the Indies, in Semarang, but eventually went to Batavia where his father became director of the famous Hotel des Indes. His father was white and his mother Indo-European; the family lived a middle-class life. Between 1921 and 1935, Nieuwenhuys studied law and humanities in Leiden. Back in Java, he started teaching. He was imprisoned by the Japanese, and in 1945 he went to the Netherlands. From 1947 to 1952, he was again in Java, working as an official for the Ministry of Education. In 1963, he established a documentation center for Indonesian history at the Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies (KITLV) in Leiden (Beekman 1996: 537-40).

Tempo Doeloe has 230 photographs on 190 pages. The subtitle of the book indicates that when the book appeared its photographs were about fifty to ninety years old. In the book, all those who were living in the Indies are separated into three racial categories: white Europeans; mixed-race Indo-Europeans (the book calls them *Indisch*, which means that here the term only refers to mixed-race people and not to all Dutch people from the Indies as in this study); and natives. The last chapter with its seventy-four pages is by far the longest in the book. It is called "East-*Indische* Ladies and Gentlemen" and depicts this group of wealthy and middle-class Europeans and Indo-Europeans whose houses, travels, and public life are also the subject of most other chapters. All in all, about 70% of the photographs in the book have this group as their main subject, while 10% are military photographs (chapter 4), 8% show the native ruling classes (chapter 7), and 5% show the native and Chinese working classes (chapter 6). Working-class natives do appear, however, in the margins of many other photographs: they stand on the streets of Batavia, as servants on patios, and are the wives of European men.

The book thus focuses deliberately on propertied Europeans and Indo-Europeans. Nieuwenhuys wrote in the introduction:

I began working on this book with the ambition of giving a cross-section of the European community in the old Indies, in its most important

facets. This turned out to be an illusion. It was only possible to subsume a limited number of photographs under a small number of categories, which of course had to be characteristic. In hindsight, it is questionable if they are more so than others. (1998: 8)

“The Old Indies” from the book’s title do not denote the same space as the country called “the Dutch East Indies” or in hindsight “colonial Indonesia”. The Indies, here, are the space where the lives and loves of Europeans and Indo-Europeans took place, and the book’s three chapters on colonial warfare, working-class and propertied Indonesians (chapters 5, 6, and 7) depict worlds of their own, separated from that of “the Indies”. The book is most interested in a private European sphere that it sees as separate from the political.

The book’s subtitle, *Photographic Documents from the Old Indies 1870-1914*, suggests that from the latter year onwards, the Indies were “New”. Visually, these two Indies form two layers that Nieuwenhuys reads in the photographs he includes in his collection. The Old Indies are seen to form one composite layer of heterogeneous elements, while in the New Indies, several layers emerged that became more and more separated. Nieuwenhuys holds that in the Old Indies, the races were still mixed and living with each other, while in the New Indies, society became more and more segregated. He positions the photographs in a transition period between the two Indies. The unmarked “layer” formed by the natives is present on every page.

Nieuwenhuys favors the mixed layer of the Old Indies. One of the book’s recurring themes is photographs in which he discovered mixed spaces such as the *Indische* domestic interior and garden, and mixed portraits such as fancy dress parties and mixed-race family portraits. Of the *Indische* private houses of the nineteenth century, Nieuwenhuys writes that they “may have had no style, but were in any case striking” (37). In the logic of the book, not having one pure or proper style is preferred, for what is important is the mixture of styles. A photograph of the gallery of an *Indisch* house in Deli (East Sumatra) depicts “portraits from Holland” on the table in the front and “Chinese pots with plants” in the back (45). Multiple perceptible orders are also pointed out by Nieuwenhuys in a photograph of the garden of the Javanese court of Mangkoenegara in Solo, which he describes as “a type of cultural syncretism... Besides hundreds of flowerpots there were ponds, garden houses and numerous statues; next to classical, also Hindu-Javanese and even Chinese” (106; Figure 3.1). These photographs of interiors and gardens bring together elements from different cultures into a new unity.

Next to these mixed spaces, there are also mixed portraits of people and groups of people. The book has a great interest in fancy dress parties and



Figure 3.1. Culture syncretism in the garden of Mangkoenegara. Print, 13.6 x 19.3 cm. Rob Nieuwenhuys. *Tempo doeloe: Fotografische documenten uit het oude Indië 1870-1914*. Amsterdam: Querido, 1961. 106. University of Amsterdam Library.

features photographs of European and Indo-European soldiers dressed up as American cowboys (73), natives dressed up as characters from Wagner's *Lohengrin* for a theater performance (94), the (Indonesian) regent of Blora as a general of the Dutch East-*Indisch* army (110; Figure 3.2), Europeans and Indo-Europeans dressed up as Japanese (165), and a European man dressed up as an Arab (167). With respect to family portraits, Nieuwenhuys says:

Whoever, like the compiler of this book, has seen hundreds, even thousands of *Indische* photographs from tempo doeloe is struck by the *Indische* character of the society. In nine out of ten cases the families on these photographs turn out to be mixed families. (119)

Here, "*Indisch*" is the same as "mixed", and indeed the captions of many family portraits emphasize the mixed character of the families. According to Nieuwenhuys, "about three quarters of the European population had mixed blood, from white with light eyes to a type that was indistinguishable from Indonesians" (130). *Tempo Doeloe* has a strong interest in all the difficulties and ambiguities this categorization produces. It discusses the situation of a boy who was the child of a European man and an Indo-European women,



Figure 3.2. The regent of Blora dressed up as a general of the *Indische* army on a *bal masqué*. Photograph, 9 x 12 cm. KITLV/Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies, Leiden, inv. no. 503179.

raised by an Indonesian woman, and legally a native, and that of a girl, a child of two natives who married a European and consequently became European.

Yet – and this is thematized from the very beginning of the book – a different layer and perceptible order was threatening Nieuwenhuys's photographs. This perceptible order of the New Indies is brought by Europeans, whose travels to the Indies are the subject of the first chapter of *Tempo Doeloe*. Europeans going to the Indies are on the one hand seen as essential in creating the mixed perceptible order of the Old Indies, yet on the other hand positioned as causing the segregated perceptible order of the New Indies. It is especially white European women who are positioned as the destroyers of harmony.

The first photographic chapter, “With the Dutch mail to the Indies”, opens with the travels of Europeans to the islands in the late nineteenth century. Nieuwenhuys writes:

Without the digging through of the Suez isthmus, the rapid development and modernization of Java after 1870 would have been unthinkable. This is why this book begins with the opening of the Suez channel on 17 November 1869. (9)

The photographs in this chapter have a montage structure that creates narrative flow and spatial coherence, not only for this opening chapter but for the entire book. The first photograph of the chapter shows boats lying in the harbor of Port Saïd in Egypt, ready to sail through the Suez canal. The camera stands at an elevated point on the quay, and the logic of figuration places the viewer looking towards the stern of the ship and the backs of the people gathered around them. The viewer is a distanced spectator, not involved in what is happening. Through its position in a chapter on Dutch ships sailing to the Indies, the photograph starts functioning as an icon for departure from the West to the East. The diagonal lines of the boat, the quay, and some of the flags, running parallel, place the vanishing point outside the frame and far away. Both viewers and figureheads are oriented toward that direction. The frame is open and thus indicates an area outside it, which makes the suggestion of travel even stronger.

Whereas in the first photograph the perspective was of those who stayed in the Occident, the next two photographs are on board of two ships. These are eye-level group portraits, creating a relationship of equality between the viewer and the people in the photograph. The camera is no longer a distant third person but an intimate second person. We can now see the first photograph as a long shot in which the principal characters (the people in the group portraits in the second and third photographs) are in the distance, namely on one of the boats in the harbor of Port Saïd. These two group portraits, as full shots, have groups of people posing together in front of the camera. Most of them are looking at the camera and at those who will see the photograph, including their future selves. Both photographs have a closed frame: there is hardly any suggestion of a space beyond.

The fourth photograph is positioned as a reverse shot of the first: we see a boat approaching through the Suez canal. Placed between the two third-person shots of boats, the groups of the second and third photograph are now firmly placed on the ships. These first four photographs now also emerge as a set of establishing shots, giving the viewer the basics about place, time, and character before the narration begins. In this fourth photograph, the camera is facing Europe, but the action is heading towards the Indies. This perspective has prepared the viewer for the fifth photograph, which is also facing Europe, not from the banks of the Suez canal but all the way from Java. Showing the roadstead of Batavia, it features numerous ships of which the suggestion in the context of this chapter is that they have just come from Europe. In photograph six, the viewer is still "facing Europe": we see Europeans in front of a ship in Batavia's harbor and in the end two

shots of the harbor of Batavia that are positioned as the first sights many people had when they had just arrived.

These last two photographs are a prelude to the second photographic chapter, on Batavia, of which the opening line is: "What was the impression of somebody arriving for the first time in Java in 1880? What did he see?" (17). This chapter shows the gates, streets, houses, parks, churches, bridges, and hotels of the capital of the Indies, followed by photographs of Buitenzorg, a city not too far from Batavia and a regular haunt for Europeans living in the capital. Through the texts and the positioning of the photographs, both the narrative flow and spatial continuity are preserved. The first photograph is of the Amsterdam city gate through which the traveler supposedly entered the city. Next, the text describes a route from downtown to uptown Batavia to Buitenzorg, and the photographs alternately have an open frame (with a road heading directly to the vanishing point, suggesting a space beyond), a semi-closed frame (with the corner of a building alongside the road directed towards the camera, so that we see both the building and the road), and a closed frame (frontal photographs of buildings), suggesting a tour during which heads are regularly turned from left to right and back again. Another example of this flow is a photograph of the outside of hotel Bellevue in Buitenzorg (32), directly followed by two photographs of the views from its windows (33).

This narrative of European travels to and through the Indies can be read on various levels. First of all, it harks back to the earliest history of the photo book, placing *Tempo Doeloe* in line with all those nineteenth-century books in which European photographers gave an account of their travels all over the world, from Egypt to the Holy Land, India, Mexico, and China.¹³⁹ These photo books were mostly presented as travels not only to another country but also to another time: they registered the antiquities of these countries, sometimes as a study of what was seen as Europe's cradle (e.g. the Middle East, Egypt, and Greece), sometimes to be able to compare the different antiquities according to the theory that different parts of the world had parallel developments.¹⁴⁰ *Tempo Doeloe* is a journey to the past in two ways. On the one hand, its photographs were fifty to ninety years old when it was published. Those who read it in 1961 or later saw old photographs. On the other hand, if we place the book within the tradition of the Orientalist photo book, the Indies, especially the Old Indies, were positioned as a country

139 E.g. Maxime Du Camp's *Egypte, Nubie, Palestine et Syrie* (1852), Auguste Salzmann's *Jérusalem* (1854 and 1856), Linnaeus Tripe's *Photographic Views in Madura* (1858), Désiré Charnay's *Cités et ruines américaines* (1862-63), and John Thomson's *Illustrations of China and its People* (1874).

140 See also Bijl 2009.

in a different temporal frame (or even in no temporal frame at all). It is no coincidence that after the reader went in the time machine that is the boat from West to East through the Suez canal, the chapter on Batavia starts with the city's seventeenth-century Amsterdam gate. Yet this opening sequence also replays the classic narrative of the European exploration of the globe and its subsequent colonization. It thereby repeats the idea that history outside Europe only began with the coming of Europeans. By creating a visual continuity between Europe and Java through the sequence of photographs, the Indies are positioned within a European space.

In *Tempo Doeloe*, the time brought by European boats has a rather ambiguous meaning, for these boats also bring with them a threat to the kind of colonialism that Nieuwenhuys prefers. Although Nieuwenhuys ostensibly wants to portray the Old Indies, all his photographs are from an era in which they were already being replaced by the New Indies. On the first photograph in the boats chapter he writes, for instance, that “we see two wooden sailing ships with ‘auxiliary steam power’ but all the way to the right, also the rear side of a ‘modern’ steam ship” (11). It is in the words “but” and “modern” that an implicit appraisal is offered. The same can be said of the words “still” and “already” in a sentence about the dresses of the women in another photograph: “You can still see the older ladies in crinoline, the younger ones are already wearing queue de Paris, which became fashionable in these years” (15). And finally a telling “still” can be found in: “How rural and park-like Batavia could still present itself around 1880, can be seen in the photograph above” (26). The phrase “present itself” (which could even be translated as “act”) suggests that the city may already not be so rural and park-like anymore but that it only pretended to be. The New Indies, throughout the book, slowly write themselves on the canvas of Java and the Old Indies, etching away some parts of the latter, painting over others, but mainly pulling the Old Indies apart. The photographs are presented as palimpsests and the text indicates the layers they have, those they will have, those they had and those they will no longer have.

There is a hierarchy of truth between the two Indies:

Until the twentieth century, the European community was like a pioneer society and had – especially in the interior – the typical features of a *boedjang* culture (a *boedjang* is a bachelor), of which the housekeeper was a natural part. If we also realize that there were all sorts of restrictive rules concerning coming out married, also for officers and civil servants, then the character of a strongly mixed, typically *Indische* society becomes understandable. And this kept on existing until well after 1900. (8)

It is the Old Indies here that get the upper hand: not only were they the age of the bachelor, they were also the times when the Indies were still “typical” – that is, one with themselves. This logic leads to a search for the oldest photographs, for the further you go back in time, the more real the Indies were. “The photograph is from before 1868” (18); “this photograph – found in one of the oldest albums – is probably made before 1870” (22); “this beautiful photograph is from 1860, one of the oldest from this collection” (25).

In the caption of the photograph “from before 1868”, which is the one of the Amsterdam gate, Nieuwenhuys distinguishes several layers of time (Figure 3.3). The natives standing at the side of the road are not discussed at all: they form the side wings of the European stage. The first element mentioned is “the old city gate of seventeenth-century Jacatra, the so-called Amsterdam gate” (18), taking the reader back three centuries. Nieuwenhuys then adds a layer by saying that “from a plate by the draughtsman Johannes Rach it turns out that the gate in its original appearance had a domed roof with a bell”. Again, there is a search for the oldest which is the most real, as can be seen here in the words “original appearance”. Next, the New Indies layer is projected onto the photograph, taking away parts of the gate: “This



Figure 3.3. Walter Woodbury and James Page. The Amsterdam Gate in Batavia, before 1868. Photograph, 18 x 24 cm. KITLV/Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies, Leiden, inv. no. 105834.

photograph is from before 1868. In this year both wings that you see here were already broken down and the tram was passing it (the horse tram, that is)". Nieuwenhuys places the photograph halfway on a timeline of decay, ending in total destruction as it has one of the very few references in the book to the end of the Indies: "The Amsterdam gate was a curiosity that did survive the Japanese occupation but not the revolution". All in all, Nieuwenhuys has named the gate (Old Indies) with a dome (Oldest Indies), without the wings (New Indies), and completely removed (post-Indies). In this last instance, all we are left with is the native layer.

As mentioned above, Nieuwenhuys saw European women in particular as guilty of dissolving the unity:

Only later... adjustment went the other way around... The women who were 'imported' (this is how they were named) from Europe tried to transfer Holland to the Indies. They started to furnish their house 'in a European manner', that is: cozy with curtains, floor lamps, armchairs; they even papered the *Indische* walls; they introduced the 'European table' and sandwich meals. They could hardly talk to their servants



Figure 3.4. European woman in a Javanese landscape. Print, 15.6 x 20.5 cm. Rob Nieuwenhuys. *Tempo doeloe: fotografische documenten uit het oude Indië 1870-1914*. Amsterdam: Querido, 1961. 55. University of Amsterdam Library.

and were not in touch with them; the contact with ‘the other world’ got lost. (120)

Throughout, Nieuwenhuys criticizes white European women who had not “adjusted”, who tried to be as European as possible. In the photographs, they are identified through their display of a European perceptible order. Next to a photograph of a European woman standing in a landscape, Nieuwenhuys writes (Figure 3.4):

This European lady walks along a kampong road along a small brown river, as she would have walked in Holland along a small village road. Her presence in this Javanese landscape strikes one as odd. She does not fit in; she is completely disconnected from it. (54)

This woman is accused of two things: an improper appearance and a lack of observational skills. On the one hand, her white dress is seen as inappropriate, because it has no *Indische* elements in it, and on the other hand she is accused of seeing the kampong road as a Dutch village road. Nieuwenhuys claims that these women pulled apart the mixed layer that was the Old Indies, particularly because they dissolved the intimate bond between European men and Indonesian women. This was of consequence, for instance, for the figure of the *njai*, an Indonesian housekeeper who was often also the sexual partner, forced or not, of a European man. As Nieuwenhuys writes:

Only later, after the Indies had become ‘inhabitable’ for European women did her [the *njai*] presence become a problem... The *njai* made the life of many a European bearable and relieved his loneliness. It was she who made adjustment possible; through her he learned the language, the way of life and the mentality of the people, through her he learned to understand much more. Together with the slow disappearance of the housekeeper after *tempo doeloe*, an important piece of association-politics got lost. (86)

As European women became available, Nieuwenhuys holds, European men could marry them and no longer married or lived together with Indonesian women.

Tempo Doeloe has a separate chapter on the native and Chinese working classes, entitled “The other world”. Comprising 7% of the book’s pages, it offers a glimpse of “the others”, that is, those other than the European and

Indonesian ruling classes. Three of its fifteen photographs are of *njais*; seven are of servants and workers who danced, made music, performed plays, guarded, or worked as prostitutes; and three are of independently working Chinese. The chapter, which is exactly at the center of the book as a whole, starts by stating that:

The European communities in the Indies – as light disseminations in a green landscape – were always enclaves in the middle of the surrounding people of millions. (85)¹⁴¹

In this phrase, Europeans are named, while the “people of millions” are not; Europeans form “communities”, while the “people of millions” are an assemblage; the European communities are plural, while the “people of millions” are one indistinguishable mass; and the Europeans are disseminations – in Dutch it reads that they were “sowed” like the seeds of (cultivated) grain or corn by a farmer – while the “people of millions” are a “green landscape”. Next, Nieuwenhuys starts gendering the two groups, claiming that “the European society had a tendency to close itself off, but that this closing-off could never be sufficient seeing the large surplus of men in *tempo doeloe*” (85). We might now expect to find white European men on the inside, while outside millions of green-brown native women are surrounding them, but a turnaround has occurred so that we find the “great surplus of men causing a strong suction ‘to the inside’” (85). It is in this “suction” that the book sees the emergence of the Indo-European mixed layer.

“The Indies” in *Tempo Doeloe* are a colony without colonialism. They form a more or less European space where the background is not formed by the North Sea and the Dutch heathland but by the Tengger mountains, bamboo forests, and a lot of people with brown skin. The book hardly thematizes the colonization of Java and the other islands, for they are timeless; it is only the Indies that change. Europeans in the first chapter enter the Indies on a narrative flow to which the chapter on Indonesians does not belong. In *Tempo Doeloe*, the division of chapters runs parallel to the colonial division of races and compartmentalizes the stories of *tempo doeloe* and Dutch imperialism as the private and the public scene respectively.

141 In Dutch, this reads: “*De Europese gemeenschappen in Indië – als lichte uitzaaiingen in een groen landschap – hebben altijd enclaves gevormd temidden van het omringende miljoenenfolk.*”

The 1980s Trilogy: Reflective Nostalgia

In 1988, Nieuwenhuys published a photo book entitled *With Strange Eyes: Tempo Doeloe – A Submerged World: Photographic Documents From the Old Indies 1870-1920*. It was the last part of a trilogy of which the first parts were published in the early 1980s. They had the same subtitles, but their main titles were *Rookies and Old Customers* (1981) and *Coming and Staying* (1982). The trilogy more or less reflects the racial classification in the Indies, with one volume on the Europeans, one on those of mixed race, and one on the natives. The order of appearance of these volumes reflects the colonial hierarchy of power. I argue here that there is a shift in Nieuwenhuys's oeuvre between 1961 and the 1980s from an emphasis on restorative nostalgia to an emphasis on reflective nostalgia.

