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Honour and Imperialism: Dutch Honour and the Advent of the Aceh War, 1873-1874

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Introduction

Imperial history is contentious history. This is especially the case for nations whose governments have not yet publicly come to terms with certain parts of history, such as the Netherlands. Lacking a definitive moral verdict, Dutch society drags the public debate about their colonial history on, perpetually debating whether Dutch policy in contemporary Indonesia was just or unjust, politically or economically motivated, and even whether the Dutch government's actions at the time constituted genocide or not. Although imperial history isn't exactly the talk of the day, public debate is reignited every once in a while as a result of (re)discovered source material or the publication of a new book on the subject. Consequently, continuing uncertainty about the moral implications of the Dutch colonial past has transformed virtually every academic contribution on the subject from an independent, analytical interpretation into ammunition to fuel either side of the moral argument.¹

Perhaps this is why the Dutch East Indies have almost structurally been regarded not as an integral part of Dutch national history, but as 'colonial history'; a label which not only suggests that the Dutch overseas expansions form a separate historical category altogether, but it also conveniently avoids the term 'imperial' in its description of the past. The term has been highly contentious for Dutch academics, who at least until the 1980's reserved the term for other colonial powers such as Britain, France, and even the United States in some respects.² The Dutch never thought of themselves as an 'empire', and even in colonial times never described themselves as such. Although it is true that the government of Batavia in the Dutch East Indies operated relatively autonomously from the Dutch government in The Hague, few historians will dispute the claim that the Dutch had in fact imperialist motives in contemporary Indonesia, especially concerning the conquest of the Aceh-region (1873-1914) and the subsequent 'completion' of the Dutch East Indies.

This seems pretty straightforward at first glance. Yet what exactly does 'imperialist motive' mean? Many different definitions of imperialism exist, yet none seem to address the importance of culture, that is to say, the influence that culturally determined value systems might have on political decision making.³ Humans aren't completely rational; their behaviour is also influenced by emotions, which in turn are influenced not merely by one's character but

¹ P. Bijl, *Emerging Memory: Photographs of Colonial Atrocity in Dutch Cultural Remembrance* (Amsterdam 2015) 224.

² M. Kuitenbrouwer, 'Drie omwentelingen in de historiografie van het imperialisme: Engeland en Nederland', *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 107 (1994) 4, 575.

³ See for example, J. Burbank & F. Cooper, *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton 2010) 8 or K. Barkey, *Empires of Difference: the Ottomans in comparative perspective* (Cambridge 2008) 9-10.

also by culturally determined values. The consideration to go to war, for example, is hardly ever solely based on rational arguments: take Napoleon's infamous obsession with *gloire* for instance, or Hitler's revenge on France for the Treaty of Versailles. To exclude culturally determined factors like honour, reputation, and pride from historical analysis is therefore to misunderstand a vital part of imperialist history.

Yet few analyses of imperialism have actually taken other motives than political and economic ones into consideration. Such analysis presupposes that human behaviour is entirely rational, and leaves culturally determined motives out of the equation. Perhaps, as Edward Saïd has contended, this is because Western societies are predisposed to view their own cultures as particularly reasonable and rational, as opposed to non-Western civilizations that are often depicted as 'irrational and childlike'.⁴

It would be too ambitious for a thesis of this size to research emotion and imperialism in general. Instead, this thesis tries to add to the larger debate, by concentrating on a scarcely researched aspect of (an equally neglected) imperial culture, namely the importance of honour in Dutch imperialism at the advent of the Aceh War in 1873. The goal of this thesis is twofold: first, to examine to what extent honour was an influential socio-cultural force in Dutch society in 1873, by contrasting leading theories about honour with historical case-studies. Second, this thesis aims to determine to what extent honour has influenced the political decision to declare war on Aceh in 1873.

Another reason to research honour in Dutch imperial culture is that the concept of honour itself has gradually been gaining more attention in historical research. At first, academic interest in honour was limited to anthropology. J.G. Peristiany's *Honor and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society* (1965) initially sparked off the debate and is regarded a classic on the topic to this day. Ever since, honour has been gaining ground slowly but steadily across a variety of academic disciplines. Historians were relatively late to take an interest in the concept, with Anton Blok's *Honour and Violence* (2001) being the first book to actually use a historical as well as an anthropological perspective. Yet it wasn't until James Bowman's *Honor: A History* (2006) that honour was given a proper historical examination. Historians have since written more and more on the subject, for example in Andrei Tsygankov's *Russia and the West from Alexander to Putin: Honor in International Relations* (2012) and more recently in the edited volume *Honour, Violence and Emotions in History* (2015).

⁴ E. Saïd, *Orientalism* (New York 1977) 40.

This thesis will rely on the following works for theoretical analysis. The anthropologist Frank Henderson Stewart wrote a small book simply called *Honor* in 1994; James Bowman provided a conceptual definition in the introductory chapter in *Honor: A History*; and Alexander Welsh has examined the concept at length in the appropriately titled book *What is Honor? A Question of Moral Imperatives* (2008). Although none of these authors are historians, their works provide an adequate theoretical basis to outline a working definition for this thesis.

The first chapter will consider an analytical definition of honour and its importance in nineteenth-century Dutch culture. The second and third chapters each deal with a different case-study regarding honour in Dutch international relations. The first case-study concerns politics and decision making, and assesses to what extent honour was involved in the Dutch decision to declare war on Aceh, the concomitant expedition and its aftermath. The second study concentrates on patriotic sentiments in Dutch songs. Did Dutch citizens regard the colonial forces' unprecedented failure as an insult to Dutch national honour?

To provide an answer to such questions, the first case study focuses on the correspondences concerning the so-called 'Betrayal of Aceh' between the Dutch minister of Colonial Affairs and the Governor-General in Batavia. The second case study focuses on patriotic songs that were inspired both by the Betrayal of Aceh and by the failure of the first military expedition of 1873. Such songs were often provided to men who went to war and such literature often provides a unique insight into the morals of the time. This is essential source material for any history of honour, for whereas the anthropologist has a contemporary case-study to examine, the historian is left with bits and pieces of a no longer existent honour-culture. In order to analyse codes of behaviour that can no longer be observed, one can gather information from popular literature, prose, and music because such sources still represent the values and morals of the time. On top of that, other authors have explicitly emphasized the connection between nationalism and honour, which makes Dutch patriotic songs a particularly fitting case-study for this thesis.

