Recent Dutch-Language Publications

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Coen van 't Veer, *De kolonie op drift: De representatie en constructie van koloniale identiteit in fictie over de zeereis tussen Nederland en Nederlands-Indië (1850–1940)*. Hilversum: Verloren, 2020, 319 pp. ISBN: 9789087048259, price: EUR 29.00 (hardback).

Coen van 't Veer (1968) obtained his PhD from Leiden University with this study on the representation and construction of the idealized colonial identity, as it was reflected in Dutch fiction about the sea voyage between the Netherlands and the Netherlands Indies. The database used for this purpose consists of 43 novels and stories, published between 1850 and 1940 by 20 male and 16 female authors. The voyage and its passengers may be considered a miniature version of colonial society, wherein its tensions were exacerbated. Van 't Veer organizes his study into four chapters, which deal chronologically with the sailing ships rounding Africa (1850–1895), the steamboats using the Suez Canal (1870–1895), and the mail boats (1895–1925 and 1925–1940). For all these periods, four prominent features are described and analyzed. The sea voyage was the excellent moment in time for the rite of passage, from a Dutch to an Indies society or the other way around, which caused a lot of mental problems and uncertainties. Next, under the headings of class and status, gender, and ethnicity, issues relating to these demographic markers are discussed. This is embedded in the theoretical groundwork as Edward Said and later writers, like Elleke Boehmer, have laid out. For the greater part, however, Van 't Veer retells in a readable format the stories he found, selecting or summarizing them to give these their due place in the narrative. Thus, the book shows how a number of developments in the colonial society are reflected in the literature. The colony was indeed adrift. This, for instance, is shown in the appraisal of the travellers, from the pioneer “gone native” to the civilized, intellectual men settling in a Europeanized colony. The Eurasian is slowly pushed back to a minor status, or in the literature to a non-subject. In my opinion, this may also be caused

by incidental absence in the relatively small data base. The status of women changes over time to a more emancipated position, but still fell far short of the preponderantly studied white men. Van 't Veer gives a lot of attention to the "natives" on board of the boats. From a nameless undistinguishable group, they slowly were given contours and individuality, to the extent that in *Zoutwater-liefde* (1929) by Herman Salomonson part of the story is told by a servant on board. According to Van 't Veer, this shows and is proof of a general tendency. This seems to be true, but how reliable is such a conclusion? If, for instance, Salomonson would have chosen to omit these pages from his novel, could the same conclusion still be drawn? The small dataset may have caused similar problems elsewhere. But in general these questions do not show up, and Van 't Veer's findings and analysis reinforce the picture we have of the colonial society. All of this is presented in a fine edition, with all the required resources, lots of illustrations, and a very attractive cover.

Tristan Broos, *Het Koninklijk Nederlands-Indisch Leger: Geschiedenis, uniformering en uitrustingen 1911–1942*. Zutphen: WalburgPers, 2019, 335 pp. ISBN: 9789462494589, price: EUR 59.99 (hardback).

Tristan Broos (1974), a military historian working with the Dutch National Military Museum, is the author of this remarkable book that documents down to the finest detail the uniforms, equipment, and fighting kits of the KNIL military, whose numbers fluctuated around 35,000. Broos begins his survey in 1911, the start of specific attention within this army for the equipment, involving long deliberations about the merits and demerits of the choices to be made, which in the 1930s even involved the intervention of Prime Minister Hendrik Colijn in The Hague. These discussions are truthfully reported by Broos, on the basis of often obscure sources extracted from archives and rare publications. In almost 500 notes, he accounts for his labor. The emphasis lies on the equipment. Only a few pages are devoted to KNIL history and its build-up, wherein substantial numbers of military from Javanese, Menadonese, and Ambonese background were drafted. To prevent unified anti-Dutch action of these ethnic groups, for instance, the Dutch leadership equipped the Ambonese with shoes, a privilege which was not conferred on soldiers of other Indonesian origin.

The term 'Geschiedenis' in the book's title is not appropriate. Omitting the comma after 'Geschiedenis' results in a more suitable title; the history of the use of uniforms and equipment is indeed the focus of this large-format book with 1065 illustrations in color and black-and-white. Thus the establishment of a separate administration, and its growing importance, and the uniforms and

equipment of separate KNIL units like the constabularies of the Javanese Principalities are related. Uniforms were of regular concern. In this respect, costs played a substantial role. These were lowered by mobilizing thousands of prisoners, who as a cheap, compulsory labor force helped to alleviate the KNIL budget. Chapters are included on badges, hats, helmets, underwear, shoes, boots, puttees, bags, gas masks, canteens, and all kinds of imaginable necessities for the soldier. It all gives revealing glimpses of how a complex organization functions. This book, beautifully produced, looks like a result of a lifelong dedication to the subject, but, surprisingly, is the work of only ten years research by the relatively young Tristan Broos, who deserves high praise.

