“WHEREOF ONE CANNOT SPEAK…”

DECEPTIVE VOICES AND AGENTIVE SILENCES IN THE ARTICULATION OF IDENTITIES OF THE MOLUCCAN POSTCOLONIAL MIGRANT COMMUNITY IN THE NETHERLANDS

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INTRODUCTION

Whereof one cannot speak...

This dissertation explores themes of "voice" and "silence" in relation to the articulation of cultural and political identities of the Moluccan postcolonial migrant community in the Netherlands. I will begin by telling a story about my grandmother. This story will introduce my main concepts and questions, while providing a basic historical context to the subject matter, as well as explicating my personal relationship to it.

My grandmother's silence

In 1980, when my father turned eighteen, my grandfather's birthday present to him came in the form of two plane tickets to Ambon: one among the approximately 1,000 islands that together constitute the Indonesian province of Maluku. One of the tickets was for my father, the other for his mother, my grandmother. There was no third ticket for my grandfather himself. Due to his fear of flying, he saw no opportunity to join his wife and son on their trip, which was meant as an exploration of their "roots".

My grandmother was part of the first generation of the Moluccan community in the Netherlands. Her migration history had begun in the first stages of Indonesian independence from Dutch colonial rule.[1] Her father, my great-grandfather, had been one of 3,500 Moluccan soldiers of the KNIL (*Koninklijk Nederlandsch-Indisch Leger*: "Royal Dutch East Indies Army"). The KNIL was the colonial army in the Dutch East Indies, and was tasked to suppress the Indonesian National Revolution (1945-1949). This war started with the one-sided declaration of Indonesian independence on 17 August 1945, and ended with the transfer of sovereignty of the Dutch East Indies to the Republic of the United States of Indonesia on 27 December 1949. This federal state structure lasted only a few months and was succeeded by the unitary Republic of Indonesia on 17 August 1950.

As so-called "ethnic soldiers" for the Dutch army (Steijlen, 2018: 2), the Moluccan KNIL-soldiers had fought *against* Indonesian independence during the Revolution. Their

[1] My historical overview of the Indonesian independence struggle and the subsequent Moluccan migration is based on Fridus Steijlen, *RMS: van ideaal tot symbool. Moluks nationalisme in Nederland, 1951-1994* (1996).

alliance with colonial power was motivated by the separatist objective to establish a Moluccan republic, independent from Indonesia. However, this objective was never reached. The declaration of the Republic of South-Maluku, which took place on 25 April 1950 on the Moluccan main island, Ambon, led to Ambon's invasion and subsequent occupation by the Indonesian army on 28 September 1950. After two months of armed conflict between Indonesian and Moluccan troops, the separatist movement was officially defeated in November 1950. Meanwhile, within the context of the disbanding of the KNIL after the transfer of sovereignty in 1949, the Moluccan soldiers, due to their separatist position, refused to be demobilized in Indonesian territory. Because of the Indonesian occupation of Maluku, they also refused to be demobilized there. The Dutch government therefore decided to demobilize and subsequently house them in the Netherlands, a solution which was initially meant to be temporary.

Thus, the 3,500 soldiers and their families, a grand total of 12,500 Moluccans, arrived in the Netherlands between March and June 1951. On arrival, they were housed in migrant camps, pending return to Indonesia. However, because of continuing political unrest in Indonesia, as well as the ultimate failure to establish the Republic of South-Maluku, their exile was indefinitely prolonged. In 1958, the Indonesian government passed Law No. 62, on the Citizenship of the Republic of Indonesia, requiring Indonesian citizens to reconfirm their loyalty to the country. Most Moluccans in the Netherlands refused to do this, and therefore lost their Indonesian citizenship. They became eligible to apply for Dutch citizenship only from 1976 onward, after almost two decades of living in a condition of statelessness.

Among this first generation of migrants was my great-grandfather, who brought along his family, including his then twelve-year-old daughter: my grandmother. As far as her husband and son knew, my grandmother was born on Ambon, specifically in the Ambonese village of Leti. Therefore, during their trip to Ambon in 1980, my father was especially looking forward to visiting this village. His mother, however, seemed reluctant. For the majority of their trip, she refused to go out, and instead preferred to stay in the hotel room while my father explored the island by himself. Whenever he would ask his mother to bring him to Leti, or at least give him directions, she would respond in vague terms, or promise to go there with him another day, or claim that she was not feeling well.

When their stay on Ambon was coming to an end, my father's patience ran out and he insisted on visiting Leti, as it was unclear if they would ever return. To his surprise, his

mother began to cry. Their conflict was overheard by a passerby, who involved himself in the conversation, asking them what was going on. From this passerby, my father finally learned that Leti was not an Ambonese village at all, but rather an island elsewhere in Maluku, around 500 kilometres south of Ambon. This is how, at the end of their stay on Ambon, my father discovered that they had traveled to the wrong island, and that his mother had kept this silent. Although the truth about Leti was as such revealed, this still did not end my grandmother's refusal to talk about it. According to my father, my grandmother even quietly approved of him talking to the passerby: it gave her the opportunity to persist in her silence about the topic. In a way, the man functioned as a mediator between my father and my grandmother, providing the former with the information he sought, while granting the latter's wish not to talk about it. My grandmother in fact never broke her silence about this topic, for the rest of her life.

When I discussed the details of this story with my father within the context of my writing of this text, he emphasized that his mother had never directly claimed that she was from Ambon. Rather, she had always said she was from Leti, but had never specified where that was. Because 90% of the Moluccan migrants in the Netherlands indeed came from Ambon (Van Amersfoort, 2004: 171), the term "Ambonese" was initially used to refer to the entire community, by Moluccans and Dutch alike. From the 1970s onward, the term "Moluccans" became more common, but referring to the community as "Ambonese" never completely disappeared (ibid.). As such, the idea that my grandmother was from Ambon, like most other Moluccans in the Netherlands, and that Leti therefore must be an Ambonese village, was a product of my father's and my grandfather's conjecture. Nevertheless, my grandmother never refuted or corrected this idea, and even went along with it to such an extent that she agreed to a trip to Ambon. Moreover, she tried to hide the confusion about Leti as long as possible, by coming up with excuses in order to stall my father's plans to visit the "village", rather than admitting that Leti was its own island several hundreds of kilometres south of Ambon.

Thus, one way or another, my grandmother must have felt that she could or should not speak about her origin. The fact that she preferred travelling with her son to a more or less random destination instead of telling him the truth, indicates how strong her reluctance was to return, or even refer, to her actual place of birth. Moreover, her tears, which came when the truth finally came out, suggest that this moment was somehow painful for her. This is further confirmed by her continued refusal to break her silence about the topic even after the confusion about Leti had been settled. One could speculate about the reasons behind my

grandmother's silence. For instance, it could indicate a trauma, war-related or otherwise. It could be understood as a form of mourning over the loss of her homeland, that is, the Republic of South-Maluku, which was never acknowledged. Perhaps the silence was an articulation of her in-between position as an involuntary migrant who was lost between nationalities, identifying neither as Dutch, nor as Indonesian. It could even be interpreted as a symptom of an intercultural communication problem between my Moluccan grandmother, her Dutch husband, and their mixed-background son.

However, the purpose of telling this story at the beginning of my dissertation is in fact *not* to interpret the reasons behind my grandmother's silence. After all, the answer could be sought anywhere from the widely symptomatic, which would interpret her silence within the context of her migration history, to the deeply personal, which would interpret her as someone with particular reasons not to revisit her past. Neither of these directions would be satisfying, considering the fact that it would be impossible to confirm any hypothesis. Moreover, my grandmother's refusal to talk about Leti was so complete that my father was eventually dependent upon a passerby to point him toward it. To inscribe her silence with meaning now, within the context of this text, would be to go against her own wishes: I would risk *speaking for her*. My grandmother wished to remain silent and she must have had her reasons for that. It would be inappropriate to attempt to uncover those reasons. Therefore, rather than approach her silence as an indication toward a hidden meaning that should be uncovered, my intention is to study the silence as such, and for itself, *without* speculating about the reasons behind it, so as not to appropriate or override it, or erase it as silence.

Indeed, my grandmother's insistence on remaining silent recalls Ludwig Wittgenstein's well-known aphorism, part of which is also included in the title of this dissertation: "Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent" (Wittgenstein, 2010 [1922]: 108). According to Jane Geany (2018), the aphorism both indicates "a loss of confidence in the power of language to represent", and suggests that there are "certain kinds of experience that transcend language" (2018: *xiii*). Correspondingly, my grandmother's silence could be taken as an indication that whatever she was not speaking about perhaps *could* not be expressed in words. Perhaps it could only be expressed through silence. With that in mind, I am aware that reproducing the story of my grandmother's silence in this text, while insisting that her silence itself should not be erased, constitutes somewhat of a paradox: one that extents to the entire premise of this dissertation. That is, my aim is to discuss silence *without undoing it as silence*. In order to do that, I approach silence not as an absence, but as a

presence, and not as an indication toward a hidden or lost meaning, but as something that itself is productive of meaning.

As such, the story of my grandmother may serve as a point of entry into this dissertation's research topic: i.e., *deceptive voices and agentive silences in the articulation of identities of the Moluccan community in the Netherlands.* Basic definitions of my terms "deceptive voice", "agentive silence", "articulation", and "identity" can be derived from the story. My grandmother wilfully remained silent about a certain aspect of her identity. As such, her silence was *agentive*: it was a conscious strategy which she deployed in order to have control over how much others knew about her. At the same time, her silence was not all-encompassing, because she did, in fact, use her voice, but only in order to create a *deception*. That is, during the trip to Ambon, she used her voice to distract my father from finding out about her silence. She came up with excuses not to visit Leti, only so that my father would not realize that she was keeping quiet what and where Leti really was. If the truth about Leti was hidden behind my grandmother's silence, then her silence itself, if you will, was hidden behind her voice. In short, my grandmother's ways of not speaking about her past, or speaking about it in a selective way, combined a deceptive use of her voice with an agentive use of silence.

Therefore, her story is a particular and individual example of what I mean with the "articulation of identities" of Moluccans in the Netherlands, a practice which, throughout the rest of my dissertation, will primarily be approached as a collective endeavour. My use of the term "identity" corresponds to great extent, but not entirely, with the way in which it is usually understood within the field of cultural studies, as outlined by Stuart Hall (1996):

> identities are about questions of using the resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being: not "who we are" or "where we came from", so much as what we might become, how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves. (1996: 4)

This definition indicates that the construction of identity is an ongoing and interactive process that includes both how one sees oneself, how one sees others, and how one is seen by others. In other words, identity is a matter of contestation. To interpret my grandmother's silence within the context of this definition, means to understand her silence not as non-participation, in which she fails to express "who she is" or "where she came from", but as an active form of self-representation, in which she takes control over "who she might become".

This approach is anti-essentialist in that it does not understand identity as referring to a "stable core of the self, unfolding from beginning to end through all the vicissitudes of history without change" (ibid., 3). Rather, it is understood as a discursive practice, that is, identities are "produced in specific historical and institutional sites within specific discursive formations and practices, by specific enunciative strategies" (ibid., 4). As such, Hall defines identity construction not only as contextual, but also as *enunciative*, that is, as something that must be declared, expressed, voiced. This is where I depart slightly from his approach. While I do not disagree with his emphasis on enunciation when it comes to identity construction, I propose to keep my grandmother's story in mind, in order to suggest that the construction of one's identity can be equally dependent on that which is *not* enunciated.

This is where my use of the term "articulation" comes in. Hall himself (1986) understands identity to be a matter of articulation, in the sense of "an 'articulated' lorry: a lorry where the front and back can, but need not necessarily, be connected to one another. The two parts are connected to each other, but through a specific linkage that can be broken. An articulation is thus […] a linkage which is not necessary, determined, absolute and essential for all time" (1986: 53). In other words, Hall's reference to articulation is in order to emphasize the relational and dynamic aspects of identity. I agree with this application of the term, but would like to add one that more directly refers to the question of identity's particular relationship to enunciation. In its most basic Oxford English Dictionary definition, "to articulate" means "to set out in articles; to particularize, specify" ("articulate, v.I.1"). This aspect of particularization remains central in definitions of the term that are speech-related: e.g., "to express distinctly"; "to modify (vocal sound, a pulmonary airstream, etc.) so as to produce a speech sound, a word, etc." ("articulate, v.II.5; v.II.6").

According to this definition, articulation refers not only to the production of speech or sound, but it specifically indicates that this sound is divided into distinct particles. As such, to articulate words well is as much a matter of voice as it is of silence: without the appropriate use of silences, vocal sounds cannot be modified so as to express something distinctly. Similarly, in the sense of a well-articulated argument, good articulation depends on a balanced interplay between what is said and what is not said. Thus, when I propose to see identity construction as a matter of articulation rather than enunciation or any of its other more directly voice-focused synonyms, it is to suggest that voice and silence both play their parts in the construction of one's identity. This suggestion will be further developed in the next section.

Does the subaltern want to speak?

My grandmother's story resonates with, but also immediately departs from, the well-known question which Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak asks in her article of the same name, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988). In her text, she focuses on Hindu women during British colonialism, and argues that they were doubly oppressed: as women in a sexist society and as colonized subjects. The women had no voices of their own, in the sense that their position in society was exclusively represented through two other, dominant discourses: Indian patriarchy and the British colonial regime. According to Spivak, this lack of a voice is the defining feature of the subaltern. It indicates a condition of marginalization that is discursive, i.e., that can only be countered by finding a means of self-expression, as Spivak declared in a follow-up text: "If the subaltern can speak then, thank God, the subaltern is not a subaltern anymore" (1989: 283). My grandmother, as an involuntary, postcolonial migrant living in the country of the former colonial oppressor, could be interpreted as occupying a subaltern position. And, as it appears, she could not, or at least did not, speak about her premigration origin. To this extent her story corresponds to Spivak's theory.

Yet, there are two important differences between my grandmother's silence and that of the theoretical figure of the subaltern, that become apparent when considering that Spivak's theory is often understood as an incentive to "solve" the subaltern's silence, by "giving voice, listening to the voiceless, speaking up, speaking back, and the like" (Slotta, 2017: 1). If the subaltern ceases to be subaltern when she finds a way to speak, then my father's insistence on my grandmother talking to him can be interpreted as a moment of her empowerment. However, what happened in that instance indicates otherwise. Not only did my grandmother cry when her past was finally brought up, she also refused to speak more than absolutely necessary. She never elaborated on her reasons for remaining silent about her past, nor did she ever provide any further details about her life before the migration.

Therefore, the first difference with Spivak's subaltern is that at least part of my grandmother's silence was not a matter of inability, but of refusal: *she did not want to speak*. The second difference is that she, in fact, *did have a voice*, which she used to deceive her son into believing that she was not keeping anything quiet. Therefore, contrary to Spivak's voice, which is used as a metaphor for empowerment through self-expression, my grandmother used her voice *to avoid self-expression.*

As such, this story complicates the common dichotomy between voice and silence in three different ways. First, it demonstrates that silence does not have to indicate a lack of identity, but can also indicate a strategy of protecting one's identity. Second, it shows that voice is not only instrumental in declaring aspects of one's identity, but it can also be instrumental in concealing such aspects. Third, voice and silence do not have to oppose each other, but instead may work together, or at least co-exist. These considerations refute the common idea that voice is to be preferred over silence, or that silence is to be understood as merely the absence of voice. In fact, both voice and silence can have different functions depending on how they are deployed as communication strategies in different situations.

These conclusions resonate with the work of a growing body of scholars who are sceptical of the ubiquity of voice in postcolonial studies and other theoretical discourses that focus on matters of power and identity. These writers are instead oriented toward analyzing the functions of silence, both in its departures from and in its co-operations with voice (e.g. Edelman, 1989; Katz, 1999; Brown, 2005; MacLure et al., 2010; Gray, 2012; Wagner, 2012; Slotta, 2017; Dingli and Cooke et al., 2019). My dissertation is aimed at contributing to this field, by exploring through five different case studies, one per chapter, how voices and silences are deployed in both Dutch and Moluccan articulations of Moluccan identity in the Netherlands. The objective of each of these case studies is to answer the following central question: *which kinds of voice and silence can be detected, and how do these voices and silences contribute to the articulation of identities of the Moluccan community in the Netherlands?* Before elaborating on my chapters, I will first take a moment to position my own approach in relation to other prominent theories about voice and silence as functions of identity articulation.

Rethinking voices

In a text called "Could the Subaltern Remain Silent?" (2012), Roi Wagner critically revisits the silence of Spivak's subaltern. He remarks that Spivak's subaltern *can*, in fact, speak, but not in a way that is recognized or accepted as meaningful by her discursive context. According to Wagner, when Spivak states near the end of her text that "the subaltern cannot speak" (1988: 308), what this means is that "The subaltern cannot speak wherever her speech is mediated through interpretation and replication mechanisms that foreclose her exercise of power through speech" (2012: 3). In other words, Spivak does not conceptualize the subaltern

as someone who is literally unable to speak. Rather, the subaltern does speak, but her voice is not acknowledged as legitimate.

Furthermore, the problem of the subaltern's so-called speechlessness is actually not so much her assumed silence, but rather the fact that her apparent lack of voice is filled up by other, dominant voices, who are *speaking for her*. In the case of Spivak's example of the Hindu women, their voice is overridden by the dominant voices of Indian patriarchy on the one hand, and British colonialism on the other. This, again, is not to be taken literally: the Hindu women are not understood as literally silent while others speak. Instead, they are conceptualized as not being allowed the development of their own discourse through which they could express their sense of self. Rather, the only discourses they are allowed access to are those of their patriarchal and colonial oppressors. In this interpretation, the subaltern's speechlessness is thus no silence at all, but a condition of being allowed to speak only with voices that are not their own.

These considerations show a preoccupation with voice in the theory of the subaltern, in which powerlessness is presented as a condition of being forced to submit to the voices of others, and in which the key to empowerment is imagined as the finding or developing of a voice of one's own. In other words, the oppression is both caused, and envisioned to be solved, by voice. In this logocentric understanding of power, there is no place for silence, other than as a reference to one's loss of voice in the face of other parties' more dominant voices. This approach to silence is therefore necessarily negative: silence here signifies the failure of voice.

This binary understanding of voice as a metaphor for empowerment, and silence as its negative counterpart, is not only present in Spivak, but could in fact be identified as a fundamental principle of many other theories that concern power. In the preface of their edited volume *Political Silence: Meanings, Functions and Ambiguity* (2019), Sophia Dingli and Thomas N. Cooke argue that in a majority of political and cultural theory, the notion of silence "has come to imply the absence of voice in political life and, as such, tends to be scholastically prescribed as the antithesis of political power and political agency" (2019: *i*). As a result, when silences are analyzed, if at all, "they are usually rendered synonymous with notions of defeat, lack, absence, or even as the end of politics, power, and agency" (ibid., 1). Examples they provide include the poststructuralist interest in "writing madness back into our discourse, thus recovering the voice of the insane, who had been silenced by the discourse of

Reason", and feminist theorists examining "the silencing of women by phallogocentric discourses" (ibid., 6-7).

To this one could add one of the most literal slogans available within this negative perspective on silence: ACT-UP's AIDS awareness motto "Silence = Death" (1986).[2] In "The Plague of Discourse" (1989), Lee Edelman argues that this motto also implies its opposite, i.e. "that Discourse = Defence, that language, articulation, the intervention of voice, is salutary, vivifying, since discourse can defend us against the death that must result from the continuation of our silence" (1989: 292-93). As such, "if that slogan challenges those in the communities most affected by AIDS to defend themselves, it does so by appealing to defensive properties that it implicitly identifies as inherent in discourse" (ibid., 292). Although the slogan has been helpful with regard to lifting the taboo on AIDS, it has overlooked the fact that breaking this silence often entails exposing vulnerable subjects to "abjection, censure or regulation" (Brown, 2005: 86). Wendy Brown (2005) concurs with Edelman's hesitance to understand breaking silence as the prime path toward inclusion, when she argues that, "while to be invisible within a local discourse may occasion the injuries of social liminality, such suffering may be mild compared to that of radical denunciation, hystericization, exclusion, or criminalization" (ibid., 87).

These examples indicate that silence is generally not understood as an agentive act, but as an imposed situation that one must overcome through active participation in discourse, i.e. speaking up. In "Silent Citizenship in Democratic Theory and Practice" (2012), Sean Gray argues that this perspective can actually be detrimental to the empowerment of marginalized subjects: "in aiming to overcome silence by encouraging speech, democratic theorists ignore the fact that sometimes *what* citizens say is precisely the issue […]. Where speech is distorted, talking things out may merely reproduce distortion" (2012: 7-8; italics in original). In other words, theories that overemphasize the emancipatory qualities of voice ignore that the cause for the subaltern's marginalization often lies not with the quality of their voices as such, but with the surrounding discourses that refuse to acknowledge their voices as legitimate, or distort and appropriate these voices until they resemble their own. Therefore, encouraging marginalized people to speak up within the very discourses that marginalized their voices in the first place "unfairly biases the democratic process in favor of those citizens who already have strong capacities for speech" (ibid.). The subaltern's voice is more likely to perpetuate

[2] I am grateful to my friend and colleague, Looi van Kessel, for this insight.

rather than undo their position at the margins, as they are expected to compete with voices that, unlike theirs, do already enjoy legitimacy.

Wendy Brown (2005) agrees with Gray that much political and cultural theory shows a disproportionate amount of faith in the liberating qualities of speech, and diagnoses this as a form of "compulsory discursivity" (2005: 85). She elaborates:

> Expression is cast either as that which makes us free, tells "our" truth, and puts our truth into circulation, *or* as that which oppresses us by featuring "their" truth […]. Though one side in the debate argues for more expression on our part […] and the other argues for less on "their" part, both sides nonetheless subscribe to an *expressive* and *repressive* notion of speech, agreeing on its capacity to express the truth of an individual's desire or condition, or to repress that truth. Both equate freedom with voice and visibility, both assume recognition to be unproblematic when we tell our own story, and both assume that such recognition is the material of power as well as pleasure. Neither confronts the regulatory potential in speaking ourselves, its capacity to bind rather than emancipate us. (Ibid., 85-86; italics in original)

In this citation, Brown points toward the claustrophobic logocentrism that marks the common understanding of power and freedom. Voice has become an overarching metaphor for power, referring to both the cause of, and the solution to, domination. That is, voice is reduced to its *repressive* and *expressive* capacities. However, as she argues at the end of the citation, by understanding voice exclusively as overpowering or as empowerment, a third possible effect is glossed over entirely, namely, voice as a way to *subject to power*, or, to paraphrase part of the *Miranda* warning commonly used in American law enforcement: "Anything you say can be used against you".

Brown terms this regulatory effect of voice "recolonization", defining it as a situation "in which potentially subversive discourse, born of exclusion and marginalization, can be colonized by that which produced it, much as countercultural fashion is routinely commodified by the corporate textile industry" (ibid., 89). As such, she departs slightly from Gray's (2012) approach with regard to the overestimation of voice in theories on empowerment. Whereas Gray argues that the problem with the voice of the marginalized is that they are expected to compete within discourses that are biased against them, Brown emphasizes that, even if certain subjugated voices do achieve recognition as belonging to subversive discourses, they risk becoming annexed by the dominant discourses they were

supposed to counter: "These efforts suggest how the work of breaking silence can metamorphose into new techniques of domination, how our truths can become our rulers rather than our emancipators, how our confessions become the norms by which we are regulated" (2005: 91).

These arguments reconsider the practice of speaking up as a form of subjugating oneself to discourse, while defining discourse itself as a system that regulates rather than liberates. By doing this, they also allow for a reconsideration of silence in its particular relation to discourse. If voice is taken as an instrument to enter, or be entered by, discourse, then silence can be understood as "that which discourse has not penetrated, as a scene of practices that escape the regulatory functions of discourse. It is this latter function that renders silence itself a source of protection and potentially even a source of power" (ibid., 88).

Rethinking silences

An example of silence as protection and power can be found in Jonathan D. Katz's text "John Cage's Queer Silence" (1999). John Cage is perhaps best known for his composition called *4'33"* (1952), during which the performer of the piece is supposed to remain silent for the duration of 4 minutes and 33 seconds. The piece is but one of many of Cage's compositions that touch upon, or somehow perform, silence. According to Katz, Cage's interest in silence must, at least in part, be analyzed by relating it to his life as a closeted homosexual within the homophobic culture of cold war era American society. Cage understood that his full acceptance within a culture that was intolerant of his sexuality depended on his not speaking out about it. To that extent, Cage's silence can indeed be understood as a "source of protection" (Brown, 2005: 88).

However, Katz stresses that "nearly everybody in the art world who knew him knew of his lifelong relationship with Merce Cunningham, and some even knew about the other men in his life. His sexuality was an open secret within the avant-garde" (1999: 231). Apparently, Cage did not intend to protect his sexuality entirely from public detection. In fact, if concealment were the objective, argues Katz, not silence but voice would have been the most effective instrument: "To be homosexual in a homophobic culture was forcefully to realize that conversation was not always about expression, that it might be about the opposite: dissimulation, camouflage, hiding" (ibid., 238). This remark recalls the deceptive quality of

voice that was discussed before, that is, voice not as a means of self-expression, but as a means to *avoid* self-expression.

Cage, however, did not so much hide or camouflage his sexuality, as *refuse to publicly declare it*. From the 1940s onward, this type of refusal became a central topic in his public performances. For instance, in his "Lecture on Nothing" (1949), he declared that "I am here/ and there is nothing to say", and "Nothing more than/ nothing/ can be said" (qtd. in: ibid., 239). Through these and similar performances, "Cage became notable precisely for his silences – clear proof of the unsuitability of silence as a strategy of evasion" (ibid., 238). As such, Cage took a paradoxical approach to self-expression, in which his aim was to voice silence, or to make his absence from discourse present within discourse. His silence was therefore not a passive form of retreat, but an active form of defiance.

Katz prefers such silent defiance over vocal defiance for reasons that recall Brown's argument about "recolonization" (2005: 89). Silence, states Katz, "avoids the recolonizing force of the oppositional: what permits the dominant culture to consolidate its authority by reference to the excluded other" (1999: 245). Rather than weaken the dominant discourse, "opposition may simply reproduce the binary logic through which domination writes itself" (ibid.). In contrast to this, silence, understood as an active refusal to submit to discourse, offers "the prospect of resisting the status quo without opposing it" (ibid., 243). In short, silence does not only defy the dominant discourse by overtly refusing to submit to it, it also denies that discourse the possibility of recolonizing the defiant subject's position, because that position is not declared in words or definitions to which it could be bound.

This approach to silence is far removed from its common conceptualization as a lack of agency which was discussed before, in relation to Spivak's and similar theories. Rather than as a reference to an absence, Katz describes a silence that is performed actively. This understanding of silence as an action, instead of as a condition, is perhaps less obvious in the English language than it is in other languages. For instance, the Dutch verb "zwijgen", or in German: "schweigen", already implies something that one *does*, just like speaking. These verbs have no appropriate translation in English other than "to be silent". This phrase, however, presents the silence itself as a condition: either as a situation in which one dwells, or as an infliction one suffers. The only verb that the English language does have with regard to silence is "to silence (someone)", meaning to force another to be silent. Silence, in English,

can therefore be understood as a repressive action done upon others, but not as an agentive action one does deliberately to and with oneself.

Yet according to Dingli and Cooke (2019), the conceptualization of silence as a deliberate action is vital to understanding silence as political. According to their definition, silence happens when someone "refuses to validate, confirm, or verify […] another actor's pursuit of power or attempts to execute power" (ibid.). In other words, the act of silence produces a situation of discord in which existing power positions are destabilized and can therefore be reordered differently: "silences offer the political possibility of (re)collectivism, (re)inscription, and (re)configuration" (ibid., 3). What becomes apparent in this definition, is that silence is not only something that one does, but it also *does something*. Put differently, silence is understood here not as a condition that has meaning, but as an action that produces meaning.

In "Silence as Resistance to Analysis" (2010), MacLure et al. explore this, what they call, *performative* quality of silence through the discussion of a case study which partially resembles the story of my grandmother, because it discusses a situation in which someone refuses to speak. The case concerns a kindergarten class, in which one of the children, Hannah, "never responds when the teacher calls out her name during the morning ritual of 'taking the register' " (ibid., 492).[3] Hannah's silence gives rise to her parents' concern as well as that of the school. Several strategies are attempted to break her silence. None are successful. Her case is eventually committed to psychological research. Analysis of her behavior results in a wide range of explanations as to the reasons behind her refusal to speak, none of which can be confirmed, because Hannah persists in her silence. Unanswered questions include: "What did Hannah's silence 'mean'? Was the resistance intentional or not? Was she able to reply but choosing not to? Or had she somehow become paralyzed?" (ibid., 493).

All of these questions could also be asked with regard to my grandmother's silence. And like with Hannah's case, these questions cannot be resolved in any conclusive way. As such, both Hannah's and my grandmother's stories have in common that they constitute silence as an obstacle that upsets the regular flow of discourse. Any analysis which one could make of the reasons for my grandmother's silence must inevitably remain unconfirmed and incomplete. Her silence, like that of Hannah, can therefore be understood not as an indication

[3] Maclure et al. indicate that "Hannah" is a pseudonym (Maclure et al., 2010: 499).

of an absent meaning to be restored, but as an active obstruction of such meaning-making. Thus, in both of these case studies, I understand silence to be a disruption mechanism that has the power to undermine and redirect the regulatory power of normative discourses. This understanding of silence informs the basis of my dissertation's central argumentation, as I will elaborate in the following section.

Deceptive voices and agentive silences

The four most important reconsiderations of voice and silence that the above review of theories about voice and silence offers for my dissertation are the following. (1) **Voices carry the potential for deception**: they may offer a false promise of truth or transparency, or a false sense of agency. This argument stands in contrast to the common understanding of voice in cultural and political theory as a metaphor for empowerment through transparent self-expression. I do not completely deny the possibility of this latter function, but I do think it deserves further scrutiny, seeing that (2) **Self-expression can make one vulnerable to the regulatory power of discourse**: oppositional voices may be recolonized within the oppressing discourses they aim to subvert. As such, I argue that opposition is a vulnerable form of resistance in which one declares one's position, and thereby becomes susceptible to regulation: anything you say can be used against you.

In contrast to voice, which thus has its limitations as an instrument of resistance or empowerment, I argue that (3) **silence can be a way to resist discursive power without opposing it**. With this argument, I take silence as a refusal to participate in a particular discourse, that is, a refusal to explain oneself, or to accept certain roles imposed by others. Whereas an oppositional voice can still be identified by the discourse as its dissenting counterpart, a silence defies such regulation through its inherent resistance to interpretation. Due to this ambiguity, it avoids the risk of recolonization. As such, (4) **silence can undermine and reconfigure discursive power**, not so much by escaping discourse entirely, but by being present in it as a manifestation of the limit of its reach. If "discourse itself is inscribed with violence since its goal is to assimilate alterity" (Dingli and Khalfey, 2019: 69), then silence offers a kind of alterity that, unlike one's voice, cannot be assimilated. In its capacity as an irreducible, ambiguous manifestation of alterity, silence interrupts the flow of discourse, provoking it to change its course.

These four points constitute this dissertation's central approach to voice and silence. That is, I understand silence not as the negative counterpart of voice, nor as an absence of or from discourse, but as an agentive act which is present within discourse, and which may be performed in order to influence and change discourse. As such, I understand silence not as the failure of voice, but as a productive alternative to voice. By suggesting these reconsiderations of voice and silence, my intention is not to deny that speaking up may have an empowering effect in certain situations, but rather to stress that voice is not always a reliable instrument due to the fact that there may be different effects based on who is speaking to whom in which kind of context. Some voices may indeed be instruments of empowerment, but others may be instruments of deception or manipulation, and yet others may be instruments of obedience or complicity. Similarly, as to silence, the aim is not to deny that silencing happens, or that one's silence can be an indication of being powerless. Rather, the objective is to open up silence's definition to alternative functions, some of which are empowering or at least resistant to power.

I will pursue this objective through five case studies that are taken from the long history of Moluccan subjection to Dutch power, both during and since the Dutch colonization of Indonesia (1605-1949). All five chapters study articulations of Moluccan identity, and explore within them different practices concerning voice, such as speaking up, speaking for others and giving voice to others, as well as different manifestations of, both deliberate and imposed, silences. My intention is *not* to establish a grand theory about voice and silence that, as a set of particular characteristics, is supposed to define the Moluccan community as a homogenous group. Instead, my aim is to nuance the traditionally rather limiting binary opposition between voice-as-power and silence-as-powerlessness through my analyses of Moluccan identity articulations. In the next section, I will specify how each of the five chapters contributes to this purpose.

Overview of the chapters

This dissertation has five chapters, each of which focuses on one specific case study. These case studies concern articulations of Moluccan identity, and the conflicts that occur between different perspectives that are involved with these articulations. In most cases, these different perspectives are, in so many words, the "Dutch" and the "Moluccan" perspectives. At moments where this could be relevant, the "Indonesian" perspective is also considered. I place

these terms between parentheses in order to immediately emphasize how problematic using them is. That is, the identity conflicts which I analyze in my chapters cannot be reduced to conflicts between different ethnicities, not in the least place because these ethnicities themselves can generally not be simplified into homogenous categories. The Moluccan community has not one but many ways of understanding its history, its place in Dutch society, and the way in which history connects Moluccans to Indonesia. Likewise, the Dutch and Indonesian societies have no one single understanding of these questions either.

Thus, my use of these differentiations, "Dutch", "Moluccan", "Indonesian", is only meant to indicate that articulations of Moluccan identity happen both from the inside and from the outside: there is the self-identification as Moluccan and there is the identification of "the other" as Moluccan. The first form of identification implies the articulation of a non-Moluccan, for instance Dutch or Indonesian, "other", and the second form of identification implies the articulation of a non-Moluccan "self". In short, the case studies discussed throughout this dissertation all work from the base principle that identity articulation is an interactive practice, in which "selfs" and "others" are constructed, and which can be initiated from different directions. The central purpose of all five chapters, then, is to identify and analyze ways in which practices of voice and silence are deployed as strategies of identity articulation, whether in order to construct the "self", the "other", or both.

In order to provide a foundation for these analyses, each chapter starts with a historical contextualization. That is, I begin every chapter by placing its main case study within the larger context of Moluccan history. This element of the dissertation's structure may effect a sense of repetitiveness, to the extent that certain prominent elements of this history, like the circumstances around the arrival of the Moluccan community's first generation in the Netherlands in 1951, will be retold with slight variations throughout all chapters. My decision to work like this perhaps requires a clarification. I have initially considered writing one separate, historical chapter, to which all other, analytical chapters could refer. However, I eventually decided against this approach, because I did not want to risk trying to appropriate Moluccan history. Therefore, instead of fixing this history into one definitive rendition, enclosed within one chapter, my approach is to continuously revisit it briefly at the start of every chapter, each time with a somewhat shifted emphasis. As such, I mean to acknowledge that Moluccan history cannot be captured, but must instead be told time and again, to allow for different perspectives and ongoing reconsiderations.

Chapter 1 discusses matters of voice and silence with regard to historiography and, to lesser extent, literature. The focus in this chapter lies on the historical representation of a Moluccan revolt against Dutch colonial rule that took place in 1817. Although the revolt ended with the reestablishment of the Dutch colonial regime, it still cost the lives of hundreds of Dutch soldiers and officials. As such, colonial writers have often represented the revolt as a failure, whereas Indonesian postcolonial writers have interpreted it as a successful precursor of the Indonesian independence struggle that culminated in the Indonesian National Revolution (1945-1949). In the chapter, I provide a comparative analysis between prominent colonial and postcolonial accounts of the revolt, studying how both of these perspectives constitute dominant, historical voices that appropriate the Moluccan revolt for the opposing ideological purposes of, respectively, colonial justification and Indonesian nationalism.

As such, both of these dominant voices silence the possibility of a distinctly Moluccan rendition of the history, in which the revolt could be interpreted as a precursor of Moluccan separatism, that is, their identification as a people independent both from the Netherlands and Indonesia. With that in mind, the chapter ends with an analysis of a short story about the Moluccan revolt by Dutch novelist Maria Dermoût ("De Juwelen Haarkam", 1956). In her story, Dermoût not only destabilizes the aforementioned dominant historical voices, but also allows for the silence of the Moluccan perspective to appear in and of itself, as an indication for an alternative, Moluccan version of history. Therefore, my reading will show how Dermoût's story provides a space for the Moluccan silence to become detectable, but without undoing it as silence, because this would mean to appropriate it all over again.

Chapter 2 continues this emphasis on Moluccan protest, by studying two contemporary instances of it: i.e., the train hijackings that took place in the Netherlands in 1975 and 1977. These actions were carried out by second-generation Moluccan migrants in order to enforce awareness of their separatist struggle toward the establishment of the Republic of South-Maluku: an objective which they argued the Dutch state was obliged to support. During the first hijacking, three hostages were killed. The second hijacking was ended by a military offensive during which six hijackers were killed, as well as two hostages. In 2014, the next of kin of two of the killed hijackers sued the Dutch state, accusing it of having ordered the execution of the hijackers by the military. Their case was lost in favour of the state in 2018. Frequent news coverage of this lawsuit has led to renewed discussions in both traditional and social media about the hijackings. Such discussions often concern

questions about the location of justice: i.e., to what extent can the hijackings themselves, and, alternatively, to what extent can the military offensive, be interpreted as justified?

In my analysis of this case study, I explore the strategies involving voice and silence that are deployed in these discussions. Because the hijackers carried out their actions on behalf of the Moluccan separatist struggle, they can be, and often have been, framed as the voices of their community. By framing them as such, not only are the hijackers understood as particular representatives of collective Moluccan identity, but, vice versa, Moluccan identity is also reduced to the way in which the hijackers expressed it. Similarly to Chapter 1, therefore, the focus here is on competing interpretations of history. However, whereas Chapter 1 focuses on the voices of the historians responsible for shaping a historical occurrence into certain renditions, Chapter 2 studies the voices of those who were *involved* in a historical occurrence, and the ways in which these voices are framed through discussions that take place in traditional and social media. In doing so, the aim is not only to analyze how these voices are silenced or amplified, but also how they become collectivized: that is, how certain individuals' voices come to represent a larger community, and to what extent such individuals themselves have a say in this process.

These first two chapters constitute **Part 1** of this dissertation, entitled **Anything you say can be used against you**. The objective here is to analyze voices for their appropriating qualities, in Chapter 1, as well as their regulatory qualities, in Chapter 2. As such, the emphasis is more on voice than on silence. This emphasis is turned around in chapters 3 and 4, which together form **Part 2: When silence speaks louder than words**.

In **Chapter 3**, I discuss a commemorative statue of Dutch colonizer Jan Pieterszoon Coen (1587-1629), that stands on a public square in the Dutch city of Hoorn. The statue was placed in 1893, as part of a larger program intended to strengthen Dutch national identity, by honoring national heroes with monuments. Coen was selected because of his role in establishing the Dutch monopoly on the global spice trade during the early 1600s. However, his heroic status has always been controversial: he established the spice monopoly by killing nearly all 15,000 inhabitants of the Banda islands, an island group in the Moluccan region, where the central plantations for nutmeg and clove were located. The 1,000 survivors were deported as slaves to Batavia (the current-day Indonesian capital city Jakarta). The Banda islands themselves were repopulated with slaves from other parts of the Dutch colonies, which were put to work on the spice plantations.

Since this statue was erected, the city of Hoorn has systematically ignored recurrent voices in favor of removing it. However, after the statue fell from its pedestal during a construction accident in 2011, these voices could no longer be ignored. In an attempt to work around this discord, the municipality decided to add a new paragraph to the inscription of the renovated statue. This new paragraph mentions the fact that Coen's legacy is controversial and that not everyone agrees that he deserves a statue. As such, it seems as if the voices of those who were against the statue are now appropriately represented in public discourse. Yet, by granting the opposition a voice in this way, the municipality legitimized its decision to ignore what that voice had to say: the statue was renovated in direct disregard of the opposition's wishes. The chapter provides an analysis of this paradoxical interplay of voice and silence, in which being granted a voice may entail being silenced.

Chapter 4 discusses the activist group De Grauwe Eeuw, that has been active since 2016. The activists work predominantly by spray-painting slogans such as "genocide" and "stop colonial glorification" on colonial monuments, including Coen's statue. However, the activists systematically refuse to speak to the mainstream media about the motivation behind their actions, claiming that speaking to this established discourse is like not speaking at all. They argue that such coverage would result in the silencing of their political voice, because it would be filtered through the media's predetermined stance on the topic at hand.

In other words, if Chapter 3 discusses how voices of dissent can be silenced through their inclusion in public discourse, Chapter 4 looks at this situation from the other side: by refusing to speak to the mainstream media, De Grauwe Eeuw prevents its voice of protest from being assimilated by this dominant discourse. However, as will be elaborated in the second half of this chapter, this strategy of silence is not without its particular risks. By studying the ways in which the media have criminalized these activists, to large extent based on their systematic refusal to declare their position publicly, I will suggest that silence, like voice, has its limitations as a strategy of identity articulation.

In **Chapter 5**, I further develop my analysis of the limitations of voice and silence as instruments of identity articulation, by analyzing what the Moluccan community considers to be a core element of its collective identity: the concept of "adat". This originally Arabic term means "custom" or "habit", and was introduced by Islamic merchants in Maluku and throughout the Indonesian archipelago from the 1200s onward. The term was used as a way to refer to indigenous customs that could not be incorporated into Islamic law. Therefore, rather

than referring to a particular system of customs or laws, "adat" denoted Islamic law's undetermined opposite: i.e. the wide variety of indigenous practices which, other than this generalizing label of "custom", remained undefined. I will trace the development of this term, from its original usage as a reference to the undefined, to its current usage as a fundamental part of Moluccan identity. As will become clear, the Moluccan usage can be understood as a strategic reappropriation of the term as a form of self-identification, which deliberately keeps intact its original capacity as something which lacks fixed definition.

As a comparative analysis will show, this particular application deviates from ways in which the term has been used by other parties throughout Indonesian and Moluccan history: including colonialist, postcolonial nationalist, and regionalist applications, in, respectively, the early, mid, and late twentieth century. Whereas these applications all have in common that they were attempts to reduce adat to a set of clear definitions aimed at instrumentalizing the term for particular purposes of societal organization, Moluccan adat is emphatically understood as something which cannot be defined. As such, adat is an example of an articulation of identity which requires both voice and silence. That is, although adat is openly declared as central to Moluccan collective identity, the term's specific definition "remains silent", to the extent that it is not fixed in discourse. By being present in discourse only as something which cannot be defined by it, this aspect of Moluccan identity remains protected from becoming a matter of contestation.

Within the larger distribution of this dissertation's three parts, Chapter 5 constitutes its own part, namely **Part 3: ...thereof one must be silent**. Whereas the chapters of Part 1 deal primarily with voice, and those belonging to Part 2 focus mostly on silence, the purpose of Part 3 is to stress that voice and silence are manifested at each other's limit, and as such, that they must be theorized together. This is why the title of this part is in reference to the second half of Wittgenstein's aphorism: "Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent" (Wittgenstein, 2010 [1922]: 108). The project as such will come full circle at the end, returning to the central conclusion of my grandmother's story: i.e., voice and silence function not as each other's opposites, but as each other's continuation. Identity is articulated through the interplay of what is expressed and what remains silent.

PART ONE

Anything you say can be used against you

CHAPTER ONE

Voices of history – The case of Martha Christina Tiahahu's revolt and its historical reappropriations

Introduction

This chapter concerns the historical representation of the Moluccan warrior Martha Christina Tiahahu (1800-1818), who, from 16 May until 26 November 1817, was involved in a revolt against Dutch colonial rule in the central Moluccan region. The details of this history will be discussed after this introduction. Historical sources differ widely as to Tiahahu's exact role in the revolt, interpreting it within a range from marginal to pivotal. She was captured by Dutch soldiers, and fell ill on the colonial ship that was taking her to the colony's capital city, Batavia, where she would have been forced to live in exile. She died on 2 January 1818, after perseveringly having refused all care and medicine.

Although the revolt in which she participated was defeated by the colonial regime, it still cost the lives of hundreds of Dutch soldiers and officials. As such, Dutch colonial writers have often represented the revolt as a failure, whereas Indonesian postcolonial writers have interpreted it as a successful precursor of the Indonesian independence struggle that culminated in the Indonesian National Revolution (1945-1949). With that in mind, the objective of this chapter is to provide a comparative analysis between prominent colonial and postcolonial accounts of the revolt, studying how both of these perspectives constitute dominant, historical voices that appropriate the Moluccan revolt for their ideological purposes of, respectively, the justification of Dutch colonial rule and Indonesian nationalism.

Both of these dominant historical voices are based on the same source: i.e., the memoir of Q.M.R. Ver Huell (1787-1860). Ver Huell was a Dutch high-ranking marine, who was in charge of the ship that was taking Tiahahu to Batavia, and in that capacity witnessed her capture and death. His memoir was published in two parts, in 1835 and 1836, and offers a detailed account of the revolt as such, as well as Tiahahu's specific role in it. However, his work was "not a methodical description and analysis of the revolt, the historical backgrounds

or the parties involved" (Straver, 2018: 166).[1] Instead, his aim was to demonstrate "that 'the glory of the Dutch flag' had been upheld as the Moluccan region was returned under its rule" (ibid.).[2]

As such, Ver Huell's writings had an ideological purpose, that is, to reinforce the legitimacy of Dutch colonial rule, at which his representation of Tiahahu was also aimed. Rather than describing her particular actions during the Moluccan revolt, he sketches a romanticized image of her as, what he calls, "an 'Oriental beauty', whose passionate impulses have not yet become restricted by a civilized upbringing" (ibid., 182).[3] By representing her in this way, and himself as her civilized and reasonable counterpart, Ver Huell enables an interpretation of the revolt as an unreasonable, impulsive uprising against Dutch colonial rule, which he thereby presents as civilized and reasonable.

His account has been decisive for the way in which Tiahahu has entered history, with both Dutch and Indonesian historians still basing their knowledge on it. In the aftermath of the Indonesian proclamation of independence in 1945, nationalist historians have used Ver Huell's account of Tiahahu's revolt as a way to construct a national identity based on anti-colonial values. In other words, they have read Ver Huell *against the grain*, using his pro-colonial text in order to articulate their anti-colonial, nationalist perspective. This nationalist perspective was institutionalized in 1969, when Tiahahu was the first Moluccan warrior to be taken up as a *Pahlawan Nasional Indonesia* ("National Hero of Indonesia"). This is an official title, which, since 1959, is given per presidential decree to Indonesians who have played central roles in histories of anti-colonial resistance. In other words, Ver Huell's writings have served as the basis for two different ideological positions: his own, colonial position, which is aimed at justifying Dutch colonial rule, and the nationalist position of post-independence writers, which is aimed at the articulation of a unified Indonesian identity based on a shared history of anti-colonial resistance.

Both of these dominant appropriations of this history silence the possibility of a distinctly Moluccan perspective, in which the 1817 revolt could be interpreted as a precursor of Moluccan separatism, i.e. their identification as a people independent both from the

[1] My translation from the Dutch original: "geen methodische beschrijving en analyse van de opstand, de historische achtergronden of de strijdende partijen."
[2] My translation from the Dutch original: "dat 'de roem van de Nederlandsche vlag' bij het terugbrengen van de Molukken onder het gezag was gehandhaafd."
[3] My translation from the Dutch original: "een 'Oostersche schoone' in die zin, dat haar hartstochtelijke opwellingen nog niet door een beschaafde opvoeding aan banden zijn gelegd."

Netherlands and Indonesia. The Moluccan separatist ideology culminated in the unilateral proclamation of the RMS (*Republik Maluku Selatan*: "Republic of South-Maluku"), on 25 April 1950. In response to this proclamation, the Indonesian state invaded and occupied the Moluccan main island, Ambon, on 28 September 1950. After two months of armed conflict between Indonesian and Moluccan troops, Maluku was annexed by Indonesia in November 1950.

Placed within the context of Moluccan seperatism, it becomes clear that the Indonesian appropriation of the Moluccan revolt as an example of nationalist resistance against Dutch colonial rule, is problematic, because it ignores the fact that Moluccans were at least as anti-Indonesian as they were anti-Dutch, if not more so. Indeed, many Moluccans were loyal to the Dutch colonial government: a fact which, in 1951, led to the establishment of the Moluccan migrant community in the Netherlands. In that year, 12,500 Moluccan soldiers of the KNIL (*Koninklijk Nederlandsch-Indisch Leger*: "Royal Netherlands East Indies Army"), and their families, migrated to the Netherlands. Due to their separatist position, these soldiers had refused to be demobilized on Indonesian soil, which, after the annexation of Maluku by the Indonesian state, included their homeland. Their stay in the Netherlands was originally planned to be temporary, but was eventually prolonged indefinitely due to continuing political conflict between Indonesia and Maluku.

In order to reflect further upon this history of Moluccan separatism, and on how this history is silenced by the dominant historical accounts of the 1817 revolt, my chapter ends with an analysis of a short story about the revolt by Dutch novelist Maria Dermoût (1888-1962). Her story, *De Juwelen Haarkam* ("The Jeweled Hair Comb", 1956), was published six years after the proclamation of Moluccan independence in 1950, and five years after the establishment of the Moluccan community in the Netherlands in 1951. By placing her story within this historical context, I will analyze how it can be read as a suggestion to understand the 1817 revolt as an early expression of Moluccan separatism.

In what follows, I will first provide an overview of the revolt as such, before pursuing this chapter's three main objectives: (1) to analyze how Ver Huell has appropriated Tiahahu's revolt for the justification of Dutch colonial rule; (2) to analyze how post-independence Indonesian historians have reinterpreted Ver Huell's representation of Tiahahu, in order to recast her as a symbol of Indonesian nationalism; (3) to analyze Dermoût's short story as a

criticism of both of these dominant voices of history, and as an indication toward an alternative, Moluccan voice that was thus far silenced.

Historical context of the 1817 revolt

The 1817 revolt was an attempt to overthrow Dutch colonial rule in the central Moluccan region. It took place at the close of a series of power shifts between the Dutch, British and French colonial empires between 1795 and 1817.[4] In 1795, a group of Dutch insurrectionists known as the Patriots, who opposed the Dutch *ancien régime* and aimed to democratize the country, had formed an alliance with the French Army and with their help overcame the absolutist rule of Prince William V, who fled to Great Britain. The Dutch Republic was renamed the Batavian Republic.

According to Hans Straver (2018), the Batavian Republic, "although being an autonomous state, had allied itself so closely with France that, as a French satellite state, it became involved in the wars between revolutionary France and Great Britain" (2018: 18).[5] Its position as a satellite state became explicit when French Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte abolished the Batavian Republic in favor of the Kingdom of Holland in 1806 and placed his younger brother Louis on the throne. Even more so when the country was officially annexed by the French Empire in 1810. The Dutch territory finally regained independence following the defeat of Napoleon in 1813. After two years of reorganization, the United Kingdom of The Netherlands was established in 1815. The son of the exiled William V proclaimed himself King William I.