Yet for all their merits, these sources also have their problems. First of all, regarding the correspondences between the minister of Colonial Affairs and the Governor General of Batavia, it's difficult to know for certain to what extent honour was involved. Honour was not something people explicitly talked about; often when discussing honour, other words are used such as 'prestige' or 'pride'. Researching honour, like most *histoire des mentalités*, requires reading between the lines and can't always be factually, empirically proven. Also, not all

correspondences were archived. Still, there is plenty archival material for this case study, even if the letters concerned don't always follow each other in chronological order.

The correspondences leading up to the first military expedition were published by request of the opposition in the Dutch parliament, as in 1881 it demanded a concise analysis of the outbreak of the Aceh War in 1873. Later correspondences have been preserved in the personal archives of both statesmen. As such, these sources are biased as they only provide an account from the Dutch government's point of view. Yet one-sidedness doesn't necessarily entail insincerity: since these letters and telegrams were private and often confidential, there is no reason to suppose that the authors were disingenuous.

The patriotic songs pose more problems. Firstly, it is impossible to verify how well these patriotic songs were read. One booklet, collected and published by lieutenant Clockener Brousson of the Dutch army, had been printed for the 113.000th time in 1911, seventeen years after its initial publication.⁵ The author considered this 'proof of its popularity', which was both distributed among soldiers in the army and sold in regular bookshops.⁶ Apart from this particular booklet, though, we know very little about these songs' date of publication or the scale of their reception. They appear to have been published rather fast and cheap, according to Bert Paasman, which indicates they were probably targeted at the lower classes.⁷ Moreover, we don't know to what extent ordinary citizens actually identified with the content of the songs, nor if their patriotic sentiment was inspired top-down or bottom-up. In other words, was patriotism created by the government or were people patriotic themselves, and if so, did the publication of such booklets merely fulfil an already existing demand? In sum, while it is possible to analyse the content of such songs with regard to honour, it remains difficult to come to a general conclusion about honour in Dutch society at the time.

⁵ H.C.C. Clockener Brousson, *'t Oranje Boekje: Liederen voor Janmaat en Soldaat (voor school en volk!)* (Amsterdam 1911) front cover of the booklet.

⁶ Clockener Brousson, *'t Oranje Boekje*, 5.

⁷ B. Paasman, 'Kleine bloemlezing van Atjeh-liederen', in: L. Dolk (ed.), *Atjeh: de verbeelding van een koloniale oorlog* (Amsterdam 2001) 155.

Chapter 1: Theories of Honour

Honour is a concept that is notoriously difficult to define. Academics have increasingly devoted attention to the subject, yet most studies have either stuck to a very broad and therefore analytically insufficient definition, or they have avoided any explanation of the concept at all.⁸ Yet three works in particular have tried to undo this lack of conceptual sophistication. This chapter will first and foremost explore a general definition of honour, and subsequently considers what the term meant specifically in Europe during the latter half of nineteenth century.

1.1. A General Description of Honour

Unfortunately, very little historical research has been done on honour in the Netherlands or for the Dutch East Indies specifically. Yet most academics have suggested that honour's meaning was generally the same in most parts of Europe.⁹ Indeed, few concepts are as universal as honour.¹⁰ The term is widely applicable to Western and non-Western societies alike, and though the specifics may differ, most academics agree that the term should be used cross-culturally. Yet, as Frank Henderson Stewart has pointed out, hardly any research has been done on honour in Europe, and inquiries into the ontological nature of honour are even rarer to come by.¹¹

What does honour mean then? According to Stewart honour means 'the right to respect'.¹² This means that the bearer of such a right has a right to be treated respectfully, while other people in society have an obligation to recognize this right, and to treat the bearer with the respect that is his due. Not everyone is expected to uphold this social contract, however. One needs to be a member of what is called an 'honour group'. Basically, an honour group is a set of people who follow the same unwritten rules pertaining to the preservation or loss of honour, also known as the 'honour code', and who recognize each other for doing so. Honour groups can be big or small, varying from families to clans, and from social classes to entire nations.¹³

⁸ An assertion made by various authors. Compare C.J. Fettweis, *The Pathologies of Power: Fear, Honor, Glory, and Hubris in U.S. Foreign Policy* (Cambridge 2013) 96; F.H. Stewart, *Honor* (Chicago 1994) 1.

⁹ Stewart, *Honor*, 1.

¹⁰ An assertion made by various authors. For example: G. Best, *Honor among Men and Nations: Transformations of an Idea* (Toronto 1982) 7.

¹¹ Stewart, *Honor*, 1; R.L. Oprisko, *Honor: A Phenomenology* (New York 2012) 4.

¹² Stewart, *Honor*, 21.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 54.

This kind of honour is also referred to as ‘horizontal honour’, because it is about maintaining one’s reputation among people who consider each other as equals, i.e. members of the honour group. ‘Vertical honour’, on the other hand, pertains not to a society of equals but to a hierarchical social structure, such as those found in the military. Vertical honour is rated on a gliding scale and can be gradually increased or diminished, whereas horizontal honour is rated only in absolutes: either you have it, or you do not. Either you are treated as an equal, or you are not.¹⁴

When expressed by an equal, in other words, an insult to one’s honour was considered to be a zero-sum game. Stewart refers to this type of honour as *reflexive honour*, by which he means that ‘if A impugns B’s honour, then B’s honour is ipso facto diminished or destroyed, unless B responds with an appropriate counterattack’.¹⁵ Honour in such societies thus functions as a system of social control; one is compelled to either respond adequately when one’s honour is challenged, or suffer the loss of honour and consequently be treated as an outcast to the honour group in question.

Now honour as described above might seem to be synonymous with ‘reputation’ or ‘prestige’. Yet this isn’t necessarily the case, as writers on the subject have recognised honour’s dual nature from the seventeenth century onwards.¹⁶ The dimension described thus far is usually referred to as external or outer honour, because this type of honour refers to a quality that is outside oneself, which is judged by other people. Internal or inner honour, on the other hand, is associated with specific personality traits, which are dependent on historical circumstances. In Western Europe these personality traits are often connected to virtue.

1.2. The Concept of Honour in Western Europe in the Nineteenth Century

During the nineteenth century, the European conception of honour underwent several profound transformations that are important for the case-studies provided later in this thesis. In order to understand such changes, it is imperative to describe the cultural roots of European honour.

Most authors agree that European honour changed dramatically in the course of history, and almost all trace its origin to the Middle Ages, during which honour was still primarily perceived as an external concept. It was a matter of reputation; in Sir Thomas Mallory’s version of the Arthurian romances (1485), this is illustrated by the relationship between Sir

¹⁴ Ibid., 59. A. Welsh, *What is Honor? A Question of Moral Imperatives* (Yale 2008) 12-13.