Cary Venselaar (ed.), *W.O.J. Nieuwenkamp: Alles voor de kunst!* Volendam: LM Publishers, 2019, 896 pp. ISBN: 9789460225215, price: EUR 69.50 (hardback).

W.O.J. Nieuwenkamp (1874–1950) has been undeservedly forgotten, even by most of those interested in the art and culture of Indonesia. His remarkable style is instantly recognizable. The Stichting Museum Nieuwenkamp (website: www.wojnnieuwenkamp.nl) is active in the endeavor to rekindle his fame. Nieuwenkamp produced an impressive number of graphic arts works, paintings, drawings, and illustrations. In 2016, Ernst Braches compiled a catalogue of his works: *Bouwstoffen: Toegepaste grafiek en illustraties*, 540 pages with 3,000(!) illustrations. This catalogue is still available. Now it has been supplemented with a large format “brick” of three kilos weight: 900 pages and almost 1,750 illustrations. It contains the biography of Nieuwenkamp, based on autobiographical writings, manuscripts, and the diaries he regularly kept. This was supplemented by biographical material that editor Cary Venselaar collected in the course of the thirty years he occupied himself with Nieuwenkamp. Venselaar ordered the overwhelming documentation that was available in 30 voluminous reference books, and from these he compiled this biography, including thus only a small part of Nieuwenkamp's legacy. The reference books may be consulted online.

Nieuwenkamp travelled extensively and reported about his experiences in illustrated travel stories. Among the earliest Westerners to visit Bali in 1898, he traveled there four more times over the next 38 years, observing with sadness the growing influence of tourism on traditional cultures. Thus he witnessed the last *puputan*, and forty years later he noted the first signs of mass tourism. He was not out of touch with reality, however, as he writes moving pages on the plight of the Balinese women. He was a diligent ethnographer who reported his findings in scholarly journals and popular magazines. He painted and

collected ethnographic objects, with which he decorated his houses in picturesque Edam and, later in Florence. He had a boat built, as a house and a studio. With 'The Wanderer' he traveled through Northwest Europa's waterways. This remarkable boat was recently renovated, as was his house in Edam. It served as the Nieuwenkamp Museum from 1947 until 1975, when it was closed for lack of visitors. Now, part of the Nieuwenkamp legacy will be given a separate place in the Edam Museum, and prevent him from being forgotten again. Venselaar has done a great job. With painstaking care he follows Nieuwenkamp's endeavors, and his travels, also to other parts of Indonesia, China, Japan, India and North Africa. He includes catalogues and chronologies. The cordial support of the publisher deserves praise. One point of critique: indexes of persons and geographical places would have been helpful.

Rob van Diessen and Robert Voskuil, *Batavia 1937–1941: De fotocollectie Thomassen à Thuessink van der Hoop*. Gorredijk: Sterck & De Vreese, 2020, 319 pp. ISBN: 9789056155292, price EUR: 49.90 (hardback).

This large-format book brings together 250 photographs of Batavia, made between 1937 and 1941 by A.N.J. Thomassen à Thuessink van der Hoop—Jan van der Hoop in short—the secretary of the Koninklijk Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen (KBG) and curator of its Museum, later Museum Nasional, and the KBG employee Mohammed Ali. In a KBG project, modern Batavia was recorded. In total, 1,250 photographs were made. The negatives of all these "are all still supposed to be", in the words of the authors, in the possession of the Jakarta Construction and Architectural Service. An obvious question is what the authors have done to get an answer to their supposition. They collected their prints from a number of institutes in the Netherlands. These prints were ordered by the Batavia District, for the duration of four years. A number of contemporary maps accompany the beautiful, high-quality photographs, which will undoubtedly evoke feelings of nostalgia in some readers. Captions are extensive and expertly done, as is to be expected of the two authors, who have published before on Indies photography and geography. In almost 50 pages, an adequate survey is given of the development of Batavia from a fort of Jan Pieterszoon Coen to the impressive colonial capital of the Netherlands Indies. In 20 pages, a biography of Jan van der Hoop (1893–1969) is also presented. Van der Hoop became famous in 1924 when he made the first flight from Amsterdam to Batavia as member of a crew of three. A few years later he made a remarkable career switch. He enrolled at Utrecht University, studied geography and got his PhD in 1932. He moved to Batavia

where his KBG career started. He was active in many respects, and quite influential. He survived the Japanese occupation and was back in KBG service until 1950. He published articles in his field of expertise and was a member of the KITLV Board as vice chairman and curator of the KITLV images collection. As an appreciation of his services, he was made a honorary KITLV member in 1967.