Rookies and Old Customers is the translation of *Baren en oudgasten*. The former refers to Dutch newcomers to the Indies (from the Malay *baru*, meaning “new”), and the latter are those who were from families that had been there for several generations. *Rookies and Old Customers* is strongly focused on white Europeans, the so-called *totoks*. It has chapters that are very close to the first chapters of *Tempo Doeloe* from 1961: again “With the Dutch mail to the Indies” on ship travel to the islands, and also a chapter on the capital Batavia. Next to these, there are several chapters on the travels, pleasures, and sorrows of Dutch people in the Indies and, remarkably for a book on white Europeans, a chapter on Javanese prostitutes.¹⁴²

In *Coming and Staying*, according to its introduction,

the emphasis is more on the interior [of Java], on the “interior towns”, on the enterprises [tea, sugar], on nature... but also on families and in the second part primarily on *Indische* [mixed race] families and *Indische* people, on that remarkable community of Europeans and Indo-Europeans. (7)

The book is mostly about the chronotope called the Old Indies that was also the main theme in *Tempo Doeloe*. The chapter on the mixed Indo-European community fills about half of the book. Other chapters are also on mixed perceptible orders: the Javanese interior, the outer territories, and “lost Europeans” – those who were closer to an Indonesian than to a European way of living.

142 The only explanation I can think of is that for Nieuwenhuys, these women were so thoroughly commodified that their logical place was indeed in the European volume of his trilogy.

With Strange Eyes, the book on natives, has about 200 photographs on 190 pages. Only a few photographs are of Europeans. While many images are of the native ruling classes, 30% is of the native and Chinese working classes. The last section of the book consists of one of its longest chapters entitled "The common man", a thoroughly reworked chapter on colonial warfare, a chapter on the Chinese in the Indies, and a chapter on *njais*. All in all, *With Strange Eyes* picks up the themes that were addressed in chapters 5, 6, and 7 of *Tempo Doeloe* on colonial warfare and the native and Chinese working and ruling classes whereby, if we look at the book in the context of the entire 1980s trilogy, the number of photographs that have natives and Chinese as their main subject increases from 13% to 33%, and the share of native and Chinese working classes has gone from 5% to 10%.

In the subtitle of both the 1961 book and the 1980s publications, Nieuwenhuys uses the concept of the photographic document. The word "document" in Dutch can mean two things: 1) every (written or printed) piece of evidence, or record; and 2) a piece of writing (film, object) that testifies to human life as it is. In *Tempo Doeloe*, only the second meaning of the word "document" was active, while in the 1980s trilogy the photographs also emerge as *photographs*. Although not completely absent in *Tempo Doeloe*, in the 1980s trilogy the emphasis on photographs as material objects is much stronger and much more deliberate: the *passe-partout* of the photographs is emphasized. *Rookies and Old Customers*, for instance, has a chapter called "Indische photographers" in which the history of photographers in the Indies is rehearsed in brief. In this chapter, Nieuwenhuys addresses different photographic technologies, the way in which photographers worked, and the social aspects of photography, particularly who commissioned the photographs and who could be in them. This chapter also has several images of photographic studios, showing the decorated rooms with their painted backgrounds, their roofs of corrugated galvanized iron, and the cameras. The other important change in the trilogy is that it allows for many more flawed or damaged photographs. *Coming and Staying*, for instance, has a photograph that was printed in two different intensities (9), and one with *craquelure* (138).¹⁴³

In *Tempo Doeloe* there were only a few photographs of natives, while all photographs were positioned as windows on the world. The first line of *With Strange Eyes*, on the other hand, reads:

143 Finally, because of the printing technique of the trilogy, it is more visible when a photograph has been retouched, which also emphasizes the photograph as an artifact. Compare, for instance, the same photograph on page 127 of *Tempo Doeloe* and on page 75 of *Rookies and Old Customers*.

By far the most photographs that have been included in this third part of my set of three photo books with photographic documents on the old Indies were made by European photographers. (7)

Further on, Nieuwenhuys continues:

These old and very old photographs have one thing in common: they are representative for what the European saw, and that was in the first place the world of the European himself. Of the Indonesian world only that part is visible that was involved in the life of the European. (8)

Here, a strong awareness of eurocentrism is combined with an attempt to give an image of the native society. On the book's last page, Nieuwenhuys writes:

With Strange Eyes I have called my new book, because the majority of the photographs from the Indonesian world were made by European photographers. They looked with the eyes of a stranger, that is they saw of the Indonesian world only that part in which their life as a European was involved. Of the "other world" ... they saw very little. (192)

Yet Nieuwenhuys at other moments goes even further than this: he claims that the photographs not only offer a selective view but also give the wrong impression. In the chapter "The common man", he addresses the hatred and bitterness on the part of Indonesians towards the Dutch, and then says:

If we rely on the photographs, it seems to turn out better than expected; we cannot say that the picture is unfavorable, the contrary is true. Life in the interior looks even idyllic now and then. Yet that is an optical illusion, it is exactly about what is *not* in the photographs: the diseases, the hunger, the natural disasters, the heavy labor, the abuse of authority, the arbitrariness, the injustice, the pressuring burdens, the unsafety, the usury, the evil of opium, the desire to throw dice. (118)

Here, Nieuwenhuys voices a desire in writing to take over from the mendacious medium of photography. The thoroughly reworked chapter on colonial warfare begins with another warning against photography from the Indies:

Whoever has seen the thousands of photographs from tempo doeloe – let us say from 1860 up to the first world war – in the first place gets the

impression of a quiet, careless existence for the European. Now and then, life even looks like an idyll. It is the well-known optical illusion; the medal has another side. (149)

The 1980s trilogy, I conclude, has a much more reflective type of nostalgia than *Tempo Doeloe* from 1961. Whereas in the 1960s Nieuwenhuys was looking for the purest Indies, in the 1980s his work is as much about photography as it is about his native country.

As was shown above, when Nieuwenhuys started working on his photographic oeuvre in the early 1960s, this was in the context of Tjalie Robinson's tempo doeloe-as-empowerment. As Lizzy van Leeuwen has shown, between then and the 1980s, several shifts took place within the Indo community. The 1970s saw the rise of a body of more reflective literature and other cultural artifacts on the Indies and a reorientation towards Indonesia, for instance through a growing number of people who visited the country, including Nieuwenhuys himself. Van Leeuwen writes how Nieuwenhuys, influenced by his trip, made a plea for more encounters between Indonesians, Dutch, and *Indische* people, in the belief that “[t]he Indies and Indonesia have amalgamated” (quoted in Van Leeuwen 2008: 153). These developments probably influenced the change in Nieuwenhuys's work towards a more reflective and more Indonesia-centered approach. Conversely, this may also have been a reaction to the rise, also in the 1970s, of a broad popular tempo doeloe culture to which Nieuwenhuys might not have wanted to align himself too much.

The Atjeh Photographs in Nieuwenhuys's Oeuvre

What were the positions of the 1904 photographs KR3 in *Tempo Doeloe* and KR2 in *With Strange Eyes*? In chapter 4 on colonial warfare in *Tempo Doeloe*, almost half of the twenty-eight photographs are studio portraits of soldiers and officers of the KNIL, four are of KNIL soldiers' graves, one is of a preemptive celebration of the end of the Atjeh War in 1874, and several are of soldiers resting “in the field” in Atjeh. Next to these, there are three photographs of atrocity: Figure 1.10 from 1901, PD from 1898, and KR3, which is dated 1903 (Figure 3.5). Nieuwenhuys wrote in his 1961 book that the deprivations of the Atjeh War were shrouded in romanticism. Strikingly, he does exactly the same by describing the *marechaussees* as an “elite corps of toughened soldiers, especially trained for guerilla in the bush”, and by emphasizing the fact that Van Daalen's troops had to go through “indescribable hardships” and forests full of leeches and snakes. In the text,

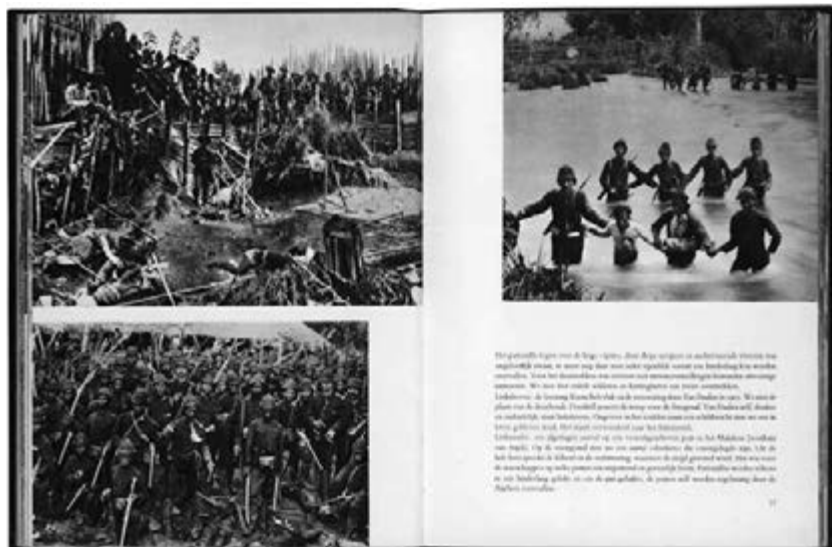


Figure 3.5. Rob Nieuwenhuys. *Tempo doeloe: fotografische documenten uit het oude Indië 1870-1914*. Amsterdam: Querido, 1961. 76-77. University of Amsterdam Library.

the inhabitants of the Gajo and Alas lands remain linguistically invisible: “as they moved on the fights started. One siege followed the next. The troop fought mercilessly; they did not take any prisoners, but killed the whole garrison” (68). Nieuwenhuys also mentions the source from which he took the 1904 photograph: Zentgraaff’s *Atjeh*. This explains his emphasis, despite the initial distancing, on the suffering of the KNIL soldiers, on their masculinity and heroic deaths.

The war chapter in *With Strange Eyes* has a very different selection of photographs. The number of portraits of KNIL soldiers is reduced from thirteen to two, while many photographs of natives have replaced them, and Nieuwenhuys is much less preoccupied with male suffering. Instead, he tells a critical story about what he calls “one uninterrupted colonial war” in the Indies. The description of Van Daalen’s expedition has also changed: the Gajos and Alas are no longer linguistically invisible, and it is now narrated as a massacre of civilians, not the outcome of a battle between two armies. The chapter has three photographs of atrocity: one of the 1904 expedition with the river of bodies in Koetö Réh (KR2), and two from an expedition to Bali in 1906.

Despite these changes, however, the war chapter in the trilogy is still bracketed off from Nieuwenhuys’s story of European colonialism. In *Tempo Doeloe*, colonial warfare, just like “the other world” of the natives, was treated in a separate chapter, while in the 1980s trilogy these two subjects

are in a separate volume and are thus still compartmentalized from the rest of the Indies. Colonial warfare is framed as public, colonial intimacy as private. Comparable to how the defenders of the 1904 expedition in the colonial period framed the photographs, Nieuwenhuys tried to semanticize them in such a way that their meanings were no longer a threat to his main story on the Indies. He contained the meanings of the 1904 photographs by compartmentalizing them in a narrative of their own, and his Indies consisted of various possible worlds that could be entered separately but not simultaneously. At the same time, precisely by bringing together different memories of the Indies, Nieuwenhuys opened up the possibility of connecting them and exploring their multidirectionality. By taking up the Atjeh photograph in his 1961 book, moreover, he directly facilitated Loe de Jong, who in that same year was working on his television documentary on the Netherlands and the Indies under the German occupation.

Multidirectional Memory

Introduction

In the academic year 2008-2009, the University of Tilburg in the Netherlands appointed the actor, photographer, and documentary maker Thom Hoffman as Leonardo Professor, a one-year position that is reserved for double talents. Hoffman's self-chosen theme for his professorship was "The Ideals of Multatuli", connected to the more general theme of "idealism, and how wastefully we are dealing with it in the year 2009". A critical professorship, in other words, as can also be seen from Hoffman's words that "[i]n the Netherlands, there is a strong nostalgia if you speak about the former colonies, a lot of *Tempo doeloe*, and at the same time those three centuries of rule are weighing us down". In a 2009 interview in *de Volkskrant*, Hoffman argued that since the rights of natives had been addressed by Multatuli in his novel *Max Havelaar*, hardly anybody had picked up this issue again until Sukarno proclaimed Indonesia's independence. The only people Hoffman believed defended the legacy of Multatuli were Madelon Székely-Lulofs, who according to him wrote novels about Dutch ignorance in the Indies; Joris Ivens, maker of the revolutionary 1946 documentary *Indonesia Calling*; and Poncke Princen, who had fought on the Indonesian side during the struggle for independence and later became a human rights activist who focused on Indonesia. The *de Volkskrant* interviewer describes how, at a certain moment in one of his classes, Hoffman picks up a book

written in 1946 about Atjeh, by the then authoritative journalist Zentgraaff. The photographs of a mountain of murdered Atjehnese, men, women, and children, are etched in his memory. He points out a quote, at the end of the book: "If the graves [of Dutch Atjeh veterans, PB] could talk they would call out: 'draw from our history the lesson that if with relentless severity the system of the last decennia is held on to... every Atjehnese can be sure: we have to accept and rest, our only chance is to cooperate in the development of a land and people under the Dutch flag'.¹⁴⁴

To which Hoffman responds with indignation: "So this was written after we ourselves had been occupied by the Germans! Isn't that unbelievable?" Hoffman, who postdated Zentgraaff's 1938 book by eight years, compares the German occupation of the Netherlands with the Atjeh War and, by extension, with Dutch colonialism, as this is the topic of his class as a whole. By presenting the 1904 photographs as icons of Dutch colonialism, and by comparing the latter with the Second World War, many in 2009 will have thought of what were by then some of the most prominent visual icons of WWII, namely the photographs made by journalists and allied forces of the dead in the liberated Nazi concentration camps (see Zelizer 1998). Yet although Hoffman brought materials together in his class that may have strongly suggested a comparison between the 1904 photographs and iconic Holocaust photography, he did not *explicitly* make such a comparison. That the topics of the 1904 massacres and the Holocaust in 2009 converged but were not equated tells us something about their complicated relationships.

Loe de Jong and *The Occupation*

In the early 1960s, just after the publication of Nieuwenhuys's *Tempo Doeloe*, a television series and subsequent book series brought together for the first time a 1904 photograph (KR3) and photographs of Nazi atrocities in one cultural artifact. Both were works by the most famous postwar historian of the Netherlands, Loe de Jong, a Jewish social-democrat who had fled to London in 1940. During the war, many of his family members were killed by the Nazis, including his parents and his brother. Back in the Netherlands, he became director of the newly founded *Rijksinstituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie* (RIOD), now the NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies. The main topic of De Jong's television series *The*

144 *de Volkskrant* 13 March 2009: 11.

Occupation and his book with the same title was the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands from 1940 to 1945. Three out of twenty-one broadcasts and chapters, however, were devoted to the Indies (about 14% of the total). In one of these chapters, De Jong, who before the war had written critical articles about Dutch colonialism and who in the late 1940s had opposed the Dutch army's police actions, discussed the photograph of Van Daalen standing on the wall of Koetö Réh, together with photograph PD from 1898.

Ever since historian Hans Blom in 1983 criticized De Jong for adopting a moralistic frame of interpretation, many in the Netherlands have come to see De Jong as a dogmatic writer who divided the world into two categories: the good and the bad. Besides upholding an untenable ideal of value-free history, however,¹⁴⁵ Blom did not have an eye for the many ambiguities that are in fact present in Loe de Jong's work.

The Occupation was broadcast on Dutch national television from 1960 to 1965, in 21 episodes. It featured De Jong sitting behind a desk and reading his self-written text on the German occupation of the Netherlands and on the Japanese in the Indies. This was interspersed with film fragments (1,868 in total), images (1,908), maps (310), and short narratives and declarations by no less than 197 witnesses (Beunders 1995: 157).¹⁴⁶ As the series progressed, five paperback volumes were published, each of which contained the texts and visual materials of a number of episodes. In 1966, these volumes were brought together in one book entitled *The Occupation: Text and Visual Materials of the Broadcasts of the Dutch Television Foundation on the Kingdom of the Netherlands in the Second World War, 1940-1945*. It was published by the prestigious Amsterdam publisher Querido, which had also published *Tempo Doeloe*. De Jong was well-known by then for being an authoritative historian who could tell the truth about history and give a final verdict. According to H. W. von der Dunk (2002), the RIOD had by then come to be perceived by the public as an authoritative institute that had the keys to the personal past of perpetrators and victims.

The first episode of *The Occupation* was broadcast on 6 May 1960. In that same week, the last relay station was installed, with the result that the whole of the Netherlands could watch the one channel of Dutch television. According to Beunders, "the streets were empty, and... on evenings that De Jong appeared on television, no meetings were planned" (1995: 154). A second important broadcast from the same period concerned the trial of Adolf

145 See also Eickhoff, Henkes and Van Vree 2010.

146 Many other data in this section are also derived from Beunders's article. For a list of broadcast data, see Van Vree 1995.

Eichmann, from 1960 to 1962, during which people heard a detailed account of the Nazi atrocities. “Television developed into a national medium” in the 1960s, Beunders writes. The ratings for the last two episodes of *The Occupation* in 1965 were 64 and 65 percent, which meant that the final episode of the series was seen by almost four million people of fifteen years and older (ibid: 157), out of a total population of twelve million. In 1960, there were 660,000 television sets; in 1965, at the end of the series, there were more than two million (ibid: 160).

As mentioned earlier, the series included three episodes on the Indies. For us, the most important of these is episode VII, called “The Dutch East Indies Threatened”, as it is here that KR3 reappears. It was broadcast on 8 December 1961 and became chapter VII in the 1966 book. In it, De Jong discusses the history of the Dutch presence in the Indies all the way from 1595 until the Japanese invasion. With an emphasis on the twentieth century, this takes up about half of the chapter and episode, while in the second half the run-up to the Japanese invasion is described. For the period 1870-1914, *The Occupation* relies several times on Nieuwenhuys’s *Tempo Doeloe*.¹⁴⁷ One important difference between the two books, however, is that De Jong has many more images and film fragments in which working-class natives take a central position. Often they are laboring for the Dutch, but there are also photographs of poverty and slums in Java (page 286), child labor (only in the broadcast), several Indonesian nationalist leaders (pages 291-3), the nationalist movement Sarekat Islam (page 286), an Indonesian demonstration against the Dutch (page 290), and the sabotage of a train (page 291). *The Occupation*, moreover, has photographs not only of the atrocities of the Atjeh War (KR3 and PD, like *Tempo Doeloe* had) but also of the prison camp Boven-Digoel, where Indonesian communists and nationalists had been imprisoned from 1926/27 onwards in a Dutch attempt to suppress communism (page 293).

De Jong’s work is not nostalgic. Both Indonesian agency and Dutch violent repression are addressed and visualized, and the Dutch East Indies are (mostly) positioned not as eternal but as a historical period between

¹⁴⁷ Episode and chapter VII have photographs of a locomotive (page 276), the Suez canal (page 276), a Dutch battalion (page 280), a resident with a servant (page 280), and the Dutch colonial army with killed Atjehnese (page 279), all of which also appear in *Tempo Doeloe*. Several passages in *The Occupation*, moreover, overlap with Nieuwenhuys’s comments. The other pictures in *The Occupation* are mostly drawings from the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries (page 275), portraits (drawn or photographic) of famous Dutch people (pages 275, 279, 281, 290, 291), or stills from anthropological, corporate, or propagandist movies which De Jong used in the broadcast (pages 274, 282, 285).

the early nineteenth century and 1942. While in *Tempo Doeloe*, Indonesian society and colonial violence were compartmentalized, in *The Occupation*, Indonesians and their struggle gain a much more prominent position and are framed by a larger historical narrative about the historical emergence and collapse of colonialism. As a result, KR₃ is less in the background and more structurally embedded in the whole. In his later work on the Netherlands in the Second World War in which he was much more vocal in his criticism of colonialism, De Jong wrote that “in a larger historical context perhaps the most important outcome that the period 1940-1945 has had for the Kingdom of the Netherlands... was an end to the colonial period that had started in the seventeenth century” (De Jong 1969-1991, Part 11a, XII). For De Jong, colonial violence was not detached from colonial history.

