

AT HOME IN THE TROPICS

Representations of the colonial home as a means of performing imperial power in the Dutch East Indies from 1880 to 1942

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Abstract

This thesis focusses on representations of the colonial home as a means of performing imperial power in the former Dutch colony of Indonesia (Dutch East Indies) between 1880 and 1942. It analyses idealized images of the home, the domestication of imperial power within the household and cultural meanings attached to domestic objects to analyse the performance of Europeanness in domestic home-making practices. It uses household manuals, architectural source material, memoirs and personal stories from a growing database on living in colonial homes (www.beyondthebungalow.com). This thesis argues that the theoretical framework of the home is useful to gain a better understanding of Dutch imperial history in the late colonial period in the Dutch East Indies.

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Introduction

Iedere vrouw, Indische of Europeesche, vergete nimmer het schooner Engelsche gezegde: *My house is my castle*. Daar ligt zooveel in die woorden. Het roept den zwerverling, in gedachten, zijn ouders en zijn geboortegrond, zijn ouderlijk huis voor den geest, een zelfde huis als dat, hetwelk hij nu, in den vreemde, zich gaat bouwen en inrichten. Onwillekeurig denkt hij aan zijn thuis, zijn geliefd thuis, zijn '*Home, sweet Home*'!¹

Johanna M.J. Catenius-van der Meijden wrote the household manual *Ons Huis in Indië* in 1908. This manual, dedicated to all women living in the Dutch East Indies, Indo-European housewives and married European women who just arrived in the colony, addressed questions on how to build, furnish and sustain your home as well as on proper ways of living, eating, dressing and behaving in the colony.² Catenius-van der Meijden mentioned that the phrase 'my house is my castle' calls up many feelings towards ones' parental home and motherland whilst living in a foreign country. Unconsciously one thinks about one's 'home, sweet home', she concluded. But what does she mean with these feelings of one's beloved home? What is the difference between house and home? And where, when and why does one feel at home? As recent studies on the home contend, house and home can well be two different things: home can be connected to a material structure, but a home is not always a house, so someone can live in a house without feeling 'at home'.³ This distinction is clear for Catenius-van der Meijden as well: building and decorating the house (*huis*) is not the same as thinking of home (*thuis*).

For a variety of reasons, historians focussed on the Dutch East Indies have emphasized the breaking with the *Indisch* way of life towards a European lifestyle from the end of the nineteenth century onwards. Jean Gelman Taylor has argued that the increased number of Dutch women moving to the Dutch East Indies led to cultural changes and had consequences for the

¹ J.M.J. Catenius-van der Meijden, *Ons huis in Indië: handboek bij de keuze, de inrichting, de bewoning en de verzorging van het huis met bijgebouwen en erf, naar de eischen der hygiëne, benevens raadgevingen en wenken op huishoudelijk gebied* (Semarang, 1908) 9. My translation: 'Every woman, *Indisch* or European, never forgets the beautiful English saying: my house is my castle. There is so much in these words. It calls to the wanderer, in his memories, his parents and place of birth, his parental home springs to mind. The same home, albeit in the present, which he seeks to build and decorate in an unknown land. Automatically, he thinks of his home, his beloved home, his "Home, sweet Home"!'.²

² When used in this thesis, Dutch East Indies refers to the political and social context associated with the colonial period. In the case of the use of Indonesia, I refer to the post-colonial, and thus contemporary, period.

³ Alison Blunt & Robyn Dowling, *Home* (Routledge, 2006) 10.

hybrid mestizo culture.⁴ This distinctive culture was neither Asian nor European, as it belonged to this *Indisch* social group, which was formed through centuries of intermarriage between Dutch men and Indonesian women.⁵ Ulbe Bosma has identified the transition from military to civilian migration as a key to understanding the break between Asian and European culture.⁶ He acknowledges the contrast between European women who just arrived in the colony and Indo-European women, but argues that the fact that they both belonged to the same social class was more important than these differences.⁷

During the late colonial period, between 1880 and 1942, a large group of European middle-class civilians migrated to the Dutch East Indies to work in trade, education and colonial enterprises.⁸ Scholars have argued that there were multiple reasons for this movement between motherland and colony. Firstly, the opening of the Suez Canal and the invention of steamships which decreased the time and resources which were necessary to move overseas. Secondly, the end of the cultivation system, which opened the economy for private capital and modern ideas on leisure and tourism. Taken together, these developments led to a democratisation of transport because travelling overseas became more affordable for people with various economic backgrounds.⁹ Bosma argues that it is incorrect to speak of the ‘verhollandsing van Indië’ because of the European (instead of Dutch) background of many newcomers and because many of the *Indisch* upper class were born in the Indies and educated in the Netherlands. As such, their lives were constantly divided between their country of birth and the Dutch metropole.¹⁰ However, other scholars have pointed out that changing notions of what was ‘European’ around this time challenged the distinctive hybrid *Indisch* culture.¹¹

At the end of the nineteenth century, race became a differentiator between ruler and ruled because of the rise of eugenics as a scientific discipline and the growing emphasis in

⁴ Jean Gelman Taylor, *The Social World of Batavia, European and Eurasians in Dutch Asia* (Wisconsin, 1983) XIX.

⁵ Jean Gelman Taylor, ‘Slippery identities: race, religion and destiny in 17th and 18th century Java’ in Côté and Loes Westerbeek (eds), *Recalling the Indies*, 30.

⁶ Ulbe Bosma, *De Indiëvaarders. Verhalen van Nederlanders die naar Indië vertrokken* (Amsterdam, 2010) 20.

⁷ Bosma, *De Indiëvaarders*, 23.

⁸ Ibid., 28.

⁹ Esther Wils, *Wonen in Indië. House and Home in the Dutch East Indies* (Stichting TongTong, 2000) 95., Susie Protschky, ‘The Colonial Table: Food, Culture and Dutch Identity in Colonial Indonesia’ in *Australian Journal of Politics and History* Volume 54, Number 3 (2008) 348., Adrian Vickers, *A History of Modern Indonesia* (Cambridge, second edition, 2015) 10-11.

¹⁰ Bosma, *De Indiëvaarders*, 29.

¹¹ See for example the work of Jean Gelman Taylor, Susie Protschky, Ann Laura Stoler and Elsbeth-Locher Scholten.

official circles on the boundary between coloniser and colonised.¹² This institutionalisation of race was common for European colonisers and was accompanied by ideas on racial superiority and the 'white man's burden'. In 1900 the archipelago fell under full colonial control because of increased Dutch military action and the Ethical Policy, the Dutch 'civilising mission', which was proclaimed by Queen Wilhelmina in 1901. This policy intended to bring progress and prosperity to the indigenous people.

Legally, this led to the formation of three distinct groups in a structure based on racial stratification: 'Europeans', 'Foreign Orientals' (Chinese and Arabs) and 'Natives' (Indonesians).¹³ These legal groups were not homogenous. The European group included white administrators, rich plantation owners, missionaries, poor Indo-European clerks and their families. There was a split in the Dutch group between *blijvers* and *trekkers*, or settlers and sojourners.¹⁴ The *blijvers* had lived in the Indies for generations and had their own hybrid cultural identity that combined indigenous and European aspects. The *trekkers* or *totoks* were born in the Netherlands and had no familial or emotional connections to the Indies; they simply wanted to make money and return home.¹⁵ This division in groups based on racial stratification was problematic since 'whiteness' was a contested boundary of racial difference because of the persistence of concubinage and intermarriage. Defining who belonged to the European group was not merely possible by distinguishing visual characteristics but rather the definition of whiteness was based on emphasizing European and bourgeois affiliations despite the very real possibility of hybrid historical lineages.¹⁶

This European category demanded 'an ideal model of white bourgeois domesticity' in which the performance of 'Europeanness' became a crucial indicator of someone's membership to this elite colonial society.¹⁷ As Protschky and Stoler both have argued, defining who was

¹² Susie Protschky argued that the British administration between 1811 and 1816, when the Netherlands were occupied by France during the Napoleonic wars, was the first step in creating this break. See Protschky, 'The Colonial Table', 347. Ann Laura Stoler focused on the making and remaking of these historically shifting social categories. See Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 2002).

¹³ Vickers, *A History of Modern Indonesia*, 29., Elsbeth Locher-Scholten, *Women and the Colonial State. Essays on Gender and Modernity in the Netherlands Indies 1900-1942* (Amsterdam University Press, 2000) 6-9.

¹⁴ Vickers, *A History of Modern Indonesia*, 26.

¹⁵ Ibid., 26-29., Bosma, *The Indiëganger*, 18-19.

¹⁶ Protschky, 'The Colonial Table', 347., Vickers, *A History of Modern Indonesia*, 26.

¹⁷ Protschky, 'The Colonial Tabele', 348., Ann Laura Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's 'History of Sexuality' and the Colonial Order of Things* (Durham and London, 1995) 116. Following Susie Protschky, the term Europeanness will be used in its broader sense to refer to practices which reflect European values and beliefs and which carried ideas on belonging to an ideal elitist colonial society.

European and who was not was partly decided by law, but also informed by social connections and cultural affiliation.¹⁸ This meant that performing Europeanness became more important than just looking white or having a Dutch father especially for women whose nationality depended on whom they married. In colonial society, this led to a tension between showing Dutch knowledge of, and thus power over, indigenous peoples and traditions and distancing oneself from these traditions in order to uphold ‘Dutch’ values’.¹⁹ Maintaining Dutch culture meant that Europeans had to show their ability to be a colonist, which required both familiarity with *Indisch* culture and having a local network. Elsbeth Locher-Scholten’s research shows that there existed a normative discourse on fashion and food for European women in the Dutch East Indies that stimulated distancing from Indonesian culture to a shared Europeanised colonial culture. Living in this framework of the colonial nation-state led to the construction of an ‘illusionary Netherlands in the Tropics’.²⁰

Performing Europeanness included certain practices such as eating and dressing which were all linked to exercising power and were embedded in ideas on race, class and cultural identity.²¹ For example, the *rijsttafel*, or rice table, developed as a symbol for colonial eating because it showed continuity of European interaction with Indonesian cooking practices but at the same time it turned the eating of rice, which was often seen as inappropriate food for colonists, into a labour-intensive festivity. Servants had to cook and serve the meal which consisted out of several dishes which were consumed by the colonial ruling class.²² Thus, European expressions of empire are less ways to understand Asian societies than a reflection of colonial assumptions and ideals.²³

The arrival of many Dutch-born women in the Dutch East Indies, combined with ideas on modern living and feelings of white superiority, influenced ideas on creating a home to sustain a European identity in the Indies which underpinned Dutch colonial rule. This thesis analyses the colonial home and home-making practices to further contribute to this scholarship on the performance of Europeanness to create an ideal model of white elite domesticity. It aims to understand how the European identity was constructed within the colonial home and focusses on the female role of exercising imperial power within and beyond the household.

¹⁸ Protschky, ‘The Colonial Table’, 349., Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial power*’ 55.

¹⁹ Protschky, ‘The Colonial Table’ 349.

²⁰ Locher-Scholten, *Women and the Colonial State*, chapter 4.

²¹ Protschky, ‘The Colonial table’, 348.

²² Ibidem, 351.

²³ Ibid., 348., Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial power*’ 46.

Over the past thirty years, many studies have focussed on the role of women within the private sphere of the home and their role in exercising colonial power. The idea that ‘woman’ or ‘man’ refers merely to the biological category was dismissed and replaced by the social construction of female-male and femininity-masculinity oppositions.²⁴ This dualism also shaped an understanding of the home, which was set apart according to categories such as public and private or domestic and civic.²⁵ Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall’s research based on the British middle-class suggests that the separate spheres ideology emerged out of a division between home and work because of industrialization from the eighteenth century onwards.²⁶ The concept shows the socially constructed notion of what is regarded as private and public and how this is reflected in the gendered binaries of female and male. Moreover, the categories are interdependent: without defining public space, there is no private space.²⁷

This separate spheres concept has been subject to considerable criticism. The most important of these criticisms is that the lines between public and private were never so well defined in practice; for example, women worked and travelled in the public sphere as well.²⁸ The home itself can be seen as a combination of public and private space. Pierre Bourdieu’s study on the Berber house shows the gendering of different spaces within the home, which reflect the discrepancy in status between men and women in Berber society. He analyses objects, events and language associated with spaces of the home as a microcosm of a larger culture.²⁹ Scholarship on separate spheres and female and male spaces within the home are important in studying colonial rule not merely as a masculine activity but also as something in which women played a role.³⁰

A number of scholars have taken a closer look at the women and domesticity within the colonial context. Julia Clancy-Smith and Frances Gouda analyse how the vocabulary of femininity and masculinity pervaded political rhetoric at home and shaped visions of empire abroad in Dutch and French colonial history.³¹ Nupur Chaudhuri and Margaret Strobel analyse

²⁴ Simon Gunn, *History and Cultural Theory* (Great Britain, 2006) 142-146.

²⁵ Blunt, *Home*, 17.

²⁶ Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes. Men and women of the English middle class 1780-1850* (Great Britain, 1987).

²⁷ Blunt, *Home*, 18-19.

²⁸ Judith Flanders, *The Making of Home The 500-year Story of How our Houses became Homes* (London, 2014) 100.

²⁹ Pierre Bourdieu, ‘The Berber house or the world reversed’ *Échanges et communications: Mélanges offerts à Claude Lévi-Strauss à l’occasion de son 60^e anniversaire* (Paris, The Hague, Mouton, 1970).

³⁰ Diane Lawrence, *Genteel Women Empire and Domestic Material Culture, 1840-1910*. (Manchester University Press, 2012).

³¹ Julia Clancy-Smith and Frances Gouda, *Domesticating the Empire. Race, Gender and Family Life*

the interaction between Western and non-Western women and the Western women's experiences to understand the relation between gender, race and class and the involvement and resistance of European women in the colonial project.³² Elsbeth Locher-Scholten's edited volume *Women and the Colonial State* analyses the relationship between European and Indonesian women and the construction of gender.³³ She questions the connection between the colonial project and the role of women as active agents contributing to the colonial framework or as victims based on the role of women in society (motherhood).³⁴ As such, the colonial project was not merely a masculine activity but also shaped by women and their domestic roles.

Another significant contribution to the research on the female role of exercising imperial power is done from the theoretical framework of the home. Alison Blunt has analysed the home in a colonial context and focussed on the exercise of imperial power within the household by analysing British household manuals for women who moved to India.³⁵ Blunt considers the domestication of imperial power within the household not merely as a practice that is bound to the private sphere of home but rather, she focusses on mobility of women to and beyond their colonial homes in the public space of empire as well.³⁶ By examining the way domestic life was intertwined with imperial rule in fostering domestic and imperial values in their colonial homes in India, she provides a better understanding of imperial home-making practices.³⁷

In this relatively new field of research on the home, the important book *Home* was written by Alison Blunt and Robyn Dowling who conceptualize home to understand the socio-spatial relations and emotions connected to home.³⁸ Their definition of home refers both to the physical structure of a house as well as to the emotional connection to home. This makes home a spatial concept: 'something which is material and imaginative and which is created through home-making practices'.³⁹

Although recent scholarship on the home focusses on the British empire, the book *House and Home in the Dutch East Indies* edited by Esther Wils is one of the first attempts to

in French and Dutch Colonialism (University Press of Virginia, 1998).