Peter Romijn, *De lange Tweede Wereldoorlog: Nederland 1940–1949*. Amsterdam: Balans, 2020, 285 pp. ISBN: 9789463820851, price: EUR 22.99 (paperback).

Peter Romijn (1955) is Head of the Research Department of the NIOD and Professor of History at Amsterdam University. This book argues that—after the German occupation of the Netherlands (1940–1945)—the war was not over, but was prolonged in Indonesia until the Dutch recognized Indonesian sovereignty in December 1949. Past experiences, contemporaneous moral explanations, and expectations about the future in this decade led to a new Dutch society, radically different from the one preceding it, but also with persistent traits. Occupation and resistance, genocide, and excessive violence uprooted Dutch society, and these processes were repeated in the decolonization war in Indonesia, which made an end to the comfortable position of the Dutch ruling elite in “their” colony. Romijn’s long World War Two is original and fitting, but the connection between German occupation and Dutch military reconquest in Indonesia has been covered before, for instance with Ian Buruma’s *Year Zero: A History of 1945* (2013) and, more generally, Tony Judt’s, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* (2005). Romijn’s six chapters are revised versions of earlier lectures and articles, brought together in 2017 in a German-language book *Der lange Krieg der Niederlande*. Another editing process has resulted in this book. The first chapter takes stock of a pillarized Dutch society, static and complacent. It ruled the vast Indies in the same complacent way, tolerated by the Big Powers, in a racially determined arrangement in a depoliticized system. The Indies had become a Project, as J.A.A. van Doorn sets out in his *De laatste eeuw van Indië* (1994). As long as individuals and organizations complied with the Project, they were given leeway. For those among the Indonesians who objected to be part of that Project and supported nationalist ideals, strong repressive measures were taken, based on an ever more repressive collection of penal law articles. For them, the Indies was a police state.

The next two chapters concentrate on the Dutch-German cooperation to administer the Netherlands. The efforts of the highest civil servants to influence affairs for the better eventually failed. The Dutch Jews were deported and

killed. Dutch resistance emerged and became a factor to reckon with. The next chapter is on the last war year and the first months of liberation, which saw the beginning of the struggle between breakdown and restoration. To all these problems was added the fate of the Indies colony, where Sukarno and Hatta had proclaimed the Republic of Indonesia on August 17, 1945. About developments in the Indies since 1940, there was a deep gap of information between Batavia and the government in exile in London. Both, however, missed the last chance to reach an agreement with the nationalist and Islamic parties in Indonesia, who went their own way, and in 1942 heartily welcomed the Japanese invading army. Chapter 5, the longest in the book, tells in 50 pages the story of the 'overseas war', with an emphasis on the Dutch side, as is understandable for a book on the Netherlands from 1940–1949. Romijn's information on the Indonesian opponent is correct and adequate, yet he underestimates the precarious internal position of the Republic vis-à-vis competing centers of power. Romijn refers to the Atlantic Charter and Queen Wilhelmina's speech of December 7, 1942 as key documents in the conflict. They probably inspired the contents and broad outline of the negotiations between the Netherlands and the Republic, starting already in April 1946 with the Hoge Veluwe Conference and the de facto recognition of the Republic it implicated.

