Emerging Memory

Bijl, Paul

Published by Amsterdam University Press

Bijl, Paul.
Emerging Memory: Photographs of Colonial Atrocity in Dutch Cultural Remembrance.
Amsterdam University Press, 2015.
Project MUSE. muse.jhu.edu/book/66385.

For additional information about this book
https://muse.jhu.edu/book/66385
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 aphasic 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 Atjehnese village, while raping the 79th Atjehnese 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.\footnote{The information in this section derives from Witte 1976 and Van Geemert 2007.} 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.\footnote{On the design history of the monument, see Koopmans 1986.}

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.
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 passe-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
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.” He felt guilty for all the

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”. 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

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. 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”. 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, while the photographs of the My Lai massacre came out at the end of June 1969, and were also widely published.

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. 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”.

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162 E.g. in *Het Parool* 14 March 1969, p. 3.
164 Fasseur 1995, p. 255-7
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, 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.” 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.
strategist in developmental aid *avant la lettre*. 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. 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. 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”

169 Tichelman 1969b.
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 Saïjah 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 Saïjah 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 aphasic 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 Saïjah 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 Saïjah and Adinda starts in 1850, when they are both fairly young children. Towards the beginning of the film, we see Saïjah 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 Saïjah maintains it is the best of the village). Not long after, the buffalo saves Saïjah 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. Saïjah’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 Saïjah and his father, who tells his son that the new assistant governor has warned Lebak’s leaders about their behavior, to which Saïjah 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 Saïjah and Adinda at the river again. They are now adolescents. Saïjah 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 Saïjah and his father by burning their clothes. At night, Saïjah and Adinda secretly come to Havelaar’s house and Saïjah relates what really happened: that they received no money and were intimidated. The next morning, Saïjah's father demands payment for his water buffalo from the regent's men and is killed by them. While placing the body of Saïjah's father on a bier at their village, Saïjah 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 Saïjah is dead (or so she thinks). She moves in with the Havelaars. Meanwhile, Saïjah 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, Saïjah 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 Saïjah 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 Saïjah 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, Saïjah 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, Saïjah 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
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. 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

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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)

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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: \textit{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.
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. 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.

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:

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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!”

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)

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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
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 Urugzan, 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.

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.
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 Bemmel. 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 Bemmel 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 Bemmel 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 Bemmel’s article, however, KR3 is summoned and commented on by military historian Jaap de Moor:

De Moor points towards and 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 Bemmel’s article, another 1904 photograph (KL2) was posted in an article by Peter Storm on 23 November 2007 on the website of

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179 The announcement for the symposium was available on: www.nimh.nl/nl/nieuws/nieuwsberichten/2007/09September/counterinsurgency.aspx#0.
180 See also Bossenbroek 2001.
the Dutch political group International Socialists (Figure 4.5). Directly after the title “Learning from Aceh?”, an un captioned 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.