³² Nupur Chaudhuri, Margaret Strobel, *Western Women and Imperialism* (Indiana University Press, 1992) 5.

³³ Elsbeth Locher-Scholten, *Women and the Colonial State. Essays on Gender and Modernity in the Netherlands Indies 1900-1942* (Amsterdam University Press, 2000).

³⁴ Locher-Scholten, *Women and the Colonial State*, 37.

³⁵ Alison Blunt, 'Imperial geographies of home: British domesticity in India, 1886 – 1925' in *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* (Volume 24, Issue 4, December 1999) 421.

³⁶ Blunt, 'Imperial geographies of home', 423.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 438.

³⁸ Blunt, *Home*, 3.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 2.

reconstruct the experience of living in an *Indisch* home.⁴⁰ This book assembles photographs related to main activities that took place in the home: eating, sleeping, washing, playing and entertaining. It offers an overview of living in a colonial home and, using literature and recent letters, describes and depicts domestic life based on physical features of the house and personal experiences of occupants.⁴¹ Although this book is an important starting point in offering a visual overview of the *Indisch* home, it does not question what the home means and what and whose values it represents.

A considerable amount of literature has thus been published on Dutch colonial society and the way practices such as eating, dressing and rules of etiquette reflected imperial power, as well as on the exercise of colonial rule by Dutch women in relation to their Indonesian servants. Yet the current historiography on Dutch imperial history lacks a critical analysis of the colonial home in the Dutch East Indies. This thesis aims to contribute to the debate on the way home-making practices reflect imperial power and construct a colonial identity. It follows Stoler, Protschky and Locher-Scholten in their argument that the late colonial period changed the distinctive hybrid *Indisch* culture and identity because the notion on what was European changed.

This thesis analyses the extent to which representations of the *Indisch* home and home-making practices can be seen as a marker of imperial power in the Dutch East Indies between 1880 and 1942. To answer this question, this thesis will firstly analyse the *Indisch* home: what values did it stand for? Whose values was it constructed for and against? Is the home representing Dutch values or European values or colonial values? How was imperial power reflected in home-making practices? Secondly, it will focus on the changing *Indisch* identity in the late colonial period. What does the colonial home tell us about *Indisch* identity? How was this identity challenged by notions of Europeanness and how was this reflected in the colonial home? This research will analyse various representations of the *Indisch* home to answer to what extent these representations and home-making practices reflected imperial power and the creation of a colonial identity.

The first chapter will trace the history of the colonial home by focussing on the shift from colonial to Dutch homes in the late colonial period. I will use several pamphlets and magazines to gain a better understanding of the architectural debate surrounding ‘traditional’ and ‘modern’ houses in order to answer the first question on the meaning of home. This

⁴⁰ Esther Wils, *Wonen in Indië. House and Home in the Dutch East Indies* (Stichting Tongtong, 2000).

⁴¹ Wils, *Wonen in Indië*, 72.

architectural debate did not merely discuss architectural styles but also encompassed ideas on how the house should be turned into a home. Houses or homes are an important part of social identity as they carry both symbolic meaning and are a material reality. Both interior and exterior domestic architecture followed certain rules on what colonial homes should look like and how women should create a ‘home away from home’.

The second chapter analyses the material culture of the home to gain a deeper understanding of how Dutch cultural values and meanings were embedded in objects such as furniture and furnishings. Writing material culture history is a growing field within the historical discipline.⁴² In combining material, visual and textual sources on the colonial home, I will analyse objects and things and their ability to shape humans to further develop our knowledge on the way imperial power was reflected in domestic objects. As a case study, I will use the reconstruction of *het Indische huis* at the exhibition *De Vrouw* in Amsterdam in 1913. This house was immensely popular and reflects how the idealized image of the tropical home was physically reconstructed in the Netherlands. This connects to the way Europeans imagined themselves in the colony, the construction of an imagined Netherlands in the tropics and the significance to materialize this imagined home in the metropole.

However, home is not merely a material structure which carries cultural meanings or an imaginative concept based on home-making practices; feelings of home are also affected by transnational migration. Blunt and Dowling argue that transnational homes, seen from the perspective of people who must leave home for economic reasons or, because of war, are shaped by the ‘interplay of both mobile and located homes and identities and by the processes and practices of home-making both within particular places and across transnational space’.⁴³

The third chapter will focus on the home as a set of feelings and the emotional connections to home based on the *Indisch* diaspora after the Japanese occupation in 1942. This thesis cannot do right to the traumatic events of the Japanese occupation, the detached feelings of home and the transnational *Indisch* identity but it can cautiously shed light on the relationship between leaving home and the imaging of home as it is reflected memories of individuals. I will use the framework of memory and imperial nostalgia to analyse the representation of home in the so-called *tempo doeloe*, ‘the good old days’.

For this research, I will use several sources to analyse various representations of the colonial home. I will use household manuals written for colonial housewives to analyse the

⁴² Anne Gerritsen & Giorgio Riello, *Writing Material Culture History* (Bloomsbury, 2015) 5.

⁴³ Blunt & Dowling, *Home*, 196.

female historical experience of daily life within the colonial home. These household manuals reflect idealized images on how women should decorate their home. Exploring these sources offers an insight in representations of the colonial home and imperial domesticity in the public domain.⁴⁴ To gain a better understanding of the actual experience of living in a colonial home, I will use novels, memoirs, photographs and questionnaires filled in by participants of the crowdsourcing platform *Beyond the Bungalow*.⁴⁵ These questionnaires focussed on the exterior and interior of the colonial home and the participants lived experiences of living in the home.

The variety of source material could well be its limitation. Although, idealized images are reflected in the household manuals, it is difficult to measure the actual practice of imperial power or empire in everyday life. Have women used these manuals? And if so, would they follow up all the advice? The manuals give insight in underlying values and beliefs on how women *should* create a home but it remains difficult to determine whether the advice was turned into practice. It does show however how Europeans imagined themselves in the colony. The oral testimonies, which are all based on memories and coloured throughout the years, are individual stories or fragmented memories of people who were born in the late colonial period. They represent some parts of the former colonial residents but are not representative for certain groups or types: the accounts are individual rather than general.⁴⁶

I will approach the sources from a material culture approach. During the 1980s and 1990s, the discipline of history changed because of the cultural turn which led to new methodologies and approaches in understanding the past. The deconstruction of discourses to reveal hidden power relations and a focus on representations and practices influenced historical research. However, there remained two unanswered questions; firstly, the possibility of cultural interpretation and the validating of historical constructions and secondly, the ability for individual agency.⁴⁷ The postmodern notion of deconstructing discourses meant for the study of history that it is impossible to interpret the past and construct a narrative based on historical

⁴⁴ Blunt, 'Imperial Geographies of home' 438.

⁴⁵ This research conducted belonged to the comparative research project *Beyond the Bungalow* of Britta Schilling. This research considers the private dimensions of European overseas empire through the lens of domestic space to deepen our understanding of colonial everyday life. The website www.beyondthebungalow.com consists of a crowdsourcing platform where people can upload stories and memories of living in colonial homes during the age of empire.

⁴⁶ I will follow Joost Coté and Loes Westerbeek who interviewed people about their colonial childhood for the book *Recalling the Indies* (Bloomsbury, 2005). They argue as well that the interviewed person do not reflect certain groups or types but rather their individual account is used to contribute to a 'total collage of 'recalling the Indies''.

⁴⁷ Gunn, *History and Cultural Theory*, 183., Anna Green, *Cultural History: Theory and History* (New York, 2008) 64-65., Harvey Green, 'Cultural History and the Material(s) Turn', *Cultural History* 1.1 (2012) 74.

sources, because this would be a construction full of hidden power relations which need to be deconstructed. Although postmodern thought still influenced the practice of cultural history, there are also new developments within the field such as the study of materials.

This interdisciplinary approach towards material culture, which refers in its broadest sense to all human-made objects, has several benefits for historical scholarship.⁴⁸ Giorgio Riello argues that historians can relate to material cultures in three different ways: history from things, history of things and history and things.⁴⁹ The first concentrates on the use of objects as primary sources, the second analyses the ‘relationship between objects, people and their representations’ and the third considers material objects outside of history. In this thesis, I will follow the second approach. The study of materials provides a better understanding of the past because it looks further than just written sources which only give insight in cultures which used a written language and people who had the ability to write. By studying historical objects, historians can understand how people created meaning and represented the world through their use of objects.⁵⁰ Additionally, objects are not merely things that are shaped by people but are active agents with the ability to shape people as well. Daily used objects reveal many things about values, ideas and beliefs of individuals and the culture these people were living in.⁵¹

What does a material culture approach for the study of the colonial home mean? Rather than merely analysing things in the house such as furniture, crockery, paintings or pianos it focusses on the way these objects create meanings for its occupants. Material things in a house might have completely different meanings than the same thing in a different location, for example a piano in a house could mean wealth or well-mannered behaviour while a piano in a restaurant could be there to provide background music. As Gerritsen and Riello have argued: “objects have meanings for the people who produce and own, purchase and gift, use and consume them”.⁵²

Home encompasses many different things; it is a physical structure where people live but it is also an idea and an imaginary which speaks to feelings of belonging (as in the phrase

⁴⁸ See for example Harvey Green’s article where he gives an overview of the study of material culture within the cultural history discipline (Harvey Green, ‘Cultural History and the Material(s) Turn’, *Cultural History* 1.1 (2012)). The book *Writing Material Culture History* offers various insights on how material culture engages with history and how it could be used in writing histories. Anne Gerritsen and Giorgio Riello, *Writing Material Culture History*, Bloomsbury, 2015).

⁴⁹ Giorgio Riello, ‘Things that shape history. Material culture and historical narratives’ in Karen Harvey (ed.) *History and Material Culture. A Student’s Guide to Approaching Alternative Sources* (Routledge, 2009) 25-26.

⁵⁰ Leora Auslander, ‘Beyond Words’, *American Historical Review* 110/4 (October, 2005) 1015-1016.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Gerritsen and Riello, *Writing Material Culture History*, 2.

‘home, sweet home’) as well as feelings of fear (home should be a safe place).⁵³ This thesis will analyse three facets of homes and home-making in the Dutch East Indies in the late colonial period: the process through which houses become ideal homes, domestic material culture and the associated meanings and values attached to objects in the home, and the memories of living in a colonial home. Together, these elements will help us understand how the colonial home contributed to the performance of imperial power. This contributes to the historiography of Dutch imperial history by exploring representations of the colonial home as a marker of imperial power and by analysing the shifting perceptions of the *Indisch* identity. By using the *Indische* home to identify meanings and values in the late colonial period, this research aims to further our knowledge on the meaning of home and belonging in a colonial context.

⁵³ Blunt, *Home*, 2.

Chapter 1: Idealized images of a home away from home

In the late colonial period, there was a noticeable increase in the stream of Dutch migrants to the Dutch East Indies. These newcomers were born in the Netherlands and did not have any familial bonds with the *Indisch* community and its hybrid, mestizo culture which had been established since the late seventeenth century because of intermarriage and concubinage. In the colonial social system, both Indo-Europeans, *blijvers* as European newcomers, *trekkers*, belonged to the legal group of ‘Europeans’.⁵⁴ The arrival of newcomers, however, changed the character of the mixed colonial society, and especially the Indo-European community, because it challenged notions on what it meant to be European.

In the late nineteenth century, architectural ideas on how to build houses in the metropole and the colony were influenced by economic and demographic developments such as streamlined transport which made moving building material easier and urbanisation to cities. European architectural notions also influenced buildings and ideas on building in the colonies. This chapter will explore the *Indische* house: what did the house look like? How was it built and by whom? Furthermore, it will take a closer look at the way the *Indische* home transformed from the beginning of the twentieth century to a more European home.

This chapter concentrates on published household manuals written for colonial housewives to explore representations of the *Indische* home in the public space. It will focus on visions of the ideal colonial home as reflected in the guides and it questions the influence this imaginary had on creating and sustaining an *Indisch* home. In addition, it is important to focus on architectural magazines and pamphlets because their writers, mostly architects, were responsible for building houses in the colony.

The *Indisch* home and its transformation towards a European modern home will be the centre of analysis. How did the arrival of many Dutch people influence life in the Indies? How did Europeans imagined themselves living in the tropics and what did this mean for the performance of Europeanness? How should colonial housewives create a home away from ‘home’? The chapter aims to understand the representation of the home in the late colonial society.

⁵⁴ Vickers, *A Modern History of Indonesia*, 26-27.

1.1. Building houses in the tropics

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, Dutch colonial expansion started with a few trading ports across the Indonesian archipelago set up by the United East India Company (*Verenigde Oost-Indische Company* or *VOC*). Throughout Company times, colonial society consisted of both freed and enslaved Asians (mostly from Bali and India), Europeans (soldiers and settlers) and several other population groups, which varied between cities (for example, on Java there was a prominent Chinese community).⁵⁵ There was a legal and bureaucratic division between these groups based on religion, language and region of origin which the Company wanted to maintain by forbidding mixed relationships and concubinage. This proved impossible; mixed marriages were allowed as a more decent variant of concubinage, so in many cities over the course of the years a group of Indo-Europeans emerged.⁵⁶

Focusing on the colonial capital, Batavia, Jean Gelman Taylor has shed light on these Dutch social relations with Asians and the distinctive mestizo culture which emerged because of this interaction. This culture was composed of many cultural influences and for this reason neither Dutch nor Indonesian.⁵⁷ Until the twentieth century, the largest group Europeans living mostly on Java consisted of two distinct groups. The first was comprised of VOC military personnel and later civil servants who were stationed in the Indies for a short period before returning home or being sent to another place. The second group consisted of the families that grew through intermarriage and formed the mestizo, or *Indisch*, community. These families had a mixed ancestral lineage.⁵⁸

In the early eighteenth century, living conditions in Batavia declined because of its location on swamps, crowded quarters, malaria, cholera and epidemics. Therefore, many wealthy citizens, mostly mixed *Indisch* families, moved out to country estates.⁵⁹ They left behind the first Dutch dwellings built in Batavia by the VOC which resembled the seventeenth-century urban houses in the Netherlands.⁶⁰ These houses were built of brick, with high, narrow two-storey fronts with steps up to the front door; they were exact copies of the canal houses in

⁵⁵ Taylor, *The Social World of Batavia*, 4., Bosma, Raben en Willems, *De geschiedenis van Indische Nederlanders*, 25-26.

⁵⁶ Bosma, *De geschiedenis van Indische Nederlanders*, 28.

⁵⁷ Taylor, *The Social World of Batavia*, XIX.

⁵⁸ Bosma, *De geschiedenis van Indische Nederlanders*, 28.

⁵⁹ Taylor, *The Social World of Batavia*, 52., Wils, *Home and House in the Dutch East Indies*, 87.

⁶⁰ Taylor gives an extensive overview of the origins and conquering of the city of Batavia by governor-general J.P. Coen and the subsequent sieges of Batavia led by Sultan Agung of Mataram. (Taylor, *The Social World of Batavia*, chapter 1).