[4] For detailed analyses of the historical context of the Moluccan revolt, see P.J.M. Noldus, *The Pattimura revolt of 1817: the causes, course and consequences* (1984), and Hans Straver, *Vaders en dochters. Molukse historie in de Nederlandse literatuur van de negentiende eeuw en haar weerklank in Indonesië* (2018). Timeline of political developments on Dutch and Moluccan territory, as based on these two sources:
1795: proclamation of the Batavian Republic; William V goes into exile in Great Britain and instructs the government of Maluku to hand over their territory to the British;
1796: beginning of the first British occupation of Maluku;
1803: return of Maluku to the rule of the Batavian Republic;
1806: abolishment of the Batavian Republic and proclamation of the Kingdom of Holland, under the rule of King Louis Bonaparte;
1810: abolishment of the Kingdom of Holland and annexation by the French Empire; second occupation of Maluku by the British;
1815: proclamation of the United Kingdom of the Netherlands; the son of William V proclaims himself King William I;
1817: return of Maluku to the United Kingdom of the Netherlands.

[5] My translation from the Dutch original: "Hoewel de Bataafse Republiek een autonome staat was, had zij zich zo nauw met Frankrijk geallieerd dat zij als Franse vazalstaat verwikkeld raakte in de oorlogen tussen het revolutionaire Frankrijk en Groot-Brittannië."

This series of political developments, in which the Netherlands gradually lost its autonomy to the French Empire, had a destabilizing impact on Dutch colonial rule in Maluku. Directly after the beginning of his exile in Great Britain in 1795, William V sent letters to the governors of all Dutch colonies, instructing them to "hand over their power to the British, in order to prevent the territories from falling into the hands of the French" (ibid., 19-20).[6] As a result, Maluku became British territory from 1796-1803. The islands were then returned to the rule of the Batavian Republic in 1803 until 1810, at which point the British occupied the territory a second time, from 1810-1817.

This second occupation was part of a larger British strategy to undermine the power of the French Empire, which by then had annexed large parts of Western Europe. Two years after Napoleon's defeat and the proclamation of the United Kingdom of the Netherlands, the British returned the Moluccan territory to the Dutch, in 1817. In short, during these twenty years of warfare between France and Britain, Maluku became British possession for two periods of seven years (1796-1803 and 1810-1817), with an in-between period of Dutch-"Batavian" rule (1803-1810). The latter was de facto a form of French rule, due to the Batavian Republic's position as a French satellite state.

During this Batavian in-between period, the Moluccan population "was placed under heavy pressure to deliver soldiers, services, money and goods" in order to "prepare for a new conflict with the British over the possession of the Dutch East Indies" (ibid., 134).[7] As a result of this treatment, the Moluccan population experienced "the return of the British in 1810" as "a relief in several regards" (ibid., 35).[8] Among other things, the British "alleviated the pressure on the population to deliver goods" and "improved the educational provisions" (ibid.).[9] According to P.J.M. Noldus (1984), the milder rule of the British "had convinced the Moluccan population that Dutch rule had been harsh and as a consequence they did not look forward to their possible return. This fear and the general unruliness created a climate fit for revolt" (1984: 62). This climate of revolt was felt not only in Maluku, but throughout the Dutch East Indies. Apart from the Moluccan revolt in 1817, "the sultan of Palembang initiated

[6] My translation from the Dutch original: "het bestuur aan de Britten over te dragen om te voorkomen dat ze in Franse handen zouden vallen."
[7] My translation from the Dutch original: "onder zware druk om manschappen, diensten, geld en goederen te leveren"; "Om voorbereid te zijn op een nieuwe strijd om Indië met de Britten."
[8] My translation from the Dutch original: "De terugkeer van de Engelsen in 1810 was in verschillende opzichten een verademing."
[9] My translation from the Dutch original: "Zij verlichtten de druk op de bevolking om diensten te leveren"; "verbeterden de onderwijsvoorzieningen."

a revolt in June 1819 that was suppressed only after two military expeditions, in June 1821.[10] Military expeditions in 1824 and 1825 finally forced the insurrectional sultan of Boni on South-Celebes to subject himself to the government" (Straver, 2018: 21).[11]

As such, the Moluccan revolt can be contextualized within a general situation of animosity toward the return of Dutch colonial rule from 1817 onward. The start of the revolt was witnessed by the Moluccan schoolmaster Hendrik Risakotta. In the aftermath of the events, he wrote a testimonial about his experiences at the request of the colonial government. This document (1817) is the only known Moluccan source about the uprising. According to Risakotta, the initiative was taken in Haria, a village on the Moluccan island of Saparua, on 3 May 1817. The immediate goal was to attack Fort Duurstede, a colonial establishment on the island, which hosted "the newly appointed young Resident Johannes Rudolf van den Berg, together with his family, a small administrative staff and a garrison" (Straver, 2018: 136).[12] Risakotta states that "About one hundred people came together and swore an oath", and that they "agreed to destroy the fort and kill all of its inhabitants" (qtd. in: ibid., 135).[13]

At a second meeting, which took place on 6 May 1817, a warrior by the name of Thomas Matulessy offered to lead the revolt. During the second British occupation (1810-1817), he had served as a sergeant major in the Moluccan division of the British army. His loyalty to British colonial rule supports Noldus's argument (1984) that "when the revolt came, its goal was not independence of European rule but rather the retention of British government and the prevention of the reestablishment of Dutch authority" (1984: 62). He finds support for this argument in the fact that the British flag was hoisted during critical moments of the struggle (ibid., 63-64).

Apart from their loyalty to the British, another direct reason for the revolt was the fact that Matulessy and most of his followers were Christians. As such, their actions were to great extent directed against their expectation that the new Dutch colonial government of 1817 would continue the secularization project which had started under the previous Dutch

[10] Palembang is a region in Sumatra, an island in western Indonesia.
[11] Celebes, known today as Sulawesi, is an island directly west of Maluku. The passage is my translation from the Dutch original: "In juni 1819 ontketende de sultan van Palembang een opstand die pas na een tweede militaire expeditie in juni 1821 werd neergeslagen. Met militaire expedities in 1824 en 1825 werd de opstandige sultan van Boni op Zuid-Celebes gedwongen zich aan het gouvernement te onderwerpen."
[12] The Resident was the regional representative of Dutch colonial rule. The sentence is my translation from the Dutch original: "waar de pas benoemde jonge resident Johannes Rudolf van de Berg met zijn gezin, een kleine administratieve staf en garnizoen was gevestigd."
[13] My translation from the Dutch original: "kwamen ongeveer honderd mensen bijeen en zwoeren een eed"; "Zij kwamen overeen het fort te gaan verwoesten en alle ingezetenen ervan te doden."

Governor-General Herman Willem Daendels. The latter had been in charge of the Moluccan territory from 1807 until 1810, and had as such represented the Kingdom of Holland, which, as a satellite state of the French Empire, had adopted Napoleon's interest in secularizing society. According to Straver (2018: 138), the Moluccans' expectation that the return of Dutch colonial rule would also mean the return of this secularization project, is due to the fact that it was unclear to them that the new Dutch government was no longer allied to the French Empire, and was thus no longer interested in secularizing the colony.

Nevertheless, "the rebels considered their revolt almost as a Holy War" (Noldus, 1984: 112). Matulessy, "saw himself as a guardian of the Christian faith which he felt was threatened by the government" (ibid., 115). For instance, between 14 and 19 July 1817, he sent a list of thirteen complaints, that was signed by several allied regional leaders, to Dutch representatives during attempts at negotiation. The first of these complaints was that "the Dutch government wanted to fire the schoolmasters and destroy the practice of religion" (Straver, 2018: 138).[14] In a letter to allied forced dated 29 September 1817, he states: "Let no one be careless about keeping God's commandments – so that we may gain strength and encouragement in this war which must serve to improve our lot and that of our country" (qtd. in: Noldus, 1984: 115).

Under Matulessy's supervision, the other villages on Saparua were convinced to join the revolt. Their first attack, on Fort Duurstede, took place on 16 May 1817. Almost all people present were killed: "the Resident and his wife, three of his four children, the administrator, the garrison of five European and twelve indigenous soldiers, as well as several civilians that had fled inside" (Straver, 2018: 136).[15] Four days after this attack, on 20 May 1817, a detachment of around 180 Dutch soldiers arrived on Saparua in an attempt to suppress the revolt. The attempt failed, around 150 Dutch soldiers were killed. In the following month, the revolt expanded to several neighboring islands, but without further significant successes. One of those neighboring islands was Nusa Laut, directly east of Saparua. A commander from that island was Paulus Tiahahu, who brought his daughter to battle: Martha Christina Tiahahu.

[14] "Schoolmaster" was the official term for Moluccan religious and educational community leaders, whose social status had increased during the British interregnums and was dwindling again under the new Dutch regime. The sentence is my translation from the Dutch original: "dat het Nederlandse bestuur de schoolmeesters wilde ontslaan en de godsdienst vernietigen."

[15] My translation from the Dutch original: "de resident en zijn vrouw, drie van zijn vier kinderen, de administrateur, het garnizoen van vijf Europese en twaalf inlandse militairen, en verschillende burgers die er hun toevlucht hadden gezocht."

After an impasse that lasted until September 1817, the Dutch achieved a series of victories over the rebels, and finally arrested Thomas Matulessy, Paulus and Martha Christina Tiahahu and several other revolt leaders on 11 November. In the following month punitive expeditions were held, and a large amount of villages that had participated in the revolt were burned down. Around forty rebels were publicly executed. Paulus Tiahahu was executed on 17 November 1817. His daughter, Martha Christina Tiahahu, was exiled to Batavia, but died on her way there, on 2 January 1818. Thomas Matulessy was hanged on 16 December 1817 on the Moluccan main island, Ambon. After that, his corpse was exhibited in an iron cage which was hung from the gallows on the bay, as a deterrent example for the Moluccan population (ibid., 140).

This summary is taken primarily from Straver (2018), who bases himself on the most prominent available Dutch and Moluccan sources. The aim of his analysis of the revolt is to show that there is a discrepancy between, on the one hand, Martha Christina Tiahahu's representation as a legendary warrior in contemporary Dutch and Indonesian history, and, on the other hand, the scarce source material that exists about her actual participation. In more direct terms, Straver's argument is that Tiahahu's heroism is to a large extent a fabrication. He emphasizes that, while there are numerous sources that confirm Matulessy's leadership and his objectives, no such reports exist about the participation of Tiahahu: "There are no direct witness reports about the participation of Christina *[sic]* and her father in the revolt itself: the scarce data from historical sources that exist exclusively refer to the days and weeks after the revolt's ending" (190).[16]

Despite this scarcity of source material, Tiahahu's legacy has become prominent to such an extent that she was taken up as an official Indonesian National Hero in 1969. According to Straver, this legacy can be accredited to the report of the revolt that was written by Dutch marine Q.M.R. Ver Huell. The latter was in charge of the ship on which Tiahahu was held captive, and as such, he was witness to her death on 2 January 1818. His two-part memoir (1835; 1836) is a dominant source for the historiography of the revolt. The following section will explore Straver's argument that Ver Huell's account of Tiahahu is, to great extent, a fabrication. By analyzing Ver Huell's particular representation of Tiahahu's role in

[16] My translation from the Dutch original: "Er zijn geen directe getuigenissen over het aandeel van Christina en haar vader in de opstand zelf: de schaarse gegevens uit historische bronnen hebben uitsluitend betrekking op de dagen en weken na afloop van de opstand."

the revolt, I will argue that his account reflects his ideological position with regard to Dutch colonial rule.

Tiahahu according to Ver Huell

Ver Huell met Martha Christina Tiahahu for the first time a few days after the arrest of revolt leader Thomas Matulessy and the de facto end of the revolt, on 14 November 1817. Tiahahu and her father, commander Paulus Tiahahu, were among a group of prisoners which Ver Huell was tasked to guard on board of his ship. About this encounter, Ver Huell (1835) wrote the following in his memoir:

> With a *kruis-Orangbaai* from Nusa Laut, the leader of the rebels of that island, Paulus Triago *[sic]*, the *raja* of Abubu, was brought on board of our ship, accompanied by a young and beautiful Indian *[sic]* girl.[17] Soon I heard that she was the only daughter of the captured raja, and that her name was Christina Martha.[18] Present at all battles, she had not only carried the weapons of her aging father, but had also participated as a warrior in the *cakalele*, or war dance, and had excelled in courage and bloodthirstiness. (1835: 248)[19]

In his analysis, Hans Straver (2018) compares this first mention of Tiahahu by Ver Huell to the witness reports of other Dutch officials.[20] Through this comparison, he points out three mistakes in Ver Huell's understanding of the situation.

First, the last name of Martha Christina and Paulus was not Triago, but Tiahahu. Second, Paulus Tiahahu had not been a raja, or local king, but a *kapitan*, that is, a commander.

[17] A kruis-orangbaai is a type of rowing boat. A raja is a local king or ruler. Abubu is a village on the island of Nusa Laut, where Tiahahu was born. "Indiaansch" ("Indian") was the common way of referring to Moluccans in Ver Huell's time.

[18] For reasons that are unknown, Dutch sources refer to her as Christina Martha, whereas Indonesian sources refer to her as Martha Christina (cf. Straver, 2018: 215). I refer to her by her last name, Tiahahu, not only in order to avoid this confusion, but also in an attempt to not repeat the patronizing habit which most historians showcase, i.e. by generally referring to her by her first name, while referring to her male contemporaries by their last names.

[19] My translation from the Dutch original: "Met eene kruis-Orangbaai van Noessa Laut werd bij ons aan boord gebragt, het hoofd der muitelingen van dat eiland, Paulus Triago, Radja van Aboeboe, vergezeld van een jong en schoon Indiaansch meisje. Spoedig vernam ik, dat zij de eenige dochter van den gevangen Radja was, en Christina Martha heette. Bij alle gevechten tegenwoordig, had zij niet alleen de wapens van haren grijzen vader gedragen, maar zelfs onder de voorvechters den Tjakileli of krijgsdans mede gedaan, en in dapperheid en bloeddorstigheid uitgemunt."

[20] Straver takes these witness reports from the *Bronnen betreffende de Midden-Molukken 1796-1902* ("Sources regarding central Maluku 1796-1902"), i.e. the open-access digital archive of all available historical sources concerning this region during this time period.

Third, Straver places doubt upon Ver Huell's understanding of Martha Christina Tiahahu's role in the revolt. Ver Huell's claims about her "courage and bloodthirstiness", as well as her alleged activities as a cakalele dancer are not based on his personal experience, but rather on unspecified hear-say. Like many of his contemporaries, Ver Huell spoke none of the local languages, and "barely had contact with the population, even during the Moluccan revolt" (Straver, 2018: 324).[21] Therefore, it is unlikely that his knowledge about Tiahahu's actions in the revolt were obtained from Moluccan sources.

It is equally unlikely that Ver Huell based his claims about Tiahahu's role as a bloodthirsty war dancer on other Dutch sources, seeing that none of these sources mention Tiahahu's particular function in the revolt, other than her role as her father's arms-bearer. For instance, Captain Nieland Scheidius, who had arrested Tiahahu and her father, writes in his report of 12 November 1817 only that his prisoners were "a captain of Nusa Laut, who had his daughter as his arms-bearer" (qtd. in: ibid., 167).[22] Lieutenant H.P.N. 't Hooft, who was serving on Ver Huell's ship as well, wrote in his journal on 14 November 1817 that Paulus Tiahahu "was an old man and his daughter Christina Martha *[sic]*, around sixteen years old, had followed him in all battles and carried his weapons for him. This girl had a wild appearance" (qtd. in: ibid., 197).[23] These references indicate that, whereas the sources agree that Tiahahu had followed her father in battle, Ver Huell is the only one to mention her role as a war dancer and her particular bloodthirstiness.

This discrepancy in the sources leads Straver to argue that Ver Huell's account of Tiahahu is partly fabricated. Although this argument cannot be definitively confirmed, its likelihood can be asserted by studying the continuation of Ver Huel's description of Tiahahu during their first meeting:

> Her long, raven black hair was hanging down completely, in wavy braids down her back. Perhaps she had made the same promise as the heroine from the Eastern epic poem Brata Youdha: "She has vowed to not bind her hair until she shall have bathed in the blood of hundreds of Kenowa!" (1835: 249-50)[24]

[21] My translation from the Dutch original: "heeft, ook ten tijde van de opstand op de Molukken, nauwelijks contact met de bevolking gehad."
[22] My translation from the Dutch original: "een kapitein van Nousalout die zijn dochter tot wapendrager heeft."
[23] My translation from the Dutch original: "was een oud man en zijne dogter Christina Martha, circa 16 jaaren oud, had hem in alle attaques gevolgd en zijne wapens voor hem gedragen. Deeze meid had een wild uitzicht."
[24] My translation from the Dutch original: "Hare lange, gitzwarte, haren hingen geheel los in golvende vlechten op haren rug. Welligt had zij dezelfde gelofte gedaan, als de heldin uit het Oostersch Heldendicht Brata Youdha:

The heroine which Ver Huell refers to in this citation is Princess Drupadi, a main character in the Indian epic tale *Mahabharata*, adapted into a Javanese version called *Bharatayudha* in the twelfth century, misspelled by Ver Huell as "Brata Youdha".[25] It had in his time been translated into English by Thomas Raffles (1817), the British Lieutenant-Governor of the East Indies from 1811-1816.[26]

In the tale, Drupadi is dragged from the women's quarters and subjected to an attempted rape by her enemies, a family called the Kurawa, misspelled by Ver Huell as "Kenowa", and of which there were exactly one hundred, rather than the "hundreds" that he mentions. In reaction to this assault, Drupadi swears to only bind her hair again once she has gotten her revenge on every single one of her aggressors. Ver Huell's reference to this rape narrative appears to be based only on the fact that Tiahahu's hair was hanging down, like was the case for Princess Drupadi. Other than that, the comparison between a twelfth-century epic poem based in the Hindu tradition of the Indian subcontinent, and a revolt at the beginning of the nineteenth century, taking place in Maluku, a Christianized region in the Dutch East Indies, seems farfetched and unnecessary for his report.

These considerations point out that Ver Huell's report has a speculative character. He includes unconfirmed details into his descriptions of Tiahahu, such as her bloodthirstiness, and makes assumptions about the motivations behind her participation in the revolt based on aspects of her appearance, such as her unbound hair. These speculative elements of his writing can be interpreted as a paradigmatic expression of *Orientalism*. This concept was first introduced by Edward Said (1979), and refers to "the divide between the Orient and the Occident, a largely imaginary line that was less about physical geography as it was a human construction of an Orientalist realm that was the polar opposite to a similarly constructed 'West' " (Herath, 2016: 32). The purpose of this constructed dichotomy was to reinforce a hierarchy between the European imagination of its colonies and that of itself, where the latter was understood as superior to the former. This hierarchy was often established by conceptualizing "the Orient as feminine, erotic, exotic, and savage, allowing the West to accede to a position of superiority as Christian, civilized, and moral" (Lewis, 1993: 54).

'Zij heeft eene gelofte gedaan, de haren niet eer op te binden alvorens zij zich gebaad heeft in het bloed van de honderden van Kenowa!' "

[25] Java is an island in the west of current-day Indonesia.

[26] Straver notes that it is unlikely that Ver Huell already knew about this tale during the revolt, as the book was published in the same year as the Moluccan revolt, 1817, and was probably not immediately available in Maluku. It is therefore more likely that Ver Huell added the comparison between Tiahahu and Princess Drupadi while writing his memoirs in the early 1830s (Straver, 2018: 183).

Ver Huell's emphases on Tiahahu's youth, beauty and bloodthirstiness resonate with this understanding of the Orient as feminine and savage, to the extent that he describes her as both attractive and dangerous. Moreover, he strengthens her representation as erotic and exotic by referring in his description of her physical appearance to a story about the attempted rape of an "Oriental" warrior-princess. According to Said (1979), every writer on the Orient "assumes some Oriental precedent, some previous knowledge of the Orient, to which he refers and on which he relies. Additionally, each work on the Orient *affiliates* itself with other works, with audiences, with institutions, with the Orient itself" (1979: 20; italics in original). The result is a coherent discourse which includes "Oriental fantasies – whose presence in time, in discourse, in institutions (schools, libraries, foreign services) gives it strength and authority" (ibid.). Ver Huell's representation of Tiahahu as a feminine savage can thus be interpreted as a continuation of such "Oriental fantasies" that make up the structure of Europe's collective imagination of its colonial territories, or in this particular case, that of the Netherlands with regard to Maluku.

Apart from thus being influenced by existing Orientalist discourse, Ver Huell's writing itself also influenced the furthering of that discourse, in that it directly inspired other prominent works about the revolt. Author W.A. van Rees (1870) introduces Tiahahu as "the fanatical daughter of Raja Paulus Triago, who through her example animated the rage of the rebels to a climax" (qtd. in: Straver, 2018: 210).[27] His book, written about 35 years after the publication of Ver Huell's two-part memoir (1835; 1836), is a biography of Dutch Captain Vermeulen Krieger, who was instrumental for the Dutch victory over the rebels during the revolt's final battle, on 11 November 1817. Tiahahu plays a central role in this biography, despite the fact that, in Captain Vermeulen Krieger's own diary, no mention of her is made at all (Straver, 2018: 205). As such, Van Rees's rendition of Tiahahu's story, in which he sketches her role as that of the very soul of the revolt, is most likely inspired by Ver Huell's speculations (ibid., 210). It can be assumed that Van Rees's account is based on Ver Huell's writings, because of his repetition of the latter's misspelling of Tiahahu's name as Triago, and of his misrepresentation of her father's function as that of raja, rather than commander.

Despite the unreliable quality of his work, Van Rees, like Ver Huell, still has had a lasting influence on later historical accounts of the revolt. For example, historian H.J. de Graaf, who was a Honorary Member of the Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian

[27] My translation from the Dutch original: "de dweepzieke dochter van de radja Paulus Triago, die door haar voorbeeld de geestdrift der muitelingen ten toppunt heeft doen stijgen."

and Caribbean Studies from 1974 until his death in 1984, and thus a prominent voice within Dutch colonial historiography, published a standard work on the history of the Moluccan people in 1977.[28] In his chapters about the revolt he follows Van Rees's version of Tiahahu's story closely, repeating that version's unsupported claim that the revolt ended when "she was finally dragged out of a burning house, half suffocated, with a spear still in her hand" (231), something which can also be read in Noldus (1984: 114).[29]

These historical accounts primarily focus on Tiahahu's alleged qualities as a "savage" warrior, while other works further exaggerate the eroticizing tendencies of Ver Huell's descriptions of her. For instance, Johan Fabricius's novella about the revolt (1978), introduces Tiahahu in the following way:

> Christina Martha *[sic]* had lived among men who would separate the heads of wounded or fallen enemies from their bodies with one single blow, only to hold up the bloody clog triumphantly. Would she, amid these savage warriors, have remained a virgin? A Moluccan Jeanne d'Arc, unapproachable as a result of her full devotion to a sacred affair? Or: did she celebrate with her co-conspirators in an orgy of blood, offering her body as a reward for their courageous efforts? (1978: 48)[30]

This representation of Tiahahu bears almost no resemblance anymore to the original witness reports, and instead uses her history as a backdrop for the expression of violent colonial fantasies about the Orient.

In short, Ver Huell's representations of Tiahahu's character and her role in the revolt showcase the tendency to eroticize and exoticize her. This is a common feature of Orientalist discourse, and functions as a way to construct an imagined dichotomy between the colonial power and its subjects, or the West and the East, in which the former is understood as superior to the latter. Representing colonial subjects as "savage" de-humanizes them, and thereby implicitly stabilizes the colonizer's position as the more humane, rational party. Representing colonial subjects as feminine or female, as well as sexually attractive, reveals the project of colonization itself to be a sexual endeavor, that involves conquering or "taming" the Other,

[28] H.J. de Graaf. *De geschiedenis van Ambon en de Zuid-Molukken* (1977).
[29] My translation from the Dutch original: "Zij werd tenslotte, half gestikt, uit een brandend huis gesleept, nog met een speer in haar hand."
[30] My translation from the Dutch original: "Christina Martha had geleefd onder mannen die een gewonde of gevallen vijand met één houw het hoofd van de romp scheidden en de bloedige klomp daarna triomfantelijk omhoog hielden. Zou zij temidden van die woeste krijgers maagd gebleven zijn? Een Molukse Jeanne d'Arc, ongenaakbaar in haar volledige overgave aan een heilige zaak? Of: met haar medestrijders een orgie van het bloed vierend, haar lichaam schenkend als prijs voor betoonde moed?"

but also anchors the colonizer in the role of the male protector, or benevolent father-figure. The following section will continue the analysis of Ver Huell's rendition of the Moluccan revolt as a text that enables the justification of Dutch colonial rule, with a focus on his self-representation as Tiahahu's benevolent protector.

Tiahahu's function for the justification of Dutch colonial rule

On 17 December 1817, Martha Christina Tiahahu was brought aboard Ver Huell's ship, among a larger group of captured rebels, to be sent into exile to the colony's capital, Batavia. Her father, Paulus Tiahahu, was among the revolt leaders that had been publicly executed as a deterrent example for the Moluccan population. She herself had been spared "in consideration of her youth" (Ver Huell, 1835: 251).[31] In his memoir (1835), Ver Huell recalls in elaborate detail how he welcomed Martha Christina Tiahahu as a captive on his ship:

> I tried my best to hearten her with convincing reasons, by assuring her that she would be treated carefully on board, that she would want for nothing, that I had reserved a cabin exclusively for her. […] She then threw a meaningful and wistful glance at me, and remained completely silent. When heavy emotions agitate the soul, words can bring only little consolation: this is what her profound silence expressed. The look in her pitch-black, soulful eyes was striking. It indicated a deep-rooted, suppressed sorrow. I felt great compassion for this savage child of nature. (Ibid., 271)[32]

Hans Straver (2018) places doubt upon the accuracy of Ver Huell's report of this situation: "Keeping in mind that his grasp of the Malay language was very limited, Ver Huell's memory of this conversation with Christina Martha *[sic]* is not exactly credible" (2018: 171).[33] Additionally, I would argue that it is an overstatement to call the cited communication a "conversation", seeing that Tiahahu does not respond to Ver Huell verbally at any point. Ver Huell appropriates her silence by inscribing it with his own meaning, thereby enabling

[31] My translation from the Dutch original: "uit aanmerking van hare jeugd."
[32] My translation from the Dutch original: "Ik deed mijn best om haar met overtuigende redenen moed in te boezemen, haar verzekerende van eene zorgvuldige behandeling aan boord, dat haar niets ontbreken zou, dat ik een verblijf voor haar alleen bestemd had. […] Zij zag mij toen met een' veelbetekendenden weemoedigen blik aan, en bewaarde het striktste stilzwijgen. Wanneer een diep gevoel de ziel ontroert, kunnen woorden weinig troost aanbrengen: een diep stilzwijgen drukte ook bij haar dit gevoel uit. De opslag van haar gitzwart, zielvol, oog was treffend. Het duidde eene, in haar binnenste verkropte, smart aan. Ik gevoelde een diep medelijden voor dit woeste kind der natuur."
[33] My translation from the Dutch original: "Omdat zijn beheersing van het Maleis zeer gebrekkig was, is Ver Huells herinnering aan dit gesprek met Christina Martha niet bijzonder geloofwaardig."

himself to speak for her. Although her silence could have been an indication for a number of things, including defiance or a lack of mutual comprehension, Ver Huell interprets it as the unequivocal expression of her sorrow.

This image of Tiahahu as an innocent, suffering object of compassion comes to full fruition in the last passage he dedicates to her, concerning her death on 2 January 1818:

> Her isolated way of life had undermined her health. She steadfastly refused all medicine; with aversion she accepted a very small amount of food, as a result of which the poor girl withered away entirely, and became like a skeleton, upon which followed a deep, gloomy dejection, that soon carried her off. That night, I quietly had her remains lowered into the sea. (1836: 2-3)[34]

The way in which Ver Huell represents Tiahahu's death suggests an interpretation of her as someone whose tragedy could not have been prevented, despite all self-proclaimed benevolent efforts on his part. As such, he represents himself as a protector of the innocent, and Tiahahu as a victim of circumstance. That is, he presents the events that led up to her captivity on his ship as out of both his and her control: "Raised among a savage people, and driven by parental love, she had surrendered completely to frantic rage" (1835: 271).[35]

Through this portrayal of the situation, Ver Huell maneuvers himself, and by extension Dutch colonial rule, away from any responsibility for Tiahahu's suffering. By representing Tiahahu specifically as a helpless victim of her upbringing among "a savage people", rather than as an agentive figure, Ver Huell enables a representation of himself as her protector, rather than her aggressor. Moreover, by stating that Tiahahu's "frantic rage" was "driven by parental love" (see previous citation), he connects her suffering and eventual death also directly to that of her father, who was executed by the colonial government two months before her own death. Ver Huell emphasizes Tiahahu's parental love frequently throughout his account. The first time he mentions it is in his report of her father's trial, on 16 November 1817. This report features a rare moment in which Martha Christina Tiahahu speaks, which is

[34] My translation from the Dutch original: "Hare afgezonderde levenswijze had hare gezondheid ondermijnd. Zij weigerde standvastig alle geneesmiddelen; en met weerzin nam zij eene zeer geringe hoeveelheid voedsel, zoodat het arme meisje geheel uitteerde, en als een geraamte werd, waarop eene diepe, sombere, neêrslagtigheid volgde, die haar weldra wegsleepte. Ik liet haar stoffelijk overblijfsel 's nachts stil in zee zakken."

[35] My translation from the Dutch original: "Onder een wild volk opgevoed, had zij, door ouderliefde gedreven, zich geheel overgegeven aan de dolle drift."

described by Ver Huell as follows: "Suddenly and desperately, she falls at Lord Buyskes's feet, and with touching words begs for mercy on her aging father" (1835: 250).[36]

Ver Huell identified this event as a significant moment for his characterization of Martha Christina Tiahahu, interpreting it as evidence of her Christian values. His focus on Tiahahu's Christian values is expressed most directly in the following passage he wrote about her:

> Would she, so I thought, have been born among civilized peoples, and would her strong soul have been tempered by softer morals, how excellent would she have developed her virtues. Born among a savage people, not yet irradiated much by the light of Religion, she had eagerly accepted all the wild manners which these peoples appreciate so much, […] and the natural softness of her female capacity had degenerated into a bloodthirsty combativeness. (1836: 2)[37]

This representation of Tiahahu as more responsive to Christian values than her fellow Moluccans, is problematic for two reasons. First, the Moluccan revolt itself was an attempt to restore the central position of Christianity in Moluccan society after attempts at secularization by the Dutch colonial government. As such, it is difficult to see how exactly the Christian character which Ver Huell ascribes to Tiahahu should set her so far apart from her contemporaries. Second, Ver Huell bases his conviction of Tiahahu's Christian values solely on her plea for the colonial government to spare her father's life. This gesture, according to him, distinguished her from "the wild people that had raised her" (1835: 271), as if a daughter's love for her father would be a primarily Christian phenomenon, and as if other Moluccans would not be capable of such love, due to their assumed "wildness".[38]

The latter term features regularly in Ver Huell's text, as do similar references to Tiahahu's "bloodthirstiness" or the "savage" nature of her co-conspirators. His use of these terms strengthens his representation of the Moluccans as animal-like or less-than-human, which, in turn, aids him in confirming the superiority of his own position as a colonizer. By

[36] Lord Buyskes was the rear admiral tasked with the executions of the revolt leaders. The sentence is my translation from the Dutch original: "Op eens stort zij wanhopig den Heer Buyskes te voet, en smeekt in roerende woorden om ontferming voor haren grijzen vader."
[37] My translation from the Dutch original: "Had zij, (dacht ik) onder beschaafde volken het levenslicht mogen aanschouwen, en ware hare sterke ziel door zachtere zedewetten getemperd geworden, hoe voortreffelijk hadden zich dan hare deugden niet ontwikkeld. Onder een woest volk geboren, nog weinig bestraald door het licht van de Godsdienst, had zij gretig alle die verwilderde zeden aangenomen, waarop deze volken eenen hoogen prijs stellen, […] en de natuurlijke zachtheid der vrouwelijke kunne ontaardde in eenen bloeddorstigen strijdlust."
[38] My translation from the Dutch original: "Onder een wild volk opgevoed."

setting Tiahahu apart from her "wild" co-conspirators by virtue of her nascent Christianity, while emphasizing her being underage, female and impressionable, Ver Huell positions himself in relation to her as a male, just, civilizing father-figure. Thus, he legitimizes his domination over her, and by extension that of Dutch colonial rule over the Moluccan territory, by representing it as the benevolent attempt to help inferior subjects who are in need of civilizing guidance, through masculine, fatherly protection.

These considerations indicate that Ver Huell's writing was to a great extent aimed at asserting the legitimacy of Dutch colonial rule, or in his own words: "I saw it as my duty to present my fellow countrymen with the history of how these delightful, fertile and precious islands were returned under lawful authority, including all the circumstances concerning this battle" (ibid., *xiv-xv*).[39] Straver (2018) emphasizes how Ver Huell's intention, to cast Tiahahu as a character through which he could represent colonial rule as legitimate, did not end after the publication of his memoir in 1835 and 1836. Both parts of his memoir were well-received in the Netherlands to such an extent that, in 1836, "he was invited to join the board of the Rotterdam department of the Dutch Society of the Fine Arts and Sciences" (2018: 147).[40] This society was "a prestigious institute, in which the Netherlands' most famous orators and literary experts performed" (ibid., 174).[41] As a member of this society, he wrote an original story, which he presented to them on 28 February 1837. The story was called *Christina Martha: Oosters romantisch historisch tafereel* ("Christina Martha: an Oriental romantic historical tale", 2013 [1837]).

In this fictionalized tale, Ver Huell takes much more creative freedom than in his memoir, as he portrays Tiahahu as a princess who is to be married off to the revolt leader, Thomas Matulessy. Ver Huell presents the eventual failure of the revolt as the result of Tiahahu handing over Matulessy to the Dutch authorities, as a way to get out of this arranged marriage. By choosing the protection of Dutch colonial rule, therefore, she escapes from her two Moluccan male authority-figures: her husband-to-be, and her father, Paulus Tiahahu, who arranged the marriage. By reorganizing the relationships between the story's main characters

[39] My translation from the Dutch original: "ik achtte het dus pligtmatig de geschiedenis van het terugbrengen van deze heerlijke, vruchtbare en kostbare eilanden onder het wettig gezag, met al de omstandigheden dezen krijgstocht betreffende, mijnen landgenooten aan te bieden."
[40] My tanslation from the Dutch original: "werd hij uitgenodigd om sitting te nemen in het bestuur van de Rotterdamse afdeling van de Hollandsche Maatschappij van Fraaije Kunsten en Wetenschappen."
[41] My translation from the Dutch original: "een prestigious genootschap, waar de meest bekende redenaars en letterkundigen van Nederland optraden."

in this way, Ver Huell makes his portrayal of Dutch colonialism as a benevolent, masculine and reasonable project even more explicit than in his memoir.

Yet, despite his explicitly pro-colonial perspective, Ver Huell's representation of Tiahahu has been read against his own intention by nationalist Indonesian writers in the years following Indonesia's proclamation of independence (1945). In the following section, I will explore this postcolonial counter-reading of Ver Huell's work, in order to analyze how it has become a prominent source for Tiahahu's inclusion in Indonesian postcolonial collective memory as an official national heroine.

Tiahahu's function for Indonesian nationalism

In 1969, Martha Christina Tiahahu was taken up as a *Pahlawan Nasional Indonesia* ("National Hero of Indonesia"), an official title which, since 1959, is granted per presidential decree to Indonesians who have played central roles in forms of anti-colonial resistance. Granting this posthumous title entails the institution of several commemoration practices. In Tiahahu's case, these practices include the establishment of "monuments in public space, […] a ceremonially and rhetorically elaborate Martha Christina Tiahahu-day on 2 January, the representation of her name in streets, buildings, institutions and societal organizations" (Straver, 2018: 343).[42]

The title itself and these corresponding commemoration practices were invented as part of a larger, nationalist strategy to write the history of the Indonesian people "as a testament to their *semangat benegara* (national spirit), *semangat perlawanan* (spirit of resistance) or *semangat kemerdekaan* (spirit of independence)" (ibid., 214).[43] Especially the latter two of these concepts, with their focus on resistance and independence, indicate the central place of anti-colonial struggle in the articulation of an Indonesian nationalist identity. To further this articulation, new national heroes are annually declared on *Hari Pahlawan* ("Heroes Day"), on 10 November. This process is supervised by the *Badan Pembina Pahlawanan Pusat* ("Central Committee of National Heroes"), which is chaired by the Indonesian Ministry of Social Affairs. In order to stimulate the national coherence of the

[42] My translation from the Dutch original: "monumenten in de openbare ruimte, […] een met ceremonieel en retorisch geweld omgeven Martha Christina Tiahahu-dag op 2 januari, vernoeming van straten, gebouwen, instellingen en maatschappelijke organisaties."
[43] My translation from the Dutch original: "een getuigenis van *semnangat benegara* (een nationale geest), *semangat perlawanan* (een geest van verzet) of *semangat kemerdekaan* (een geest van vrijheid)."

multi-ethnic and multi-religious constitution of Indonesia, heroes are chosen from all different ethnic and religious backgrounds.

This is a significant detail when considering that the Christian section of the Moluccan province had declared itself independent from the rest of Indonesia, with the proclamation of the Republic of South-Maluku (RMS), on 25 April 1950. The Indonesian government refused to acknowledge the RMS and sent their army to occupy Maluku's main island, Ambon, on 28 September 1950. The RMS President, Chris Soumokil, went into hiding on the neighboring island of Seram, from where he continued to organize guerilla attacks. The Moluccan separatist movement was eventually suppressed when Soumokil was arrested by the Indonesian government in 1963, and subsequently executed in 1966. After Soumokil's execution, the Indonesian government worked systematically toward the reconfirmation of the unitary state.

Understood within this context, it makes sense that not only Tiahahu received the heroic status, in 1969, but Moluccan revolt leader Thomas Matulessy as well, in 1973. The choice for not just one, but two warriors from the same revolt indicates the desire of the Indonesian state to override Moluccan separatism, and appropriate Moluccan history for the purpose of constructing Indonesian national unity. The fact that both warriors were Christians is also significant, since the proclamation of the RMS was led by the Christian section of the Moluccan province. Their separatism was to great extent an expression of their interpretation of independent Indonesia as "a state based on Islam" (Pesuwarissa, qtd. in: Chauvel, 1990: 371). As such, the proclamation of the RMS caused a rift between Christians and Muslims in the region. Therefore, the decision to select two Christian Moluccan warriors as national heroes was based "on the hope that they would serve as a connecting principle between Christians and Muslims. Their election propagated the idea that this region's Christians had also resisted Dutch oppression, and that Moluccan Christians and Muslims were both essential parts of the Indonesian nation" (Straver, 2018: 224).[44]

In order to give further substance to this nationalist appropriation of Tiahahu's revolt, Indonesian historian L.J.H. Zacharias (1977) was appointed by the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture to write Tiahahu's biography for their ongoing book series *Proyek*

[44] My translation from the Dutch original: "in de hoop dat zij een bindende factor tussen christenen en moslims zouden vormen. Hun uitverkiezing droeg de gedachte uit dat ook de christenen in deze regio zich tegen de Nederlandse overheersing hadden verzet en dat de Molukse christenen en moslims beiden een onlosmakelijk deel van de Indonesische natie uitmaken."

Biografi Pahlawan Nasional ("National Hero Biographies Project"). For want of Moluccan sources about Tiahahu or the revolt, "Zacharias was forced to collect the scarce data for her biography from Dutch sources, in particular the travelogue of Ver Huell and the romanticized biography of Van Rees", the latter of which was itself also based predominantly on Ver Huell (Straver, 2018: 217).[45] In the foreword to her book, she shares her doubts concerning this uncomfortable dependency on colonial sources, mentioning that these accounts consist of "biased statements" and sketch only a "poor and moreover fragmentary image of this heroine" (qtd. in: ibid., 216).[46]

Yet, despite this outspoken awareness of the limitations of her source material, Zacharias's biography is carried by strategically selective interpretations of these texts. For instance, she mentions about Tiahahu's appearance, that, "Especially during battle, she let her hair hang down, on account of her oath that she would not bind her hair neatly until it had been washed in the blood of her enemies" (qtd. in: ibid., 218).[47] This claim is based on Ver Huell's (1835) assumptive reference to the legend of Princess Drupadi: "Perhaps she had made the same promise as the heroine from the Eastern epic poem Brata Youdha: 'She has vowed to not bind her hair until she shall have bathed in the blood of hundreds of Kenowa!' " (1835: 250).[48] By turning Ver Huell's assumption into fact, Zacharias reappropriates this Orientalist excerpt, and transforms it into a confirmation of Tiahahu's heroism. Similarly, Tiahahu's death, which Ver Huell described as the result of her "deep, gloomy dejection" that was caused by her grief over her father's death, is reinterpreted by Zacharias as a testament to her unending refusal to surrender to the enemy (Straver, 2018: 171).[49] As such, whereas Ver Huell represents Tiahahu's death as her final abandonment of all hope, Zacharias represents it as evidence of her steadfast loyalty to the cause of independence.

Through such rereadings, Zacharias enables the reappropriation of Tiahahu's story as serving the Indonesian state's nationalist ideology. Her rendition of Tiahahu's character fits

[45] My translation from the Dutch original: "Zacharias was genoodzaakt om de schaarse gegevens voor haar biografie te verzamelen uit Nederlandse bronnen, in het bijzonder de reisbeschrijving van Ver Huell en de geromantiseerde biografie van Van Rees."
[46] My translation from the Dutch original: "partijdige verklaringen"; "een pover en bovendien fragmentarisch beeld van deze heldin."
[47] My translation from the Dutch original: "Vooral in de strijd liet ze het haar los hangen, onder het motto dat ze het niet eerder keurig zou opsteken dan nadat het gespoeld was in het bloed van de vijanden die ze tegemoet trad."
[48] My translation from the Dutch original: "Welligt had zij dezelfde gelofte gedaan, als de heldin uit het Oostersch Heldendicht Brata Youdha: 'Zij heeft eene gelofte gedaan, de haren niet eer op te binden alvorens zij zich gebaad heeft in het bloed van de honderden van Kenowa!' "
[49] My translation from the Dutch original: "eene diepe, somber neêrslagtigheid."

the requirement of the title of national hero, to the extent that the latter is presented as possessing "a respectable character, a readiness to fight injustice and oppression, a commitment to the liberation of her people, and an animating impact on the people" (ibid., 223).[50] Zacharias stresses the latter aspect with an emphasis on the female population of the region: "Not only did she take up arms, she also animated the women in these villages to take part and accompany the men in each battle" (qtd. in: ibid., 221).[51] She interprets the fact that Tiahahu was arrested and imprisoned on Ver Huell's ship as evidence for the fact that "the Dutch were apprehensive of the dangerous influence she could exert on the population" (ibid., 222).[52] As such, Zacharias casts Tiahahu not only as a voice of independence, but also as a symbol for female empowerment.

This take on Tiahahu's life has had a lasting influence on her legacy in current-day Indonesia. An article in the English-language Indonesian newspaper *The Jakarta Post* (27 April 2008), discusses how her legacy has inspired, among other things, the foundation of the "Yasayan Martha Christina Tiahahu, a social foundation for the Maluku community", as well as the Martha Christina magazine, which is published by "a number of female activists and journalists in Ambon" (27 April 2008). In her interview for the article, Moluccan women's activist Rosa Pentury argues that

> Christina's *[sic]* spirit of struggle should be inherited by every generation of women in present-day Maluku, in spite of the different conditions. […] In the past, the youthful Christina led armed uprisings against our colonizers. Today, Maluku women should fight injustice, poverty and other disparities. Those in the bureaucracy, legislature and social organizations should also emulate Christina's great passion for struggle. (Ibid.)

This contemporary imagination of Tiahahu as a passionate warrior who led multiple anti-colonial uprisings, does not much resemble the way she was presented in colonial witness reports anymore. In those reports, the only facts which Ver Huell and his contemporaries agreed upon were that Tiahahu was her father's arms-bearer, and that she died on the way to Batavia. Her active participation in the revolt is confirmed in none of the sources, but is rather assumed without reference by Ver Huell in his account. His free associations, which

[50] My translation from the Dutch original: "een hoogstaande levenshouding, strijdvaardigheid tegenover onrecht en overheersing, inzet voor de vrijheid van het volk en een bezielende invloed op het volk."
[51] My translation from the Dutch original: "Zij nam niet slechts de wapens op, maar bezielde ook de vrouwen in deze dorpen om deel te nemen en de mannen in elk gevecht terzijde te staan."
[52] My translation from the Dutch original: "de Nederlanders zouden beducht zijn geweest voor de gevaarlijke invloed die zij op de bevolking zou kunnen uitoefenen."

contributed to his justification of Dutch colonialism, were taken up and further escalated by several Dutch biographers and historians in the decades that followed (e.g. Van Rees, 1870; De Graaf, 1977). The legendary status which Tiahahu has received in post-independence Indonesia is the result of a nationalist reappropriation of the original colonial sources, framing her as an early voice of Indonesian female empowerment.

These conflicting accounts of Tiahahu's legacy have in common that they are based on almost no original source material. The basic facts that she was an underage girl who carried her father's arms, and that she died an untimely death, were sufficient for her to become a mouthpiece for the expression of both colonial and nationalist ideologies. Indeed, the fact that Tiahahu hardly spoke a word during her encounters with Ver Huell has proven beneficial to the historians that appropriated her story. Ver Huell took her silence on board of his ship as an invitation to speak for her: "When heavy emotions agitate the soul, words can bring only little consolation: this is what her profound silence expressed" (1835: 271)[53] The same silence is understood in Zacharias's version as the refusal to engage with her captor, as a testament to her unending resistance to colonial oppression (Straver, 2018: 222).

In short, both Ver Huell's and Zacharias's perspectives constitute dominant, historical voices that appropriate the Moluccan revolt of 1817 for their ideological purposes of, respectively, colonial justification and Indonesian nationalism. Both of these dominant appropriations silence the possibility of an interpretation of the revolt as a precursor of Moluccan separatism. In order to explore this consideration further, the following section will present an analysis of Maria Dermoût's short story about the revolt (1956). By discussing how her story is a critical study of Ver Huells's original report, I will read it as a criticism of the aforementioned dominant historical voices, and as the opening up of a space for the silenced Moluccan perspective to resurface.

Ver Huell according to Dermoût

Maria Dermoût (1888-1862) was born into a colonial family on Java, in the west of the Dutch East Indies. Throughout her life, she lived in many difference parts of the colony, including in Maluku, from 1910-1914. She eventually moved to the Netherlands in 1933, at age 45. Her

[53] My translation from the Dutch original: "Wanneer een diep gevoel de ziel ontroert, kunnen woorden weinig troost aanbrengen: een diep stilzwijgen drukte ook bij haar dit gevoel uit."

short story about the Moluccan revolt, *De Juwelen Haarkam* ("The Jeweled Hair Comb") was published in 1956. According to Annelies Dirkse-Balhan (2001), it is likely that Dermoût "had wanted to react to the political actuality", seeing that her story was published five years after the establishment of the Moluccan migrant community in the Netherlands in 1951 (2001: 85).[54]

The first generation of these migrants consisted of Moluccan soldiers of the Dutch colonial army, and their families. Due to their separatist position, they had refused to be demobilized on Indonesian soil, which, after the annexation of Maluku by the Indonesian state in 1950, included their homeland. They were therefore brought to the Netherlands to be demobilized there, in 1951. As such, the migrant community in the Netherlands is living testament to the Moluccan separatist struggle, which positions them outside of the colonial opposition between the Netherlands and Indonesia, as a distinct political identity that seeks independence from both of these dominant sides. With this historical context in mind, I will analyze Dermoût's short story, *De Juwelen Haarkam*, as an exploration of Moluccan separatism.

De Juwelen Haarkam (2001 [1956]) is a take on the Moluccan revolt that focuses not on Martha Christina Tiahahu or any of its other main characters, but instead places the history's most prominent historical source, Q.M.R. Ver Huell, at the centre of attention. The story follows his return to the Netherlands in 1819, after his four-year stay in the colony, during which he played a part in the suppression of the revolt, in 1817. Dermoût introduces him at the beginning of her story as "still a very young man, thin, blond, with light-grey eyes, in a long, dark marine officer's coat, two epaulettes, a dark bicorn; he looked exhausted and ill" (2001: 301).[55] Throughout the story, his travel-worn and absent-minded state is frequently emphasized. He is presented as someone who "has come from far away" (ibid., 303), and who fears that "he does not belong here anymore", that is, in the Netherlands (ibid., 330).[56] Through these character descriptions, and by referring to Ver Huell only by his first name, Quirien, Dermoût makes explicit that what is commonly accepted as the truth about the revolt – in Dutch and Indonesian, colonial and postcolonial sources alike – was in fact the personal experience of one young marine.

[54] My translation from the Dutch original: "heeft willen reageren op de politieke actualiteit."
[55] My translation from the Dutch original: "Een nog erg jonge man, mager, blond, met lichtgrijze ogen, in een lange donkere zeeofficiersjas, twee epauletten, een donkere tweekantige steek; hij zag er vermoeid en slecht uit."
[56] My translation from the Dutch original: "Hij kwam van ver weg"; "hoorde hij niet meer aan hier."

Dermoût's emphasis on this personal aspect of the history comes across most clearly through the fact that, in her story, the revolt itself is narrated entirely in retrospect, in the form of a conversation between Quirien and his family on the evening of his return. During this conversation, his family is eager to hear about his experience of the Moluccan revolt, news of which had thus far only reached them via the national press. However, Quirien is reluctant to share his story: "Quirien preferred not to talk and he did not want to tell stories; one story in particular he did not want to tell" (ibid., 306).[57] In fact, the first thirteen pages of the story, which comprise more than one third of the full text, feature Quirien's many attempts to talk about anything *but* the revolt, including the shipwreck which he had suffered on his way back to the Netherlands: "that was a safe topic as well" (ibid., 310).[58] This is a first indication that Dermoût approaches telling the history of the revolt through *negation*. That is, the revolt materializes in her story through its most prominent source's continued refusal to speak about it.