¹⁵ Stewart, *Honor*, 64.

¹⁶ Ibid.

Lancelot and Queen Guinevere. All Knights of the Round Table know that Sir Lancelot, who was famous for his unsurpassed skill in combat, was having an affair with the wife of King Arthur, the leader of the Knights and the man whom Lancelot had pledged his allegiance to. Bowman notes that although everyone seemed to know this individually, Lancelot's honour was not aggrieved until twelve knights decided to expose him, and catch him alone with Queen Guinevere in her bedroom. Lancelot defeated the knights, but his honour is still challenged because the obvious has been made public, and King Arthur is forced to publicly recognize his wife's infidelity.

In defending his honour before Arthur in court, Lancelot denies every allegation regarding his relationship with Guinevere. Instead, he argues that he was the most honourable knight, for singlehandedly defeating every assailant, even though he was unarmed and taken by surprise. God had chosen his side, Lancelot argued, for how else could he have won a battle in which he was so enormously outnumbered? He had defended his honour before God and would do so again against any man who would dare to insult his honour. Since everyone knew he was the best knight, all contenders kept silent, as a result of which Lancelot claimed there was no reason not to believe him on his word. Lancelot considered his honour, in other words, to be synonymous with his martial prowess.¹⁷

This 'might makes right' philosophy was at the core of the medieval honour culture, and has since had an important influence on Western notions of honour. Lancelot's honour culture is typical of Stewart's 'reflexive honour', since Lancelot is required to defend any attack on his honour publicly or suffer the consequences of being dishonoured. There is no middle ground. This mentality inspired duelling as a way to settle individual disputes of honour between gentlemen, as well as the militant nationalism of the late nineteenth century, which were also at least partly based on medieval notions of knighthood and courage.¹⁸ In short, medieval chivalry remained a major source of influence on European honour. Though the popularity and importance of honour to society waxed and waned with the passing of time, each revival of honour was largely inspired by romanticized notions of medieval chivalry.¹⁹

This applied in particular to the nineteenth century. A renewed interest in everything medieval swept through all layers of society as part of the Romantic Movement, which glorified the Middle Ages and idealized the knightly virtues of the Arthurian romances. Medievalism was popular on both sides of the Atlantic, and was especially prevalent in

¹⁷ Ibid., 48.

¹⁸ Compare K. McAleer, *Dueling: The Cult of Honor in Fin-de-Siècle Germany* (Princeton 2014) 7; Bowman, *Honor: A History*, 45.

¹⁹ Bowman, *Honor: A History*, 54.

literature, painting, and architecture. The revival of medieval chivalry as an exemplary, idealistic behavioural code occurred mostly due to Romantic literature about knighthood in the Middle Ages. One author is widely recognized to have been of supreme importance in popularizing the knightly ethos in both America and Europe. Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832) was a widely celebrated author already during his own lifetime, and many of his works continued to be popular and influential long after he died.²⁰ Scott created a romanticized, simplified narrative of the Middle Ages in his books, in which martial prowess had its place, but was never considered unconditionally honourable in itself and certainly not above inner qualities such as integrity, courage, Christian piety, and the venerable treatment of women.

Such internal qualities marked the gentlemanly code of conduct: not martial prowess but Christian piety stood at the heart of the new honour code. Traditionally, notes Bowman, the aristocratic code of honour stood in direct opposition to Christianity: 'Where honor was local, Christianity was universal; where honor was elitist, Christianity was Catholic and inclusive; where honor was warlike, Christianity was pacifist; where honor treated women only as property, Christianity treated them as human beings, if not yet as the equals of men'.²¹ Although the process started centuries earlier, the nineteenth century saw the merging of Christian values with the traditional honour code reach its apex. This had a profound influence on the practical application of laws and moral codes concerned with honour. Ever since the sixteenth century, for example, both secular and ecclesiastical authorities had repeatedly tried to ban the tradition of duelling, yet no formal prohibition put an end to its informal existence among the elite. Only when the honour culture changed, and duelling was no longer revered as the most honourable way to settle individual disputes, did duelling finally cease to exist. In Britain, the tradition ended around somewhere around 1850 (although lack of reliable sources makes it difficult to pinpoint an exact date), whereas in German speaking territories the tradition survived into the early twentieth century. The German code of honour remained more reflexive and military in nature than the British one, and resembled the feudal honour code more closely.²²

Two other major transformations of honour, both of which also occurred during the nineteenth century, happened in a much shorter timeframe. The first was the democratization of honour. In the eighteenth century, honour was still reserved exclusively for the aristocracy. This had been the case ever since the Middle Ages: military honour, for example, could only

²⁰ Alessandro Manzoni & Sandra Bermann, *On the Historical Novel* (Nebraska 1996) 78.

²¹ Bowman, *Honor: A History*, 51.

²² McAleer, *Duelling*, 8.

be gained or lost by officers who were almost exclusively of aristocratic heritage. Regular soldiers simply weren't included in the honour group. This tradition changed in the late eighteenth century, mostly because of the French and American revolutions. Since it takes too much time and does not complement the goal of this thesis, this transformation will not be discussed in detail here; it suffices to say that especially the French revolutionaries were very sceptical of honour. They associated it with aristocratic privilege, and considered honour to be a remnant of the feudal corporate society against which they were revolting. They felt that if honour was to exist at all, it should not be limited to a social class. This scepticism spread across the continent, to some extent even among the aristocracy.²³

As such, in the course of the nineteenth century, the concept of honour was gradually separated from its traditional roots in the social stratification of society. Honour was democratized, in a sense, since it was made accessible to all citizens. This occurred in part because citizens took an active interest in honour, mostly due to Gothic inspired novels of the kind Sir Walter Scott wrote. Although the aristocracy always felt they constituted a separate class with separate rules, honour became a universal attribute of nineteenth-century society. More than anyone else, gentlemen were expected to live up to the ideals of neo-chivalry, to be exemplary in this respect to the rest of society.²⁴

A second transformation would change the most honourable object in society. For years, centuries even, the most honourable object one could act in service of was that of the monarch or that of God himself. In the nineteenth century however, honour was nationalized. Thus the honour group did not only come to entail an entire national population, but the fatherland became the most honourable symbol to sacrifice yourself for. Before the French revolution, the monarch had an indisputable position as the most honourable symbol in society; soldiers fought for king, not so much for country. This changed in the nineteenth century, when serving the fatherland became just as or even more honourable a goal than serving the monarch himself.²⁵

Honour thus became universally accessible and of central importance to citizens who identified themselves increasingly as citizens of a particular nation-state. Honour had been largely redeemed from its status as an aristocracy-exclusive phenomenon, and moral values were of increasing importance in assessing the honourableness of one's character. Yet from the 1870's onwards, militarism became of vital importance to the concept of national honour.