Amsterdam. Minor differences included the by Chinese architecture inspired rotated roof which was built parallel to the street instead of from the back to the front as was the case in the Netherlands, and white plasterwork which reflected the sunlight and was cooler than exposed brick. The most striking difference was the outbuildings at the reverse side of the house, which were used for housing slaves.⁶¹

The new country houses were built by local engineers who distanced themselves from the traditional Dutch VOC way of building and were instead inspired by their surroundings and Indonesian building styles. These country houses were spacious, well-ventilated villas in the southern areas of Bandung and Bogor and were built in a hybrid Dutch-Indonesian style.⁶² The princely residences on Java became inspirational sources for the ground-plan because of the open front and back galleries and inner courtyard which would provide the best possible light and ventilation. The upper floor, however, was enclosed, as in Dutch houses. This new building style required creative engineers but demanded adaptation by its occupants as well. Indo-European occupants had to adapt their style of living to an open space instead of the private domestic space of their old homes.⁶³ However, people experienced the airy comfort and soon became accustomed to the new spatial divisions, so the style became popular and was imported to colonial towns as well throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Besides providing a healthy environment on the mainland, these landed estates gave rich citizens ways to display their wealth. In these new living conditions, their Eurasian culture could develop even more.⁶⁴

The country house consisted of a mixture of Javanese influences but was also inspired by the European 'Empire style' based on classical ancient Greek structures combined with baroque and rococo architecture. Two other inspirations were the British bungalow for its single-level structure, including a veranda, as well as the romantic European belief of idyllic country life.⁶⁵ The eighteenth-century European movement, Romanticism, was characterized by an emphasis on emotion, nature and past, and influenced thoughts on country life as well. In 1913, the magazine *Het Nederlandsch-Indische Huis Oud en Nieuw* published an article on

⁶¹ Wils, *Wonen in Indië*, 87. The following article analysed the way early modern Dutch style architecture reflected architecture at home but was hybrid at the same time in using local materials and forms. Marsely Kehoe, 'Imaginary Gables: The Visual Culture of Dutch Architecture in the Indies' in *Journal of Early Modern History* 20 (2016) 462-493. Recently there is scholarly attention for the Dutch slavery past in the Netherlands Indies, see for example Reggie Baay, *Daar werd iets gruwelijks verricht. Slavernij in Nederlands-Indië* (Amsterdam, 2015).

⁶² *Ibid.*, 88.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 88.

⁶⁴ Taylor, *The social world of Batavia*, 52.

⁶⁵ Wils, *Wonen in Indië*, 88-89.

VOC houses in and surrounding the city of Batavia because its readers requested more detailed information on this topic.⁶⁶ The author argued that it seemed like his ancestors were not concerned with ventilation and heat and as such the houses were exact copies of the ones in the Netherlands: symmetrical streets with bridges across canals. The country houses, however, ‘with their galleries and spacious courtyard[s] [are] extremely suitable for the tropical climate’.⁶⁷ Thus, the colonial country houses became tropical homes which were built in a hybrid Indo-European style.

From the beginning of the twentieth century, Modernist architecture was introduced to the Indies which meant the building style was adapted to the industrialized society and consisted of new sober, brick buildings. Modernist architecture combined with increased immigration of Dutch nationals, who brought their ideas on modernity and belief in European superiority, and imposed this via the Ethical Policy of the Dutch government. Increased European migration and economic developments, such as streamlined transport and a boom in the construction of houses, offices, banks and railway offices, led to urban expansion. The cost of land increased due to this, and smaller houses were built on smaller plots, which led to more densely populated urban areas and resulted in housing and sanitary problems.⁶⁸

Pharmacist Hendrik Freerk Tillema, member of the municipality in Semarang, wrote the book *Van Wonen en Bewonen. Van Bouwen, Huis en Erf* in 1913.⁶⁹ His aim was to improve the living conditions in Semarang by raising awareness for the miserable housing and sanitary conditions. Since the nineteenth century, the housing question became relevant in many European countries and its colonies because of population growth but also because of ideas on social welfare in a modern society and issues of hygiene. Unhealthy and poor quality houses needed to be improved and thus public housing became an important part of this social question which was in line with the Ethical Policy as well.⁷⁰

Tillema addressed different issues surrounding the living conditions in Semarang in particular and the Dutch East Indies in general. He distinguished between European houses in the colony and houses for indigenous people, although he did argue that living conditions

⁶⁶ *Het Nederlandsch-Indische Huis Oud en Nieuw*, No 2, Juli 1913 ‘Oude woningen in en nabij de stad Batavia’ 113 – 124.

⁶⁷ *Het Nederlandsch-Indische Huis Oud en Nieuw*, ‘Oude woningen in en nabij de stad Batavia’, 115. My translation of original text: ‘ (...) met hare galerijen en ruime erven [zijn] uitermate geschikt voor het klimaat’.

⁶⁸ Wils, *Wonen in Indië*, 95.

⁶⁹ H.F. Tillema, *Van Wonen en Bewonen. Van Bouwen, Huis en Erf* (Tjandi-Samarang, 1913).

⁷⁰ Friso Wielenga, *Geschiedenis van Nederland. Van de Opstand tot heden* (Boom Amsterdam 2012) 251., Remieg Aerts e.a. *Het land van kleine gebaren. Politieke geschiedenis van Nederland 1780-1990* (Nijmegen/Amsterdam, 4^e druk, 2004) 153-161.

should be improved in both: '[d]e toestanden op woninggebied zijn voor geen der bewoners van Samarang ideaal. Aan de massa, de armen, van welk ras ook, zijn ze zelfs zeer bijzonder slecht! Groote sterfte is hiervan een der gevolgen'.⁷¹ Tillema advised to not merely develop construction plans with the aim of building hygienic houses suitable for the tropic climate, but also to install a sanitary service that would be in charge of maintaining good living conditions.⁷² This service needed to enforce regulations and ensure that proper buildings did not turn into unhygienic houses because of their inhabitants. Tillema assumed that the lack for hygienic houses was not the problem of the architects themselves, but rather the cause of misinformed inhabitants. The solution, according to Tillema, would be that instead of being strict, the sanitary service needed to focus on advising and teaching people how to live healthy lives. Therefore, one of Tillema's recommendations was that: '[d]e architecten moeten leeren tropische huizen te bouwen, de huurders moeten die leeren waardeeren'.⁷³ He compared the Indies to British India and other European colonies which shows how much the ideas of Dutch housing planners were embedded within a larger European idea of a civilization mission and the 'burden' to educate the indigenous population.

Who are the tenants Tillema is speaking of? He makes a clear distinction between natives and Europeans. Whereas the native has a lack of knowledge and needs to be civilized, the *totok* prefers a Dutch house instead of an *Indisch* house even though the latter is much more suitable for the tropical climate. For Tillema, supporter of the old *Indisch* house the European wish for modern homes leads to unhygienic conditions. For this reason, it is important to build houses which meet the needs for ventilation, coolness and a constant temperature and should keep away insects and malaria. As Tillema mentioned 't Is dankzij de moderne tropische hygiëne, mogelijk hier even gezond te zijn als in patria'.⁷⁴ This contradicts his own notion that modern homes lead to unhygienic conditions because he argued that 'modern tropical hygiene' leads to the 'same hygienic standards as in the Netherlands'. This could mean that Tillema sees the care for hygienic issues as something modern and colonial instead of indigenous and

⁷¹ Tillema, *Van Wonen en Bewonen*. 153. My translation: '[t]he conditions for housing are for none of the inhabitants of Semarang ideal. For the masses, the poor, regardless of their race, are these conditions extremely bad! High mortality rates are one of the consequences'.

⁷² Ibid., 146.

⁷³ Ibid., 153, 146. My translation: '[t]he architects must learn how to build tropical homes, the tenants must learn to appreciate them'.

⁷⁴ Ibid. 153. My translation: '[T]hanks to modern hygienic conditions, we can live here just as healthy as in the metropole'.

Indisch. Thus, Tillema wants to use certain elements of the *Indisch* home but aims to construct a new type of modern home suitable for the tropical climate.

This appropriating of certain elements becomes apparent in ideas of individual architects who started with building and developing houses to find solutions for the housing problem as well. Wils mentions the architect Moojen who ‘loathed the gimcrack villas thrown up at the close of the nineteenth century and sought simplicity and transparency of form allied to honest construction and sparing decoration’.⁷⁵ Moojen thought the unstructured buildings of the colonial villas with their various influences such as decorated verandas and overgrown gardens, did not fit the ideal of one *Indisch* architectural style. ‘He [Moojen] wanted to abandon the conventions to the past and base his work on local conditions, such as the climate and the available building materials and manpower’, as Wils states.⁷⁶

This architectural debate on how to build houses suitable for the tropical climate led to the publication of the magazine *Het Nederlandsch-Indische huis Oud en Nieuw* which was founded in 1913 and appeared twice a year until 1915. The architectural studio of Cuypers and Hulswit based in Weltevreden, Java, wanted to publish this magazine with the aim of developing a ‘modern European architectural style in the Indies’.⁷⁷ This style would flourish ‘door ernstige studie van het schoone der oude Inlandsche cultuur en hoe de moderne Inlandsche kunstnijveren, de invloed van het Europeesche niet kunnende ontgaan, door goede leiding en verstandige toepassing, ook zonder de hen aangeboren gaven te dooden, op hun beurt van de Europeesche cultuur hun voordeel kunnen doen’.⁷⁸ By developing a European architectural style in the Indies based on the indigenous culture and contemporary local arts and crafts but under European supervision, the architects made clear how the indigenous population could learn from the European culture as well.

Thus, the colonial country house became an example of something old and unstructured which did not fit into the ‘modern’ Dutch colonial society. This meant that the ground-plan and the various functions of the ‘old’ *Indisch* house would change. The front gallery, or veranda, was replaced by the so-called *platje* or patio and the social life slowly started to happen inside

⁷⁵ Wils, *Wonen in Indië*, 96.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 96.

⁷⁷ *Het Nederlandsch-Indische Huis Oud en Nieuw* No 1, Jan, 1913 – preface.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, My translation: ‘by severe study of the beautiful old native culture and how the modern native arts and crafts, cannot ignore the European influence, by adequate leadership and decent adaptation, even without killing their congenital gifts, and as such learning from the European culture as well’.

the home in living rooms instead of outside on the veranda.⁷⁹ The new houses became reflections of Dutch villas in suburbs in the Netherlands.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, European colonial society in the Dutch East Indies consisted of both Indo-Europeans, who lived in *Indisch* houses according to a more nineteenth century lifestyle, and Dutch newcomers who lived in small modern Dutch homes striving towards an ideal image of the white bourgeoisie.⁸⁰ These two groups, with all the varieties within them, both had the social status of 'European' which would mean their members belonged to an elite colonial society. As mentioned before and argued by Protschky and Stoler, to determine who was European and who was not was based on the performance of Europeanness rather than having merely Dutch ancestral lineage.⁸¹ This European identity was based on ideas of being a capable colonist and encompassed knowledge and familiarity with *Indisch* customs and traditions and required a local network. This was also reflected in ideas on new modern homes: although these homes should be well-ventilated and spacious, they had to be different from the *Indisch* house. Thus, the modern homes would use elements such as the *platje* which showed familiarity with the traditional veranda but was not the same because it was smaller and not surrounding the house, to differentiate between the old and the new. The idealized late colonial home in the Dutch East Indies was a Dutch suburban inspired house with traditional, *Indisch*, elements such as the *platje*. It is important to examine these idealized images further to explore how home-making practices could turn a house into a home and what idealized images of the home meant.

1.2. Idealized images of the colonial home

The nineteenth-century life of *Indisch* families was adapted to the tropical heat and would follow the climate by using the coolness of the early morning for activities and the hottest hours of the day to rest. Around four, people would have tea and around six, they would gather for dinner. Life took place behind the house at the back veranda, a place where children could play, people could relax and which was a meeting place between servants and the family members.⁸² Servants were an indispensable part of the *Indisch* family. Extensive research on the relationship and European ambivalence towards Indonesian and Javanese servants has been

⁷⁹ Wils, *Wonen in Indië*, 112.

⁸⁰ Pattynama, 'The Indisch Family', 52-53.

⁸¹ Protschky, 'The Colonial Table', 348., Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire*, 116.

⁸² Pattynama, 'The Indisch Family', 54., Wils, *House and Home in the Dutch East Indies*, 104.

done by Locher-Scholten.⁸³ She argues that this relationship was based on otherness, or ‘orientalism’, and nearness, or ‘familisation’.⁸⁴ This shows the same tension between creating a distance based on othering the Javanese servant and using racist language in household discourse but at the same time it shows familiarity by incorporating the servants into the family. The recently arrived Dutch women knew they needed the servants to maintain a successful household but they looked down upon them as well. Management of servants became a contentious subject which gave rise to the publication of household manuals with advice given on how to deal with the Indonesian staff.⁸⁵ Another important aspect for maintaining a proper household was by decorating and sustaining the home according to certain ideals of what the colonial home should look like. These idealized images of the home, related to the exterior and interior, and the advice given on the creation of a home will be centre of analysis.

During the nineteenth century, household guides for housewives became popular for middle-class Europeans, mostly young, married women, who went with their husbands to the colonies.⁸⁶ These guidebooks for colonial housewives were published with advice on how to build, decorate and maintain the home. Their prescriptive character promoted a ‘metropolitan view of middle-class feminine domesticity to readers both at home and across the empire’ as Blunt and Dowling have argued.⁸⁷ These manuals reflect values and beliefs on how to behave in the colony and thus provide insight into colonial society. The analysis of these manuals show the tension between the *Indisch* house and the modern house and how the domestic white European ideal was created by home-making practices.

In 1908, Johanna Catenius-van der Meijden, a Dutch woman who spent many years in the Indies, wrote the household manual *Ons Huis in Indië* during a leave in the Netherlands. She lived in the colony in a European enclave and felt very comfortable in this environment, and as such her guide books are written to maintain and sustain the European identity whilst living in the Dutch East Indies.⁸⁸ She dedicated the manual to both *Indisch* housewives as well as newly arrived Dutch housewives and started with discussing the construction of the house in detail. Whereas most household manuals focus on the way women had to adapt to the new

⁸³ Elsbeth Locher-Scholten., *Women and the Colonial State. Essays on Gender and Modernity in the Netherlands Indies 1900 – 1942* (Amsterdam, 2000) 85-119.

⁸⁴ Locher-Scholten, *Women and the Colonial State*, 107-108.

⁸⁵ Pattinama, ‘The Indisch Family’, 54.

⁸⁶ Flanders, *The Making of Home*, 108.

⁸⁷ Blunt, *Home*, 52, 143-144.