In this long train of talks, Romijn does not mention the Renville Agreement of January 1948. As to the Republican leadership, there is no evidence, as Romijn suggests, that Sukarno and Hatta were of different opinions. Their coalition was indispensable for the survival of the Republic. Neither was Hatta involved in underground action against the Japanese. Hatta was a "pious Muslim", as Romijn describes him, but only in private. In politics he was a secular nationalist. In this chapter, there is due allowance for the international interference. However favorably disposed towards the Dutch, it was unappreciated by the Dutch, who chose to consider the conflict as an internal Dutch affair. At last they acquiesced, and were rewarded with a pro-Dutch agreement. Here, the Marshall Plan, NATO, and Cold War probably all played their roles. In a concluding chapter, Romijn argues that the extraordinary circumstances during the German occupation explain the Dutch position and the extreme violence applied in Indonesia, notwithstanding the moral mission that served as a justification for a prolonged presence of the Dutch in Indonesia. In this way, in their role as victims, martyrs, and heroes, the debate among the Dutch continues to this day. In Indonesia, such a debate has long remained a non-issue. In that sense, Romijn's book offers a lot to contemplate. It would have helped if an index was included.

Griselda Molemans, *Levenslang oorlog: De verzwegen slachtoffers van het Japanse Keizerlijk systeem van verkrachting en dwangprostitutie tussen 1932 en 1945*. [Amsterdam]: Quasar Books, 2020, 351 pp. ISBN: 9789082373950, price: EUR 21.95 (paperback).

Griselda Molemans (1964) is an investigative journalist who already published several titles on the forgotten victims of the Japanese occupation (1942–1945) and the decolonization war (1945–1949), such as, for instance, the *Belanda Hitam*, the African KNIL soldiers recruited in the then Dutch colony of Gold Coast. For the past fifteen years, she has researched the fate of the hundreds of thousands of young women who were forced to become “comfort women”, a euphemism for women who were rounded up or recruited under false pretexts to sexually satisfy and serve the Japanese military under horrible circumstances. This was all according to a system centrally organized from a high level. In addition to this, the Japanese invading forces committed rape and plunder on a grand scale, often resulting in murder. Molemans begins her book in 1932, when Japan invaded China, in fact the beginning of the Pacific War. Japanese conduct was already a scandal then, the Nanjing Massacre its foremost outrage. In 1941, the whole Pacific area became involved in the war. Molemans organizes her findings in a geographical and a chronological manner, dealing with the whole Pacific war theatre. About 125 pages are devoted to Indonesian territories. During her research she collected an impressive number of documents, hitherto unknown. Archives in eight countries were consulted, as well as collections of personal memories, as preserved by research institutes, among these the valuable results of the KITLV Interview Project. In 1200 notes, Molemans accounts for the details of her research. In this way her book becomes the most complete review of prostitution and rape hitherto, almost a compendium which will be used fruitfully by other researchers. In this respect it is a pity that an index is missing. Molemans reports her findings in a restrained way. Her set-up leads to enumerations and repetitions and in this way there is less room for personal testimonies. In an epilogue, there is room for the traumas of the surviving women, who were completely erased from history, all for the sake of the Cold War alliance of the USA and Japan. Only since 1992 has their fate become public but a frank Japanese acknowledgement has not been issued.

Bauke Geersing, *Kapitein Raymond Westerling en de Zuid-Celebes-affaire (1946–1947): Mythe en werkelijkheid: Een markante periode uit de geschiedenis van Nederlands-Indië*. Soesterberg: Aspekt, 2019, 507 pp. ISBN: 9789463387651, price EUR 29.95 (paperback).

Bauke Geersing (1944) followed a military career, obtained a law degree, and worked for Groningen University and Dutch broadcasting. His interest in military and legal matters turned to the decolonization war in Indonesia (1945–1950) and especially the episode of the involvement in South Celebes of the Depot Speciale Troepen (DST), under command of Captain Raymond Westerling. This lasted from November 1946 until March 1947. Westerling's approach to restore peace and order soon became a controversial issue, which led to official reports and publications by those involved and by historians. The common picture that eventually emerged on Westerling was very negative. He became the archetype of a war criminal and as such a welcome scapegoat for Dutch politicians and an obvious target for Indonesian writings on South Celebes. All of this got a stamp of approval when Willem IJzereef published his revised MA thesis in 1984. Since then he has set the norm, also reflected in recent publications by Jaap de Moor and Rémy Limpach. Geersing aims his critique in particular at these three historians, who are taken to task time and again in his 500-page polemical book—also as representatives of a school of writers with an a priori anti-colonial bias.