²³ Best, *Honour Among Nations*, 18.

²⁴ Bowman, *Honor: A History*, 86.

²⁵ Best, *Honour among Nations*, xii.

While honour was considered a personal and internal attribute by society at large, and the compulsive (or reflexive, in Stewart's words) nature of honour was gradually shifting to a more voluntary nature, the military institutions of nations such as Britain, France, and Germany instilled a very different kind of honour. Based on notions of hierarchy, strict obedience, and loyalty to one's fatherland, the military still aspired to a reflexive kind of honour that resembled Lancelot's warrior-ethos. In this context, it's hardly surprising to see that dueling remained intact in the military as a means of settling individual disputes when the tradition had long since been cast aside in other parts of society.²⁶

Whereas personal honour was considered to be internal, national honour was external; whereas personal honour became increasingly voluntary, national honour remained reflexive and therefore compulsory. This militant attitude spread not only among the ranks of the army, but also instilled a very militant nationalism among the elite of society. The period from 1870 to 1914 is generally known among historians as a period of militant nationalism, felt not just by the elite but throughout all classes in society.²⁷ This might have been different for the German speaking territories, as especially Prussia has been described as having a very military culture in these days, but for the Netherlands and Britain this mentality seems to have been limited to the aristocracy.²⁸ This makes sense in light of the aristocracy's historical obsession with honour, and its traditional function as a warrior class that had the exclusive rights to attaining or losing honour on the battlefield.

This is of interest to the following case studies, since one covers archival source material concerning the highest politicians' in The Hague and Batavia, while the other concerns songbooks handed out to soldiers who were to fight the war in Aceh. As the public for which these sources were originally intended differ between the highest and the lowest classes, it is interesting to see if the differences in honour marked by the literature also appear in the sources.

Of course, before attending to the case studies, one wonders just to what extent the aforementioned actually concerns Dutch culture, in particular the colonial culture of the Dutch East Indies. As there has been no research on the subject, it is hard to tell. Yet we aren't entirely in the dark either. In his analysis of social stratification of Dutch society in the late nineteenth century, Henk te Velde remarks that 'eer' (the literal Dutch translation for honour)

²⁶ As exemplified by the Dreyfus affair in 1894, when the French military would not admit their mistake, thereby deliberately prioritising their honour above justice. D.L. Lewis, *Prisoners of Honor* (New York 1973) 207-208.

²⁷ H. te Velde, *Gemeenschapszin en plichtsbeseft. Liberalisme en nationalisme in Nederland, 1870-1918* (Den Haag 1992) 12.

²⁸ Te Velde, *Gemeenschapszin en plichtsbeseft*, 144.

and ‘fatsoen’ (Dutch for ‘civility’) were linked really closely, and were occasionally used in synonymous fashion.²⁹ Te Velde even notes a distinction between internal and external ‘fatsoen’, which closely resembles the analysis made for honour. Te Velde’s description of late nineteenth-century Dutch society as a corporate society, rigidly structured into many different coteries, each with its own specific set of social rules, resembles Stewart’s theory of honour groups and honour codes. Moreover, he notes that the nation had become the most honourable object of service imaginable, and that Dutch culture was characterized by a militant kind of nationalism from 1870 to 1900, which is in keeping with literature about other European nations.³⁰

²⁹ H. te Velde, ‘Herenstijl en burgerzin. Nederlandse burgerlijke cultuur in de negentiende eeuw’ in: R. Aerts en H. te Velde, *De Stijl van de Burger: Over Nederlandse burgerlijke cultuur vanaf de Middeleeuwen* (Amsterdam 1998) 159.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 175.

Chapter 2: Honour, Diplomacy and the Advent of the Aceh War

2.1: The Dutch Statesmen Responsible for the Aceh Conflict: Minister Fransen van de Putte and Governor-General Loudon

The official report on the outbreak of the Aceh War starts with a preliminary which outlines how the international relations regarding Aceh elapsed in the decades leading up to the war. The essence of the Dutch interpretation is as follows: the Dutch were determined to establish order on Sumatra and fight piracy, which they were entrusted to do to a certain extent by their ally Great Britain, as settled in the First Sumatra Treaty of 1824. Aceh had repeatedly shown itself hostile to foreign influence, and had repeatedly provoked the Netherlands for no apparent reason. Aceh was basically considered a thorn in the Dutch colonial side for many years, especially since pirates used Aceh as a base of operations.³¹

But the Dutch were compelled to do nothing, since the same treaty that settled the Dutch sphere of influence on Sumatra also forbade them to violate Aceh's sovereignty in any way. Under the protection of Britain, Aceh remained untouchable. This changed in 1871, when the second Sumatra treaty was signed between the Netherlands and Great Britain, which formally recognized Aceh as part of the Dutch sphere of influence in the Indonesian archipelago. As a result of the treaty, Aceh no longer fell under the protection of Great Britain and thus allowed the Dutch to expand their influence.³²

I deliberately state 'influence' as opposed to 'territory', because it seems that it wasn't quite clear from the outset what the Dutch were to do with Aceh. The personalities and political views of the politicians involved are here of great importance, as each preferred a different handling of the situation. The previous minister of Colonial Affairs P.P. van Bosse (1809-1879) seems to have preferred military intervention more than his successor, I.D. Fransen van de Putte (1822-1902; in office 1872-1874). The highest ranking political office in the government of the Dutch East Indies was the position of Governor-General, held by James Loudon (1824-1900; in office 1872-1874) at the advent of the Aceh War. Loudon seemed to

³¹ National Archive, The Hague, (hereafter: NL-HaNA), 2.10.02, Ministry of Colonial Affairs, inventory-number 6551A, 'Nota over de betrekkingen tusschen Nederland en Atjeh van 1824 tot 1873', 28-29.