⁸⁸ Van de Loo, ‘Mevrouw J.M.J. Catenius-van der Meijden (1860-1926)’ *Damescompartiment Online...voort met die trein!* Accessed June 2017: <http://www.damescompartiment.nl/biografie/catenius.html>.

tropical environment, how they should behave as a wife towards their husband and how to deal with servants and the raising of children, Catenius started with practical advice on choosing a healthy house to live in. The Dutch government provided housing for officials but otherwise people were responsible for finding or building their own house. Catenius provided advice on the problems that may arise with finding a well-maintained house and concluded with the notion that the housewife is responsible for the creation of her own 'proper palace'.⁸⁹

Catenius showed familiarity with the traditional *Indisch* house by referring to many traditional aspects but preferred European influences: '[h]et zijn oude Hollandsche mensen en geheel verliefd op het Indië van toen' as van de Loo cited a contemporary of Catenius.⁹⁰ The purpose of the tropical home should be to give protection against the climate and sheltering from the heat which meant the house should provide many cool spaces, ventilation through open galleries and high ceilings inspired by Roman and Greek architecture as Catenius argued.⁹¹ It seems that she attributes all features of the colonial villa to the ancient architectural style instead of seeing hybrid Indo-European elements which formed the basis of the colonial villa as important for the house. By arguing that there exist a 'merkwaardige overeenkomst tussen de oude bouwworden en de inrichting van ons 'Indisch huis', Catenius distances herself from the indigenous influences in the construction of this house.⁹² She attributes the *Indisch* house to something which has Greek and Roman roots but at the same time is completely different from what Europeans are used to: 'de geheele eigenaardige, volkomen van de Europeesche afwijkende, bouworde, medewerkt dat aangename gevoel [van ruimte en frisheid] op te wekken'.⁹³

Catenius dedicated a section of her book to 'Het Indië van thans' in which she mentioned that the turn of the century led to an evolution in the decoration and furnishing of the home because of the weekly arrival of newcomers to the Indies.⁹⁴ These Europeans brought along many European things, ideas and values, according to Catenius.⁹⁵ As a result, she argued, the dwellings were built in a European style, although there were no storeys, the interior was

⁸⁹ Catenius-van der Meijden, 10. My translation of original: 'keurig paleisje'.

⁹⁰ Van de Loo, 'Tobben in Indië', 68. Original citation of Rita Schenkhuizen who wrote a letter to Vilan van de Loo.

⁹¹ Ibid., 29.

⁹² Ibid., 29-30. My translation: 'remarkable similarity between the ancient architectural styles and the decoration of our 'Indisch house'.

⁹³ Ibid., 30. My translation: 'the completely peculiar, totally non-European, building styles, contribute to that pleasant feeling [of space and air]'.
⁹⁴ Ibid., 45. My translation: 'The Indies of the past'.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 45.

elegant furnished, full of *bric-a-brac*, and the house lacked in style. The interior also became European, with teakwood furniture and all furnishings were made in the same new style, by which Catenius meant that everything fitted together. She concluded: 'de tijden gaan vooruit en zeden en gewoonten houden gelijken tred. Al het *oude*, het *goede*, het degelijke van voorheen verdwijnt! *Sic transit...*'.⁹⁶

Johanna Kloppenburg-Versteeg, born at a Javanese coffee plantation in an *Indisch* family, warned against turning the Indies into the Netherlands: 'wensch (...) nimmer van Indië een Holland te maken: dit is onmogelijk. Hoe kan men vergelijkingen maken tusschen Indische en Hollandsche huizen?'.⁹⁷ She argued that houses in the Netherlands should be built close to each other and closed off from the outside to keep out the cold. Houses in the Indies, in contrast, should be open and airy. The first Europeans did not know this and built their houses in a European fashion.⁹⁸ As a result, many people died because the living conditions were poor but, 'life in the Indies is not unbearable anymore: a civilised woman with willpower and without prejudices against this beautiful country, could live here properly' as Kloppenburg concluded.⁹⁹ This 'civilised' way of living was based on ideas on civilisation and Europeaness which also influenced the way the house should be decorated.

During the interwar period, the community of *totoks* expanded because newcomers could travel relatively easy overseas. In the colony, the Dutch population saw a rise in its living standards and they could live more prestigiously and wealthy than they could have lived in the metropole.¹⁰⁰ Their lives were similar to their lives in the Dutch suburbs. Constance Koopman, born in Groningen, the Netherlands, studied mechanical engineering before moving together with her husband, Willem Swaan, to the Dutch East Indies in 1922. They met each other at a Christian student association where it was customary to serve the nation by working in the colony according to Christian values and beliefs. After six years of living overseas in various places because of her husband's transfers as engineer, they went back to the Netherlands on a short leave. During this period, many women asked Swaan what living in the Indies was like

⁹⁶ Catenius-van der Meijden, *Ons huis in Indië*, 47. My translation: 'time goes on and morals and values remain the same. All the *old*, the *good*, the decent things of the past are disappearing! *Sic transit...*'.

⁹⁷ Kloppenburg-Versteegh, *Het leven van de Europeesche vrouw in Indië*, 100-101. My translation: 'never wish to turn the Indies into Holland: this is impossible. How can someone ever compare Indies and Dutch homes?'.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 101.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 101. My translation of original text: 'het leven aldaar [is] niet meer ondragelijk te noemen. Een beschaafde vrouw met wilskracht en zonder vooroordeel tegen dit mooie land, zal het er best kunnen uithouden'.

¹⁰⁰ Vickers, *A Modern History of Indonesia*, 20.

and she decided to write the book *Vrouwen in Indië* to meet this demand.¹⁰¹ She dedicated the book to 'Hollandsche jonge vrouwen, aan 't begin van haar Indische leven' and 'voor alle trouw schrijvende Oma's die in Holland zijn achtergebleven'.¹⁰² Thus, this advice manual is specifically aimed at Dutch women who never went to the Dutch East Indies before and for their mothers whose daughter moved overseas.

Swaan observed that newcomers would choose at first a clean and new house to live in and after a while when they were used to the filth in the Indies and additionally could appreciate the cool air and space of traditional houses, they might move.¹⁰³ She had had the same experience and recalled: 'we hadden de keus tusschen twee, een heel oud en een splinternieuw huis. Het oude leek werkelijk op mijn voorstelling (...) maar het was zoo lek en zoo vuil, en de bijgebouwen waren nog griezeler dan in het hôtél, zoodat we het niet durfden te nemen, en het nieuwe kozen, hoewel dat tweemaal zoo duur was'.¹⁰⁴ These notions on hygiene and cleanliness were important in distinguishing Europeans from indigenous people. Moreover, Swaan mentions her own idealized image before moving to the colony; this shows the imagined colonial home in the metropole as a spacious, airy colonial home. However, recently arrived Europeans lived in new, modern houses which corresponded more to the way of living they were used to from the Netherlands.

Swaan's book is rather autobiographical and reads less explicitly like an advice manual than the books of Catenius or Kloppenburg. Her main aim was to improve the knowledge of Dutch women who moved to the colony; she states that two general mistakes were being made by young women asking about life in the Indies.¹⁰⁵ People in the Netherlands, she argued, want to see unity in the Indies by imagining two groups of women: Dutch women and indigenous women in which the latter can be divided into *baboes* and 'oriental princesses'.¹⁰⁶ Besides this problematic division, Swaan argued that, herself included, people tend to generalise the Indies community as a homogenous group across the whole Indonesian archipelago.¹⁰⁷ This was

¹⁰¹ Vilan van de Loo, 'C. Swaan-Koopman', *Damescompartiment online... voort met die trein!* (1 December 2001) Online accessible: <http://www.damescompartiment.nl/biografie/swaan.html>.

¹⁰² Swaan-Koopman, *Vrouwen in Indië*, title page. My translation: 'all Dutch young women, at the beginning of their Indies lives' and 'for all the loyal writing grandmothers who stayed behind in the Netherlands'.

¹⁰³ Swaan-Koopman, *Vrouwen in Indië*, 57. My translation: 'we could choose between two, a very old and brandnew house. The old looked just like my imagination (...) but it was so leak and filthy, and the outerbuildings were much scarier than the ones in the hotel, so we did not dare to buy it. For this reason we chose the new house, even though it was twice as expensive'.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 57.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 9-10.

impossible, and therefore Swaan did not aim to give women an understanding of the Indies society as a whole, but rather she wanted to provide them with valuable information on some types of people and situations to recognize certain circumstances and to advise women to look further than their own private home. She noted: 'het is bedroevend te bemerken, hoe bitter weinig vele Hollandse vrouwen, vooral in de steden, van Indië zien, eenvoudig omdat zij nooit ondekt hebben, dát er iets te zien is'.¹⁰⁸ The newly arrived Dutch women living in European suburbs in large cities such as Batavia and Semarang did not travel outside the city so the only things they saw from the Indies were 'Hollandsch aandoende villa'tjes (...) bewoond door andere Hollandsche dames', according to Swaan.¹⁰⁹ As a European woman herself, the Christian faith forms the base for the moral values she stretched in her book: indigenous people are "soms op wonderlijke wijze (...) óók menschen met een ziel" and the civilisation mission proved successful as many indigenous men and women became more civilised according to Swaan.¹¹⁰

Cato Rutten-Pekelharing wrote, just as Swaan, a book for the European women who migrated overseas. She specifically aimed at ordinary women who were not wealthy and most of the time had to live in the mainland of Java.¹¹¹ Her advice mainly focusses on hygienic and sanitary issues, and she concludes: '[i]k hoop dat ik U niet te erg heb doen terugschrikken voor het leven in Indië, dat u te wachten staat'.¹¹² The most important things for Pekelharing were to think rationally and enjoy minor things such as the flowers on galleries and the beautiful nature.¹¹³

Idealized images of the home were based on the similarities with closed houses in the Netherlands on the one hand, and exotic indigenous elements such as open spaces on the other hand. Hygiene and cleanliness were associated with Europeans as opposed to filthy indigenous living standards. This corresponded with ideas on modernisation and the hygienic improvements in cities because of the improvements in running water, electricity and wash basins.¹¹⁴ The imagined ideas on living in the Indies represent the colonial *Indisch* home, whilst newly arrived Europeans rather live in a European new house. As all four authors mentioned,

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 10. My translation: 'it is sad to note how many Dutch women, mostly in the cities, do not see anything of the Indies, simply because they never discovered *that* there is something to see'.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 11. My translation: 'Dutch looking villa' (...) occupied by other Dutch women'.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 12. My translation: 'sometimes in remarkable ways (...) also people with a soul'.

¹¹¹ Rutten-Pekelharing, *Waaraan moet ik denken? Wat moet ik doen?*, introduction.

¹¹² Rutten, *Waaraan moet ik denken? Wat moet ik doen?*, 72. My translation: 'I hope you are not scared off by the life in the Indies that lies in front of you'.

¹¹³ Ibid., 72.

¹¹⁴ Pattynama, 'The Indisch Family', 50.

the woman is responsible for the household and she has the task to turn her house into a home. But how is Europeanness performed in the colonial home? What kind of home-making practices should women exercise? How can women show their understanding of European culture with keeping a distance to their servants? And how can they distance themselves from indigenous culture but showing familiarity of the *Indisch* culture as well?

1.3. Home-making practices within the colonial home

Als ik ergens ben, onverschillig waar, en ik laat, bij een bezoek, mijne oogen gaan over alles, wat ik zie, denk ik dikwijls (...): 'O, wat zou ik dit huis anders inrichten! Dáár zou, bijvoorbeeld, een 'gezellig hoekje' komen, aan dien muur zou ik een groep familieportretten hangen, hier weer een mooi Japansch schut plaatsen, met 'n paar nette stoeltjes en een tafeltje, wat mooie en nuttige lectuur er op', en zoo voort.¹¹⁵

Catenius' advice in relation to the household starts with mentioning all responsibilities women in the tropics have. These range from the household, furnishings, food, clothing and finances to rules of behaviour, raising children and aesthetics. Typical for the colonial society were *venduties*, similar to auctions, where people who had to move would sell their furniture. For this reason, many colonial homes were decorated with a variety of furniture. These mixed interiors based on different furnishings were not a problem in the Indies, however; when the newcomers from Europe arrived they would not understand 'hoe zoo'n chaos van meubels ooit door de bewoners 'bij elkaar is gehaald''.¹¹⁶ Catenius explained that in the Indo-European society *venduties* are organic processes because people who stay behind can buy some furniture from those who are transferred or move back to the Netherlands. This variety in interior is typical for Indies homes but stood in contrast with the Dutch ideas on creating a home based on colour and a style '*ensemble*'.¹¹⁷

There were two ways to decorate one's home; either by buying furniture on *venduties* or by buying new and matching furniture from Chinese or Indonesian skilled workers. In either

¹¹⁵ Catenius-van der Meijden, *Ons huis in Indië*, 9. My translation: 'If I am somewhere, indifferent where, and I look around during a visit at everything I see, I often think (...) 'O, how would I decorate this house differently! Over there, I would, for example, create a 'cosy corner'', and at the wall I would hang some family portraits, over there a nice Japanese screen, with a few decent chairs and a small table, with some interesting and nice lecture on it, and so on'.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 35., My translation: 'how such a mess of furniture could ever be 'gathered' by its occupants'.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 35.

case, it depended on the woman how this would influence her household. However, as Catenius argued, creating a cosy space is also an act of having feeling for style and arrangements and using accessories such as lace- and crochet works which can contribute to a pleasant feeling.¹¹⁸ Kloppenburg mentioned needlework, decorating and assembling the interior as well as fulfilling tasks for housewives.

Catenius showed the performance of European identity by her advice given on the use of curtains within the colonial home; curtains, she claims, contribute to the elegance of the whole house and show the tasteful assemblage the housewife has made. Catenius suggests using curtains at all windows and draping them on the walls in the inner and outer veranda. She warned, however, against the profuse use of flowery designs in the fabrics; the motif should instead be designed in line with Greek motifs and frames.¹¹⁹ It is possible that Catenius was inspired by the Empire-style with its focus on classical Greek forms and structures. Although the use and looks of the curtains were similar to the way they were used in the Netherlands, Catenius mentioned that ‘het *cachet* moet, in het warme land, *Indisch* blijven’.¹²⁰ She meant that the overall finishing touch should remain Indies and by this she showed her familiarity with the chic Indo-European culture whilst distinguishing herself from the indigenous people as well. She does this by saying that many comments have been made on the overwhelming use of flower motifs in the decoration of the *Indisch* house: ‘er zijn schooner bloemen genoeg in de tuin, (...) voor, om en achter het huis; ban dan de bloemfiguren *uit* de patronen van (...) gordijnen’ because this ‘bloemendécor verraadt wansmaak’.¹²¹ By this, she makes curtains and carpets a part of the Dutch culture but only if used properly, the Indies use of flowers is not as decent and elegant as the Dutch way is. By giving a ‘*Indisch cachet*’ to the draped rooms, she shows her familiarity with the *Indische* culture and her ability to be a ‘capable colonist’.¹²²

In another advice on furniture, Catenius advised women to decorate the inner gallery in a strict manner so that it keeps it ‘European *cachet*’ but ‘naturally adapted to Indies customs’.¹²³ This is another example of the performance of Europeaness by showing familiarity with local customs but this time maintaining a European *cachet*. Kloppenburg agreed that women should

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 35.

¹¹⁹ Catenius-van der Meijden, *Ons huis in Indië*, 40-41.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 40-41. My translation: ‘the *cachet* should, in the tropical climate, remain Indies’.

¹²¹ Ibid., 40-41. My translation: ‘there are a dozen beautiful flowers in the garden, (...) at the front, the back and surrounding the house: remove the flower figures *from* the motives of (...) curtains’ because this ‘flower décor shows bad taste’.

¹²² Protschky, ‘The colonial table’ 349.