In the introduction to his 1966 book made on the basis of the series, De Jong starts by asking his readers a question. He first makes clear that he wants to reach Dutch society as a whole and asks: “What does a historian achieve with his labor in society?” Scholarly publications, he argues, reach a limited number of readers; newspapers and magazines, although read more widely, only summarize scholarly research and are “fleeting”; while the most important contribution of history as a discipline is to education. By contrast, “[t]he medium of television has broken through those boundaries; new, never expected and never foreseen possibilities have been created” (5). De Jong here shows himself to be keenly aware of the potential of television to function as a consensus medium in the creation of a consensus narrative. In the rest of the introduction, the readers and viewers of *The Occupation* are interpellated as “our people”, an imagined community with a shared past but also a shared future. The broadcasts and the book are not only “a report of the misery of war... endured by complete communities”, they are also a report of “the inspirational example that in the toughest of times was offered over and over again by some” (6). De Jong concludes the introduction with a wish:

I hope that this book finds readers as long as there are Dutch people; perhaps there are those among them who, now or later, in the uncertainty of life, will derive force from the example given by so many in the years 1940-45.

The history of the past cannot, it is true, take upon itself to be didactic. But this is not to say that one cannot derive lessons from that past. In this way, this book wants to be an appeal to the reader: to think about the problems that the war, but even more the occupation, has put forward. (7)

Above the text is a *chiaroscuro* portrait of the author. His head is turned slightly to the left, while his eyes are turned away to the right where the light is coming from. He looks serious and wise, with a hint of fatherly friendliness, and his hair and suit are impeccable. As becomes clear from the start, for De Jong the Second World War is a source of timeless lessons with universal value, with himself as the great interpreter.

According to Frank van Vree,

The Occupation is the story of the assault of an innocent and ignorant people, which, however, through its mental power and indomitability, inspiringly led by its queen, conquers evil and emerges essentially unbroken and purified from this struggle. (1995)

At the same time, Van Vree holds, the series ignores the possible consequences of passivity and adjustment, pays disproportionate attention to small expressions of discontent and actual resistance, anonymizes collaborators, marginalizes the role of Dutch people and institutions in the persecution of Jews, has scant and apologetic attention for the *Endlösung* and the fate of individual Jewish victims, sees the occupation as an independent, isolated episode, pays minimal attention to the international context, affirms existing patterns of political and spiritual leadership, and brushes over social, religious, and political differences. According to Von der Dunk (2002: 66), one of the ideas that lay at the basis of De Jong's work was that it would stimulate national unity, or rather, keep intact the idea of a wholesome community of righteous Dutch people that was created through the war. All this was in order to prevent a relapse to the pre-war, pillared fragmentation in which Dutch society was divided into Catholic, Protestant, socialist, and liberal groups.

After the war, until the second half of the 1960s, the fate of the Dutch Jews was integrated into the fate of the Dutch people as a whole. It was only later, with the 1965 book by Jacques Presser entitled *Doom: The Persecution and Extermination of Dutch Jewry 1940-1945*,¹⁴⁸ that the Holocaust emerged as it is known in the Netherlands today, namely as an event of an importance far outreaching that of the rest of the Second World War. De Jong integrated

148 The first tone-setting sentences of *Doom* are: "This book contains the history of a murder. A murder, also a mass murder, committed on a hitherto unknown scale, with premeditation and in cold blood. The murderers were Germans, the murdered Jews...". According to Von der Dunk, the book carries the implicit reproach that the Dutch had been too passive, which led to feelings of guilt in the country. Others, who had been active in the resistance, were indignant. Presser's book was a bestseller.

the Jews into the nation; people like Presser distinguished the fate of the Dutch Jews from the rest of the population.

The Atjeh Photographs in *The Occupation*

In *The Occupation*, KR3 and PD function as icons of a certain phase in Dutch colonialism. The episode in which they appear, "The Dutch East Indies Threatened", starts with a brief discussion of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. A montage of films shows the Japanese military: battleships where the Japanese flag of war is raised, aircraft carriers sailing at full speed, Japanese pilots running to their posts. As the Japanese planes take off, narrator De Jong says in an increasingly loud voice "Every pilot knows his goal: the units of the American battle fleet in the Pacific Ocean, harbored in – [dramatic pause] Pearl Harbor!" In the meantime, the sound is of the motors of ships and planes, while De Jong's words are followed by violins striking a threatening tone and chord. Then the screen image changes into a map with the Dutch East Indies, while the sound switches to the soft tones of Indonesian gamelan music. The commentator, beginning *mezzo forte* but ending *sotto voce* so as not to wake anyone or make them enter history prematurely, says:

While the Japanese planes approached Pearl Harbor in the early morning, it was still night in the Dutch East Indies. Between Asia and Australia was that *Indische* archipelago, which was governed by the Dutch authority.

Opposed here are, on the one hand, the modern nation of Japan with advanced military technology, up early in the morning to write history against the background of the sounds of engines and dramatic violins, and on the other hand the Dutch East Indies, at rest as a sleeping beauty accompanied by gamelan music with its connotations of being cultural, traditional, and eternal. Initially, the Indies are shown without the Dutch or colonialism, but "in themselves". While the gamelan continues playing, De Jong gives an overview of the islands, which are presented as both traditional and on their way to modernity. "The Indies – inhabited by a conglomerate of races and peoples", the narrator says *pianissimo*. And while a colonial film is shown of three men hunting birds with a blow pipe: "Dayaks in Borneo, who have hardly outgrown the Stone Age, some maintaining themselves with difficulty in almost inaccessible jungles". Next, people working in a field are shown, while De Jong relates that "[i]n Sumatra the jungle is being pushed back by the fields of more developed peoples, peoples that group themselves in villages with a fixed social structure". Here, the pushing

back of nature concerns not only the jungle but also the inner nature in the “peoples” of Indonesia, who are represented as a diverse collection of groups yet also as not that far advanced on a developmental timeline. Moving on to Java (“the most developed island”), De Jong explains that

[f]or centuries [the people of Java] were subjected to the authority of feudal rulers in whose palaces, the kratons, even in this century forms of life prevailed that were once the expression of a real royal and aristocratic supreme authority.

A traditional Java is constructed here that is slowly disappearing, while its remaining forms are empty shells. After a display of traditional dance and Hindu-Buddhist architecture, the music suddenly stops, as Islam enters the picture, directly followed by the Dutch:

in the largest part of the archipelago, the population has been won over by Islam. That happened three, four centuries ago, and coincided more or less with, what was for us, an important historical event: the coming to these territories of the Dutch.

While a soothing classical melody sets in, a series of drawings represents the first steps of the Dutch in the Indies. Initially there was no “racial discrimination”: “all who became Christian were equated with the Dutch”. It is emphasized that the Indies were very much like the Netherlands and had the same architecture, the same religion, and the same equality and tolerance. In short, *The Occupation* gives an overview of the Dutch East Indies in the beginning full of Orientalist ideas, where a population that was both inside and outside time lived together with tolerant Dutch traders.

Then the text makes a shift and becomes more critical of the Dutch as time progresses. A passage that only appears in the book describes the increasing grip on the islands exercised by the Dutch during the nineteenth century. In Java “the population was forced to give up one-fifth of the farmland” for the profit of the Dutch Trading Company, and those who did not possess land were forced into three months of labor. “In a mere fifty years’ time, more than 800 million guilders of *Indische* profits were transferred to the Dutch treasury – which was about one-fifth of the total state income”. Next, both text (277-8) and broadcast address the “modernization of the means of transportation” and connect this directly to one of the 1904 photographs. After a shot of a boat sailing through the Suez canal and one of a train in Java, we see Loe de Jong himself, saying:

with the modernization of the means of transportation, the Dutch authority could also be expanded to other parts of the archipelago, sometimes in the face of the resistance of the population and her leaders. This resistance was especially fierce in Atjeh [a hand points out Atjeh on a map of the Indies], where people were strongly averse to foreign oppression. Under the supervision of general Van Heutsz... [his portrait is shown] the reinforcements of the Atjehnese were attacked.

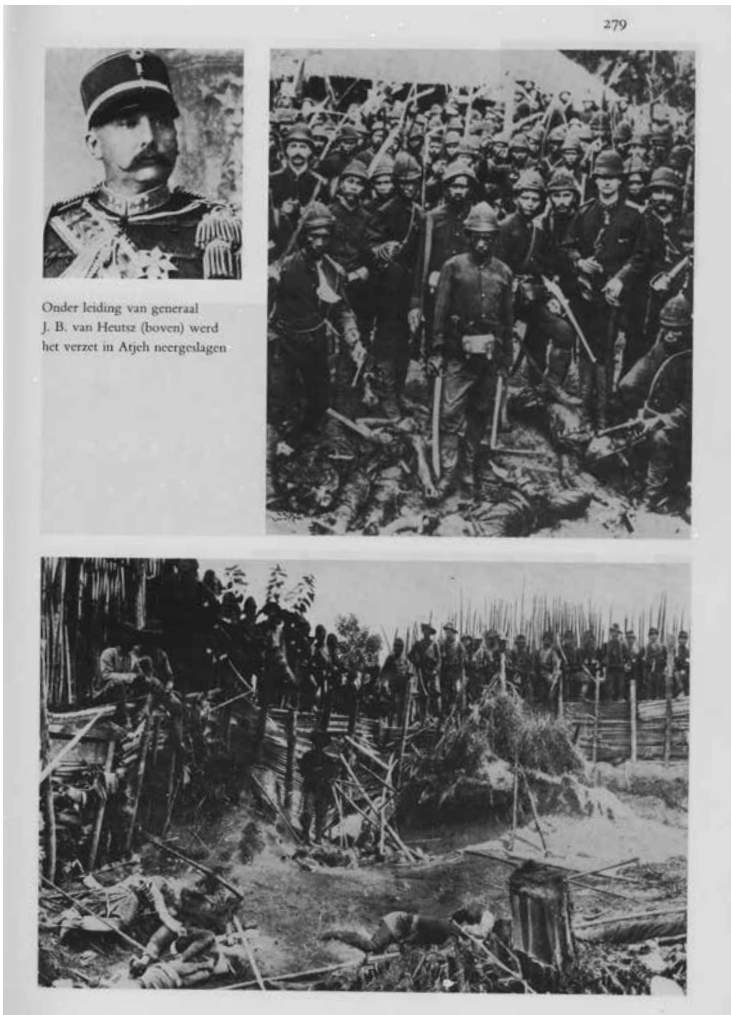


Figure 3.6. L. de Jong. *De bezetting*: tekst en beeldmateriaal van de uitzendingen van de Nederlandse Televisie-Stichting over het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog, 1940-1945. Amsterdam: Querido, 1966. University of Amsterdam Library.

We see KR₃ and PD. The camera moves along this latter photograph at the level of the soldiers; we do not see the dead at their feet, but they do appear in the book. KR₃, on the other hand, is broadcast in full and therefore includes the bodies of Atjehnese lying on the ground. In the book, the two photographs of the army in Atjeh are on one page, together with the portrait of Van Heutsz (Figure 3.6). The caption there reads: “Under the supervision of general J. B. van Heutz... the resistance in Atjeh was struck down” (279).

Another shift then occurs as De Jong introduces the heroes of this chapter: the men who tried to give the Indonesians better lives. He says: “However, development did not halt. Against the belief that it was a matter of course that you exploited a colony in the first place for the benefit of the motherland, protests were raised” (278). He mentions the novel *Max Havelaar* by Multatuli, a “cry from the heart” for the poor Javanese. Saying that it found thousands of readers in the Netherlands, De Jong implicitly suggests that the Dutch were actually against colonial exploitation. He mentions several ethicists who protested against colonial exploitation and shows a portrait picture of each of them. “And with this,” De Jong proclaims, “we entered the new century.”

The main characteristic of the period 1900-1940 in the Indies, De Jong holds, was “the progressive penetration of Western companies and lifestyles in the *Indische* society, which was mainly untouched by modern times”. While an orchestra of brass and violins plays uplifting music, the broadcast then shows a number of film fragments in which Indonesians work in the sugar and tea industries, laborious and smiling. Tobacco, oil, petrol, and rubber are exported from a country where for both the Dutch and the Indonesians the circumstances might sometimes have been primitive, De Jong argues, and where workers and employers had different interests, but where the government would also always smooth things over and negotiate between the various parties. The Indies, we are told, were transformed into a modern society with a modern industrial landscape and infrastructure:

Until the Japanese time, the construction of the modern Indies was mainly established under supervision of Dutch people, and many were deeply attached to that beautiful country. (283)

On top of creating new industries, the Dutch also put a stop to wars between the Indonesians, met with disasters such as bad harvests and inundations, fought deadly diseases “down to the smallest *desas*”, built irrigation systems, and transferred Western knowledge through education. All in all, De Jong concludes:

What the administrative machinery achieved in only a few decades, also to the benefit of the Indonesian population, compares favorably with what happened in other colonially administered countries. (284-7)

The successes of the Dutch, however, turned against them: because of the containment of epidemics, the population was growing so fast that the Dutch were not able to relieve all the symptoms of poverty, including high infant mortality and very low wages.

It was inevitable that the Indonesians, maybe primarily the younger among them, started comparing the circumstances of their own, traditional life with those of the so much more prosperous European upper layer. (287)

It is from this point onwards that De Jong makes another turn and starts addressing the wish of many Indonesians to become independent. What follows is a short account of the rise of Indonesian nationalism, and the negative response to it by all Dutch except those from the left (among whom De Jong included himself). Then follows the second half of the episode on the Japanese war threat.

De Jong offers a mixed account of Dutch colonialism. The 1904 photograph, which is not given a date in the television series, functions as an icon for its low point, namely the nineteenth century with its exploitation and violent suppression. The rest of De Jong's story of Dutch colonialism chronicles how a few good men and later on many teachers and doctors tried to help the population of the Indies from about 1900 onwards, but that despite all these good intentions the Indonesians still wanted only one thing: independence.

What is the position of the 1904 photograph in the book as a whole? The eight hundred pages of *The Occupation* are divided into twenty-one chapters, starting with "The Rise of National Socialism and the May Days of 1940" and ending with "The Liberation". In between are three chapters on the Dutch East Indies.¹⁴⁹ The book has many images, showing among many other subjects the bombing of Rotterdam, the systematic exclusion of and terror against the Dutch Jews and their deportation to the concentration camps, the allied forces fighting their way through Europe, and the hunger winter in the north of the Netherlands in 1944-45. The text is larded with short, first-person narratives by eyewitnesses who were interviewed

149 These are chapter VII "The Dutch East Indies Threatened", chapter VIII "The struggle in the Indies", and chapter XVI "The Dutch East Indies under Japanese Occupation".

especially for the project, all of whom have a portrait image in the book. On camera, “ordinary” people like Mrs. W. M. Sneevliet-Draayer explain how she and her comrades procured paper for their illegal newspaper (441); W. B. Vreugdenhil recalls how he arranged a work space for the resistance to make illegal documents (572); and A. M. Noppen tells how he was able to stop Nazi troops from shooting his employees who were on strike (170-1). While collaborators are anonymized, of all these heroic witnesses and of many others who did good deeds but did not survive, portraits are shown.

If we compare the forms used in chapter VII with those used in the rest of the book, a pattern emerges in which certain categories of people are given a name, a face, and often also a voice. There was, for instance, also a witness in chapter VII who told his story: Christiaan Nooteboom, an anthropologist and a Dutch civil servant in the Indies. He tells the viewer about a conversation he once had with an Indonesian leader from South Celebes (Sulawesi) who told him he preferred Dutch rule over English and certainly over Japanese, but who also said that

all Indonesians who were honest towards themselves and their brothers and sisters in their hearts desired nothing but to be liberated from foreign authority. They wanted to be themselves under Indonesian leadership. (288)

This neatly follows the main structure of the chapter, which shows that the Dutch did a lot of good but that nevertheless the colonization of the Indies was wrong. Van Vree (1995) comments on De Jong’s positioning of the witnesses:

... like [an] epic singer De Jong is constantly in the foreground to narrate the events; nobody can open his mouth if he has not first given him the floor. The “monological linguistic attitude” implies a fundamental inequality between narrator and witness: the hundred and sixty-nine men and women who are staged in *The Occupation* seldom express their own standpoint or perspective.

The technique of showing heroes and anonymizing anti-heroes also becomes visible in the other portraits in chapter VII, of which only two are of people who, according to De Jong, played a less benign role in the Indies (Van Heutsz and the conservative Prime Minister Hendrik Colijn), and nine either of Dutch people who fought for the rights of Indonesians (Multatuli, Van Deventer, Van Kol, Kuypers, Idenburg, and J. P. graaf van Limburg Stirum, a progressive governor-general of the Indies) or of Indonesians who fought

for independence (Sukarno, Hatta, and Sutan Sjahrir).¹⁵⁰ Through its formal structure and visualizations, the book thus facilitates connections between anti-national socialist and anti-colonial positions.

This constellation also returns in the framing of the 1904 photograph. It is, first of all, positioned opposite the portrait of one of the anti-heroes of chapter VII who is named: Van Heutsz. Secondly, if we reread its caption, we see an important code word which in the whole of the book denotes goodness beyond any doubt, namely “resistance”. I am not arguing that De Jong positions German Nazism and Dutch colonialism as essentially the same thing. The word “resistance” that describes the Atjehnese in chapter VII, for instance, does not have the connotation of an organized movement that works underground but instead means “opposition”, or even more basically the physical defense against an enemy force. What happens, rather, is that in the narrative structure of *The Occupation*, the two end up in positions that facilitate multidirectional connections between them. In the other two chapters on the Indies, however, the constellation is completely different, as there it is the Dutch who are the victims, importantly of Japanese cruelties. According to Van Vree (1999), these chapters strongly emphasize Dutch heroism and suffering and marginalize the Indonesians, so that the Second World War in the Indies became a purely Dutch affair. Chapter VII on the Indies was certainly the most critical of the three.

The Atjeh Photographs and Images of Historical Atrocity

In addition to these affinities, the book also facilitates connections between the 1904 photographs and photographs of the dead in the Nazi concentration camps. *The Occupation* has several of the latter, made in 1945 when the camps were found by the allied forces, in chapter XV entitled “The Prisons and Concentration Camps”. Half of this chapter is on Nazi prisons in the Netherlands, and half on the Nazi concentration camps in Eastern Europe. The photographs are not framed within the context of the Holocaust, as this frame was not yet available at the time, and the victims are not identified as Jews.

After the early 1960s, the remembrance of Nazi atrocities changed considerably. According to Van Vree and Rob van der Laarse (2009: 7), the Second World War in the Netherlands as well as in many other countries was primarily remembered as a *national* event in the first decades after 1945. Sacrifice, heroism, and national honor were central themes. In the

150 Later in the book, De Jong is very critical of Sukarno's role during the Japanese occupation.

Netherlands, little attention was paid to the fate of the Dutch Jews (75% of the 140,000 Jews in the Netherlands in 1939 did not survive the war), while a 1962 monument in Amsterdam talked about how they “fell” (this text was later removed). In the course of the 1960s this changed, as the acknowledgement of victimhood (particularly of Jews, later on also of Romani, people with a disability, homosexuals, and other groups) took a central position in the remembrance. These days, according to Van Vree, “the Second World War, primarily in Western Europe, has not been remembered for decades as a source of national pride and optimism, but as a period of horror *which for that reason alone may not be forgotten*” (ibid: 22). From the 1960s onwards, the nationalist and ideological representations, in which unity and continuity were the most important themes, were replaced by an emphasis on diversity. Auschwitz became the central symbol and came to be seen as an irreparable rupture in history (ibid: 33-4). The motive of guilt (of Dutch people actively helping the Nazis, or doing nothing to stop them) replaced the motives of resistance and solidarity. After the early 1960s, the whole idea of the Holocaust as a defining event was also conceived. According to Van Vree, it was the American miniseries *Holocaust* from 1978 that achieved

what uncountable, scholarly solid works, school books and documentaries had not been able to bring about. Regarding this, the fact speaks volumes that the term “Holocaust”, which was as good as unknown before 1978 outside the English-speaking language area, since then has become accepted everywhere. (35)

According to Barbie Zelizer in her book on Holocaust photography in the United States and Britain,

[t]hree waves of memory work made the Nazi atrocities rise and fall in the public imagination over time: an initial period of high attention persisted until the end of the forties; it was followed by a bracketed period of amnesia that lingered from the end of the forties until the end of the seventies; and that was followed in turn by a renewed period of intensive memory work that has persisted from the end of the seventies until the present day. (1998: 142)¹⁵¹

151 While in Zelizer’s account on Britain and the US, the period of silence only ended at the end of the 1970s, in the Netherlands, as Frank van Vree and others have shown, it had already ended during the 1960s.