As such, the setting of Dermoût's story presents a different, more unstable, premise for Quirien's account of the revolt, than the memoir of the historical Ver Huell. The latter introduced his account rather confidently, with the following motivation:

> After all, the revolt has nowhere been described accurately. Therefore, I saw it as my duty to present my fellow countrymen with the history of how these delightful, fertile and precious islands were returned under lawful authority, including all the circumstances concerning this battle. (1835: *xiv*-*xv*)[59]

As this citation indicates, Ver Huell presents his account as a matter of national duty, and as the provision of structure and clarity to a thus far fragmented knowledge. Moreover, he presents the suppression of the revolt unambiguously as the return of the territory to lawful, that is Dutch colonial, authority.

Unlike Ver Huell's self-representation as an essential voice of history, Dermoût's Quirien is unwilling to share his experiences. In this way, he is portrayed as a reluctant and self-doubting, rather than as a confident narrator. When Quirien's father, finally, refuses to go

[57] My translation from the Dutch original: "Quirien wilde liever niet praten en hij wilde geen verhalen vertellen, een verhaal wilde hij niet vertellen."
[58] My translation from the Dutch original: "dat was ook veilig."
[59] My translation from the Dutch original: "Men vindt, immers nergens dien strijd met naauwkeurigheid beschreven; ik achtte het dus pligtmatig de geschiedenis van het terugbrengen van deze heerlijke, vruchtbare en kostbare eilanden onder het wettig gezag, met al de omstandigheden dezen krijgstocht betreffende, mijnen landgenooten aan te bieden."

along with his son's stalling any longer and starts asking him direct questions about the revolt, Quirien almost does not respond at all, except for a few very short answers in which he mostly denies any authority to say anything about the topic: e.g., "I don't know what you are trying to explain […], Father" (Dermoût, 2001: 315); "I don't know" (ibid., 316); "I am a marine, Father, not an administrator, I don't know if there were other causes, other motives" (ibid., 317).[60]

This reimagination of Ver Huell as a self-doubting witness offers a reconsideration of his memoir, suggesting that it is an unreliable account of the revolt. Dermoût's short story reminds the reader of two main facts that destabilize the purported truth of Ver Huell's writing. First, her story emphasizes the historically accurate detail that his original notes were lost in a shipwreck. His work was written from memory, around fifteen years after the revolt had ended, that is, in the early 1830s. The result of this, as Straver's study (2018) has pointed out, is that Ver Huell's account suffers from a large number of inaccuracies. Second, Dermoût's protagonist gives his father the disclaimer that he is a marine and not an administrator, as a way to remind him that his views on the political circumstances around the revolt may not be that informed. This passage also refers to a fact about the historical Ver Huell. As a marine, Ver Huell was sent to Saparua only on 23 October 1817, five months after the revolt had begun, and, on arrival, "was tasked with on-board duties", as a result of which "he could follow the events only from a distance" (Straver, 2018: 164).[61] By emphasizing these two details in her representation of Ver Huell, she destabilizes his authority as a voice of history.

Therefore, Dermoût's narrative strategy can be identified as being aimed toward *decolonization*. The latter term refers to "the process of revealing and dismantling colonialist power in all its forms. This includes dismantling the hidden aspects of those institutional and cultural forces that had maintained the colonialist power and that remain even after political independence is achieved" (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 2003: 52). Ver Huell's memoir is an example of these cultural forces that maintain colonialist power even after independence, to the extent that his memoir has become indispensable to common knowledge about the revolt to such an extent, that even the anti-colonial historiography of post-independence Indonesia bases itself on his work.

[60] My translation from the Dutch original: "Ik weet niet wat u […] wilt uitleggen Père"; "Ik weet het niet"; "Ik ben een zeeman Père, geen bestuursman, ik weet niet of er niet nog andere oorzaken, andere motieven waren."
[61] My translation from the Dutch original: "Zelf moest hij taken aan boord vervullen en kon hij de gebeurtenissen slechts vanaf een afstand volgen."

Thus, Dermoût's story, with its focus on Ver Huell's unreliability as a source, can be read as a decolonizing fiction, that is, as an attempt to dismantle the lasting colonial power attached to his unquestioned authority: "By exploiting and subverting the hierarchically dependent communicative value of reliability, decolonizing fictions revise implicitly authoritarian narrative mores" (Olson, 2018: 168). By destabilizing Ver Huell's reliability as a source, Dermoût poses a larger question about the reliability of recorded colonial history, opening up the possibility of imagining it differently: "The recognition of unreliability interrupts the fluid narrativization process and urges the reader to imagine alternative stories" (ibid., 169).

This aim of imagining alternative stories becomes most clear when considering that Dermoût presents her take on the revolt like "a historian: she conducts research and handles her sources critically and with care" (Dirkse-Balhan, 2001: 78).[62] In her analysis of Dermoût's story, Annelies Dirkse-Balhan (2001) calls it a "web of references", to the extent that many parts of the text "are literal citations from other authors" (ibid., 75).[63] Dermoût expresses her archival approach predominantly through the character of Quirien's father. The latter has an extensive collection of notes about the revolt, from which he cites passages and then asks Quirien to confirm or deny the information. These notes, most of which Dermoût has directly copied from secondary literature about the revolt, offer an alternative perspective on the history compared to the one offered in the memoir of the historical Ver Huell.

For example, when Quirien's father tries to get his son to describe Moluccan revolt leader Thomas Matulessy, he cites from his notes: " 'A courageous, formidable man', is said here by someone who fought in the battle, on our side I mean. What do you think, huh Quirien?" (Dermoût, 2001: 315).[64] Dirkse-Balhan (2001: 77) points out that this description of Matulessy can literally be found in a book about the revolt leader by J.B.J. van Doren (1857). This description of Matulessy as a courageous and formidable man does not correspond to the way in which Ver Huell himself has described him in his memoir. According to Ver Huell, Matulessy was "around 34 years old, tall in stature, with a meager posture and a dark appearance, which however did not present much in terms of expression or

[62] My translation from the Dutch original: "een historicus: zij doet onderzoek en hanteert haar bronnen zorgvuldig en kritisch."
[63] My translation from the Dutch original: "web van verwijzingen"; "zijn letterlijk afkomstig van ándere *[sic]* auteurs."
[64] My translation from the Dutch original: "Een dapper en ontzagwekkend man, zegt hier iemand die meegevochten heeft, ik bedoel aan onze kant. Wat vind jij, eh Quirien?"

intelligence" (1835: 242).[65] This is an unsympathetic description in comparison to Van Doren's more positive imagination of Matulessy. When Quirien's father confronts his son with this alternative representation of the revolt leader and asks him for his opinion, Quirien does not respond, but instead reacts as he does throughout most of the story: he remains silent.

Throughout these passages, the observations by Quirien's father indicate a perspective on the revolt that stands in contrast to the one offered by the historical Ver Huell. As opposed to the latter's representation of the history as an unlawful transgression of "the stray Indians" against their colonial rulers (1835: 127), Quirien's father proposes that the revolt's anti-colonial aims may have been legitimate, when understood from the perspective of the Moluccan rebels.[66] He does this, for instance, by suggesting that Dutch colonial rule has been harsh as compared to the milder rule of the British (Dermoût, 2001: 316), and by pointing out that the revolt was based emphatically on Christian motives (ibid., 314). The latter point implicitly complicates the historical Ver Huell's frequent representations of the Moluccans as "a savage people, not yet irradiated much by the light of Religion" (1836: 2).[67] Because Quirien generally does not respond to his father's suggestions, the pro-Moluccan, anti-colonial perspective that these suggestions invoke is never definitively asserted in Dermoût's text, but only hinted at.

Dermoût explores this implicit alternative reading further by paying attention to the sketches that Quirien made of some of the most prominent participants of the revolts, including Tiahahu and Matulessy. These sketches indeed exist, and are taken up in the collection of Museum Arnhem (cf. Straver, 2018: 169; 173). In the story, when Quirien reluctantly shows his sketch of Matulessy to his family, one of his brothers makes fun of his ability to draw portraits: "Drawing portraits has never been your forte" (Dermoût, 2001: 319).[68] Quirien accepts the criticism in silence. Eventually, right before Quirien retreats to his bedroom to go to sleep, his brother apologizes for his behavior, to which Quirien responds that he should not worry about it. In fact, he agrees with the assessment: drawing portraits is not his strongest quality (ibid., 320). Therefore, Quirien's response to his brother's criticism of his ability to represent the revolt appropriately is characterized by the same silent acceptance that he showed in his reponses to his father's critical inquiries. By silently

[65] My translation from the Dutch original: "ongeveer vierendertig jaar oud, rijzig van gestalte, schraal van wezen, van een duister uitzicht, dat evenwel niet veel sprekends of vernuftigs had."
[66] My translation from the Dutch original: "de verdwaalde Indianen."
[67] My translation from the Dutch original: "een woest volk […], nog weinig bestraald door het licht van de Godsdienst."
[68] My translation from the Dutch original: "Portret tekenen is nooit je fort geweest."

allowing the consideration that he is not a reliable witness of the Moluccan revolt, Dermoût's Quirien functions as an implicit destabilization of Ver Huell's account of this history, yet without replacing this dominant account with a definitive alternative reading.[69]

As such, Dermoût's approach to telling the story of the revolt differs from the ones that were discussed before. Whereas both Ver Huell's colonial, and Zacharias's nationalist accounts are appropriations of the history meant to give voice to their respective ideological positions, Dermoût is careful not to take any side, at least not explicitly. Instead, she presents her political standpoint toward the subject matter "indirectly, like so much of her writing works indirectly" (Dirkse-Balhan, 2001: 85).[70] Dermoût uses the silence of Quirien's systematic refusal to respond to his father's critical questions, as a way to take up a position from which she can scrutinize Ver Huell's perspective on the revolt, without having to replace it with a definitive perspective of her own. She thereby writes the revolt back into the silence of a preappropriated condition: Ver Huell's dominant historical voice is replaced by the hesitant silence of Quirien.

This emphasis on silence is featured throughout Dermoût's entire take on the revolt. Her story can be divided into three parts of approximately equal lengths. The first part (Dermoût, 2001: 301-12) concerns Quirien's arrival at his family's house in the Netherlands, and his subsequent attempts to avoid talking about the revolt. The second part (ibid., 312-21) concerns the conversation between Quirien and his father, in which he either does not respond to his father's critical reconsiderations of the revolt's legitimacy, or responds only to deny any authority with regard to this topic. The third part (ibid., 321-30), finally, takes place in Quirien's bedroom, right before he goes to sleep, and concerns a conversation he has with his mother about the impact that his travels have had on him.

In this part, the story's emphasis on silence is manifested through the communication breakdown that happens between Quirien and his mother, when they both realize that there is a distance between them that can no longer be bridged. His mother asks him: "Why did you go so far away […], to that strange country and these strange people? Now you cannot come back". He responds, "I have come back Mama", but she insists, "No you have not come back,

[69] For a more detailed analysis of Ver Huell's sketch of Matulessy, and the way in which it appears in Dermoût's short story, see Frans-Willem Korsten, "Apostrophe, witnessing and its essentially theatrical modes of address" (2012).
[70] My translation from the Dutch original: "indirect, zoals zoveel van haar werk indirect was."

you will not… you will never come back anymore… here with us" (ibid., 329).[71] As his mother desperately mentions a long list of memories from his childhood, in an attempt to reconnect him to his past, Quirien does not answer her, but instead retreats into silence, reflecting on the sense of detachment which he feels from his family and from the Netherlands.

This sense of detachment is expressed most clearly near the end of the story, in the following passage:

> – Was she right? Was it true, did he no longer belong here? Did he belong to a few islands far away? To a volcano? To a bay? Drowned gardens of coral flowers? […] To an Amazon, a ring – a small mosque made of palm wood – lacquered and gilded – from the inside – from the outside – crimson – red – dashing – balsamic – fragrant – an enchanting – blue tree? –
>
> – Would he from now on belong to a lady's jeweled hair comb and a hanged rebel? – (2001: 330)[72]

Rather than using full sentences, this passage consists mostly of interrupted thoughts and incoherent musings, in which much space is left for silences in between that which is spoken, most explicitly through the abundant use of "–". By using this writing style, Dermoût presents Quirien's memories of the colony, including those concerning his experience of the revolt, as something which cannot be fully expressed in words. Therefore, the passage suggests that his refusal to talk about the revolt, earlier in the story, is an indication not just of his unwillingness, but of his felt inability to do so. Through Quirien's silence, Dermoût represents the revolt, paradoxically, as something that must remain unrepresented.

As such, Dermoût reflects on the Moluccan revolt, but without assuming a position of authority over it: she "willfully and consciously refuses mastery" (Korsten, 2016: 18). By having Quirien's father explore the possibility of approaching the history from the point of view of the Moluccan rebels, Dermoût hints at an interpretation of the revolt as a legitimate

[71] My translation from the Dutch original: "Waarom ben je zo over weg gegaan […], naar dat vreemde land, die vreemde mensen? Nu kun je niet meer terugkomen." "Ik ben teruggekomen Maman". "Neen je bent niet teruggkomen, je komt niet… je komt nooit meer terug hier… bij ons."

[72] My translation from the Dutch original: "– Had zij gelijk? Was het zo, hoorde hij niet meer aan hier? Hoorde hij aan een paar eilanden ver weg? Aan een vulkaan? Aan een baai? Verdronken tuinen vol koralen bloemen? […] Eene Amazone, en een ring – een palmhouten moskeetje – gelakt en verguld – van binnen – van buiten – karmozijn – rode – zwierige – balsamiek – geurende – een betoverde – blauwe boom? – – Hoorde hij voortaan aan een juwelen vrouwenkam en een gehangen oproerling? –"

protest against the oppressive rule of Dutch colonialism. However, rather than enforcing this perspective at any point, she allows it to linger in the silence of Quirien's refusal to comment on it, as an open-ended indication towards an alternative reading. Unlike the accounts of Ver Huell and Zacharias, therefore, Dermoût's story "does not succumb to the colonial tendencies of appropriation and paternalism" (Pattynama, 2009: 143).[73] Instead, she writes the history of the revolt back into silence, and thereby opens up the possibility of imagining it differently.

Conclusions

The 1817 revolt was an attempt to overthrow Dutch colonial rule in Maluku, and took place at the close of a series of power shifts between the Dutch, British and French colonial empires between 1795 and 1817. During these power shifts, Maluku had temporarily become part of the British colonial empire, between 1796-1803, and again between 1810-1817. British rule was generally experienced as milder, as a result of which the return of Dutch colonial rule in 1817 was met with animosity. As such, the Moluccan revolt was an attempt to keep the territory under British, rather than Dutch colonial rule. One of the high-ranking marines that witnessed this revolt, Q.M.R. Ver Huell, recorded the events in his memoir that was published in two parts, in 1835 and 1836. This memoir has become an important source for the history of the revolt, and has been cited abundantly by colonial and postcolonial historians alike.

In his report, Ver Huell reserves a central position for Martha Christina Tiahahu, the seventeen-year-old daughter of one of the revolt's commanders, Paulus Tiahahu. His representation of Martha Christina Tiahahu as a principal participant of the revolt does not correspond to other witness reports, in which she hardly appears at all. The only fact that all witnesses agree on is that she was her father's arms-bearer. Other than that, the only report that mentions anything about her active participation is Ver Huell's, who himself was tasked with on-board duties on his ship throughout the revolt's development, and therefore bases his assumptions about Tiahahu solely on unspecified conjecture. Moreover, his representation of her is an example of Orientalist discourse, as it is tainted by sexist and exoticizing descriptions that are meant to frame her as the savage and feminine Other to his rational, masculine, benevolent and civilized Self. As such, his work is aimed more at the justification of Dutch colonialism, than at a descriptive analysis of the revolt.

[73] My translation from the Dutch original: "houden zich ver van de koloniale tendens van toe-eigening en paternalisme."

These details stand in contrast to his widely acknowledged authority as a voice of history, which has monopolized the historical reality of the revolt to such an extent that even Indonesian nationalist historiography, which identifies itself emphatically as based on anti-colonial values, are dependent on, albeit strategic rereadings of, his work. As part of the Indonesian state's development of a national identity, Tiahahu received the official title of National Heroine of Indonesia in 1969. This posthumous election becomes especially significant when placed within the context of Moluccan separatism, which started with the declaration of the independent Moluccan state in 1950, and was eventually suppressed with the execution of Moluccan President Soumokil by the Indonesian government in 1966. With this context in mind, the acknowledgment of Tiahahu as a national heroine can be understood as an attempt by the Indonesian state to override Moluccan separatism, by appropriating her legacy as a symbol of Indonesian nationalism.

Therefore, a similar gesture takes place in both Ver Huell's memoir and Indonesian nationalist historiography. Whereas the former appropriates Tiahahu's legacy as a way to justify the colonial project, the latter appropriates the same history, using the same colonial source, as a way to justify the Indonesian nationalist project. Both of these appropriations override a Moluccan interpretation of this history, in which the revolt could function as a precursor to Moluccan separatism, or could at least be understood as a form of anti-colonial resistance that is not automatically a form of pro-Indonesia nationalism.

Maria Dermoût's short story, *De Juwelen Haarkam* (1956), can be read as a critical rereading of the revolt, that creates space for this silenced Moluccan interpretation to resurface. Her story is an account of the 1817 revolt, but does not feature Martha Christina Tiahahu or any other prominent Moluccan warrior. Instead, Ver Huell himself is the story's main character, referred to only by his first name, Quirien. The revolt is presented completely in retrospect, in the form of a conversation between him and his family on the evening of his return to the Netherlands in 1819. During this conversation, Quirien refuses to engage in his father's exploration of the revolt as a legitimate expression of Moluccan separatism. He points out repeatedly that he is in no position to judge the political circumstances of the revolt, and that his memories of the events are fragmentary due to the loss of his original notes in a shipwreck, a fact which holds true for the historical Ver Huell as well.

Therefore, Dermoût short story can be read as a decolonizing fiction, that is, a fiction aimed at dismantling the lasting historical authority attached to Ver Huell's colonial voice.

Her story serves as a reminder that current common knowledge that exists about Martha Christina Tiahahu's revolt is the result of Ver Huell's and other historical voices, that sought to appropriate her legacy in order to use it as a mouthpiece for the representation of their ideological positions. By reimagining the revolt's most dominant source as a reluctant and unreliable narrator, Dermoût writes the history back into an indeterminate silence. Because she replaces Ver Huell's perspective with this silence, rather than with an explicit perspective of her own, she forgoes assuming the same authoritarian position that she strips him of. As such, she does not force her voice upon this history, but instead grants it silence so that it may begin to speak for itself.

CHAPTER TWO

Voices of their community? – The case of the Moluccan train hijackings and their entrance into Dutch collective memory

Introduction

This chapter concerns two train hijackings, that took place from 2 to 14 December 1975, and from 23 May to 11 June 1977, near Dutch villages Wijster and De Punt. The actions were carried out by, respectively, a group of seven and a group of nine activists belonging to the second generation of the Moluccan community in the Netherlands. The hijackings were radical protests against the disadvantaged position of Moluccans in Dutch society and attempts to force the Dutch government to support their separatist struggle aimed at establishing a Moluccan state, independent from Indonesia. The hijackers of 1975 killed three hostages, and were sentenced with fourteen years in prison. The hijackers of 1977 did not kill any hostages. This hijacking was ended with a military intervention in which six hijackers were killed, as well as two hostages by accidental military bullets. The three surviving hijackers were sentenced with six to nine years in prison.

In 2014, the next of kin of two of the killed hijackers sued the Dutch state, accusing it of having ordered the execution of the hijackers by the military. Their case was lost in favour of the state in 2018. Frequent news coverage of this lawsuit has led to renewed discussions in both traditional and social media about the hijackings. These discussions mainly concern issues of justice and responsibility. That is, these discussions often revolve around the following questions: to what extent can the hijackings themselves, and to what extent can the military intervention, be interpreted as justified? The different answers that these questions invite, locate responsibility on different sides, mostly either that of the Dutch state or that of the hijackers, sometimes that of the marines who were involved in the military intervention.

Through close-readings of such contemporary media discussions, this chapter is aimed at studying how these instances of Moluccan activism have entered Dutch *collective memory*. I base my application of this concept on Maurice Halbwachs's sociological understanding of the term (1980; 1992), and on Jan Assman's (2008) and Astrid Erll's (2011) developments of it specifically for cultural studies. Halbwachs distinguishes between two kinds of collective

memory. The first kind involves "Collective memory as the organic memory of the individual, which operates within the framework of a socio-cultural environment" (Erll, 2011: 15). The second kind is "Collective memory as the creation of shared versions of the past, which results through interaction, communication, media, and institutions within small social groups as well as large cultural communities" (ibid.).

Thus, whereas the first of these forms of collective memory is the individual's memory as influenced by their socio-cultural context, the second form presents the reverse dynamic, in which a socio-cultural context contains shared memories that are created through the interaction between individuals, as well as between individuals and institutions, such as the state. In other words, Halbwachs understands collective memory to be a circular process in which individuals tap into their socio-cultural context's collective memories, which, in turn, they help co-create.

This theory has been further developed by Jan Assman (2008), who proposed to conceptualize Halbwachs's understanding of collective memory as a form of *communicative memory*, and juxtaposed this to the concept of *cultural memory*. Whereas the former is "non-institutional", and happens "in everyday interaction and communication", the latter is institutionalized through "monuments, museums, libraries, archives, and other mnemonic institutions" (2008: 111). Assman makes this distinction between communicative and cultural memory in order to emphasize that memory is practiced in a variety of ways, from everyday social interaction to museum collections. Whereas Assman's work focuses mostly on the kind of memory that is preserved in official institutions, the current chapter instead primarily concerns what he would call communicative memory, that is, the kind of memory that is characterized by a situation of social conflict, in which different groups of people remember the same occurrence, in this case the Moluccan hijackings, differently, and contest each other's versions through public deliberation.

According to Astrid Erll (2011), this type of conflict lies at the basis of individual and collective processes of identity articulation: "Things are remembered which correspond to the self-image and the interests of the group", as a result of which "what is remembered can become distorted and shifted to such an extent that the result is closer to fiction than to a past reality" (2011: 17). Based on this consideration of collective memory's fictional quality, she emphasizes that "collective memories are never a mirror image of the past, but rather an expressive indication of the needs and interests of the person or group doing the remembering

in the present" (ibid., 8). Collective memory is therefore not simply a reference to a historical past, but rather an interactive process that takes place in the present.

Correspondingly, the current chapter is *not* intended to approach the hijackings as events in the past, by working toward a reconstruction of the actions as such, or to allocate justice and responsibility to any of the involved parties, be it the hijackers, the Dutch state or the marines. Instead, my intention is to study conflicting memory practices regarding these events that are taking place in the present, on social media, through newspaper articles and in the online response sections of these newspapers. Studying these conflicting memory practices will provide an insight in the ways in which collective memory is used for the purpose of identity articulation by the two predominent positions that are taken up with regard to the hijackings.

These two positions, in general terms, consist of those who support the perspective of the hijackers and their next of kin, and those who support the perspective of the Dutch government, as well as the marines carrying out the military intervention that was ordered by the government. As such, I divide the two basic positions of this conflict in terms of loyalty. An alternative would be to sketch the conflict as existing between "the Moluccans" and "the Dutch", which is how it is often represented in the media. This categorization, however, suffers from racial profiling as well as from generalization. It is problematic to categorize "Moluccans" versus "Dutch", as these population groups overlap and are to great extent a matter of self-definition and perspective. Moreover, to approach the conflict in this way also denies the possibility of "Dutch people" supporting the hijackings, or "Moluccans" opposing them.

Throughout the analysis of these identity groups and their corresponding approaches to memorizing the train hijackings, my emphasis will lie on the strategies involving voice and silence that are deployed in this process. Because the hijackers carried out their actions on behalf of the Moluccan separatist struggle, they can be, and often have been, framed as "voices of their community". By framing them as such, not only are the hijackers understood as particular representatives of collective Moluccan identity, but, vice versa, Moluccan identity is also reduced to the way in which the hijackers expressed it. Framing the hijackers as the voices of their community can happen for positive or negative reasons. That is, they can be cast as heroes who fought for Moluccan seperatism, or they can be cast as exemplars of the Moluccan community's perceived hostility toward their host country.

In a similar way, the Dutch marines, who killed six hijackers and two hostages during their intervention of the 1977 train hijacking, are also often framed as exemplars, voicing larger ideological perspectives. That is, they can either be cast as Dutch heroes who defended the country against domestic terrorism, or as symbols of Dutch state violence against its postcolonial migrants. In the latter case, they can also be perceived to function as a reference to the much longer history of systematic violence done upon Moluccans through Dutch colonialism. Amplifying the voices of either of these parties usually implies silencing the voice of the other party: focusing on the legitimacy of Moluccan separatism often implies disregarding the position of the marines, and by extension the state, as illegitimate, and vice versa.

With these considerations in mind, my aim is not only to analyze how the hijackers' and the marines' voices are silenced or amplified through media discussions about their actions, but also how their voices become collectivized: i.e., how do individuals' voices come to represent a larger community, and to what extent do these individuals have a say in this process? In what follows, I will first provide an overview of the Moluccan community's migration history as a way to contextualize the train hijackings. After that, I will discuss the conflicting ways in which the hijackings are remembered in Dutch society with a focus on strategies involving voice and silence, in order to answer the following questions: (1) Which memory practices are deployed in order to silence the perspectives of either the hijackers and, by extension, the Moluccan community, or the marines and, by extension, the state? (2) Which memory practices are deployed in order to elevate the status of the hijackers or the marines as "the voices" of larger collective identities? (3) To what extent do marines and surviving hijackers have a say in this process, that is, to what extent are they in control of their own "voices", understood as instruments for the expression of larger collective identities?

Historical context of the Moluccan migration[1]

The Moluccan migrant community in the Netherlands originates in the Indonesian province of Maluku, which consists of approximately 1,000 islands. During the Dutch colonization of

[1] Parts of this and the following sections are also published in Gerlov van Engelenhoven, "The case of telefilm *De Punt*'s online discussion forum: participatory space for societal debate or echo chamber for the polemical few?" (forthcoming).

the Indonesian territory (1605-1949), the Moluccan population was socially and politically privileged over other Indonesian ethnic groups (Chauvel, 1990: 41).[2] This privilege was the result of the importance of the Moluccan region for Dutch colonial power. Maluku was the first, and for almost two centuries (1605-1800), the primary region of the Dutch colonial territory. Most other regions of the Dutch East Indies were only conquered or obtained from the beginning of the 1800s onward. Moreover, Maluku functioned as the centre of the international clove, mace and nutmeg trade, on which the Dutch trading company, the VOC (*Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie*: "Dutch East India Company"), held the monopoly. The spice monopoly was the foundation for the further development of the Dutch colonial empire. As a result of this much longer history of subjection to Dutch colonial rule, as compared to the rest of Indonesia, Moluccans were generally granted more social privileges than other colonial subjects. They often served in the KNIL (*Koninklijk Nederlands-Indisch Leger*: "Royal Netherlands East Indies Army") or worked for the colonial administration (Chauvel, 1990: *ix*).

This privileged position formed the basis of Moluccan separatism, together with the Calvinist Protestantism they had adopted from the Dutch, which set them apart from the predominantly Islam-based Indonesian nationalist ideology. During the Indonesian National Revolution (1945-1949), Moluccans predominantly fought on the side of Dutch colonialism, against Indonesian independence. According to Richard Chauvel (1990), after the end of the Revolution in 1949 there was an estimated amount of 6,000 Moluccan KNIL-soldiers (ibid., 396).[3] Indonesia proclaimed independence in 1945, but the transfer of sovereignty happened only after the Revolution, in 1949. This resulted initially in a federal state system, the Republic of the United States of Indonesia (1949-1950), which allowed provinces, including Maluku, the right to self-determination. However, the Indonesian government began working toward a unitary Republic of Indonesia immediately after independence, leading to violent confrontations between Indonesian nationalists and Moluccan separatists. The separatists' aim was to establish their own state, independent from Indonesia: the RMS (*Republik Maluku Selatan*: "Republic of South-Maluku").

The RMS was unilaterally proclaimed on the Moluccan island of Ambon, on 25 April 1950. This resulted in the Indonesian army invading Ambon on 28 September 1950, in an

[2] Richard Chauvel's book *Nationalists, Soldiers and Separatists: The Ambonese Islands From Colonialism to Revolt, 1880-1950* (1990) provides a comprehensive account of how the history of Moluccan privilege led to their ideology of separatism, which was the central cause of their migration.
[3] The KNIL had a total amount of 68,889 soldiers at that time (Harinck and Verwey, 2015: 3).

attempt to annex the territory as part of the Republic of Indonesia. The RMS government fled to a neighbouring island, Seram, and continued the struggle from there via guerrilla warfare. During this conflict, the Dutch government were in the process of disbanding the KNIL, which was complicated because of its Moluccan troops, who had to be demobilized. Because of their separatism, a majority of these soldiers refused to be demobilized on Indonesian soil, which, due to the Indonesian occupation of Ambon, included the Moluccan region. The other option they were offered was to be transferred to the Indonesian army. But as a result of the political and religious differences between Moluccans and Indonesians, most Moluccan troops were also opposed to this option. Therefore, "After a long and complex process of negotiation and legal action the Dutch authorities had no choice but to ship some 4,000 soldiers and their families to the Netherlands in early 1951, as a temporary measure" (ibid.).

On arrival in the Netherlands, the Moluccan soldiers and their families, a grand total of 12,500 people, had expected to be treated as Dutch nationals due to their service for the colonial army and their felt shared identity with the Dutch. According to Dieter Bartels (1986), their "identification with the Dutch was so complete that they referred to themselves as 'Black Dutchmen' (*Belanda Hitam*)" (1986: 25). However, and contrary to their expectations, they were housed in migrant camps in remote locations, some of which had served during the Second World War as *Durchgangslager*: i.e. Nazi camps used as transit locations for prisoners before their deportation to Germany. The migrant camp in Dutch city Vught had even served as a *Konzentrationslager*: i.e. a concentration camp.

The reason for this isolation from Dutch society was that their residence in the Netherlands was supposed to be temporary: the original planning was for a period of six months. In 1952, the CAZ (*Commissie Ambonezenzorg*: "Committee for the Care of Moluccans") was installed to organize the facilitation of their daily requirements, such as food and hygiene.[4] Until 1954, the Moluccans were not allowed to seek employment or send their children to school. In 1958, the Indonesian government passed Law No. 62, on the Citizenship of the Republic of Indonesia, requiring Indonesian citizens to reconfirm their loyalty to the country. Due to their separatist position, most Moluccans in the Netherlands refused to do this, and therefore lost their Indonesian citizenship. They became eligible to

[4] The name would officially translate to Committee for the Care of *Ambonese*. The latter is the original term which was used to refer to Moluccans, by themselves and by the Dutch alike. Ambon is Maluku's main island and is the location for a majority of the Moluccan migration's prehistory. From around the 1970s onwards, the term "Moluccans" started to replace that of "Ambonese", at least as a term of self-identification, after the latter was felt to have acquired too many negative connotations as a result of the violent activism in that decade.

apply for Dutch citizenship only from 1976 onward, after almost two decades of living in a condition of statelessness. Throughout the 1960s, most Moluccans were relocated to newly built, segregated neighbourhoods in the margins of cities. During these years, the Moluccan dependence on the state was gradually reduced until 1970, when the CAZ was dissolved, marking the end of their residence being regarded as temporary by the Dutch government.

From the mid-1960s, a portion of the community's second generation sought violent means to protest their continued marginalization both by the Dutch and Indonesian governments. In Indonesia, the Moluccan struggle for independence had suffered a major defeat when RMS President Chris Soumokil was publicly executed on the Moluccan island of Obi, on 12 April 1966. In the Netherlands, the second generation of the migrant community had perceived the slow retraction of Dutch support for their residence, and the increasing unlikelihood of their return to Maluku, as a systematic denial of responsibility on the side of the Dutch government. The train hijackings were two of the final actions in a longer history of attacks between 1966 and 1978:

1966: attempt to set fire to the Indonesian embassy in The Hague;
1970: occupation of the residence of the Indonesian ambassador in Wassenaar (one patrolling police officer killed);
1975: attempt to take the Queen hostage;
1975: first train hijacking near Wijster (three hostages killed);
1975: occupation of the Indonesian consulate in Amsterdam (one staff member died due to an unfortunate fall while attempting to flee);
1977: second train hijacking near De Punt (six hijackers and two hostages killed, all by the Dutch military);
1977: occupation of a primary school in Bovensmilde;
1978: occupation of a province house in Assen (two hostages killed).

The first hijacking started on 2 December 1975, when a group of seven Moluccan youths took control of a train near the village of Wijster, and took 23 passengers hostage. The action was meant to force the Dutch government to assist the Moluccan community in realizing the RMS. The hijackers executed three hostages during their action. They surrendered after twelve days, on 14 December 1975, due to the successful mediation by Moluccan representatives, and were sentenced to fourteen years in prison. One and a half years later, on 23 May 1977, a group of nine Moluccan youths hijacked a train near the village De Punt, and

took 54 passengers hostage, this time without taking lives. The aims were the same as before, with the additional demand that those who were involved in the previous hijacking were to be released from prison. After nineteen days of unsuccessful negotiations, a special taskforce of marines surrounded the train on 11 June 1977, and ended the hijacking violently, killing six of the hijackers. They also accidentally killed two hostages. The three surviving hijackers were sentenced to six to nine years in prison.

Although the events took place more than forty years ago, the actions still reappear in the news "on an almost yearly basis", as the Dutch national news channel, *NOS*, remarked in an article on 29 May 2017.[5] Novels that are based on the actions have been written by both Dutch and Moluccan authors (e.g. Scholten, 2000; Van Dam, 2009; Pessireron, 2014). The first non-fiction book about the history was published three years after the second hijacking (Barker, 1980). A four-part television documentary was released in 2000 (Roelofs, 2000), discussing Moluccan activism in general, but focusing primarily on the hijackings. Telefilms were released for both hijackings (Van der Oest, 2008; Smitsman, 2009).[6] The one about the 1977 hijacking in particular was the most watched telefilm in ten years, indicating that "the theme of the film was not only important to the Dutch-Moluccan community but had broader national interest" (Marselis, 2016: 206).

This lasting public impact was possibly a result of the second hijacking headlining the national media for three weeks, as well as the televised live report of the military intervention that ended the action. The violent military ending of the hijacking further ignited the controversy of this event, which remains unresolved until today. An investigation of the military intervention took place from 2014-2018, when the killed hijackers' next of kin sued the Dutch state, accusing it of having ordered the execution of the hijackers by the military. The case was won by the Dutch state on 25 July 2018. The frequent updates about the lawsuit that appeared in the national media during these years have inspired ongoing public discussions about this history.

Recurring questions in these discussions regard the degree to which the hijackings could be interpreted as justified, when analyzed within the larger context of Dutch colonialism, as well as the degree to which the military intervention could be interpreted as justified, when analyzed within the larger context of Moluccan attacks in the 1960s and

[5] My translation of the Dutch original: "bijna jaarlijks in het nieuws."
[6] Telefilms, according to their website (https://telefilm.cobofonds.nl/over-telefilm/), are Dutch direct-to-TV feature films that discuss current societal themes.

1970s. The discussions mainly take place on social media and in the online response sections of national newspapers, and can be understood as a conflict between groups of people remembering these events differently. In the next sections, therefore, I will close-read selections of these discussions in order to analyze some of the main ways in which the hijackings are being remembered. As will become clear, these memory practices often operate through the silencing or amplifying of the voices of those who were involved in the actions.

Victims and perpetrators as voiceless archetypes

The hijackings caused a shift in the way in which Moluccans were generally perceived in the Netherlands. In his article about the hijacking's effects on the Moluccan community, Dieter Bartels (1986) argues that the actions triggered

> widespread abuse by Dutch civilians and indiscriminate actions by the police against younger Moluccans (including non-involved southeast Moluccans and Ambonese Moslems) countrywide. […] The immediate repercussions ranged from Dutch civilians cursing Moluccans on the streets to police harassing young Moluccans or anybody who faintly resembled them, including many Dutch-Indonesians. A more long-term effect resulted from stereotyping Moluccans as violence-prone, leading to widespread discrimination, particularly on the labour market. (1986: 35)

The stereotype of Moluccans as violent indicates one of two major directions in which the hijackings polarized public opinion about them. This first direction regards Moluccans as *perpetrators*, the other as *victims*. As perpetrators, the Moluccans are interpreted as aggressors, who took innocent bystanders hostage. As victims, they are interpreted as marginalized postcolonial subjects, who were driven to despair as a result of their systematic mistreatment by the Dutch government.

The latter interpretation, of Moluccans as victims, was to a great extent encouraged by publications appearing from the late 1960s onward on the oppressive role which the Dutch had played in their colonies during the last decades before independence. In 1969, a government-initiated investigation into archive material about the Indonesian National Revolution led to what was called the *Excessennota* ("Report of Excesses"). This research report was written by Cees Fasseur, the legislation advisor for the Ministry of Justice at the time, and made public a long list of war crimes committed by Dutch soldiers. The

Excessennota inspired many further reconsiderations of the Dutch colonial past. Most prominently, war veterans J.A.A. van Doorn and W.J. Hendrix released many details about the systematic cruelty of the Dutch army during the Indonesian National Revolution (1945-1949) in their book *Ontsporing van geweld* ("Derailment of Violence", 1970). These are examples of a Dutch self-critical perspective that was developing in public opinion on colonial memory around the time of the hijackings. This self-critical perspective enabled a general interpretation of the Moluccans as victims of Dutch state violence within the context of colonization.

These interpretations of Moluccans as either perpetrators or victims are further strengthened by considering the casualties of the hijackings. While the hijackers of 1975 killed three hostages, making their interpretation as perpetrators more likely, the hijackers of 1977 did not kill any hostages, whereas the military intervention of this second hijacking caused eight deaths, including those of two hostages. As such, the second hijacking allows for an interpretation of the marines as perpetrators, and the hijackers and the hostages they killed as their victims. Additionally, the lawsuit that started in 2014 has led to new controversial archive material being released to the court and the media, including tapes of recording devices that were placed under the train, which indicate that the soldiers were also shooting at unarmed hijackers. The uncovering of these details has resulted in renewed discussions in traditional and social media about the hijackings, and have furthered the polarization of public opinion about these events. In a 2018 interview with national newspaper *Algemeen Dagblad*, Fridus Steijlen, Professor of Moluccan Migration and Culture in Comparative Perspective, argued that the lawsuit "reduces the discussion to a case study about perpetrators and victims" (*Algemeen Dagblad*, 9 February 2018).[7]

Steijlen's argument can be validated by studying user-generated content between 2014-2018, that was posted online in response to newspaper articles about the lawsuit and the actions themselves. In 2015, about one year after the beginning of the lawsuit, national newspaper *Volkskrant* published a selection of letters from readers entitled "Readers about the Moluccan indictment: 'outrageous' " (*Volkskrant*, 8 December 2015).[8] One reader writes: "In my opinion, it goes much too far [...] that the train hijackers that died during the actions are

[7] My translation of the Dutch original: "De rechtszaak verengt de discussie tot een casus van daders en slachtoffers."
[8] My translation of the Dutch original: "Lezers over Molukse aanklacht: 'Godgeklaagd'."

cast in a victim role, almost forty years after the fact" (ibid.).[9] Another reader states that, even if the lawsuit would prove that some of the hijackers were executed despite being unarmed, "their status as perpetrators would remain unchanged, that is: people who seriously harmed, or indirectly even terminated, the lives of others, without any right to do so. Terrorists, in other words" (ibid.).[10]

This selection of reader responses from *Volkskrant* contains only arguments against interpreting the hijackers as victims, and in favour of interpreting them as perpetrators. However, there are also indications toward the opposite inclination. For example, the website of *2DOC* posted a selection of viewers' tweets about the actions (*2DOC*, 23 May 2017). *2DOC* is an organization that releases an ongoing series of documentaries about Dutch society, that is broadcast on public television channel *NPO 2*. The tweets were responses to the *2DOC* documentary about the Moluccan actions in 1977 (Verbraak, 2017). One tweet calls the 1977 government an "administration with blood on their hands" (*2DOC*, 23 May 2017)[11] Another tweet affirms that "the Dutch state is responsible for many lies and mistakes" (ibid.).[12] Yet another states that "Moluccans have indeed been treated scandalously and have been abandoned" (ibid.).[13] Several tweets call upon the Dutch state to make official apologies to the Moluccan community. These public opinions show a tendency to interpret the state as the perpetrator, and the Moluccans as their victims.

These are examples of public discussions about the actions taking place since the beginning of the 2014 lawsuit. Similar discussions can however be found before 2014 as well, as Randi Marselis (2016) has pointed out. In her article, she discusses user-generated content about the actions on an online discussion forum that was active in 2009. This forum was created by Dutch television channel *EO*, as an invitation for viewers to comment on the telefilm *De Punt* (Smitsman, 2009), which is a fictionalized account of the Moluccan hijacking of 1977. Marselis points out that many of the contributions to the forum were preoccupied with locating perpetrators and victims, with some discussants declaring to be "ashamed of the way the Netherlands have treated our Moluccan fellow creatures *[sic]*.

[9] My translation of the Dutch original: "Dat de treinkapers die hierbij het leven hebben gelaten bijna veertig jaar na dato in een slachtofferrol geplaatst worden […] vind ik veel te ver gaan."
[10] My translation of the Dutch original: "dan nog blijft de status van de daders ongewijzigd: lieden die andermans bestaan zonder enig recht ernstig hebben geschaad of indirect zelfs beëindigd. Terroristen kortom."
[11] My translation of the Dutch original: "kabinetmetbloedaandehanden *[sic]*."
[12] My translation of the Dutch original: "De Nederlandse Staat heeft zoveel gelogen en fouten gemaakt."
[13] My translation of the Dutch original: "Molukkers zijn idd *[sic]* schandalig behandeld en in de steek gelaten."

[These] people have been treated like old trash *[sic]*" (2016: 213).[14] Other voices criticized this point of view on the Moluccans as victims, identifying it as "part of a broader tendency in Dutch society", i.e. that "we the Dutch always seem to be masters at making perpetrators into victims" (ibid., 211; 212).

According to sociologist Bernhard Giesen (2004), this fixation on perpetrators and victims is common for a society that is dealing with the memory of shocking events. He argues that perpetrators and victims are two "archetypes", as he calls them, that appear as the result of "a social construction carried by a moral community defining an evil" (2004: 47). This argument informs the relevance of Giesen's theory for the current case study: victims and perpetrators do not construct themselves. Instead, their construction is in the hands of what he calls "the public perspective", which acts as a "universalist moral discourse that aims at impartiality and justice", and which is "at a certain distance from the victims, as well as from the perpetrators" (48). Giesen locates this public perspective in different institutional arenas:

> The public perspective can be based on the authority of […] intellectuals, or judges or it can just refer to the majority of impartial spectators. It can be constructed in the discourse of civil society, articulated in literature and art, or brought forward by the response of the common people on the streets. (Ibid.)

These different discourses work together to establish the moral boundaries of society, by defining deviations from its norms: "the moral community needs deviance and perpetrators in order to construct the boundary between the good and the evil" (ibid., 51).

The direct relationship between perpetrators and victims lies in the fact that perpetrators are those who "intentionally and knowingly" cause harm "to members of the community" (ibid., 62). Their identification as perpetrator therefore relies on the identification of their victims. Victims, in turn, are defined by Giesen as "innocent individuals" who "have been treated as non-humans", as a result of which, they too "represent the fringe of moral communities, but on the opposite end to the position of the perpetrator" (ibid., 52). In other words, the identification of victims relies on the identification of their perpetrators. Their connected yet opposing positions at the fringe explains why "Viewed from the centre, the fringe of moral communities appears as an area of twilight and ambivalence where the

[14] The English translations of these originally Dutch comments are provided by Randi Marselis.

opposites are sometimes in close vicinity", as a result of which "the boundaries between perpetrators […] and victims tend to be blurred" (ibid.). This confusion of perpetrators and victims corresponds to the two main interpretations of the hijackers.

When applying Giesen's theory to the case study of the hijackers, it becomes possible to analyze why they are generally interpreted either as perpetrators or as victims. The hijackings, as climaxes to a longer history of attacks on Dutch society, forced the reconsideration of a fragile element of Dutch collective identity, that is, the colonial past and the way in which this past impacts the present. To stabilize itself in this situation, society has to decide on matters of responsibility and justice. By interpreting the hijackers as perpetrators, they are held responsible for their actions, and their actions are interpreted as unjustifiable. By interpreting them as victims, their actions are interpreted as justifiable, because they are understood as a desperate attempt to gain attention for their treatment as exiles by the Dutch state ever since their migration, despite their history of loyalty to Dutch colonial rule. In the latter case, major responsibility is located on the side of the state.

Whether interpreted as perpetrators or as victims, however, the hijackers are in either case regarded as deviants, whose actions banished them to the margins of the moral community. As such, argues Giesen, both victims and perpetrators have "no faces, no voices, no places of their own [...]. They cannot raise their voices in the public discourse of civil society" (ibid., 51). As victims, the hijackers have no voice because they are interpreted as having been deprived of it; as perpetrators, because they are interpreted as having lost their right to it. Therefore, in both cases, the hijackers fail to communicate their political message with regard to their claim for Moluccan independence and their indictment against the Dutch state. Instead, their protest is reduced either to a victim's desperate cry for help, or a perpetrator's radical attack on society. As such, labeling the hijackers as victims or perpetrators can be understood as ways to silence their political voice. As a counterpoint, the next section will explore which options there are for remembering the events without silencing the perspective of the hijackers.

Heroes as the voices of their community

Each year on 11 June, which is the day on which the military intervention ended the hijacking in 1977, an annual commemoration ceremony is held at the memorial for the killed hijackers, in the cemetery of the Dutch town of Assen. Especially in 2017, 40 years after the hijacking,

the event drew "several thousands of attendants" (*NOS*, 11 June 2017).[15] During the event, John Wattilete, president of the RMS government-in-exile since 2010, spoke out for the first time about the events during his press conference. The RMS government-in-exile is the administrative body that was created after President Soumokil's execution in 1966. After his death, the RMS was restructured as a government-in-exile, based in the Moluccan community in the Netherlands.

In his address, which was broadcast on national television, President Wattilete referred to the hijacking with the following words:

> This is the day on which the Dutch state ended the train hijacking at De Punt with unprecedented and brutal violence. The day when, on behalf of the Dutch government, the young lives of our heroes were terminated. (Qtd. in: *NOS*, 11 June 2017)[16]

Wattilete's interpretation of the action stands in contrast to the memory practices that were discussed before. While identifying the Dutch state as the perpetrator of the situation, he avoids identifying victims, but instead labels the hijackers as "our heroes", thereby indirectly endorsing their actions. The statement was received controversially in the press. In an interview with national newspaper *Telegraaf* a few weeks later (8 July 2017), the interviewers ask him: "People that threaten children and other innocents, and take them hostage, certainly should not be called heroes?" (8 July 2017).[17] Wattilete responds: "They are heroes because they gave their lives for the RMS. I saw it this way back then, and I still do today. Because of their efforts, which resulted in their deaths, they have become martyrs" (ibid.).[18]

The way in which Wattilete remembers the hijackers constructs them as subjects who died heroically while fighting for the Moluccan separatist cause. As such, his identification of them as heroes, and, later, as *martyrs*, corresponds to the way in which literary scholar Stathis Gourgouris (1997) defines the latter concept. According to Gourgouris, martyrs are defined by the moment in which they heroically sacrifice themselves "for a different (not yet instituted) *ought*", by which he means "not what society (or reality) *is* but what it *ought to be*" (1997: 133; italics in original). Applied to the hijackings, this means that when President

[15] My translation of the Dutch original: "enkele duizenden belangstellenden."
[16] My translation of the Dutch original: "Het is de dag waarop de Nederlandse staat met ongekend grof geweld een einde heeft gemaakt aan de treinkaping bij De Punt. De dag waarop in opdracht van de Nederlandse regering een einde is gemaakt aan de jonge levens van onze helden."
[17] My translation of the Dutch original: "Mensen die kinderen en andere onschuldigen bedreigen en gijzelen, kunt u toch geen helden noemen?"
[18] My translation of the Dutch original: "Zij zijn helden omdat ze hun leven hebben gegeven voor de RMS. Dat vond ik toen en dat vind ik nog steeds. Door hun inzet, met de dood tot gevolg zijn het martelaren."

Wattilete presents the hijackers as martyrs, he enables the imagination of an *ought*, in which the independent Moluccan state would be acknowledged, and in which Moluccans therefore would no longer be marginalized subjects within the two surrounding dominant national contexts of Indonesia and the Netherlands.

This understanding of the figure of the martyr, as a symbol of the struggle for justice, is also taken up in Bernhard Giesen's theory (2004) as one among several variants of what he classifies as *heroes* (2004: 18). In his classification, heroes are a third archetype, next to victims and perpetrators, who can be identified by their "sacred subjectivity" (ibid., 7). Giesen bases his notion of the "sacred" on the work of Émile Durkheim (1912), who conceptualizes it in opposition to the "profane". In the introduction to the English translation of Durkheim's book, Mark S. Cladis (2001) defines these two concepts as follows:

> Durkheim frequently associated the sacred with the collective practices of the moral community, and the profane with the utilitarian activities of individuals pursuing self-interest. Thus the fundamental religious dichotomy between the sacred and the profane is parallel to the social dichotomy between the common life of the community and the private life of the individual. (2001: *xxii*)

In other words, whereas the profane refers to individual, everyday actions, the sacred refers to actions that transcend this mundane level, and instead are "collective, elevated, and moral" (ibid., *xxiii*). The purpose of the sacred is to "make and remake society's collective existence" (ibid.). In Durkheim's terms, President Wattilete does not see the hijackings as "profane" actions, committed for individual reasons, but rather interprets them within the larger context of Moluccan separatism, and as such provides them with a "sacred" significance.

Whereas Durkheim's use of these concepts has a focus on religious practices toward the construction of collective identity, Giesen applies them to secular versions of such community building. The "memory of the hero", he argues, is "the triumphant representation of subjectivity and collective identity" (2004: 2). The hero "is presented as a mediator between the realm of the sacred and the mundane fields of human action; he *[sic]* is imagined as a personal embodiment of the sacred" (ibid.). Correspondingly, in Wattilete's representation of the hijackers as heroes, they gain "sacred" subjectivity, to the extent that they are presented as personal embodiments of Moluccan separatism. As such, the hijackers' sacred subjectivity is dependent upon Wattilete's particular representation of them, as Giesen

also stresses: the hero's "subjectivity 'exists' only insofar as it is recognized by a community of other subjects" (ibid., 7).