¹²³ Catenius, *Ons Huis in Indië*, 36. My translation of original text: ‘het Europeesch cachet, natuurlijk naar de Indische eischen gewijzigd’.

be responsible for the decoration of the household but she rejected the notion of buying these things because every penny should be saved for the children's education.¹²⁴ 'Wanneer gij dit voor ogen houdt, zal het u zuinig en vindingrijk maken: het tegenovergestelde is oorzaak geweest, dat zoovele vroeger rijke families heden aan lager wal zijn geraakt' as Kloppenburg cautioned.¹²⁵ This corresponds to the notion that education appears to have been essential in learning how to perform European identity: children whose social status was not defined by 'whiteness' needed to be educated to internalise this affiliation to Europeanness.¹²⁶

Both Kloppenburg and Catenius were focussed on the Netherlands by acting European. The danger of spending too much money and losing all wealth was a threat to both, and became a reality for Kloppenburg when she was a child. Catenius argued that the increased influx of Europeans changed the dynamics in the Indies: it had changed the environment and the European, himself.¹²⁷ She continues that it has made the European realise that if he lives frugally, decently and according to the habits of the country, he can become wealthy and thus be able to return to Europe on leave. To reach this ideal: 'een tweejarig verblijf in Europa', the housewife should contribute as much as possible to ease their lives in the tropics, Catenius concluded.¹²⁸

This corresponds to the notion that European education was one of the most important indicators of Europeanness. From the nineteenth century onwards, the colonial system expanded and intensified turning the Indies into a plantation economy. However, civilians and families remained the dominant European population which would maintain its connections with the Netherlands because of accessibility of education. Wealthy parents would send their children, especially sons, to the Netherlands to go to school which would be the most important way to improve one's social position.¹²⁹ The turn of the century sharpened the divisions based on race which was encouraged by the formation of families based on the Dutch model within

¹²⁴ Kloppenburg-Versteegh, *Het leven van de Europeesche vrouw in Indië*, 86-87.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 87., This advice was based upon Kloppenburg-Versteegh's own personal experiences. She was born on a coffee plantation and her father was one of the wealthiest planters on Java. Kloppenburg-Versteegh received a decent education in Batavia but had to return home when her father got into financial troubles and had to sell all his possessions. (Vilan van de Loo, 'Mevr. J.M.C. Kloppenburg-Versteegh' (12/07/2009)). <http://www.damescompartiment.nl/kloppenburg/leven.html> (accessed june 2017).). My translation: 'If you keep this in mind, it will make you frugal and inventive: the opposite has been the cause for the bankruptcy of so many rich families in the past'.

¹²⁶ Protschky, 'The colonial table' 357.

¹²⁷ Catenius, *Ons huis in Indië*, 161.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 161. My translation: 'a two-years stay in Europe'.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 30.

European communities.¹³⁰ This was reflected in the home as well as many newcomers lived in copies of Dutch suburban houses. The warnings of Catenius and Kloppenburg should be understood within this wider historical framework.

Thus, home-making practices included decorating the home with showing familiarity towards the Indies culture and at the same time othering this culture by dividing European from Indies practices. The eclectic, hybrid *Indisch* style reminded Europeans of the late nineteenth century life-styles but was also seen as being too much orientated towards indigenous cultures. The lines between indigenous and European were not strict enough, so the European practice of creating a home became much more oriented at the Netherlands. This maintaining of a European lifestyle was for example reflected in the wish to import furniture from the Netherlands instead of buying it at an auction but also in the number of servants one's household had.¹³¹ Another new attitude was acting frugally and saving money. This corresponds with the warning in the manuals that mothers should raise their own children to protect them from the negative indigenous habits such as spoiling children too much.¹³² As mentioned before, the ability to send children to the Netherlands for education was also important in belonging to the European elite and as such money should be saved.

This chapter showed that the colonial home in the late colonial period was at first a building in the tropics that was adapted to its climate and surroundings. The late colonial period and its distinctive features such as increased mobility and immigration, but also ideas influenced by social Darwinism and the civilising mission which resulted in the Dutch Ethical Policy showed a tension between coloniser and colonised. Additionally, because of the distinctive social stratification in the colonial society the act of Europeanness became important. This chapter put the shifting perspectives on the colonial home in the late colonial period at the centre of analysis. It aimed to give insight in the representations of the home by exploring idealized images of the home and on advice on how to create a home overseas. The tension in the late colonial society between maintaining Dutch while being familiar with Indies customs and having local connections, but distancing from the indigenous people, is reflected in the guide books. All four authors noticed the shift from old houses to new houses because of the influx of newcomers. They argued that the newcomer does not know how to build proper houses

¹³⁰ Taylor, *The Social world of Batavia*, 173.

¹³¹ Vickers, *A Modern History of Indonesia*, 29.

¹³² Pattynama, 'The Indisch Family', 56.

suitable for the tropic climate so there is a longing for past times when the houses were all built on spacious, airy grounds. At the same time, the authors do welcome European influences in relation to modernity, hygiene and rules of etiquettes. Moreover, in all advice books superior feelings towards the indigenous servants are present and these are also reflected in notions towards the colonial home.

All four writers, and especially Swaan, wrote the manuals based on their own personal experiences and mentioned this explicitly throughout their books. In the case of Swaan, she took the reader with her on her journey to the Dutch East Indies with all prejudiced opinions and difficulties she had to overcome included. This chapter gave insights in the dynamics of the Dutch colonial society which balance between remaining traditional and becoming modern which go hand in hand with being European or not. In the second chapter, however, it is important to take a closer look at the objects within the home itself. What do they say about the underlying assumptions about identity and representations of the colonial home as a reflection of the Dutch society itself.

Chapter 2 – Material culture of the home

’De bedden hadden ijzeren spijlen, waar zogenaamde klamboes van vitragestof aan hingen; een ‘hemel’. De klamboes waren nodig tegen de muskieten. Overdag werd de klamboe met vaak heel mooie (soms zilveren) klamboehaken opengehouden, de open kant was ook vaak afgewerkt met brede kantachtige stroken. Ik denk dat dit naast dat het mooi stond ook een teken was van gastvrijheid, hoewel... misschien een beetje al te uitnodigend. De muskieten maakten hier namelijk graag gebruik van, vandaar dat er een hele ceremonie gehouden werd met een *sapoe lidi*, waarmee alle muskieten die in ons bed waren, verjaagd werden.’¹³³

Peggy van Drunen–van Hout recalled these memories in her memoirs written for her grandchildren. She was born in Banjoewangi at the east coast of Java, in a typical *Indisch* family in 1923. When she was 14 years old, her parents moved to the Netherlands because of personal circumstances, her father’s feelings of discontent because of the promotion of an Indonesian colleague at the police department where he worked and because of the Japanese threat which started to influence the colony. With hindsight, she argued, the departure must have been a difficult decision for both her parents.¹³⁴

In the 1990s, upon request of her granddaughter, Peggy van Drunen started with writing her memoirs. Later, her granddaughter Tessa van ‘t Hull, wrote out these hand-written memories and provided them with footnotes to further elaborate on certain thoughts and to explain Indonesian terms. This private source material provides unique insight in the personal experiences of colonial everyday life. In this chapter, I will put objects in the centre of analysis and will use a material culture approach to analyse objects in and outside the home as carriers of ideas. I will use private source material such as memoirs, photographs, drawings and information acquired by questionnaires and the household manuals and primary source material from chapter 1 to answer questions about the meaning of these objects in a colonial context. What do the ‘iron bars and lovely hook’ mean? Were they often used in bedrooms? And where

¹³³ Memoirs Peggy van Drunen-van Hout, written down by Tessa van ‘t Hull in the 1990s (Family archive of Van Hout) Sent to the author in June 2017. My translation: ‘The beds had iron bars, which supported the klamboes (mosquito-nets) which formed a ‘heaven’. During the day, the klamboes were held open by very lovely (sometimes silver) hooks. This looked very nice, and also had a certain welcoming gesture to it. Although... perhaps a bit too much, as each night an elaborate ceremony was required to get all the mosquitoes out again, before closing the klamboe. A *sapoe lidi* (a rod made of coconut leaves) was used to get all those mosquitoes out’.

¹³⁴ Memoirs Peggy van Drunen-van Hout.

did they come from? This chapter will follow the premise that the study of material can discover the beliefs, values, ideas, attitudes and assumptions of a certain community in a particular time. It can be used to gain a better understanding of values and meanings of this culture.

This chapter will firstly use the reconstruction of the *Indisch* home at the exhibition ‘De Vrouw’ in Amsterdam in 1913 as a case study. It will analyse how idealized images of the home were materialized in the construction of the house. Secondly, this chapter will focus on the interior of the home and on the way, the interior changed with the shift from the traditional to the modern Dutch home. How were Dutch cultural values and meanings embedded in objects such as furniture and furnishings? Furthermore, I will take a closer look to an *Indisch* household and their relation to certain objects as recalled in memoirs.

2.1. Materialisation of idealized images

Life in the Indies in the late colonial period was characterised by a shift from living outside the house to a move inwards. As showed in the first chapter, the representation of an ideal image in the tropics, based on European notions on hygiene and architectural influences, led to a ‘modern’ home which was unsuitable for the tropics. The hybrid interior style of Indies families was slowly replaced by Dutch furniture and systematically ordered things in the household. Whereas there was a shift towards a modern home in the colony, during the exhibition ‘De Vrouw’, there was a Indies home reconstructed to show its Dutch visitors how Europeans in the Indies lived.

From 2 May until 30 September 1913, the exhibition ‘De Vrouw 1813-1913’ was held at ‘Meerhuysen’ at the Amsteldijk in Amsterdam. This exhibition focused on the changing position of women in the last 100 years and aimed at highlighting all obstacles which were still present. In 1912, there was a commission established to organise the event. This commission, which existed entirely of women, organised the exhibition and showed the work and pursuit of Dutch women between 1813 and 1913. It cannot be viewed separately from the Dutch women’s movement and the struggle for voting rights, although the commission explicitly mentioned that it would be neutral on this issue.¹³⁵

At the exhibition, there was a colonial section which consisted of a colonial hall with contributions from the colonies in the East and West Indies (Suriname, Curaçao and the Dutch East Indies) and focussed on the working environment of women and the differences between

¹³⁵ Gedenkboek, Tentoonstelling ‘De Vrouw, 1813-1913’, 11.

race and class. Besides the colonial section, there was a reconstructed *Indisch* house with its surroundings:

In Holland zal een huis staan,	Den ‘oudgast’ zal ‘t herinneren
Een Indisch huis getrouw,	Aan lang verleden tijd,
Van binnen en uitwendig.	‘‘ZIJN HUIS’’ – vervlogen – droombeeld,
Wat vorm betreft en bouw,	Herrijst in werkelijkheid. ¹³⁶

This is part of the poem that was mentioned in the beginning of the guide book for the *Indisch* house. As mentioned previously, the house resembled an *Indisch* house and was designed for the tropics. It could withstand the heat, moisture and climate, had open-sided galleries for fresh air, high ceilings, smooth stone and cement floors for coolness. The kitchen and sanitary facilities were situated in separate outbuildings.¹³⁷ At the exhibition, this house was reconstructed in original size, including the outer buildings and premises, with original furniture and decoration to show the Dutch visitors how *Indisch* people lived in the colony.¹³⁸ In the exhibition catalogue, the organisation committee thanked all women in the colonies in the East and West for answering the ‘call from their mother country’ to help reconstruct and furnish a colonial house with outer buildings such as the kitchen and servant dwellings.¹³⁹ The traditional colonial home was an enormous success; many visitors walked by and were impressed to see how their family members who lived overseas were living in the colony. As the commission argued in the chronicle published after the exhibition: ‘een ieder weet in hoe groote mate het Indisch Huis tot het succes der tentoonstelling heeft bijgedragen’.¹⁴⁰

This case study of the *Indisch* house shows the way the colonial home was imagined and ‘othered’ in the Netherlands. The traditional colonial home with its galleries and distinct ground-plan, was replaced by the modern living house with a Dutch-style living and dining room.¹⁴¹ Thus, while in the Dutch East Indies the traditional colonial home was abandoned for small, sometimes multi-storeyed, modern buildings, at the exhibition the traditional colonial

¹³⁶ Gedenkboek Tentoonstelling ‘De Vrouw 1813-1913’, 59-62., ‘Ons Huis in Indië’, Tentoonstelling ‘de Vrouw, 1813-1913’, Een woordje vooraf. My translation: ‘There will be a home in Holland, True to the Indisch house, On the inside and exterior, As in shape as in build, The old visitor will recall, A time long gone by, ‘His home’, faded away, a dream, risen in reality’.

¹³⁷ Esther Wils, *Wonen in Indië*, 81.

¹³⁸ Gedenkboek, Tentoonstelling ‘De Vrouw, 1813-1913’, 11

¹³⁹ Ibid., 24-25.

¹⁴⁰ Gedenkboek, Tentoonstelling ‘De Vrouw, 1813-1913’, inleiding.

¹⁴¹ Wils, *Wonen in Indië*, 83.

home was highlighted and well visited. The author of the poem referred to a *Indisch* house which is 'real' from the inside and outside. The 'oudgast' or old visitor will remember it as the house from the past. He would refer to 'his house' which is bygone and nothing more than a dream but during this exhibition it will become real again. This discrepancy corresponds with the shifting values and beliefs of Dutch colonial society in the Dutch East Indies in the late colonial period.

The reconstruction of the *Indisch* house shows how the imagination of a colonial home in the tropics was reconstructed in the Netherlands. Henri Borel, who lived in several colonial houses for more than twelve years, reacted in a newspaper article on the reconstruction of the Indies huis with 'some regret'.¹⁴² His reluctant feelings to write his article are based on the friendly guided tour the Indies women gave him during the exhibition, 'to give a less sympathetic view, seems almost rude' as he argues.¹⁴³ Borel warned readers who might want to travel to the Indies after they have seen the house because the reality might be less rosy. The reconstruction of the colonial home left out all that was unpleasant and the accompanied booklet on the house was unrealistic in picturing the living costs and salary of the public servants. Furthermore, he argued, the bedroom became a Europeanised version of an *Indisch* bedroom contrary to the fact that in the booklet ones speak of the fact that 'papa een echte Indischman, en grootmama een echte Indische is!'.¹⁴⁴ The colonial housewife, however, is Dutch and gathered everything around her which is European except for the Indies grandmother as Borel mentioned. Again, this shows the familiarity with the Indies identity whilst maintaining Europeanness. However, according to Borel, such a family could never have lived in such a 'ver-Europeescht huis' because especially the grandmother would have never agreed.¹⁴⁵ As he argued: 'Dat huis, waarin de Indische grootmama met spijt het echt Europeesche ziet binnenkomen, wordt al heel gauw een zonderling mengelmoes van Indisch en Hollandsch, met het Indische als boventoon en het Hollandsche verdrukt in een hoekje'.¹⁴⁶

The reconstructed *Indisch* house at the exhibition in Amsterdam showed not merely a material house and its furniture. At first, the organisation committee intended to invite an *Indisch* family who would 'live' in the house to show the visitors how people lived in the

¹⁴² Henri Borel, 'Het Indische huis op de tentoonstelling 'De Vrouw' De Telegraaf. C.1913.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid. My translation: 'both dad and grandma true Indies are!'