In this third wave, photographs, especially of World War II brutality, became more and more central to cultural memory.

In a study on how the Algerian War was perceived in the Netherlands, Niek Pas has written that the Second World War provided a normative frame of reference around 1960, a great epic. Those on the left, such as the Dutch Communist Party, the Pacifist-Socialist Party, trotskysts, and anarchists, told an anti-fascist and anti-colonial tale about the Second World War. Ideas about the “lesson of Auschwitz” for Western modernity were absent. The Algerian War was told within the parameters of good and evil as a story of occupation and liberation, persecution and resistance: “The universe of Germany and the Netherlands from the period between 1940 and 1945 was detached from its original context and connected to the French-Algerian relation” (2008: 155). That no connections were made with the Dutch colonial period was an effect of compartmentalization: a French colonial war was not a Dutch one.

What becomes clear in chapter XV is that, for De Jong, the Second World War and the Nazi atrocities were a version of a universal epic from which universal lessons could be drawn. About halfway through the chapter, there is a set of images that illustrates two sections called “Cruelty In History” and “People Against People”. These sections start with the statement that “[t]hroughout the history of the human race on earth runs as a leitmotiv the horrors that people have committed against people” (617). In the broadcast, De Jong is talking with a slow, lofty, and soft voice, sometimes stressing certain words *fortissimo* to show indignation. The examples given are the Massacre of the Innocents in Bethlehem, the killing of Christians in Roman arenas, the killing of Jews in the diaspora in the Middle Ages, the Spanish inquisition, slave trade by Europeans (“also Dutch people”), terror against the Spanish by the French under Napoleon, English concentration camps in the Boer wars in South Africa, the systematic extermination of one million Armenians by the Turks, and the millions of Russians killed under communism.¹⁵² The common ground between the victims in the fifteen photographs and drawings shown in the book and the broadcast is that they are framed as civilians, not as soldiers: children, Christians, Jews,

¹⁵² The images in the book are captioned “Jew pogrom in the Middle Ages”; “woman and child in a concentration camp in South Africa during the Boer War”; “torture of Spanish farmer by soldiers of Napoleon (Goya)”; “group of slaves”; “bodies of Armenians murdered by the Turks (1915)”. In the broadcast, supported by grave harp music, were also shown Brueghel’s *Massacre of the Innocents* (on the biblical story of infanticide by King Herod), Jean-Léon Gérôme’s *The Christian Martyrs’ Last Prayer*, several drawings of galleys with chained prisoners, another drawing by Goya of French soldiers in Spain, a drawing of British soldiers dispelling Boer women and children in South Africa, and a photograph of a Soviet concentration camp.

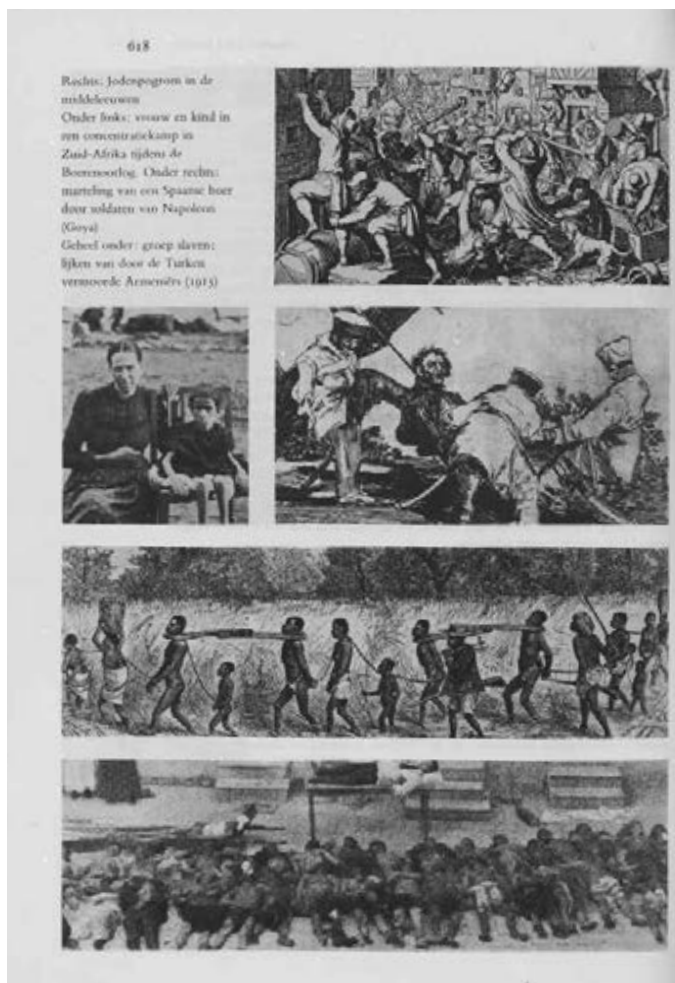


Figure 3.7. L. de Jong. *De bezetting: tekst en beeldmateriaal van de uitzendingen van de Nederlandse Televisie-Stichting over het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog, 1940-1945*. Amsterdam: Querido, 1966. 618. University of Amsterdam Library.

Africans, Spanish farmers, Armenians, they are all shown here as unarmed and helpless (Figure 3.7).

Through these images and De Jong's summoning of the figure of the human race, the photographs of Nazi concentration camps are placed in a universal framework and dehistoricized. The book hereby accords the Nazi killings a special position that is almost outside the scope of this historical account of what happened in the Netherlands in the years 1940-45. De Jong seems to have noticed this himself, as he notes at the beginning of the chapter:

Of course, I have also posed myself the question: is it necessary to devote a separate programme to the suffering of our fellow countrymen in Nazi imprisonment and especially in the concentration camps? And I want to tell you in a few words why that question is answered in the affirmative. (601)

The reasons De Jong then gives are that terror was an essential characteristic of National Socialism, that more than 100,000 Dutch people were killed in concentration camps, and that there was a need to make clear what the survivors – “many thousands amongst us” – went through. In the end, the mass killings by the Nazis have a rather ambiguous position in the book: though it devotes two whole chapters to the persecution of Jews, it hardly addresses their mass destruction; it doubts whether the concentration camps are important enough to warrant a separate chapter, yet it places them among the sites where the great massacres of history took place; and finally it accords them a supra-historical meaning, giving them an exceptional position in an otherwise historical account.

Although photographs of atrocity from Dutch colonial history in the Indies are not taken up in chapter XV, they and the images from the concentration camps nevertheless start resonating with each other, especially due to the presence of the section “Cruelty in History”. Above, it was shown how the structure of the book produced subject positions for heroes (e.g. Dutch ethicists and Indonesian nationalists) and villains (e.g. German occupiers or Dutch warmongers in the Indies). Yet through the parade of images in “People Against People”, an even stronger affinity is brought to the fore, namely that both types of images show large numbers of people killed. In the book, they are the only images that depict such scenes of atrocity. As I mentioned earlier, PD was printed together with the 1904 photograph. In it, dozens of KNIL soldiers with drawn swords pose for the camera with the bodies of dead Atjehnese at their feet. To the right, a soldier has placed his foot on the belly of what appears to be a very young boy. Nowhere does De Jong claim that these two groups of photographs show the same things, yet in bringing them together in one book and in comparable positions within the overall narrative, questions about their relationship are nevertheless raised.

In *Multidirectional Memory*, Rothberg notes that:

early Holocaust memory emerged in dialogue with the dynamic transformations and multifaceted struggles that defined the era of decolonization. The period between 1942 and 1962 contains both the rise of consciousness of the Holocaust as an unprecedented form of modern genocide and the

coming to national consciousness and political independence of many of the subjects of European colonialism. (7)

This emphasis on the “rhetorical and cultural *intimacy* of seemingly opposed traditions of remembrance” (7) directs our attention towards an absence in De Jong’s book: the decolonization of the Indies. The last words on Indonesia in his book are “Proclamation Indonesia Merdeka – Indonesia free” (660), while his last words on the Indies are to ask for “understanding for what all who later came to us from the Indies endured” (660) (he meant the 300,000 postcolonial migrants from the Indies, particularly those who had been imprisoned by the Japanese). Still, as was shown above, colonialism was a topic critically debated in *The Occupation* – one that silently but inevitably carried decolonization along with it. In the 1980s, in the volumes on the Dutch East Indies from his seminal work *The Kingdom of the Netherlands during the Second World War*, De Jong did pay extensive attention to decolonization while being much more explicitly critical of the Dutch colonial regime and the Dutch-Indonesian Wars of the late 1940s. Concerning *The Kingdom*, many readers felt that De Jong drew parallels between colonialism, decolonization, and the Nazi crimes in Europe to an excessive degree. I will return to this in chapter 4.

Conclusion

De Jong was the first author to take up one of the 1904 photographs in a larger historical narrative, namely of the history of the Dutch East Indies and of the Netherlands during the Second World War. The reframing of the photograph of Koetö Réh by De Jong removed it from the particular compartment it was placed in by *tempo doeloe* culture: it was no longer only part of the native but also of the European world in the Indies, and even of the history of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The photograph was, moreover, transformed into an icon for a particular phase in the history of Dutch colonialism. Whereas in Nieuwenhuys’s book, the opening of the Suez canal, for instance, was important for the transportation of families to their houses in Batavia, in De Jong’s work it is directly connected to modernity and imperialism. De Jong was certainly not the first one to distinguish a phase in Dutch colonial history in which the outer territories were subjugated, but he was the first to visually represent this phase using two photographs of atrocity, together with a portrait photograph of Van Heutsz. De Jong’s narrative was, moreover, critical of Dutch history in the

Indies, sometimes even opposed to it, and made an effort to look at Dutch colonialism from the other side of the colonial divide. A phrase about the Atjehnese such as “people were strongly averse to foreign oppression”, for instance, makes the Gajos the focalizers in the 1904 photograph. Secondly, the Atjeh photographs, because of their position in the book, were opened up as sites of multidirectional memory: they cross-referenced other moments of mass violence in European history, and they cross-referenced Dutch resistance against the Nazis.

The third thing De Jong’s broadcasts achieved was that they produced the nation of the Netherlands as an imagined mnemonic community for the photographs. Not only were viewers interpellated as citizens of the Dutch nation, due to the popularity of *The Occupation* everybody seeing the photograph *knew that everybody else was seeing it as well*. And the next day at work, *everybody had seen it*. What De Jong achieved, in short, was that the imagined mnemonic community of the Netherlands at least for one moment saw the 1904 massacres through the eyes of the Atjehnese (that is, of course, the Atjehnese as characters in De Jong’s possible world and narrative). By selecting KR3, moreover, he facilitated the convergence of Dutch postcolonial memory on this specific image and invested it with critical meanings.

At the heart of tempo doeloe culture and Dutch national history of the Second World War, the Atjeh photographs proved to be inevitable documents. In neither case is it possible to say that colonial violence was forgotten in the sense that it was erased without a trace: it remained at least *oubli de réserve*. Looking at tempo doeloe culture in particular, the 1904 photographs were truly “present absences”: absent from the main story that was conveyed and yet present in the margins, like the ghosts and skeletons in Albert Hahn’s drawings. The fact that these photographs of atrocity appeared in a different compartment than those of European luxury life shows the aphasiac condition produced by the nostalgic distribution of the perceptible in which the Gajo and Alas dead were not recognizable as part of the same story. Tempo doeloe culture, one could say, suffers from what Jakobson calls a “contiguity disorder”: an impairment “to combine simpler linguistic entities into more complex units” (1971b: 251). Here the two entities are aspects of the memory of the Indies which are both present but prove unable to be subjected to grammatical coordination and subordination. This might also be an explanation for the many moments of reflexivity in tempo doeloe culture: they may in fact be induced by discomfort about the rosy pictures that are sometimes painted and implicitly ask whether certain aspects of the colonial past have not been skipped over. Irony and

reflexivity reveal a photograph's *passe-partout* – the space between the photograph and the frames that semanticize it – and question its meanings.

While the book *Tempo Doeloe* can be viewed as a word heap consisting of yet-to-be-combined units, *The Occupation* laid the groundwork for connections that were highly uncomfortable but that would be made in increasing numbers from the second half of the 1960s onwards, as will be discussed in the next chapter. *The Occupation* made possible the connection of histories that had precisely been kept separate in other contexts. It is this coming together of compartmentalized and multidirectional memory that we can see as essential for what in this study is called “emerging memory”: representations of the past that are periodically rediscovered only to submerge again. In the wake of De Jong's work, many critics of Dutch colonial memory have sought to connect the Atjeh photographs and other documents of colonial atrocity to larger histories, particularly Dutch national history. These photographs, they held, should be part of imagetexts relating the story of not only a number of massacred Sumatran villages but also of the Netherlands in the twentieth century. Framing them as “forgotten”, they aimed to sway public opinion by producing revelations. What these critics underestimated, however, was the power of compartmentalization. Making these photographs available – revealing them – was not the issue. This had, in fact, never been a problem, as the army had eagerly distributed these pictures the moment they had been made. The difficulty lay in the fact that people do not only need to see things to believe them but also need to believe things to see them.

4 Emerging memory, 1966-2010

This last chapter discusses the position of the Atjeh photographs since the second half of the 1960s, when the Atjeh War was increasingly connected to larger and other episodes of violence in Western modernity, including imperialism, the Holocaust, and the Vietnam War. It was specifically KR₃ and KR₂ that played a role in these debates, the first being reprinted in a new history of the Atjeh War by Paul van 't Veer published in 1969, and the second appearing in an episode of the critical television series *Indisch ABC* broadcast in 1969-1970. These moments will be discussed in the first part of this chapter. In the second part, I discuss four cases since 1970 that show the continued dialectic between multidirectional and compartmentalized memory in Dutch colonial memory: the 1976 feature film *Max Havelaar*, which has a scene based on KR₃; the debate in the 1980s over the meaning of KR₃ in Loe de Jong's 29-volume *The Kingdom of the Netherlands in the Second World War*; and the roles of KR₃ and KL₂ in a 2007 debate on the Dutch contribution to the War on Terror in Afghanistan.

In all these cases, questions were asked as to what the Atjeh photographs meant: in terms of Dutch colonial history, in terms of Dutch national history, and in terms of the relation of these histories to other histories of violence perpetrated by Western powers in the twentieth century. The photographs again and again functioned as indictments through which attempts were made to integrate the violence they depicted in Dutch cultural memory. However, they did not escape their paradoxical position of being simultaneously icons of memory and forgetting: again and again, critics apparently experienced these images as absent from the public sphere and wanted to expose these and other documents, turning them into emerging memories which kept on haunting an aphasiac nation that could not find the right vocabulary to semanticize them.

In order to further explain this simultaneity of memory and forgetting, I would like to introduce the concept of memorability. Memorability can be defined as the degree to which a past is memorable, easy to remember. By introducing a notion of gradation, we are already moving away from the either/or of memory/forgetting. Moreover, I specifically want to link the notion of memorability to Judith Butler's discussion of the concept of recognizability, which in her words "characterizes the more general conditions that prepare or shape a subject for recognition" (2009: 5). As recognizability precedes or makes possible the act of recognition, memorability facilitates the act of remembrance (see also Bijl 2012).

I will argue in this chapter that in the period described, there was a group of critical voices in the Netherlands that wished to give colonial violence a prominent and structural position in Dutch cultural memory but failed to convince the nation that this should be the case. This failure can be attributed to compartmentalization – most importantly of national and colonial history but also of tempo doeloe and imperial history – which made it impossible for this violence to become memorable within a national framework. As we have seen in previous chapters, such voices were there from the moment the photographs had been made, but in the period described in this chapter their number and audibility grew. Just like in the previous periods, the perceptible order of the photographs continued to clash with ethical and nostalgic distributions of the perceptible, both of which were still active in Dutch society. What changed, however, is that anxious responses (e.g. from De Stuers) and compartmentalizing responses (e.g. from Nieuwenhuys) were increasingly matched by the type of response once offered by Troelstra, in which documents of colonial violence were produced as icons of the nation. In the anti-authoritarian and anti-colonial distribution of the perceptible as it emerged in the second half of the 1960s in the Netherlands, the Atjeh photographs were not experienced as disturbances by certain observers but as confirmations of everything they believed was wrong with the Netherlands and the rest of the Western world.

The Atjeh Photographs and the Violence of Western Modernity

In the third edition of the magazine *Provo* of 22 September 1965, an article highlighted the placing earlier that year of a sign at the statue of Van Heutsz in his birthplace Coevorden, in the east of the Netherlands, which said:

Passed away below the swastika, killed while massacring the 39th Atjehese village, while raping the 79th Atjehese woman, to found anew the shocked confidence of the Dutch East Indies government. (Van Lenthe 1965: 15)¹⁵³

The protesters had given Van Heutsz's statue the nickname "The Darling of Coevorden". The daughter of Van Heutsz, living in Coevorden, filed a

153 The Dutch original reads: *Ontslapen onder het hakenkruis, gesneuveld bij het uitmoorden van het 39ste Atjehse dorp, bij het verkrachten van de 79ste Atjehse vrouw, om het geschokte vertrouwen van het Nederlands-Indische bestuur opnieuw te funderen.*

complaint against the two boys who had placed the sign. They were fined fifty guilders each.

Van Heutsz, after a period of critique (see chapter 2), had been an honored yet also controversial figure in Dutch cultural remembrance.¹⁵⁴ When he died in 1924, prominent figures had written hagiographic articles on him. Colijn, Van Heutsz's former right-hand man in Atjeh and Prime Minister in the mid-1920s and the 1930s, wrote in his article "General van Heutsz – *Créateur de Valeurs*" that Van Heutsz should be seen as the finisher of the colonial work that Jan Pieterszoon Coen had started in the seventeenth century. A committee of honor was established which was supposed to arrange a number of memorials to keep his memory alive, especially against the background of the rise of Indonesian nationalism and in line with the generally conservative response to this on the part of the Dutch. A state portrait was made; a PhD thesis was written showing that Van Heutsz had done the right thing (Van Hulstijn 1926); and an impressive mausoleum in Amsterdam and two monuments were built for him: one in Batavia (1932) and one in Amsterdam (1935). At the same time, there were also critical voices. In 1927, following the reburial of Van Heutsz's remains in Amsterdam that included a long procession, buzzing airplanes, and salutes, communist leader Louis de Jong called him a mass murderer, while some considered the procession to be "the first Dutch-fascist display of power" (Coenen 1956: 548). When the monument in Amsterdam was unveiled, protesters were present with a banner that said "Van Heutsz's commemoration is bloody colonial suppression". Marieke Bloembergen (2005: 76) has shown how the worship of Van Heutsz took place in the midst of worries about the colony, where economic stagnation and the rise of Indonesian nationalism had engendered a conservative turn. The form of the monument in Amsterdam was a compromise: its central figure was not a heroic man, as the right would have liked, but a strong woman (the Dutch virgin) with two lions.¹⁵⁵

Alard van Lenthe, one of the boys who had connected Van Heutsz to the most iconic symbol of National Socialism by placing a sign with the word "swastika" at his statue, declared that he saw the statue as "an insult to the moral conscience of the Dutch people and a posthumous slander of the repressed, killed, and physically – but most of all mentally – raped Indonesians". He said that he did not want to protest against Van Heutsz or his daughter

154 The information in this section derives from Witte 1976 and Van Geemert 2007.

155 On the design history of the monument, see Koopmans 1986.

but against a certain mentality. Against honoring military violence, against paying tribute to crimes such as the killing of people who want to be free. Against nationalist feelings, against theories of race and race discrimination. Against fascism, to use a dirty word. The purpose of the action “The Darling of Coevorden” was: to denounce the fascism in people from 1965, to expose it. (1965: 16)

In the rest of his statement, Van Lenthe addresses many things that according to him people do not see but that he finds disturbing, such as air pollution, atomic tests, money spent on armaments and space travel (rather than on developing countries), dictatorships in Spain and Portugal, Western imperialist politics that led to many international conflicts, bombings in Vietnam, and hunger. “Just like everyone around 1900 in the Dutch East Indies let the people of Atjeh and Lombok be killed. *‘Wir haben es nicht gewusst.’* People did not want to know”. The comparison between the Nazis and Dutch colonialism is elaborated upon several times:

These days one is permitted (after 5 years of war and 6 million gassed Jews) to say that the Nazi leaders were psychopaths and criminals. Despite the daughters that are hurt. [This is a reference to Van Heutsz’s daughter, who filed a complaint against the boys.] It should these days (after so many years of colonialism and so many millions of dead Indonesians) also be permissible to say that many of the Dutch occupiers in the Indies were also war criminals. (ibid: 17)

Yet his main point was that people like Hitler and Van Heutsz were the outcomes of a culture: “They were both a personification of a certain Western-European fascist mentality”. This is a far cry from the compartmentalization of history: Van Lenthe here deftly connects a myriad of episodes of Western violence to each other, thereby turning Van Heutsz’s statue into a site of multidirectional memory. Yet there is another conclusion to be drawn: Van Lenthe, like De Stuers, analyzed the *passé-partout* of Dutch colonial memory: the conditions under which it established itself. He distinguished the permissible from the inadmissible and used a “dirty word” like “fascism” to disturb the Dutch authorities. Like Albert Hahn, he fought against the cultural aphasia of the “East Indies blind” – those who “did not want to know” and who “did not see”.