³² H. Bakker, 'Het economisch belang van Noord-Sumatra tijdens de Atjeh-oorlog, 1873-1910', in: A.H.P. Clemens and Lindblad, J.T.H. (ed.), *Het Belang van de Buitengewesten. Economische expansie en koloniale staatsvorming in de Buitengewesten van Nederlands-Indië, 1870-1942* (Amsterdam 1989) 41.

have preferred the stark military approach pursued by P.P. van Bosse, whereas Fransen van de Putte preferred a gentler approach more diplomatic in nature.³³

De Jong notes a stark contrast between the personalities of Loudon and Fransen van de Putte. Loudon was a man of principle, who was steadfast, inflexible even, and seldom made political compromises. He was a man who firmly believed in authority, as he believed he was the representative of the Dutch king in Aceh. Thus, Loudon considered any insult to his persona to mean an insult to the king.³⁴ According to De Jong, Loudon's attitude toward the governance of the Dutch East Indies hardly changed since he wrote them down in a memoir in 1861. His views maintained a strong similarity to those of enlightened despots of the eighteenth century, as he believed the character of the Governor-General should ideally inspire trust and esteem through his 'enlightened mind, noble heart and steadfast character'.³⁵ It is interesting to note that during this time, when he served as the minister of Colonial Affairs (1861-1862), he was explicitly against expanding Dutch influence on Sumatra. He was a practical man, moreover, and despised seemingly endless political consultations. He detested oversight from The Hague, and consistently condemned politicians who meddled in the affairs of the colony.³⁶

This perfectly fits the aristocratic code of honour as described by Bowman, Stewart and Hamilton. For example, Loudon believed his rank entitled him to a certain amount of respect: when he began his tenure, he explicitly demanded of the minister of Colonial Affairs to be treated with respect that is due a Governor-General.³⁷ This resembles Stewarts' theory of 'a right to respect' perfectly. This hierarchical mind-set also expressed itself in the fact that Loudon wanted to distinguish himself from ordinary people. When he travelled from the Netherlands to Batavia after being assigned Governor-General, he demanded that he be transported on an exclusive ship so that he didn't have to mingle with the lower classes.³⁸

Moreover, Loudon considered himself to be a man of honour, as he stated explicitly in a correspondence in 1871: 'You might see me without fortune but you'll never see me without honour'.³⁹ He kept his word, as he resigned his post before his five-year tenure as Governor-General was over, which was highly unusual and considered thoroughly dishonourable at the

³³ J. de Jong, 'Gezag, macht en prestige. Het ontslag van James Loudon als gouverneur-generaal van Nederlands-Indië in 1874 in het perspectief van de veranderende politieke cultuur', *BMGN: The Low Countries Historical Review* 113 (1998) 2, 183.

³⁴ H. Boels, J. de Jong, and C.A. Tamse, *Eer en Fortuin: Leven in Nederland en Indië, 1824-1900. Autobiografie van gouverneur-generaal James Loudon* (Amsterdam 2003) 7.

³⁵ De Jong, 'Gezag, macht en prestige', 180.

³⁶ Boels e.a., *Eer en Fortuin*, 7-8.

³⁷ De Jong, 'Gezag, macht en prestige', 183.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 181.

³⁹ Boels e.a., *Eer en Fortuin*, 7.

time. One peculiar characteristic of honour is that it has often been considered more important than life itself, exemplified by gentleman duelling over a lady's honour or soldiers dying in the name of their country. Loudon here clearly illustrates that honour entailed more than mere prestige. Even if his reputation should fall with his fortune, he would not forfeit his honour. Internal qualities therefore constituted part of Loudon's conception of honour.

Fransen van de Putte was more of a diplomat. He chose his words more carefully than Loudon, insisted less on the value of 'strong character' and the need to be treated correspondingly. He also seemed to be less of a proponent of military interventions than Loudon. Since he was much more careful in his expressions, his letters are less obviously connected with honour. Perhaps this is because honour was less important for him. Unlike Loudon, who had had grown up in an elite family and was good friends with other aristocrats (including members of the Dutch Royal family), Fransen van de Putte came from a much lower class. He was a businessman, as he made his fortune in sugar in the Dutch East Indies. It would make sense that a self-made man such as Fransen van de Putte was less concerned with issues regarding honour than members from the aristocracy's highest echelons.

2.2: Honour in Diplomatic Correspondences

Generally speaking, matters of honour were hardly discussed in the correspondences between the minister of Colonial Affairs and the Governor-General. Yet in the letters they exchanged, which refer to and elaborate on the messages sent per telegram, it becomes very clear that Governor-General Loudon was more concerned with honour than minister Fransen van de Putte. An obvious example concerns the 'Betrayal of Aceh', a phrase which Loudon invented when Aceh sought to ally itself with foreign powers other than the Netherlands.⁴⁰ To Loudon, it was immediately clear that this constituted a 'betrayal', even though diplomatic contact between the Dutch East Indies and Aceh was minimal and Aceh had signed no formal agreement by which it was forbidden to reach out to nations other than the Dutch. The minister took it very differently. Initially, Fransen van de Putte didn't even understand what Aceh supposedly had betrayed. He explicitly expresses his lack of understanding to Loudon, in a dispassionate, detached tone: 'I could only take the words 'betrayal of Aceh' to mean the following, that we were betrayed by those, who had raised the apparently false appearance

⁴⁰ NL-HaNA, 2.10.02, Ministry of Colonial Affairs, inventory-number 6551A, telegram February 16th 1873, Governor-General James Loudon to the minister of Colonial Affairs I.B. Fransen van de Putte.

that they were favourably-disposed to us [...]'.⁴¹ Fransen van de Putte wasn't so emotional, and didn't seem to take Aceh's supposed betrayal so personal.

This difference in attitude naturally manifested itself in different solutions. Loudon favoured a military expedition, as he felt any other path would prove to be both ineffective and more costly.⁴² Fransen van de Putte on the other hand tried to avoid military intervention at all costs; even when it was decided that troops had to be sent to Aceh they were to serve first and foremost as the backbone of a diplomatic mission, which the minister hoped could avert war. He explained this repeatedly to Loudon, who didn't understand the difference between their approaches. Fransen van de Putte explained that the difference concerned 'explanation and tonality' which he deemed of 'great importance' for conveying the right message.⁴³

The difference in their approaches seems to be exemplary of a general difference in attitude between the government in The Hague and the administration in Batavia. For decades, the Dutch government had resisted military expeditions since they were very expensive; instead, it preferred diplomatic solutions where possible. For a long time, the Dutch assumed that other nations would passively accept Dutch hegemony over the Indonesian archipelago. It was only when the Dutch government realized that this wasn't the case that military expeditions were actually carried out. Such 'actions were grudgingly supported by The Hague, mostly for reasons of "restoring prestige"'.⁴⁴ In other words, the one thing that actually motivated the Dutch government to condone a military expedition was international reputation. When the nation's honour was at stake, Dutch politicians would allow for a show of military force in the colonies.