More than a hundred pages are devoted to an in-depth analysis of the picture the above three authors sketch. Geersing raises some relevant questions. However, his book would have profited from drastic abridgment. Now it contains numerous repetitions with conclusions repeated again and again. It is thus detrimental to the author's objectives, as is the aggressive wording. For the Dutch, the motive for the DST actions was the chaos, anarchy, and lawlessness in South Sulawesi, which they felt had become uncontrollable. Banditry had taken over the region. In their minds, only drastic action might be successful in returning peace and order. Thus DST was sent in, a state of emergency proclaimed, which also included authorization to apply summary justice, an issue hotly debated later on. According to his superiors, Westerling acted within the authority vested in him. However, none of this excludes that Westerling's superiors and Westerling himself "invented" summary justice, which had no place in Dutch military justice. His superiors retraced their steps, and were content that blame for the actions was directed at Westerling, thus absolving themselves. Another matter was the expedition to another part of South Sulawesi by other DST officers, who indiscriminately engaged in mass killings. They were indicted. Later, Westerling was incorrectly made an accomplice of these officers. It would

have been illuminating to compare Dutch opinion on the anarchy and banditry with the Indonesian opinion on the situation. Quite a number of Republican documents were confiscated—for instance, from infiltration parties, sent by boat from Java, and are still kept in the Dutch National Archive. And what about organized political activity in Makassar and among the delegates involved in the formation of the state of East Indonesia?

Geersing takes Dutch intelligence and reports at face value. As to the Indonesians involved, without hesitation he quotes and takes for granted the pejorative adjectives from official Dutch reports. And, for instance, he copies—three times and without qualification—the unsubstantiated Dutch intelligence information that the Republic sent criminals on the ships that infiltrated South Sulawesi. His own opinion on Sukarno and Hatta, and their Republican government, is rather Neerlandocentric. Sukarno and Hatta are labelled as collaborators of the Japanese. This was common thinking among the Dutch, but why should they owe allegiance to the Dutch, who had sent them, without due process, for more than ten years into exile? As to the Indonesian Republic at the end of 1946, it was, in Geersing's view, still a non-functioning entity. However, by the Dutch government it was considered to be the *de facto* authority effectively operating on the greater part of Java and Sumatra. This authority was already recognized by the Dutch during the Hoge Veluwe talks of March 1946, and reiterated in the negotiations leading to the Linggadjati Agreement. In these respects, Geersing's conclusions, which professed to be based on "facts, evidence, and proof", are ostensibly invalid or inconsistent. This also holds true for Geersing's uncritical condoning of the conduct of Dutch troops in South Sulawesi, where he glosses over the terror that was applied. In sum, Geersing's plea—however disorganized—for a revision of the role of Westerling deserves consideration from a historical and legal point of view, to eliminate prejudice and emotions. A reappraisal of the role of the highest Dutch civil and military authorities also appears to be due.

Henk Harcksen, *Blauwe brieven: Indische ontrechting*. [Enschede: Boekengilde], 2019, 149 pp. ISBN: 9789463238946, price: EUR 24.95 (paperback).

For 70 years already, the Dutch government has evaded its responsibilities towards the Dutch nationals who were subjected during the Japanese occupation to internment in large camps under ever-worsening conditions, or were ordered to stay in their homes under constant and threatening supervision. After the war, conditions did not change for the better. Dutch officials and military did not receive their more than three years of backpay, nor were civil-

ians compensated for their loss of assets—money and goods. In this insensible treatment, the Dutch government stood alone in comparison to other colonial powers. This story was related in Hans Meijer, *Indische rekening: Indië, Nederland en de backpay-kwestie, 1945–2005* (2005), and Peter Keppy, *Sporen van vernieling: Oorlogsschade, roof en rechtsherstel in Indonesië* (2006). Their conclusions were ignored by the Dutch government, which continued its policies of delay and evasion. A spark of hope in 2000, after the government made a financial ‘Gesture’ to the thousands of Dutch nationals who returned to the Netherlands to make up for their chilly reception, soon evaporated. Endless talking went on between the government, parliament, and the Indies organizations, united in the Indies Platform. An indispensable account of the course of these talks, as well as the conflicts among the divided Indies community, is given by Herman Bussemaker, *Indisch verdriet: Strijd om erkenning* (2014). Motivated by indignation, Harcksen adds to the present accounts his review of the course of affairs, quoting from many sources, and pointing an accusing finger at successive Ministers of Finance and the officialdom, who, in his view, deliberately sabotaged a serious consideration of the Indies claims. In sum, it looks as if he does not add substantially to insights into the issues at stake, compared to the monographs mentioned above. Law philosopher Wouter Veraart’s evaluation of the book (pp. 117–127) is especially interesting in this broader context. The book’s index is almost unusable, as it arranges its entries by first names.