“The Darling of Coevorden”, an act of protest that Van Lenthe carried out together with Relus ter Beek (who was later to become Minister of Defense), should be seen in the context of the rise of a politicized, leftist-anarchist youth movement that protested against the fundamentals of Dutch (and

Western) society. This culminated in the so-called Provo movement of 1965-7, characterized by the historian Hans Righart as having “no real political program, but being a kind of mixture of satire, actionism, and utopianism... [I]t was a cultural countermovement, in which artistic resistance paired itself to... more politically formulated protest” (1995: 29). The Provo movement was inclined towards “leftist radicalism and tied in with a renewed pacifist sentiment and an older anarchist tradition” (201). What it did best was provoke the authorities. When their banners were forbidden, the Provos (as followers of the movement were called) made new ones saying “Freedom of Expression”, “Democracy” and “The Right to Demonstrate”, and when those were forbidden as well, they protested with blank banners. They had weekly happenings, most often at the Amsterdam Spui square at a statue called “The Darling” (“Het Lieverdje”), hence the nickname for Van Heutsz’s statue. They spread false rumors that they would give sugar cubes with LSD to police horses. When Princess Beatrix married the German Claus von Amsberg on 10 March 1966, Provos made references to the Second World War, the German occupation of the Netherlands, and the Holocaust, exploded several smoke bombs, and threw a white chicken – the Provos’s symbol for a new, friendly type of police officer who was more like a social worker – in front of the golden royal carriage (219).

In 1965, Provo orchestrated three happenings at the Van Heutsz monument in the south of Amsterdam, the first of which took place on 4 September (see Van Duyn 1985: 53). On 11 September 1965, the words “Provo” and “Image” were painted in big white letters on the monument, indicating the group’s awareness of the importance of both reality and its representations, and Provos went into the water of the monument’s basin. Several of the bronze letters were torn off the monument (ibid: 54; Figure 4.1). According to Niek Pas (2003: 136), the Provo movement used the non-violent marking of symbolic locations to turn against the mentality of “an order is an order” and the imperialism of Van Heutsz and other authoritative figures, such as the mayor of Amsterdam, Gijs van Hall. Provo Roel van Duijn wrote in 1967: “After three happenings, we had enough of Van Heutsz. His bombastic monument till this day throws its fascist stains on ‘red’ Amsterdam. How much longer will this still be the case?”

Through these happenings, a *lieu de mémoire* of Dutch colonialism was transformed and appropriated by its critics, though not by resemanticizing it but by making it the center of a seemingly meaningless event. It is precisely this absence of meaning which made these happenings so provocative, just like the empty banners. The Provos undermined Van Heutsz not with opposing arguments but with exactly nothing. Their reframing did not expose the monument’s *passe-partout* – rather, the only thing it left standing *was*



Figure 4.1. Sel Vreeland. Happening at Van Heutsz Monument, 1965. Photograph. International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam, inv. no. BG B27/273.

the passe-partout: the spaces between the letters and the air in which the performance took place.

On 10 March 1967, one year after the wedding of Beatrix and Claus, a bomb exploded at the monument, damaging it slightly. According to a newspaper report, someone who identified himself as the “revolutionary council” had informed the police that the monument would blow up sky-high. In the early 2000s, one of the bombers, who remained anonymous, was interviewed for a website called *The Widow of the Indies*. About the date they chose for the bombing, he felt that “there was a connection between the colonial period of the Netherlands and the royal family”.¹⁵⁶ He felt guilty for all the

¹⁵⁶ “Vraaggesprek met dader bomaanslag '67.” www.antenna.nl/~fwillems/nl/ic/vp/atjeh/heutsz/index.html.

misery in the world, and his parents had told him that if you did nothing you were an accessory to evil. What he felt particularly bad about was that, in his opinion, the Netherlands had done nothing for Indonesia after the independence of the Republic but that it had embraced the new regime of Suharto in 1965-66 during which hundreds of thousands of communists (and nationalists of Sukarno's PNI) had been massacred. He was a pacifist and against personal violence – “of course because of my aversion to war, being in the shadow of the last one” – and therefore thought “damaging a symbol from the colonial past with a symbolic act of violence a good way to make clear my rejection of the Dutch standpoint and anyway, I had to do *something!* (or be an accessory)”. In prison for ten months, he read all of Dostoevsky's work and later participated in student protests, demonstrations in Berlin against the war in Vietnam, and the Maoist Red Youth movement. Another bomber, who had sent a letter to *The Widow of the Indies* and also remained anonymous, had previously been active in Sinn Fein as secretary of the Roger Casement Commemoration Committee to raise funds internationally. When he came to Amsterdam, he “changed in a few minutes from Irish nationalist into an anarchist. Not that difficult, seeing my prehistory in semi-illegality”.¹⁵⁷ He says he was “betrayed” (a word ethically charged by the Second World War) by a Provo from The Hague. The police asked him if he actually knew anything about Van Heutsz, to which he had answered: “Yes of course. It would be naive to think I would do such a thing for no reason at all. Already then I was very anti-monarchist and strongly anti-colonialist”. He again refers to WWII when he says he was locked up “*in einzelhaft*”. After his release, he remembers that he was “collected by a frantic crowd of people. I remembered I was carried in the air for hundreds of meters before I again touched the pavestones”.

These statements make clear that, like Van Lenthe, the bombers saw protesting against Van Heutsz as a deed of anti-imperialism, anti-authoritarianism, anti-Nazism, anarchism, and pacifism. These protesters moved with ease from cause to cause, organization to organization, and country to country, while semantically they brought all their struggles together, for instance by applying German words and symbols connoting the Second World War to Dutch colonialism or their own treatment by the Dutch authorities. Do Hitler and Van Heutsz belong to the same frames of remembrance, or to different ones? The difference here is between multidirectional and compartmentalized memory. As can be seen from

¹⁵⁷ “Brief van mededader bomaanslag '67.” www.antenna.nl/~fwillems/nl/ic/vp/atjeh/heutsz/index.html.

the story of the impassioned reception of the bomber upon his release from prison, this was a struggle over which mnemonic community would win the battle over semanticization.

The Third World, Vietnam, and the Colonial Past

Simultaneously, and related to the rise of this anarchist youth movement, the 1960s also saw the rise of the Third World movement, parts of which were strongly interconnected with the critique of the West from the left. According to historian Maarten Kuitenbrouwer,

The start of Dutch developmental aid and the rise of a political, intellectual, and humanitarian interest for the new states in Asia and Africa was directly influenced by the decolonization of Indonesia. (1994: 24)

The first steps towards a policy for less-developed countries had already been taken in 1949 as part of a UN program. The Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs Dirk Stikker had said in 1950: “Now that Indonesia will decline as an area of export for Dutch intellect, we will have to search for a field of activity in other regions, such as Africa, Latin America and Asia” (quoted in Kuitenbrouwer 1994: 31). Kuitenbrouwer also points out the continuities between colonial ethical policy and postcolonial Third Worldism: both aimed to lift up the population of the colony or Third World country. The strong Dutch Third World movement also had roots in the extraordinarily strong missionary tradition in the Netherlands.¹⁵⁸

The Dutch interest in the Third World, and especially in Indonesia,¹⁵⁹ was strongly connected to what political scientist Arend Lijphart (1966) had once called “the trauma of decolonization”. On the relationship between decolonization, the Third World movement, and the Vietnam War, journalist Paul van ’t Veer wrote:

Until recently, decolonization and emancipation were, for a broad public, self-evident priorities in our foreign policy. I suspect that the traumatic experiences with the decolonization of Indonesia have something to do

¹⁵⁸ On this tradition, see Van Vree 2005.

¹⁵⁹ Kuitenbrouwer writes that “[b]etween 1966 and 1983 more than 2.5 billion guilders in Dutch developmental aid were given to Indonesia, almost 10% of the total developmental aid in that period. Almost one billion existed in donations, the rest were loans against favorable conditions.” (46-7)

with this. The war in Vietnam has kept the traumas awake in the Netherlands, as can be seen from the sudden attention to the question what kind of war crimes the Netherlands may have committed in Indonesia in 1944-1950, when this case had become current in Vietnam. Concerning developmental aid and support for the liberation movements in Africa, the Netherlands could finally figure as a “guiding country” [*gidsland*, a metaphor for the Dutch self-image as an ethically leading nation]... Ethical and religious urgings (do not underestimate the influence of Protestant and Catholic mission in their modern, leftist-radical shapes) helped direct the ethical bent in Dutch politics, by definition strongly present, towards the new priorities of our foreign policy. Where a small country can be great. If it has enough money, of course. (1991: 203)

As indicated here, the Vietnam War played an important part in the Third World movement. According to Kuitenbrouwer, it had a “mobilizing and radicalizing effect” (64) on many people in the Netherlands. These were the days when the socialist publisher SUN published *What is Imperialism?* (1972); when books with titles such as *The Ideology of the West* (1969) by political scientist G. van Benthem van den Bergh discussed the links between imperialism, capitalism, underdevelopment, and the war in Vietnam; when the Roman Catholic archbishop of the Netherlands B. J. Alfrink sent a telegram to President Nixon to stop bombing Vietnam (1972); and when the chairman of the Dutch parliament called out “Nixon go, Nixon go home, Nixon walk to the moon!” With respect to Vietnam, protests began in 1964 with demonstrations by the Socialist Youth (SJ) at the American consulate in Amsterdam. Later, the Pacifist-Socialist Party, the ban-the-bomb movement, and the Provos would join in, and by 1970, CPN (Communist Party of the Netherlands), D66 (a liberal, direct-democracy party), PvdA (the Dutch social democratic party), KVP (the country’s main Catholic party) and ARP (the reformed Anti-Revolutionary Party, founded by Abraham Kuyper) all openly protested against the Vietnam War.

That struggles were easily seen through each other’s perspectives and phrased in each other’s terms becomes clear from historian Rimko van der Maar’s observation that

North Vietnam and the South Vietnamese revolutionaries developed into a symbol of successful resistance against Western imperialism. Young people identified with it and projected the success of the Vietnamese “freedom fighters” onto their own, domestic surroundings. So, for instance, the students who occupied the Maagdenhuis of the University

of Amsterdam [16-21 May 1969] called the bridge across which they were provisioned... the 'Ho Chi Minh Bridge' while one of them, [Ton] Regtien, compared the nightly fights on the bridge with the Amsterdam police with the struggle in Vietnam. (2007: 130-1)

Historian Hans Righart writes that in those days, young people were especially fascinated by

[the] heroics of the individual, the total refuser [*totaalweigeraar*], the city guerilla, the provoker, the brave David who takes on the anonymous force of the goliaths such as the state, the multinational or the military-industrial complex. (2004: 20)

What many popular philosophers at the time shared, according to Righart, was their critique of modernity, primarily when it came to the dehumanization by industrial capitalism: "Their charge was aimed against estrangement and robotization, manipulation and repression, against the fear caused by capitalist modernity" (22). It was within this atmosphere of anti-authoritarian protests and fundamental critique, yet also of continued paternalism, that the Atjeh photographs were resemanticized in the Netherlands. The direct context in which they reappeared was a national debate on Dutch colonial war crimes.

On 17 January 1969, a well-known moment in Dutch colonial memory occurred when Joop Hueting, a former soldier in the Dutch army in Indonesia, gave a television interview in which he addressed war crimes committed in the late 1940s during the Dutch-Indonesian wars. Hueting, revealed the following: "Kampongs were riddled by machine gun fire, prisoners were tortured in a horrible manner, there were revenge expeditions against the civilian population, and all this was without military necessity" (quoted in Scagliola 2002: 108). Reports of Dutch atrocities had already come out during the conflict itself, and several media had published on them. There had also been a debate in parliament at that time. One case had been extensively researched: that of the commando unit of captain Raymond Westerling in South Celebes. A government report from 1948 condoned Westerling's summary executions, while a later government report from 1954 was very critical. It was not, however, made public, and Westerling was never tried. Scagliola explains why Hueting's story was received as "news":

That the "old" news on the Dutch terror now came as a real bombshell is connected to the political climate at the end of the sixties. In the whole

of Western Europe, students were protesting and criticism was voiced against the war that the Americans were fighting in Vietnam... The Netherlands also turned out to have known a kind of "Vietnam". (108)

Hueting, who had told his story in a national newspaper one month earlier, had successfully used the medium of television to be heard. His story was followed by several other broadcasts in which veterans related what they had seen and done. This prompted the leader of the opposition, the social-democrat Joop den Uyl, to urge the government to investigate the allegations. The broadcasting station that had aired the Hueting interview, the VARA, received 885 letters on this matter, and national newspapers published 464 articles on the Hueting case in the first four weeks after the first interview (Stam and Manschot 1972). In June 1969, the government published a so-called *Memorandum of Excesses* but it did not pass judgment on the responsibility of the government.¹⁶⁰ Following De Stuers and Hahn in the early twentieth century, Hueting was the first of a new generation who uncovered facts that had been widely available. His interview was the first in a long string of postcolonial revelations about the Dutch colonial past.

Historian James Kennedy has noted that although eventually most politicians, including the Prime Minister, were forced to acknowledge that shameful things had happened, this did not result in any action. Neither the general public nor the political left felt the urge to pursue the Hueting affair further, and as a result, none of the accused, including Westerling, was ever prosecuted. "Towards the summer of 1969, the whole affair had sunk into oblivion" (1995: 73). Kennedy argued that the Dutch were not interested and that the colonial past had sunk away (he has fittingly entitled the section in which he discusses the Hueting case "The Colonial Past Far-away"). In an interview, historian Cees Fasseur argued that the memorandum, which he had largely compiled, did not receive much attention because its presentation coincided with news of the *Trinta di mei* riots in Curaçao. Yet a case like the Hueting one cannot be adequately explained with reference to the incidental, nor is "lack of interest" a sufficient explanation. Both the outburst of the debate and, more importantly, the subsequent disappearance of the issue from the public agenda were caused by distributions of the perceptible in which Dutch perpetratorship was not an available subject position.

¹⁶⁰ For a modern edition, see Bank 1995.

A New History of the Atjeh War

It was in this atmosphere of multidirectionality and recent debates on colonial war crimes that the 1904 photographs began reappearing, first of all in a historical study on the Atjeh War by journalist Paul van 't Veer which was published in mid-October 1969. In 1904, Dutch newspapers had printed regular articles on colonial violence all across the globe, and in 1969 violence in various countries which could easily be read in colonial terms was a topic widely reported on. Newspapers all through 1969, for instance, reported on the massacre of My Lai in Vietnam, the Black Panthers who feared they would be wiped out by the US government, the way German colonialism had cleared the way for the Nazis, and how "also France has a race problem".¹⁶¹ With respect to photography, the Vietnam War had yielded a number of iconic images, some of which could easily be interpreted as Western violence bordering on neocolonialism. Eddie Adams's *South Vietnam National Police Chief Nguyen Ngoc Loan Executes a Suspected Viet Cong Member* had won the World Press Photo award 1968, and was published in Dutch newspapers,¹⁶² while the photographs of the My Lai massacre came out at the end of June 1969, and were also widely published.¹⁶³

Van 't Veer's *The Atjeh War* provides an early example of the rise of publications on Dutch colonialism from the late 1960s onwards. Cees Fasseur has explained the pre-1969 silence in the Netherlands by pointing to a number of critical studies by non-Dutch scholars on the dismantling of the Dutch colonial empire.¹⁶⁴ The response to these studies in the Netherlands, according to Fasseur, was largely a silent agreement with the views expressed, and the idea was that it was best to be completely silent on one's own colonial past:

In the fifties and sixties the history of Indonesia had still been the almost exclusive domain of former civil servants who had known the old Indies as eyewitnesses, had mostly had the best years of their lives there and felt a great connection to "the country that disappeared".¹⁶⁵

161 See: *Trouw* 19 November 1969, p. 7; *de Volkskrant* 22 November 1969, p. 3; *Trouw* 10 December 1969, p. 7; *NRC* 1 November 1969. *Wekelijks bijvoegsel* 2. *Trouw* 24 January 1970, p. 2.

162 E.g. in *Het Parool* 14 March 1969, p. 3.

163 E.g. in *Trouw*. 1 Dec 1969, p. 1.

164 Fasseur 1995, p. 255-7

165 Fasseur 1995, p. 257.

In the 1960s the colonial archives were almost exclusively consulted by American, Australian, and English Indonesia specialists.

In his three-hundred page account, Van 't Veer tells the story of the Atjeh War, which he divides into four parts. The 1904 massacres are placed in the fourth part (1898-1942), the period of the rise of Van Heutsz. The book has sixteen photographs: several of Atjehnese leaders, several group portraits of soldiers of the KNIL, one of an Atjehnese village during the war, one of the official surrender of the sultan of Atjeh in 1903, one famous photograph of Van Heutsz looking out over the battle field,¹⁶⁶ and KR3. Van 't Veer has a minimal amount of direct references to his own time, though he does address the controversial memory of Van Heutsz when he writes that “[m]onuments in Batavia (demolished) and Amsterdam (damaged) honored him as the creator of ‘order, rest, and prosperity’ in the Dutch East Indies”.¹⁶⁷ According to the dust jacket of the 1980 edition Van 't Veer thought his book showed that Van Heutsz was a “much more complicated figure than people have occasionally thought”. On the one hand, the 1904 photograph is positioned as an index of a specific event: the expedition is narrated in detail and all known specifics are given. Yet as Van 't Veer also tells a broader story of Dutch colonialism, which he sees as characterized by an “ethical imperialism” and partly as an effect of capitalism, KR3 also gains larger iconic meanings.

With respect to the 1904 photographs, the step taken by Van 't Veer is that he took up the critical discursive frame on Western imperialism, already summoned by Troelstra but now again strongly emerging, and carefully and convincingly (his book is still a standard reference for Dutch historians) applied it to a historical case. The reason why Van 't Veer could succeed where Troelstra did not was that by 1969 this frame had become more readily available, whereas in 1904 it had been marginal. One glance at the bibliography of *The Atjeh War*, which shows that Van 't Veer was working in a historiographic wasteland, is enough to see that for the story of the Atjeh War this was a major moment in which it entered a “new” language. This is not to say that everybody accepted this new semanticization, as can be seen from the reviews of Van 't Veer's book.

Whereas all reviews were positive, their angles and terminologies varied widely. Several newspapers seized the occasion to rehabilitate Van Heutsz, writing that he “wanted to help the Indonesians”, or calling him “almost a

¹⁶⁶ Figure 0.5.

¹⁶⁷ Van 't Veet 1969, p. 292.

strategist in developmental aid *avant la lettre*.¹⁶⁸ Others criticized *The Atjeh War*'s image of Van Heutsz as not critical enough. Several authors adopted the concept of imperialism as used by Van 't Veer, while others did not take over any of Van 't Veer's concepts and described the Atjeh War in terms that were current in earlier literature from the colonial period.