The colonial administration on the other hand preferred military solutions, even considering it necessary since they deemed the indigenous population barbaric and incapable of reasoning. Only punitive expeditions were reckoned to be able to get the message across.⁴⁵ H.L. Wesseling has noted that colonial armies around the world developed distinct cultures of their own, as the 'colonial army was a "pre-eminently practical army", where theoretical

⁴¹ NL-HaNA, 2.10.02, Ministry of Colonial Affairs, inventory-number 6551A, letter February 20th 1873, the minister of Colonial Affairs I.B. Fransen van de Putte to the Governor-General James Loudon, The Hague.

⁴² NL-HaNA, 2.10.02, Ministry of Colonial Affairs, inventory-number 6551A, letter February 25th 1873, Governor-General James Loudon to the minister of Colonial Affairs I.B. Fransen van de Putte, Buitenzorg.

⁴³ NL-HaNA, 2.10.02, Ministry of Colonial Affairs, inventory-number 6551A, telegram March 12th 1873, the minister of Colonial Affairs I.B. Fransen van de Putte to Governor-General James Loudon.

⁴⁴ J.A. de Moor, 'Warmakers in the Archipelago: Dutch Expeditions in Nineteenth Century Indonesia', in: J.A. de Moor & H.L. Wesseling, *Imperialism and War: Essays on Colonial Wars in Asia and Africa* (Leiden 1989) 56.

⁴⁵ H.L. Wesseling, 'Colonial Wars; An Introduction', in: J.A. de Moor & H.L. Wesseling, *Imperialism and War: Essays on Colonial Wars in Asia and Africa* (Leiden 1989) 4.

knowledge wasn't valued and the lessons of the military academy were of no importance'.⁴⁶ As Wesseling describes it, colonial armies were armies in which the traditional honour culture was revered: all challenges to authority were to be met with severe violence, lest the population forget who's in charge. This resembles a reflexive honour system in that an assault on authority was perceived as an assault on the nation's honour, and therefore had to be redeemed.

Governor-General Loudon seemed to exemplify this militant, hands-on mentality, as opposed to the native Dutch view that his colleague Fransen van de Putte represented. Both deemed international reputation important, but for Loudon this was a matter of honour. In his opinion, Aceh had betrayed the Netherlands and thereby impugned its honour. The only possible recourse was to offer a stark ultimatum to Aceh, forcing it to publicly, explicitly recognize Dutch supremacy or to prepare for war. Loudon had never believed in negotiating with indigenous peoples, and he didn't like compromises. Such thinking in absolutes was typical of the aristocratic honour culture and as such, though honour isn't explicitly mentioned, I believe that it was a primary motive for Loudon to go to war. The minister of Colonial Affairs also cared for international reputation, but the sources don't imply any honourable mentality on his side. On the contrary, he was afraid that an ultimatum of the kind Loudon proposed would hurt the Netherlands' international reputation.⁴⁷

This attests that both statesmen were concerned with the international reputation of the Netherlands, but at first only one viewed this through the lens of national honour. This changed after the advent of the first expedition. It was clear to both politicians that defeat was not an option: there was no question whether or not a second military expedition was to be conducted. The only questions concerned timing and scale of the expedition.⁴⁸ Though honour was not explicitly discussed, it becomes clear that military defeat was regarded as shameful. Formally, therefore, Fransen van de Putte explicitly apologized in a letter to the King, as he took full responsibility for the decision to go to war.⁴⁹ Yet it seems that Loudon felt more personally ashamed, as he is the one insisting on a grand, full scale military assault on Aceh, whereas Fransen van de Putte wanted to analyse the cause of their defeat before engaging in another war. Loudon seemed intent on restoring honour as fast as possible by any means possible, whereas the minister of Colonial Affairs did not feel this urgency. Moreover, he

⁴⁶Ibid., 3-4.

⁴⁷ NL-HaNA, 2.10.02, Ministry of Colonial Affairs, inventory-number 6551A, telegram March 10th 1873, the minister of Colonial Affairs I.B. Fransen van de Putte to the Governor-General James Loudon.

⁴⁸ Idem.

⁴⁹ NL-HaNA, 2.21.183.50, Loudon, James, inventory-number 3, item 10, letter May 4th 1873, the minister of Colonial Affairs I.B. Fransen van de Putte to the Governor-General James Loudon.

seems impatient with Loudon, as he wrote that ‘nobody understands the discontinuation of the second expedition’ and that he had been right to insist on a diplomatic solution (by means of asking the Acehnese Sultan to explain his treacherous behaviour) before invading militarily.⁵⁰ Apparently, the Dutch army’s defeat took them both by surprise, as their tone hardened and the topic quickly turned from explaining the defeat to when and how to attack Aceh again. If the first expedition had mostly been a matter of honour for Loudon, the military defeat also prompted Fransen van de Putte to regain national honour.

⁵⁰ Idem.

Chapter 3: Honour in Patriotic Songs Regarding the Aceh Conflict

Initially, the idea was to test various patriotic songs about the Aceh War with regard to honour. During my research, however, I found that the Netherlands has no rich history in patriotic songs at all, as opposed to, say, Germany or England.⁵¹ What follows therefore is a selection of songs which originate from various sources, whose publication dates are not too far apart and whose subject concerns the military conflict in Aceh.

The most important of this particular selection is probably the ‘Militair Atchinlied’ or ‘Military Aceh-song’, which dates back to September 1873 and was published as a direct result of the failure of the first expedition. It’s a patriotic song, intended to boost the morale of the soldiers who were going on the second Aceh mission. Interesting about this song is that honour is very explicitly, repeatedly referred to as the reason for engaging this war. This is evident from the start of the first couplet: ‘Come brethren the battle is calling, [...], / For our country’s honour and for the fall of Aceh’.⁵² This makes it seem as if the goal of the battle is twofold: first, to attain (or, more likely, regain) national honour; and second, to force Aceh into submission.

The song continues to stress the importance of indigenous soldiers, of Javanese and Malaysian birth: ‘Unite with the whites, because! United we stand / for the Netherlands thanks anyone who fights for her honour’.⁵³ Many of such pledges to honour are made in this song, which raises the impression that the consideration of going to war was solely dependent on honour, regardless of ethics or circumstances. Honour demanded restoration, and as such the national citizens (members of the honour group) were called upon to restore it. To quote the text literally: ‘Yes, the Nation entrusts us, its honour depends on it’.⁵⁴

It seems that the author considered the failure of the first military expedition as a thorn in the nation’s side: he deems it of vital importance that this infringement of national honour be redeemed. As Stewart suggested, in a reflexive honour culture this can only be done by mounting a successful counterattack, which in this case entails a total victory over the enemy. Though the goals of the military expedition thus seem twofold at first glance, in reality there is only one true objective: to regain lost national honour. Defeating the Acehnese sultan and

⁵¹ A fact which evidently bothered some people at the time as well, for this lack of patriotic songs was given as the explicit reason to publish a small booklet containing 56 of the aforementioned kind of songs. See: H.C.C. Clockener Brousson, ‘Liederen-Bundel voor Janmaat en Soldaat’ (versie 1894), <http://www.geheugenvannederland.nl/?/nl/items/KBMI01:LbIKBWouters20056> (20-02-2016)

⁵² P. Haagsma, ‘Militair Atchinlied’, as published in: B. Paasman, ‘Kleine bloemlezing van Atjeh-liederen’, in: L. Dolk (ed.), *Atjeh: de verbeelding van een koloniale oorlog* (Amsterdam 2001) 59.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

conquering his lands constituted no goal in itself; it constituted merely the means by which national honour was to be restored.