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., My translation: 'That home, in which the Indies grandmother sees, with regret, the arrival of the European, rapidly evolves into a mixture of Indies and Dutch, with the Indisch elements remaining dominant and the Dutch oppressed into a corner'.

colony. Practically, however, this was impossible so the organisers imitated a *rijsttafel* to bring a lively touch to the exhibition by acting like the occupants are celebrating a feast.¹⁴⁷

This *rijsttafel*, ‘rice table’, which consisted out of many dishes surrounding rice, developed as a colonial meal for the ruling class. On the one hand, it represented historical continuation of European interaction with the indigenous population and on the other hand the Europeans had turned the local dish in such a varied meal that it was time intensive labour and time consuming to eat as Protschky has argued.¹⁴⁸ By turning the eating of rice into a grand luxurious feast meal, the Europeans distanced themselves from the indigenous population. This was reflected during the exhibition where the rice table was the core activity in the *Indisch* house although the guiding pamphlet mentioned that the rice table is unusual: ‘velen eten om 1 of 2 uur Europeesch middageten en des avonds om 8 uur weer brood, zooals bij ons in Holland op het koffieuurtje’.¹⁴⁹

In a newspaper article, a visitor reflected on the exhibition and argued that ‘eindelijk dient de ruime achtergalerij, met glas afgeschoten, voor de rijsttafel’.¹⁵⁰ It seems like the author referred to the previous function of the back gallery when it was also used as dining room, completely furnished and covered, but without a wall towards the garden. The gallery lacked one wall so people could enjoy shade, fresh air and the view over the garden.¹⁵¹ The author of the article referred to modern types of houses in which the galleries disappeared and a fourth wall, possibly of glass, was added. With the replacement of the front and back gallery to the terrace or patio, the function of the back gallery as furnished space where people would relax and dine was replaced by a small patio on the front of the house.¹⁵²

The case study on the exhibition ‘De Vrouw’ showed that the reconstruction of the *Indisch* house was successful and many people walked by to visit it. It represented a typical *Indisch* house but, as the newspaper article by Borel shows, it might be more a reflection of the Dutch values and ideas than the actual reflection a *Indisch* house. The organisation committee, however, replied to Borel’s article, mentioning that it was a very misleading evaluation.¹⁵³ The

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Protschky, ‘The Colonial Table’, 350.

¹⁴⁹ ‘Ons Huis in Indië’, Tentoonstelling ‘de Vrouw, 1813-1913’, 21. My translation: ‘many have European lunch around 1 or 2 and dinner at 8 in the evening, during the coffee moment in Holland’.

¹⁵⁰ Author unknown, Newspaper article on the exhibition ‘De Vrouw’ (21 maart 1913). My translation: ‘finally serves the spacious back gallery, locked down with glass, for the rice table’.

¹⁵¹ Wils, *Wonen in Indië*, 103.

¹⁵² Newspaper article on the exhibition ‘De Vrouw’ (21 maart 1913)., Wils, *House and Home in the Dutch East Indies*, 128.

¹⁵³ M.C. Kooy- van Zeggelen, ‘Ingezonden stukken – Het Indische Huis’, Newspaper unknown, c. 1913.

author referred to the booklet ‘Ons Huis in Indië’ and argued that every reader will see that the organisers have represented the house as natural as possible and that Borel presented an unfortunate image of Indies to Europe.¹⁵⁴ She concluded that the booklet aimed specifically to people who never went to the Indies and still want to go; the book provides relevant and accurate information on the living conditions in Weltevreden (present day Jakarta).¹⁵⁵

The reconstruction of the *Indisch* house was not merely a material endeavour in showing Dutch visitors how living in the Indies looked like, but it carried also many ideological meanings by using othering, elements of exoticism and appropriating certain values and ideas to the Dutch culture. It shows how an ideal of home is materialized in the form of a house.

2.3. Inside the colonial home: furnishing and functions of spaces

The *Indisch* house, hybrid from the outside, was just as eclectic from the inside and included different kinds of furnishing bought at auctions and influenced by different styles throughout the centuries. During the VOC time, furniture was made from tropical woods in a European style and many European settlers would bring their own heavy oak furniture from Holland.¹⁵⁶ From the seventeenth century onward, local wood-carvers would start making furniture for European and Asian households. This antique colonial furniture had a distinctive character because of local craft traditions mixed with European modes of decoration.¹⁵⁷ The large Chinese community on Java also had a profound influence on the development of colonial furniture. For example, in the reclining chair which is a returning object on the veranda but also in the introduction of rattan furniture. During the nineteenth century, the British influence on the design tradition was immense: there was a demand for British pattern books and these British designs were imitated by Indonesian and Chinese craftsmen.¹⁵⁸

In 1915, the magazine ‘Het Nederlansch-Indisch Huis’ published an article on the decoration of the home in which the author explains how colonial furniture was copied by Chinese craftsmen:

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Wils, *Wonen in Indië*, 106.

¹⁵⁷ See for example the article of Robin Jones, ‘“Furnished in English Style”: Anglicization of Local Elite Domestic Interiors in Ceylon (Sri Lanka) c. 1850 – 1910’ in *South Asian Studies* 20:1, 45-56.

¹⁵⁸ Wils, *Wonen in Indië*, 107.

Tot voor ongeveer 20 jaar stelde de Europeaan in Indië aan de inrichting zijne woning wat betreft schoonheid, geen hooge eischen. Het meerendeel der gebruikte meubelen werd gemaakt door den Chineeschen meubelmaker, welke zich inspireerde op renaissance meubelen die waarschijnlijk vanuit Europa waren geïmporteerd. Zijne fantasie deed hierbij soms vreemde versieringen op eigenaardige plaatsen ontstaan, terwijl de originele vormen zeer slecht werden gecopieerd.¹⁵⁹

The author continued that Europeans wanted a different style and reintroduced the Company furniture combined with the ancient Chinese furnishings which stand out because of their richness and dark warm coloured wood.¹⁶⁰ Furthermore, he states, Europeans wanted from the turn of the century to decorate their homes in a modern style which consisted of good, practical and characteristic furniture.¹⁶¹

Daar in Indië geen meubel-ontwerpers waren moest men zijn toevlucht nemen tot het doen copieeren van europeesche meubelen zoals deze in Engelsche, Duitsche en Hollandsche kunsttijdschriften waren afgebeeld. Dat de oorspronkelijke ontwerpen ook hierbij dikwijls zeer werden verminkt en de aldus verkregen meubelen er soms belachelijk uitzagen is zeer goed te begrijpen.¹⁶²

The author showed his feelings of colonial superiority by mentioning that local craftsmen tried to copy the European style without success so the furniture looked “mutilated”. His idealized image of the interior reflected Dutch homes based on European furniture design and was influenced by wider architectural movements such as the Art and Crafts movement, Art Nouveau and modernist movements such as *Bauhaus* and *De Stijl*.¹⁶³

The booklet ‘Ons Huis in Indië’ which was used to provide information on the *Indisch* house during the exhibition ‘De Vrouw’, argued that the interest in Company furniture

¹⁵⁹ Het Nederlandsch-Indische Huis Oud en Nieuw Deel II Aflevering 2, 1915. My translation: ‘Until 20 years ago, the European in the Indies did not attach high values to the interior of his house. Most of the used furniture was made by Chinese craftsmen, who were inspired by renaissance furnishings who were probably imported from Europe. His fantasy did sometimes add strange decorations to strange places, while the original shapes were badly imitated’.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Ibid. My translation: ‘As there where no furniture designers in the Indies, one was left with little other choice then fabricate copies of European furniture as they were presented in English, German and Dutch art magazines. As those primary designs were already mutilated, it’s no surprise that they [the copies] often looked ridiculous’.

¹⁶³ Wils, *Wonen in Indië*, 108.

increased at the end of the nineteenth century. In the section on remarkable objects in the house, the authors referred to the bedstead of the Indies grandmother of the fictional inhabitants of the house.¹⁶⁴ This bedstead had some interesting features: 'de zilveren klamboehaken van het ledikant, de zilveren sluitstukken van de goelingsloop, het trapje dat dient om in bed te komen (...)'.¹⁶⁵ The *goeling* was a kapok-filling bolster which people held between their legs whilst sleeping to stay cool during the night.¹⁶⁶

Peggy van Drunen's memories of the silver hooks used to raise the mosquito-nets during the day were possibly part of a bedstead from Company times. As she was born in a family that lived for many generations in the Indies, it could well be that they inherited this bed from relatives or bought it at an auction. The *sapoe lidi* to keep away mosquitos is also mentioned by Wils as a necessary attribute of the bedroom.¹⁶⁷

As explained earlier, people would buy their household furniture at auctions which were most of the time held in the seller's house. Peggy van Drunen kept the receipts of objects her parents bought at various auctions in 1936 and 1937. These receipts are being saved by her relatives and contain bills of a gramophone record with discs, pots and pans, pudding moulds, beer glasses, crockery, wine, canned fruit, dried apples, green peas, a women's bike, rattan child's chair, paintings, vases, clothing, linen, bookshelves, lamps, carpets and rugs to hang on the walls.¹⁶⁸ During an auction in December 1936, the family van Drunen-van Hout bought several sets of firework probably to celebrate the turn of the year.¹⁶⁹ She recalled living in the *Indisch* household as followed:

I think that every Indisch child from my time has delightful memories of their youth. How could it be different? We lived in enormous houses with white walls and ceilings and chill tiles. The average house had an open front gallery, sometimes followed by a room, then came a hallway with sleeping rooms on both sides, and finally exiting on a back gallery. Then an open, but covered, path to the outbuildings. These were the mandi, the toilet, the spenkamer (supply room), dapur (kitchen), and the servants quarters. The

¹⁶⁴ 'Ons Huis in Indië', Tentoonstelling 'de Vrouw, 1813-1913', 13-14.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid. My translation: 'the silver hooks of the mosquito-net of the bedstead, the silveren locks of the *goeling*, the small staircase to climb into the bed'.

¹⁶⁶ Wils, *Wonen in Indië*, 141.

¹⁶⁷ Wils, *Wonen in Indië*, 141.

¹⁶⁸ Han van Drunen, receipts and bills, family archive Van Hout.

¹⁶⁹ Han van Drunen, auction receipts, family archive Van Hout.

spenkamer had a rice box, cans of butter, jam and other supplies. Sometimes the houses were a bit different, but they all, in general, followed aforementioned lay out.¹⁷⁰

Peggy van Drunen described a traditional colonial home and her childhood memories follow certain patterns which are also visible in literature on the *Indisch* family.¹⁷¹ According to the inventory made out of the purchasing lists, the family van Drunen had also several ‘modern’ objects such as a gramophone record and a piano.

The piano was frequently found in colonial households where it would stand in the living room or inner gallery to be the least exposed to the tropical climate.¹⁷² Having a piano was not merely an indicator of someone’s wealth but it also contributed to the performance of Europeanness. The piano played an important role in the representation of the colonial home as much in the colony as in the Netherlands. Swaan mentioned in her manual that she had many ideas on living in the Indies before she moved overseas: ‘a wooden house on poles, with an open gallery (...) the piano stood on the front gallery besides a divan and some cosy hassocks: why the piano would be exposed to wind and rain, I have never thought of’.¹⁷³ She continued with her fear to live in a small part of a pavilion because the rents were too expensive, she heard stories of people who had to put their grand piano partly inside and partly outside the house.¹⁷⁴ After her arrival in the Indies, Swaan concluded, the reality was not as bad: the piano would stand inside the house, just as in every decent home in the Netherlands.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁰ Memoirs Peggy van Drunen-van Hout, family archive Van Hout. My translation of original text: ‘Ik denk dat elk Indische kind uit mijn tijd zalige herinneringen heeft aan z’n jeugd. Hoe kan het ook anders? We leefden in grote ruime huizen met witgekalkte muren en plafonds en overal koele tegelvloeren. De doorsneehuizen bestonden uit een open voorgalerij, soms gevolgd door een kamer, dan een gang met aan weerszijden slaapkamers, uitkomend op de achtergalerij. Daarna een open (wel overdekte) brede tegelgang naar de bijgebouwen, die daar haaks op stonden. Daar waren de mandi, de wc, de spenkamer, de dapur en de bediendenkamers. In de spenkamer bewaarde moeder onder andere een rijstkist, blikken boter, jam en andere voorraden. Soms was de indeling natuurlijk iets afwijkend, maar in grote lijnen was het zoals hierboven beschreven’.

¹⁷¹ For example as argued in the article ‘The Indisch Family’ of Pamela Pattynama which gave an overview of a fictional *Indisch* family and their life in the late colonial period.

¹⁷² Wils, *Wonen in Indië*, 128.

¹⁷³ Swaan, *Vrouwen in Indië*, 53-54. My translation of original text: ‘Het was een houten huis op palen, met een open galerij die rondom was afgezet door een houten hekje. De piano stond op de voorgalerij, en daarnaast een divan en eenige gezellige poeffen: waarom die piano daar zoo werd blootgesteld aan wind en inregen, heb ik nooit bedacht’.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 54.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 54. My translation of the original text: ‘die in een paviljoen woonden, dat zoo klein was, dat hun vleugelpiano haast buiten de deur stak’.

This shows that having a piano would improve one's social position because it was regarded as something European. Peggy van Drunen's parents bought a piano on a loan and had to pay fifteen guilders each month to pay off the total amount of 300 guilders.¹⁷⁶ After 20 monthly payments the piano would be their own property. She recalled that after school, she went home to take a shower, took an afternoon nap or would drink tea with something to eat next to it.¹⁷⁷ After that the children went playing, studying or later she started playing the piano as well. In 1937, when her family moved to the Netherlands, the piano went with them according to the passenger list with transported goods.¹⁷⁸ The piano was worth 75 guilders when it was transported to the Netherlands. Other goods which were shipped were several trunks, suitcases, bicycles, sewing machine, crockery, mattresses, used linen, clothing, two boxes with local ingredients and books.¹⁷⁹ For Peggy van Drunen the journey to the Netherlands on the steamship *Johan de Wit* was one luxurious holiday: 'Wij kinderen zagen het als een groot avontuur en ervoeren de reis naar Holland als een luxe vakantie. Moeder en Bietje [her sister] waren alleen bij elke deining meteen zeeziek. Lastig hoor'.¹⁸⁰

Peggy van Drunen arrived in the Netherlands when she was 14 years old, and later when she married and moved out, she brought the piano along. Her son, Han van Hout, recalled that he learned to play the piano on the same piece. As such, this object travelled along with the family in their migration. The sewing machine, which is more a piece of furniture because a closet is built around the machine itself, stands currently in the garage of Han van Hout. Watching the Singer sewing machine, which was also leased to own, reveals the intertwined history of people and objects and the importance of family history. The fact that these material objects, and the payment documents, are still saved within a family shows historians that there are many unique sources which provide insight in one family's life. Following the life of an object in relation to their buyers, users and owners, shows also the importance of preserving these material artefacts of the past because they are part of a larger story. In this case, the piano and sewing machine could be seen as symbols for a *Indisch* family influenced and oriented

¹⁷⁶ Huurkoopcontract piano, archive family Drunen-van Hout.

¹⁷⁷ Susie Protschky has written an article on the 'theeuurtje', the afternoon teamoment which was also typical for Indisch colonial life. Susie Protschky, 'Tea Cups, Cameras and Family Life: Picturing Domesticity in Elite European and Javanese Family Photographs from the Netherlands Indies, ca 1900-42, *History of Photography* 36:1 (2012) 44-65.