An example of a review which completely took over *The Atjeh War*'s language, importantly because its author already "spoke" it, can be found in the leftist weekly *Vrij Nederland* from 1969, which also reprinted KR3.¹⁶⁹ The review was written by Fritjof Tichelman (1945-1994), who by then had already written several articles on (Dutch) socialism, communism, and social-democracy in Indonesia.¹⁷⁰ He called *The Atjeh War* "the first modern work about this subject", and thus the first which was not caught "within the colonial horizon, whether this concerns ethical scholars or reactionary 'revolver journalists' such as H.C. Zentgraaff". Tichelman embraces *The Atjeh War*'s argument and his use of concepts like "colonial expansion", "capitalist dynamics", "inner Atjehnese class conflict" and the "defeudalization" of Atjeh shows that he is operating within a Marxist discourse. Tichelman is critical of Van 't Veer's book for not investigating thoroughly enough the relation between capitalist exploitation and colonial expansion, which, Tichelman holds, may not always seem to be part and parcel of the same system (Van Heutsz, Van 't Veer had written, was critical of colonial business), but in the end both serve the capitalist cause, whereby the state ensures "the entrepreneurs' general interests in the longer run". The 1904 photograph, reproduced in the review, is, like in Van 't Veer's book, both an icon of a specific event (the caption gives date, place, and other specifics) and, through the broad and structural story told by Tichelman, also an icon of larger historical processes.

In stark contrast to Tichelman's article, the review written by Joop van den Broek in *Algemeen Handelsblad* took over nothing of *The Atjeh War*'s vocabulary and stuck to the colonial version of the story. This becomes clear if we look at the different ways in which Van 't Veer and Van den Broek refer to documents from the colonial period. Van 't Veer, for instance, had discussed a Dutch report from the early 1920s on the "mental health" of the Atjehnese. The author of this report had written about the disappearance of "folk art", about how the "psychic energy of community and individual"

168 See *de Volkskrant* 31 October 1969, p. 8.; *Trouw* 29 October 1969, p. 11.; *Algemeen Handelsblad* 10 November 1969, p. 4.

169 Tichelman 1969b.

170 Tichelman 1967, 1969a.

had suffered because of the subjugation, and about how “the people’s strength” (“volkskracht”) had been undermined (295-6). Whereas Van ’t Veer had discussed this report *as a report*, Van den Broek simply presents these categories as descriptions of reality, thereby removing as it were the quotation marks that had distanced Van ’t Veer’s text from this document. Van den Broek clearly struggled with the position he should adopt, and was uncertain which language to use. On the one hand, he writes that readers should not judge “a situation that was embedded in the thought and life spheres of the nineteenth century”, yet on the other hand he ends his review by admitting that “[t]he reader of the twentieth century... is no less shocked about the sometimes unimaginable failures and insights of that last century”. Van den Broek had to negotiate between a frame that until recently had been almost fully accepted, and a newly emerging, harsh critique of this frame. By placing the Atjeh War and Dutch imperialism in the nineteenth century and himself in the twentieth, he created a temporal distance between himself and these events. It was only through complex and ambiguous strategies like these that the colonial frame of semanticization could be maintained after the 1960s.

Indisch ABC

More negotiations can be found in a television series and accompanying book entitled *Indisch ABC* on Dutch colonial history in the Indies broadcast and published in 1969 and 1970, and which again featured one of the 1904 photographs, namely KR2. Although the tapes of this series are lost, the book by Hans Jacobs, Jan Roelands, and Tine Jacobs-Stam included the photograph with the river of bodies, which makes it likely that it also appeared in the television series. The book is the colonial counterpart of Loe de Jong’s *The Occupation*, to which it has been compared by reviewers (see its cover). It is richly illustrated with many photographs and some drawings, newspaper articles, and film stills. It alternates between a narrator and many eyewitnesses and specialists. The fact that the book has a good index which includes both names and themes indicates that it was intended as a reference work. On 20 October 1969, Van ’t Veer appeared in an episode of *Indisch ABC* as an expert on the Atjeh War.

The book tells the story of the colonization and decolonization of the *Indische* archipelago. From the start, it places great emphasis on the failures of Dutch colonialism and is particularly critical of the Dutch response to Indonesian wishes for self-government and independence during the colonial period. This results in a teleological structure, which can already

be seen from the titles of its chapters. While the first chapter is called “The Empire Overseas” and mainly deals with the first centuries of the Dutch presence in the East, the next six chapters, making up the lion’s share of the book, all suggest a spiraling dynamic leading directly towards the abyss: the Dutch colonial empire is consecutively “In Motion”, “In Trouble”, “Staggering”, “Attempted to Be Restored”, “In Flames” and “Over”.

The title of the series is derived from a colonial children’s book in which to each letter of the alphabet an *Indisch* phenomenon was connected (Figure 4.2). The cover of this 1922 children’s book is also the front of the 1970 *Indisch ABC*: a young, white man in hunting costume sits on his knees in the grass, holding a rifle. Frightened, he looks directly into the eyes of a tiger that is sticking its head from the bushes. The authors of the 1970 *Indisch ABC* write: “Isn’t there in that beautiful, primitive drawing by J. van der Heyde a fine symbolism for the finale of history: the European with the rifle in his hands lying on his knees in front of the clawing, implacable tiger?” (11). Dutch colonialism in this book is looked at with pitying eyes; *Indisch ABC* is a book of dramatic irony.

In the first chapter, which also functions as an introduction to the book/series as a whole, the suggestion is put forward that among the general public in the Netherlands there is little knowledge of “three and a half centuries of Dutch colonial regime” beyond its beginning in the late sixteenth century. The book positions itself as breaking through a silence, induced by the dominant feeling “of preferring not to talk about” the Indies anymore. *Indisch ABC* hoped to be the first of many publications, documentaries, and memoirs on the Dutch colonial past. The Indies were framed as a “forgotten” past.

As I mentioned earlier, the book resembles De Jong’s *The Occupation*, but what distinguishes it from the latter is that its witnesses and specialists are less integrated into the story. In *Indisch ABC*, different witnesses tell different stories, are opposed to each other, and differ in their accounts from what the narrator wants to convey. The latter becomes clear if we look at how the contributions of Professor I. J. Brugmans are framed. Just before Brugmans plays down the economic importance of the Indies for the Netherlands so as to mitigate the impression of pure economic exploitation, the reader is told that while listening to what will be said, s/he should keep in mind that Mohammad Hatta, the first vice president of the Republic of Indonesia, had said in 1928 that “[t]he goal of colonization is solely to satisfy material hunger with colonial treasures” (41). After Brugmans has finished, the narrator says: “Well, this might all be true...” (42) and re-asserts that all who went to the Indies actually had only one goal: to become rich as soon

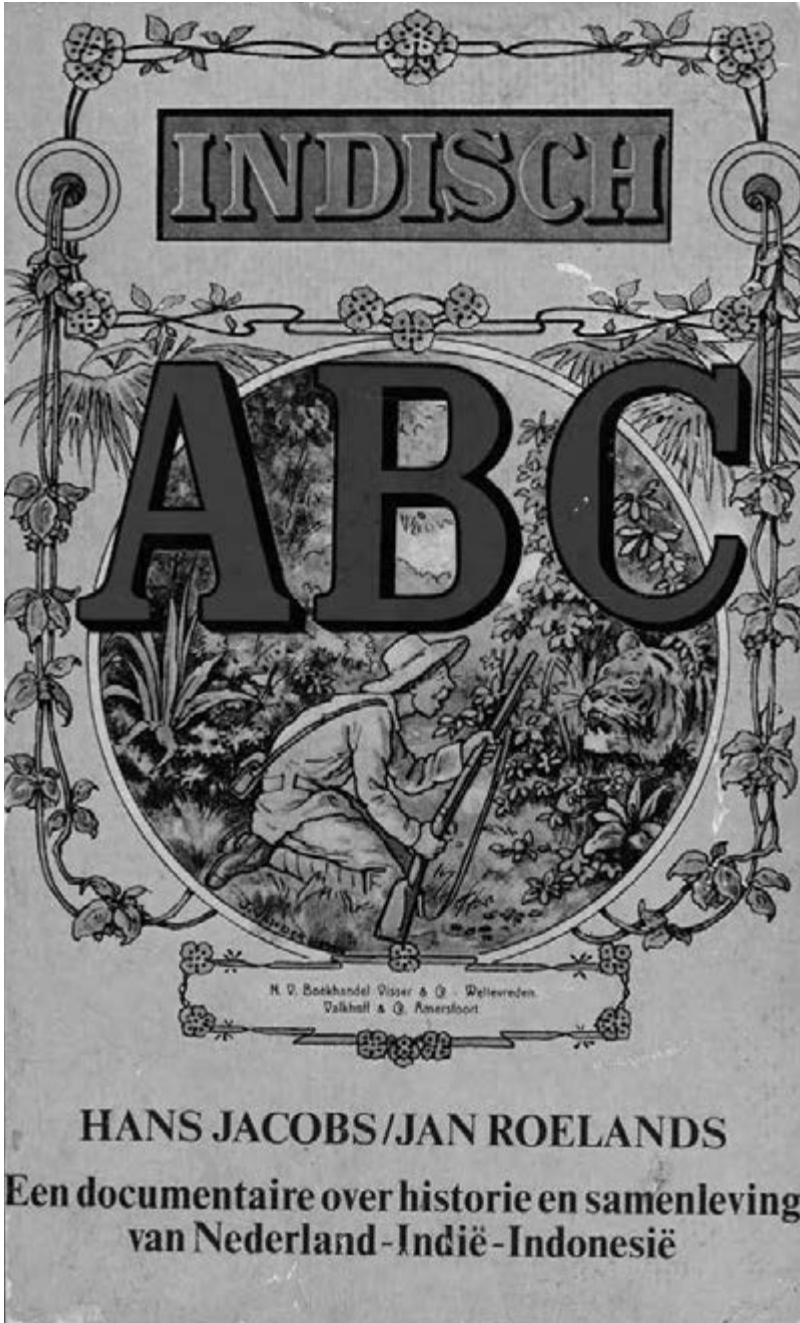


Figure 4.2. J. van der Heyde. Cover of *Indisch ABC: Een documentaire over historie en samenleving van Nederland-Indië-Indonesië*, gebaseerd op Vara-tv uitzendingen onder de gelijknamige titel. Amsterdam: Arbeiderspers, 1970.

as possible. Later in the book, when the authors have just argued that it was crucial on which side of the (racial) divide one stood during the colonial period, they write that the same is valid “in our time”. They then place a quote from Brugmans (“there is no reason at all for the Netherlands to put on the cilice concerning the policy in Indonesia”) next to one from a former prisoner in the Dutch camp Boven-Digul, I. F. M. Salim, who says you can compare the Indies with the Netherlands during the German occupation, “if I may express it in an extreme manner” (46).

As mentioned earlier, the book is full of negotiations between the different frames of interpretation, and what could and could not be seen. J. H. W. Veenstra is quoted as saying that while the Dutch colonial civil servants had a decent education, they had no sense of politics, unlike their British counterparts, and did not know what to make of Indonesian nationalism (124). J. E. Textor Grieve claims that when living in the Indies as a child, “you weren’t even aware of different races sitting next to you in class” (47). A comparable explanation is offered by W. F. A. Hakker: “The average European lived so isolated in his own group that he did not see or hear what was going on outside” (82). Rob Nieuwenhuys admits that he sees more and more that the colonial society was not a good thing, that it deformed characters, gave people a feeling of inferiority, made them lose self-respect, and bred hatred and wrath (113). Spokesmen like these were coming to terms with colonial aphasia: they were confronted with their own old ignorance. Getting acclimated to the newly emerging critical discourse which was also the framework of *Indisch ABC*, they tried to explain how they could have participated in a situation which in an anti-colonial and anti-imperial distribution of the perceptible appeared as wholly rejectable. There was one important demarcation line within this group: whereas some (like Hakker) claimed that Europeans did not *perceive* or *register* anything, others (like Textor Grieve) said that they did *perceive* but did not consider racial differences, for instance, to be meaningful. In other words, it was only now that a new frame of interpretation had become available that they could semanticize what was “actually” happening back then.

The 1904 photograph (KR2) appears in the second chapter of the book, which is entitled “The Empire Overseas In Motion”. This chapter continues the main narrative of Dutch (East Indies) blindness to Indonesian wishes for self-governance, alongside the assertion that almost everything the Dutch did in the Indies benefited only themselves. Attempts to alleviate the poverty of natives are framed as only serving the purpose of raising the budget they could spend on Dutch products; ethical policy is discussed in terms of satisfying Dutch paternalist cravings; and the happy youths

of tempo doeloe are sharply contrasted with the way in which “the great mass... had to live in those years”. Though not all Dutch ethical thinkers are denied good intentions, the best result of ethical policy, in the opinion of the authors of *Indisch ABC*, was the growing realization among Indonesians that it was important to get organized. Ethical policy is, moreover, directly connected to imperialism, just as it was in *The Atjeh War* by Paul van ’t Veer.

In this same chapter, Van ’t Veer is introduced as a specialist on the many colonial expeditions from around 1900. In his account, he contrasts tempo doeloe with what “is not generally known”, namely the reality of “one uninterrupted period... of colonial war” between 1815 and the Second World War, “not to mention what came afterwards” (58). The Atjeh War is described as the Netherlands’ biggest war ever, and its story is told roughly along the same lines as in *The Atjeh War*. The 1904 expedition and the debates it triggered are given a disproportionate amount of attention: they receive two out of six pages devoted to the Atjeh War (compared with about fifteen pages out of three hundred in *The Atjeh War*, though there it was also given a privileged position). *Indisch ABC* busts all myths of heroics about this march: “militarily speaking it’s certainly no heroes’ work and humanly speaking it’s an example of degradation” (64). On the other hand, Van Heutsz is called “a very complicated man... no hero and no villain” (67).

Because of *Indisch ABC*’s generally highly critical narrative of Dutch colonialism, KR2 emerges as an icon of the Netherlands’ exploitative and violent presence in the Indies, and in the context of the book as a whole as an icon of the failed response to Indonesian attempts to free the country from colonial subjugation. *Indisch ABC* uses many of its images as icons for larger histories than were occurring in front of the lens at the moment the photograph was taken. A rather striking example of this is the use of another photograph from the Atjeh War in *Indisch ABC*, namely PD, to illustrate the fate of the character of Saijah from Multatuli’s *Max Havelaar* from 1860. In both cases, colonial troops killed Javanese/Atjehnese. The caption of the photograph is a quote from Multatuli’s novel: “He let himself be cut through by the soldiers, who came towards him with fixed bayonets...”. The soldiers in the photograph, however, do not have bayonets (only revolvers, *klewangs*, and rifles without bayonets). The story of Saijah in South Sumatra, which in the novel occurred in 1856, is illustrated with a photograph from about fifty years later in North Sumatra (34). This shows how photographs of atrocity from the Atjeh War were increasingly becoming icons of colonial violence in general.

Conclusion

In the second half of the 1960s, the effect of the scarcity principle in cultural memory persevered. Whereas in De Jong's book the 1904 photographs received a couple of sentences, in Van 't Veer's *The Atjeh War* they were part of a discussion of the 1904 expedition of more than a dozen pages, and in *Indisch ABC* the authors devoted one-third of their story of the Atjeh War to the 1904 expedition. As time progressed and more voices gathered around them, the photographs increasingly became points of social encounter and icons of both remembrance and amnesia. They began to be connected to larger histories than only that of the 1904 expedition and were used as icons for the Atjeh War and (Dutch) colonialism as a whole, for instance in the book review by Tichelman. Increasingly they functioned as sites of multidirectional memory: whereas in De Jong's work, a connection between the Atjeh War and the Second World War had at most been facilitated, in the second half of the 1960s people like Van Lenthe started making these connections explicitly.

Yet what also became apparent is that there was still no consensus in the Netherlands concerning the photographs' meanings. In *Indisch ABC*, for instance, Van 't Veer positioned the 1904 photographs in opposition to tempo doeloe culture: while for some observers these images were icons of Dutch imperialism, the Dutch nation, and the type of violence perpetrated by, for instance, the Nazis against the Jews and the Americans in Vietnam, others like Joop van den Broek and several of those interviewed in *Indisch ABC* had considerably more difficulty integrating these images and other documents of colonial atrocity into their distribution of the perceptible. Their search for words indicated the aphasiac condition of many Dutch, at least when it came to the national framework in which the Atjeh photographs were not memorable. The growing attention for these images – of all the places where they can be found, 90% can be located after 1960 – shows there was not a “lack of interest” for these images. On the contrary, they kept on returning to the public sphere without, however, sticking.

Emerging Memory

After 1970, the Atjeh photographs and other documents of colonial atrocity have regularly resurfaced in the Dutch public sphere as icons of the colonial violence that the nation had supposedly forgotten. They usually submerged as quickly as they emerged, however. Out of the many moments, I have

selected a number that I will discuss here to illustrate some of the most common patterns. The case of the 1976 feature film *Max Havelaar*, which has a scene restaging KR3, shows the continuing importance of ethical policy in the Netherlands, as this film paradoxically combines an anti-colonial message with a colonial narrative. Next follows a case that can be read as an example of the clash between compartmentalized and multidirectional memory: the debate surrounding Loe de Jong's positioning of the Atjeh photographs in his *magnum opus* on the Netherlands during the Second World War. The third case is the discussion in the 2000s regarding the Dutch contribution to the War on Terror in Afghanistan. In this final case, the various trends sketched in this section come together.

Ethical Policy in *Max Havelaar* (1976)

In the feature film *Max Havelaar*, KR3 returns, transmediated as a scene. Based on the famous 1860 literary masterpiece with the same title by Multatuli (pseudonym of Eduard Douwes Dekker), the movie tells the story of Max Havelaar, a Dutch colonial civil servant, who fights the exploitation and suppression of ordinary Javanese by their indigenous leaders and the indifference to this practice on the part of his Dutch superiors. As has been pointed out by Pamela Pattynama, the story of Max Havelaar, which in Multatuli's version was not aimed against colonialism, took a turn towards the anti-colonial in the Netherlands after the Second World War. The film *Max Havelaar* played a pivotal role in this resemanticization (see Pattynama 2006). The film's ambivalence lies in the fact that it wanted to convey an anti-colonial message through a thoroughly colonial narrative.

In a 1976 interview, director Fons Rademakers said that what attracted him most about the figure of Max Havelaar was the latter's non-conformism and the fact that he did not align himself with anything. Rademakers says he is the same in this respect, and gives as an example that he does not participate in the anti-Vietnam movement, though he also says that "you could perhaps suspect how I feel deep down about Vietnam", and that he lets "people notice [his feeling about Vietnam] in the things I make" (28). In a rather subtle way, Rademakers thus says that *Max Havelaar* can be viewed as a protest against Vietnam, or even against the type of politics that the Indies had in common with Vietnam. When asked how he thinks the film will be viewed in Indonesia, he responds that he hopes:

that people, not only in Indonesia, but in all countries that were colonized, see that the problem was not only that. Next to the colonizers they were

also exploited by their own ruling class. In many countries not much has changed after independence in that respect and the people are still abused in the same manner. (28)

The Dutch clearly embraced the movie: it had more than 700,000 viewers, which was exceptional for a Dutch film (Pattynama 2006: 174).