The rules Stewart formulated for personal honour therefore seem to extend to questions of national honour. Yet it is no longer an individual, but a collective phenomenon. Thus, not one person but every member of the honour group is expected to feel insulted in his or her honour and to react accordingly. Considering the militarist attitude that prevails throughout the song, the honour described here seems to be external. Moreover, it values the aristocratic warrior-ethos above virtue and proclaims the motherland as the noblest cause a man can support. This seems to confirm theories about the merging of nationalism, honour, and the military as an institute in which the remnants of the aristocratic honour culture were still preserved.

Interestingly, this song was intended to boost the morale of the regular infantry, which consisted for the most part of people from the lower classes, not aristocrats. Although the aristocratic honour code of old was still preserved in the military, as opposed to the rest of society, this song was not merely intended for those who were *already* in the army, but also for people who had yet to become soldiers. While it has been broadly accepted that the period under review was one of extreme nationalism, the militarist aspect was thought both by Dutch historians and authors on honour to appeal mostly (if not exclusively) to the aristocratic segment of society.⁵⁵

The song 'The Colonial' expresses the reflexive honour sentiment even stronger. Here, the objective of the Aceh War is expressed as follows: 'Lucky is he, who fights with us / That is our goal: to go on a rampage / Wherever the Acehnese would defy us, To march onward where kris and klewang threaten, / to be exemplary of 'Courage, Deliberation and Loyalty'.⁵⁶ Not only is this exemplary of the aristocratic warrior-ethos, but it also makes a distinct reference to honour. 'Moed, beleid en trouw', which roughly translates to 'courage, deliberation and loyalty', was (and still is) the motto of the Military William Order, the Dutch chivalric military order established by King William I in 1815. This order didn't have an ancient heritage; it was only invented after Napoleon's demise as a means of distinguishing men who had proven exceptional courage on the battlefield. The order exemplified the popularity of a highly romanticized narrative of the Middle Ages, and is symbolic of the aristocratic, reflexive honour system. After all, it recognized military prowess of the kind Lancelot would have excelled in, as the highest standard of honour man could achieve.

⁵⁵ Te Velde, *Gemeenschapszin en plichtsbefef*, 144.

⁵⁶ Clockener Brousson, *Liederenbundel voor Janmaat en Soldaat*, 42.

The ‘Military Aceh-song’ further concentrates on the heroism of soldiers serving a ‘just cause’; a cause for which the motherland seemed to qualify regardless of circumstances. In a song this nationalistic, it should come as no surprise that the enemy is demonized while the Dutch army is glorified. Yet the fact that almost every couplet has a sentence which either involves the honour of the Dutch nation or the humiliation of the Acehnese, seems to further imply that honour was considered to be of the utmost importance. The song ends with the lines ‘But Aceh will fall, / Or else we won’t return, / To win or to die, for the honour of the Netherlands’.⁵⁷ In other words, honour was considered to be so important that it was worth sacrificing your life for. Dealing in such absolutes as winning or losing, or living and dying is typical for horizontal honour. Earlier in the song it becomes already apparent that it is considered better to be dead and honoured than to be alive but disgraced: ‘Yes Holland! Though separated by sea, / Trust thy sons, for they fight over there, / Though many might die, we’ll bestow them with honour, / And the Dutch epitaph ‘deliberation, courage and loyalty’. / Remembering their battle, blessing their graves, / Marching onward again, to punish the one, / Who has plagued the Netherlands for so long, / But who’ll soon read his loss, written on those graves’.⁵⁸

Another such song is ‘Atchin moet vallen! Oproeping tot den strijd’ or, ‘Aceh must fall! A call to arms’. Also written in 1873 as an attempt to boost morale after the failure of the first expedition, it focuses less explicitly on honour. Most of the song pertains to bravery, camaraderie and the heroism of the Dutch army. The justification for going to battle, however, lies primarily in serving king and country. With regard to Aceh, the marines were commanded to ‘do their duty’ and to ‘forcibly ensure that Aceh will face up to its responsibilities’, because ‘the evil sultan has violated our [Dutch] rights’.⁵⁹ Everything is framed to make the Acehnese look like the axis of evil, so it naturally becomes a very noble and honourable task to join in the fight against them.

In another stanza, the soldiers are called upon to ‘avenge their general’, which refers to general J. Köhler, who led the first expedition to Aceh and perished in battle.⁶⁰ By fighting admirably for king and country and avenging general Köhler in the process, honour will be the soldiers’ reward. Moreover, the men will attain honour ‘for the punishment of such a

⁵⁷ Haagsma, ‘Militair Atchinlied’, as published in: Paasman, ‘Kleine bloemlezing van Atjeh-liederen’, in: L. Dolk (ed.), *Atjeh: de verbeelding van een koloniale oorlog* (Amsterdam 2001) 60.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 60.

⁵⁹ J. van Rossum, ‘Atchin moet vallen! Oproeping tot den strijd’, as published in: Paasman, ‘Kleine bloemlezing van Atjeh-liederen’, 64-66.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 64-66

rebellious sovereign',⁶¹ which again indicates that the nature of the conflict was either deemed honourable in Dutch society at large, or that it was deliberately framed to look honourable.

The same motivation is given over and over in different songs: as Paasman already concluded, the representation of the Aceh War was extremely one-sided.⁶² Yet the emphasis in the songs undoubtedly lies on honour. First and foremost, honour has become democratized: even 'ordinary' people from the lower classes were recruited and incited with the idea of fighting for honour. Secondly, the most honourable objective was to put oneself in service of the fatherland. National honour in these songs was comparable to the kind of external honour Lancelot fought for. Yet Lancelot fought for personal glory, whereas these songs are primarily concerned with national glory. This seems to confirm that prevailing theories about honour in the nineteenth century also applied to the Netherlands. The internal aspects of honour were either of no concern to the authors of these songs, or, as the literature about honour supposes, such virtues were only of consideration in civil society, far removed from the conduct of war.⁶³

⁶¹ Ibid., 64-66.