This consideration, that someone's heroic status is the result of a community interpreting that person as such, forms the basis of Giesen's argument that the event of a hero's death usually strengthens, rather than diminishes, their heroic status. As he argues, dying "is even today regarded as a prime path for being remembered as a hero", because after death, the hero's monumentality can no longer be shattered "by presenting the profane and humane details of his or her life" (ibid., 19). In other words, when heroes die during their struggle, they transcend the profane reality of their everyday existence, thereby granting their community the opportunity to identify them exclusively through their "sacred" purpose, which they died for. This understanding of death as a prime path toward heroism is also apparent in Wattilete's remark that the hijackers "are heroes because they gave their lives for the RMS" (*Telegraaf*, 8 July 2017).[19]

This preference for subjects who have died over those who are still alive, when it comes to the identification of heroes, can be explored further by studying the image reproduced below (see fig. 1).

Fig. 1: A frequently cited collage in memory of the killed hijackers of the 1977 action. Copyright is unknown.

This image is of anonymous origin, but circulates on social media among internet users who see the hijackers as heroes. The image was for instance used in the *2DOC* twitter discussion from 2017, as an accompanying image to a Moluccan user's tweet, who stated that "To me they are and will forever be heroes. The Dutch treason and the colonial past remain painful issues, but we persist…" (23 May 2017).[20] The image was also used in the national media, for

[19] My translation of the Dutch original: "Zij zijn helden omdat ze hun leven hebben gegeven voor de RMS."
[20] My translation of the Dutch original: "Voor mij zijn en blijven het helden. Het Nederlandse verraad en koloniale verleden blijven pijnpunten mr *[sic]* we gaan verder…"

a 2017 interview with Moluccan soccer player Simon Tahamata, who sees the hijackers as "heroes, still. Who fought for our ideals" (*Algemeen Dagblad*, 11 June 2017).[21]

The image states the deceased hijackers' names and the date of their deaths, and it includes photos of their faces, as well as the Indonesian-language proverb *Djauw dari mata / dekat di hati* ("Far from the eyes, close to the heart"), printed in the colors of the RMS flag. The text is printed over a photo of the hijacked train's front carriage, including the flag which the hijackers had attached to it. The three hijackers that survived the military intervention are not included in this collage. Moreover, for the other hijacking, the one that took place in 1975 and during which none of the hijackers were killed, similar collages do not exist. Therefore, like Wattilete's speech and the annual practice of the commemoration itself, this collage indicates that the process of remembering the hijackings as heroic has an emphasis on death. In all three of these memory practices, the dead rather than the living hijackers are remembered. According to Giesen (2004), the dead hero's legacy can be immortalized by means of memory practices that emphasize three possible elements: "they can mark his *[sic] place* in the community, they can recall his *voice* and his story, and they can represent his *face* to insiders and outsiders" (2004: 26; italics in original).

The latter ritual, of representing the hero's *face* to insiders and outsiders, is showcased by the collage's inclusion of the hijackers' profile photos. Moreover, their identity is also presented by enlisting their names. Their *place* in the community is marked by the photo presenting the place where they died, as well as the collage's proverb that locates them "close to the heart". The annual commemoration, during which considerable numbers of the Moluccan community come together in the cemetery where the hijackers are buried, is also a means to remember their legacy in spatial terms. Their *voice* and their story, finally, are recalled when Wattilete publicly remembers them as "our heroes", and frames their actions within the context of the Moluccan independence struggle, on behalf of which they acted, and for which they ultimately died. Such ideological contextualization is further strengthened by the references to the RMS flag in the collage, and the raising of the flag during the commemoration.

As such, whereas victims and perpetrators are theorized by Giesen to possess "no faces, no voices, no places of their own" (ibid., 51), he argues that heroes do have all three of these characteristics. Whereas victims and perpetrators are banished to the margins of their

[21] My translation of the Dutch original: "helden, nog steeds. Die actie voerden voor ons ideaal."

community, the hero instead is located in the centre of the "social community that reveres him *[sic]*, commemorates him and imagines him. His or her presence marks the charismatic centre of society" (ibid., 17). Giesen's notion of charisma is based upon the work of Max Weber (1947 [1922]), who defines it as "a certain quality of an individual personality, by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men *[sic]*" and treated as endowed with "specifically exceptional powers or qualities" (1947: 358). Giesen emphasizes that Weber's understanding of charisma concerns a form of authority which "is constituted by the *belief* of followers in the extraordinary qualities of an individual", as a result of which studies about heroism and charisma often focus "more on the charismatic movement than on the figure of the hero himself *[sic]*" (17; italics in original).

Correspondingly, the interpretation of the hijackers as heroes says less about the hijackers themselves, than about how those who develop and foster this interpretation want to remember their actions in the present. Interpreting the hijackers as heroes helps the Moluccan community to remember the hijackings as justified actions against the Dutch state, whose treatment of the Moluccan community since their migration in turn is thereby represented as unjust. Therefore, unlike victims and perpetrators, heroes do possess a political voice, to the extent that their legacy is remembered, and their political message is ritually recalled, repeated and continued. Through memory practices that honor the hijackers as heroes, their claim to separatism stays alive even after their deaths. Their heroic character is constructed by a community that itself benefits from this construction. By interpreting the hijackers as "charismatic", extraordinary individuals, in terms of bravery, sense of justice, and willingness to self-sacrifice, the community constructs itself in this archetype's ideal image. Heroes function as exemplars to a community's sense of self.

To that extent, the status of the hero shares with that of the victim and the perpetrator that it is a socially constructed label placed upon a person, rather than this person's self-identification, let alone their natural quality. Therefore, the hero's voice reaches only as far as their community: the hijackers are heroes only to those who believe that the Moluccan separatist struggle is legitimate, and that their actions were a justified method toward the fulfillment of that struggle. To people who interpret the actions differently, for instance as the desperate cry for help of victims of colonial oppression, or as the radical transgressions of perpetrators, the hijackers' political voice is not acknowledged.

My analysis therefore departs from Giesen's theory (2004) to the extent that it questions his general acceptance of the hero's voice. If heroes are constructions made by a community in order to build a positive self-image, it follows that their voices are part of that construction. According to this approach, and in contrast to Giesen's argumentation, heroes do in fact *not* have voices of their own. Instead, their voices are the result of the community speaking through them. They are, quite literally, the voices of their community.

This idea, of heroes not being in control of their own voices, can be asserted by studying an interview with Abé Sahetapy, who was among the hijackers of the 1975 action (*Historiën*, 16 October 2014). In this interview, Sahetapy is repeatedly asked whether or not he sees himself as a Moluccan hero. He answers: "I am not a hero at all in the Moluccan community and never wanted to be. No, all of that is nonsense" (16 October 2014).[22] Throughout the interview, Sahetapy invalidates one after the other glorifying interpretation of his actions. For example, because he took up writing poetry while he was in prison, the interviewer asks him whether he sees himself as "a romantic artist-warrior in the way in which the philosopher Nietzsche had imagined it" (ibid.).[23] He answers: "No, not at all. To me, art and the armed struggle have nothing in common. […] I was just a guy who performed an action, nothing more. Our people were mistreated and we were no longer going to take it" (ibid.).[24] When asked whether or not the rumor is true that the hijackers received special training for their actions in a guerilla camp, he states: "We did not receive special training or even practice to handle weapons. Everyone can use a gun or throw a grenade. There is nothing difficult about it. You can do it too" (ibid.).[25]

With these and similar statements, Sahetapy attempts to decrease the distance which the interviewer tries to create between them, by attempting to elevate him to the status of a man with extraordinary abilities, or by imagining him as someone whose actions were inspired by a set of unique circumstances. Rather than a courageous freedom fighter, Sahetapy sketches himself as a typical, troubled adolescent: "I felt a lot of dissatisfaction, despite the

[22] My translation of the Dutch original: "Ik ben helemaal geen held in de Molukse samenleving en wilde dat ook nooit worden. Nee, dat is allemaal onzin."
[23] My translation of the Dutch original: "of hij zich daardoor een romantische kunstenaar-strijder voelt zoals de filosoof Nietzsche zich die voorstelde."
[24] My translation of the Dutch original: "Nee, helemaal niet. In mijn geval hebben kunst en gewapende strijd niks met elkaar te maken. […] Ik was gewoon een jongen die een actie uitvoerde, meer niet. Ons volk werd slecht behandeld en dat pikten we niet langer."
[25] My translation of the Dutch original: "Ook hadden we niet speciaal getraind of geoefend om met wapens om te gaan. Iedereen kan een geweer bedienen of granaat gooien. Daar is niks moeilijks aan. Ook jij kunt het."

fact that I had a pleasant youth in Drenthe.[26] I was, and still am, stuck between two cultures. As it happens, you first agitate against the one culture, and then against the other" (ibid.).[27] By refusing to be identified as an extraordinary character, Sahetapy disrupts the possibility of interpreting his actions as serving a larger, ideological purpose. Rather than this "sacred" understanding of his actions, he presents them as "profane", individual transgressions.

What becomes clear from Sahetapy's insistence on the everyday quality of his actions, is that living individuals make for more fragile heroes than individuals who are no longer alive. The main reason for this is that the construction of heroes is a way for a community to articulate its own identity, and that living subjects may refuse to serve this purpose. Their personal memories and interpretations of their actions may be in conflict with the way in which their actions are taken up in collective memory as exemplary deeds. As such, if becoming a hero means to become "the voice of a community", then rejecting heroic status can be understood as a means to counteract this process. This consideration, of rejecting heroic status as a means to retain control over one's own voice, will be further developed in the next section, by analyzing another party that was active during the hijackings, and whose perspective has not yet been discussed: the marines who participated in the military intervention that ended the hijacking in 1977.

Who controls the hero's voice?

Like the hijackers, the marines that executed the military intervention in 1977 have frequently been the subject of public discussions about perpetrators, victims and heroes. A thorough attempt to grant the marines an official heroic status was made in 2012, when Minister of Defense Hans Hillen announced the *Veteranenwet* ("Veterans Law"). According to the press release that was published on the Ministry of Defense's website, this law was to extend the definition of veterans to include "soldiers who are deployed against terrorist actions in both the Netherlands and abroad" (4 June 2012).[28] Within this context, Minister Hillen explicitly mentioned the 1977 marines, announcing his intention to reward their actions with a medal.

[26] Drenthe is the Dutch province in which both hijackings took place.
[27] My translation of the Dutch original: "Zelf voelde ik ook veel onvrede, hoewel ik een goede jeugd heb gehad in Drenthe. Ik zat en zit nu nog steeds klem tussen twee culturen. Eerst schop je tegen de ene cultuur aan en vervolgens tegen de andere."
[28] My translation of the Dutch original: "militairen die worden ingezet tegen terroristische acties in zowel Nederland of in het buitenland."

This proposal resulted in discussions in both traditional and social media about whether or not the marines should be regarded as heroes.

Some of the marines themselves also contributed to these discussions. Most prominently, in an interview with national news channel *NOS* (9 June 2012), ex-commander Kees Kommer, who had led the taskforce in 1977, deromanticizes the memory of the military intervention, by stressing the fatal reality of the actions for which Minister Hillen suggested he should receive the medal: "In my opinion, the government has the right to intervene in cases such as the train hijacking. But I do not need a reward for the fact that I killed people" (9 June 2012).[29] Moreover, with this comment he redirects responsibility for the military intervention to the government, on whose orders the marines were acting. As such, Kommer's point of view complicates the heroic status that a medal would grant him. Because he was one among several marines to criticize the proposal for the same reasons, Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, Hillen's successor as Minister of Defense, officially decided against the medal in 2014. Therefore, just like in the example of surviving hijacker Abé Sahetapy, Kommer's personal interpretation of his past deeds obstructs the construction of a stable collective memory in the present. The official acknowledgment of the members of his taskforce as heroes by the government is impeded by his personal understanding of the military intervention.

Kommer's refusal to be regarded as a hero can be understood through Bernhard Giesen's (2004) arguments concerning the fragility of this position: "the public embodiment of power and charisma in the figure of the hero risks being considered immoral, scandalous, or unjust", as a result of which, whoever "was regarded as a hero before" could be "converted into a perpetrator" (2004: 54). For the marines, this shift from hero to potential perpetrator indeed took place in the course of the 2014-2018 lawsuit which the hijackers' next of kin started against the state. According to an article by national newspaper *Telegraaf* (28 January 2017), after their military intervention of the hijacking in 1977, the marines were initially "welcomed as heroes. But since a few years, this status has come under scrutiny. The most

[29] My translation of the Dutch original: "Ik vind dat de overheid het recht heeft om in te grijpen in gevallen zoals bij het kapen van die trein. Maar ik hoef niet beloond te worden voor het feit dat ik mensen heb doodgeschoten."

severe attack: a lawsuit in which the hijackers' next of kin accuse the soldiers of being responsible for executions" (28 January 2017).[30]

As this article indicates, the elevated position which individuals are offered when they are hailed as heroes, can also be turned against them once the interpretation landscape changes: "Versions of the past change with every recall, in accordance with the changed present situation" (Erll, 2011: 8). In the case of the marines, an example of such a changed present situation took place in 2013, when freelance journalist Jan Beckers published the results of his independent research into the details of the 1977 military intervention online (*Initiatiefgroep 7for7*, 29 June 2013). Since 2010, he had worked together with surviving hijacker Junus Ririmasse and forensic pathologist F.R.W. van de Goot to develop a reconstruction of the way in which the 1977 hijacking had ended. The reconstruction was based on a reexamination of the autopsy reports of the killed hijackers, as well as on a series of interviews with people that had been closely involved with the event, including hostages and participating marines. The purpose of this project was to determine whether or not the hijackers' deaths could be interpreted as executions, and as such as illegitimate violence.

To this aim, the reconstruction was focused on finding out both whether or not the marines had purposefully killed, rather than arrested, the hijackers, and whether or not some of the hijackers had been unarmed. Because the results of the reconstruction appeared to confirm both of these questions, Beckers sought national attention for his work, and was interviewed by a number of newspapers. Among these interviews is one with *Dagblad van het Noorden* (1 June 2013), the main newspaper for the provinces Groningen and Drenthe, which is where the hijackers were from. In the interview, Beckers proclaims that "several marines have been guilty of committing perversities and engaging in an orgy of blood and violence" (1 June 2013).[31]

These and similarly spectacular statements rekindled public discussions about questions of justice in the case of the hijacking of 1977, prompting the government to initiate an archival research in order to decide whether or not Beckers's claims were legitimate. As such, the research was primarily aimed at studying the audio recordings which existed of the military intervention, but which had not been publicly accessible up until that point. The

[30] My translation of the Dutch original: "werden als helden onthaald. Aan die status wordt sinds een paar jaar getornd. De zwaarste aanval: een rechtszaak waarin nabestaanden van kapers de militairen beschuldigen van executies."
[31] My translation of the Dutch original: "een aantal mariniers zich schuldig heeft gemaakt aan perversiteiten en zich te buiten ging aan een orgie van bloed en geweld."

outcome of the research was that the government did not consider Beckers's indictment to be legitimate, because the archival research indicated that "the soldiers had acted within their rules of engagement", as was reported by the Ministry of Defense's online magazine *Defensiekrant* (2014: 4).[32] This outcome, in turn, resulted in the 2014-2018 lawsuit against the Dutch state, which was led by human rights lawyer Liesbeth Zegveld, who had won several lawsuits concerning state violence since the early 2000s.

Although this lawsuit has shifted the question of perpetration from the hijackers to the state, Beckers's initiating accusation, which he has frequently repeated in the media since, labeled individual marines as perpetrators. The discussions in the media have mainly followed the lawsuit's rather than Beckers's premise, in that they have primarily focused on the roles played by the hijackers and by the state. Nevertheless, Beckers's indictment has inspired a considerable amount of public discussions about the marines themselves, which, like the discussions concerning the hijackers, are preoccupied with identifying heroes, perpetrators and victims. For instance, a reader's letter to *Dagblad van het Noorden* (6 June 2017) states that "The marines were heroes, not cruel murderers", and expresses frustration about the fact that "the guardians of this country are time and again cast as perpetrators. Meanwhile, perpetrators are turned into victims" (6 June 2017).[33] This interpretation of the situation as a reversal of moral positions is quite common in the public discussions concerning the lawsuit. Another prominent example is an article for *Telegraaf* (1 June 2017), written by crime journalist and television presenter John van den Heuvel, who argues that "the (ex-)marines of De Punt in any case do not deserve a shameful place in the courtroom. They rather deserve a heroic status" (1 June 2017).[34]

The polarized nature of the public debate of marines as heroes or perpetrators stands in contrast to the way in which individual marines themselves on several occasions have advocated an interpretation that labels them as neither of these archetypes. In a *Volkskrant* article emphatically entitled "We are killers" (16 October 2017), two ex-marines who were part of the special taskforce, Jack Schollink and Peter Gatowinas, remind readers of the specifics of their function: "We are trained to kill. Torture. Chew off someone's throat if necessary. […] When we are deployed, killing is anticipated. Otherwise, one would rather call

[32] My translation of the Dutch original: "De militairen handelden binnen hun geweldinstructies."
[33] My translation of the Dutch original: "Mariniers waren helden, geen kille moordenaars"; "De hoeders van dit land worden keer op keer als daders weggezet. Daders worden slachtoffers."
[34] My translation of the Dutch original: "De (oud-)mariniers van De Punt verdienen hoe dan ook geen beschamende plek in de rechtszaal, maar een heldenstatus."

the police" (16 October 2017).[35] Their self-representation complicates both an understanding of them as heroes and as perpetrators. While their unappealing and explicitly violent self-description makes it difficult to romanticize their function, they also avoid an interpretation as perpetrators by emphasizing that they work for the state, as a result of which the actions they are ordered to perform, unlike those of perpetrators, do not consist in breaking the law.

Therefore, like Kommer before them, Schollink and Gatowinas criticize the exclusive attention which the lawsuit places on them as subjects, as if they were acting independently, and redirect this attention to the state, on whose orders they were operating: "The state should solve cases, rather than shift the blame onto others as a means to functional self-protection" (ibid.).[36] Moreover, they complicate the binary opposition between hijackers and marines which the hero-perpetrator discussion assumes, as they argue that the hijackings resulted directly from the systematic disregard which the Moluccan soldiers faced upon their arrival in the Netherlands in 1951: "They were screwed over and lied to by the Dutch government. Because the government always screws over its soldiers. We are always the ones to be sacrificed" (ibid.).[37] With this remark they diminish their distance to the hijackers, whose parents, so they argue, were soldiers for the same Dutch state as they themselves were, and were treated with the same systematic neglect which they are currently facing.

This analysis of the marines and the changing public appreciation for the roles they played during the hijacking, shows how living heroes may often reject their heroic status, because this status makes them easy targets for incriminating interpretations once something changes in the general understanding of the history. As long as the hijackers are understood as merciless criminals, the military intervention can be understood as a heroic liberation, despite the fact that it caused eight deaths, including those of two hostages. When, however, new research gives reason to believe that some of the killed hijackers were in fact unarmed, their deaths, that were until then believed to be unavoidable, can be reinterpreted as illegitimate executions. As a result of this, the violence of the intervention becomes more difficult to justify, stand alone glorify, as it runs the risk of being reinterpreted as excessive.

[35] My translation of the Dutch original: "Wij zijn killers." "Wij zijn getraind om te doden. Martelen. Een strot doorbijten als het moet. […] Als je ons inzet, wordt doden ingecalculeerd. Anders bel je de politie."
[36] My translation of the Dutch original: "De staat moet zaken oplossen en niet de schuld afschuiven uit functionele zelfbescherming."
[37] My translation of the Dutch original: "Ze zijn genaaid en belogen door de Nederlandse overheid. De regering naait ook altijd haar militairen. Wij worden altijd opgeofferd."

In short, because the marines, when they are understood as heroes, run the risk of becoming recast in the role of perpetrators, they prefer to be seen as regular individuals who were playing their predesigned parts in a larger conflict that lies beyond their personal responsibility. This risk that they run, of becoming revalidated as perpetrators, showcases that heroes are not in control of their own public significance. Therefore, marines like Kommer, Schollink and Gatowinas, and surviving hijackers like Sahetapy, interrupt the collective memory practices that seek to endow their actions with a sense of "sacredness", in order to avoid that their voices are annexed by a larger community investing them with meaning. By rejecting heroic status, therefore, these individuals remain in control of their own voices.

Conclusions

The Moluccan hijackings in the 1970s were violent actions aimed at forcing the Dutch government to follow up on its alleged promise to help establish an independent Moluccan republic. These actions have caused ongoing discussions in both traditional and social media, where the state, the hijackers, and the marines are often interpreted in terms of Giesen's three archetypes: i.e. victims, perpetrators and heroes. These interpretations indicate different ways in which the hijackings, and the larger context of postcolonial conflict, are remembered, predominantly in terms of responsibility and justice.

Victims and perpetrators are two opposing yet mutually dependent archetypes. Each of them is identified by identifying the other. If the hijackings are interpreted as unjustified, and the hijackers are held responsible for their actions, they can be interpreted as perpetrators, whereas their hostages can be interpreted as victims. And vice versa, if the state is interpreted as responsible for the neglect which their postcolonial immigrants suffered upon arrival, the hijackings can be interpreted as a justified, symptomatic result of the Moluccan community's position as victims of this mismanagement. Any casualties of the actions, on Dutch as well as on Moluccan sides, can then by extension be interpreted as victims of the state's perpetration as well. Remembering any party as either victims or perpetrators takes away their political voice: as victims because they are deprived of it, as perpetrators because they have lost their right to it.

The third archetype, that of the hero, differs from the other two to the extent that to interpret individuals as heroes does not mean to take away, but rather to collectivize their

voices as expressing a larger ideological position. When a community identifies a certain individual as its hero, it means that this individual is constructed as an exemplar for this community's self-identity. Moluccan President Wattilete remembers the hijackers as heroes, because to interpret their deeds as justified and heroic means to interpret the Moluccan independence struggle as legitimate. Correspondingly, when people interpret the marines as heroes, it is because it means to remember their deeds as justified, and therefore to remember the fatal violence which they committed as legitimate rather than excessive.

Individuals who have died during their struggle are easier objects of such glorification than individuals who are still alive. The main reason for this is that living people may reject their heroic status, whereas people no longer alive lack the capacity to do so. Because heroes run the risk of being reinterpreted as perpetrators when the interpretative landscape shifts to their disadvantage, they often prefer to be remembered as ordinary, rather than extraordinary subjects. The lawsuit against the Dutch state, which had a major focus on the question to what extent the marines were following orders when they killed the hijackers, is an example of this fragile position.

With these conclusions in mind, Giesen's claim (2004) that the hero has "a face, a voice and a place in the center of a social community that reveres him" (2004: 17), requires some reconsideration. Seeing that it is easier to make dead people into heroes, due to their lack of capacity to reject this status, a question can be formed about who controls the hero's face, voice and place. That is, to what extent does a hero have the agency to make decisions about these qualities? On the one hand, heroes express elements of a community's identity. On the other hand, they are cast in these roles by their community, which means that, in a way, the community is articulating its identity to itself, using heroes as its passive, communicative portals. Rather than having voices and faces of their own, heroes are, quite literally, the voices and faces of their community. As such, one can wonder whether the killed hijackers would agree to being venerated as the heroes which Wattilete makes of them, or whether, in Durkheim's terms, they would deny this "sacred" identity and prefer a more "profane" understanding of their actions, like Sahetapy does in his interview. Dead heroes can be used as instruments for the articulation of a community's collective identity, exactly because they cannot participate in this practice.

Moreover, the cases of Sahetapy and of the marines have shown that even subjects who are still alive may have difficulty being in control of their own voices. Publicly

denouncing their own heroic status has not kept the general public from continuing to hail them as heroes or condemn them as perpetrators, or, at times, mourn them as victims. Therefore, unlike perpetrators and victims, heroes *do* have a voice, but it is not their own. The community speaks through them, and does so most successfully when the heroes themselves are not alive to interrupt the process.

PART TWO

When silence speaks louder than words

CHAPTER THREE

Silencing dissent by granting it voice – The case of Jan Pieterszoon Coen's statue

Introduction

This chapter concerns a national monument that honors the Dutch colonizer Jan Pieterszoon Coen (1587-1629). In April 1621, Coen headed an offensive of 2,000 Dutch soldiers against the population of the Banda islands, an island group in central Maluku. The offensive was a way to force a Dutch monopoly over the global spice trade that was centered there. Banda was home to a large amount of spice plantations, and its population was known to trade with the highest bidder. Over the course of several days, Coen's soldiers burned down villages and plantations, and killed nearly all of Banda's 15,000 inhabitants. The less than 1,000 survivors were deported as slaves to the colonial capital, Batavia. The Banda islands themselves were repopulated with slaves acquired through the international slave trade. These slaves were put to work on the remaining plantations, under the rule of so-called *perkeniers*: i.e. "planters/gardeners", a euphemistic term that refers to the Dutch plantation owners who managed the slave labor.[1]

The spice monopoly that was thus established was a considerable foundation of Dutch prosperity during the 1600s, a century which contemporary Dutch national history refers to as the Golden Age. Because of the decisive role which Coen played in initiating this prosperous period in Dutch colonial history, Coen is often remembered as a national hero, and, in that capacity, was honored with a statue in 1893, which was placed on the central square of his birthplace, Hoorn. This statue has given rise to much controversy over the years, both among the Moluccan community as well as among other postcolonial migrant communities living in the Netherlands.[2] They generally take offense with Coen's statue, because the Dutch prosperity for which he was responsible and for which he is hailed as a national hero, was accomplished by what they see as the mass-destruction of Moluccan territory and the mass-

[1] For an overview of the VOC's use of slaves for the establishment of the spice monopoly, see Vincent Loth, "Pioneers and Perkeniers: The Banda Islands in the 17th Century" (1995). For a more general overview of the extensive Dutch-Asian slave trade in the 1600s and 1700s, see Reggie Baay, *Daar werd wat gruwelijks verricht* (2015), and Matthias van Rossum, *Kleurrijke Tragiek* (2015).

[2] For an overview of postcolonial migrant communities in the Netherlands, see Gert Oostindie. *Postcolonial Netherlands: Sixty-five Years of Forgetting, Commemorating, Silencing* (2011).

killing of Moluccans. Ever since Coen's statue was erected, the city of Hoorn has systematically ignored recurrent Moluccan and other voices in favor of removing it. However, after the statue fell from its pedestal during a construction accident on 16 August 2011, these voices could no longer be avoided. The objective of this chapter is to analyze the ways in which the municipality eventually interacted with these voices of protest, during and after the process of renovating the statue.

The most prominent voice of protest that was heard in this context was that of freelance journalist Eric van de Beek, who had formulated a petition that had made the national news. The petition, signed by 297 citizens of Hoorn, was called *Ja voor Hoorn; Nee tegen Coen* ("Yes to Hoorn, No to Coen") and pleaded for the definitive removal of the statue from the square, and for its relocation in the Westfries Museum. The latter is a museum about the Dutch Golden Age, and is located on the same square as the statue. Van de Beek's main argument was that "the municipality of Hoorn would honor a genocide committer if it would place J.P. Coen's fallen statue back on its pedestal" (*Ja voor Hoorn. Nee tegen Coen*).[3] Possibly as a way to argue that if Coen would have lived today, he would be prosecuted for crimes against humanity, the text includes a reminder that the Netherlands is "home to the International Criminal Court in The Hague" (ibid.).[4]

The municipality did not heed the request for the statue's relocation to the Westfries Museum, but did offer three compromises, in collaboration with the museum. The first of these compromises was that the municipality provided the renovated statue with an updated inscription, that gave a more detailed account of Coen's deeds, including an acknowledgment of the existence of criticism against the statue. The second compromise was an interactive exhibition called *De Zaak Coen* ("The Coen Case"), which took place in the Westfries Museum a few months after the statue's renovation, from 14 April to 1 July 2012. The exhibition staged the ongoing public debate about Coen's controversial legacy as a court case based on the charge that Coen is not worthy of a statue. Visitors were invited to take in a variety of opinions about the case before reaching their own verdicts. The third and final compromise was a one-off glossy magazine that was published simultaneously with the opening of the exhibition, entitled *De Coen! Geroemd en verguisd* ("The Coen! Praised and

[3] My translation from the Dutch original: "als de gemeente Hoorn eer bewijst aan genocidepleger J.P. Coen door diens gevallen standbeeld terug te zetten op zijn sokkel."
[4] My translation from the Dutch original: "die onderdak bieden aan het Internationaal Strafhof in Den Haag."

Reviled", 2012).[5] Similarly to the exhibition, the aim of the magazine was to give voice to many different opinions about Coen, including critical ones.

All three responses to Van de Beek's petition appear to be attempts to grant critical voices a place among voices of praise. Yet, by granting the opposition a voice in this way, the municipality legitimized its decision to ignore what these voices had to say: the statue was renovated in direct disregard of the opposition's wishes. With that in mind, I will close-read all three of the municipality's compromises in order to inquire under which circumstances being granted a voice may result in being silenced.

In what follows, I will first give an overview of the relevant elements of Coen's actions in the Moluccan region in the early 1600s, and bring this in relation with an account of the historical context in which his statue was erected almost 300 years later, in 1893. According to N.C.F. van Sas (2005), the late 1800s were a time in which the Netherlands was impacted by the rise of "modern imperialism, with its intensification of international tensions and rivalries" (2005: 564-65).[6] Within this context, the Netherlands sought to develop a national self-identification as a strong colonial presence in the world, which resulted among other things in "statues of national heroes being erected everywhere" (ibid., 560).[7] These statues, like Coen's, often honored well-known colonizers from the Golden Age, in order to present Dutch history as a history of colonial conquest and mercantile ingenuity. Contextualizing the origin of Coen's statue within this development of a national identity focused on colonial power will help to understand why it has often functioned as a catalyst for disputes about the representation of colonial history: the placements of statues "were frequently preceded by years of discussion. Often, the decisions for certain figures led to considerable resistance" (ibid., 560).[8]

After providing this historical context, I will analyze the ways in which the municipality of Hoorn interacted with voices protesting the renovation of Coen's statue in 2011 and 2012, in order to answer the following three questions: (1) How is Dutch colonial history represented and made official through public memory sites such as Coen's statue? (2) How do Moluccan and other voices that contest this representation of history interact with the

[5] The publication was officially called a glossy magazine (*VindMagazine*, 13 April 2012).
[6] My translation from the Dutch original: "het moderne imperialisme met zijn verscherping van international spanningen en rivaliteiten."
[7] My translation from the Dutch original: "om overal standbeelden op te richten van vaderlandse helden."
[8] My translation from the Dutch original: "gingen aan plaatsing vaak jarenlange discussies vooraf. Niet zelden riep de keuze van de uitverkorene al grote weerstanden op."

official discourses that manage these public sites? (3) How do these official discourses attempt to regulate and eventually silence these voices?

Conflicts over Dutch colonial memory in public space[9]

Coen was the fourth Governor-General of the VOC (*Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie*: "Dutch East India Company") from 1617-1623. He established the city of Batavia in 1619 (currently Jakarta, the capital city of Indonesia) and is remembered for being responsible for the establishment of the Dutch global monopoly over the clove and nutmeg trade in 1621. A less emphasized aspect of this history, however, is the fact that he accomplished the spice monopoly by organizing a violent offensive on the Banda islands, in central Maluku, killing nearly all 15,000 of its inhabitants, deporting the less than 1,000 survivors as slaves to Batavia, and repopulating Banda with "shiploads of slaves, who were usually acquired from regional slave markets on the coasts where the VOC traded, if they were not prisoners" (Loth, 1995: 24).

The conquest of Banda was not the first time that Coen had burned down and depopulated an area to take control over it. The establishment of Batavia in 1619 had also been the result of his soldiers burning down the existing city of Jayakarta and expelling its native population. This practice became a common VOC strategy to maintain in control over the colony. Throughout the 1600s and 1700s, the trading company organized annual military expeditions, the so-called *hongi* expeditions, to uphold the Dutch monopoly on the spice trade, by extirpating plantations that were not trading exclusively with the Dutch.[10]

Coen's particular expedition against the Banda islands was motivated by the fact that this region was the main location for the spice plantations, which preexisted the arrival of the Dutch, and were of great interest to the VOC. Coen's actions constituted a decisive step in the VOC project, which Richard Chauvel (1990) summarizes as:

> a policy of excluding Asian traders and the imposition of control over the clove-producing areas. The clove producers were forced to cease trading with their

[9] Parts of this and the following sections were previously published in Gerlov van Engelenhoven and Hannes Kaufmann. "When Silence Speaks Louder than Words: Tracing moments of *Verfremdung* in Contemporary Political Protests" (2019).

[10] The VOC took the term "hongi" from the language of the Moluccan island of Ternate. The word translates to "armada". For an overview of the VOC's use of hongi expeditions for the maintenance of the spice monopoly, see Muridan Widjojo, "Ruling the Local Rulers: Maintenance of the Spice Monopoly" (2009).

> traditional partners and supply cloves only to the Dutch, while the Dutch were the only and more expensive source of the commodities of exchange. (1990: 19)

The Bandanese did not accept this to them detrimental collaboration which the VOC was forcing upon them, as a result of which, "Resistance was offered by covert trading and force of arms" (ibid.). This resistance is often taken as a justification for Coen's mass-killing of the Bandanese population in 1621, which on the inscription of his statue, for example, is referred to as a "punitive expedition". Due to the foundational role he has played in the establishment of the spice monopoly, Coen is remembered as a national hero. His statue, which was built by Ferdinand Leenhoff in 1893, and is located on the central square in Coen's birthplace of Hoorn, is an expression of this heroic status.

However, because of the violent details of Coen's actions, his statue has often been criticized. Since the settlement of the Moluccan migrant community in the Netherlands in 1951, this criticism has often, but not exclusively, come from Moluccan voices. A major reason for the offense which they take with the statue is that Coen's establishment of the spice monopoly was brought about through the mass-destruction of a Moluccan area, that is, the Banda islands, and the mass-killing of its inhabitants. The honor which the statue offers to Coen's legacy therefore implies a one-sided approach to remembering the Dutch colonial past that actively ignores Dutch society's postcolonial reality: i.e. a portion of contemporary Dutch nationals are descendants of people who suffered enslavement, oppression and forced migration under the Dutch colonial regime, in which Coen played a central part.

Seeing the controversial role that Coen has played in Dutch colonial history, it is curious that he received a statue at all. Perhaps even more curious is the fact that this statue was built so many years after his death: what was the purpose of building a national commemoration for a man, more than two and a half centuries after his lifetime? A possible explanation of these issues can be found in the work of N.C.F. van Sas, who argues that Coen's statue was built in a time of "statue mania" (2005: 560).[11] This statue mania helped shape the Dutch colonial past as a history of national heroes. Van Sas sketches the 1800s as a time in which the Netherlands was "preoccupied with the nation", and the construction of a "fatherland discourse", which he also terms "the myth of the Netherlands" (ibid., 523).[12] Van Sas bases himself in a tradition that is shared by historians like Benedict Anderson (1983) and

[11] My translation from the Dutch original: "statuomanie"
[12] My translation from the Dutch original: "preoccupatie met de natie"; "vaderlanddiscours"; "de mythe Nederland."

Pierre Nora (1984), who theorize nationalism as a process of myth-making, in which collective imaginations of a national community are institutionalized via certain societal practices. These include national media and literature, which Anderson is most interested in, as well as sites of memory, such as national monuments and public art, which is what Nora focuses on.

Based in this tradition, Van Sas (2005) interprets Dutch nationalism in especially the late 1800s, as a form of using literature and public art to strengthen the Dutch national self-identification as a strong colonial power. At the time, the Netherlands was occupied with maintaining control over its colonial territories. The Dutch, argues Van Sas "enforced their power, if necessary, aggressively", which led to "expressions of outspoken jingoism – exalted nationalism – in the motherland" (2005: 565)[13] An example of the violent presence of the Dutch in their colonies in this era is the Aceh "pacification" (1873-1904), as it was euphemistically referred to at the time, which cost between 60,000 and 70,000 Indonesian lives. The offensive succeeded in restabilizing Dutch control over the region of Aceh, on the western Indonesian island of Sumatra, which had been struggling towards independence. Governor J.B. van Heutsz, who was responsible for the offensive, was remembered as "the pacifier of Aceh" and received a monument in Amsterdam in 1935. Based on the Dutch victory over Aceh, as well as several other successful expeditions, Dutch national identity "undeniably took on an imperialist tone in the last decades of the nineteenth century" (ibid., 579).[14]

These attempts to implement an imperialist-minded Dutch nationalism via public art were rarely uncontested. Coen's statue especially was met with immediate protest, due to the cruel details of his legacy. According to Victor Enthoven (2015), the first protests date from the time when the statue was still only an initiative. The bibliographer P.A. Tiele argued against the initiative in 1885 by referring to Coen's violent assault on Banda, writing that "for the sake of monopoly, the affluent population of a beautiful archipelago […] was murdered in a cold-blooded manner" (2015: 128). In 1887, the head archivist of the Dutch National Archives, J.A. van der Chijs, also expressed his doubts, by reminding that Coen's name "is covered with blood" (ibid.).

[13] My translation from the Dutch original: "De gezagshandhaving gebeurde desnoods met harde hand"; "uitingen van uitgesproken jingoïsme – geëxalteerd nationalisme – in het moederland."
[14] My translation from the Dutch original: "onvervalst imperialistische toonzetting die dat in de laatste decennia van de negentiende eeuw heeft gekregen."

More contemporary protests against Coen's statue include a play by one of the most celebrated modern Dutch poets, Jan Jacob Slauerhoff: *Jan Pietersz. Coen, drama in elf taferelen* ("Jan Pieterszoon Coen, drama in eleven tableaux", 1931), which "completely stripped Coen of his hero status" (Enthoven, 2015: 128). It was published as a text but never performed as a play due to its controversial content, until fifty years after Slauerhoff's death, in 1986. During the celebration of Coen's 350th birthday in 1937, the Revolutionary Socialist Workers Party distributed flyers that read: "Monday the Dutch upper class will applaud in grandiloquent terms the exploitation of the Indonesian people" (qtd. in: ibid., 129). During the celebration of Coen's 400th birthday in 1987, at the opening of an exhibition about him in the Westfries Museum in Hoorn, "Protest posters went up in the town, a collection of protest poems was published, and the statue was smeared with paint. […] Moluccan artist Willy Nanlohy presented the Queen's husband, Prince Claus, with a black book on the atrocities carried out by Coen" (ibid.).

Such protests against Coen's glorification have continued into the twenty-first century. In 2011, a citizens' initiative called *Ja voor Hoorn; Nee tegen Coen* ("Yes to Hoorn; No to Coen") petitioned for the statue's removal and relocation to the Westfries Museum, arguing that it glorifies a genocide committer. The petition was signed by the rather modest amount of 297 citizens of Hoorn. Yet, its message gained symbolic significance when Coen's statue was knocked off its pedestal in a construction accident on 16 August 2011. The national attention that ensued urged the municipality of Hoorn to respond to the petition. Although the statue was placed back on its pedestal, the municipality officially acknowledged the petition in three ways. First of all, the statue was provided with a new inscription, which acknowledges criticism against its renovation. Second, the Westfries Museum started an exhibition about the statue and Coen's controversial history as such. Finally, the museum issued an accompanying glossy magazine, that presented a selection of both positive and negative perspectives on Coen. The following three sections will provide close-readings for each of these offered compromises, in order to analyze the effects they have had on the statue's contested reputation.

The first compromise: the statue's updated inscription

The first compromise that the municipality offered to those who protested the renovation of Coen's statue in 2011, was to update the statue's inscription in a way that would acknowledge critical voices. The old inscription was as follows:

> Jan Pieterszoon Coen (1587-1629). Born in Hoorn. Governor-General of the VOC and founder of Batavia (present-day Jakarta). The statue was erected in 1893. The square, named after the red stone where executions took place, is the central point from which Hoorn has developed itself, with notable buildings such as the Statencollege (1632), nowadays known as the Westfries Museum, and the Waag (1609).[15]

No reference is made to Coen's violent actions on Banda, or to the fact that he "founded" Batavia by burning down the existing city of Jayakarta and expelling its native population. On the other hand, this version also does not seek to aggrandize his legacy. In fact, most of the inscription is more about the statue's location than it is about Coen.

The new, bilingual inscription (in Dutch and English) presents a much longer, and more detailed version of history. The English version is quoted in full below:

> Jan Pieterszoon Coen (Hoorn 1587 – Batavia 1629).
>
> Merchant, Director-General and Governor-General of the Dutch East India Company (VOC). Architect of the VOC's successful trading empire in Asia. Founder of the city of Batavia, currently known as Jakarta.
>
> Coen was praised as a vigorous and visionary administrator. But he was also criticized for the violent means by which he built up trade monopolies in the East Indies. In 1621 Coen led a punitive expedition against one of the Banda Islands, as the local population was selling to the English in disregard of a VOC ban. Thousands of Bandanese lost their lives during the assault and the survivors were deported to Batavia.
>
> By the end of the nineteenth century Coen had grown into a national hero and was honored with a statue in his home town. A national committee headed by the Mayor of

[15] My translation from the Dutch original: "Jan Pieterszoon Coen (1587-1629). Geboren te Hoorn. Gouverneur-generaal van de VOC en grondlegger van Batavia, het huidige Jakarta. Standbeeld geplaatst in 1893. Het plein, genoemd naar de rode steen waarop terechtstelling werden voltrokken, is het centrale punt van waaruit Hoorn zich heeft ontwikkeld met het Statencollege (1632), thans Westfries Museum en de Waag (1609) als markante gebouwen."

> Hoorn, Baron Van Dedem, collected money to realize this. The bronze work which was designed by Ferdinand Leenhoff (1841-1914), an instructor at the National Academy of Visual Arts in Amsterdam, was unveiled during a festive ceremony in 1893.
>
> The statue is controversial. According to critics, Coen's violent mercantilism in the East Indian Archipelago does not deserve to be honored.[16]

This text contains several telling choices of formulation. First of all, although the inscription acknowledges Coen's violent strategies, it uses the term "punitive expedition", rather than "genocide" or "mass-killing", which suggests, as is also emphasized later in the same sentence, that this expedition happened because the Bandanese were breaking the law. Therefore, the situation is framed in such a way that it sounds as if the mass-killing of a region's nigh full population was a justified consequence of their transgressions. Yet, this representation sketches a misleading account of the situation, as can be gathered from Muridan Widjojo's (2009) description of the Bandanese resistance to VOC law. He reports that, in August 1609, VOC admiral Simon Jansz Hoen

> managed to blockade the Bandanese coastal waters in order to obstruct the import of foodstuff and the escape by sea by the islanders. On 13 August 1609, a number of *orangkaya* were forced to sign a contract regulating the delivery of nutmeg and mace and control over the islands, but on the very day it was signed, the Bandanese began to violate the contract. (2009: 17)[17]

This citation indicates that the law which the Bandanese were breaking was the result of a contract that had been forced upon them by Coen's predecessors. As such, the "punitive expedition" which Coen led against the Bandanese in 1621 is unjustifiable.

[16] The Dutch version reads: "Jan Pieterszoon Coen (Hoorn 1587 – Batavia 1629). Koopman, directeur-generaal en gouverneur-generaal van de Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie (VOC). Vormgever van het succesvolle handelsimperium van de VOC in Azië. Stichter van Batavia, het huidige Jakarta. Geroemd als krachtdadig en visionair bestuurder. Maar evenzeer bekritiseerd om zijn gewelddadige optreden bij het verwerven van handelsmonopolies in Indië. Voerde in 1621 een strafexpeditie uit tegen één van de Banda-eilanden, omdat de bewoners tegen het verbod van de VOC in nootmuskaat leverden aan de Engelsen. Duizenden Bandanezen lieten hierbij het leven, de overlevenden werden naar Batavia gedeporteerd. Coen kreeg aan het eind van de negentiende eeuw de status van nationale held, compleet met standbeeld in zijn geboortestad. Een landelijk oprichtingscomité onder leiding van de Hoornse burgemeester Van Dedem zamelde hiervoor het geld in. Het bronzen beeld, een ontwerp van Ferdinand Leenhoff (1841-1914), leraar aan de Academie voor Beeldende Kunst in Amsterdam, werd in 1893 feestelijk onthuld. Onomstreden is het standbeeld niet. Volgens critici verdient Coens gewelddadige handelspolitiek in de Indische archipel geen eerbetoon."

[17] "Orangkaya" is an Indonesian title referring to members of the nobility.

A second problematic element of the new inscription is that it mentions the deaths of "thousands of Bandanese". Although this is an acknowledgment of an important aspect of Coen's legacy, it is still unspecific, seeing that it fails to mention that the Banda region was completely depopulated, and then repopulated with slaves, that were put to work on the few remaining spice plantations that had not been burned down. That these actions of depopulation and repopulation, and the destruction of large parts of the area, were based on premeditated intentions shows from the letter which the central executive board of the VOC, known as the *Heeren XVII* ("Lords Seventeen"), had sent to Coen in 1615. In this letter, the executive board urged Coen to conquer the Bandanese and to "exterminate or chase out their leaders, and repopulate the country with pagans, considered more tractable than the Muslim Bandanese" (Tracy, 1997: 4). In his 1623 report to the Heeren XVII, Coen himself suggested a more rigorous idea, i.e. to repopulate Banda and the other regions against which he was executing expeditions with slaves: "we should diligently work towards bringing an amount of slaves, as many as possible, to Batavia, Amboina and Banda" (qtd. in: Lauts, 1895: 294).[18] In the same report, Coen assures that he has followed his executives' orders to "exterminate the inhabitants of several of the islands" (qtd. in: Lensink, 2012: 17) very closely: "the natives have almost all perished by war, poverty and defeat. Very little have escaped from the surrounding islands" (qtd. in: Van der Chijs, 1886: 162).[19]

Thus, to some extent, the analyzed passages of the new inscription do provide critical details about Coen's legacy, and as such can be interpreted to grant some degree of voice to the statue's opposition. Yet, calling a mass-killing a punitive expedition, euphemizing the oppressive aspects of the action, and framing it as a justifiable counter-measure against the population's transgressions, could also be seen as direct attempts to filter or downplay the violence of Coen's actions and its long history of controversy. The cruel details of Coen's legacy have been publicly criticized at least since J.A. van der Chijs's book about the conquest of Banda, which was published seven years before Coen's statue in Hoorn was erected, in 1886.[20]

Moreover, the updated inscription presents historical details of Coen's actions within a context in which his statue is explicitly understood as the result of a collective Dutch effort,

[18] Amboina was the colonial name for a central Moluccan region of ten islands, including the Moluccan main island, Ambon. The sentence is my translation from the Dutch original: "behoort men er zich met ijver op toe te leggen, om een aantal slaven, zoo veel immer mogelijk, over te brengen naar Batavia, Amboina en Banda.
[19] My translation from the Dutch original: "uijtroeijinge van eenige eijlanden"; "De inboorlingen syn meest allen door den oorlooch, armoede ende gebreck vergaen. Zeer weynich isser op de omringende landen ontcomen."
[20] J.A. van der Chijs. *De vestiging van het Nederlandsche gezag over de Banda eilanden (1599-1621)* (1886).

with emphasis on the fact that the statue was built by a renowned Dutch sculptor, and that it was paid for by voluntary subsidies from citizens. The new inscription also includes more directly flattering sentences than the original inscription had. Whereas the original had none, the new inscription explicitly mentions Coen's "successful trading empire" and depicts him as a "vigorous and visionary administrator".

Additionally, as was outlined in the previous section, the statue has led to systematic protest since before it was constructed. Yet, the inscription minimizes the acknowledgment of this protest to calling the statue "controversial". This acknowledgment is formulated in an even less direct way in the Dutch version of the inscription, which would literally translate to "The statue is not undisputed".[21] Furthermore, the inscription presents the well-established opposition to the statue as an unspecified set of "critics" that disagree with Coen's heroic status. This heroic status, in turn, is neutrally represented as something that he had naturally "grown into", whereas historians such as Van Sas (2005) have pointed out that it was a conscious strategy to strengthen Dutch national identity, the controversial implementation of which gave rise to immediate protests.

This analysis shows that the apparently tolerant gesture of updating Coen's renovated statue with a more detailed inscription that grants voice to those opposing the renovation, in fact neutralizes and bypasses much of the protest that it was supposed to heed. This form of tolerance can be analyzed through Herbert Marcuse's theory of *repressive tolerance*, which he develops in a text by the same name (1969), and which he defines as,

> prior to all expression and communication a matter of semantics: the blocking of effective dissent […] begins in the language that is publicized and administered. […] Other words can be spoken and heard, other ideas can be expressed, but […] they are immediately "evaluated" (i.e. automatically understood) in terms of the public language – a language which determines "a priori" the direction in which the thought process moves. (1969: 95-96)

Marcuse's argumentation can be applied to the current case study as a way to understand how the municipality's apparent tolerance of dissent in fact neutralized this dissent: i.e. the new inscription acknowledges the criticism against the statue, but in its own, euphemizing and de-escalating rhetoric. It is significant that this public gesture happened only after the statue had literally fallen off its pedestal, more than a century after the first protests had been published

[21] "Onomstreden is het standbeeld niet."

to no avail. According to an article in national newspaper *Volkskrant* (28 September 2011), the restoration of the statue cost the municipality of Hoorn 20,000 Euros. As such, placing the statue back on its pedestal was not a neutral measure, which possibly informs the decision to at least respond in some way to the citizens' initiative against the restoration.

The gesture of the updated inscription was subsequently presented by the national news as a benevolent act proving that the municipality listens to all of its citizens, including dissenters. For example, the same *Volkskrant* article states that "In June, the municipality of Hoorn *partly heeded* a citizens' initiative to tackle the issue of the statue. The statue will not be removed, but instead there will be an inscription that provides more nuance about Coen's past" (ibid.; italics added).[22] Just like the inscription itself, this news report presents the situation in such a way that it alters reality to its advantage. In fact, the citizens' initiative did not ask the municipality to "tackle the issue of the statue", but directly pleaded against its restoration and for its permanent relocation to the Westfries Museum. Therefore, by putting the statue back on its pedestal, the municipality had not "partly heeded the initiative", but had instead effected the exact opposite of the request. Eric van de Beek, who initiated the petition, also noticed the municipality's strategic lack of substantial response to his action:

> Instead of removing the statue, they will provide the pedestal with a fig leaf, that is, a substitute text that will read something along the lines of: "We apologize for this statue, but we could not bring ourselves to remove it." (*Volkskrant*, 12 July 2011)[23]

In short, the municipality's public gesture of tolerance was used as an attempt to reach a compromise between the status quo and its critics, aimed at keeping things more or less the same.

As such, the municipality's reaction to the citizens' initiative is a case in point in support of Marcuse's argument that "Those who stand against the established system are a priori at a disadvantage, which is not removed by the toleration of their ideas, speeches, and newspapers" (1969: 92). In fact, tolerating dissent can even help to further strengthen the status quo: "on the firm foundations of a coordinated society all but closed against qualitative change, tolerance itself serves to contain […] change rather than to promote it" (ibid., 116).