Compared to the novel, the famous and tragic love story of Saijah and Adinda has undergone several changes. In the novel, their story had been confined to a separate chapter 17. In the film, however, it returns throughout the whole of the movie and has been interwoven with the story of the main character, Max Havelaar. The film is set in the assistant-residency of Lebak, in the south of the residence of Bantam, in East Java. The subplot of Saijah and Adinda starts in 1850, when they are both fairly young children. Towards the beginning of the film, we see Saijah walking the family water buffalo to the river to bathe it. He is followed by Adinda, and the two children talk about whether the buffalo is any good (Adinda says it can't plow very well, while Saijah maintains it is the best of the village). Not long after, the buffalo saves Saijah from a tiger by killing it. The buffalo is then taken away by one of the men of the regent, the Javanese ruler of Lebak where Max Havelaar is soon to become assistant governor. Saijah's brother runs after the men but is shot to death by a soldier of the Royal Netherlands East Indies Army, indicating the cooperation between the Dutch and the Javanese ruling classes. Later in the film – it is by then 1855 – Max Havelaar is introduced. As a civil servant in Celebes (Sulawesi), he saves his son's dog from an ocean full of sharks, and we meet a number of particularly nasty Dutch men who maltreat a Celebesian woman. Havelaar teaches them a lesson, which foreshadows his future struggle with the Javanese regent of Lebak, the Dutch envoy (*resident* in Dutch) of Bantam, and the governor-general about the maltreatment and exploitation of the people of Lebak, though in this early case he emerges victorious. After Havelaar's appointment as assistant governor of Lebak, we again see Saijah and his father, who tells his son that the new assistant governor has warned Lebak's leaders about their behavior, to which Saijah responds that those are just idle words. In the fields, they meet Havelaar who asks them (implicitly) about their exploitation by the regent. Father and son, who do not think anything will change, tell him nothing. Later, we see Saijah and Adinda at the river again. They are now adolescents. Saijah sees the regent's men going to his village, where they again take the family's water buffalo. Then Havelaar enters the scene and tries to stop the regent's men, but the villagers back up the story of the regent's assistant that the water buffalos will be paid for

and were sold without coercion. Havelaar then shouts: "Those of you who do not want to sell their water buffalos can tell me now. Right here, right now!" Nobody responds, so he leaves, and the men intimidate Saijah and his father by burning their clothes. At night, Saijah and Adinda secretly come to Havelaar's house and Saijah relates what really happened: that they received no money and were intimidated. The next morning, Saijah's father demands payment for his water buffalo from the regent's men and is killed by them. While placing the body of Saijah's father on a bier at their village, Saijah and Adinda hear the regent's men approaching again and flee. They are chased by them but eventually escape, though they get separated. Adinda goes to Havelaar again and lets him know that Saijah is dead (or so she thinks). She moves in with the Havelaars. Meanwhile, Saijah takes the boat to Sumatra. Later, as she accompanies the Havelaars who are on their way to Buitenzorg to testify in front of the governor general, Adinda says she does not want to talk anymore but take action by going to her friends in Lampung in Sumatra. She gets out of the coach and runs into the forest. There follows a scene that was also part of the 1860 novel but which is changed in one important respect. Near the end of chapter 17 in the 1860 novel, Saijah is looking for Adinda:

One day...he wandered about in a village that had just been taken by the Dutch army and was therefore in flames... Like a ghost he roamed around in the huts which had not yet been entirely destroyed by the fire, and found the corpse of Adinda's father, with a *klewang*-bayonet wound in the chest. Beside him Saijah saw the three murdered brothers of Adinda, youths, hardly more than children still; and a little farther away, the body of Adinda, naked, horribly abused. (276)

In the film, we see soldiers of the Royal Netherlands East Indies Army (KNIL) shooting people on the run, and afterwards Saijah walking through a burning village. The sounds of fire, crickets, and birds that we hear are accompanied and soon pushed aside by those of a crying infant. As he walks through the village, Saijah sees a child of a few years old crying next to the body of his dead mother and surrounded by at least a dozen other dead people, all killed by the KNIL (Figure 4.3). Next, Saijah looks up and finds Adinda dead, and just as in the novel he walks towards a group of KNIL soldiers, one of whom kills him with his bayonet. Adinda's father and brothers, thus, have been replaced in the film by a crying child among the dead people of its village. Here it seems that KR3, the photograph taken in Northwest Sumatra in 1904 of Van Daalen and his men standing on the



Figure 4.3. Fons Rademakers, dir. *Max Havelaar*. Script Gerard Soeteman. 1976.

wall of Koetö Réh, formed the basis for a scene in South Sumatra in 1856. This shows to what extent the 1904 photograph of Van Daalen – through Zentgraaff, De Jong, Nieuwenhuys, and Van 't Veer – had grown into an icon of Dutch colonialism and especially of its violence.

In several reviews of the movie, critics refer specifically to the child. Guus Sötemann, professor of modern Dutch literature and author of a well-known book on the structure of *Max Havelaar*, mentions the film's "reveling in the wailing little baby in the pit of corpses" as one of the many sensationalist elements that lead him to conclude that this was "a particularly bad movie" (1977). His opinion matches that of Rudy Kousbroek, who writes in his review that while watching the film he wanted to hang himself, as it was filled with unlikely and absurd scenes. Like Sötemann, he missed the nuance found in the novel, and the only thing they both liked about the film were the Indonesian actors (Kousbroek 1976).

By 1976, there was a strong connection between *Max Havelaar* and the suffering of the people of the Indies. In the mid-1800s when the novel appeared, contemporaries of Multatuli called him the Dutch Beecher Stowe, comparing *Max Havelaar* to *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.¹⁷¹ But because Multatuli could not be easily incorporated into either the liberal or the conservative political camp (W. F. Hermans once characterized him as an impossible ally), and because both camps had contradictory interpretations of the novel, the political influence of *Max Havelaar* was limited in the short

171 The information in this section is from Fasseur 1988.

run. By the 1890s, however, the book was the most widely read book in the Netherlands after Hildebrand's 1839 *Camera Obscura*. The book had a strong influence on students who were being trained in Delft and Leiden for civil service in the Indies:

Many of these students of Indology left for the Indies with the fixed resolve to shape their career after the example of that ideal and idealized civil servant who in Lebak had stood up for the Javanese population, who wanted to bring her justice and protect her against arbitrariness, and who had sacrificed career and pension to this conviction. (Fasseur 1988: 49)

According to Fasseur, everybody in the *Indische* civil service knew the book and had read it, which meant that ethical policy and especially its quick acceptance after 1900 can be connected to the popularity of *Max Havelaar*. What also can be linked to the novel is distrust of native leaders, who were portrayed in a negative light by Multatuli.

Between the nineteenth century and 1976, there was a consistently strong connection between *Max Havelaar* and the protest against the suppression of the people of the Indies, but this link gradually changed in terms of content. Early colonial readers mostly read it as a book about the wickedness of local leaders, a critique of capitalism,¹⁷² and the sloppiness of certain elements within the civil service. By 1976, however, the novel had come to stand for the wickedness of the whole of the Dutch colonial project, and even more broadly, as an indictment of imperialism (and neo-imperialism) in general, as we saw with the filmmaker Rademakers.

The Atjeh War was strongly tied to this constellation. Multatuli was the first to write a brochure on the Atjeh War, in 1872 (one year before it was declared). In his *Open Letter To the King*, he wrote:

Your Governor-General, Sire, under contrived pretexts at most based on artificially provoked grounds, is about to declare war on the Sultan of Atjin, with the resolve to rob this Sovereign of his inheritance. Sire, this is neither grateful, nor generous, nor fair, nor wise. (quoted in Van 't Veer 1969: 39)

172 Through the infamous character of the capitalist and petty bourgeois Batavus Droogstoppel from Amsterdam, whose type Multatuli had called that of the "wicked thief, *minus* the courage to burgle".

According to Van 't Veer, Multatuli commented on the 1871 Sumatra Treaty by which the Netherlands was given a free hand in Sumatra:

It's all about the hauling in of Atjin [Atjeh]. This will no doubt happen, yet not without trouble, for the Atjinese are militant. For I already wrote to you: we shall hear from the war in Sumatra? Anyhow! I'd rather not have it! (ibid)

Above, another recent connection between *Max Havelaar* and the Atjeh War was shown, namely in *Indisch ABC* in which the murder of Saijah was illustrated with a photograph of atrocity from Atjeh. Yet the clearest indication that Multatuli had by 1976 been connected to the Atjeh War can be found in the 1969 proposal in the Amsterdam city council by Roel van Duijn of the Provo movement to erect a statue of Multatuli to counter the Van Heutsz monument. *Het Parool* quotes Van Duijn:

Are mayor and aldermen not of the opinion that Multatuli is wronged by maintaining a statue for Van Heutsz – exponent of a cruel colonialism, against which Multatuli rightly resisted – in Amsterdam while not one is erected for this brave non-conformist?

That in the 1976 film it was specifically a child which replaced Adinda's father and brothers was also no coincidence, given the growing part given to children in war photography. In 1973, Nick Ut's 1972 *Napalm Girl* had won major photographic prizes. Before that, the 1943 photograph of the boy with raised hands in the Warsaw ghetto had become famous, featuring already in Alain Resnais's 1956 *Nuit et brouillard* and in Ingmar Bergman's 1966 *Persona*. As Marianne Hirsch wrote:

If you had to name one picture that signals and evokes the Holocaust in the contemporary cultural imaginary, it might well be the picture of the little boy in the Warsaw ghetto with his hands raised. The pervasive role this photograph has come to play is indeed astounding: it is not an exaggeration to say that in assuming an archetypical role of Jewish (and universal) victimization, the boy in the Warsaw ghetto has become the post child of the Holocaust. (2003: 19)

A third important photograph is from 1968 of a pile of bodies from the Vietnamese village of My Lai. This color photograph by Ron Haeberle was first published in 1969 and thereafter reprinted around the world. As Mary Warner Marien writes:

Working together, staff from the Museum of Modern Art and members of the Art Workers' Coalition used the image to create a gripping anti-war poster, which the museum later refused to sanction. With the question and answer 'Q: And babies? A: And babies', derived from a television interview with a soldier who had witnessed the massacre, the poster became a rallying point against the war. (2006: 368)¹⁷³

All this went back to a longer Romantic tradition in which children connoted innocence (Bijl 2014).

All in all, Dutch viewers of the film were invited to identify with Max Havelaar who was fighting for the poor, suppressed people of the Indies, and as a moral high point could feel a pleasant sense of indignation because of the innocent little child whose mother had been so ruthlessly shot by the bad soldiers. In addition, as Rademakers pointed out in the interview, imperialism was not over yet, so everybody could go home ready for the battle against global suffering. The ambiguity of this film lies in the fact that it conveys its anti-colonial message through colonial means. For all the elements analyzed above add up to a movie in which there are white and brown people (Dutch men and Javanese male leaders) who exploit, and other brown people who suffer. Fortunately, hope dawns on the horizon in the figure of more white people, namely Max Havelaar. What Fasseur wrote about the novel also goes for the film: *Max Havelaar* is against the "spirit" of the colonial state, not against colonialism as such. The book was an argument for the strict application of the colonial rules, not their abolition. With its strong paternalism and a belief in European superiority, the book can therefore also be seen as evidence that the Dutch ethical policy was largely a politics of paternalism and that its legacy still burdened the Republic of Indonesia in 1988, when Fasseur remarked that the transition from the colonial to the postcolonial era was more difficult than in most other colonies because the Dutch had not transferred any power

173 That indeed children had become a common theme in war photography in the 1970s can be seen from the website of the World Press Photo Contest, which has archived all winners. Nick Ut's 1972 photograph "Napalm Girl" is there, along with other now less well-known examples. From 1975, there is David Hume Kennerly's photograph of a naked, crying child, a refugee from Cambodia, and Sven Erik Sjöberg's crying boy in a suburb of Phnom Penh, days before the fall of the republic to the Khmer Rouge. 1974 saw James Soullier's photograph of a man with a huge gun sitting on a sleeping child's bed in Mozambique, the gun hovering over the child, and Nancy Moran's photograph of a mother with two babies in a buggy in Belfast going through what is possibly a gate, while a soldier with a huge gun is sitting just behind it, his gun partly overlapping the sight of the buggy. Next to these, there are several photographs of children starving of hunger, like Ovie Carter's portrait of a child.

whatsoever.¹⁷⁴ The film thus reproduces the paternalist politics of Dutch colonialism by portraying the Javanese as helpless or evil, while the only person with agency is a white man.

The child is supposed to be an apolitical figure of innocence and suffering, but in the film it is a figure that stands in for the population of the Indies as a whole. Like the children in other war photographs, it is not presented as an active participant in the conflict but as a victim. The child, possibly more than any other human figure, can take on this role, as its body can be framed more easily as a figure of "humanity" in general, unmarked as it seems by sex or gender, race or class, culture or ideology. It is, however, exactly at this apparent high point of neutrality that the figure of the child is most political. Being placed in this ultimate victim position, it is ripe for colonial ethical policy and postcolonial moviegoers who can feel good about themselves as they imagine themselves, like Max Havelaar, as trying to stop this outrage. This is one important reason why the book is still beloved in the Netherlands: through the figure of Max Havelaar, it produces the Dutch as always already against colonialism, or at least against colonial exploitation.

Whereas *Multatuli* told a colonial tale with colonial means, Rademakers tried to tell an *anti*-colonial tale with colonial means. This contradiction is epitomized in the position of the scene based on the 1904 photograph. One way in which it is framed in the movie is as an icon of the horrors of Dutch colonialism, and through the interview with Rademakers even as an anti-icon of everything that is wrong with the West and dictatorships everywhere. Yet on the other hand, the surviving child is exactly what positions the Dutch audience in a colonial way, namely as protectors of the less advanced people of the globe who cannot take care of themselves. In *Max Havelaar*, the transmediation of KR3 shows the latter's ambivalent position in the postcolonial Netherlands of the 1970s, for although its physical violence with respect to the village is condemned, the paternalism with respect to the child (characteristic of Dutch ethical policy) is embraced. In the case of *Max Havelaar*, the photograph functions as an icon of memory and forgetting, yet while on one level it can be read as an indictment against the Dutch colonial past and Dutch colonial forgetting, on another level it harkens back to the strategies of denial employed by supporters of the 1904 expedition, by which the villagers were produced as objects of Dutch care rather than as victims of Dutch violence.

174 See for an elaborate foundation of this argument Van den Doel 2001.

Loe de Jong and Moesson

In the 1980s a clash over the 1904 photograph of Van Daalen in Koetö Réh occurred in a larger debate centered on Loe de Jong's major work *The Kingdom of the Netherlands in the Second World War. The Kingdom*, consisting of 14 parts, 29 volumes, and 16,000 pages, was published between 1969 and 1991. It is estimated that about 74,000 Dutch households have a copy of the complete series.¹⁷⁵ The five volumes of part 11 and almost half of part 12 were devoted to the Dutch East Indies and decolonization. In the two volumes of part 11a, De Jong discussed the pre-colonial and colonial period up to the Japanese invasion.

In the period 1961-1965, when *The Occupation* was broadcast, De Jong was the "dream television teacher", operating in a homogenized media landscape in which the nation was brought together (Beunders 1995: 146). Wim Berkelaar and Jos Palm (2008: 100) write about De Jong's relation with the press: "Criticism of the volumes of *The Kingdom* appeared in the seventies and eighties from the critical *Vrij Nederland* journalist Jan Rogier and *Parool* journalist Paul van 't Veer. They were exceptions, the rest was in servitude". By 1984, when the volumes on the Indies began appearing, this situation had changed. The editors of part 14 of *The Kingdom*, in which responses to the previous thirteen parts are collected, write: "Part 11A summoned more and especially more thorough responses in the media than the volumes on the last war years had" (762). According to the respondents, among whom were professional historians as well as people who had lived in the Indies, De Jong had not paid sufficient attention to the favorable results of the policy of the government and business, had portrayed all colonials as villains, had simplified the colonial regime's response to the rise of Indonesian nationalism, and was judgmental and teleological.¹⁷⁶ Two advisers to part 11a had not given their consent to the volume. J. A. A. van Doorn summarizes the critique of several historians as follows: "His representation, so it was put, would show an antipathy against the Dutch in the colony, possibly prompted by socialist convictions" (quoted in De Jong 1969-1994, Vol. 14, 988). In Van Doorn's view, "De Jong... uses a scheme that will be met with the approval of the majority of the Dutch population: good Dutch, bad Germans, and even worse collaborators". Yet, he adds:

¹⁷⁵ See the introduction by Jeroen Kemperman in De Jong 2002.

¹⁷⁶ The first of these four points was made by I. J. Brugmans and R. C. Kwantes (761), the second by P. J. Koets (771), and the third and fourth by Elsbeth Locher-Scholten (786).

this scheme is not applicable to the Dutch East Indies. The Japanese do not pose any problems. With respect to the Indies, they can fulfill the questionable role played by the Germans in the Netherlands... Yet what were the Indies? It was not, like the Netherlands, a homogenous but a dualistic society, with about 300,000 Dutch in all supervising and profitable positions placed above about 70 million indigenous people... Every simplification is out of order... Nevertheless [De Jong] seems now and then to slip into the “Dutch scheme”. (988-9)

As in *The Occupation*, De Jong in part 11a emphasizes the violence in Dutch colonialism around 1900:

The Dutch commander estimated that the KNIL between 1874 and 1880 had killed thirty thousand Atjehnese and had burnt down four to five hundred villages... In the winter of 96 to 97 all villages in the not yet conquered part of the valley of the Atjeh river were burnt to the ground. (68)

As he had done in the early 1960s, De Jong also included KR3, now giving it a caption based on Van 't Veer's *The Atjeh War*: “*Kampong* massacred by the KNIL in the upper lands of Atjeh, 1904”.

It was this caption which, among many other things in De Jong's book, proved to be a stumbling block for a group from *Moesson* magazine (the new name for *Tong Tong*; see chapter 3). The most visible deed of this group was the foundation of the “Committee for the Historical Rehabilitation of the Dutch East Indies”, which on behalf of 60,000 people took the state and De Jong to court to force the latter to rewrite his book. They were unsuccessful, however, and in 1986 two judges rejected their appeal. The criticism of the committee was primarily aimed at chapters 3 and 5 on the colonial society and state, whereas the 1904 photograph figured in chapter 2 on the nineteenth century. Two responses on the part of the *Moesson* group, however, directly addressed the 1904 photograph. In December 1984, in the second of three reviews in the magazine about volume 11a, an author writing under the pseudonym AvL wrote:

In that war – like in every war – there were a lot of plusses and minuses, but, Mr. De Jong, do not only read Van 't Veer; have a conversation with autochthonous Atjehnese old-timers, or read ‘their’ history in translation and also read the letters of Van Daalen to his wife, try then especially

to read between the lines... These were different times with different customs and habits and above all different standards for good and evil!¹⁷⁷

This reviewer repeats one of the arguments of Zentgraaff's *Atjeh*, to which explicit reference is made, namely that the "real" Van Daalen cannot be found in the 1904 photographs but only in his private letters (see chapter 2). Although the semanticization of the photograph as an icon of Dutch imperialism is rejected, AvL is not able to move beyond the discomfort caused by the image – also felt in Zentgraaff's book – and has to derealize it in order for a nostalgic distribution of the perceptible not to be disturbed.

The other response came several years after the trials in a 1992 book by Moesson editor Ralph Boekholt entitled *The State, Dr. L. de Jong and the Indies*. According to the introduction "De Jong reached a one-sided result by emphasizing the negative aspects of the [*Indische*] society and government and by being nearly silent about the many positive aspects" (9). *The State* is one long diatribe, and two-thirds of it is filled with the texts of the legal battle against *The Kingdom*. The book strongly resembles the way in which the state publishing company Sdu had designed *The Kingdom*.¹⁷⁸ Like De Jong's book, *The State* has several sections with photographs, but missing are photographs of massacred Atjehnese villages, demonstrations against the Dutch, poverty among Indonesians, portraits of Indonesian nationalists, or the Dutch internment camp Boven-Digul, all of which are in De Jong's 11a. The images it gives are of education, health care, new industries, and new infrastructure in the Indies. Images of all these subjects can also be found in 11a. One of the sections in *The State* is called "About a Photograph":

"Kampong massacred by the KNIL in the upper lands of Atjeh, 1904", is the caption on page 81 of part 11A. It thus does not say something like "captured" or "conquered" but "massacred". This is, so we assume, to make it clear to the readers that the Atjehnese that they see lying on the ground here on this photograph have not perished in a struggle, in a war, but that they have been murdered in cold blood when they were working peacefully in their kampong. (58)

¹⁷⁷ Moesson 29 September 1984, p. 14.

¹⁷⁸ This imitation was very successful, as the Sdu took the publisher Moesson to court, which then put big stickers on the front and spines of *The State* indicating that it was "No work of Dr. L. de Jong and no official publication of Sdu".

Boekholt quotes a letter to De Jong by F. H. J. Bal who, referring to *Tempo Doeloe*, claimed that Nieuwenhuys (“a critical observer of the colonial period”) talks about a *benteng* (a fortress) and not a *kampong* (a village) with respect to the 1904 event and concludes: “I therefore fear that you have not taken proper care in this respect and that you have hurt many or at least irritated them. It’s a pity” (59). By the time *The State* was published, De Jong had already amended the caption in part 13 and changed it into: “The KNIL has conquered an Atjehnese fortified position in the upper lands”. According to Boekholt,

[w]e can assume that De Jong did not yield because of this one letter. On this subject he must have received dozens, if not hundreds of postal articles. And he had to turn around, for a benteng is something else than a kampong. And those that fall/perish, though they are equally dead, are not victims of killers. (59)

De Jong, Boekholt continues, knew the original photograph and caption very well and, being a committed anti-colonial, knew what he was doing. For Boekholt, an extra problem was that De Jong had done this in a reference work on *national* history.