¹⁷⁸ Opgave van passagiersgoederen, family archive van Drunen – van Hout.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Memoirs Peggy van Drunen-van Hout. My translation: 'We children saw it as one big adventure and experienced the journey to Holland as a luxurious holiday. Mum and Bietje [her sister] were constantly seasick. Quite difficult!'

towards Europe, who bought these expensive things to develop a certain lifestyle which they would carry with them to their homes.

This chapter used a material culture approach to gain a deeper understanding of how Dutch cultural values and meanings were embedded in objects within the home. Firstly, it provided a theoretical framework on the study of ‘things’ and positioned this research within the growing field of research. The objects I have analysed were complementary to written and visual sources, thus I have not so much focussed on the production of objects as more on the cultural values which are embedded in objects.

Secondly, this chapter analysed the interior of the colonial home and the shifting functions of spaces within the home. In the late colonial period, the performance of Europeaness led to new notions on how to live a ‘modern’ life which meant a shift from living outside on the back gallery to inside in the home. Thirdly, by using personal memories and documentations I have focussed on one family and how their sewing machine and piano, bought in the 1930s in the Dutch East Indies, travelled along to new homes across continents. This showed that the study of material things can contribute to historical scholarship by focussing on beliefs, values and ideas of a community in a certain time. The reconstruction of the *Indisch* house showed the discrepancy between leaving the old house in the colony itself because it did not meet the demands of the time and replacing it by a modern home, but representing the colonial home as typical *Indisch* during the exhibition in Amsterdam.

Chapter 3 – Memories of home: transnational identities

Herinneringen kunnen gekleurd zijn. Je ervaring van de gebeurtenis bepaalt of de herinnering als positief of negatief opgeslagen wordt, maar dit kan je herinnering ook later weer beïnvloeden. Daarnaast kunnen foto's uit je jeugd vage herinneringen duidelijker maken. Waarmee het nut van foto's bewezen is. Ik zal de foto's uit mijn jeugd als leidraad gebruiken en mijn herinneringen proberen op te schrijven, waarbij ik aantekenen dat ze vast en zeker enigszins gekleurd zullen zijn.¹⁸¹

As mentioned previously, the racial stratification of social groups was problematic in the Dutch East Indies. The Second World War and the German occupation of the Netherlands led to a break in communications between the motherland and its colony. At first, in the Dutch East Indies, the war was too far away for direct effect, but this changed with the Japanese occupation in 1942. Every European was forced into an internment camp, but because of logistic impossibilities, the large group of Indo-Europeans living on Java could not be captured. They had to register, and if they could prove their historical lineage was mostly Asian, they would not be put into the camps.¹⁸² For the Indo-European community, which had to choose between their European and Asian descent, the Japanese occupation brought disruption and unsettled feelings. This was continued by the four-years' Indonesian revolution, the *Bersiap* period, and subsequent independence. After this time, many (Indo)- Europeans migrated to the Netherlands, America or Australia. The cultural identity of this *Indisch* diaspora is neither Dutch nor Indonesian.¹⁸³ This corresponds to the representation of home as a feeling of belonging. Transnational migration affects feelings of home and the connection to the *Indisch* home which is neither Dutch nor Indonesian as well.

By the time of their arrival in the Netherlands, the (Indo)-Europeans encountered a lack of understanding. For many it was the first time they went overseas, and they had to start a new life in a country they had never been before. For the people in Netherlands the war in the Indies seemed too far away and the dominant remembrance discourse focused on dealing with the

¹⁸¹ Memoirs Peggy van Drunen- van Hout. My translation: 'Memories can be coloured. Your experiences of a certain event determine whether the memory is positive or negative. Pictures can help clarify troubled memories. That's the purpose of pictures. I will use these pictures from my childhood to draw up my memories, which are certainly coloured'.

¹⁸² Bosma, Raben & Willems, *De Geschiedenis van Indische Nederlanders*, 46-47.

¹⁸³ Ibid., 47., Remco Raben (ed), *Beelden van de Japanse bezetting van Indonesië. Persoonlijke Getuigenissen en Publieke Beeldvorming in Indonesië, Japan en Nederland* (NIOD Amsterdam, Waanders Uitgevers Zwolle (1999) 7-14.

traumatic events of the Second World War.¹⁸⁴ For Indonesia, Japan and the Netherlands, the Second World War was a profound episode of their histories which had several national consequences such as independence for Indonesia, the Japanese trauma of defeat and decolonisation for the Netherlands. Remco Raben argues that these national events would overshadow the remembrance of the Japanese occupation.¹⁸⁵ In the Netherlands, the traumatic experiences of the Indo-European would not be recognized as a national trauma but rather the individuals needed to process these experiences for themselves. This chapter will not focus on the remembrance of the Japanese occupation in Dutch collective memory. Indeed, it cannot do justice to all different experiences, stories and (traumatic) memories and the acts of memorialisation which were carried out on a national level. Instead in this chapter I will analyse the relationship between leaving home and the imagining of home by using (photographic) memoirs and memories and stories of people who lived in colonial homes in the Dutch East Indies.¹⁸⁶

I will analyse these personal memoirs in a wider context of *tempo doeloe*, the nostalgic, romantic notion of the time of a bygone era, the late nineteenth century in the Dutch East Indies. Joost Coté wrote an article on the literary construction of *tempo doeloe* in novels such as *De Stille Kracht* of Louis Couperus from 1900.¹⁸⁷ These novels, written by colonial writers, have constructed romantic images of living in the tropics which would become a framework for the way people in the Netherlands would perceive the Dutch East Indies. Similarly, this chapter will focus on the way feelings of home can be constructed out of memory and a longing for a certain time and place in the past. Firstly, I will analyse different memoirs and photographic collections which focus on *tempo doeloe* (*tijd van vroeger*). Secondly, I will use memoirs and source material from private collections. These accounts provide insight in the way individuals deal with the past and in some cases with the fact that the colonial society in which they grew up no longer existed. Some of these memoirs are written by people born after 1942, the initial time frame of this research, however, because the scope of the *Beyond the Bungalow* project focusses on experiences of colonial homes, I will use these accounts in this thesis as well.

¹⁸⁴ Raben (ed), *Beelden van de Japanse bezetting van Indonesië*, 7, 9.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 9.

¹⁸⁶ Parts of the research conducted belonged to the comparative research project *Beyond the Bungalow* of Britta Schilling on the private dimensions of European overseas empire. This project consists of a crowdsourcing platform where people can upload stories and memories of living in colonial homes during the age of empire

¹⁸⁷ Joost Coté, 'Romancing the Indies: the Literary Construction of *Tempo Doeloe* 1880-1930' in Joost Coté and Loes Westerbeek, *Recalling the Indies. Colonial Culture and Postcolonial Identity* (Bloomsbury, 2005) 133-172.

3.1 Longing for home

In the 1960s and 1970s there was a boom of photographic publications on the Dutch East Indies. E. Breton de Nijs, pseudonym for Rob Nieuwenhuys, combined photograph collections from Dutch archives and family archives to provide a visual account of *tempo doeloe*. It aimed to show the European society in the former Dutch East Indies but this proved to be an illusion: the selected photographs show merely characteristics but did not reflect the whole society, as Nieuwenhuys has argued.¹⁸⁸ He continued this project in the 1980s and 1990s which resulted in three publications. The first part, *Baren en Oudgasten*, focussed on *Indisch* photographers who travelled across the colony to photograph everything that seemed to be relevant for Europeans.¹⁸⁹ For Europeans in the Indies he concluded that the tragic part of the *Indisch* life was the arrival and departure of people, this continuous arriving and leaving of Europeans. The second part, *Komen en Blijven*, put the Indo-Europeans at the centre and focussed on the people who stayed in the Indies. Nieuwenhuys argues that the photographs show a focus on the mainland, nature and a society in which Europeans saw the Indies as their second mother country, besides the Netherlands, while the Indo-Europeans referred to the Indies as their home country.¹⁹⁰

This contrast becomes clear in the personal memories of two participants as well. Ellen de Bats, whose grandmother was an Indo-European woman, recalled that home was the Netherlands. She remembered that when she went to school in Bandung, she felt at home in the Dutch culture; she wanted to live there and her education and upbringing were Dutch as well. She noticed that outside the school, people spoke a different language and that there were no Indonesian children (only some Chinese children) who went to the same school.¹⁹¹

Ami Emanuel, born in Surabaya in 1931, grew up in an Indo-European family and referred to the Dutch East Indies as home.¹⁹² His father worked as a civil servant and for this

¹⁸⁸ E. Breton de Nijs, *Tempo Doeloe. Fotografische documenten uit het oude Indië 1870-1914* (Amsterdam, 1961) 7-8.

¹⁸⁹ Rob Nieuwenhuys, *Tempo Doeloe – een verzonken wereld. Fotografische documenten uit het oude Indië 1870-1920* (1998) 'Baren en Oudgasten', 11.

¹⁹⁰ Rob Nieuwenhuys, *Tempo Doeloe* (1998) 'Komen en Blijven' 7.

¹⁹¹ Memories Ellen de Bats. Sent to the author in April 2017. My translation of 'Voor mij was Nederland mijn thuis. Al op school in Bandung voelde ik mij thuis in de Nederlandse cultuur. In deze cultuur wilde ik leven. De opvoeding thuis en op school was Nederlands. Wel vond ik het vreemd, dat er buiten de school een andere taal werd gesproken, en dat Indonesische kinderen (behalve enkele Chinese kinderen) niet op mijn school zaten. Maar als kind zag je alles als vanzelfsprekend. Het was gewoon zo'.

¹⁹² Memories Ami Emanuel, Sent to the author in April 2017.

reason his family had to move a lot. Emanuel remembered that during the Japanese occupation, and his father's imprisonment, his family moved in with his aunt, his mother's sister, to get through the war. In the *Bersiap* period, their former house was *gerampokt* (robbed) and therefore many personal family albums were lost. He remembers this home as having an open back and front gallery where a table, chairs, houseplants and flowers were part of the furniture of the veranda.¹⁹³

Nieuwenhuys concluded in his epilogue that silence is that what is forgotten, what does not exist anymore, not even the memory.¹⁹⁴ The photographs of cemeteries reflect what is gone: lives of people but also life in the Indies. These material ruins of graveyards remind one of what once was. As Ann Laura Stoler argues ruins are not merely icons of romantic loss or left overs of what once was but rather 'to what people are 'left with': to what remains, to the aftershock of empire, to the material and social afterlife of structures, sensibilities and things'.¹⁹⁵ Thus, the photographs of material remnants, in the form of cemeteries, reflect 'that what once lived'. It also connects to the remaining memories and ruins of life in the Indies and the houses which are still present in Indonesia. These former colonial homes are legacies of the colonial past and remain present in the contemporary landscape.

The third and final part of Nieuwenhuys series was 'Met vreemde ogen'. This volume is dedicated to the indigenous people and how the Indonesian society was viewed through 'other' eyes. Many photographs of Indonesians are made by Europeans thus this book focussed on the world of the European in relation to the Indonesian society.¹⁹⁶ As mentioned previously, it shows how Europeans saw themselves by picturing the 'other' thus a European representation of the colonial society based on racial difference and western superiority.¹⁹⁷ Nieuwenhuys, born in Semarang in 1908, had an *Indisch* youth with his Dutch father and Indo-European mother. His memoirs and this series on *tempo doeloe* showed nostalgic elements but provided historical context and critical reflections on the representations of the bygone era as well.

Hein Buitengeweg wrote the book *Op Java staat een Huis* in 1960. This book, dedicated to Annetje Berg-van Bijleveld is based on 120 photos Buitengeweg found in her teak closet. He decided to combine these photos, together with stories, to remember *tempo doeloe*.¹⁹⁸ As the

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Nieuwenhuys, 'Komen en Blijven', 183-187.

¹⁹⁵ Ann-Laura Stoler, 'Imperial Debris: Reflections on Ruin and Ruination', *Cultural Anthropology* 23,2 (2008) 194.

¹⁹⁶ Nieuwenhuys, 'Met vreemde ogen' 7-9.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Hein Buitengeweg, *Op Java staat een Huis* (1960) 5.

author argued, the photos, tell more than his written story which accompanies the pictures.¹⁹⁹ Buitenweg argued that the photos showed the lives of ordinary people, 'maybe too ordinary as their lives were not remarkable in relation to the history of humankind' but he continued 'the lives and work of their generation have had some meaning (...) for the greatness of a small country and – hopefully – for the future greatness of the large country, named Indonesia'.²⁰⁰ Buitenweg argued that the Dutch achieved 'something' in the colony: 'sugar, tobacco, coffee, rubber and kina plantations, construction of roads, harbours, bridges, factories, bringing knowledge, improving health conditions, govern, maintaining order, safety and law sailing through the thousands of green islands across the oceans'.²⁰¹ These achievements relate to the constructing of the house as well although Buitenweg does not mention the home separately. The improvement of health conditions but also the construction of roads all contribute to increasing living conditions which impact the home as well.

This citation shows how ideas on European superiority and ideas on the Dutch colonial past are reflected in the narrative on the Dutch presence in Indonesia. Renato Rosaldo argues that in films imperialism is portrayed with nostalgia, but the same goes for books.²⁰² He defined 'Imperialist Nostalgia' as a representation where people 'mourn the passing of what they themselves have transformed'.²⁰³ Nostalgia is an appropriate way to establish one's innocence by talking about what one has destroyed at the same time.²⁰⁴ This is reflected in Buitenweg's account of the homes on Java as he mentioned: 'het kan gebouwd zijn in de laatste helft van de vorige eeuw, lang vóór de moderne – de toen moderne – architectuur meende zich over het toenmalige Nederlands-Oost-Indië te moeten ontfemen'.²⁰⁵ Buitenweg recalled the traditional colonial home and the late colonial life style but argued that the modern architecture destroyed

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 5.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 5. My translation of original text: 'dat het leven en de arbeid van hun generatie toch wel van enige betekenis zijn geweest (...) voor de grootheid van een klein lang – en ik hoop het heel oprecht- voor de toekomstige grootheid van het grote land, dat nu Indonesië heet'.

²⁰¹ Ibid., 5. My translation of original text: 'Waar men eenmaal zal begrijpen, dat er door al die mensen uit Nederland toch wel iets is verricht. Zo maar rustig suiker, tabak, koffie, rubber en kina plantend, wegen aanlegend, havens, bruggen en fabrieken bouwend, kennis brengend en gezondheid bevorderend, besturend, orde en veiligheid handhavend en rechtsprekend, varend tussen duizend groene eilanden en over de wereldzeeën'.

²⁰² Renato Rosaldo, 'Imperialist Nostalgia' in *Representations* No 26, Special Issue: Memory and Counter-Memory (Spring 1989) 107-122.

²⁰³ Rosaldo, 'Imperialist Nostalgia' 108.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 108.

²⁰⁵ Buitenweg, *Op Java staat een Huis*, 7-8. My translation: 'it could be build in the late nineteenth century, long before the modern – then modern- architecture believed to interfere in the former Dutch East Indies'.

this life in the ‘old *Indisch*. At the same time, these modern homes resulted because of Dutch colonial ideas on racial superiority and political centralisation combined with the Ethical Policy.

As argued previously, at the beginning of the twentieth century changing notions on Europeanness challenged the *Indisch* culture, which was neither Dutch nor Indonesian, but based upon Asian influences and traditions. This influenced the *Indisch* home as well because home-making practices turned the home into an ideal Dutch home in the tropics. Buitenweg recalled the ‘typical’ *Indisch* home, which was not so much a ‘Dutch’ home, in his photographic account but blamed modernity for destroying this home.