[22] My translation from the Dutch original: "De Hoornse gemeenteraad ging in juli deels in op een burgerinitiatief om het standbeeld aan te pakken. Het standbeeld wordt niet verplaatst, maar er komt wel een tekstboord met meer nuances over Coens verleden."

[23] My translation from the Dutch original: "Liever dan het standbeeld te verwijderen, plaatst zij op de sokkel een schaamlapje in de vorm van een vervangende tekst. Deze kan worden gelezen als: 'Sorry dat dit beeld hier staat, maar we konden het niet over ons hart verkrijgen het te verwijderen'."

Van de Beek's dissenting voice was effectively silenced through a gesture that claimed to do the opposite. By granting (the illusion of) voice to those who wanted the statue removed, the municipality legitimized its decision to put the statue back on its pedestal.

The second compromise: the museum exhibition

Several months after the statue's renovation, the Westfries Museum started *De Zaak Coen* ("The Coen Case", 14 April – 1 July 2012), an exhibition that was aimed at further developing the project of offering nuance to Coen's legacy. The tolerating gesture of this exhibition was even stronger than that of the statue's new inscription, due to its interactive approach. The exhibition invited visitors to reach and share their own verdicts about the matter at hand. Indications for why this gesture of tolerance was of the "deceptive" and "spurious" kind that Herbert Marcuse discusses (1969: 116) can be found when close-reading some passages from the spoken text in the introduction video that is published on the museum's website.

> Quoted are the English subtitles to this video, that are provided by the website itself:
>
> The Coen Case. An exhibition in the form of a trial, with Coen as the accused and a genuine charge: Jan Pieterszoon Coen is not worthy of a statue. […] Supported by a lot of physical evidence, expert witnesses both for the prosecution and for the defense and an appealing person as the judge, whose verdict everyone wants to know. […] A fitting format, allowing the visitor to develop an opinion in a well-founded and engaging way while the museum encourages and facilitates the debate without forcing an opinion on anyone. (*De Zaak Coen*)

The first problem with the setup that this text sketches concerns the question of equal representation. The "expert witnesses" that are mentioned are two Dutch historians, one of which argues in favor of Coen's statue and one of which argues against it. The trial's judge who presents the final verdict of the case, Maarten van Rossem, is also a Dutch historian. Moreover, what is not mentioned in the video is the fact that Van Rossem's concluding verdict which "everyone wants to know" (see citation above) is a *dismissal* of the charge against Coen's statue. His dismissal of the charge is also published as a short piece in the exhibition's corresponding glossy magazine, and will be discussed in more detail during the next section. As this authoritative opinion in favor of the statue forms a central aspect of the

fixed, non-interactive part of the exhibition, it becomes difficult to see how the museum facilitates a debate "without forcing an opinion on anyone" (see citation above).

Furthermore, the choice of Dutch, rather than Moluccan, historians for the complete scope of the trial is surprising, seeing that the establishment of the Moluccan migrant community in the Netherlands in 1951 was the conclusion of the Dutch colonial reign over the Moluccan territory. This reign had started with Coen's violent actions in Banda: a central Moluccan region. The choice of a Dutch historian as the accuser is therefore confusing, seeing that a representative of the impaired party could instead have been chosen from the Moluccan community. One appropriate candidate, for instance, would have been Wim Manuhutu, who was the director of the Moluccan Historical Museum between 1990 and 2008. Manuhutu is trained as a historian and has played a leading role in several state-initiated research projects to resolve conflicts between different cultural identities within the Netherlands: e.g. *Cultureel Erfgoed Minderheden* ("Cultural Heritage of Minorities", 2000-2004). Instead, the role of the accuser was played by Ewald Vanvugt, who has published several books that present a critical view on Dutch colonial history, e.g. *Roofstaat – wat iedere Nederlander moet weten* ("Nation of Plunderers – What Every Dutch Person Should Know", 2016). Without aiming to discredit Vanvugt's work or approach, the current argument is still meant to direct attention toward the absence of a Moluccan voice in an instead all-Dutch staged court case about shared colonial history.

As such, the museum's approach to the issue can be interpreted as a claim of opening the floor to all possible voices equally, while in fact doing the opposite. The Moluccan voice within the discussion was repressed, or at least not acknowledged. Nevertheless, the claimed tolerance of the exhibition has still helped to strengthen the museum's, and by extension Hoorn's, position as a legitimate voice of colonial memory. Soon after the end of the exhibition, the final results of the visitor's votes were posted on the exhibition's website: of the 3,012 votes that were cast, 63.9% were in favor of the statue, 34.7% were against it, and 1.4% had voted neutral (*De Zaak Coen*). This result was then used as a source for the mainstream media to reconfirm Coen's heroic status.

For example, national news platform *Hart van Nederland* published an article called "J.P. Coen deserves his statue" (2 July 2012), in which they reported:

> The statue of Jan Pieterszoon Coen will not have to be removed from the inner city of Hoorn. That was the final verdict of thousands of visitors of the Westfries Museum,

> who shared their opinions in the last few months about the question of whether or not the VOC-leader deserves his statue. (2 July 2012)[24]

Such reporting suggests that the decision to renovate Coen's statue was the result of a democratic vote, whereas in reality the statue was already renovated months before the start of the exhibition and its purely symbolic election. Additional to these national confirmations of the status quo, the museum also received international acknowledgment for its exhibition, when it was granted the European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage in 2014. According to its website, "The Prize celebrates and promotes best practices related to heritage conservation, management, research, education and communication" (*European Heritage Awards*). The museum was awarded within the category "Education, training and awareness-raising", which focuses on "Outstanding initiatives" in the field of "tangible and/or intangible cultural heritage" (ibid.).

These national and international forms of support for the exhibition are examples of repressive tolerance, to the extent that the conditions of such expressions of positive assessment are what Marcuse (1969) calls "loaded", because "they are determined and defined by the institutionalized inequality" that is based in the "privileged position held by the predominant interests and their 'connections' " (1969: 84-85). While claiming neutrality, the museum instead facilitated a discussion on the colonial past that featured no Moluccan voices. Moreover, even without this consideration regarding the equal representation of voices, the discussion was not impartial, because the "judge" of the staged court case officially chose a side, i.e. the side that argues in favor of the statue. The national confirmations of the status quo and the international award which the museum received, demonstrate how such tolerance often "actually protects the already established machinery of discrimination" (ibid., 85).

The third compromise: the glossy magazine

The final gesture of tolerance that still remains to be analyzed is that of the publication of the exhibition's accompanying glossy magazine *De Coen! Geroemd en verguisd* ("The Coen! Famed and reviled", 2012). Mirroring the exhibition, the magazine's first article is Maarten

[24] My translation from the Dutch original: "JP [*sic]* Coen verdient zijn standbeeld." "Het standbeeld van Jan Pieterszoon Coen hoeft niet weg uit de Hoornse binnenstad. Zo luidt het eindoordeel van duizenden bezoekers van het Westfries Museum die de afgelopen maanden lieten weten of de omstreden VOC-voorman een standbeeld verdient."

van Rossem's written version of his verdict as a judge in the trial, entitled "Coen in Context" (2012). In his first sentence, he writes:

> There exists an understandable, but nevertheless peculiar tendency to judge the past according to the customs, norms and values of the present. […] Whoever would think this tendency through a little further, would probably realize that such exercises may perhaps result in considerable moral satisfaction, yet are not very sensible. The past must be judged by its own standards. This is certainly a difficult task, because our standards are indeed hard to switch off. (2012: 7)[25]

In this citation, without addressing the conflict around the statue directly, Van Rossem sketches a societal tendency which he immediately and, in my opinion, patronizingly identifies as something which people would understand is not very sensible, if only they would think it through more thoroughly. His diagnosis of this tendency, i.e. to judge the past according to the moral standards of the present, is his text's main argument against the removal of Coen's statue. This argument is often used as a way to disregard criticism against the statue. The museum's director Ad Geerdink already made a similar statement in national newspaper *Volkskrant* a year earlier: Coen "was a violent person. But he was not the only one in his time. These were ruthless times" (12 July 2011).[26] The initiator of the 2011 petition against Coen's statue, Eric Van de Beek, identifies this statement as a fallacy, and argues that "committing genocide was also already quite unusual in the Golden Age" (ibid.).[27]

Such references to historical context as an argument to de-emphasize Coen's deadly transgressions can be interpreted as an attempt to achieve what Scott Veitch (2007) argues to be an asymmetrical compartmentalization of responsibility:

> According to the image of the two-way mirror, all kinds of current benefits that are built on the "achievements" of the past – from landholding, all the way to taking patriotic pride in the nation's past – can be held onto or espoused as "one's own", even though "our current" generation did not *do* any of those things either. There is, in other

[25] My translation from the Dutch original: "Er bestaat een begrijpelijke, maar desalniettemin wonderlijke neiging om het verleden te beoordelen naar de gewoonten en normen en waarden van het heden. […] Wie er even over nadenkt zal zich waarschijnlijk wel realiseren dat dergelijke exercities weliswaar aanzienlijke morele bevrediging opleveren, maar niet erg zinvol zijn. Het verleden dient beoordeeld te worden naar zijn eigen maatstaven. Dat is overigens een lastige opgave, omdat onze maatstaven zich inderdaad lastig laten uitschakelen."

[26] My translation from the Dutch original: "was een gewelddadige persoon. Maar hij was niet de enige in zijn tijd. Want in die tijd werden geen zoete broodjes gebakken."

[27] My translation from the Dutch original: "ook in de Gouden Eeuw was het bepaald ongebruikelijk genocide te plegen."

> words, a simultaneous acceptance of benefits accruing from, and a refusal to accept responsibility for any wrongdoing having occurred in, the self-same period. (2007: 113; italics in original)

This disparity can also be traced in the argument about Coen's historical context. If, conform to Geerdink's and Van Rossem's arguments, Coen's atrocities should be disregarded because they took place in a historical context in which such conduct was *allegedly* common, then his heroic status as such must also be disregarded according to the same line of thought. That is, the actions for which Coen was hailed as a national hero took place in a historical context of colonial domination, in which the oppression of colonial subjects could still be interpreted as heroic. In the Netherlands's current postcolonial context, in which a considerable part of Dutch nationals consists of descendents of the oppressed rather than the oppressors in the self-same colonial past, it should therefore not be possible for a colonizer to be hailed as a hero any longer.

This recurrent fallacy about the historical context of Coen's legacy poses a compartmentalized understanding of the past, in which Coen's heroic deeds are presented as timeless, while his crimes are presented as dated and therefore argued to be irrelevant. It was according to the same principle that former Prime Minister Jan-Peter Balkenende (in office 2002-2010), during a House of Representatives debate in 2006, felt legitimated to argue in favor of what he called "that VOC-mentality: looking across the borders, being dynamic!" (qtd. in: *Trouw*, 27 October 2006).[28] The remark led to widespread criticism at the time, but was justified by Balkenende in a subsequent press conference as an innocent remark with which he "solely referred to the mercantile and entrepreneurial spirit of the Netherlands in that era" (ibid.).[29] As with Van Rossem's argument about Coen's statue, Balkenende's remark honors the colonial past as an exemplary time for the current era, while denying problematic elements of such historical identification.

Because Van Rossem's argument is based on an asymmetrical contextualization of Coen's legacy, he is able to tolerate critical voices within his appeal for the statue's preservation. For example, the acknowledgment that "If he would live today, he would be tried at the International Criminal Court in Scheveningen" (2012: 7), is implicitly disregarded within the larger argumentation of his text, i.e. that all such criticism ignores that Coen lived

[28] My translation from the Dutch original: "Die VOC-mentaliteit. Over grenzen heen kijken! Dynamiek!"
[29] My translation from the Dutch original: "dat hij louter doelde op de handels- en ondernemersgeest van Nederland in die tijd."

in a different, more cruel time.[30] Such apparent tolerance is in effect a neutralization of dissent. The criticism against Coen's *statue* is given a voice within Van Rossem's appeal, but is reformulated as a criticism against Coen's *actions*, which could allegedly be disregarded as a product of his time. The actual criticism, meanwhile, was in fact never directed against Coen's actions per se, but against his statue's central place in the city. The latter is not a matter of Coen's bygone era, but of the representation of colonial memory in the current era.

Van Rossem's favorable appeal has a central position in the glossy magazine, not only because it is the opening article, but also because, within the context of the museum exhibition, Van Rossem's voice has considerably more authority than that of the magazine's other contributors, due to his role as a judge in the exhibition's staged court case. This central position of an authoritative opinion in favor of the statue unsettles the claim to neutrality that the museum's director Ad Geerdink makes in the foreword to the magazine (2012):

> This publication does not take a stance in the discussion and only serves the purpose […] of making you acquainted with the great wealth of viewpoints, stories and objects that are associated with this historical person. (2012: 3)[31]

The plurality of perspectives that this quote suggests is to some extent confirmed by the fact that the magazine contains 24 articles by ten different authors, and that some of these articles are indeed quite critical of Coen's actions, e.g. Hans Lensink's article "The Bloody Revenge on Banda" (2012: 14-20).[32] However, none of these articles criticize the statue as such, but rather only address Coen's historical actions. Therefore, Van Rossem's introductory credo that past actions cannot be judged with today's moral compass, has implicitly and before the fact already disregarded all such criticism. By giving voice to a few critics who address past mistakes, the museum can assert their open-minded approach toward this issue. Yet with the self-same gesture, they can minimize the potential strength of such voices by contextualizing them within an overarching reminder that such past mistakes cannot be judged anymore, at least not by "sensible" people.

Moreover, what was mentioned about the exhibition as such, can be repeated here: none of the articles are written by, or are interviews with, historians or other spokespersons

[30] My translation from the Dutch original: "Zou hij nu leven, dan zou hij voor het Internationale Strafhof in Scheveningen belanden."
[31] My translation from the Dutch original: "Deze uitgave neemt geen stelling in de discussie en heeft enkel tot doel om […] u kennis te laten maken met de grote rijkdom aan visies, verhalen en objecten die met deze historische persoon samenhangen."
[32] My translation from the Dutch original: "De bloedige wraak op Banda."

with a Moluccan background. For example, the Moluccan artist Willy Nanlohy is neither referred to nor interviewed, despite the fact that he led a major protest against the statue during the museum's festive opening of the official "Coen Year", 1987, in honor of Coen's 400th birth year. Nanlohy's protest involved handing Prince Claus van Amsberg a *zwartboek* about Coen's crimes against the Moluccan people: a *zwartboek* (literally "black book") is a name that refers to publications protesting institutionalized injustice. Several assisting protesters handed out flyers with similar information to the rest of the audience. That no mention of Nanlohy's protest is made, can be criticized for two reasons.

First of all, his protest took place in 1987, which was a year in which the Westfries Museum was facing public criticism, due to its decision to declare this year "Coen Year". Protests were initiated not only by Nanlohy but by other artists as well, such as the Dutch poet Dirk Beemster, who published a collection of protest poetry about Coen, and was also co-responsible for smearing the statue with paint that year. Unlike Nanlohy, Beemster *did* receive an interview for *De Coen!* (Stephanie Koenen, 2012: 100-101). The title of this interview is "The Last of the Satires", and it is introduced in the magazine's table of contents with the following words: "A rebel does not always remain a rebel. Dirk Beemster was a fierce activist 25 years ago, but nowadays presents himself in a more nuanced manner" (ibid., 5).[33]

As is indicated by this introduction, the article is mostly an account of how Beemster does not support his own actions from 1987 any longer. Instead, he presents his current-day take on the issue in a way that very much echoes the kind of neutrality that Geerdink claims, as well as the context-argument formulated by Van Rossem in both the exhibition itself and in the magazine's opening article:

> I have become more careful when it comes to taking up a one-sided standpoint. That will only lead to conflicts. I am trying to avoid that nowadays. […] To what extent can we morally judge things that happened in history, and how far are we willing to go with this? […]. By the way, the statue is not even that bad. Beautiful statues were created in the nineteenth century, and Coen has one of them. Especially after the restoration, when he was placed back on his pedestal. (101)[34]

[33] My translation from the Dutch original: "De laatste der hekeldichten"; "Een rebel blijft niet altijd rebels. Dirk Beemster was 25 jaar geleden fel actievoerder, maar stelt zich tegenwoordig genuanceerder op."
[34] My translation from the Dutch original: "Ik ben voorzichtiger geworden met het innemen van een eenzijdig standpunt. Dat levert toch alleen maar conflicten op. Dat probeer ik tegenwoordig te vermijden. […] In hoeverre kun je een moreel oordeel vellen over de geschiedenis en hoever kun je hierin gaan? […] En trouwens, het beeld

The final sentences of this quote, which form the conclusion of the interview, are a direct vote in favor of the statue again, this time cast by a former protester. The suggestion seems to be that even former protesters are now favoring the statue. However, this implicit proposal is only possible because none of the protesters that still disagree with Coen's statue have been interviewed.

The second reason for my argument that Nanlohy's absence in *De Coen!* is problematic, concerns the fact that he was protesting from an ambivalent position. That is, he was one of several Moluccan artists who had initially accepted an invitation from the museum's former director, Ruud Spruit, to participate in the celebration of Coen's 400th birthday, but then turned back on this decision at the last moment. One of Nanlohy's co-conspirators was anthropologist Fridus Steijlen, who recalled Nanlohy's sudden change of mind during the inaugural lecture of his 2018 professorate of Moluccan Migration and Culture in Comparative Perspective at the *Vrije Universiteit* (VU) in Amsterdam:

> The director at that time, Ruud Spruit, had invited Willy Nanlohy to exhibit his work in the basement of the museum as part of a wider exhibition about Coen. While installing his sculptures, Nanlohy discovered that Coen was being glorified in the other halls of the museum. […] Nanlohy felt that he had been misused and, in protest, covered his sculptures with black mourning cloths. […] During the opening ceremony, Nanlohy, dressed as Alfoer, stood up and offered Prince Claus a black book about Moluccan history.[35] Museum director Spruit was furious and ordered for the cloths over Willy's sculptures to be removed. (2018: 2)

It is peculiar that Nanlohy's story would remain absent from the magazine's array of stories about the statue, especially because his protest took place during the museum's previous large-scale attempt at a tolerant, all-inclusive event around Coen, which, in contrast to the 2012 exhibition, did in fact include Moluccan contributors.

Nanlohy's criticism to the 1987 event in general, and to former director Spruit in particular, was included in the information flyer that Nanlohy, Steijlen and their co-conspirators distributed, and was re-published in an article for Moluccan magazine *Marinjo* in the same year. According to this article,

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zelf is niet eens zo slecht. In de negentiende eeuw maakten ze mooie standbeelden en daar is Coen er één van. Helemaal toen hij gerestaureerd en wel weer terug op zijn sokkel stond."

[35] An Alfoer is a mythical Moluccan forefather.

> The way in which Spruit has invited Moluccans to participate in the opening manifestation and exhibition does not allow them the possibility to write their own history. It is the history of Ruud Spruit with Moluccans as decoration. (Qtd. in: Steijlen, 2015: n. pag.)[36]

This argumentation behind Nanlohy's protest is a direct criticism about the kind of tolerance that is central to this chapter. That is, the flyer acknowledges Spruit's gesture of apparent tolerance, but criticizes the silencing effects of this gesture.

Spruit himself did in fact write a contribution to the glossy magazine, in which he however does not at all mention Nanlohy's or any of the other protests during his time as the museum's director. Instead, his contribution is entitled "Coen's Paradise: My Memories of Banda" (2012).[37] This contribution is a memoir about Spruit's friendships with Moluccans since his early childhood, culminating in a story about how he visited Banda together with his wife, and how they were

> bombarded to the status of honorary village chiefs, and were taken by singing rowers in cora-coras (long slender canoes) along the islands, where we were received by dancing girls on the beach: the kind of circumstances that seafarers under Coen's leadership must also have remembered for the rest of their lives. (75)[38]

Whether or not this fragment, or Spruit's full article for that matter, is an example of blatant Orientalism is perhaps a matter of perspective. However, it is hard to deny the implicit comparison which Spruit draws between the Bandanese tribute to him and his wife on the one hand, and Coen and his fellow colonizers on the other. Rather than commenting on the large, Moluccan-led protest that the museum underwent while he was in charge of it, in Coen Year 1987, Spruit's article argues repeatedly that current generations of Bandanese have forgiven the Dutch for Coen's actions, an argument which he makes through a series of anecdotes concerning his friendship with Bandanese ambassador Des Alwi (ibid., 75).

This final point, even if true, has very little to do with Coen's statue in the Netherlands, and takes away focus from the actual topic of conflict, that is, the city's decision

[36] My translation from the Dutch original: "De wijze waarop Ruud Spruit Molukkers bij de openingsmanifestatie en tentoonstelling heeft betrokken laat Molukkers echter geen mogelijkheid hun eigen geschiedenis te schrijven. Het is de geschiedenis van Ruud Spruit met Molukkers als versiering."
[37] My translation from the Dutch original: "Het paradijs van Coen. Mijn herinneringen aan Banda."
[38] My translation from the Dutch original: "tot ere-dorpshoofd werden gebombardeerd en in cora-cora's, lange ranke kano's, door zingende roeiers langs de eilanden werden gevoerd waar we overal werden ontvangen door dansende meisjes op het strand, gebeurtenissen zoals de zeelui onder Coen zich hun leven lang herinnerden."

to not remove the statue from the square. Spruit's memoir instead shifts the focus once again toward the question of Coen's actions in the past, and stresses that current Bandanese have in fact forgiven these actions, implying perhaps that Moluccans and other critics in the Netherlands should do the same. However, the criticism which inspired the glossy magazine and the other gestures of tolerance, was never about Coen's actions in the past, but rather about the contemporary Dutch society's institutional glorification of someone who committed a mass-killing on a people whose descendants are now part of that self-same contemporary Dutch society. Spruit was directly involved in this debate as the museum's director in 1987, when Moluccans protested this glorification of the past. It would have been relevant for the present-day societal discussion if Spruit would have discussed this incident, and to have Nanlohy's account included as well, or at least some archive material from newspapers at the time: many of the magazine's pages are devoted to archive material around Coen and his statue, none of which concern Moluccan protests.

This absence of Moluccan voices from the magazine, either as experts, or as protesters, can be extended to a question about the one-sidedness of the magazine in general. The magazine includes no Moluccan-oriented experts at all, Dutch nor Moluccan. Absent, for examples, is Fridus Steijlen, who was not only active during the 1987 protest, but also has published a large amount of research about Moluccans since the early 1990s, and has been a close contributor to the Moluccan Historical Museum since its foundation in 1990. His absence from the magazine, next to previously mentioned absences like that of Moluccan Historical Museum director Wim Manuhutu, indicate that the magazine is not as all-inclusive as it repeatedly claims.

That the magazine is perhaps not entirely responsible for this latter aspect of its one-sided approach can be read in an article by Harry Westerink (2012) for the website of anti-capitalist activist platform *Doorbraak*. According to Westerink, the museum in fact did approach Eric van de Beek himself, whose petition to great extent was the cause for this glossy magazine to be developed. The museum as such reached out to the main protester, at least of this particular chapter in the history of protests against Coen, and offered him a space to voice his criticism. However, Van de Beek declined the offer, explaining to Westerink that he finds the project of the magazine "inappropriate. Would we release a glossy magazine entitled 'Adolf?' " (*Doorbraak*, 8 March 2012).[39] His refusal to participate in the project

[39] My translation from the Dutch original: "ongepast. We brengen toch ook geen glossy uit met de titel 'Adolf?'"

echoes Nanlohy's action of covering his sculptures with black mourning cloths, and withdrawing from the 1987 exhibition, after having offered the *zwartboek* to Prince Claus in silence. Such refusals to participate in repressive tolerance will be discussed in more detail during the next section.

When being granted a voice means being silenced

One preliminary conclusion that can be drawn from these close-readings of the museum's and the municipality's approaches to granting voice to their opposition, is that the kind of tolerance that these gestures showcase works on a very selective basis. Only voices of dissent that can be framed in such a way that they form no risk to the status quo will be tolerated. An example of this process of selection can be found in the fact that the Dutch Socialist Party (SP) had proposed another new inscription for the renovated statue than the one that was ultimately chosen. Their inscription came closer to Eric van de Beek's demands, by for instance mentioning that Coen was "criticized for his aggressive politics", and that he "depopulated the Banda islands in 1621" (*Doorbraak,* 15 March 2012).[40] This is a more specific version of Coen's actions, the gruesome details of which are provided in two paragraphs that paraphrase Coen's own famous words, which directly mention genocide, and which make a strong voice against the glorification of this part of Dutch colonial history:

> Thousands of Bandanese died. Hundreds were enslaved and deported to Batavia, where they were eventually killed or where they died under other miserable circumstances. From this genocide Coen derives his nickname: "The butcher of Banda."
>
> The municipality of Hoorn placed the statue, that was created by Ferdinand Leenhoff, in 1893, but does no longer view it as a tribute. (Ibid.)[41]

This version of the inscription was written in three languages, Dutch, English and Indonesian, and as such also directly addressed Moluccan and other postcolonial citizens with an Indonesian background. Anticipating that their suggested inscription would be rejected in the

[40] My translation from the Dutch original: "Bekritiseerd om zijn agressieve beleid"; "ontvolkte in 1621 de Banda-eilanden."
[41] My translation from the Dutch original: "Duizenden Bandanezen kwamen hierbij om het leven. Honderden werden als slaaf naar Batavia gedeporteerd, waar ze alsnog werden gedood of van ellende omkwamen. Aan deze volkerenmoord ontleent Coen zijn bijnaam 'De slachter van Banda'. De gemeente Hoorn, die het door Ferdinand Leenhoff vervaardigde standbeeld plaatste in 1893, ziet het niet langer als eerbetoon."

city council's meeting, members of the SP attached their version on Coen's statue in the night from 11 to 12 March 2012 (the meeting took place on 13 March). The next day, a representative of the local political party of Hoorn, Fractie Tonnaer, publicly cut the poster into pieces.

An indication of how repressive tolerance is a matter of careful selection can be found in the particular way in which this occurrence eventually was referred to in the glossy magazine. One of the sections of the magazine is called *Coen Weetjes* ("Coen's 'Did You Know…?'," 2012: 88-89). This section contains a more or less random selection of facts concerning, among other things, the amount of babies named Coen that were born in 2011, and the specific monetary rewards Coen received from the Heeren XVII for founding Batavia and conquering Banda. Among such facts is one short paragraph entitled "Cut-Art", which addresses the protest of the SP, and presents it as "an action that had playful intentions", but which "was not appreciated by everyone. The local party, Fractie Tonnaer, publicly cut the SP-sign into pieces" (2012: 89).[42]

The exact way in which this incident eventually made it into the magazine is an example of the strategic selectivity of repressive tolerance. Rather than including a copy of the SP-version of the sign, or interviewing the member of the party responsible for the action, the action is instead framed as having "playful intentions", a manifestation of a certain behavior that other parties did not appreciate. The rather spectacular gesture of cutting up this alternative inscription publicly, is then de-escalated in a tongue-in-cheek manner, by calling this action a form of "Cut-Art". That the action was serious and not so much intended to be playful at all, can be read in Westerink's articles for *Doorbraak* about this issue (8 March 2012; 15 March 2012).

Thus, the way in which the magazine strategically tolerates only selective aspects of dissent, and presents them in such a way that these aspects further confirm the status quo, rather than invite a more thorough discussion, corresponds to the way in which Herbert Marcuse (1969) warns against the repressive tolerance strategies to be found in

> such things as the make-up of a newspaper (with the breaking up of vital information into bits interspersed between extraneous material, irrelevant items, relegating of some radically negative news to an obscure place), in the juxtaposition of gorgeous ads with

[42] My translation from the Dutch original: "Knipkunst"; "Deze ludiek bedoelde actie viel niet bij iedereen in de smaak. De lokale fractie Tonnaer verknipte publiekelijk het SP-bordje."

> unmitigated horrors […]. The result is a *neutralization* of opposites, a neutralization however, which takes place on the firm grounds of the structural limitation of tolerance and within a preformed mentality. (1969: 97-98; italics in original)

In other words, to open up the floor to a carefully selected plurality of voices, does not automatically result in a fruitful discussion. To the contrary, an overdose of too many half-related voices and viewpoints might instead lead to a weakening of the possible impact of voices of dissent, due to the matters of fragmentation and overdose that Marcuse terms "affluent discussion" (ibid., 94).

A further possible repressive effect of affluent discussion is that specific voices of dissent might get lost in the overwhelming plurality once tolerated into it. Or: dissenting voices may be accepted within an affluent plurality, but there is no guarantee that anyone is listening. An example of this argument is the addition of a QR-code on the statue's inscription. Scanning this code with a Smartphone redirects to a phone number that, when it is called, immediately goes to Jan Pieterszoon Coen's voicemail, with a voice actor urging the caller to leave a message. As such, everyone who wants to express their opinion about Coen can do so directly via this method. In his interview for the magazine, city council member Peter Westenberg calls this part of the project "pedestal-communication", which "gives the statue an extra dimension; you can now easily work interactively with Coen" (qtd. in: Koenen, 2012: 65).[43] However, it is doubtful whether a one-way possibility to express one's opinion into a fake voicemail account to a prerecorded message from a voice actor is really all that interactive. To the contrary, it is perhaps the most concrete example of the museum's repressive tolerance, and how it attempts to silence dissent. Repressive tolerance is a strategy of repression that works by giving dissenters the illusion of being granted a voice, while instead creating a neutralizing plurality that reaffirms the status quo.

Therefore, the case study of Coen's statue shows how dissenters who offer their voice to the discourse against which they are protesting, risk being silenced by being tolerated. An example of this is the protest poster that was found on the statue in the morning of the exhibition's opening. The protest was a parody of the glossy's front cover, but featured a photograph of Adolf Hitler, rather than Coen, as well as the following introductory text: "Adolf, famed and reviled: you give the verdict" (*VindMagazine*, 13 April 2012).[44] About this

[43] My translation from the Dutch original: "Deze sokkelcommunicatie geeft het beeld een extra dimensie; je kunt snel interactief aan de slag met Coen."
[44] My translation from the Dutch original: "Adolf, geroemd en verguisd. U velt het oordeel."

action, director Geerdink related in an interview with the magazine's publisher (13 April 2012), that "we immediately included the poster in our exhibition. The discussion is alive, which means that the history is alive, which is wonderful" (ibid.).[45] By including the parody as one of the many voices in the exhibition's collection, the protest is effectively silenced. This gesture of tolerance enabled Geerdink to reframe the protest as part of a wonderful discussion about history, rather than a direct attack on the museum's project.

Such cases, of the parody on the magazine's cover, of Coen's voicemail account, and of the SP's alternative new inscription, are examples of the museum's much larger strategy of tolerance. They can serve as indications for why protester Eric van de Beek refused to be included in the museum's project, which he called a "circus attraction" (*Doorbraak*, 8 March 2012).[46] Rather than being tolerated as one of the many voices that is granted a place in the affluent plurality of perspectives, selected and monitored by the museum, Van de Beek chooses to reserve his voice for platforms outside of the museum's control. Although it has been several years since the restoration of Coen's statue in 2012, he still frequently publishes his viewpoints on the statue and his criticism on the museum via multiple news platforms since the construction accident (e.g. *Joop*, 19 January 2018). Because these publications exist outside of the museum's or the municipality's will to tolerance, his voice of dissent is not silenced.

Conclusions

The construction of Coen's statue in 1893 served Dutch nationalist identity politics within the context of modern European imperialism, and was chosen based on a mechanism of selective remembering. That is, Coen's heroic deeds were remembered, while his cruelty was denied or euphemized. A continuation of that mechanism can be identified in current discussions about the statue. Contemporary voices that support the statue tend to propagate a relativist point of view with regard to Coen's cruel deeds, compartmentalizing them as products of his allegedly more cruel era, while granting the more reputable aspects of his legacy a timeless presence.

Since the restoration of Coen's statue in 2011, certain voices of protest are partially tolerated by the municipality of Hoorn and the Westfries Museum, through the statue's

[45] My translation from the Dutch original: "De poster hebben we direct opgenomen in de tentoonstelling. De discussie leeft, dus de geschiedenis leeft en dat is prachtig."
[46] My translation from the Dutch original: "kermisattractie."

updated inscription, through the museum exhibition in 2012, and through the publication of the glossy magazine in the same year. However, these compromises reframe the protest in such a way that they strengthen rather than question the status quo. Instead of including an interview with, or a reference to Moluccan artist Willy Nanlohy, concerning his protest during the museum's large-scale Coen celebration in 1987, the glossy magazine decided to interview Dirk Beemster, a protester who by now has changed his mind-set in favor of the statue. A directly racist outcome of this one-sided approach to the discussion about Coen's statue, is that it effected the denial of the possibility for Moluccan voices to contribute to this discussion about shared colonial memory. Rather than including Moluccan voices in any of the aspects of the exhibition, the magazine and the inscription, all parties are represented by Dutch people.

This strong position of the museum's perspective on the conflict is furthered by other representatives of the status quo, that affirm the museum's apparent tolerance, by giving it credit for being open-minded enough to acknowledge voices of dissent within their discourse. Examples of this are the national media basing themselves on the exhibition to reestablish the statue's legitimacy, and the international award for cultural heritage which the museum received in 2014.

Therefore, if being tolerated into a dominant discourse often means to be silenced or neutralized, it might in such circumstances be a more productive plan of action to *decline such tolerance*, or withdraw from certain discussions. By actively staying absent from spaces of debate that are run by the forces under scrutiny, voices of dissent may maintain the potential of their public impact, which they otherwise would lose. This is why Eric van de Beek refused to contribute to the glossy magazine, and why Willy Nanlohy, who was too late to decline the museum's tolerance, covered his sculptures with black mourning cloths, and, after having handed Prince Claus his black book, left the exhibition without further comment. When taking up a voice in certain contexts means to lose that voice, protecting one's voice may entail remaining silent within these contexts.

CHAPTER FOUR

Silence as interruption – The case of De Grauwe Eeuw and their refusal to speak about their activism in the mainstream media

Introduction

This chapter is an analysis of the protest strategy of the activist group known as *De Grauwe Eeuw*. This Dutch name translates to something along the lines of "the grizzled age", or "the dreary age", and will be further discussed after this introduction. Since 2016, the group has claimed responsibility for spray-painted slogans, like "genocide" and "stop colonial glorification", on colonial statues in the Netherlands. As such, they can be understood as participating in what Rosemarie Buikema (2018) has called "a global activist movement geared towards the decolonization of the postcolonial public space" (2018: 193). According to Buikema, decolonization starts with the realization that, "whilst colonialism has indeed been abolished, both the public sphere and the setup of institutions continue to be dominated and legitimized by an imaginary that is inherently referential to a 'glorious' colonial past – that is to say, by reminiscences that are apparently unaware of the enduring polarizing effects and spasms of colonial and patriarchal power" (ibid., 194). Within this context, decolonization is understood as the process of undoing the glorification of the colonial past, in acknowledgment of the fact that for a majority of the world, this past is felt as a history of exploitation and oppression.

In their pursuit of this objective, activists often target colonial statues because of their symbolic value as indicators of collective memory. By contesting these public signs of a collective memory that favors the colonizer over the colonized, such activism can be understood as an attempt to demand a different perspective on colonial history. Examples of this kind of activism can be found across the globe: e.g. the successful RhodesMustFall movement in Cape Town, South Africa, in 2015;[1] the growing list of removed Confederate

[1] The movement successfully rallied for the removal of a statue for Cecil Rhodes (1853-1902) at the University of Cape Town. Rhodes was the Prime Minister of the Cape Colony (in current South-Africa) from 1890 to 1896, and the founder of Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe and Zambia). The removal of the statue heeded criticism concerning Rhodes' legacy as a white supremacist.

memorials in the United States, since 2015;[2] the ongoing protests against James Cook memorials in Australia and New Zealand since 2016.[3] Similar contestations are happening in the Netherlands. For example, in 2017, the Mauritshuis in The Hague decided to remove a bust of its name giver, Johan Maurits, from its prominent place in the museum's central hall, and relocate it to storage.[4]

The success of some of these protests, as Buikema argues in her article about RhodesMustFall (2018), is "only the beginning of an ongoing process of thought and debate on how to deal with the complex legacies of colonialism in the postcolonial world" (ibid., 193). These debates, she emphasizes, "will have to include marginalized voices" (ibid.). As such, she understands public activism against colonial statues as a catalyzing force to initiate inclusive debates about colonial memory, that is, about the question of how the colonial past should be remembered collectively in society. In relation to this point of view, what characterizes the activists of De Grauwe Eeuw is that they seem emphatically unwilling to engage in such debates. As they have repeatedly expressed on their website (http://degrauweeeuw.blogspot.com), they refuse all participation in interviews with the mainstream media. They argue that speaking to this dominant discourse about colonial memory is like not speaking at all, because it would mean to allow their critical voice to become filtered and downplayed through the media's predetermined views on this topic.

Therefore, in what follows, I will discuss De Grauwe Eeuw's protest strategies with a focus on the following three objectives: (1) to analyze De Grauwe Eeuw's silent treatment of the mainstream media as an activist strategy; (2) to explore what effects their silence has on the mainstream media's authority as a discourse that shapes public debate; (3) to study the particular risks involved in deploying this strategy of silence. The latter point will be developed by analyzing the ways in which the media have criminalized the group, despite, or even to great extent based on, its systematic refusal to engage in public debate. In order to

[2] The growing list of removed memorials is a result of the critique against the positive memory of the Confederate States of America (1861-1865), i.e. seven secessionist states that rejected the abolition of slavery.
[3] James Cook (1728-1779) was a British explorer who is widely remembered and honored, by memorials and other public tributes throughout Australia and New Zealand, for "discovering" Australia. His legacy is being criticized for symbolizing the erasure of indigenous history, and the normalization of European colonialism.
[4] The Mauritshuis is a museum of seventeenth-century art, that is named after the Dutch colonial governor in Brazil, Johan Maurits van Nassau-Siegen (1604-1679). The museum is located in the house in which Maurits himself used to live, and is one of several residential palaces which he built both in the Netherlands and in Brazil, with money he earned through the Atlantic slave trade. Two years after relocating the bust to storage, the Mauritshuis organized an exhibition aimed at developing a balanced understanding of Maurits's history, called "Bewogen Beeld – Op zoek naar Johan Maurits" (4 April – 7 July 2019). More info about this exhibition see the museum's website (https://www.mauritshuis.nl/nl-nl/ontdek/tentoonstellingen/bewogen-beeld/).

pursue these three objectives, I will first introduce the type of debate to which De Grauwe Eeuw refuses to contribute, that is, the public debate about Dutch colonial memory.

Debating Dutch colonial memory

The two main voices that participate in debates concerning Dutch colonial memory can be identified by returning briefly to the previous chapter's central case study: Jan Pieterszoon Coen's statue in Hoorn.[5] Coen was the Governor-General of the Dutch trading company VOC (*Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie*: "Dutch East India Company"), from 1619-1623. In this capacity, he was responsible for the establishment of the Dutch monopoly on the global spice trade during the early 1600s, and is therefore remembered as a national hero, hence the statue.

However, his heroic status has always been controversial: he established the spice monopoly by organizing a military offensive against the population of the Banda islands, an island group in central Maluku. Over the course of several days, Coen's soldiers burned down villages and plantations, and killed nearly all of Banda's 15,000 inhabitants. The less than 1,000 survivors were deported as slaves to the colonial capital, Batavia. The Banda islands themselves were repopulated with slaves acquired through the international slave trade. These slaves were put to work on the spice plantations, under the rule of so-called *perkeniers*: i.e. "planters/gardeners", a euphemistic term that refers to the Dutch plantation owners who managed the slave labor.[6]

This system enabled Coen to establish the spice monopoly that prompted the prosperity which characterized the Netherlands in the 1600s to such an extent that Dutch national history still refers to this century as the Golden Age. This term has come under scrutiny since the 2010s. For instance, in September 2019, the Amsterdam Museum announced that they will stop using the term, and start referring to the century simply as "the seventeenth century". According to the museum, calling this century the Golden Age ignores

[5] A more detailed discussion of Coen's controversial legacy is provided in Chapter 3 of this dissertation. For further reading, see the references used for that chapter and the following in particular: Chauvel, Richard. *Nationalists, Soldiers and Separatists* (1990); Chijs, J.A. van der. *De vestiging van het Nederlandsche gezag over de Banda eilanden (1599-1621)* (1886); Lauts, G.. "Jan Pietersz. Coen" (1859); Tracy, James D.. (ed.). *The Political Economy of Merchant Empires* (1997); Widjojo, Muridan Satrio. "The VOC in Maluku: Imposing the Spice Monopoly" (2009).

[6] For an overview of the VOC's use of slaves for the establishment of the spice monopoly, see Vincent Loth, "Pioneers and Perkeniers: The Banda Islands in the 17th Century" (1995). For a more general overview of the extensive Dutch-Asian slave trade in the 1600s and 1700s, see Reggie Baay, *Daar werd wat gruwelijks verricht* (2015), and Matthias van Rossum, *Kleurrijke Tragiek* (2015).

"the negative aspects of that century, such as poverty, war and slavery" (*NOS*, 13 September 2019).[7] This criticism is also apparent in the name of the activist group *De Grauwe Eeuw*, or, "the dreary age", which is a play on words referring in a disapproving way to the Dutch name for the Golden Age, i.e., *De Gouden Eeuw*.

Due to the controversial role which Coen played in initiating this prosperous period in Dutch colonial history, he is remembered in two ways, which correspond to the two predominant voices that are involved in contemporary discussions about Dutch colonial memory. One of these voices hails him as a hero, who brought prosperity to the Netherlands, and the other remembers him as a perpetrator, because of his violent legacy. The interpretation of Coen as a national hero can be seen as a symptom of the way in which Dutch society since the nineteenth century generally remembers its colonial past, that is, as the glorious history of conquest and mercantile power. This glorifying interpretation is developed and maintained, among other things, through public symbols such as statues, that honor this history. The interpretation of Coen as a perpetrator is supported by the wide variety of postcolonial migrant communities living in the Netherlands, including the Moluccan community.[8] These communities generally take offense with Coen's statue because the Dutch prosperity for which he is hailed as a national hero was accomplished by the destruction of an entire Moluccan region and the mass-killing of its inhabitants, as well as by the use of large amounts of slaves acquired from the international slave trade. Coen's statue in Hoorn is one among many other examples of colonial statues that function as catalysts for this larger societal debate over the way in which Dutch colonial history should be remembered.

This debate is marked by a power imbalance between the institutional contexts of the two opposing perspectives. Whereas favorable interpretations of the colonial past are supported by national monuments, street names and other public symbols, critical interpretations are restricted to the role of counter-voices to the norm, whose criticism can be, and often is, interpreted as an attack on Dutch identity. To give one example of this mechanism, in 2018, Dutch historian Piet Emmer published an essay in which he addresses the debate about colonial memory as follows:

[7] My translation from the Dutch original: "de negatieve kanten van die eeuw, zoals armoede, oorlog en slavernij."
[8] For an overview of postcolonial migrant communities in the Netherlands, see Gert Oostindie. *Postcolonial Netherlands: Sixty-five Years of Forgetting, Commemorating, Silencing* (2011).

> A new iconoclasm is raging through our country. Apparently, countless amounts of statues and street names are tributes to bad, white men such as Jan Pieterszoon Coen in Hoorn, Petrus Stuyvesant and General Van Heutsz in Amsterdam, and more recently, Michiel de Ruyter in Vlissingen and Witte de With in Rotterdam. The latter two were until recently still celebrated as courageous Dutch seafaring heroes. (2018: 7)[9]

Emmer's publication was both a reaction to, and a further escalation of, the polarized debate about the colonial past. His term for critical perspectives on colonial memory, "iconoclasm", has since been widely reiterated by the mainstream media, both critically and uncritically.

In his text, Emmer reduces the conflict over the complex legacies of Dutch colonialism to a dispute between "rational" historians and "emotional" iconoclasts, in which the latter are characterized as inferior to the former: "Whoever reads the newspaper nowadays cannot escape the impression that Dutch history is being incriminated. […] Debates about such topics have little to do with facts and numbers, and instead revolve around emotions" (ibid., 17).[10] According to Emmer, the process of defaming national heroes because of their controversial deeds would be "more appropriate for a minister or a pastor than for a historian. But you may have noticed that nowadays we enjoy to replete our past with a lot of guilt and atonement, especially when it comes to our contacts with the overseas world" (ibid., 8).[11]

With such statements, Emmer interprets criticism against the glorifying representation of colonial memory in public space not only as an emotional project, but also as the moralistic attempt to "incriminate" Dutch history. According to his point of view, this criticism is

[9] Petrus Stuyvesant (1592-1672) was the director-general of the Dutch colony of New Netherlands (current-day New York) from 1647 until 1664. His legacy is controversial because of his outspoken anti-Semitism. General van Heutsz (1851-1924) was the military governor of Aceh, an insurrectional region in the west of the Dutch East Indies, from 1898 until 1904. During his office, he commissioned the violent repression of the region's struggle for independence, which cost the lives of at least 2,900 Acehnese. Michiel de Ruyter (1607-1676) was a Dutch colonial admiral, who is criticized for his role in the Atlantic slave trade. Witte de With (1599-1658) was a Dutch naval officer for both the VOC (Dutch East India Company) and the WIC (Dutch West India Company). He participated in multiple violent expeditions against colonial populations, including the siege of Jayakarta in 1618-1619, during which the city of Jayakarta was burned down in order to establish Batavia, the capital city of the Dutch East Indies until 1942. The passage is my translation from the Dutch original: "Er raast een nieuwe beeldenstorm door ons land. Tal van standbeelden en straatnamen blijken een eerbetoon aan foute, witten mannen te zijn zoals Jan Pieterszoon Coen in Hoorn, Petrus Stuyvesant en Generaal van Heutsz in Amsterdam en meer recentelijk Michiel de Ruyter in Vlissingen en Witte de With in Rotterdam. Beide laatsten werden tot voor kort nog als dappere Nederlandse zeehelden gevierd."

[10] My translation from the Dutch original: "Wie dezer dagen de krant openslaat, kan zich niet aan de indruk onttrekken dat de geschiedenis van Nederland in het verdomhoekje zit. […] Met feiten en cijfers hebben deze debatten weinig te doen, wel met emoties."

[11] My translation from the Dutch original: "eerder afkomstig van een dominee of pastoor dan van een geschiedkundige. Maar het zal u niet ontgaan zijn, dat we tegenwoordig graag veel schuld en boete in ons verleden stoppen, zeker als het gaan om de contacten met de overzeese wereld."

marked by "an unwillingness to understand our past" (ibid., 19), because it projects "our contemporary moral views upon the past without the least hesitation" (ibid., 18).[12] As such, his approach to this conflict resembles the way in which Coen's statue in Hoorn, after it had become damaged in 2011, was defended by writers who were in favor of its restoration.[13] For example, Maarten van Rossem (2012) writes about the criticism against Coen's statue, that "There exists an understandable, but nevertheless peculiar tendency to judge the past according to the customs, norms and values of the present" (2012: 7).[14] To him, this tendency is "not very sensible", because "The past must be judged according to its own standards" (ibid.).[15] Emmer makes this point of view explicit by calling the past "a strange land with very different ideas about good and bad compared to those we have now, in present-day the Netherlands" (2018: 8-9).[16]

The way in which writers like Emmer and Van Rossem approach colonial memory justifies the existence of colonial statues in the Dutch public space by interpreting history as a natural fact, and such statues as the logical outcomes of it. As such, their approach ignores that a majority of these statues in the Netherlands were built in the nineteenth century, that is, two or three centuries after the lifetimes of the colonizers that are being honored. Coen's statue in Hoorn, for instance, was built in 1893, two and half centuries after his lifetime. According to N.C.F. van Sas (2005), the construction of this statue had little to do with Coen's historical context, but was instead a sign of the historical context in which it was built. The late nineteenth century was a period in which the Netherlands was impacted by the rise of "modern imperialism, with its intensification of international tensions and rivalries" (2005: 564-65).[17] Within this context, the Netherlands sought to develop a national self-identification as a strong colonial presence in the world, which resulted among other things in "statues of national heroes being erected everywhere" (ibid., 560).[18] These statues, like Coen's, often honored well-known colonizers from the Golden Age, in order to present Dutch history as a history of colonial conquest and mercantile ingenuity.

[12] My translation from the Dutch original: "onwil om het verleden te begrijpen"; "onze huidige morele opvattingen zonder de minste aarzeling steeds op het verleden."
[13] This case is discussed in more detail in Chapter 3 of this dissertation.
[14] My translation from the Dutch original: "Er bestaat een begrijpelijke, maar desalniettemin wonderlijke neiging om het verleden te beoordelen naar de gewoonten en normen en waarden van het heden."
[15] My translation from the Dutch original: "niet erg zinvol"; "Het verleden dient beoordeeld te worden naar zijn eigen maatstaven."
[16] My translation from the Dutch original: "een vreemd land met heel andere opvattingen over goed en kwaad dan wij er nu op nahouden in het hedendaagse Nederland."
[17] My translation from the Dutch original: "het moderne imperialisme met zijn verscherping van international spanningen en rivaliteiten."
[18] My translation from the Dutch original: "om overal standbeelden op te richten van vaderlandse helden."

In other words, the way in which history is presented in public space is not neutral. To the contrary, it is a selective interpretation, which is used in order to articulate a particular self-image in the present. In this selective interpretation, certain details, like Coen's murder of 14,000 Moluccans in pursuit of a Dutch monopoly on the global spice trade, are actively ignored in favor of more honorable details, such as the fact that he brought wealth and fame to the Netherlands through this spice monopoly. Emmer's representation of the colonial statues as innocent products of their time enables him to reframe the public debate about colonial memory as a conflict between historians and iconoclasts, the former of which are portrayed as aiming to defend history itself against the latter, who are portrayed as trying to erase history by aiming to destroy its visible symbols in contemporary society.

However, this polarized portrayal of the conflict ignores that the criticism of colonial statues is in fact not a protest against colonial history as such, but against the particular way in which this history was represented in the nineteenth century, through the construction of statues and monuments that glorified this past. The criticism suggests that such glorifying symbols are no longer appropriate in the contemporary reality of postcolonial societies like the Netherlands, in which a considerable part of its citizens is descendant from the colonized rather than the colonizers.[19] The debate is therefore not between defenders and destroyers of history, as Emmer suggests, but between two different interpretations of history, one in which colonialism is remembered as a history of conquest and discovery, and one in which it is remembered as a history of oppression and exploitation. Emmer represents his own interpretation of history as based on "facts and numbers", while reducing that of his opponents to an emotional project of misguided moralists (2018: 17).[20] As such, he refutes the possibility that one shared past could engender multiple histories that place emphasis on different aspects of that past. He naturalizes his own perspective as historically correct, while discarding that of his opponents as ahistorical and incorrect.

He expresses this reductive interpretation of the conflict even more directly in his many interviews with the media, in which he for example argues that "Slavery is so long ago. It keeps surprising me that people never cease complaining about it" (*Volkskrant*, 10 May 2016).[21] In an interview with *De Wereld Draait Door*, a talk show on national television, he

[19] According to Gert Oostindie, of the approximately seventeen million inhabitants of the Netherlands, "The number of Dutch people with roots in the colonies is estimated to be around one million" (2011: 8).
[20] My translation from the Dutch original: "feiten en cijfers."
[21] My translation from the Dutch original: "De slavernij is zo lang geleden. Het verbaast me altijd opnieuw dat mensen daar eindeloos in blijven rondzeuren."

remarks that "black people in the Netherlands are constantly attempting to cast themselves as victims of history" (17 January 2018).[22] The latter remark indicates that with his representation of the topic he not only assumes his own perspective to be correct and the opposing perspective to be incorrect, but he also presents the debate as a conflict between people with different skin colors. By explicitly framing the other side of the debate as a "black" point of view, he implies that the reasonable qualities which he assumes for his own voice in the debate are also understood by him to be "white" qualities.

As such, Emmer's approach to colonial memory is an example of what Gloria Wekker (2016) has identified as a sustained collective illusion which she terms "white innocence", and which according to her is "a dominant way in which the Dutch think of themselves, as being a small, but just, ethical nation; color-blind, thus free of racism; as being inherently on the moral and ethical high ground, thus a guiding light to other folks and nations" (2016: 2). This self-aggrandizing identity, she argues, is maintained through what she calls a "smug ignorance" of the problematic elements of national history: i.e. "an ignorance that is active, dynamic, that refuses to go quietly – not at all confined to the illiterate and uneducated but propagated at the highest level of the land, indeed presenting itself unblushingly as *knowledge*" (ibid., 18; italics in original). That this sense of innocence is indeed naturalized as a form of knowledge is shown in Emmer's representation of the debate over colonial memory as a conflict between those who do understand history, and those who do not.

The next section will introduce the activist group De Grauwe Eeuw, in order to discuss how it protests against this glorification of Dutch colonial history in public space, and how it attempts to protect its protest from being misrepresented as emotional, a-historical iconoclasm.

The interruptive activism of De Grauwe Eeuw[23]

The activists of De Grauwe Eeuw are among those protesters who criticize the glorifying way in which colonial history is remembered in the Dutch public space. On its Twitter account (@DeGrauwEeuw *[sic]*), the anonymous group profiles itself as "The counter-reaction to the

[22] My translation from the Dutch original: "Je ziet voortdurend vanuit de mensen die in Nederland zwart zijn […], pogingen om […] een soort slachtofferrol te spelen in de geschiedenis."
[23] Parts of this and the following sections were previously published in Gerlov van Engelenhoven and Hannes Kaufmann. "When Silence Speaks Louder than Words: Tracing moments of *Verfremdung* in Contemporary Political Protests" (2019).

glorification of the Golden Age".[24] The group first gained national attention when it claimed responsibility for a series of slogans that were spray-painted on colonial monuments in the city of Hoorn, in the night of 24 October 2016, as was reported by the national newspaper *Algemeen Dagblad* (27 October 2016). The activists had written "Get rid of colonial glorification" on a monument for Willem IJsbrantszoon Bontekoe, who was a merchant in the service of the VOC.[25] A bust of Bontekoe was also smeared with paint. On Jan Pieterszoon Coen's pedestal and in front of Museum Halve Maen, which is a replica of a VOC ship, they had painted the word "genocide", as well as a variant of the VOC logo, in which the "O" was drawn in such a way as to resemble a noose. A post on their Facebook page motivated the action as follows:

> Via an action that took place last night, members of our group have shown their disgust regarding the colonial glorification with which Hoorn proudly parades.
>
> J.P. Coen and Bontekoe were two mass-murderers in the service of the VOC and brought colonial terror over the population of the Dutch East Indies, as well as other territories. […] Museum Halve Maen is a replica of the VOC ship, which Henri Hudson used to "discover" Manhattan, which was the beginning of a bloody colonization, and a genocide against the area's native population, the Lenape. […]
>
> Colonial glorification leads to the normalization of genocide, as well as to the normalization of large-scale pillaging of land and natural resources.
>
> This is one of many actions that will follow throughout the country. (*Blikopnieuws*, 25 October 2016)[26]

The group was active throughout 2017 as well, protesting against a wide array of colonial references in Dutch society, including statues, street names, and racist elements in national and local festivals.

[24] My translation from the Dutch original: "Tegenantwoord op de verheerlijking van de gouden eeuw."
[25] My translation from the Dutch original: "Weg met koloniale verheerlijking."
[26] My translation from the Dutch original: "Vannacht hebben leden van onze groep via een actie hun afschuw laten blijken van de koloniale verheerlijking waarmee Hoorn vol trots pronkt. […] JP Coen *[sic]* en Bontekoe waren twee massamoordenaars in dienst van de VOC en hebben hun koloniale terreur losgelaten op o.a. de bevolking van Nederlands-Indië. […] Museum de Halve Maen is een replica van het VOC schip waarmee Henri Hudson Manhattan 'ontdekte', het begin van een bloedige kolonisatie van en genocide op de Lenape, de inheemse bevolking daar. […] Via deze koloniale verheerlijking worden roof van land, grootschalige roof van grondstoffen en genocide genormaliseerd. Dit is een van vele acties die door het gehele land zullen volgen."

This overview of their actions shows that the activists of De Grauwe Eeuw focus on colonial memory as it is practiced in the Dutch public space. The statues and other public symbols of memory which they target form a constant presence in citizens' daily lives, inviting them to uncritically identify and empathize with colonizers through these statues that portray them as national heroes, despite the fact that these figures played pivotal roles in histories of oppression. In other words, public space has a *theatrical function* when it comes to colonial memory, to the extent that it stages the past in a particular way. In a text called "Staging the Past" (1999), Karen E. Till stresses this theatrical function by arguing that "official urban landscapes of memory – museums, memorials and monuments" function "as stages or backdrops framing myths of national identity" (1999: 254). Therefore, public space may often become a location in which collective identity is contested, seeing that "social groups may not agree with the official meanings of these landscapes and staged rituals: they may decide to take over existing *topoi* or create their own sites of memory" (ibid.).

The activism of De Grauwe Eeuw is an example of such contestation. By spray-painting anti-colonial slogans on colonial statues, they complicate the identification with colonizers which these statues encourage. For example, the spray-painting of the word "genocide" on Coen's statue in Hoorn complicates its representation of him as a national hero, because it offers an alternative interpretation of him as a mass-murderer. Because the slogan is an unsolicited addition to the statue's usual presence in the city, it demands attention. Passers-by are provoked to notice the statue and the added slogan, and form their own opinion about the conflict that is presented through their juxtaposition: should Coen be remembered as a hero or a mass-murderer?

As such, De Grauwe Eeuw's protest strategy can be analyzed by applying Bertolt Brecht's concept of *Verfremdung* to it. This term has been translated into English as the "alienation effect" (Willett, 1974: 91), and refers to Brecht's method of effecting social and political change through theatre. Brecht (1974 [1957]) defined *Verfremdung* as the directing of a play in such a way that the audience is "hindered from simply identifying itself with the characters in the play" (1974: 91). To the contrary, "acceptance or rejection of their actions and utterances" is urged to take place "on a conscious plane, instead of, as hitherto, in the audience's subconscious" (ibid.). Brecht disproved of theatre that aimed at the audience's empathy. His problem with such theatre was that, according to him, it encouraged audiences to remain passive spectators of the staged action, rather than inspire them to think and act for themselves. Therefore, he suggested an alternative approach, which he called "epic theatre",

and which operated via effectuating instances of *Verfremdung*. This alternative form of theatre was aimed at distancing spectators from what they saw on stage, and thereby, alienating them from the conditions of their own lives, in order to urge them to actively change these conditions rather than passively accept them.

In his analysis of Brecht's method, Walter Benjamin (1998 [1939]) points out that *Verfremdung* is often "brought about by processes of being interrupted" (1998: 18). Brecht used many forms of interruption in his plays. Actors would frequently interrupt their own acting and start over again, specific gestures would be repeated in different contexts, actors would fall out of their roles and address members of the audience directly. Such interruption, argues Benjamin, "has an organizing function. It brings the action to a standstill in mid-course and thereby compels the spectator to take up a position towards the action" (ibid., 100). In other words, Brecht's use of interruptions were aimed at complicating the possibility for the audience to passively empathize with the actors or to identify with their actions.

Based on these considerations, the activism of De Grauwe Eeuw can be understood as a strategy of *Verfremdung*, because it interrupts citizens' usually passive and unconscious acceptation of colonial memory as it is presented to them through public memorials. These public memorials stage controversial figures of colonial history unequivocally as national heroes. By interrupting these glorifying memory practices, De Grauwe Eeuw urges citizens to become conscious of their own positions in relation to what is presented to them. By becoming aware of the statues which usually form the backdrop to their daily lives, they are encouraged to see them as if for the first time, and consider to what extent they agree with the version of colonial memory that these monuments symbolize. The following section will explore De Grauw Eeuw's strategy of interruption further, by analyzing how it can be identified not only as the central element of their protest strategy, but also as the defining feature of their relationship to the mainstream media.

De Grauwe Eeuw's refusal to speak with the mainstream media

De Grauwe Eeuw is known to systematically refuse interviews with the mainstream media. In a blog post on their website (25 October 2017), the activists motivate this attitude in the following way:

> Because of our policy concerning mainstream white media […] we often encounter surprised or even indignant journalists. Yes, there will undoubtedly be journalists who have good intentions, et cetera blah blah *[sic]*, but even those generally still work for white newsrooms, that are often owned by white institutions that benefit from publishing news about racism as tepidly and inaccurately as possible.
>
> The knowledge of most journalists in the Netherlands about racism, colonialism and slavery is below level to such an extent that it is basically impossible for them to write a serious article, even if they would try. Their questions are always framed from a white perspective: insinuative, depreciative and derisive. (25 October 2017)[27]

The central message of this blog post is that, whereas the activist group's project is to criticize dominant colonial memory, the mainstream media are owned, so they argue, by the white, dominant part of Dutch society that directly benefits from the heritage of colonialism. Therefore, to publish their anti-colonial views in this biased context would jeopardize the integrity of their voice.

Like their approach to protest, this critical understanding of the mainstream media can be analyzed via Brecht. According to Brecht (1974 [1930]), critical thinkers should be wary of publishing their thoughts via the press:

> For by imagining that they have got hold of an apparatus which in fact has got hold of them they are supporting an apparatus which is out of their control, which is no longer (as they believe) a means of furthering output but has become an obstacle to output, and specifically to their own output as soon as it follows a new and original course which the apparatus finds awkward or opposed to its own aims. (1974: 34)

In other words, Brecht argues that the media should not be seen as a channel through which thinkers can reach their audience, but as an obstacle to this objective. He understands the media not as a neutral vehicle for the communication of thoughts and opinions, but as a manipulative apparatus in the hands of society, which itself he understands as a conservative body aimed at reproducing the status quo: "Society absorbs via the apparatus whatever it

[27] My translation from the Dutch original: "Gezien ons beleid omtrent mainstream witte media […] krijgen wij vaak verbaasde of zelfs verontwaardigde journalisten. Ja er zal vast die ene tussen zitten die het wel goed bedoelt enz blabla. *[sic]* echter zijn zij allemaal journalisten voor een witte redactie die vaak eigendom is van een wit instituut wat er baat bij heeft om nieuws mbt *[sic]* racisme zo lauw en onnauwkeurig mogelijk te brengen. De kennis over racisme, kolonialisme, slavernij van de meeste journalisten in Nederland is zo beneden peil dat je er geen serieus artikel uit krijgt al zouden ze hun best doen. De vragen zijn altijd vanuit een wit perspectief, insinuerend, bagatelliserend and badinerend."

needs in order to reproduce itself. This means that an innovation will pass if it is calculated to rejuvenate existing society, but not if it is going to change it" (ibid.).

Applied to the case of De Grauwe Eeuw, this understanding of the media as an apparatus aimed at reproducing the status quo further clarifies the group's refusal to submit its voice to this apparatus. The group's actions are meant to reveal and criticize certain conditions of society that are usually taken for granted, particularly concerning the topic of colonial memory. The mainstream media could be argued to generally work against this principle, as their purpose, from a Brechtian point of view, is to reproduce those conditions. Therefore, for the group to contribute their voice to this discourse would imply to subject their voice to that mechanism of reproduction. For this reason, the group chooses to remain silent within that context, and instead preserves its voice for what it deems to be non-conforming platforms, such as its own website.

These considerations suggest an interpretation of De Grauwe Eeuw's silence in the mainstream media as a conscious strategy to remain in control of its voice, and not as an obstacle to getting its message across. The latter interpretation is common among journalists whose attempts at interviewing the activists were rejected by them. On their website, the group discusses this recurrent interpretation of its silence, arguing that it proves to which extent journalists overestimate their roles in society as agents of information. The activists support their argument by providing a series of print screens taken from a conversation between them and a journalist that took place in October 2017 via Facebook Messenger.

They introduce their example by stating that "this journalist has the same distorted image of himself as most journalists of the mainstream media. He thinks that he is doing us a favor and that he is an important link between us and the world" (25 October 2017).[28] The print screens show a conversation in which the journalist requests an interview. The activists ask to which news platform the interview would be submitted. The journalist indicates that he works independently and would sell his article to the highest bidder. The activists respond that, in that case, they are not available for an interview, and they wish him good luck in future endeavors. At this point, the conversation takes a turn in the direction which De Grauwe Eeuw argues is symptomatic for its relationship with the mainstream media. The journalist states:

[28] My translation from the Dutch original: "deze journalist heeft hetzelfde vertekend beeld van zichzelf als de meeste journalisten van de mainstream media. Hij denkt dat hij ons een plezier doet en hij de belangrijke schakel is tussen ons en de buitenwereld."

> I have indicated sincerely that my aim is to present your vision objectively. At that point, if you decide to be unwilling to co-operate, then that is fine. But you should be aware of the fact that you thereby lose the right to take on a victim-role. After all, you had the chance to influence my reporting. An article cannot illuminate your perspective and motivation if you yourself choose not to share it. […] Seeing that you are an action group, it would seem to me that your priority should be to share your vision and plans with the larger public. What is happening now is the opposite of this. Your choice. (Ibid.)[29]

The activists respond by saying:

> Exactly, and this is the type of whitesplaining *[sic]* reaction we always get from white media. They think that we need them, that we want to hear their opinions and that, above all, we need the approval of white people. And yet, we do NOT *[sic]* need any of these things. (Ibid.)[30]

This exchange shows that De Grauwe Eeuw and the journalist have different understandings of the function of journalism for the articulation of an activist perspective on society. With his remark, the journalist invokes the common principle of *audi alteram partem*, i.e. the right for an accused party to defend themselves. By offering the activists a space to voice their side of the conflict, he believes that he offers them a chance to defend themselves. Therefore, he understands their refusal to speak with him as their failure to defend themselves, that is, their failure to present themselves as a legitimate movement. As such, consciously or not, the journalist creates an unequal power distribution between himself and the activists, by positioning himself as a representative of the norm, whose legitimacy is self-evident, while positioning them as occupying a deviant position, that has yet to acquire legitimacy.

The group's response indicates that the activists disagree with the journalist's representation of their relationship. By emphasizing that they do not "need the approval of

[29] My translation from the Dutch original: "Ik heb namelijk met open vizier aangekaart dat ik jullie visie op een objectieve manier wilde belichten. Op het moment dat jullie er voor kiezen niet mee te werken, is dat prima. Ben er u dan wel van bewust dat u metterdaad het recht verspeelt om een slachtofferrol in te nemen. U had immers zelf de kans om de berichtgeving te beïnvloeden. Een artikel/productie kan namelijk niet uw standpunten en motivatie belichten als u er zelf voor kiest deze niet te willen delen. […] als zijnde actiegroep lijk het me een prioriteit uw visie en plannen kenbaar te maken aan het grote publiek. Wat er nu gebeurt is het tegenovergestelde. Uw keuze."

[30] My translation from the Dutch original: "Zo'n Whitesplainerige *[sic]* reactie als de jouwe krijgen we dus altijd van de witte media. Ze denken dat wij hun *[sic]* nodig hebben, hun mening willen en maar vooral goedkeuring van witte mensen nodig hebben. We hebben dat alles NIET nodig."

white people", they reframe the conversation which he offers them as an unequal space in which they would be expected to convince him, and his readers, of their legitimacy. By refusing to engage in this conversation, they imply that their legitimacy is not dependent upon such approval. This refusal to explain themselves suggests that the activists understand taking up a voice within the context of the mainstream media to be a form of subjection. By submitting their voice to a conversation that is hosted by the media, they would acknowledge the latter's power to evaluate their actions. Not speaking to them therefore destabilizes the media's dominant position as an apparatus that grants or denies legitimacy to political voices.

Thus, De Grauwe Eeuw's silence can be understood as an example of what political scientist Kennan Ferguson (2002) calls the "overt refusal to participate in the normative linguistic practices of a state or society" (2002: 7). According to Ferguson, silence has a defiant quality to the extent that it "can serve as resistance to any institution that requires verbal participation (as do virtually all). […] Silence as non-participation is threatening to institutional forces in that silence resists whatever demands are made without necessarily opposing" (ibid., 8). In other words, Ferguson theorizes an activist's silence not as the overt opposition to, but as the interruption or suspension of, the status quo. Silence "disturbs those institutions and institutional executors […] who demand verbal interaction as evaluative mechanisms. It disturbs precisely because the ideal of transparent speech is the presumed mode of affiliation in our cultural practices, a standard to which silence is not reducible" (ibid., 15). By not participating in the mainstream media's normative practice of evaluating different points of view by bringing them into dialogue with each other, the activists of De Grauwe Eeuw resist such evaluation in that they avoid expressing a clear position to which they could be held accountable.

This use of deliberate silence in their protest strategy aligns them to some extent, but not entirely, with other historical examples of political resistance through forms of silence, or its non-aural equivalents, such as withdrawal and non-participation. In a text called "Silent Citizenship in Democratic Theory and Practice" (2012), political scientist Sean Gray points out that

> silence is often the default mode of sanctioning those in power whenever citizens lack the credibility to be heard or the costs of other instruments (speech) are simply too high. In these situations, withholding acknowledging or refusing to respond can reduce

> the asymmetrical effects of differences in power by motivating the other side to take notice and engage – even if only to clarify a silence's meaning. (2012: 9)

In other words, Gray theorizes silence as a weapon in the hands of those whose voices are usually not valued. Examples which he provides include the National Women's Party's deployment of so-called "Silent Sentinels", that were "committed to drawing attention to politically voiceless women by standing in silent protest outside of the White House everyday throughout 1917" (ibid.), and the action of the religious Falun Gong movement in Beijing in 1999, when "10,000 of its members surrounded government buildings in Zhongnanhai in silent protest of the government's religious policies" (ibid.).

Unlike such examples of silent resistance, however, I argue that De Grauwe Eeuw's project is *not* to demand a voice through silence, but rather to express their *distrust of voice* as an instrument for societal change. Their refusal to engage in dialogues about their negative representation of colonial history is not a way to claim that their point of view has not been heard before in this debate. Instead, their silence is a protest against the debate itself. This is for example how they explained it to a journalist of the national newspaper *NRC*, who relates that "I would have been happy to start a conversation with them, but the anonymous group informed me via the internet that they refuse to talk to the press: 'We are not looking for a dialogue; it is the task of white Europeans themselves to educate each other about their past' " (27 October 2016).[31] With this remark, the activists make clear that they do not see how a dialogue would rectify the glorifying representation of colonial memory that is upheld in the Dutch public space. By refusing to elaborate their actions through a conversation, they let their actions speak for themselves, or as they expressed it explicitly to the national newspaper *Volkskrant*: "Dialogue prolongs the status quo, while action needs to be taken" (16 August 2018).[32]

These paradoxical exchanges with journalists, in which the group speaks to them only to explain why they will not speak to them, indicate how they pair their silence with a strongly articulated voice in society via other platforms. First of all, their actions themselves constitute a coherent voice of protest in the public realm. And second, they frequently update their blog with lengthy posts in which they elaborate their objectives and perspectives. As

[31] My translation from the Dutch original: "Ik was graag met hen in gesprek gegaan, maar via internet laat de anonieme groep me weten niet met de pers te praten. 'Wij zijn niet uit op een dialoog; witte Europeanen hebben zelf de taak zich te onderwijzen in hun verleden'."
[32] My translation from the Dutch original: "Dialoog verlengt de status quo, terwijl er actie ondernomen moet worden."

such, their outspoken refusal to speak to the mainstream media can be interpreted as an autonomous form of societal participation that protects them from having to compromise their voice. However, as will be elaborated in the next section, this strategy is not without its particular risks. By studying the negative way in which the mainstream media have portrayed the group, predominantly based on their systematic refusal to speak with them, I will argue that silence, like voice, has its limitations as a strategy of activism.

The risks of remaining silent

One of the most effective actions by De Grauwe Eeuw was its very first. In August 2016, the activists wrote a letter to the municipality of Utrecht, in which they requested to have all twelve street names in a particular neighborhood of the city changed, because they uncritically refer to the colonization of Indonesia. The municipality did not heed the request, but instead offered to start a project with them and several other parties, including other activist groups, and students of Cultural History from Utrecht University. This project would be aimed at improving the awareness of colonial history in the city's public space. De Grauwe Eeuw agreed to this idea. It eventually led to the initiation of the so-called *Bitterzoete Route* ("Bittersweet Route") in October 2018, i.e. a guided tour through the neighborhood in question, in which the controversial historical context of its street names is discussed.[33]

Although this initiative was based on an action by De Grauwe Eeuw, the municipality banned the group from the project halfway through, in October 2017. The discontinuation of their collaboration was based on the negative national attention which the group had received earlier that year, in August 2017, when it had sent a letter to the Director-General for Public Works and Water Management. The letter demanded the immediate name change of the Coen Tunnel, which is a tunnel under the North Sea Canal in the west of Amsterdam that is named after Jan Pieterszoon Coen. In this letter, the activists promised further actions in case the name was not changed, and specified that these actions would possibly also be aimed at the Director-General personally, seeing that she was the sole official who could make a decision about this matter.

[33] More information about this guided tour can be found on the project's website: https://bitterzoeteroute.nl/wandeling.

The chairman of the Utrecht department of the conservative-liberal party VVD, Dimitri Gilissen, interpreted the tone of this letter as threatening, and, based on that interpretation, criticized the city's collaboration with the group in an interview with national newspaper *Algemeen Dagblad* (29 October 2017). He announced that if Utrecht would not end its relationship with the action group, he would address this matter during the next plenary meeting of the House of Representatives. In the interview he emphasizes the fact that the group can usually not be reached for commentary, and calls them "an extremely shadowy and elusory organization with no face" (29 October 2017).[34] Addressing the matter officially was eventually unnecessary: two days after this article, the same newspaper reported that the municipality of Utrecht "has ended its collaboration with action group De Grauwe Eeuw promptly" (31 October 2017).[35]

This sequence of events marks the first time that the activists' silent treatment of the media directly worked against them. As had been the case with all their previous actions, their letter about the Coen Tunnel had caused new requests for interviews by the mainstream media, all of which the group had rejected. In combination with the negative attention their letter had caused, their refusal to defend or explain themselves publicly was now interpreted as a sign of their culpability. This negative interpretation was frequently repeated in news coverage about the group from this time onward, as newspapers began to increasingly stress the group's refusal to speak to them. For example, national newspaper *Volkskrant* published an interview with terrorism expert Jacco Pekelder on 7 February 2018. In this interview, Pekelder notes that "De Grauwe Eeuw is not looking for debate. They are not interested in whether or not their message reaches a wider audience, and are preaching to the choir. If you never listen to anyone else, you are always right. That is frightening" (7 February 2018).[36] In the very next sentence, the newspaper specifies that they have attempted to contact the activists via email and social media to ask them for a response, but without success (ibid.).

As such, by juxtaposing the group's silence with a terrorism expert's denouncement of it, the newspaper frames this silence as part of the threat to society which the group supposedly poses. However, this representation ignores the fact that the group's silence is only aimed at one particular type of news platform. Whereas De Grauwe Eeuw refuses to

[34] My translation from the Dutch original: "een uiterst schimmig clubje, zonder gezicht, en ze zijn onbereikbaar."
[35] My translation from the Dutch original: "Gemeente Utrecht stopt onmiddellijk samenwerking met actiegroep De Grauwe Eeuw."
[36] My translation from the Dutch original: "dat de Grauwe Eeuw niet het debat zoekt. Ze zijn niet geïnteresseerd of hun boodschap bij een breed publiek aankomt en preken voor eigen parochie. Als je nooit naar anderen luistert, heb je altijd gelijk. Dat is benauwend."

speak to the mainstream media, the group does give interviews with what they see as non-dominant news platforms, and also frequently publish their thoughts and opinions on their own website. For instance, in the aftermath of their controversial letter about the Coen Tunnel, the activists published a lengthy blog post about Dimitri Gilissen's public request for the discontinuation of their collaboration with the city of Utrecht (30 October 2017). In this post, which also includes a link to the letter in question, they state that their action was not unlawful in any way: "We have used our freedom of expression and have claimed our right to demonstrate about our right not to be discriminated against" (30 October 2017).[37] They criticize the fact that Gilissen called their letter threatening, and argue that this is a form of "tone policing", in which "a white person decides which tone should be used in the anti-racism debate" (ibid.).[38] Seeing that this blog was posted on their website, it can be read as their official comment on the situation, which makes it difficult to insist that they do not speak out publicly.

Two days later, on 1 November 2017, they also published an open letter on their website to the councilor who was responsible for the final decision to discontinue their collaboration on the street names project. In this letter, they express their suspicion that the councilor had originally initiated the project partly in order to limit the group's activity as protesters, and that they themselves had already discussed exiting it. They call the collaboration "a prestige project for the municipality of Utrecht" and state that they believe that the councilor had always planned to excommunicate them once they were no longer necessary (ibid.).[39] Finally, they emphasize that the only reason for the fact that there will be no counteraction from their side, is that "nor De Grauwe Eeuw, nor the municipality of Utrecht, but the decolonization of Utrecht's public space has priority" (ibid.).[40] If the municipality wishes to continue the project without them, so they state, they will comply, but only in order to make sure that the project as such will not be jeopardized (ibid).

Because these detailed responses are publicly available on their official website, their representation by the mainstream media as a group that refuses to speak out publicly deserves further scrutiny. As the activists have frequently declared on their website, their refusal to speak to the mainstream media is meant as an interruption of the latter's usually unquestioned

[37] My translation from the Dutch original: "Wij hebben gebruik gemaakt van onze vrijheid van meningsuiting en het recht om te demonstreren om onze rechten niet gediscrimineerd te worden op te eisen."
[38] My translation from the Dutch original: "om als wit persoon de toon te bepalen in het antiracismedebat."
[39] My translation from the Dutch original: "een prestigeproject van Gemeente Utrecht."
[40] My translation from the Dutch original: "omdat het allemaal […] noch om De Grauwe Eeuw, noch om gemeente Utrecht gaat. Dit gaat over het dekoloniseren van het Utrechtse straatbeeld en dat heeft prioriteit."

authority when it comes to societal issues, such as the public representation of colonial memory. Their aim is to address these societal issues without having them filtered by this normative discourse. Therefore, their reputation as "shadowy", as VVD chairman Gilissen called them, does not correspond to their public self-representation. Instead, it can be interpreted as the result of a form of selective journalism, in which reporters disregard any of the group's public statements made through media channels other than their own. Representing the group as unresponsive dodges its criticism of the media as perpetuators of the status quo, and parries its strategy of silence by turning it into something that reflects badly upon the activists themselves.

An example of this kind of selective journalism can be found in an article for *Algemeen Dagblad* that is entitled "Who are hiding behind De Grauwe Eeuw?" (27 October 2017).[41] This article includes the following paragraph:

> Who are behind De Grauwe Eeuw, and what are their motives? An interview with this newspaper is not an option: the group has a "no white media-policy". "We write on our own platforms, because we refuse to give power to white media", declared one of its members recently in an interview with *Hollandistan*, which is a website for young Muslims. "This policy is based on anti-racist motives."
>
> The statement was provided by Michael van Zeijl, the only member of De Grauwe Eeuw which this newspaper was able to trace. (Ibid.)[42]

The quote in question was taken from a video that was made on 15 August 2017 by *Hollandistan*, an independent online news platform that was founded by Dutch sociologist and journalist Sangar Paykhar in 2015.[43] In a conversation with *Spreekbuis*, a trade magazine for media professionals, Paykhar calls *Hollandistan* "an experiment to see whether we as Muslims in the Netherlands could initiate an alternative to existing mainstream media, using

[41] My translation from the Dutch original: "Wie gaan er schuil achter De Grauwe Eeuw?"
[42] My translation from the Dutch original: "Wie zitten achter De Grauwe Eeuw, en wat zijn hun drijfveren? Een interview met deze krant behoort niet tot de mogelijkheden: de groep heeft een 'geen witte media-policy'. 'Wij schrijven op onze eigen platforms, omdat we witte media geen macht willen geven', liet één van de leden onlangs weten in een interview aan Hollandistan, een website voor jonge moslims. 'Dat doen wij vanuit antiracistisch motief.' De uitspraak is van Michael van Zeijl, het enige lid van de Grauwe Eeuw dat deze krant kon traceren."
[43] At the time of writing, in early 2020, the website of *Hollandistan* was no longer online. I am grateful to the platform's founder and contributor, Sangar Paykhar, for making the video of his interview with De Grauwe Eeuw available to me nevertheless.

only our own resources" (17 March 2019).[44] He mentions that many Dutch Muslims are dissatisfied with the mainstream media and their hostile attitude toward Muslims. *Hollandistan* is therefore meant as a contribution to "the diversity and pluralism of the Dutch media landscape" (ibid.).[45] As such, Paykhar's point of view regarding mainstream media is similar to that of De Grauwe Eeuw, to the extent that he criticizes this discourse for perpetuating an imbalanced representation of, in his case, Muslims in the Netherlands. Whereas De Grauwe Eeuw responds to this perceived imbalance by refusing to partake in it, Paykhar initiated *Hollandistan* as a way to improve on it.

Because of their shared wariness of the mainstream media, De Grauwe Eeuw's decision to accept an interview with *Hollandistan* makes sense: it is an example of their policy of reserving their voice for media platforms that represent marginalized rather than dominant positions in Dutch society. The resulting conversation, between Paykhar and the activist, Michael van Zeijl, marked an important moment in the history of De Grauwe Eeuw, to the extent that this was the first time that one of its members showed his face on video and spoke out on a platform other than their own. During the interview, Van Zeijl not only elaborates on their "no white media-policy", he also declares the central motivation of his group and of himself as an activist, in the following way:

> My goal as an activist is to kick open doors that usually remain closed, and we are willing to go quite far with that. However, we would not attack people personally. We are trying to do our work as much as possible within the limits of the law.
>
> Our objective is to create awareness and to empower marginalized groups. We hope to inspire other people, who experience racism and who have a colonial past that is being ignored completely, to become pro-active as well. We want them to realize that it is ok to stand up for themselves. (15 August 2017)[46]

This citation includes two direct statements about De Grauwe Eeuw's objectives and methods. In the first half of the citation, Van Zeijl declares that, although his group is willing to explore

[44] My translation from the Dutch original: "als een experiment om te kijken of wij als moslims in Nederland op eigen kracht een alternatief kunnen oprichten voor bestaande mainstream media."
[45] My translation from the Dutch original: "aan diversiteit en pluriformiteit van het Nederlands medialandschap."
[46] My translation from the Dutch original: "Mijn doel als activist is om deuren open te trappen die altijd dicht blijven, en wij zijn best bereid om daar ver in te gaan. Niet dat we daar mensen persoonlijk mee gaan aanvallen, nee dat niet, we gaan ook proberen om dat zoveel mogelijk binnen de wet te doen. Het gaat ons om het awareness *[sic]* creëeren, het gaat ons om het empoweren *[sic]* van gemarginaliseerde groepen. Dus zodat andere mensen die slachtoffer van racisme zijn en die een koloniaal verleden hebben wat totaal genegeerd wordt, dat die ook proactief gaan worden, dat die gaan merken van hé, ik mag wel voor mezelf opkomen."

the limits of the law in pursuing their goals, they are nevertheless non-violent: "we would not attack people personally" (see citation above). The second half of the citation is a description of the action group's main objectives: to create awareness and to empower marginalized people.

With these statements in mind, *Algemeen Dagblad*'s (27 October 2017) claim that De Grauwe Eeuw's motives are unclear can be identified as selective journalism: it is based on a citation from the very interview in which a representative of the group does in fact state their motives. By citing only Van Zeijl's remarks about their "no white media-policy" and meanwhile ignoring the parts of the interview in which he explains his group's objectives, the newspaper frames the group as being unwilling to share their agenda. This corresponds to Gilissen's remark about them being a shadowy group without a face, and Pekelder's argument that the group preaches for the choir. By actively ignoring the fact that the group's voice is available on platforms other than those of the mainstream media, such journalism misrepresents the activists' no white media-policy as the complete refusal to explain themselves, thereby presenting their silence as potentially threatening to society.

This interpretation of De Grauwe Eeuw as a potential threat to society has not remained limited to the mainstream media. In November 2017, one month after they were banned from the Utrecht street names project, the group was mentioned in the *Terrorist Threat Assessment for the Netherlands* (NCTV). This report is published four times per year by the National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism, a division of the Dutch Ministry of Justice and Security. The report is published in both Dutch and English and is, according to its colophon, meant as "a broad outline of the threat to the Netherlands posed by domestic and international terrorism" (2017: 8). It bases itself "on information from the intelligence and security services, the police, public sources and foreign partners, and on analyses by embassy staff" (ibid.).

In this report, De Grauwe Eeuw is mentioned under the section-header "Extremism", as one among several "relatively new far-left anti-racist activist groups", that "consist mainly of activists with migrant backgrounds. They are fighting against what they perceive to be racist and colonial symbols in Dutch society", such as "the Dutch East India Company, street names and statues" (ibid., 7). In an interview with *Volkskrant*, a representative of the bureau emphasizes that their mentioning of De Grauwe Eeuw in the report does not mean that the activists are explicitly understood to be terrorists (7 February 2018). Rather, the report aims to

outline potential forms of radicalization and polarization: "We want to signal developments early on and sketch a threat assessment that is as wide as possible" (ibid.).[47] This elaboration indicates that De Grauwe Eeuw is interpreted as a potential threat, much according to the way in which the mainstream media has profiled them.

These considerations show that the main benefit of the type of silence that is deployed by De Grauwe Eeuw is also its biggest risk. If De Grauwe Eeuw's silence vis-à-vis the mainstream media was a way for the group to avoid perpetuating the latter's power position, the media have turned that strategy against itself, by taking the group's silence as an invitation to propagate their own interpretations about them. These interpretations, which frame the group as a threat to society, can be repeated until the group would refute them publicly, by breaking their silence. Therefore, as long as the group refuses to enter the dominant news discourse, they de facto confirm this discourse's representation of them as potentially dangerous. As such, instead of an interruption of the status quo, the group's silence risks becoming a confirmation of it. In his article about silent resistance, Sean Gray (2012) also stresses this risk, when he warns that silence is a vulnerable form of communication: "silent individuals risk losing control of their silence's meaning – especially if they have little or no opportunity to correct misinterpretation" (2012: 13).

That De Grauwe Eeuw itself became aware of this risk, shows from the fact that the group eventually did decide to accept an interview with a national newspaper, one year after the controversy concerning its letter about the Coen Tunnel had begun (*Volkskrant*, 16 August 2018). The article in question is a double interview with De Grauwe Eeuw's Van Zeijl and his colleague from an allied activist group, Rogier Meijerink. In this article, the interviewer reminds her readers that Van Zeijl "does not often speak extensively to the 'white, racist press', among which he ranks *Volkskrant* as well. But, this afternoon, he has decided to tell his story, possibly only this once, as he declares" (16 August 2018).[48] The reason for this rare decision to break his usual silence, is that "He finds that he is often misunderstood" (ibid.).[49]

Van Zeijl mentions his group's inclusion in the Terrorist Threat Assessment as an example of such misunderstanding: "We do not see ourselves as extremists. I predominantly

[47] My translation from the Dutch original: "We willen vroeg ontwikkelingen signaleren en een zo breed mogelijk dreigingsbeeld schetsen."
[48] My translation from the Dutch original: "praat niet vaak uitgebreid met de 'witte, racistische pers', waaronder hij ook de Volkskrant schaart. Maar deze middag neemt hij de tijd om, misschien wel eenmalig zegt hij, zijn verhaal te doen."
[49] My translation from the Dutch original: "Hij vindt dat hij vaak verkeerd wordt begrepen."

send official requests about street names. Especially when keeping in mind the kind of injustice which we are fighting against, I find our actions themselves not to be so extreme" (ibid.).[50] His colleague activist, Meijerink, adds that "The inclusion of De Grauwe Eeuw in a report from the National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism is pure propaganda, meant to present the group in a bad light. If they would regard a group like that to be truly dangerous, they would rather monitor them quietly" (ibid.).[51] Van Zeijl himself explicitly makes the connection with his group's notorious silence: "The quieter we are, the more nervous they become" (ibid.).[52] However, despite all the "fables that exist about me in the media", he emphasizes that "I draw the line far before violence. We are not violent" (ibid.).[53]

This interview shows the limitations of De Grauwe Eeuw's interruptive protest strategy. News reporters have the power to ignore the group's voice as long as it dwells outside of the norm, while misrepresenting its silent treatment of the mainstream media as a general unwillingness to declare its motives publicly. As a result of this, the group finally decided to accept an interview with *Volkskrant*, if only to rectify its negative framing by this and other national newspapers. In other words, although De Grauwe Eeuw's refusal to submit its voice to the mainstream media is perhaps an effective form of resistance to it, it still fails to set the group free from its influence entirely.

In a text called "Freedom's Silences" (2005), Wendy Brown draws the same conclusion, when she argues that "while silence can be a mode of resistance to power", it is "not yet freedom precisely insofar as it constitutes resistance to domination rather than its own discursive bid for hegemony" (2005: 97). Correspondingly, De Grauwe Eeuw's silence vis-à-vis the mainstream media may interrupt the latter's authority temporarily. But, without a voice that is strong enough to challenge that discourse, this interruption can be no more than a temporary reprieve, or as Brown calls it, "a defense in the context of domination, rather than a sign of emancipation from it" (ibid.). In short, facing its criminalization by the mainstream media and the government, De Grauwe Eeuw eventually saw no other choice than to break its silence toward them and explicitly declare its non-extremism and non-violence. The following

[50] My translation from the Dutch original: "Wij zien onszelf niet als extremisten. Ik stuur voornamelijk officiële verzoeken over straatnamen. Zeker gezien het onrecht waartegen wij strijden, vind ik zulke acties zelf niet zo extreem."
[51] My translation from the Dutch original: "Dat De Grauwe Eeuw wordt genoemd in een rapport van de Nationaal Coördinator Terrorismebestrijding is puur propaganda, om de groep in een kwaad daglicht te stellen. Als ze zo'n groep werkelijk gevaarlijk zouden vinden, zouden ze die stilletjes in de gaten houden."
[52] My translation from the Dutch original: "Hoe stiller wij zijn, hoe nerveuzer zij worden."
[53] My translation from the Dutch original: "alle fabels in de media over mij"; "De grens ligt voor mij ver voor geweld. Wij zijn niet gewelddadig."

section will explore to what extent this means that this strategy of silence must be understood as a flawed project.

Using voice and silence together

In a text called "The Paradox of Silence: Some Questions About Silence as Resistance" (2000), legal scholar Dorothy Roberts discusses the thin line between silence as resistance, and silence as an obstacle to resistance: "This ambiguity should make scholars cautious about their own interpretations of silence" (2000: 346). Because silence is exactly the practice of not declaring one's position, opinions or motives, it is not always possible "to discern the transformative potential of what is largely a response to subjugation. The distinction between what is compelled and what is defiance is not always apparent" (ibid.). Reformulated within the context of De Grauwe Eeuw's case study, Roberts's question would be: is the group's silence vis-à-vis the mainstream media an expression of defiance aimed at transforming the status quo, or is it an expression of its *inability* to transform the status quo? The latter option would be to understand the activists' refusal to participate in the dominant discourse as symptomatic of their marginalized position within it.

Roberts' critical perspective on silence to some extent recalls Wendy Brown's (2005) argument that silence is "a defense in the context of domination, rather than a sign of emancipation from it" (2005: 97). Brown understands silence as the practice of "refusing complicity in injurious interpellations or in subjection through regulation" (ibid.). In other words, while she agrees that silence may not yet be a form of emancipation, she argues that it does at least challenge domination. Whereas Brown therefore does regard silence positively, Roberts (2000) is more skeptical, as she asks: "Does outsiders' silence in response to dominant speech challenge the status quo or simply acquiesce in it?" (2000: 347). With this question, Roberts suggests an understanding of silence not as a refuge from, but as the silent acceptation of, domination. Correspondingly, De Grauwe Eeuw's refusal to discuss their dissenting point of view with representatives of the status quo could also be understood as them shying away from confrontation.

This perspective can for example be found in an article which Klaas Cobbaut wrote for the online opinion magazine, *Doorbraak* (18 August 2018), in response to De Grauwe Eeuw's interview with *Volkskrant* (16 August 2018). In his piece, which is called "Does the Left

actually want to hear counterarguments?", Cobbaut notices the group's unwillingness to engage in debate, and argues that this is a recognizable left-wing attitude: "It is a common sight nowadays: the Grand Righteousness of the Left has assumed such large proportions that it requires no further argumentation" (18 August 2018).[54] Throughout his article, he uses De Grauwe Eeuw as an example to argue how their "lack of interest in a civilized debate" proves that such activism cannot be reasoned with: "among many progressive thinkers, a moral absolutism has been installed that refuses to be contradicted" (ibid.).[55]

This point of view marks a return to the power imbalance between the two predominant voices in the debate about colonial memory, that was discussed near the beginning of this chapter. The example of Piet Emmer showed how he normalizes his perspective by framing the voice of the opposition as unreasonable. Cobbaut's interpretation of De Grauwe Eeuw's silence corresponds to this form of framing, to the extent that he argues that it is reasonable to be willing to hear counterarguments through "civilized" debate, and therefore, that an unwillingness to partake in such debates is unreasonable and even shows a lack of "civilization". In short, De Grauwe Eeuw's decision to remain silent in the face of a normative discourse that represents them as unreasonable, may also be understood as confirming, rather than interrupting, that representation.

These considerations may seem to encourage the conclusion that De Grauwe Eeuw's silent treatment of the mainstream media has failed to be an effective form of resistance. However, this conclusion would ignore the fact that the group's silence is part of a larger strategy of protest that, as a whole, has been effective. Van Zeijl himself points this out during his *Volkskrant* interview: "The way in which the Netherlands reflects on its colonial past is changing" (16 August 2018).[56] As an example of his group's direct influence on this gradual change, the activist mentions the Utrecht street names project, which, despite De Grauwe Eeuw's exit halfway through, was still successful (ibid.). When the interviewer suggests that this and similar projects would perhaps happen more often if the group would be willing to engage in dialogues about their point of view, in which they would also listen to others, Van

[54] My translation from the Dutch original: "Wil Links wel tegenargumenten horen?" "Je ziet dit de laatste tijd steeds vaker: het Grote Gelijk van links neemt zulke proporties aan dat het geen argumenten meer nodig heeft."
[55] My translation from the Dutch original: "niet meer geïnteresseerd zijn in een beschaafd debat"; "installeert zich bij veel progressieven *[sic]* een moreel absolutisme dat geen tegenspraak meer duldt."
[56] My translation from the Dutch original: "Het denken in Nederland over het koloniale verleden is mede dankzij hun acties aan het veranderen."

Zeijl answers: “Dialogue prolongs the status quo, while action needs to be taken” (ibid.).[57] He elaborates: “I take it as a form of moral blackmail when I am told: we can only listen to you when you make it easy for us” (ibid.).[58]

These remarks paradoxically argue for the uselessness of dialogue within the context of a dialogue. They may serve as an indication of the fact that activists of De Grauwe Eeuw breaking their silence in this particular instance, does not equal the renouncement of their entire silence policy. Rather, their approach to protest combines forms of speaking out with forms of deliberate silence. It combines spray-painting their point of view on public property with an outspoken unwillingness to make this point of view open to debate. This approach offers a welcome perspective on public debates about colonial memory, namely that, as long as these debates are hosted and led by representatives of the status quo, they are more likely to perpetuate rather than change that status quo. Nevertheless, as the media’s and the government’s criminalization of the group has suggested, remaining silent in contexts where speaking out is the norm, has its limitations as a strategy of resistance. The fact that the group eventually decided to speak to a national newspaper in order to make their non-violent motives explicit, shows that the activists themselves also realized that, at some point, their silence had ceased to work in their favor, and had instead become a liability to their project.

Therefore, this case study shows that, although refusing to submit one’s voice to a dominant discourse can be a way to interrupt that discourse’s authority, such interruption cannot be the final step of the process. In order to make sure that this interruption also leads to a reconfiguration of authority, the silence may need to be broken in order to articulate an alternative norm. For this reason, Brown (2005) suggests that “one historical-political place of silence for collective subjects emerging into history is this crossed one: a place of potentially pleasurable reprieve in newly acquired zones of freedom and privacy, yet a place of ‘freedom from’ that is not yet freedom to make the world” (2005: 97). The insight offered by her definition of silence as “freedom from”, rather than freedom as such, is that silence may protect one’s voice from domination, but that this is not yet the same as emancipation. In order to not only interrupt, but reconfigure authority, or construct an alternative to it, deliberate silence must be combined with a carefully aimed voice.

[57] My translation from the Dutch original: “Dialoog verlengt de status quo, terwijl er actie ondernomen moet worden.”
[58] My translation from the Dutch original: “Ik zie het als een vorm van morele chantage als men zegt: we kunnen alleen naar je luisteren, als je het ons gemakkelijk maakt.”

Conclusions

In the public debate about the practice of Dutch colonial memory in public space, two main voices can be heard. One voice is in favor of colonial statues and other public memorials that honor well-known colonizers as national heroes. The other voice suggests that such glorifying symbols are inappropriate in postcolonial societies like the Netherlands, in which many citizens are descendant from the colonized rather than the colonizers.

De Grauwe Eeuw is a group of activists who, far from aiming to contribute to this debate, instead aim to interrupt the possibility of the debate as such. In their point of view, debating prolongs the status quo, to the extent that, as long as the conversation is still taking place, nothing will be changed. The interruptive quality of their protest strategy can be detected both in their actions, and in their "no white media-policy", as they call it. Their actions often aim to interrupt Dutch citizen's usually passive and unconscious acceptation of colonial memory as it is presented to them through public memorials, for example by spray-painting slogans such as "get rid of colonial glorification" or "genocide" on statues that portray famous colonizers as national heroes. The envisioned effect of such actions, in Brechtian terms, is a sense of *Verfremdung*. By interrupting the glorifying way in which the colonial past is staged in public space, the group encourages citizens to become alienated from this glorification, so that different representations may be articulated.

In similar fashion, De Grauwe Eeuw's attitude toward the mainstream media is aimed at interrupting the latter's authority when it comes to shaping public debate about societal issues. By openly refusing to speak to dominant news platforms, the group prevents them from, as they call it, "whitesplaining" its point of view. In other words, the activists see the mainstream media as an apparatus that is aimed at reproducing the status quo through enabling dialogues between unequally staged voices, in which marginal voices are not granted the same gravitas as the dominant voices which they oppose. As such, the group's silent treatment of these dominant news platforms can be interpreted as an autonomous form of societal participation, that protects it from having to compromise its political voice. The activists reserve this voice for what they deem to be non-dominant platforms, such as their own website and independent news platforms like *Hollandistan*, which represent marginalized positions in Dutch society.

Through selective journalism that ignores most of De Grauwe Eeuw's communication on platforms other than those belonging to the mainstream media, reporters have

misrepresented the group's silent treatment of these particular media as a general unwillingness to share its agenda with the wider public. Through this misrepresentation, the group has gained the reputation of a potential threat to society, which, as a category, was even made official in a publication by the National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism in 2017. This reputation has had a directly negative effect on its productivity as an activist movement, to the extent that the municipality of Utrecht discontinued their collaboration with the group on a project that was aimed at improving the awareness of colonial history in the public space of the city.

In order to rectify these false rumors about its potentially violent tendencies, De Grauwe Eeuw eventually decided to break its silence, by accepting an interview with a national newspaper, in August 2018. This disregard of their own policy indicates that the activists were aware of the risk of using silence as a strategy of resistance: one cannot always remain in control of how one's silence is interpreted by other, more powerful parties. Depending on such interpretations, silence can cease to be an interruption of the authority of the discourse it refuses to submit to, and unwillingly become a silent acceptation of that authority. Therefore, rather than arguing that silence as a strategy of protest is to be preferred over vocal protest, or vice versa, the central conclusion of this chapter is that silence and voice must be used together. In order to not only suspend, but reorder the norm, deliberate silence that is aimed at destabilizing the authority of dominant discourses must be combined with a voice that is aimed at turning this temporary interruption into lasting change.

PART THREE

…thereof one must be silent

CHAPTER FIVE

Between speaking out and remaining silent – Adat as a deliberately indefinable element of Moluccan identity

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an analysis of that which the Moluccan community in the Netherlands considers to be a core element of its collective identity: the concept of *adat*. This originally Arabic term means "custom" or "habit", and was introduced by Islamic merchants in Maluku from the 1200s onward. It was used as a way to refer to indigenous customs that could not be incorporated into Islamic law. Therefore, rather than referring to a particular system of customs or laws, adat denoted Islamic law's undetermined opposite: i.e. the wide variety of indigenous practices which, other than this generalizing label of "custom", remained undefined.

In what follows, I will trace the development of this term from its original usage to its current-day function as an aspect of Moluccan identity. I will argue that the contemporary Moluccan application of the term can be understood as a strategic reappropriation of adat as a form of collective self-identification, *which leaves intact its original capacity of having no fixed definition.* In other words, while adat is considered to be a central element of Moluccan identity, what that means, or what adat *is*, exactly, deliberately remains undetermined.

An example of this deliberately unspecific use of adat for the articulation of Moluccan identity can be found in the short film documentary *Untuk Selalu*, which was released during the Amsterdam-based film festival CinemAsia in 2015 (Van den Bos, Maruanaija and Surastri, 2015).[1] This documentary is a series of interviews about cultural identity with third-generation postcolonial migrants in the Netherlands. During his interview for this film, Moluccan artist Dominique Latoel is asked which main elements define his identity as a Moluccan in the Netherlands. He answers: "the strength and identity are *hidden in the adat*,

[1] "Untuk selalu" is Indonesian for "forever".

which forms the right to exist of the Moluccan people and of myself as an individual" (Van den Bos, Maruanaija and Surastri, 2015; italics added).[2]

This remark exemplifies adat's invocation as an undetermined concept that is nevertheless central to Moluccan identity. Latoel presents Moluccan identity as something that is both expressed by, and *hidden within* adat. To present this type of concealment, he uses the Dutch passive construction of "verscholen liggen in", which could also be translated as "to lie sheltered within". He elaborates that adat is that which forms both his individual right to exist, and that of the Moluccan community collectively. His remark therefore indicates that the concealing or sheltering aspect of adat forms the foundation of their strength as a people, that it protects the community's identity, and that it legitimizes its existence. Yet, while he points out all these functions of adat, he does not provide a definition of the term as such. What adat *does* is clear, but what it *is*, and how exactly it does these things, remains unspecified. In short, he explicitly connects Moluccan identity to adat, but does so in a way that invokes the idea of a secret: something that is hidden from view, or kept silent. Therefore, Latoel's remark is an example of the type of identity articulation for which adat is invoked, in that it combines showing with hiding, speaking out with keeping quiet, making present with leaving absent.

This type of identity articulation is common among the Moluccan community, although adat's unspoken or invisible aspect is not always equally explicit. For example, in an article of the Christian newspaper *Reformatorisch Dagblad* (10 May 2010), journalist Jacob Hoekman interviews members of a Moluccan church in Dutch town Assen about their experience as Moluccans in the Netherlands. Like in Latoel's interview, the term adat is mentioned with emphasis. However, unlike Latoel's approach, the church members do not so much keep adat's definition quiet, as provide the concept with an affluence of possible definitions. Hoekman summarizes it as follows: "This term refers to time-honored traditional Moluccan institutions, customs, morals and folklore. In short: the adat prescribes Moluccans how they are supposed to live, and as such forms the undisputed core of Moluccan identity" (10 May 2010).[3] This description of adat, though different from Latoel's, still has the same effect: adat is presented as something that could refer to any aspect of Moluccan identity, and

[2] My translation from the Dutch original: "De kracht en de identiteit liggen verscholen in de adat, die het bestaansrecht vormen van het Molukse volk en mij als individu."
[3] My translation from the Dutch original: "Dat begrip duidt op de aloude traditionele Molukse instituties, gebruiken, zeden en folklore. Kortom: de adat vertelt je als Molukker hoe je dient te leven, en vormt dan ook de onbetwiste kern van de Molukse identiteit."

as such, it remains unspecified. This is also expressed by Hoekman's rhetorical question which he asks himself later in the article: "Are there, in fact, things that do *not* concern the adat?" (ibid.).[4]

These two examples may serve as the two sides that delineate the scope of adat's lack of a definition within the Moluccan community. The term is either emphatically left undefined, or is presented as a concept that could mean anything. The latter approach is also noticed by anthropologist Birgit Bräuchler (2015), who describes adat as "originally a holistic concept that cannot be disconnected from any societal sphere" and adds that "there is no single translation or definition for the word, […] it pertains to all aspects of community life" (2015: 44). According to legal scholar Jacqueline Vel (2008), "the concept is perceived so naturally that it is like asking a fish to define water" (2008: 66). In short, adat is a concept that cannot be reduced to any single definition.

The way in which Moluccans in the Netherlands understand adat deviates from ways in which the term has been used throughout Indonesian history. Apart from its function as a term of *cultural identity*, in which sense it is similar to the Moluccan application, adat in Indonesia is also used as an umbrella term to refer to the wide variety of often unwritten, *customary law* found throughout the archipelago. Furthermore, the term has been, and still is, used as a central element within different, frequently contradictory, Indonesian *political discourses*. These three general applications overlap, first of all because culture, law and politics are overlapping domains. But more specifically, all three applications have in common that they involve the organization of society: the term "adat" is used by communities as a connecting principle, whether concretized as a set of cultural customs, customary laws, political objectives, or all at once. As a result, "adat has never been simply tantamount to a fixed set of traditions, but has always included a political dimension involving questions of authority and authenticity", be it "as a means for unification or exclusion, for suppression or the struggle for indigenous rights" (Bräuchler, 2015: 44).

In order to showcase this political dimension of adat, I will compare the ways in which adat has been applied in Indonesia during three distinct eras of Indonesian history: (1) the late colonial era, from the beginning of the twentieth century to the declaration of independence in 1945; (2) the era of nationalism and state centralization, during the presidencies of Sukarno and Suharto (1945-1967; 1967-1998); and (3) the current era of decentralization and

[4] My translation from the Dutch original: "Waar gaat de adat eigenlijk niet over?"

regionalist state reformation, that has begun after the fall of Suharto's regime in 1998. As will become clear, the particular functions that were ascribed to adat in these three eras all have in common that they can be understood as attempts to reduce the concept to a set of clear definitions aimed at instrumentalizing it for particular ideological purposes, be they colonialist, nationalist or regionalist. Based on this comparative analysis, I will argue that Moluccan adat in the Netherlands differs from the above-mentioned applications in Indonesia, to the extent that, among the Moluccan community, adat is emphatically understood as something which cannot be reduced to any concrete definition.

In what follows, I will first discuss adat's origin as an unspecific reference to all customs not incorporated by central law within the context of the Islamic colonization of the Indonesian archipelago from the 1200s onward. After that, I will trace adat's different functions throughout the three eras of Indonesian history mentioned above. Finally, I will return to the Moluccan community in the Netherlands, in order to analyze in which ways their understanding of adat differs from these historical Indonesian applications. By placing the Moluccan application of adat within the historical context of their migration to the Netherlands in the early 1950s, I will argue that their insistence on adat's indefinable quality can be understood as part of their strategy of collective identity articulation.

Adat's origin as that which is not law

In his analysis of adat, legal scholar Daniel Fitzpatrick (1997) explicitly mentions the concept's "elusive" character, and emphasizes the "tremendous regional variation in Indonesian society" with regard to its particular functions (1997: 176). With that in mind, this section's aim is to explore adat's elusiveness, by analyzing its origins within the long history of Indonesia's colonization.

To begin with, Indonesia has not one, but several histories of colonization. Parts of the area were first subjected to foreign domination from the fifth century AD onward, with the establishment of a succession of Hindu and Buddhist kingdoms and empires linking the territory to Greater India. From the thirteenth century onwards, Persian and Indian merchants arrived, establishing Islamic sultanates in coastal regions, chiefly on the islands of Java and Sumatra in the west of the archipelago, and in the Northern Moluccan territory in the east. Over the next few centuries, these sultanates multiplied, until at the beginning of the

seventeenth century, large parts of the Indonesian territory had been converted to Islam. The Portuguese, spreading Catholicism, conquered parts of Maluku from 1511 onward. Finally, the Dutch, introducing Calvinist Protestantism, expelled the Portuguese in 1605, and expanded their colonial rule gradually, until, at the beginning of the twentieth century, it encompassed the full Indonesian territory, then named the Dutch East Indies. Indonesia declared independence in 1945, which incited the four-year Indonesian National Revolution. This war ended with the official transfer of sovereignty, in 1949.[5]

Within this succession of different histories of domination, the term "adat" was introduced during the era of Islamic colonization, form the thirteenth century onward. Political scientist Daniel Lev (1972) argues that the term was used as a way to refer to indigenous customs that could not be incorporated into Islamic law: "Adat law in Indonesia, as in other Islamic countries, tends to be defined precisely in contrast to Islamic law […]; it is originally an Arabic word that refers to local custom" (1972: 27). Therefore, in its early use, adat was not a particular system of law, but rather denoted that system's undetermined opposite: i.e. customs or traditions that were tolerated alongside, but not seen as part of, Islamic law. Lev's description of adat as law's undetermined opposite is significant for two reasons. First, it shows that adat was initially not a concept of indigenous self-description, which is what it has become in the present day. Rather, it was a general label used by foreign dominators to categorize local customs that could not be incorporated into their own law system. Second, and directly following from this, Lev's description provides a basic explanation of adat's elusiveness with regard to fixed definition. Because adat referred to all things beyond the accepted law, its specific definition could take virtually any form depending on context.

This understanding of adat as an unspecific reference to customs not incorporated by central law continued up until the early twentieth century, when Dutch colonial jurists first began to study the phenomenon: "For some, adat law meant any Indonesian law not derived from Dutch or Islamic sources. Others would have disqualified Hindu sources, too. For some, it meant the unwritten law of Indonesia. For others, adat law signified folk law, as opposed to the laws of sultans" (Burns, 1989: 93). In short, adat could refer to any collection of rules and

[5] This summarized history is taken from Herman Burgers. *De Garoeda en de ooievaar: Indonesië van kolonie tot nationale staat* (2012). The summary as it is presented here is rather selective, for instance: the Japanese occupation during the Second World War is not mentioned, and neither is the influence of Chinese merchants since the first centuries AD. The reason for this is that these foreign powers are not directly relevant for the focus of the current section, i.e. the development of adat.

customs not belonging to whichever system of formal law was in place. To many colonial scholars, adat's apparent incoherence was a reason to discredit the phenomenon as irrelevant to Dutch law, as is showcased in legal scholar Peter Burns's (1989) reference to a joke that was common among jurists of the early twentieth century: if you want to know what adat is, "take a concept or a major principle of Dutch law, and inscribe in it the word, 'not' " (ibid., 83). The premise of the critique was that adat as such did not exist, but was a negating term, describing disparate phenomena in terms of what they were not.

This dismissive perception of adat was disputed by Dutch jurist Cornelis van Vollenhoven (1874-1933). According to his biographer, J.F. Holleman (1981), Van Vollenhoven was "the mastermind and driving force behind the first systematic study of the rich variety of indigenous Indonesian law, and the foremost champion of its recognition in the colonial system of the Dutch East Indies" (Holleman, 1981: *ix*). Van Vollenhoven (1981 [1906]) argued that adat should be understood not as a vague reference to any customs not incorporated by Dutch law, but as an umbrella term referring to a collection of rules of conduct which "has not been derived from a single source" (1981: 7). To him, the term's apparent lack of a coherent, single definition, was due to the fact that "the influence of history is noticeable. Against the Malayo-Polynesian background of indigenous beliefs and customs the imprint of Hindu, Moslem and Christian shapes and shades became visible" (ibid.). He elaborates that "the indigenous Malayo-Polynesian law is still the background of the adat law of the Indonesians", into which "there have slipped elements now of Hindu, now of Moslem and now of Christian, origin, or a combination of these elements in areas where Islam has succeeded Hinduism […] or Christianity Islam" (ibid., 7-8).

In other words, Van Vollenhoven presents adat as a pluralistic phenomenon, that reflects the long history of different, often overlapping forms of domination to which the Indonesian territory was subjected. As such, what set him apart from his contemporaries was that, for him, adat's apparent incoherence was not a reason to disregard it as "a jumble, an incomplete, inadequate and untidy whole", but instead, to approach it as an "inexhaustible source of instruction" (ibid., 1-2). Because he saw adat's pluralistic appearance as a testament to the territory's multiple histories of oppression, "he regarded every aspect of adat as having indigenous legal significance. Adat was for him a peculiar and pan-Indonesian cultural value system" (Burns, 1989: 93). Therefore, he proposed that an elaborate study of as many of adat's manifestations as could be found throughout the archipelago, would bring to light patterns and similarities.

His interest in studying adat was motivated by the proposal which the Dutch government had made in 1904, to unify all law in the colony by installing a centralized system modeled on the Dutch Civil Code. Van Vollenhoven rejected this idea, characterizing it as an attempt at creating a " 'lawyer's law', as Roman Law had been in relation to early Dutch law; a dominating European law under which all that was still indigenous law […] would be submerged" (Sonius, 1981: *xxxiv*). As an alternative, Van Vollenhoven argued in favor of a pluralistic system that would incorporate indigenous law alongside Dutch law. His work has therefore been characterized by contemporary legal scholars as having a basis in "a broader understanding of law" that does not "tie the concept by definition to the state", and that allows "the possibility of co-existing interdependent legal orders that have different legitimations and are based on different organizational structures" (Franz and Keebet von Benda-Beckmann, 2011: 171). As such, he can be considered to be an early advocate of *legal pluralism*.

I take my understanding of that concept from Greta Olson (2017), who contextualizes it within "early twentieth century debates in legal anthropology concerning colonial and post-colonial contexts. These debates revolved around the question of how best to think about and refer to non-Western and non-state centered forms of normative authority" (2017: 234). Such debates usually arose "during moments of codification, state formation and centralization" (ibid., 235-36). Van Vollenhoven's project is an example of such a debate because it openly opposed the proposal of the Dutch government to centralize Dutch law, in favor of a system which would recognize indigenous forms of law as well. The following section explores his project further, by contextualizing it within the changing attitude toward colonialism that was impacting Dutch government policy in the early twentieth century.

Cornelis van Vollenhoven's legal pluralism

Cornelis Van Vollenhoven became Professor of Constitutional and Administrative Law of the Dutch Overseas Territories and of the Adat Law of the Dutch East Indies, at Leiden University, on 2 October 1901, during what legal scholar H.W.J. Sonius (1981), calls "the turn of the tide of Dutch colonial policy" (1981: *xxix*). Since the early seventeenth century, Dutch domination over their colonies had been characterized by metropolitan rule, the main objective of which was "to exploit the East Indies through agrarian production for the European market", which was carried out "through state enterprises, compulsory cultivation by Indonesians, and large private plantations" (ibid.).

However, in 1901, "after a long and heated debate both in and outside the Dutch parliament, a fresh principle of administrative policy was proclaimed: that of moral responsibility" (ibid.). In September of that year, the newly appointed Prime Minister, Abraham Kuyper (in office from 1901-1905), stated that, "As a Christian State, Holland is obliged to suffuse its entire policy with a conviction of moral responsibility to the peoples of these territories" (qtd. in: ibid.). With this pledge, the Dutch government initiated the so-called "ethical policy", i.e. the reinterpretation of colonization as the moral duty of Western civilization, often formulated specifically as a Christian project (ibid.). The ethical policy presented colonization as a benevolent project, rather than one of exploitation. However, Sonius regards the "benevolence" of this project skeptically, emphasizing that it was formulated "in the face of a rapidly growing nationalist movement" in the colony (ibid.).

An example of this growing nationalism was the Aceh War (1873-1904), which was fought between the Netherlands and the sultanate of Aceh, on the island of Sumatra in the west of current-day Indonesia. This war had proven that directly oppressive forms of colonial domination were starting to give rise to structural resistance oriented toward independence. The Dutch ethical policy was developed during the last years of this war, and can be understood as a "softer" form of domination, that is, as an attempt to retain the colonies without the use of military violence. As such, this new approach to colonialism was built from an ambivalent premise, since on the one hand, it claimed to be "aimed at the emancipation or elevation of the indigenous population" (Fasseur, 2007: 58), but on the other hand, it pursued this direction in order to justify the fact that the Netherlands remained in possession of a territory that was struggling for independence.

This ambivalent premise of the ethical policy explains why the emancipatory measures which the Dutch government had in mind often entailed further centralization, rather than decentralization, of colonial rule. For instance, a prominent advocate of the ethical policy, the politician and lawyer C.Th. van Deventer, "saw a direct link between unification of law and common prosperity; the latter was not really possible without the former. Only Western law could ensure judicial certainty for the indigenous people, and industry and commerce would follow in its footsteps and flourish" (ibid., 59). In this citation, Van Deventer presents the unification of local law based on the western model explicitly as a necessary step toward more prosperous circumstances for colonial subjects. As such, it is an example of how proposals toward the centralization of colonial rule were expressed as serving the ethical policy, as a way to justify the continued Dutch possession of the Indonesian territory.

In 1904, inspired by this perspective on colonial jurisdiction, A.W.F. Idenburg, the Minister for Colonial Affairs at the time, "introduced a bill which would make it possible to codify the substantive private law for *all* population groups in Indonesia on the basis of the Dutch Civil Code" (Sonius, 1981: *xxxiii-xxxiv*; italics in original). The so-called Idenburg bill incited a "fierce discussion about the advantages and disadvantages of the introduction of modern and uniform European law concepts into native societies and of the suppression or conservation of […] adat law in Indonesia" (Fasseur, 2007: 50). The problem with adat, argues legal historian Cees Fasseur (2007), was that so little was known about it: "A systematic description and analysis of Indonesian adat law really got under way only after the appointment of Van Vollenhoven to the Leiden chair of adat law of the Indies in 1901" (ibid., 50-51).

In this capacity, Van Vollenhoven became a prominent voice against legal unification, and in favor of incorporating adat into a pluralistic law system. He advocated an integrated system of law, to which everyone, Dutch and Indonesian, would be subjected, and in which adat and European law would be applied together. In order to develop this system, he believed that more knowledge about adat had to be acquired: "good government and a good administration of justice […] are unthinkable without a thorough knowledge of indigenous law and indigenous conceptions" (Sonius, 1981: *xxxvi*). In pursuit of this aim, he established the Commission for Adat Law in 1909, which "set out to publish systematic collections of widely dispersed adat law data. Most of these were published in the *Adatrechtbundels* (45 volumes since 1910)" (ibid., *lvii*).

Van Vollenhoven's pluralistic position was eventually adopted by the government in 1919, with priority even shifted toward adat rather than European law. According to article 75 of the government regulation for the colony of that year, "Only when the needs of native society required it […] could European law be declared applicable" (Fasseur, 2007: 59-60). Although this may seem to have been a victory on behalf of Van Vollenhoven, Fasseur emphasizes that the article also stated that, for this pluralistic arrangement to work, "adat law should be codified" (ibid., 60). In other words, in order to incorporate adat into colonial jurisdiction, it had to be translated into an applicable system that would be comprehensible to Dutch legislators.

This task, however, was not easy to fulfill. The problem of codifying adat, as Daniel Fitzpatrick (1997) explicates, is that as a normative practice, it resists

> analysis based on Western notions of enforceable "rights" and "obligations". Instead, the regulation of adat communities, and the interaction of those communities with other adat groups, rests squarely on traditional processes of deliberation and consensus (*mufakat* and *musyawarah*) and mutual assistance (*gotong royong*). (1997: 179)

In concurrence with these considerations of adat's negotiable and situational character, Sonius (1981) asks rhetorically: "How could one ascribe to adat law a body of objective and preexisting rules if the conciliatory nature of adat justice made it constantly necessary for adat judges to 'find' or 'create' the law applicable in individual cases?" (1981: *xlviii*). These remarks present adat as a multiplicity that is detectable only in its singular applications to particular situations. Taken as such, its codification would be a contradictory project to the extent that it implies universalizing into generally applicable rules an intrinsically non-universalizable phenomenon.

Despite being aware of these contradictions, Van Vollenhoven himself had attempted a basic codification of adat law in 1910. The result, argues Fasseur (2007), was "too rudimentary an edifice to give a satisfying answer to the question of how adat law could be made operational in practice" (2007: 61). This guideline for the judge "was in reality the proclamation of his complete freedom to invent the law that, depending on the circumstances, suited people most" (ibid., 61). Moreover, Van Vollenhoven further complicated the purpose of adat's codification by suggesting that one single code would not do justice to the reality of Indonesia's multi-ethnic and multi-religious constellation. Instead, he estimated that about twenty local codifications "would be needed to chart the complex and highly diverse legal situation in the whole of Indonesia" (ibid., 58). Additionally, he argued that each adat codification would have to be "abrogated automatically after ten or fifteen years in order to force the administration continuously to adapt the adat regulations to new developments and changed circumstances in native society" (ibid.).

None of these suggestions seemed realistic to "government officials or to practicing lawyers who were looking for an immediate solution to their many questions" (ibid.). Even Van Vollenhoven himself gradually developed a point of view that disregarded the possibility of codification entirely, fearing that "it might stifle a harmonious development of native customs and institutions" (ibid., 61). This point of view informed much of his output in the years after the official declaration of the pluralistic system in 1919. Van Vollenhoven and his students, collectively known as the Adat Law School, "were committed to resisting every step

that would allow adat to undergo the painful transmutation into formal law" (Burns, 1989: 108). The result was a stalemate. Despite the agreement between the Dutch government and the Adat Law School concerning adat's incorporation into the colonial law system, neither party had a feasible proposal as to how to realize this aim. According to Sonius (1981), this stalemate was symptomatic of a dilemma that lay at the heart of Van Vollenhoven's project. The project was motivated, on the one hand, by "a desire for the sake of legal certainty to provide adat law with a formal criterion (the judicial decision, jurisdiction), and, on the other, by a fear that such a criterion would unduly restrict the meaning of operative adat law" (1981: *xlix*).

The unfortunate effect of this stalemate was that despite the objective of the post-1919 pluralistic system to prioritize adat law over Dutch law, in practice, the unstable status of adat as adaptable local law would often instead *subject it to* Dutch law: "In all circumstances the authority of the adat was made to bend to that of Dutch criminal and civil law whenever the two overlapped" or whenever they "came into conflict" (Jaspan, 1965: 254). Political scientists David Henley and Jamie S. Davidson (2007) formulate this practical reality of the pluralistic system in a directly critical way. According to them, the incorporation of adat into colonial rule often entailed the strategic "reinforcement by the state of internal hierarchy within the 'adat communities' themselves" (2007: 24). The official recognition of adat enabled a form of *indirect rule*, which Henley and Davidson define as "The practice of ruling via existing leaders, backing up their authority with the power of the state in return for their compliance in using that authority for the state's purposes" (ibid.).

A concrete example of such adat-based indirect rule is the fact that Dutch officials used the pluralistic system to cast local leaders as so-called "adat chiefs". These chiefs functioned as what Henley and Davidson call "Client (or puppet) leaders", seeing that their "right to rule – and judge according to adat law – rested neither on the state nor in a direct way on the popular will but rather on the authority of custom" (ibid.). This was "a more abstract source of legitimacy", that appealed to the local population's sense of autonomy (ibid.). This perspective presents the reality of Van Vollenhoven's envisioned plurality as a form of, often quite overt, political manipulation: "Such was the confidence of Dutch officials in their own understanding of what Indonesian custom entailed that in extreme cases they even created, by a procedure referred to as *adatontwikkeling* or 'development of custom', new types of 'popular' chief (*volkshoofd*) at levels where none had previously existed" (ibid.).

These considerations concerning the colonial manipulation of adat are further elaborated by legal scholars Franz and Keebet von Benda-Beckmann (2011). They argue that "local rules and institutions were also willfully changed in line with colonial social, economic, and political interests" (2011: 168). But even in cases where jurists may have had the best of intentions to apply adat authentically, its rules and procedures were still "interpreted and transformed through the conceptual language and assumptions of the ethnocentric legal categories of Dutch […] colonialists" (2011: 168). With these remarks in mind, doubt can be cast on the actual pluralism of the post-1919 colonial law system, on the basis of its implicit denial of the power imbalance between indigenous society and its colonial oppressor, whether or not euphemized as a matter of "ethical policy". The ideology of a pluralistic law system implies a horizontal relationship between the different elements that make up this plurality. But to what extent is it possible for an oppressive colonial regime to incorporate local forms of law into its legal system, without appropriating and transforming them?

In short, what was practiced as "adat" in the colonial courts were to great extent new constructs, which more often than not were instrumentalized within a larger strategy of indirect rule. This implies that adat was not used to open up space for indigenous legal subjectivities, which is how Van Vollenhoven had envisioned it. On the contrary, the application of adat within the colonial law system enabled the continuation of colonial oppression. The following section will further develop this idea of adat law as a colonial product, by shifting the focus to the first decades after the Indonesian declaration of independence in 1945, and analyzing adat's changed role within this era, as a central element of the construction of a nationalist identity.

Adat's function for Indonesian nationalism

That the application of adat as law was more a Dutch than an Indonesian affair, becomes clear when considering that "Rudimentary legal training for Indonesians was not introduced until 1909", i.e. five years after Idenburg had proposed to unify colonial law (Fasseur, 2007: 62). Moreover, "A complete law faculty was opened in Batavia only in 1924", that is, five years after the Idenburg bill had been withdrawn in favor of an, albeit poorly executed, version of Van Vollenhoven's vision of a pluralistic system (ibid.). As such, the version of adat that was practiced in the colony must be understood as a particular adaptation of the concept, provided with meaning through its appropriation by Dutch colonial legislators. This section follows up

on this consideration, by analyzing how adat's function as a colonial instrument changed when Indonesian nationalists reappropriated the term after the declaration of independence in 1945.

In order to understand this gradual change of adat's application in post-independence Indonesia, the initial influence of Van Vollenhoven's Adat Law School must be noted. Cees Fasseur (2007) relates that in 1942, when the Japanese invasion of Indonesia instigated the process of the dissolution of Dutch colonial rule, the colony had a grand total of 194 professional advocates, of whom only 36 were Indonesians (ibid.). Although this equates a percentage close to twenty percent, Fasseur emphasizes that the most influential "of these Indonesian lawyers had received their university training in the Netherlands, in particular at the University of Leiden, for want of an Indonesian academic alternative" (ibid., 63). All of these Leiden alumni had written their doctoral dissertations "under the supervision of Van Vollenhoven or his close colleagues" (ibid.). Among them was Supomo, who would become "the first republican Minister of Justice in independent Indonesia after 1945", and "who drafted the constitution of the new state" (ibid.).

In other words, of the small number of Indonesian jurists that were employed near the end of colonial rule, a majority were students of the Adat Law School. Moreover, not only the Indonesian jurists were often Leiden-trained, most Dutch jurists practicing in the colony had studied in Leiden as well. Many of Van Vollenhoven's Dutch students "reached high positions in the colonial bureaucracy since, from 1902 on, Leiden University had the monopoly of the training and education of future Dutch civil servants for the East Indies administration" (ibid., 51). This means that even Indonesian jurists who were *not* trained in Leiden, were probably still trained by Van Vollenhoven's former students. For example, the chair of adat law at the law faculty of the colony's capital, Batavia, was occupied by one of Van Vollenhoven's most prominent students, Bernard ter Haar, who was responsible for authoring the first standard work on adat to be translated into English.[6]

According to Daniel Lev (1985), this dominant presence of Leiden alumni in Indonesian legal practice was one of two important reasons for the fact that the Indonesian republican government, which was established in the months after the declaration of independence in 1945, initially continued the plural law system without any fundamental

[6] The book was called *Beginselen en Stelsel van het Adatrecht* (1939). Its English translation, *Adat Law in Indonesia*, was published in 1948. Fasseur stresses that this was "the first time that a major work on adat law was made accessible to readers who did not understand Dutch" (2007: 65).

changes: “most officials in the new state, particularly public lawyers in the administrative and judicial bureaucracies, took plural law and plural society for granted as the only working model they knew” (1985: 70). However, Lev’s second, more elaborate, reason to keep legal pluralism in place proves that the problematic colonial legacy of this system did not go unnoticed:

> without an obvious alternative, unifying the law seemed to demand a painful choice between the codes and adat as the conceptual base. The codes were attractively “modern” but symbolically “European”, and might still work to the advantage of European […] commerce. Adat, which had been used to keep Indonesians in their place, could by slight turn of imagination become a nationalist symbol of their distinctiveness, but it was generally regarded as too primitive *[sic]* for the law of a modern state. The dilemma favored the legal status quo until there was time to resolve the issues. (Ibid.)

This citation indicates that post-independence adat provided two opposing connotations at the same time. On the one hand it was seen as a colonial inheritance, but on the other hand as something distinctly “Indonesian”.

The influence of the Adat Law School on early nationalist discussions about adat becomes clear when considering that not only the first, but also the second of these connotations can be traced back to Van Vollenhoven’s legacy. The idea of adat as an inherently Indonesian phenomenon was due to Van Vollenhoven’s argument that underlying the wide variety of local applications, “there was a single, basic, *Ur-adat* common to all regions of the Indonesian culture area” (Burns, 1989: 9). According to political scientist David Bourchier (2007), this argument “provided the basis for imagining the islands of Indonesia as a coherent culture area and thus a coherent nation. In this way adat, and the communitarian values it was associated with, came to be thought of as the essence of the Indonesian national personality” (2007: 115). However, whereas “adat”, as an idea, was frequently invoked as an abstract appeal to national unity during these first years after the declaration of independence in 1945, the republican government meanwhile began to systematically nullify the concrete legal practice of adat. For instance, adat courts, which had functioned as so-called native courts within the pluralistic judiciary system, “were abolished during the war and during the years of revolution that followed” (Fasseur, 2007: 63).

Lev (1973) provides an example of the rationale behind the abolishment of the adat courts when he refers to a working paper entitled "Towards the Abolition of Native Courts and Judicial Unification in South Sumatra", that was written by former state secretary Alwi, and sent to the Indonesian Ministry of Justice in 1950. According to Alwi,

> adat courts had not fulfilled the conditions of good justice. They were not based on a separation of functions, nor were they bound by written codes […]. The adat courts were guilty of arbitrariness, and they provided no legal certainty. […] Moreover, as the customary courts were not bound by common rules of procedure and substantive law, the law varied from area to area, and this too increased legal uncertainty. (1973: 28)

These criticisms against the practice of adat law to a great extent resemble the general argumentation of the Dutch colonial government in the early twentieth century. Before Van Vollenhoven had implemented the plural law system in 1919, the Dutch government had been in favor of unified law in the colony. This point of view, much like Alwi's, was based on their interpretation of adat as an incoherent and arbitrary system that provided no legal certainty. Like the pre-1919 Dutch government's criticism of adat, Alwi's criticism, in 1950, also culminated in the appeal for legal unification, as he proclaims at the end of his paper: "One kind of law and one kind of court for all the people of Indonesia" (qtd. in: ibid., 29).

Alwi's appeal was one of many signs that nationalists favored legal unification, as pluralism was now understood as "a legacy of Dutch efforts to keep Indonesians divided along racial and ethnic lines" (Bourchier, 2007: 118). However, the fact that nationalist lawyers understood the particular practice of adat law as it existed in 1945 to be a colonial legacy, did not imply that they saw adat, as such, as a colonial invention. Rather, they presented it as an originally Indonesian concept that had been appropriated and manipulated by colonial power. As such, in their development of a unified national law system, their objective was to detach adat from its colonial inheritance, and appropriate it as a national symbol.

This new, specifically nationalist, function of adat, becomes apparent when studying the way in which President Sukarno (in office from 1945-1967) justified Indonesia's transition from a parliamentary democracy, which had been in place since 1949, to the so-called Guided Democracy, which was initiated in 1959. According to Bourchier (2007), Sukarno explained this autocratic revision of society "squarely in terms of the need to move

towards a more indigenous system of rule based on the village practices of *musyawarah* (deliberation) and *mufakat* (consensus). In so doing he brought indigenist rhetoric back to centre stage" (2007: 119). Therefore, while concrete adat practice was being repressed, the *term* "adat" gained significance as an abstract appeal to Indonesian indigenousness, and was in that symbolic capacity "readily available […] both for instrumental and legitimatizing purposes" (ibid.).

This split in adat's function, as a nationalist ideal on the one hand, and the concrete practice of local law on the other, increased further when Suharto succeeded Sukarno as Indonesia's second president in 1967, ushering in the so-called *Orde Baru* ("New Order", 1967-1998). One of Suharto's main concerns "was to legitimate the New Order in cultural terms, to assure the millions of Sukarno sympathizers in particular, that the New Order was at least as authentically Indonesian as the old regime" (ibid., 120). To pursue this aim, he developed the P4 program (*Pedoman Penghayatan dan Pengamalan Pancasila*: "Guidelines for the Understanding and Implementation of *Pancasila*"), i.e. a mandatory education program for all of Indonesian society, first introduced in 1979.[7] The program was not only incorporated into primary, secondary and tertiary education, but also became obligatory for "all civil servants below the rank of cabinet minister" (Morfit, 1981: 838). Its purpose was

> to inscribe on the population a way of thinking about being Indonesian that was intimately tied to the conservative image of traditional society promoted by adat scholarship. In tying Indonesian-ness to generic "adat norms" in this way, the government was able to declare behaviors that it did not approve of – including opposition, striking, and voting in parliament – to be un-Indonesian. (Bourchier, 2007: 121)

This citation indicates how Suharto's regime appropriated adat and turned it into an exclusionary concept. This version of adat was utilized to portray Suharto's political opponents as cultural outsiders, who, through their refusal to comply to – his definition of – "adat", had proven that they were essentially not Indonesians.

[7] Pancasila (Old Javanese for "Five Principles") is the Indonesian state philosophy, first developed under Sukarno's rule. The five principles are (1) "the belief in one supreme being"; (2) "the commitment […] to a just and civilized humanitarianism"; (3) "a commitment to the unity of Indonesia"; (4) "the idea of a people led or governed by wise policies arrived at through a process of consultation and consensus"; (5) "a commitment to social justice for all the Indonesian people" (Morfit, 1981: 840). According to Michael Morfit (1981), the Pancasila philosophy provides "an important ideological justification" for the policies of the New Order government, where especially the fourth principle resembles adat's emphasis on consultation (*musyawarah*), and consensus (*mufakat*) (ibid., 839).

However, while thus transforming adat into a form of propaganda, Suharto also furthered national unification, for example by issuing Village Law No. 5/1979, which resulted in the standardization "of governmental structures all over Indonesia from the top down to the village level" (Bräuchler, 2015: 48). This process was referred to as "Javanization", i.e. the restructuring of the entirety of Indonesia's multi-ethnic and multi-religious society on the basis of the model operative on Suharto's birth island of Java (ibid.). By centralizing Java as the heart of the Indonesian identity, this process was detrimental to innumerous local customs throughout the archipelago: "Culture was folklorized and local traditional structures and functionaries at the village level were depoliticized, marginalized, deprived of their meaning, co-opted, or replaced by village heads installed or at least approved by the state" (ibid.).

In short, Suharto's regime essentialized adat as the symbolic heart of Indonesian identity, while suppressing diverse concrete forms of local adat practice. As such, Suharto's appropriation of adat continued the practice of instrumentalizing the concept for political reasons, that had begun with the initiation of the pluralistic colonial law system in 1919. Whereas the colonial application of adat had enabled indirect rule, Suharto's intention was to replace adat's function as a collection of concrete, local forms of authority, by an abstract, state-led ideology of national unity. That this intention was not entirely fulfilled, becomes clear in the next section. As I will argue, during the *Era Reformasi* ("Reformation Era") that began with Suharto's resignation in 1998, local applications of adat persisted and became pivotal in the development of post-Suharto, indigenous identities.

Adat's function during the Era Reformasi

Near the end of his overview of Van Vollenhoven's legacy in contemporary Indonesia, H.W.J. Sonius (1981) offers a brief insight into Indonesian society's legal situation during the 1980s, and the position of adat within it: "Today, […] Adat law has no institutions which could enable it to operate effectively outside the sphere of the local communities, or to prevent the abuse of foreign concessions" (1981: *xxxviii-xxxix*). Peter Burns (1989), who, like Sonius, wrote during the height of Suharto's New Order regime, agrees with him, and elaborates:

> Meanwhile, the rural masses of Indonesia enjoy no greater certainty of either law or rights than did their ancestors in the years when Van Vollenhoven was first moved to

> defend their interests. Now, as then, a central government is concerned to encourage foreign capital to develop the natural resources of the land, but adat law no longer functions as a weapon which might be employed to resist over-exploitation. (1989: 110).

These citations indicate that legal scholars in the years before the Era Reformasi (1998 onward) believed that adat had lost all its practical significance, as a result of it being continuously appropriated as an instrument of state control: first by the colonial, and after that by the Indonesian nationalist governments of Sukarno and Suharto.

However, Daniel Fitzpatrick (1997), who published his study one year before the fall of Suharto's regime, argues that, although Suharto has worked systematically toward "the destruction of adat authority", it may nevertheless "continue to exist as a network of shared values and relationships. […] In fact, in many areas it has become an expression of regional identity against the pervasive social, economic, and governmental influence of the Javanese" (ibid.). In other words, according to Fitzpatrick, adat never completely lost its regional functions, despite state efforts to nationalize the concept. The fact that Suharto's regime suppressed these regional functions does not mean that they could not resurface again if the political situation would change.

As it indeed turned out, the fall of Suharto's New Order, in 1998, initiated processes of "decentralization, and the reconstitution of the original precolonial autonomy of local communities" (Bräuchler, 2015: 41). These post-Suharto reforms indicate that adat's function, which had been reconfigured twice since the beginning of the twentieth century, was changing again. First, with the installation of plural law in 1919, adat had been used as an instrument of indirect rule by colonial legislators. Subsequently, from the declaration of independence in 1945 onward, the concept had been turned into a nationalist instrument of state centralization during Sukarno's and Suharto's presidencies. Now, since the fall of Suharto's regime in 1998, the focus on local autonomy suggests a new configuration of adat as an instrument of indigenous emancipation from state control. The collapse of the New Order "allowed the return of the repressed, the other side of adat, the claims to provide a normative base for a local *political* community independent of the state" (Bowen, 2003: 255; italics in original).

An important step toward this envisioned decentralization was the founding of the Indonesian Human Rights organization AMAN (*Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara*, translated

by the organization itself as "Indigenous Peoples Alliance of the Indonesian Archipelago") in 1999. As becomes apparent from comparing the Indonesian name of this NGO to its English name, "indigenous peoples" is the official translation used for *masyarakat adat* (literally: "adat peoples"). According to Birgit Bräuchler (2015), this choice of terminology "intimately ties the question of indigeneity to the (revival of) adat discourse in Indonesia" (2015: 57). The group was founded during the First Congress of Indigenous Peoples of the Archipelago in March 1999, and gained national attention when they, supported by "more than two hundred representatives of adat communities scattered across Indonesia from Aceh to Papua", made a public threat "not to recognize the authority of the Indonesian state if the state did not recognize theirs" (Henley and Davidson, 2007: 14).[8]

This threat was effective, to the extent that it resulted in "a raft of new national and regional legislation recognizing traditional customary rights" (Bourchier, 2007: 122). The most important new laws in this context were Laws Nos. 22/1999 on Local Government, and 25/1999 on Regional Autonomy. These laws "allowed specifically for internal institutional reform at village level, highlighted the importance of local adat in village governance", and obliged administrators at district levels to "recognize and honor the rights, origins and customs and traditions of the village" (Henley and Davidson, 2007: 15).

These reforms show that AMAN was successful in propagating a nation-wide celebration of regional diversity under the adat banner. Although this may seem like a fortuitous development for local communities, especially in the aftermath of Suharto's 31 years of centralized rule (1967-1998), David Bourchier (2007) is critical of AMAN's version of adat. According to him, the effectiveness of this project was questionable, "due to the fact that their representations of adat as wise, socially harmonious, communalistic, and in tune with nature chimed with one of the favorite themes in Indonesian political thinking, the idea that adat is inherently good, pure, and authentic" (2007: 123). As such, while AMAN reappropriated adat in order to strengthen indigenous authorities against the centralized state, it did so without critically reassessing the connotations which the state had provided the term with: AMAN "adopted quite unselfconsciously the romantic imagery of 'adat' that had been a staple of conservative political ideologues in Indonesia for decades" (ibid.).

This uncritical continuation of adat as a rhetorical term utilized to invoke the image of peaceful communitarianism, has led AMAN "to push for the introduction of legislation

[8] Aceh and Papua are regions in, respectively, the far west and the far east of Indonesia.

empowering adat communities as if they existed as distinct, harmonious, self-regulating entities" (ibid.). However, the concrete practice of local adat had been undermined by the Indonesian government for the last half century in favor of an intentionally vague, symbolic meaning indicating national unity. Therefore, by the time AMAN was founded in 1999, adat had become "a generic term to indicate an often undifferentiated whole constituted by the morality, customs, and legal institutions of ethnic or territorial groups" (Franz and Keebet von Benda-Beckmann, 2011: 168). As such, the result of AMAN's campaign was not the massive indigenous emancipation which the organization had envisioned. Instead, the new laws induced a large number of "internal disputes over the different interpretations of local adat", showcasing "the power of definition and representation" (Bräuchler, 2015: 50).

An example of these disputes can be found by studying the details of Law No. 25/1999 on Regional Autonomy. In order to claim the rights provided by this new law, villagers had to "provide proof for being a traditional adat community/village" (ibid., 49). Bourchier (2007) scrutinizes this obligation by asking: "What is an adat community?" (2007: 123). AMAN defined it in 2001 as a "community living together based on their origins intergenerationally in *adat land,* who have sovereignty over the land and the natural resources", and whose sociocultural life is "regulated by *adat law* and *adat institutions* which manage the sustainability of the communities' lives" (qtd. in: ibid.; italics added).

This definition, rather than clarifying the meaning of an adat community, invokes more adat-related concepts in need of explanation: "adat land", "adat law" and "adat institutions" are all terms that are used differently by different parties, and are dependent upon context. The result is, that "In practice, an adat community is a group that describes itself as an adat community" (ibid.). As such, a large variety of groups of people have defined themselves in these terms for myriad political purposes, many of which are radically different from AMAN's originally democratizing and emancipatory aims: "the adat revival has sparked the emergence of ethno-nationalisms and other – sometimes violent – manifestations of chauvinism that are difficult to square with the progressive aims of the NGO activists leading the adat movement" (ibid.).

David Henley and Jamie S. Davidson (2007) offer a concrete example of these negative outcomes of the new adat legislations: "In Kalimantan, where indigenous Dayaks have participated in a series of pogroms against migrant Madurese communities, acts of horrific violence have been carried out – or at least justified – in the name of adat" (2007:

28).[9] Another example is the sectarian conflict that took place in Maluku between 1999-2002: "Adat councils in the Moluccas have been implicated in sectarian violence and the destruction of property that has killed and displaced tens of thousands of people" (Bourchier, 2007: 124). According to Bourchier (2007), these cases prove that violent conflict is the inescapable outcome of "supporting adat as a vehicle for mobilizing people", because "it sharpens distinctions between cultural insiders and outsiders, increasing the potential for horizontal conflict and violence" (ibid.).

Apart from these instances of violence *between* communities, regional appropriations of adat have also affected the distribution of power *within* communities: "There is already evidence of conservative elites using the new opportunities afforded by the resurgence of adat to reinforce their power at the expense of less privileged groups" (ibid.). Moreover, adat revivalism has also increased the inequality between men and women in Indonesian society: appeals to adat as a basis for political legitimacy and organization "tend to privilege elites, especially senior men, who are empowered to speak on behalf of a presumed whole" (Li, 2007: 465-66). Henley and Davidson (2007) elaborate that "the disempowerment of women is often a particularly visible – and for international supporters of the movement, particularly embarrassing – by-product of its enthusiasm for traditional institutions and ways of thinking" (2007: 26-27).

These problematic results of adat's revitalization have not remained unnoticed. As Bräuchler (2015) relates, "These negative developments motivated the central government to partly take back local autonomy again with the revised law No. 32/2004", five turbulent years after the original decentralization laws were formulated (2015: 52). This law, concerning Regional Autonomy, declared that "the state acknowledges and respects adat law communities and their traditional rights as long as they are still alive and in accord with societal developments and the principle of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia" (qtd. in: ibid., 54). In other words, after the opening up of adat's meaning to regional definitions had caused unexpected conflicts between and among self-proclaimed adat communities, the state decided, with Law No. 32/2004, to resubordinate adat to a secondary form of authority, only to be invoked in situations where that would not be in conflict with the state's purposes.

[9] Kalimantan is an island in the west of Indonesia. Dayaks are the indigenous people of Kalimantan. The Madurese people on Kalimantan originate from Madura, which is another island in the west of Indonesia.

The specific way in which this law formulates its acknowledgment of adat constricts it to a marginal place from where it cannot stand in the way of formal law. Before the Era Reformasi, this type of formulation was already used in the centralization laws that were developed during Sukarno's and Suharto's presidencies. For instance, the Basic Agrarian Law (BAL) of 1960 stated that its rights were based upon adat, but only "insofar as it is consistent with national unity, the interests of the state, and the provisions of the BAL itself" (Fitzpatrick, 1997: 185). Before independence, this strategic approach to adat was also already used in the colonial government's adaptation of Van Vollenhoven's pluralistic vision in 1919, where, "In all circumstances the authority of the adat was made to bend to that of Dutch criminal and civil law whenever the two overlapped" or "came into conflict" (Jaspan, 1965: 254).

In fact, this marginalizing approach to adat even predates Van Vollenhoven's time. For instance, in 1814, the Lieutenant-Governor of the Dutch East Indies, Thomas Raffles, issued an order about legislation on Java, declaring that a judge "shall be guided in his decisions by existing native laws, and ancient customs of the Island; provided the same be not decidedly at variance with the universal and acknowledged principles of natural justice" (qtd. in: ibid., 255). According to Bräuchler (2015), the particular space given to adat in legal formulations such as those mentioned above "always leaves a back door open for the government in case the different normative orders clash or in case there would be economic disadvantages for the government" (2015: 54). Thus, adat is acknowledged up until the point that this ceases to be convenient to central rule.

This long history of limiting adat's authority suggests that the term has perhaps not ventured that far from its origin in the thirteenth century, as an unspecific reference to all customs not belonging to Islamic law. Throughout Indonesian history, adat has been tolerated alongside whichever central rule the territory was subject to. As such, the concept's *limits* have been defined in many different ways: adat's authority is usually described to end there where it would otherwise clash with formal law. Adat itself, meanwhile, has proven to remain resistant to any lasting definition. This becomes apparent when considering that, following the declaration of Law No. 32/2004, new attempts to codify adat law in village regulations have been without significant success:

> A World Bank team assessing the engagement of non-state justice in Indonesia consulted villagers for their opinion and faced the same dilemmas as the Dutch adat scholars in the past: while most of their respondents on the ground said that

> "codification was necessary for legitimacy and external recognition of adat law", others rejected it as contrary to the dynamic and contested nature of local norms and adat. (Ibid., 54)

This citation indicates that, as was the case in Van Vollenhoven's time, the codification of adat is met with skepticism, because of the risk it presents concerning the loss of its flexibility: the problem with turning adat into formal law is "how to fix it and at the same time preserve its flexibility so as to allow its adaptation to changing sociopolitical circumstances" (ibid., 180). However, the alternative to codification is to apply adat without codifying it or otherwise using the state's central authority to fix its definition into a nation-wide consensus. But, as has been discussed, this grassroots approach was attempted with the laws on Local Government and Regional Autonomy in 1999, and resulted in violent conflicts throughout Indonesia, due to the widely varying and often contradictory local interpretations.

While considering the unsatisfying results of both of these approaches to adat, i.e. fixing it into a definitive meaning or applying it without such fixed definition, Bräuchler concludes that a more productive question to ask with regard to the phenomenon concerns "who is doing the fixing, and who is defining what traditions need to be fixed" (ibid., 180-81). In other words, her suggestion is to approach adat as an *indicator of power*: "In order to avoid one-sided political manipulation or instrumentalization of (reinvented) collective identities and traditions, it is important to find out who is speaking for whom and who claims to represent whom" (ibid., 207). The way in which adat is defined in a specific context of time and space usually indicates which parties are involved and how power is distributed among them.

In other words, adat's meaning is relative to who is applying it and for which reasons. This becomes most clear when considering that the cases of the colonial, nationalist and regionalist appropriations of adat have shown that every attempt to provide adat with a lasting definition was eventually used against its own intention. President Suharto's transformation of adat into a form of nationalist propaganda was based upon a strategic rereading of Van Vollenhoven's work on the concept. But whereas the latter's aim had been to advocate local diversity of customs throughout Indonesia, Suharto's nationalist rereading used these self-same definitions in order to legitimize centralized rule. In a similar fashion, Van Vollenhoven's own government had used his work in order to legitimize indirect colonial rule. In turn, AMAN's interpretation of adat as an indicator of local, indigenous subjectivity

was based on a rereading of Suharto's propaganda. Whereas Suharto's regime had interpreted adat as pan-Indonesian communitarianism in order to advocate centralized rule, AMAN had taken that self-same interpretation and used it instead as an appeal to decentralization.

In short, what these three cases, of Van Vollenhoven's, Suharto's and AMAN's applications of adat, have in common is that they were attempts at fixing adat into lasting definitions, in order to instrumentalize the concept for particular political purposes. Yet, the three cases also have in common that it was exactly these attempted definitions that allowed other parties to reappropriate adat and reverse or alter its function. The emphasis on definition, which is present in all three discussed versions of adat, stands in contrast to the emphatic lack of definition which characterizes the Moluccan adaptation of adat in the Netherlands. The next section will explore this particular adaptation, by analyzing how adat traveled to the Netherlands with the first generation of Moluccan migrants in the early 1950s, and how it was developed within the context of this community's marginalized position in Dutch society. By analyzing the development of the concept within the context of this history of migration and marginalization, it will become clear to what end Moluccan adat remains deliberately undefined.

Adat's function within the Moluccan community

In order to understand the contemporary function of adat in the Moluccan community in the Netherlands, it must be analyzed within the context of its migration history.[10] The community originated in the Indonesian province of Maluku. The first generation consisted of a group of 12,500 Moluccan soldiers of the KNIL (*Koninklijk Nederlandsch-Indisch Leger*: "Royal Dutch East Indies Army"), and their families. Within the context of the disbanding of the KNIL after the transfer of sovereignty (1949), these soldiers refused to be demobilized on Indonesian soil, due to their separatist, anti-Indonesia position. They were therefore brought to the Netherlands on behalf of the Dutch government in 1951, to be demobilized there.

Because their stay in the Netherlands was intended to be temporary, they were housed in migrant camps at remote locations. However, their residency was prolonged indefinitely due to continuing political unrest in Indonesia. In 1958, the Indonesian government passed

[10] More detailed discussions of this migration history are provided in the Introduction and in Chapter 2 of this dissertation.

Law No. 62, on the Citizenship of the Republic of Indonesia, requiring Indonesian citizens to reconfirm their loyalty to the country. Most Moluccans in the Netherlands refused to do this, and therefore lost their Indonesian citizenship. They became eligible to apply for Dutch citizenship only from 1976 onward, after almost two decades of living in a condition of statelessness. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, young Moluccans of the second generation carried out a series of violent actions aimed at forcing the Dutch state to support their separatist struggle. By the beginning of the 1980s most Moluccan families had been relocated from the camps to Dutch cities.

Both its history of migration and its initially isolated position in Dutch society have had an impact on the Moluccan community's particular application of adat. Their migration was a result of the Moluccan separatist struggle, which motivated their recruitment for the Dutch, rather than the Indonesian army during the Indonesian National Revolution (1945-1949), as well as their attempt to establish an independent Moluccan republic. The RMS (*Republik Maluku Selatan*: "Republic of South-Maluku") was unilaterally proclaimed on the Moluccan island of Ambon, on 25 April 1950. The political leaders who were responsible for this proclamation had based their actions on a separatist interpretation of adat. For instance, the Moluccan Minister of Defense, Alex Nanlohy, "had developed an adat-based Ambonese nationalism, as much anti-Dutch as anti-Javanese" (Chauvel, 1990: 367).[11] In other words, Nanlohy's interpretation of adat functioned as the basis for Moluccan separatism, setting them apart both from the Dutch colonial past and from the Indonesian independence ideology that was developing in Java.[12]

A different aspect of Moluccan adat is mentioned by Moluccan Minister of Information, D.Z. Pesuwarissa, in an interview with Radio Ambon on 24 April 1950, the day before the proclamation. During this interview, Pesuwarissa emphasized that the Moluccan Republic "is neither Islamic or Christian, because in the Moluccas the relationship between Islam and Christianity is like that of brothers", to the extent that both communities "have the same family names and share the same *adat-istiadat* and culture" (qtd. in: ibid., 371).[13] As such, whereas Nanlohy emphasizes the separatist element of Moluccan adat, Pesuwarissa

[11] Because Ambon is Maluku's central island, and the location from which the independent Moluccan state was proclaimed, the terms "Ambonese" and "Moluccan" were used interchangeably at the time.
[12] Cf. President Suharto's project of "Javanization", i.e. the standardization of "government structures all over Indonesia from the top down to the village level" based on Javanese society (Bräuchler, 2015: 48).
[13] The suffix "-istiadat" can be translated as "tradition". As such, the term "adat-istiadat" signifies a pleonastic articulation along the lines of "adat tradition" or "customary tradition".

stresses its reconciliatory function as a "means to bridge the religious divide" between Christianity and Islam in Maluku (Bräuchler, 2015: 50).

Therefore, in its origin, Moluccan adat differed both from Van Vollenhoven's colonial version in the first half of the twentieth century, and from the nationalist version that was developed during Sukarno's and Suharto's presidencies throughout the second half of the twentieth century. Whereas these versions had in common that they saw adat as a pan-Indonesian cultural value system, Moluccan adat was in fact presented as something that separated them from the rest of Indonesia. To that extent, it can be understood as an early variant of the regionalist approach that became common throughout Indonesia after the fall of Suharto's regime in 1998: it was invoked as an appeal to regional autonomy rather than national unity.

However, what sets Moluccan adat apart from all the other variants that have been discussed, is that it traveled from Indonesia to the Netherlands in 1951, along with the first generation of Moluccan migrants. From that moment onward, this particular type of adat was developed independently from adat in Maluku. The latter evolved much along the same lines as other forms of adat in Indonesia. During the Sukarno and the Suharto presidencies in the second half of the twentieth century, it was stripped of its concrete legal validity and simultaneously essentialized as a symbol of national unity. After Suharto's resignation in 1998, its function as a form of local autonomy was revived by the indigenous activist organization AMAN, alongside the innumerous other forms of adat found throughout the Indonesian archipelago. Like elsewhere in Indonesia, this revival had adverse effects in Maluku, to the extent that it resulted in widespread sectarian violence between 1999-2002.

Meanwhile, the adat of the Moluccan community in the Netherlands did not evolve along these lines. To the contrary, its particular development reflects the history of the community's first generation, that is, the Moluccan KNIL-soldiers. According to anthropologist Dieter Bartels (1986), a majority of these soldiers "had left their home villages in their teens and twenties", and about "one-tenth of them had been born outside the Moluccas", in barracks stationed elsewhere in Indonesia (1986: 30). In other words, these soldiers, though ethnically Moluccan, had been separated from their place of origin early in life, and had been stationed in different locations throughout Indonesia in the service of the Dutch colonial army. As indicated by the one-tenth which Bartels mentions (see citation above), it was not uncommon for these soldiers to come from a longer lineage of soldiers, as a

result of which many of them had never even been to Maluku, but instead had been born and raised in the army barracks throughout Indonesia. According to political historian Richard Chauvel (1990), "This type of internal recruitment seems to have been preferred by the authorities", perhaps because "the soldiers' sons were already socialized into the military way of life, thus minimizing the training requirements" (1990: 50).

These considerations indicate that the first generation of Moluccan migrants already experienced a sense of displacement long before they were housed in migrant camps in the Netherlands: "the soldiers formed a distinct part of Ambonese society, isolated from *negeri* and urban society in Ambon as well as the host societies in garrison towns throughout the archipelago" (ibid., 397).[14] This sense of isolation merely became more permanent as "The *tangsi* society of the Indies garrison towns was transplanted to the unfamiliar environment of provisional camps in the Netherlands, surrounded by but isolated from Dutch society" (ibid., 396).[15] In reaction to their isolation and displacement, the first generation "assigned an almost sacral value to old customs" (Habiboe, 2007: 34), even if, as a result of their military career, "they had not (yet) developed a deeper insight into the backgrounds of Moluccan culture" (ibid.).[16]

As a result, the adat which Moluccans adhered to in the first decades of their residence in the Netherlands, was what Bartels (1986) calls "adat-by-rote: i.e., people followed, and forced their children to follow, customs and rules of whose underlying philosophy the ex-soldiers knew little" (1986: 30). More often than not, "adat had to be reconstructed, piece by piece from the little everyone remembered" (ibid.). As such, the development of adat within the Moluccan community reflects their situation as migrants who were alienated from their homeland. Identifying neither as Indonesians nor as Dutch, they had to articulate a new identity that would legitimize their position as a separate people, even as their objective of an independent Moluccan republic had not been realized. Their adat was therefore actively built anew from the fragments of what had survived their migration.

This conscious effort to articulate a new identity based on old customs was started by the first generation, but was transmitted to further generations. Especially the second

[14] "Negeri" was the term used in the Dutch East Indies for village communities. For Chauvel's use of "Ambonese" rather than "Moluccan", see footnote 11.
[15] "Tangsi" was the term used in the Dutch East Indies to refer to the garrisons that housed the Moluccan KNIL-soldiers.
[16] My translation from the Dutch original: "kende aan oude gebruiken een soms sacrale waarde toe"; "zelf (nog) geen diepgaand inzicht hadden verworven in de achtergronden van de Molukse cultuur."

generation, that is, the soldiers' children, were interested in adat and other traditionally Moluccan concepts, because of the fact that their sense of alienation was even more radical than that of their parents. Like their parents, they were a visible minority in the Netherlands, living isolated lives in migrant camps, and as such initially developed no sense of belonging to Dutch society. However, unlike their parents, they were born after the migration. As such, whereas a majority of their parents had at least been born, and partially raised, in Maluku before facing the in-between condition that characterized the Dutch migrant camps, second-generation Moluccans were born directly into this in-between condition. Maluku to them was not a lived, but an imagined past, which they had to create through the memories of their parents.

Within this context of not-belonging and having only fragmented access to the memories of the events that brought them here, adat was developed as a founding principle for the articulation of a contemporary Moluccan migrant identity based on a reconstructed past. Historian Ron Habiboe (2007) relates that, within the Moluccan community, there is "an active core of people who are involved in Moluccan history, adat, language, and *pela* relations which they intend to tighten" (2007: 35).[17] As Habiboe emphasizes, this group "forms the vanguard of people who wish to conserve, or even reinstate, ancient norms and values. Especially members of the second and third generations take part in this practice" (ibid., 34-35).[18] In short, the Moluccan community uses adat as a connecting principle between the present and the past, or the before and the after of its migration. As such, adat's function for the Moluccan community is to contribute to transformating its involuntary in-between position into the positive articulation of a new identity.

Therefore, the separatism that was underlying the early Moluccan reconfigurations of adat around the time of the proclamation of the Moluccan Republic in 1950, still forms the fundament of the contemporary application by the community in the Netherlands. Adat is used as a sign of difference, that sets the Moluccan community apart both from the Indonesians and from the Dutch. As Moluccan artist Dominique Latoel expresses it in his interview with *CinemAsia* (2015), adat "forms the *right to exist* of the Moluccan people and

[17] Pela is a system that allows and disallows Moluccans to marry one another, based on their islands and villages of origin. The sentence is my translation from the Dutch origin: "een actieve kern van mensen die zich bezighoudt met de Molukse geschiedenis, adat, taal,en *pela*-banden die men strakker wil aanhalen."
[18] My translation from the Dutch original: "vormt een voorhoede van mensen die de oude normen en waarden wil conserveren, zo niet in ere herstellen. Vooral leden van de tweede en derde generatie nemen hieraan deel."

of myself as an individual" (Van den Bos, Maruanaija and Surastri, 2015; italics added).[19] Latoel's description of adat as the Moluccan right to exist makes sense when considering that the community's migration happened as a result of their failed attempt to establish an independent republic. The Moluccan identity is therefore based on a state that was never acknowledged: their right to exist as a people was denied. Adat returns this right to them, as it is applied as an inheritance from a past before their migration to the Netherlands, and before the suppression of their independence struggle by Indonesia.

This function of adat as the Moluccan right to exist is discussed in much detail in an edited volume by anthropologist Elias Rinsampessy (2008). The book is a collection of articles by Moluccan scholars, as well as interviews with Moluccans who play a prominent role in the community, including athletes, artists, church leaders and politicians. It is entitled *Tussen Adat en Integratie: Vijf generaties Molukkers worstelen en dansen op de Nederlandse Aarde* ("Between Adat and Integration: five generations of Moluccans wrestle and dance on Dutch soil", 2008). In this title, "adat" is juxtaposed to "integration". According to sociologist Willem Schinkel (2017), the concept of "integration" is problematic to the extent that it "allows the identification of what does not belong. Western European societies diagnose themselves as under threat from immigrants they perceive as 'not yet present in society', although these immigrants are part and parcel of the social process in these societies" (2017: 2). Such diagnoses are "productive to the extent that they identify what 'society' is and who properly belongs to it" (2017: 2).

In other words, "integration" is a term reserved by a society for immigrants it deems unwelcome, as a way to suspend their participation in it. Even when immigrants are legally citizens, they can still be imagined as "not yet integrated", meaning that they are still perceived as outsiders to society. With these considerations in mind, I read the title of Rinsampessy's volume (2008), "Between Adat and Integration", as an implicit criticism of the concept of integration. That is, if "integration" can be understood as referring to the unrealistic expectation which Dutch society has of its immigrants, that is, for them to become assimilated entirely within Dutch culture; then juxtaposing "adat" to this term suggests that adat is that which stands in the way of this expectation. In short, the title indicates that there is a divide between Moluccan and Dutch identity that is difficult, perhaps impossible, to reconcile.

[19] My translation from the Dutch original: "die het bestaansrecht vormen van het Molukse volk en mij als individu."

This divide between Moluccan and Dutch identity is explored throughout the articles and interviews that are included in the volume. For instance, during his interview, Moluccan pastor Gersom Salamony states that "adat conveys the intimate sense of belonging to a people […], to a *rumah-tangga*" (2008: 219).[20] He adds that adat "indicates where you come from. Many say that it travels along with you, wherever you go" (ibid.).[21] Salamony's interpretation not only emphasizes the migratory element of adat, by describing the term as something which travelers take with them to remember their origin. He also presents adat as an intimate concept, that signifies the relationship between Moluccans and their wider community, which he imagines as a rumah-tangga, that is, a family or household. According to Elias Rinsampessy (1992), in the Moluccan understanding of society's organization, the rumah-tangga is "the smallest unit of living together. It is comparable to the western 'nuclear family', usually father, mother and children" (1992:42).[22] By ascribing to adat this sense of belonging to a nuclear family, Salamony presents it as an intimate marker of the Moluccan community's collective identity.

This approach to adat as something intimate differs from the ways in which it was approached in the three historical case studies discussed before, to the extent that these applications were all concerned with state organization. Van Vollenhoven's study of adat was meant as a way to implement a new form of jurisdiction throughout the colony. Sukarno's and Suharto's appropriations of the term were aimed at the construction of a post-independence national identity. The objective of AMAN's approach to adat was to initiate the decentralization of the state, and claim indigenous autonomy. In all three cases, adat is an instrument used to organize society.

Salamony's description of adat stands in contrast to these public applications, to the extent that it is directed not at incorporating Moluccans into, but rather sheltering them from, the wider context of, in their case, Dutch society. That is, his version of adat provides the Moluccan community with the sense of belonging to a family, and reminds them that, originally, they came from elsewhere. Adat's function as an intimate, sheltering marker of identity makes sense when considering that the Moluccan community identifies as a separate

[20] "Rumah-tangga" can be translated to "family" or "household", and is used here as a reference to the sense of brother and sisterhood between members of the Moluccan community. The sentence is my translation from the Dutch original: "adat beantwoordt aan de innerlijke gevoelens van het behoren tot een volk […], de rumah-tangga."
[21] My translation from the Dutch original: "Het geeft aan waar je vandaan komt. Velen zeggen dat het met je meegaat, waar je ook naar toe gaat."
[22] My translation from the Dutch original: "De kleinste leefeenheid is de 'rumah-tangga'. Die kan vergeleken worden met het westerse 'gezin', meestal vader, moeder en kinderen."

people, distinct from both the Indonesians and the Dutch. As such, the articulation of their collective identity is aimed not at becoming part of any wider national context, but rather at maintaining their sense of autonomy, outside of these dominant contexts.

This interpretation of adat as an intimate affair has been a stable element of the Moluccan community throughout their history as a sociopolitical minority in the Netherlands. For instance, Habiboe (2007) discusses the Dutch government's suggestion, in the 1970s, to set up an intercultural education program for Dutch and Moluccan children. He notes that this idea led to resistance among many Moluccans, because

> this would also mean that Dutch children would learn about Moluccan morals and customs […]. They argued that these things are none of Dutch people's business, and it would only teach them "our weak spots". On top of that, there is the dilemma concerning to what extent it is allowed for adat to be orally transmitted, let alone via written text. Some elements of it are only supposed to be discussed within the context of the *mata rumah*, and no-one outside of it has the right to this knowledge.[23] […] Besides, the adat has many variants, and there are differences in emphasis per village and sometimes per family. (62-63)[24]

In this citation, adat is presented not only as an intimate, but even as a secret affair. The construction of adat is seen as private to such an extent that it is not only inappropriate to communicate about it to non-Moluccans, but it is even questionable to discuss adat matters among different Moluccan *mata rumahs*, that is, extended families.

As such, Habiboe's approach resembles not only that of Salomony, but also that of Latoel, who argued that Moluccan identity was "hidden in the adat" (Van den Bos, Maruanaija and Surastri, 2015).[25] This understanding of adat as something secret marks a conceptual difference to the previous analyses of colonial government policies, nationalist

[23] "Mata rumah" is a term which, like "rumah-tangga", refers to the concept of family. According to Rinsampessy (1992), a mata rumah officially is a larger, extended understanding of family: a cluster of rumah-tanggas. However, he stresses that there are various interpretations of both terms, and that they are often used interchangeably (1992: 42).

[24] My translation from the Dutch original: "zou namelijk inhouden dat Nederlandse kinderen eveneens kennis opdoen over de Molukse zeden en gewoonten […]. Die zaken gaan Nederlanders niets aan en je leert ze zo alleen maar 'onze zwakke plekken' te ontdekken, vinden zij. Daarbij komt het dilemma in hoeverre de adat mondeling, laat staan schriftelijk mag worden overgeleverd. Sommige elementen ervan dienen alleen in de context van de *mata rumah* te worden besproken, niemand daarbuiten heeft recht op die kennis […]. Bovendien kent de adat allerlei varianten en bestaan per dorp en soms per familie accentverschillen."

[25] My translation from the Dutch original: "liggen verscholen in de adat."

propaganda and indigenous resistance. Whereas these case studies concern adat as a term that is actively defined and redefined as a way to organize society, the Moluccan approach leaves the specific definition of the concept emphatically unspoken. That is, it is, in general terms, clear what adat *does*, i.e. it forms the Moluccan community's right to exist, it provides them with a sense of belonging to a family, it protects their identity, and so on. Meanwhile, what adat *is*, or how exactly it does these things, remains undetermined.

The rationale supporting this undefined aspect of adat can be located in the Moluccan community's history of marginalization. As the previous case studies have shown, attempts to represent adat into a commonly acceptable set of definitions have often limited the concept to an instrument of manipulation, whether in the context of government oppression or inter-community ethno-political violence. In each of these examples, the publicly formulated definitions of adat made the concept vulnerable to manipulation. Within this context, it makes sense that Moluccans in the Netherlands, as a sociopolitical minority, prefer to keep their definitions of adat to themselves. As long as adat's definition is not spoken out, it cannot be used against them or taken away from them.

These considerations imply that the Moluccan application of adat takes shape as a double movement: on the one hand, adat is declared as a central and distinguishing element of Moluccan identity, that sets them apart from both the Dutch and the Indonesians; on the other hand, the definition of adat is kept quiet, and is fragmented into intimate interpretations that are not to be shared. As such adat is presented actively as unspecified and singular, that is, as a phenomenon which, through its multiplicity, gives meaning to particular experiences within the community that cannot be generalized into a universally applicable definition.

This approach resonates with Van Vollenhoven's argument that to codify adat would be to appropriate it: "Whether it be intended or not, codification drifts in the direction of unified law" (Burns, 1989: 108). Correspondingly, if Moluccans would translate their particular attachments to the concept of adat into terms that would be understandable to Dutch and other people not belonging to their community, they would open up the articulation of their identity to outside evaluation and contestation. Instead, by leaving adat's definition uncertain, Moluccans enable the concept to continue functioning as a distinguishing trait that sets their community apart from its national contexts.

Conclusions

The word "adat" derives from Arabic and means custom or habit. Islamic colonists of the Indonesian territory from the thirteenth century onward introduced the term as a way to refer to indigenous customs that could not be incorporated into Islamic law. Therefore, in its early use, adat was not a particular system of law, but rather denoted that system's undetermined opposite. Because adat referred to all things beyond the accepted law, its specific meaning could take virtually any form depending on context. Its comtemporary usage as an identity marker for the Moluccan migrant community in the Netherlands is a strategic reappropriation of the term as a form of self-identification, which deliberately keeps intact its original capacity as something which lacks fixed definition. As such, adat is an example of an articulation of identity which requires both voice and silence. That is, although adat is openly declared to be central to Moluccan collective identity, the term's specific definition "remains silent", to the extent that it is not fixed in discourse.

This particular application deviates from ways in which the term has been used by other parties throughout Indonesian and Moluccan history: including Van Vollenhoven's colonialist, Sukarno's and Suharto's nationalist, and AMAN's regionalist applications, in, respectively, the early, mid, and late twentieth century. All three of these applications have in common that they were attempts to reduce adat to a set of clear definitions aimed at instrumentalizing the term for particular purposes of societal organization. Van Vollenhoven's study of adat was meant as a way to implement a new form of jurisdiction throughout the colony. Sukarno's and Suharto's appropriations of the term were aimed at the construction of a post-independence national identity. The objective of AMAN's approach to adat was to initiate the decentralization of the state, and claim indigenous autonomy.

Unlike these applications of adat, Moluccan adat in the Nethertlands is emphatically understood as something which cannot be defined in any universally applicable way. It is not meant to position people within a larger societal context, but, instead, to *shelter them from* such contexts. The rationale supporting this sheltering aspect of adat can be located in the Moluccan community's marginalized position in Indonesian history, as well as in contemporary Dutch society. Their separatist identity, as a people independent from both Indonesia and the Netherlands, was never acknowledged by either of these dominant sides. Today, Maluku is an Indonesian province, and since the late 1970s, the Moluccans in the Netherlands are Dutch citizens. The Moluccan application of adat as an indefinable element

of their identity makes sense within this context. By emphasizing adat's function as an identity marker, while remaining silent about its specific meaning, Moluccans protect not only the concept, but also their identity itself from becoming a matter of wider contestation. By not defining adat, they remain in control of their own identity.

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DEUTSCHE ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

„Wovon man nicht sprechen kann ...“

Täuschende Stimmen und agierende Stille in der Artikulation von Identitäten der postkolonialen Migrant:innengemeinschaft der Molukken in den Niederlanden

Diese Dissertation befasst sich mit den Themen „Stimme“ und „Stille“ in Bezug auf die Artikulation kultureller und politischer Identitäten der postkolonialen Migrant:innengemeinschaft der Molukken in den Niederlanden. Die Gemeinde hat ihren Ursprung in der indonesischen Provinz Maluku, die aus ungefähr 1.000 Inseln besteht. Ihre Migrationsgeschichte begann in den ersten Phasen der Unabhängigkeit Indonesiens von der niederländischen Kolonialherrschaft, in denen die Molukken im Allgemeinen auf der Seite der Kolonialherrschaft und gegen die Unabhängigkeit Indonesiens gekämpft hatten. Während der indonesischen Nationalrevolution (1945-1949) umfasste die KNIL (Koninklijk Nederlandsch-Indisch Leger: „Königlich Niederländisch Indische Armee“), die mit der Unterdrückung der Revolution beauftragt war, 3.500 molukkische Soldaten. Die Revolution begann mit der einseitigen Erklärung der Unabhängigkeit Indonesiens am 17. August 1945 und endete mit der Übertragung der Souveränität Niederländisch-Ostindiens auf die Republik der Vereinigten Staaten von Indonesien am 27. Dezember 1949. Diese föderale Staatsstruktur dauerte nur wenige Monate und wurde von der Einheitlichen Republik Indonesien am 17. August 1950 ersetzt.

Das Bündnis der Molukken mit der Kolonialmacht wurde durch das separatistische Ziel motiviert, eine von Indonesien unabhängige Molukkenrepublik zu gründen. Dieses Ziel wurde jedoch nie erreicht. Die Erklärung der Republik der Südmalukken, die am 25. April 1950 auf der Molukken-Hauptinsel Ambon stattfand, führte am 28. September 1950 zu Ambons Invasion und anschließender Besetzung durch die indonesische Armee. Nach zwei Monaten bewaffneten Konflikts zwischen indonesischen und molukkenischen Truppen – wurde die Separatistenbewegung im November 1950 offiziell besiegt. Im Rahmen der Auflösung der KNIL nach der Übertragung der Souveränität im Jahr 1949 weigerten sich die Molukken-Soldaten aufgrund ihrer separatistischen Position auf indonesischem Territorium

demobilisiert zu werden. Wegen der indonesischen Besetzung von Maluku weigerten sie sich auch, dort demobilisiert zu werden. Die niederländische Regierung beschloss daher, sie zu demobilisieren und anschließend in den Niederlanden unterzubringen, eine Lösung, die ursprünglich nur vorübergehend sein sollte.

So kamen die 3.500 Soldaten und ihre Familien, insgesamt 12.500 Molukken, zwischen März und Juni 1951 in die Niederlande. Bei ihrer Ankunft wurden sie bis zu ihrer geplantern Rückkehr nach Indonesien in Aufnahmelagern untergebracht. Aufgrund der anhaltenden politischen Unruhen in Indonesien und des endgültigen Versagens die Republik Süd-Maluku zu gründen, wurde ihr Exil jedoch auf unbestimmte Zeit verlängert. 1958 verabschiedete die indonesische Regierung das Gesetz Nr. 62 über die Staatsbürgerschaft der Republik Indonesien, wonach indonesische Staatsbürger ihre Loyalität gegenüber dem Land erneut bekräftigen müssen. Die meisten Molukken in den Niederlanden weigerten sich, dies zu tun und verloren daher ihre indonesische Staatsbürgerschaft. Sie konnten erst ab 1976 die niederländische Staatsbürgerschaft beantragen, nachdem sie fast zwei Jahrzehnte in einem Zustand der Staatenlosigkeit gelebt hatten.

In den fünf Kapiteln dieser Dissertation werde ich analysieren, wie diese postkoloniale Migrant:innengemeinschaft sowohl auf individueller als auch auf kollektiver Ebene ihre Identität oder Identitäten artikuliert. Meine Verwendung des Begriffs „Identität“ entspricht weitgehend, aber nicht vollständig der Art und Weise, wie sie normalerweise im Bereich der Kulturwissenschaften verstanden wird, d. h. als ein fortlaufender und interaktiver Prozess, der sowohl das Selbstverständnis als auch das Selbstbild umfasst, wie man andere sieht und wie man von anderen gesehen wird. Mit anderen Worten, Identität ist eine Frage der Auseinandersetzung. Dieser Ansatz ist insofern anti-essentiell, als er Identität nicht als Hinweis auf einen unveränderlichen Zustand versteht, sondern als dynamische, diskursive Praxis. Im zeitgenössischen Diskurs der Kulturwissenschaften wird die Konstruktion von Identität im Allgemeinen als eine Praxis verstanden, die sowohl kontextuell als auch aussagekräftig ist: Etwas, das deklariert, ausgedrückt und geäußert werden muss. Obwohl ich dieser Betonung auf Ausdruck bei der Identitätskonstruktion nicht widerspreche, schlage ich vor, dass die Konstruktion einer Identität gleichermaßen von Elementen abhängig sein kann, die *nicht ausgesprochen* werden.

Hier kommt meine Verwendung des Begriffs „Artikulation“ ins Spiel. Basierend auf der Definition des Oxford English Dictionary („articulation“; „to articulate“) bezieht sich

dieser Begriff nicht nur auf die Erzeugung von Sprache oder Ton, sondern weist ausdrücklich darauf hin, dass Klang in verschiedene Teilchen unterteilt ist. Daher ist es sowohl eine Frage der Stimme als auch der Stille, wenn Klänge zu Wörtern und Begriffen artikuliert werden: Ohne die angemessene Verwendung von Stille können Stimmlaute nicht so modifiziert werden, dass sie etwas deutlich ausdrücken. In ähnlicher Weise hängt eine angemessene Artikulation im Sinne eines gut artikulierten Arguments von einem ausgewogenen Zusammenspiel zwischen dem Gesagten und dem Nicht-Gesagten ab. Wenn ich also vorschlage, die Identitätskonstruktion eher als eine Frage der Artikulation als der Aussprache oder eines ihrer anderen direkteren sprachbezogenen Synonyme zu betrachten, soll dies darauf hinweisen, dass sowohl Stimme als auch Stille ihre Rolle bei der Konstruktion der eigenen Identität spielen.

Als solches zielt mein Ansatz darauf ab, die gemeinsame Dichotomie zwischen Stimme und Stille zu komplizieren, die in vielen kulturellen und politischen Theorien besteht. Diese Dichotomie lässt sich am besten anhand der bekannten Frage beschreiben, die Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak in ihrem gleichnamigen Artikel stellt: „Can the Subaltern Speak?“. (1988). In ihrem Text konzentriert sie sich auf hinduistische Frauen während des britischen Kolonialismus und argumentiert, dass sie doppelt unterdrückt wurden: als Frauen in einer sexistischen Gesellschaft und als kolonisierte Untertanen. Die Frauen hatten keine eigenen Stimmen in dem Sinne, dass ihre Position in der Gesellschaft ausschließlich durch zwei andere dominante Diskurse vertreten war: das indische Patriarchat und das britische Kolonialregime. Laut Spivak ist dieses Fehlen einer Stimme das bestimmende Merkmal der Subalternen. Es zeigt einen Zustand der Marginalisierung an, der diskursiv ist, d. h. dem nur entgegengewirkt werden kann, indem ein Mittel zur Selbstausdruck gefunden wird. Spivaks Theorie wird oft als Anreiz verstanden, die Stille der Subalternen zu „lösen“, indem man dieser eine „Stimme gibt“, „auf die Stimmlosen hört“, „spricht“ oder „zurück spricht“. Als solches wird Stimme allgemein als das wichtigste Instrument für die Konstruktion der eigenen Identität verstanden. Die Stimme fungiert daher als Metapher für Ermächtigung. Als solches wird Stille im Allgemeinen als Mangel an Stimme und daher als Mangel an Identität sowie als Form von Ohnmacht verstanden.

Meine Dissertation zielt darauf ab, vier kritische Überlegungen zu dieser scheinbaren Zweiteilung zwischen Stimme als Ermächtigung und Stille als Ohnmacht anzubieten. Diese vier Überlegungen sind die folgenden. **(1)** Stimmen bergen das Potenzial zur Täuschung: Sie können ein falsches Versprechen der Wahrheit oder Transparenz oder ein falsches Gefühl der

Entscheidungsfreiheit bieten. Dieses Argument steht im Gegensatz zum geläufigen Verständnis von Stimme in der kritischen Kulturtheorie und der Politischen Theorie als Metapher für Empowernment durch transparenten Selbstausdruck. Ich leugne die Möglichkeit dieser letzteren Funktion nicht vollständig, aber ich denke, sie verdient weitere Prüfung, da **(2)** Selbstausdruck für die regulatorische Macht des Diskurses anfällig machen kann: Oppositionsstimmen können innerhalb der Unterdrückung erneut denjenigen machtvollen Diskursen unterworfen werden, die sie zu untergraben versuchen. Als solches argumentiere ich, dass Opposition eine verletzliche Form des Widerstands ist, in der man seine Position erklärt und dadurch anfällig für Regulierung wird: Alles, was Sie sagen, kann gegen Sie verwendet werden.

Im Gegensatz zur Stimme, die als Instrument des Widerstands oder der Ermächtigung ihre Grenzen hat, argumentiere ich, dass **(3)** Schweigen ein Weg sein kann, diskursiver Kraft zu widerstehen, ohne sich ihr zu widersetzen. Mit diesem Argument verstehe ich Schweigen als Weigerung, an einem bestimmten Diskurs teilzunehmen, d. h. als Weigerung, sich selbst zu erklären oder bestimmte, diskursiv erzeugte und demnach auferlegte Rollen zu akzeptieren. Während eine oppositionelle Stimme vom Diskurs immer noch als ihr abweichendes Gegenstück identifiziert und als solche ihren Normen unterworfen werden kann, widersetzt sich ein Schweigen einer solchen Regulierung durch seinen inhärenten Widerstand gegen die Interpretation. Aufgrund dieser Mehrdeutigkeit wird das Risiko einer erneuten Besetzung vermieden. Als solches kann **(4)** Stille diskursive Kräfte untergraben und neu konfigurieren, nicht so sehr, indem sie dem Diskurs vollständig entgeht, sondern indem sie als Manifestation der Grenze ihrer Reichweite in ihr präsent ist. Wenn das allgemeine Ziel des Diskurses darin besteht, Alterität zu assimilieren, bietet Schweigen eine Art Alterität, die im Gegensatz zu der eigenen Stimme nicht assimiliert werden kann. In ihrer Eigenschaft als irreduzible, mehrdeutige Manifestation von Alterität unterbricht die Stille den Diskursfluss und provoziert ihn, seinen Kurs zu ändern.

Diese vier Punkte bilden den zentralen Ansatz meiner Dissertation zu Stimme und Stille. Das heißt, ich verstehe Schweigen nicht als negatives Gegenstück zur Stimme oder Abwesenheit des Diskurses, sondern als eine agierende Handlung, die im Diskurs vorhanden ist und ausgeführt werden kann, um den Diskurs zu beeinflussen und zu verändern. Als solches verstehe ich Stille nicht als Versagen der Stimme, sondern als produktive Alternative zur Stimme. Indem ich diese Überlegungen zu Stimme und Stille vorschlage, möchte ich nicht leugnen, dass das Sprechen in bestimmten Situationen eine ermächtigende Wirkung haben

kann, sondern betonen, dass die Stimme nicht immer ein verlässliches Instrument ist, da möglicherweise unterschiedliche Effekte auftreten abhängig davon, wer in welchem Kontext mit wem und wie spricht. Einige Stimmen können tatsächlich Instrumente der Ermächtigung sein, andere können Instrumente der Täuschung oder Manipulation sein, und wieder andere können Instrumente des Gehorsams oder der Komplizenschaft sein. In Bezug auf das Schweigen besteht das Ziel nicht darin, zu leugnen, dass es zum Schweigen kommt oder dass das Schweigen ein Hinweis darauf sein kann, dass man machtlos ist. Ziel ist es vielmehr, die Definition des Schweigens für alternative Funktionen zu öffnen, von denen einige ermächtigend sind oder zumindest Resistenz gegenüber herrschenden Machtverhältnissen aufweisen.

Ich werde dieses Ziel anhand von fünf Fallstudien verfolgen, eine pro Kapitel, die aus der langen Geschichte der Unterwerfung der Molukken unter die niederländische Herrschaft während und nach der niederländischen Kolonialisierung Indonesiens (1605-1949) stammen. In allen fünf Kapiteln werden Artikulationen der Identität der Molukken untersucht und in ihnen verschiedene Praktiken in Bezug auf die Stimme untersucht, z. B. das Sprechen, das Sprechen für andere und das Geben von Stimme für andere sowie verschiedene Manifestationen von absichtlichem und auferlegtem Schweigen. Meine Absicht ist es nicht, eine Theorie über Stimme und Stille aufzustellen, die die besonderen Merkmale der Molukkengemeinschaft als einer homogenen Gruppe definieren soll. Stattdessen ist es mein Ziel, den traditionell eher begrenzenden binären Gegensatz zwischen Stimme als Macht und Stille als Ohnmacht durch meine Fallstudienanalysen molukkischer Identitätsartikulationen zu nuancieren.

Jede dieser Fallstudien betrifft Artikulationen der molukkanischen Identität und die Konflikte, die zwischen verschiedenen Perspektiven auftreten, die mit diesen Artikulationen verbunden sind. In den meisten Fällen handelt es sich bei diesen unterschiedlichen Perspektiven um die „niederländische“ und die „molukkanische“ Perspektive. In Momenten, in denen dies relevant sein könnte, wird auch die „indonesische“ Perspektive berücksichtigt. Ich setze diese Begriffe in Anführungszeichen, um hervorzuheben, wie problematisch ihre Verwendung ist. Die Identitätskonflikte, welche ich in den folgenden Kapiteln analysiere, können nicht auf Konflikte zwischen verschiedenen Ethnien reduziert werden, nicht zuletzt, weil diese Ethnien selbst im Allgemeinen nicht innerhalb homogener Kategorien reduziert werden können. Die Molukkengemeinschaft hat nicht nur eine, sondern viele Möglichkeiten, ihre Geschichte, ihren Platz in der niederländischen Gesellschaft und die Art und Weise, wie

die Geschichte die Molukk:innen mit Indonesien verbindet, zu verstehen. Ebenso haben die niederländische und die indonesische Gesellschaft kein homogenes Verständnis für diese Fragen.

Daher soll meine Verwendung dieser Unterscheidungen, „Niederländisch“, „Molukkisch“, „Indonesisch“, nur darauf hinweisen, dass Artikulationen der molukkischen Identität sowohl von innen als auch von außen erfolgen: Es gibt die Selbstidentifikation als Molukken und dann gibt es noch die Identifizierung des „Anderen“ als Molukken. Die erste Form der Identifizierung impliziert die Artikulation eines nicht-molukkische, zum Beispiel niederländische oder indonesische „andere“, und die zweite Form der Identifizierung impliziert die Artikulation eines nicht-molukkischen „Selbst“. Kurz gesagt, die in dieser Dissertation diskutierten Fallstudien basieren alle auf dem Grundprinzip, dass Identitätsartikulation eine interaktive Praxis ist, in der „Selbst“ und „Andere“ permanent konstruiert werden und die aus verschiedenen Richtungen initiiert werden kann. Der zentrale Zweck aller fünf Kapitel besteht daher darin, Wege zu identifizieren und zu analysieren, auf denen Sprach- und Schweigepraktiken als Strategien der Identitätsartikulation eingesetzt werden, sei es, um das „Selbst“, das „Andere“ oder beides zu konstruieren.

Um eine Grundlage für diese Analysen zu schaffen, beginnt jedes Kapitel mit einer historischen Kontextualisierung. Das heißt, ich beginne jedes Kapitel damit, seine Hauptfallstudie in den größeren Kontext der Geschichte der Molukken zu stellen. Dieses Element der Struktur kann ein Gefühl der Wiederholung hervorrufen, insofern, als bestimmte herausragende Elemente dieser Geschichte, wie die Umstände um die Ankunft der ersten Generation der Molukkengemeinschaft in den Niederlanden im Jahr 1951, mit geringfügigen Abweichungen sich im Laufe der Dissertation wiederholen werden. Meine Entscheidung, so zu arbeiten, bedarf vielleicht einer Klarstellung. Ich habe zunächst darüber nachgedacht, ein separates historisches Kapitel zu schreiben, auf das sich alle anderen analytischen Kapitel beziehen könnten. Ich habe mich jedoch letztendlich gegen diesen Ansatz entschieden, weil ich nicht riskieren wollte, mir die Geschichte der Molukken anzueignen. Anstatt diese Geschichte in einer endgültigen Wiedergabe zu fixieren, die in einem Kapitel enthalten ist, besteht mein Ansatz darin, sie zu Beginn jedes Kapitels jedes Mal mit einer etwas verschobenen Betonung kurz zu wiederholen. Als solches möchte ich anerkennen, dass die Geschichte der Molukken nicht erfasst werden kann, sondern immer wieder erzählt werden muss, um unterschiedliche Perspektiven und laufende Überlegungen zu ermöglichen.

In **Kapitel 1** werden Fragen der Stimme und des Schweigens in Bezug auf Fragen der Geschichtsschreibung und in geringerem Maße der literarischen Praxis zum Thema erörtert. Der Schwerpunkt dieses Kapitels liegt auf der historischen Darstellung eines Aufstands der Molukken gegen die niederländische Kolonialherrschaft im Jahr 1817. Obwohl der Aufstand mit der Wiederherstellung des niederländischen Kolonialregimes endete, kostete er immer noch Hunderte niederländische Soldaten und Beamten das Leben. Als solche haben koloniale Schriftsteller:innen den Aufstand oft als Misserfolg dargestellt, während indonesische postkoloniale Schriftsteller:innen ihn als erfolgreichen Vorläufer des indonesischen Unabhängigkeitskampfes interpretierten, der in der indonesischen nationalen Revolution (1945-1949) gipfelte. In diesem Kapitel stelle ich eine vergleichende Analyse zwischen prominenten kolonialen und postkolonialen Berichten über den Aufstand vor und untersuche, wie diese beiden Perspektiven dominante historische Stimmen darstellen, die sich den Aufstand der Molukken für die gegensätzlichen ideologischen Zwecke der kolonialen Rechtfertigung bzw. des indonesischen Nationalismus aneignen.

Als solche bringen diese beiden dominanten Stimmen die Möglichkeit einer molukkanischen Wiedergabe der Geschichte zum Schweigen, in der der Aufstand als Vorläufer des Molukken-Separatismus interpretiert werden könnte, d. h. einer Selbstidentifikation als eines von den Niederlanden und Indonesien unabhängigen Volkes. Vor diesem Hintergrund endet das Kapitel mit einer Analyse einer Kurzgeschichte über den Molukkenaufstand der niederländischen Schriftstellerin Maria Dermoût („De Juwelen Haarkam“, 1956). In ihrer Geschichte destabilisiert Dermoût nicht nur die oben genannten dominanten historischen Stimmen, sondern lässt auch das Schweigen der molukkanischen Perspektive an und für sich erscheinen, als Hinweis auf eine alternative molukkanische Version der Geschichte. Daher wird meine Lektüre zeigen, wie Dermoûts Geschichte einen Raum bietet, in dem die Stille der Molukk:innen erkennbar wird, ohne sie jedoch explizit zum Ausdruck zu bringen, da dies bedeuten würde, sie erneut anzueignen.

Kapitel 2 setzt diesen Schwerpunkt auf den Protest der Molukken fort, indem es zwei zeitgenössische Beispiele dafür untersucht: die Zugentführungen, die 1975 und 1977 in den Niederlanden stattfanden. Diese Aktionen wurden von Molukken der zweiten Generation durchgeführt, um ein Bewusstsein für ihren separatistischen Kampf für die Gründung der Republik Süd-Maluku zu erzeugen: ein Ziel, das der niederländische Staat ihrer Ansicht nach unterstützen musste. Bei der ersten Entführung wurden drei Geiseln getötet. Die zweite Entführung wurde durch eine Militäroffensive beendet, bei der sechs Entführer sowie zwei

Geiseln getötet wurden. Im Jahr 2014 verklagten die nächsten Angehörigen von zwei der getöteten Entführer den niederländischen Staat und beschuldigten ihn, die Hinrichtung der Entführer durch das Militär angeordnet zu haben. Ihr Fall ging 2018 zugunsten des Staates verloren. Die häufige Berichterstattung über diese Klage hat zu erneuten Diskussionen in den traditionellen und sozialen Medien über die Entführungen geführt. Solche Diskussionen betreffen häufig Fragen zum Ort der Justiz: d. h. Inwieweit können die Entführungen selbst und inwieweit die Militäroffensive als gerechtfertigt interpretiert werden?

In meiner Analyse dieser Fallstudie untersuche ich die Strategien, die Stimme und Stille beinhalten und in diesen Diskussionen eingesetzt werden. Weil die Entführer ihre Aktionen im Namen des separatistischen Kampfes der Molukken durchgeführt haben, können und wurden sie oft als Stimmen ihrer Gemeinschaft gerahmt. Indem sie als solche definiert werden, werden die Entführer nicht nur als besondere Vertreter der kollektiven Identität der Molukken verstanden, sondern umgekehrt wird die Identität der Molukken auch auf die Art und Weise reduziert, wie die Entführer sie ausgedrückt haben. Ähnlich wie in Kapitel 1 liegt der Schwerpunkt hier daher auf konkurrierenden Interpretationen der Geschichte. Während sich Kapitel 1 auf die Stimmen der Historiker:innen konzentriert, die für die Gestaltung eines historischen Ereignisses verantwortlich sind, untersucht Kapitel 2 die Stimmen derjenigen, die an einem historischen Ereignis beteiligt waren, und die Art und Weise, wie diese Stimmen durch öffentliche Diskussionen in traditionellen und sozialen Medien genutzt werden. Ziel ist es dabei nicht nur zu analysieren, wie diese Stimmen zum Schweigen gebracht oder verstärkt werden, sondern auch, wie sie kollektiviert werden: das heißt, wie die Stimmen bestimmter Personen eine größere Gemeinschaft repräsentieren und inwieweit diese Personen selbst Mitsprache haben an diesem Prozess.

Diese ersten beiden Kapitel bilden **Teil 1** dieser Dissertation mit dem Titel **Alles, was Sie sagen, kann gegen Sie verwendet werden**. Ziel ist es, Stimmen in Kapitel 1 auf ihre Aneignungsqualitäten sowie in Kapitel 2 auf ihre regulatorischen Qualitäten zu analysieren. Daher liegt der Schwerpunkt mehr auf der Stimme als auf der Stille. Diese Betonung wird in den Kapiteln 3 und 4 umgedreht, die zusammen **Teil 2** bilden: **Wenn Stille lauter spricht als Worte**.

In **Kapitel 3** diskutiere ich eine Gedenkstatue des niederländischen Kolonisators Jan Pieterszoon Coen (1587-1629), die auf einem öffentlichen Platz in der niederländischen Stadt Hoorn steht. Die Statue wurde 1893 als Teil eines größeren Programms zur Stärkung der

nationalen Identität der Niederlande aufgestellt, indem Nationalhelden mit Denkmälern geehrt wurden. Coen wurde aufgrund seiner Rolle bei der Errichtung des niederländischen Monopols für den globalen Gewürzhandel im frühen 17. Jahrhundert ausgewählt. Sein Heldenstatus war jedoch immer umstritten: Er errichtete das Gewürzmonopol, indem er fast alle 15.000 Einwohner der Banda-Inseln tötete, einer Inselgruppe in der Molukkenregion, auf der sich die zentralen Plantagen für Muskatnuss und Nelke befanden. Die 1.000 Überlebenden wurden als Sklaven nach Batavia (der heutigen indonesischen Hauptstadt Jakarta) deportiert. Die Banda-Inseln selbst wurden mit Sklav:innen aus anderen Teilen der niederländischen Kolonien neu bevölkert, die auf den Gewürzplantagen eingesetzt wurden.

Seit der Errichtung dieser Statue hat die Stadt Hoorn wiederkehrende Stimmen, die eine Entfernung der Statue forderten systematisch ignoriert. Nachdem die Statue 2011 bei einem Bauunfall vom Sockel gefallen war und neu aufgestellt werden musste, konnten diese Stimmen nicht mehr ignoriert werden. Um weitere Konflikte zu umgehen, beschloss die Gemeinde, der Inschrift der renovierten Statue einen neuen Absatz hinzuzufügen. In diesem neuen Absatz wird die Tatsache erwähnt, dass Coens Vermächtnis umstritten ist und nicht alle zustimmen, dass er eine Statue verdient. Als solches scheint es, als ob die Stimmen derer, die gegen die Statue waren, jetzt im öffentlichen Diskurs angemessen vertreten sind. Indem die Gemeinde der Opposition auf diese Weise eine Stimme einräumte, legitimierte sie ihre Entscheidung, das zu ignorieren, was diese Stimme zu sagen hatte: Die Statue wurde unter direkter Missachtung der Wünsche der Opposition renoviert. Das Kapitel bietet eine Analyse dieses paradoxen Zusammenspiels von Stimme und Stille, bei dem das Gewähren einer Stimme ein zum-Schweigen-bringen bedeuten kann.

In **Kapitel 4** wird die Aktivistengruppe De Grauwe Eeuw erörtert, die seit 2016 aktiv ist. Die Aktivist:innen dieser Gruppe arbeiten hauptsächlich mit Sprühmalereien der Bezeichnungen „Völkermord“ und „Stopp der kolonialen Verherrlichung“ auf Kolonialdenkmälern, einschließlich Coens Statue. Die Aktivist:innen weigern sich jedoch systematisch mit den Massenmedien über die Motivation ihres Handelns zu sprechen, und behaupten, dass das Sprechen mit diesem etablierten Diskurs so ist, als würde man überhaupt nicht sprechen. Sie argumentieren, dass eine solche Berichterstattung dazu führen würde, dass ihre politische Stimme zum Schweigen gebracht wird, da dies durch die vorgegebene Haltung der Medien zu dem jeweiligen Thema gefiltert würde.

Mit anderen Worten, wenn in Kapitel 3 erörtert wird, wie Stimmen von Dissens durch ihre Einbeziehung in den öffentlichen Diskurs zum Schweigen gebracht werden können, betrachtet Kapitel 4 diese Situation von der anderen Seite: Indem De Grauwe Eeuw sich weigern, mit den Massenmedien zu sprechen, verhindern sie die Assimilation ihres Protestes innerhalb des dominanten Diskurses. Wie jedoch in der zweiten Hälfte dieses Kapitels ausgeführt wird, ist diese Strategie des Schweigens nicht ohne besondere Risiken. Indem ich die Art und Weise untersuche, in der die Medien diese Aktivist:innen kriminalisiert haben, und zwar weitgehend auf der Grundlage ihrer systematischen Weigerung, ihre Position öffentlich zu erklären, möchte ich darauf hinweisen, dass das Schweigen ebenso wie die Stimme seine Grenzen als Strategie der Identitätsartikulation hat.

In **Kapitel 5** entwickle ich meine Analyse der Grenzen von Stimme und Stille als Instrumente der Identitätsartikulation weiter, indem ich analysiere, was die Molukkengemeinschaft als Kernelement ihrer kollektiven Identität betrachtet: das Konzept von „Adat“. Dieser ursprünglich arabische Begriff bedeutet „Sitte“ oder „Gewohnheit“ und wurde ab dem 13. Jahrhundert von islamischen Kaufleuten in Maluku und im gesamten indonesischen Archipel eingeführt. Der Begriff wurde verwendet, um sich auf indigene Bräuche zu beziehen, die nicht in das islamische Recht aufgenommen werden konnten. Anstatt sich auf ein bestimmtes System von Bräuchen oder Gesetzen zu beziehen, bezeichnete „Adat“ daher das unbestimmte Gegenteil des islamischen Rechts: d. h. Die große Vielfalt indigener Praktiken, die, abgesehen von dieser verallgemeinernden Bezeichnung „Sitte“, undefiniert blieben. Ich werde die Entwicklung dieses Begriffs von seiner ursprünglichen Verwendung als Verweis auf das Undefinierte bis zu seiner gegenwärtigen Verwendung als grundlegenden Bestandteil der Identität der Molukken verfolgen. Dabei wird deutlich, dass die Verwendung des Konzeptes als strategische Neuaneignung des Begriffs und als eine Form der Selbstidentifikation verstanden werden, die bewusst ihre ursprüngliche Fähigkeit als etwas, das nicht fest definiert ist, intakt hält.

Wie eine vergleichende Analyse zeigen wird, weicht diese spezielle Anwendung von der Art und Weise ab, in der der Begriff von anderen Parteien in der gesamten indonesischen und molukkanischen Geschichte verwendet wurde: einschließlich kolonialer, postkolonialer nationalistischer und regionalistischer Anwendungen in den frühen, mittleren und späten Anwendungen im 20sten Jahrhundert. Während Konzeptionalisierungen alle gemeinsam haben, dass es sich um Versuche handelte, Adat auf eine Reihe klarer Definitionen zu reduzieren, die darauf abzielen, den Begriff für bestimmte Zwecke der gesellschaftlichen

Organisation zu instrumentalisieren, wird Molukken-adat nachdrücklich als etwas verstanden, das nicht definiert werden kann. Als solches ist Adat ein Beispiel für eine Artikulation der Identität, die sowohl Stimme als auch Stille erfordert. Das heißt, obwohl Adat explizit als zentral für die kollektive Identität der Molukken deklariert wird, bleibt die spezifische Definition des Begriffs „still“, sofern sie nicht im Diskurs festgelegt ist. Indem dieser Aspekt der molukkanischen Identität im Diskurs nur als etwas präsent ist, das von ihm nicht definiert werden kann, bleibt er vor einer Frage der Auseinandersetzung geschützt.

Innerhalb der Struktur der drei Teile dieser Dissertation bildet Kapitel 5 einen eigenen Teil, nämlich **Teil 3: ... davon muss man schweigen**. Während sich die Kapitel von Teil 1 hauptsächlich mit der Stimme befassen und diejenigen, die zu Teil 2 gehören, sich hauptsächlich auf die Stille konzentrieren, besteht der Zweck von Teil 3 darin, zu betonen, dass sich Stimme und Stille an der Grenze des jeweils anderen manifestieren und als solche zusammen theoretisiert werden müssen. Deshalb bezieht sich der Titel dieses Teils auf die zweite Hälfte von Wittgensteins Aphorismus, deren erste Hälfte im Titel der Dissertation enthalten ist: „Wovon man nicht sprechen kann, davon muss man schweigen“ (Wittgenstein, 2010 [1922]) : 108). Das Projekt wird abschließend mein zentrales Verständnis von Stimme und Stille als Instrumente der Identitätsartikulation zusammenfassen: d. h. Stimme und Stille fungieren nicht als Gegensätze des anderen, sondern als Fortsetzung des anderen. Identität wird durch das Zusammenspiel von Ausdruck und Schweigen artikuliert.