What this boils down to is that people, depending on which print they have of part 11a (the first from 1984 or the second from 1995), have a radically different caption for the 1904 photograph. In the first edition, Koetö Réh is a massacred village, in the second it is a conquered fortified position. In the first case, because of the subtext of Van ’t Veer’s book, the photograph is connected to Dutch imperial history, which was inseparable from Dutch national history due to its place in De Jong’s volumes. In the second caption, however, we can recognize a case of interpretive denial in which the Dutch and the villagers are represented as equal opponents and the 1904 expedition is compartmentalized and bracketed off from *tempo doeloe*.

The 1904 Photographs and the War on Terror

On 11 November 2007, *de Volkskrant* published a photograph from 1898 of Van Heutsz and Snouck Hurgronje on expedition in Atjeh to accompany an article on the Dutch contribution to the American War on Terror in Afghanistan (Figure 4.4). In August 2006, 1,200 soldiers of the Dutch Royal Army started a so-called “reconstruction mission” in the Afghan province of Uruzgan as part of the NATO operation ISAF (International Security



Figure 4.4. C. B. Nieuwenhuis. Bivouac of Colonel van Heutsz, 1898. Fifth from the left is Van Heutsz; first on the left is Snouck Hurgronje. Photograph, 17 x 23 cm. KITLV/Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies, Leiden, inv. no. 31910.

Assistance Force). An important concept attached to this mission – one that was emphasized in military and political circles and in the media – was that of the “Dutch approach”. Redefined every time this concept was used, the “Dutch approach” was persistently linked to the idea that battling the enemy, though necessary, was not the most important thing to do; that soldiers should talk with the locals (including the Taliban) and listen to their wishes and concerns; that they should be sensitive to local culture and approachable (e.g. walk around without helmets); and that they should make an effort to rebuild the province’s schools, health care system, and infrastructure. As one Dutch colonel said: “We are not here to combat the Taliban, we are here to make them irrelevant.”

A question the army was facing was how to historically embed this Dutch approach to war. The Srebrenica massacre in the Bosnian war, the Dutch-Indonesian wars of the 1940s, and the Dutch involvement in the Second World War did not yield the right examples. The colonel who led his troops into Uruzgan, however, did find an old, seldom-discussed war that he could present as a historical example of the Dutch “population-oriented” approach: the Atjeh War, particularly under lieutenant-general J. B. van Heutsz.

Yet how exactly was the Dutch reconstruction mission to Uruzgan supposed to be inspired by the Atjeh War? On 30 December 2006, the Dutch magazine *Elsevier* wrote an article on the mission in Uruzgan in which it was claimed that “Colonel Johannes van Heutsz (1851-1924) overcame the insurgents in Atjeh a century ago... To win the population over he propagated education and health care.” In the same article, Dutch lieutenant-colonel Van der Sar, who was a former head of the Dutch troops in Uruzgan, said that for him “Van Heutsz’s people-oriented strategy is a model. ‘We are competing with the Taliban for the people’s support. We have to learn to think the way they do.’” This view on the similarity between Atjeh and Uruzgan was corroborated in the newspaper *de Volkskrant* on 23 March 2007 by Herman Amersfoort, professor of military history at the University of Amsterdam:

The historian [Amersfoort] points towards parallels with the KNIL operation in Atjeh at the end of the 19th century. “It only became a success after 30 years of struggle, when the European doctrine was abandoned.” ... Dutch soldiers left their fortifications and entered the interior of the country in small groups. At the same time better education and health care were propagated.

The most explicit analysis the parallels between Atjeh and Uruzgan, however, appeared in *de Volkskrant* on 12 November 2007 in an article written by journalist Noël van Bommel. Entitled “Lessons from Atjeh for Uruzgan”, this article was accompanied by the photograph of Van Heutsz and Snouck Hurgronje mentioned above, and its main subject was the “renewed attention for a then innovative, but also very severe campaign”. In it, Van Bommel announced a one-day symposium to be held in The Hague on 15 November 2007 entitled “Counter Insurgency: Historical Roots and Relevance”. A Dutch Ministry of Defense magazine provided the background to this symposium:

Because of the Second World War and the subsequent Cold War, armies in the West have focused mainly on the tactics of conflicts between power blocks. Battling on a small scale against a different kind of opponent has only become current again after 11 September 2001. (Van Elk 2007)

One of the issues discussed during the symposium was the question addressed by military historian Jaap de Moor: “How did the fight against insurgents in the former Dutch East Indies go? What can be learned from the

Dutch counter-insurgency experience?”¹⁷⁹ The military not only wanted to learn the lessons of Atjeh on how to win the hearts and minds of the people but also on how to beat insurgents and use COIN (COunter-INSurgency) battle techniques. Indeed, what colonel Van der Sar learned from Atjeh was “the effect of mobile, surprising patrols deep into the interior of the country.” Throughout the *de Volkskrant* article mentioned above, Van Bommel offered the following brief summary of the tactics of the Atjeh War:

General Johannes van Heutsz followed the innovative and for that time enlightened recommendations of arabist and islamologist Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje... Better information, less cultural interference and a more precise use of violence: these elements stemmed the tide in Atjeh after nearly twenty years of muddling along. Most of all thanks to Snouck Hurgronje, who was sent to Atjeh in 1892, learned Acehnese and gained the confidence of many leaders... After half a year’s research, the islamologist advised taking strong action against the core of rebellious Muslims. In his words: “hit them where it hurts” and put “the foot on the neck.” That phase should be as short as possible to spare the population... He [Snouck Hurgronje] abolished the sea blockade and collective punishment and rejected the burning down of fields and villages... After the violent phase [Snouck Hurgronje] advise[d] rest [a cessation of hostilities] and the promotion of trade.

In other words, the Atjeh War could offer inspiration for both the Dutch approach and COIN, combining humanitarianism and “precise” violence.¹⁸⁰

At the end of Van Bommel’s article, however, KR3 is summoned and commented on by military historian Jaap de Moor:

De Moor points towards an old map of Sumatra. “There, there, and there things went wrong.” In 1903 and 1904, KNIL soldiers massacred a number of villages. A photograph of a pile of corpses and a crying infant next to it led to great consternation in the Netherlands. De Moor: “That butchering went against the agreed procedures. Van Heutsz did defend it, however.”

In response to Van Bommel’s article, another 1904 photograph (KL2) was posted in an article by Peter Storm on 23 November 2007 on the website of

179 The announcement for the symposium was available on: www.nimh.nl/nl/nieuws/nieuws-berichten/2007/09September/counterinsurgency.aspx#0.

180 See also Bossenbroek 2001.



Figure 4.5. Peter Storm. "Leren van Atjeh?" Detail. News Blog International Socialists. 23 November 2007. <http://socialisme.nu/blog/nieuws/761/leren-van-atjeh-2/>. 25 March 2013.

the Dutch political group International Socialists (Figure 4.5). Directly after the title "Learning from Aceh?", an uncaptioned photograph was placed of a massacred Atjehnese village in which we recognize one of those from 1904. Storm elaborates on the "extremely bloody" Atjeh War. He discusses "an expedition under the supervision of Colonel van Daalen" that led to "large-scale massacres and burnt-down villages" and distinguishes these practices from "official" policy, which was "more subtle". He argues that now, just as then, it was emphasized that gaining the sympathy of the population was the most important policy aim. By drawing a parallel between Atjeh and Uruzgan, Storm holds, the Dutch military acknowledged that the Uruzgan mission stood in a colonial tradition. He reveals that close to Atjeh, oil could be found (the International Socialists believe that the main reason Western countries went to Iraq was to secure oil) and that the Dutch Minister of War in 1904 was a commissioner at Shell. In short, the mission to Uruzgan is, like the one in Atjeh, a "colonial expedition" and supporting this mission means "continuous responsibility for colonial crimes". Storm writes that it is not certain "whether the [modern Dutch] soldiers will follow the example of the bluntness of Van Daalen". However, by not providing a caption for the photograph and by drawing several parallels between Atjeh and Uruzgan, the photograph becomes a threatening prospect for the people in the Afghan province. The dissensus here is not so much about whether or not KR3 or KL2 depict an undesirable situation, but about whether they are icons for only those particular events ("There, there, and there things went wrong.") or for the evils of (neo)colonialism in general.

In this case, various trends sketched in this chapter come together. First of all, the way in which Storm uses KL2 makes it an icon of multidirectional memory and even of a multidirectional future: in it we see both Atjeh's and the Netherlands' past and Uruzgan's and the Netherlands' future. De Moor, on the other hand, compartmentalizes the violence depicted by KR3 as a specific set of events. What both have in common, however, is that they position the Atjeh photographs as revelations to confront an army that had apparently forgotten about some of the outcomes of Van Heutsz's military policies.

Conclusion

In the postcolonial era, the 1904 photographs proved to have a continuing relevance in different current affairs, in which they functioned as locations of social encounter where different visions on the Dutch past – and therefore on Dutch national identity and the Dutch present – could come together. What got lost in their social biography were the specific circumstances in which they were produced: neither De Jong's books, for instance, nor the debate on Uruzgan mentioned that KR3 depicted some of the 561 dead of Koetö Réh in the Alas land on 14 June 1904. However, whereas their indexicality had diminished, their iconicity was enhanced. The photographs, moreover, increasingly became sites with their own history of reframings: previous semanticizations and frames became just as important as the historical events they depicted, as could be seen at moments when viewers referred back to the meanings given to the images at earlier moments. The scarcity principle in the meantime led to an increasing concentration on KR3, precisely because it had previously been taken up by Zentgraaff, Nieuwenhuys, De Jong, Van 't Veer, and others.

The nation remained a crucial social frame in which the photographs were semanticized. This was apparent in De Jong's *The Occupation* but also almost fifty years later when Thom Hoffman connected the framing of the 1904 photographs in Zentgraaff's *Atjeh* to what "we ourselves" had to endure during the German occupation. One of the things that Ralph Boekholt criticized in De Jong's framing of KR3 was that he had positioned it in a reference work on *national* history. This case brings up the tension that became apparent between iconization and compartmentalization: while in De Jong's account KR3 was an icon for certain aspects of Dutch colonialism, the *Moesson* group tried to contain its meanings as much as possible, for instance by opposing De Jong's frames with those of Zentgraaff. Important in this recalling of colonial frames was a sense that a simplified

and distorted image was created of the country in which people and/or their parents had grown up and lived. At the same time, as was discussed in the introduction of this study, some *Indisch* Dutch people were themselves seeking acknowledgement by the Dutch state and nation for their suffering and material and monetary losses during the Japanese occupation, the *Bersiap* period, the (forced) return to the Netherlands, and the unwelcoming and reluctant reception there. Also because of racism in the Indies and because in the Netherlands a white identity had always had more advantages and status than a brown one, a number of mixed-race people identified with Van Daalen and the colonial regime rather than with the Gajos and Alas.

Another question with which the 1904 photographs became embroiled several times was the role of the Netherlands as an imagined white community in relation to nations and (previous) colonies that were seen as brown, from the former Indies to Vietnam to Indonesia. This became especially clear in the cases of *Max Havelaar* and Uruzgan. In both cases, the framing of the photographs pointed to uncertainties and dissensus about this role in both the past and the future, particularly stemming from paternalism as the sliding scale between taking care of brown people and teaching them a (violent) lesson. The same tension had also been present in Dutch ethical imperialism, as was shown above.

Conclusion

The purpose of this book was an interrogation of the binary logic of dominant accounts of memory and forgetting and a search for concepts that could more accurately describe the dynamics between these two phenomena. This interrogation was necessary because in investigating the case of the 1904 photographs, I found that both the debate on Dutch colonial memory and memory studies as a discipline lacked a conceptual apparatus to address the particular nature of the site of memory that these photographs have formed over time. What was missing was an account of memory sites that regularly emerge and submerge and are therefore time and again semanticized as forgotten. In this book, a method of frame analysis was outlined which made it possible to move beyond the question of whether or not certain pasts are present to an analysis of the conditions of this presence.

The concept of emerging memory addresses on the one hand the ebb and flow along a diachronic axis of the debate on the violence in the Dutch colonial past, and on the other hand the position between semanticization and aphasia that the photographs from 1904 have had at particular moments in time. What became apparent was a continuing relevance of the photographs over the past century, connected both to later occurrences such as the decolonization and to questions of Dutch national identity, especially in relation to the rest of the world. What do these images say about the Netherlands and what are the Netherlands therefore in relation to countries such as Britain, Germany, and Indonesia?

Over the past century, no interpretive consensus concerning the photographs has been achieved. Instead, they have become battlegrounds on which different groups can mark their position both with respect to the Dutch colonial past and the Dutch postcolonial present. In this sense there is some sort of consensus, namely that the photographs are crucial documents concerning the Dutch colonial past and present. In the production of this convergence on these particular documents, both the scarcity principle in cultural memory and the photographs themselves have been of importance: the fact that others have reproduced and framed them plus the affective appeal that these images emit make them documents to which people return again and again.

The dissensus over the photographs makes apparent the continuing presence in the Netherlands of ideas that also played an important part in colonialism, particularly with respect to the production of brown people as objects of paternalist care. An important reason the Dutch cannot leave

their colonial past behind is that they are still living it. At the same time, colonialism is heavily criticized. It is this ambivalence that makes a return to the photographs necessary: they depict the undesirable outcomes of a way of thinking that still has appeal in certain respects because it positions the Dutch as guides and caretakers.

One of the consequences of this dissensus is that there is no account available about the 1904 photographs or the colonial period in general which authoritatively offers a moral verdict, like Loe de Jong had provided for the Second World War. This absence of a final verdict means that there is no sense of closure concerning them. The moments when the photographs are semanticized as forgotten can be read as appeals to the mnemonic community of the nation to review them and collectively produce a closing statement. As historian Vincent Houben (1997) has pointed out, this is also the point where there is a gap between academic production on the colonial past and the broader social debate: the latter is conducted in primarily moral terms, while the former wants to adopt a more analytical approach. Moral considerations, however, are inevitable in the public scene because the photographs are seen as connected to the core values of Dutch society.

While critical discourse on the photographs had been available since 1904, it was only since the late 1960s that it became more widespread. This marks an important change concerning the question of cultural aphasia: when this critical discourse was still marginal, addressing the 1904 photographs was difficult due to a lack of language, while when it grew as dominant as the various strategies of denial and compartmentalization, Dutch colonial memory became deadlocked because of a clash of meanings. Both a shortage and an excess of frames of semanticization have created obstacles in producing a shared understanding of what the photographs depict.

In the debate on the photographs in the Netherlands, Indonesian, Atjehnese, Gajo, or Alas voices were seldom included.¹⁸¹ In 1977, journalist Wiecher Hulst published two articles on the 1904 expedition in which he took up PD, KR2, and KR3 and for which he had traveled to Atjeh to interview people (*Nieuwe Revu* 15 and 22 July 1977). Jelte Rep's 1996 documentary *Atjeh! Atjeh!* from 1996 starts with KR3, while later on Rep asks several Atjehnese how they look back on the Atjeh War, also in relation to this photograph. For the most part, however, *Dutch* people addressed the photographs, often on behalf of the people in them. Other groups that went through Dutch colonialism and its aftermath were strongly present in the country: former

181 For Indonesian colonial memory, see Bijl 2012.

KNIL soldiers, former prisoners of the Japanese, victims from the *Bersiap* period, and other *Indisch* Dutch people. As none of these groups identified themselves as victims of Dutch colonialism, the case of the 1904 massacres remained an orphaned memory in the Netherlands that was mostly adopted by critics of colonialism. These then met with mnemonic communities that told other stories, namely of pride, nostalgia, or their own victimhood which was sometimes seen to be in competition with Indonesian suffering. However, it is certainly not only *Indisch* Dutch people for whom the photographs represent uncomfortable truths, for they are disturbing for all who identify themselves as Dutch. The passing away of the first *Indische* generation, therefore, will not automatically produce consensus, and the colonial past will continue to be contested terrain and lead to painful silences.

To which urgent need do these silences respond? An answer to this question leads back to Dutch colonial culture, when certain grids of intelligibility were set up that have been working their way into Dutch society ever since. Crucial in this respect is a broadly held conception that the Dutch had a different, better type of colonialism than the larger European nations – particularly, of course, England and France. Imperialism, the Dutch Ministers of the Colonies used to say, was something for other nations, and it was only in the 1980s that Dutch historians began to accept the concept of imperialism as a useful term to discuss the Dutch colonial past.

Dutch self-fashioning as small-scaled (in a positive sense) or mediocre (in a negative sense) has been part of national discourse since the early nineteenth century, when writers started constructing a national identity that could distinguish this small country from its larger neighbors (see Johannes 1997). Embracing this smallness, these authors imagined their community as not participating in the international power games of the big nations, but as consisting of modest mediators that did good works in the margins of the globe. As recently as 2003, historian Hermann von der Dunk wrote that it seemed hard for him to deny that “aversion to war and violence, not only in principle and theory – that goes of course for most peoples – but in practice characterizes Dutch history and society as a whole”. It is only in the colonies, he writes, that we encounter a different Netherlands, but this is in his estimate “a separate chapter” (2003: 20).

On 10 July 2012, 108 years and one month after Koetö Réh's destruction, the national newspaper *de Volkskrant* published two photographs on its front page accompanying an article entitled “First Picture of Executions in the Indies” (Figure 4.6). As I have shown with this book, however, Dutch colonial violence is not absent from the public sphere in the Netherlands, and never has been. The nevertheless often expressed concern that it is



Figure 4.6. Front page de Volkskrant 10 July 2012.

forgotten stems from the fact that dominant frames of remembrance do not produce colonial violence as memorable in a national grand narrative and make the dead and abused of the Dutch East Indies difficult to fit in a larger narrative. This is not the place to elaborately go into which elements from the Dutch past have, in fact, proven to be malleable, but the images of the Dutch as resilient and independent (e.g. against the Spanish in the



Figure 4.7. Kaleb de Groot. *Likat, after the take-over. "View of the reinforced kampong Likat, with rice-sheds in the background."*, 2011. Crayon on reproduction, 29 x 40 cm. Photo by H. M. Neeb. 1904. World Museum, Rotterdam. © the artist. This altered reproduction of the massacre at kampong Likat is part of the Counter Memory project, created by Iben Trino-Molenkamp and Kaleb de Groot. The Counter Memory project has been displayed at museums & galleries across the Netherlands and at the 2011 Jakarta Biennial. See www.kalebdegroot.nl.

Eighty Years' War), as victimized (by the Germans in World War II, and in more recent times by Muslim immigrants), and as tolerant and leading in international human rights affairs (e.g. as founders of the European Union and hosts of the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice in The Hague) are strongly present in the education system and the public sphere in general. Remembering the dead of Dutch colonial violence, by contrast, also implies remembering Dutch perpetratorship, and that historical subject position is hardly available.

Two further factors, pointed out by Stoler for the French case, are strongly applicable to the Netherlands. Firstly, histories of the Dutch nation and the Dutch empire are mostly treated as separate matters. What we see happening is that there is a group of critics who wish to give colonial violence a prominent and structural position in Dutch cultural memory, yet it fails to convince the nation that this should be the case, because this compartmentalization of national and colonial history makes it impossible for this violence to become memorable within a national framework. Secondly – and strongly related to this compartmentalization of history – the Netherlands are seen by many Dutch as an essentially white country and culture, with

the result that the nation's non-white population is often excluded from notions of Dutchness. The regularly criticized yet still widespread usage of the binary opposition between *autochtonen* and *allochtonen*, literally meaning "from here" or "from elsewhere" but in practice used to denote white and brown people, makes this distinction evident. One connection between the slippage of critique of colonial violence and of this 'multicultural' terminology is unacknowledged racism in the Dutch past and present. In other words, the Dutch aphasiac condition produces an inability to see the nation as the former metropolis of a colonial empire and to acknowledge the lasting racial hierarchies stemming from this past, leading to a structural inhibition of the memorability of colonial violence. The fact, however, that documents of colonial violence keep on being 'discovered' – that is: covered and uncovered – points towards their haunting power over Dutch society.¹⁸²

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