⁶² B. Paasman, 'Wij gaan naar Atchin toe' in: L. Dolk (ed.), *Atjeh: de verbeelding van een koloniale oorlog* (Amsterdam 2001) 62.

⁶³ Most prominently explained in chapter 1 above.

Conclusion

According to the literature about European honour, three major developments supposedly took place during the nineteenth century, the result of which would have been tangible by the start of the 1870's. First, honour was internalized, as internal aspects came to be valued more highly on an individual level. Second, honour was democratized; the democratization of society paved the way for an inclusive form of honour, to which all national residents belonged rather than just the aristocracy. Third, honour was nationalized, as the nation became the most honourable object in society, on par with or even surpassing the symbol of the monarch in this respect.

The main goal of this thesis was twofold: first, to discover if prominent theories about honour in other parts of Europe apply to the Netherlands of the late nineteenth century as well. Second, this thesis aimed to examine to what extent Dutch motivations to declare war on Aceh were motivated by questions of honour. Such historical attitudes are naturally difficult to substantiate, as the individuals involved rarely wrote explicitly about the subjects under examination.

Yet the source-material examined here provides ample evidence to conclude the following. Honour definitely was a prominent cultural force both in the Netherlands and its overseas colonies in the Indonesian archipelago. Patriotic songs almost exclusively relied on honour for recruiting new soldiers and for raising morale. This aligns with at least two theories of honour, as it proves honour was both democratized and nationalized. After all, the fatherland was repeatedly revered as the most noble and honourable cause to serve, and the fact that honour was continuously appealed to as the prime reason to join the military suggests that such sentiments were deeply ingrained in society.

The songs hardly speak about character traits, however, and when they do they mostly concern bravery and loyalty. Such masculine character traits were definitely considered honourable, but are exemplary of the aristocratic warrior ethos, not of a Christian value system which the literature supposes to have been prevalent by the 1870's. Character traits such as honesty, integrity, and protection of the weak only came to the fore through the demonization of the enemy, since Aceh was portrayed to be a treacherous nation, that condoned piracy and slavery. Thus, Aceh was personified and characterized as the opposite of the Netherlands, by personal, internal character traits diametrically opposed to the knightly virtues which the literature suggests were considered honourable at the time.

As for honour's influence on the outbreak of the Aceh war, it seems evident that two factors must be taken into consideration: the characters of the politicians involved and the

nature of what they considered to be an affront to national honour. Governor-General Loudon enjoyed an aristocratic social background. Honour had been a guiding principle throughout his life, as he was generally known to take offence quickly, and demanded to be treated in the utmost respectful manner, according to his rank. This complies neatly with Stewart's theory of honour as 'a right to respect.'⁶⁴

Fransen van de Putte on the other hand was brought up in a middle-class family. He was a self-made man, as he made his fortune in the sugar business in the Dutch East Indies. He was obviously less concerned with the aristocratic honour code, as he didn't feel particularly 'betrayed' by Aceh in the first place. Moreover, he didn't want to force Aceh to go to war without having first attempted a diplomatic approach. Only when the Dutch forces were defeated did Fransen van de Putte see no other alternative then to subdue the Sultan of Aceh by sheer military strength.

It seems evident that the importance of honour differed greatly per social class or caste; this is noted in the literature about honour and proved in the case studies presented in this thesis. Yet this study is too small to make any specific conclusions about honour in late-nineteenth century Dutch society, which, as Henk te Velde noted, was a corporate society, rigidly structured into many coteries, each with its own specific set of rules. A more comprehensive study is needed, ideally using more case studies and different types of sources, including newspapers for example, to gain a more complete picture. Thus far, no such study exists according to Te Velde.⁶⁵

Further research into Dutch honour would do well to analyse specific Dutch words as 'fatsoen' and 'deftigheid', a correlation noted but not further researched by Yme Kuiper in his analysis of the social stratification of late nineteenth-century Dutch society. He touched on the topic of honour, referring to Max Weber who already noted the similarities between Dutch 'deftigheid' and German *Ehrbarkeit* as early as 1905.⁶⁶ Due to the length of this thesis, his work has been omitted here, but his method of using Dutch novels as historical sources may also provide insight into the state of honour at the time. For the Dutch East Indies in particular, the works of Multatuli would be very interesting in this regard, as well as the public debate his work *Max Havelaar* ignited.

⁶⁴ Stewart, *Honor*, 21.

⁶⁵ Te Velde, 'Herenstijl en burgerzin', 172.

⁶⁶ Y. Kuiper, 'Eine rein bürgerliche Nation? – Adel und Politik in den Niederlanden im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert' in: J. Leonhard & C. Wieland, *What Makes the Nobility Noble? Comparative Perspectives from the Sixteenth to Twentieth Century* (Göttingen 2011) 203.

It seems there is still much work left to be done concerning Dutch honour, in particular in relation to imperialism. The case-studies in this thesis have proven at the very least that emotion is never entirely out of the question, and thus that to consider imperialism exclusively from a rational, political or economic vantage point is to leave a huge historiographical blind spot intact. Culturally determined value systems and codes of conduct, in this case honour codes, are relevant in determining human decision making, including political decision making. Especially the reflexive type of honour typical for the European aristocracy functioned as a means of social control, as losing one's honour meant being cast out of the honour group. Historians of imperialism should consider that this might also have applied to nations, as disrespectful treatment (diplomatically or otherwise) would have impugned a nation's honour, thereby forcing it to either regain honour through (military) counterattack or be forever dishonoured.

This would comply neatly with 'reluctant imperialism', that is to say, an imperialist nation that has not as primary goal to conquer other nations, but feels it has to do it for other reasons, such as maintaining stability in a region. To regain honour would fit perfectly in this description, yet it is seldom described as such.⁶⁷ Reluctant imperialism is usually associated with the British Empire of the nineteenth century, but with honour added to the equation, it might also be an apt description for Dutch imperialism. For although honour was seldom explicitly mentioned as a motivation for conduct, the sources examined here at least show that the highest-ranking Dutch officials were influenced by honour. Honour thus provided the moral framework to determine an adequate response to (perceived) threats to national honour, such as the Betrayal of Aceh.

Total word count: 8767

⁶⁷ See for example, C. Harvie & H.C.G. Matthew, *Nineteenth-Century Britain: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford 2000) 118.

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