For Johan Fabricius, born in the region Preanger, his journey through Indonesia was a ‘sentimental journey’ which would become the title of his book ‘*Een reis door het nieuwe Indonesië – a sentimental journey*’.²⁰⁶ Fabricius recalled precious memories of the old *Indisch* society by describing sounds, words, colours which subconsciously were still present.²⁰⁷ In his book he combined his experiences of the journey with photographs from his own family albums. He concluded with his feelings of Java which will still be looming in his subconscious mind but at the same time he reflected on post-colonial Indonesia and the Indonesians wish to create an honest society.²⁰⁸

This longing for *tempo doeloe* is in many examples reflected in the materiality of the home. These photographic accounts showed different ways of dealing with the past and longing for bygone times. The house, or people’s use of the home, gave many impulses for remembering the lost lifestyle of late nineteenth century colonial society. Because home is related to many more things than merely the physical structure, many authors reflect on the emotions connected to the home.

3.2. Home as trope for memories

Lived experiences of home can give insight in the way people remember living in colonial homes and the feelings that are attached to the house. Was it merely a house or did people feel at home? Was it a safe place or a place of fear? What did it mean to be at home? This chapter will use memories written down by participants of the *Beyond the Bungalow* project. Most of these participants were born in the Dutch East Indies and spent their childhood in the colony.

²⁰⁶ Johan Fabricius, *Een reis door het nieuwe Indonesië – a sentimental journey* (Den Haag, 1971).

²⁰⁷ Fabricius, *Een reis door het nieuwe Indonesië*, 6.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 135.

Some of the participants were born after the intended scope of this research but because the *Beyond the Bungalow* project focusses on experiences of living in colonial homes, the contributions remain important. Besides, the fact that people lived in colonial homes after the independence can tell us a lot on the way people perceive their home. What does it tell if people regard a home 'colonial' even after independence? The Japanese occupation was a sudden rupture which had consequences for all families who lived in the Indies at that time. During and just after the occupation, several families went permanently to the Netherlands, others only for a few years to return in the late 1940s. After Indonesian independence in 1949, most families returned to the Netherlands. These memories are individual and based upon childhood memories. As all participants argued, as a child you take things for granted and you do not question certain circumstances.

Ellen de Bats, born in 1947, spent her childhood in Bandung, Indonesia after the independence. She lived with her parents, *Indisch* grandmother and two siblings in a detached house which consisted of a main building, pavilion and a big garage. They lived in the pavilion, which were the former rooms for the servants; she had never been in the main building or garage because it was occupied by other families.²⁰⁹ Ellen de Bats recalled that the interior was frugally furnished with only the most essential things such as tables, chairs, beds and closets of dark teak wood: all heavy colonial furniture. She cannot remember that her parents had vases or paintings, although she does know her father had a small aquarium with tropical fishes which stood in the living room. Besides fish, the family had a dog and her father had two white cockatoos in the shed next to the kitchen. She recalled the most important spaces of the building, namely the veranda at the front of the house and the back gallery where the family would gather to drink tea or to grill corn-on-the-cob. The children liked to play in the garden at the back of the house; this was considered a safe place to play, in comparison to the garden at the front of the building which was more a flower garden.²¹⁰ Furthermore, Ellen de Bats argued that the so-called Dutch houses were desired properties after independence. She explained that these homes were built by the Dutch and were in the strict hierarchy of the colonial society, considered a status symbol.²¹¹ These aesthetic, decent homes built out of brick, were also sought after by well-off Indonesian families. Thus, it seems that the late colonial modern homes were popular in urban areas even after independence.

²⁰⁹ Memoirs of Ellen de Bats, April 2017.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ Ibid.

Traditional colonial homes were often built by people themselves instead of architects. Ellen de Bats recalled the house her grandfather, a plantation holder, built in Wonotunggal (Pekalongan, Middle Java). He constructed this house himself and it was destroyed in 1945 by the pemoeda's (nationalists). 'Nobody dared to build or go to the plot as it was believed that the spirit of my grandfather, haunted the grounds' as she mentioned.²¹²

Joty ter Kulve, born in 1927 in Semarang, moved at a young age to Linggarjati, West-Java. Her father, Koos van Os, owned the company Technisch Bureau J.J. van Os and a tile and concrete factory in Cheribon. He built the house, together with local craftsmen, on the slopes of the volcano Tjeremai in Linggarjati. For the building material, he used locally produced tiles and bricks from his own concrete factory. The house was surrounded by a veranda, which was used for everything and consisted of various rattan furniture, and a large garden with many flowers and home-grown fruit and vegetables.²¹³ The architectural style of the house reflected the Dutch style of the 1920s and 1930s. The walls were sturdy to resist earthquakes and volcanic eruptions and stayed cool because of actual openings at the top of the walls.²¹⁴

The significance of Joty ter Kulve's personal memories of her family house, have changed into national memories as well because of the function the house in Linggarjati received during the independence negotiations. During the Japanese occupation, she was 14 years at the time, her family was forced into camps. After this traumatic period, she went to the Netherlands to study law. The Linggarjati negotiations, resulting in the Linggarjati agreement which was the start of the decolonisation process, took place in her former family home. Today, this house has been transformed into a museum and acts as a symbol for national war heritage. Joty ter Kulve strived to bring together this Indonesian and Dutch heritage as she stated: 'it is quite surprising that Indonesia maintains and cherishes a monument that until recently was not even part of Dutch colonial history, nor ever considered as part of the Dutch colonial heritage'.²¹⁵ As a founder of the Indonesia-Nederland Society, Joty ter Kulve and her brother Willem van Os, aimed to connect Indonesia and the Netherlands and change their home into a *lieu de mémoire*.²¹⁶

²¹² Ibid. My translation of original tekst: 'Een lange tijd durfde niemand op deze plek iets te bouwen of te wonen, omdat men dacht dat de geest van mijn grootvader er nog rondzwierf'.

²¹³ Questionnaire filled in by Joty ter Kulve, March 2017.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ Ibid., Interview Joty ter Kulve (9 March and 20 March 2017) Citation: speech of Joty ter Kulve in 2007 published on the website <http://indonesia-nederland.org>.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

Joty ter Kulve's personal memories of her childhood and her home with a beautiful view over the volcano and jungle, the surrounding garden which moved into the sawa's, rice fields, and had flowers everywhere, are not merely bound to her personal experience. For Joty ter Kulve the dwelling is a home, but for many Indonesians it is a material structure, a house, connected to independence.²¹⁷ This shows how the same material structure can encompass different feelings related to the home or related to the house in a political and historical context.

Home as trope for memories does not always mean the memories have to be related to the actual house. Several examples used in this chapter focusses on memories of the home and the way it looked like, was decorated, was used or how it was not merely a house but one's home. These feelings of belonging to a home stretch far beyond the house in itself. People can feel at home in a house, but people also feel at home in a city, country or environment. This research has shown that for some participants the questions regarding the home would mean much more than just remembering physical features of the home. As Melchior Huster mentioned: 'Ik word oud, Indië/Indonesië is een afgesloten deel van mijn leven. Misschien dat daarom het brein maar met stukjes en beetjes te voorschijnt komt met info? Blijkbaar blijft het toch malen daarboven binnenin'.²¹⁸ Thinking of home means also thinking of where someone felt at home: memories are not static and keep on developing and changing in the mind.

This chapter showed how the home functions as a trope for memories. Firstly, it focussed on the post-colonial remembrance of life in the Dutch East Indies within a nostalgic framework. Rosaldo's concept of imperial nostalgia applied well to the literature but less to the respondents. Although many respondents referred to the careless youth where they could play in the garden and the servants played an important role in their upbringing, they do not reflect on it in a nostalgic way. This could be because the participants were young when they lived in the Indies and the questionnaire did not so much focussed on the memories of their parents for example. For most of the participants, home was the Dutch East Indies but this was heavily connected with the Netherlands although it was not the same. The described homes were mostly hybrid in style and combined Dutch and *Indisch* elements.

²¹⁷ The Linggarjati museum is one of the best visited museums on Java (Joty ter Kulve, 9 March and 20 March 2017).

²¹⁸ Questionnaire Melchior Huster, Sent to the author in May and June 2017. My translation of original text: 'I am getting old. The Indies/Indonesia is a closed part of my life. It might be that the brain just shows parts and bits of all information? Apparently, it keeps on working in my head'.

This chapter also used photographic accounts and memoirs of Indo-Europeans who lived after the independence in the Netherlands and collected photographs to reflect the *Indisch* society. These *Indische* writers belong to the distinctive *Indische* community which still highlights its mixed background and culture. This *Indisch* identity is important in remembering home: the physical house where someone used to live but also the wider notion of home as a place where someone feels at home. For some participants, this home is still a place, the Indies, which does not exist anymore. This chapter used personal memories and stories collected by the research project *Beyond the Bungalow* to gain a better understanding of how memories of experiences of home looked like. This chapter showed that the home is a starting point for thinking about past times. The bygone era of *tempo doeloe* is reflected in the photographs of colonial homes with verandas full of rattan furniture, people reading in lazy chairs and family pictures of having tea moments. In these reflections of the past, the home functions as a material reference point. The lived experiences of home showed that the Japanese occupation led to a break between their *Indisch* life and a new life in the Netherlands – away from home. The remembrance of home is twofold: the material reality of the *Indische* house which was a combination of Dutch and indigenous influences and the memory of home: the place where someone feels at home. Finally, can this representation of the remembered home be seen as a marker of imperial power? This is difficult to say based on the childhood memories of the *Indische* home and household. Some participants reflected on the colonial society they lived in by mentioning that they behaved cruel to the servants whilst others recall that the servants were part of their family. However, the colonial homes the participants grew up in, were part of the colonial society and for many participants the metropole was important for ideas on for example lifestyle and education. However, the colonial society and the *Indisch* house were not static and it is impossible to identify one colonial identity or one colonial home.

Conclusion

This thesis aimed to shed new light on Dutch imperial history by focussing on the home in the late colonial period in the Dutch East Indies. It contributed to the existing body of literature on the changing notions on what it meant to be European in the late *Indisch* society. The distinctive hybrid *Indisch* culture was challenged by these notions which became visible in home-making practices and idealized images of the home. This thesis analysed representations of the colonial home as exercising imperial power by focussing on the performance of Europeanness in domestic home-making practices. Furthermore, this research used concepts from the relatively new field of studies of home to analyse the exercise of imperial power on a domestic scale.

This thesis analysed various representations of the colonial home. Firstly, it focussed on written sources such as prescriptive household guides, to analyse idealized images of the home. Ideologies of home became visible in ideas on how to build, maintain and sustain the home. The process of how to turn a house into a home was central to this analysis. The late colonial period noted a shift from traditional, colonial, homes to new modern homes and this chapter aimed to shed light on this process of how ideal images of home were materialized in the physical structure of the house.

Secondly, this thesis aimed to understand how the analysis of domestic material culture could reveal information on certain values and beliefs within the society. The reconstruction of the *Indisch* home in the Netherlands was used as an example to show how certain Dutch values and beliefs were projected on the reconstruction of the house. For this reason, it did not show how people in the Indies lived but rather how people in the Netherlands thought how people in the Indies lived. This reconstructed house consisted out of all nineteenth century *Indisch* elements of a colonial house such as the veranda and eclectic interior, but used values such as the rice table to show twentieth century notions on colonial superiority. The hybrid *Indische* house had, just as the *Indische* identity, a hybrid character whilst the shifting notions on Europeanness demanded to develop a colonial identity which followed the metropole. In comparison to the British case for example, the Indian bungalows were from the inside reflections of Britain but in the Dutch case the ‘European’ group was too different. The *Indisch* house and identity were parts of the Dutch colonial identity but this was not static and easily identified.

The third chapter focussed on lived experiences of home and memories attached to former homes in the Dutch East Indies. It showed that the home can serve as a trope for different memories: from the personal to the national level and from the actual house and its looks to the

idea of belonging at home and thinking of home. By using private documents and photographs it gives a unique insight in memories and experiences of former colonial families. Besides, it shows how the remembrance of home encompasses memories of the actual structure as well as the feeling of belonging at a place.

This thesis combined written, material and visual source material with memories from people who lived in the former Dutch East Indies to further our knowledge on the meaning and representation of home in a colonial context.²¹⁹ The material culture approach used in this thesis should be further developed to give a systematic analysis of objects and their relation to peoples and vice versa. It would be interesting to continue this into an analysis of production and consumer networks to understand how objects moved through time and space. By this, it would also give a voice to the many Chinese and Javanese local craftsmen and it would provide a better understanding of production networks on Java.

The danger exists that throughout this thesis the *Indisch* colonial home was reflected as one typical way of building and living in a house. This would not do justice to the variety within this community. Just as there did not exist one homogenous *Indisch* community, there did not exist one homogenous colonial home either. The thesis aims to give some insight into representations of colonial homes by using various approaches and source material, but the borders between traditional and modern homes could well be overlapping in many cases. Above all, this thesis aimed to show how the theoretical framework of home is useful to gain a better understanding of Dutch imperial history in the late colonial period in the Dutch East Indies. Future research topics, which are briefly touched upon, should be focussed on the actual experience, instead of remembering, of living in a colonial home and should provide a better insight in domestic material culture by analysing the objects from a more systematic point of view. Furthermore, future research should focus on the builders instead of the occupants of the homes so the question ‘who builds the colonial home’ could be an interesting starting point.

The relevance of contributing to the historiography of Dutch imperial history is that colonial legacies are still present in the contemporary world. By using the home as starting point, it sheds new light on the material legacies in former colonies as well as on (detached) feelings of home. Furthermore, this thesis aimed to provide a better understanding of the *Indisch* identity in the late colonial period and the way changing notions on Europeanness influenced

²¹⁹ Bosma, Raben and Willems argued that picturing the *Indische* society is dealing with its limitations. Many photographs are made from a colonial perspective by focussing on the European elite and othering the non-European or they are intimate family photographs but there has never been an attempt to catalogue all this unique material. (Bosma, Raben and Willems, *De Geschiedenis van Indische Nederlanders*, 14-15).

the colonial home, both of its interior and exterior. The transnational character of homes could open up the debate on contemporary colonial legacies by focussing on lived experiences of home from both former coloniser as former colonised. Although this thesis only focussed on the experience of the former coloniser, the perspective of the former colonised should be analysed in future research as well. A material culture approach could be beneficial in understanding how homes shape our ideas, feelings and identity.

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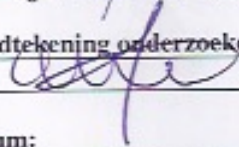
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Datum:

01-07-2017

Eventuele beschrijving voorwaarden:

na gebruik retourneren

TOESTEMMINGSFORMULIER

Project: Onderzoeksproject *Beyond the Bungalow*

Onderzoeker: Britta Schilling

Student: Anne Marijn Damstra


Naam van deelnemer:

J.E.A. EMANUEL

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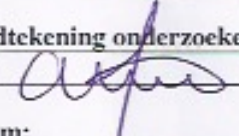
Handtekening:



Datum:

25 APRIL 2017.

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Datum:

01-07-2017

Eventuele beschrijving voorwaarden:
