

Colonial memory in the ‘Gutter of Europe’

The representation of the Colonial Recruitment Depot in Harderwijk, the Netherlands



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Abstract

In the 19th century, Harderwijk was known as the ‘gutter of Europe’. This was because the Dutch city of Harderwijk was home to the Colonial Recruitment Depot (*Koloniaal Werfdepot*), where colonial recruits from all over Europe came to be trained to fight in the Dutch colonial army. This thesis is about representation of the Colonial Recruitment Depot (*koloniaal werfdepot*) in Harderwijk. Today, this city is a nationally known tourist destination, primarily because of its sea park, the Dolphinarium. Even though Harderwijk describes itself as a historical city, the history of the Colonial Recruitment Depot is hard to find in the city centre of Harderwijk. Using theories and methods of memory studies, postcolonial studies, anthropology and history, this thesis traces the memory of the Dutch colonial training facility in Harderwijk to discover the ambiguous place it holds within local collective memory.

Christian consciousness through processes of pillarization influenced the position of the colonial history in local public history and historiography. Histories around the fishing industry were prioritised instead, dealing with the cultural trauma of losing the Zuiderzee. This does not mean that the history of the *Koloniaal Werfdepot* was completely forgotten. Throughout history, the depot is represented in various ways, although not always fully contextualised and explained. Strategies of colonial and imperial nostalgia result in colonial aphasia, which consequently influences the way colonialism is discussed in postcolonial Harderwijk.

Preface

During my bachelor's in cultural anthropology I always wanted to do research abroad. I wanted to discover an unknown, strange world, where I did not know the rules. During my masters Cultural History of Modern Europe I researched the place I grew up in and went to high school: Harderwijk. I implicitly expected to find familiarity, but the opposite was true. Suddenly, my hometown felt like an undiscovered place, with a strange, but compelling history and interesting people.

In March 2020, the covid-19 pandemic broke out. The archives closed and I went through a difficult time. I am fortunate enough to have a group of wonderful friends who listened when I struggled. In particular, I need to mention Pam, Yasser, Vincent, Verena, Sandra and Wouter for distracting me when I needed a break. I know this sounds cheesy, but I really could not have done this without you.

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I want to thank my fellow students and the professors of the master programme Cultural history of modern Europe. Thanks to Gertjan Plets for being able to help on such short notice.

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Introduction

*“Once, Harderwijk seemed to be inhabited by hundreds of vandals
They came for military service, future colonials
They populated city centre, brothels and bars, spent each penny
That did not please the people after all, they came with so many
In churches they prayed, for so long with persistence
For the morality of Harderwijk and her alleged obedience”*¹

In the poem above, Theo Bakker, who was Harderwijk’s city poet in 2014, described a contentious chapter in the city’s past. The poem is entitled *Multi-Culti door de eeuwen heen*, and it describes multiculturalism in Harderwijk through the ages. This paragraph focuses on the 19th century, when the city was infamous for its unusual visitors: colonial soldiers. In this century, Harderwijk, a small fishing town in the middle of the Dutch Bible Belt at the edge of the forests of the Veluwe and bordering the former Zuiderzee, was known throughout the continent as ‘the Gutter of Europe’.²

At first glance, it might be hard to imagine that Harderwijk was once a coastal town that played an important role in the Dutch colonial empire, as it is now most famous for its sea park, the Dolphinarium.³ Still, from 1814 till 1909 Harderwijk was home to the *Koloniaal Werfdepot*, or Colonial Recruitment Depot.⁴ At this facility, colonial soldiers from all over Europe were trained for approximately six weeks and then shipped to the Dutch East and

¹Theo Bakker. ‘Stadsgedicht 9: Multiculti door de eeuwen heen.’ *Harderwijkse Zaken*. Published on 07-06-2014. Accessed on 09-01-2020. URL: <https://www.harderwijksezaken.nl/stadsgedichten/stadsdichter-theo-bakker-2013-2014/stadsgedicht-9-multi-culti-door-de-eeuwen-heen>.

My own translation. Original text:

*“Ooit leek Harderwijk bewoond door honderden vandalen
ze kwamen hier voor Militaire Dienst, toekomstige kolonialen
ze bevolkten de binnenstad, de kroegen en bordelen
Dat vond men hier toch niet zo leuk, ze waren ook met velen
in de kerken werd er in die tijd lang en volhardend gebeden
voor het brave Harderwijk en haar vermeende goede zeden”*

² See, Martin Bossenbroek, *Volk voor Indië: de werving van Europese militairen voor de Nederlandse koloniale dienst 1814-1909*. (Van Soeren&Co, 1992), 13.; Martin Elands and Wim Timmers. *Uitgediend: Harderwijk als Garnizoensstad*(Harderwijk, Drukkerij Wedding, 2005), 12.

³ It is even hard to imagine that Harderwijk was once a coastal town. Due to Dutch land reclamation policies of the ‘50s and ‘60s, the salt water Zuiderzee gradually turned into the province of Flevoland, surrounded by some freshwater lakes. Older people still refer to the bodies of freshwater next to Harderwijk as ‘the sea’.

⁴ It is important to note that from 1814 to 1822, the Colonial Recruitment depot was named the Depot Battalion of colonial forces (*Depot-Bataljon der Koloniale troepen*) and from 1822 to 1843, it was known as the General Depot of ground forces (*Algemeen Depot van de Landmacht*). From 1843 to 1909, the facility was called the Colonial Recruitment Depot (*Koloniaal Werfdepot*). For the sake of consistency I refer to the colonial training facility in Harderwijk as the Colonial Recruitment Depot, also when referring to events before 1843 throughout this thesis.

West Indies to become part of their respective colonial armies. Adventurers, volunteers, but also desperate people and deserters from other European armies came to Harderwijk in order to become colonial soldiers, or *kolonialen*. Simultaneously, Harderwijk functioned as a temporary home for returnees from the colonies that wanted to end their military contract. These returnees visited Harderwijk to be relieved of their military duties, and after their short stay, they usually returned home or stayed in the *Militair Tehuis*, the military home. Approximately 150.000 people were trained in Harderwijk in less than a century.⁵

When I first encountered this story, I was intrigued to learn that the town I have lived in for most of my life played such an enormous role in the Dutch colonial empire. I was even more fascinated by the fact that I had never heard this story before. Why was this Protestant town host to such a training facility, which was of massive importance for the existence of the Dutch colonial empire? In order to learn more about this particular history, I decided to visit the city museum. However, to my surprise, there was no information to be found regarding Harderwijk's colonial connections. This sparked even more confusion. How is it possible that this particular history was not represented in the public historical centre of Harderwijk, its city museum?⁶

In my thesis, I analyse the representation of the Colonial Recruitment Depot in Harderwijk in order to answer the following research question: 'Why is the Colonial Recruitment Depot insufficiently represented in the collective memory of Harderwijk?'. It explores how the Colonial Recruitment Depot is represented in newspaper articles and how Harderwijk deals with its colonial history today. Harderwijk's amnesia regarding the colonial is part of larger postcolonial Dutch processes of memory making. The story of Harderwijk connects to broader theoretical questions. The following discussion situates the thesis in these larger contexts.

On Dutch colonial memory

This thesis combines multiple theoretical approaches, from various disciplines, such as memory studies, postcolonial studies, cultural anthropology, sociology and history. Theories of memory have inspired the narrower field of colonial memory. These theories ground my research on the particular case of Harderwijk.

⁵ Martin Bossenbroek, *Van Holland naar Indië: het transport van koloniale troepen voor het Oost-Indisch leger 1815-1909*. (De Bataafsche Leeuw, 1986), 9.

⁶ I visited the museum on 14 and 27 December 2019. Based on my observations.

Even though memory and history are intertwined and connected, they are different. Memory is created today, whereas history is something of the past. History is factual and solid, whereas memory is performed and reconstructed both by individuals and groups, based on historical events.⁷ Memory can thus change and is socially constructed, whereas history already happened. In order to stress the social aspect of memory, sociologist Maurice Halbwachs coined the term ‘collective memory’. Various layers of memory, such as familial memory, regional memory and national memory are combined. All these types of memory consist of historical events and how they are remembered by the ‘collective’. What is important to consider, is that collective memory, similar to every other social construction, is bound to a specific place and time.⁸ Local memory, for instance, can differ from national memory and various generations tend to remember similar histories in different ways.⁹ For instance, memory can be influenced by cultural or collective trauma. According to Alexander, a collective or cultural trauma occurs when members of a collective group are subjected to a terrible event that leaves marks on their group consciousness. These marks on group consciousness, then, influence the way the actual event is remembered.

The problem with memory is that it is often one-sided, which distorts the actual historical event. Nationalistic or regionalist tendencies shape memory.¹⁰ These forces often privilege what is socially accepted as ‘good’ history in both a local and a national context. Of course, what is considered ‘good history’ changes over time, similarly to memory itself. However, memory can be multidirectional, meaning memory can be constructed using multiple narratives and can come from multiple angles and approaches.¹¹ Memory is sometimes regarded as a zero-sum game, meaning that if we chose to remember a specific historical event, we forget other moments. In this sense, memory is regarded as binary, with nothing in between remembering or forgetting. In reality, this is not the case, although these popular connotations are important for our social understanding of memory.¹²

⁷ Jay Winter. ‘Introduction. The performance of the past: memory, history, identity’. In: *Performing the Past Memory, History, and Identity in modern Europe*, ed. Karin Tilmans, Jay Winter and Frank van Vree, (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010), 11-34.

⁸ Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*. Translated by Lewis A. Coser. (Chicago: Chicago University Press. 1992).

⁹ Britta Schilling, ‘Imperial Heirlooms: the Private Memory of Colonialism in Germany’, *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* (2013), 663-682.

¹⁰ Benedict Anderson. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the origins and spread of nationalism*. (London: Verso, 1983), 181.

¹¹ Michael Rothberg. ‘Introduction: Theorizing Multidirectional Memory in a Transnational Age’, in *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford, 2009), 3.

¹² Paul Bijl, ‘Colonial Memory and Forgetting in the Netherlands and Indonesia’, *Journal of genocide studies* (2012), 444; Rothberg, ‘Introduction’, 15.

This thesis draws on theories that regard memory as socially constructed.¹³ For instance, a way to establish collective memory is through what Pierre Nora typifies as *lieux de memoire*, or sites of memory. These are important places for the construction of a collective memory and include, for example, streets named after historical figures, monuments or heritage sites. By installing these sites, it is signified that specific moments are considered important and that they should not be ‘forgotten’ by citizens.¹⁴ This, however, does not mean that memory is necessarily actively ‘chosen’, but societal structures also constrict it.¹⁵

A good example of this is colonial memory and, more specifically, Dutch colonial memory. When it comes to the Dutch collective memory, the countries’ colonial past holds a peculiar place. As Paul Bijl argues, national and colonial historiography are often regarded as separate. He states that the Dutch colonial past is regarded as separate from the national historiography.¹⁶ There is a misconception that the colonial past happened ‘out there’, which disregards the extensive network which connected colonies with their respective centres in the colonies: the metropolises.¹⁷ Many publications on the Dutch colonial past conclude that the colonial past is not discussed enough or that its atrocities are silenced, and yet they don’t contribute further to the state of knowledge.

Another problem in Dutch colonial historiography occurs when Dutch colonial atrocities are described, they are treated as if they are a new discovery. Bijl refers to this as the ‘revelation effect’. The ‘newly revealed’ documents, which had been in public spheres for years, are ‘discovered’ and then quickly move back into the realm of ‘secrecy’ again. Bijl states that this is due to a lack of memorability of colonial atrocities. The lack of memorability, as he explains, refers to the degree in which certain events can be remembered within existing frames of memory.¹⁸ Ann Laura Stoler’s concept of colonial aphasia is helpful here. Colonial aphasia is blockage of knowledge, a lack of vocabulary to appropriately express yourself and an incapacity to understand colonial contexts. Due to colonial aphasia, colonial pasts are often considered to be difficult to remember, although they are not

¹³ See, for instance, Aleida Assmann, ‘Re-framing memory. Between individual and collective forms of constructing the past’. In: *Performing the Past Memory, History, and Identity in modern Europe*, ed. Karin Tilmans, Jay Winter and Frank van Vree, (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010), 35-50.

¹⁴ Pierre Nora. ‘Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire’. *Representations*. 26, (1989), 7-24.

¹⁵ See Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

¹⁶ Paul Bijl, ‘Dutch Colonial Nostalgia across Decolonisation’. *Journal of Dutch Literature*, 4,1 (2013), 128-149

¹⁷ Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper. ‘Between Metropole and Colony: Rethinking a Research Agenda,’ in *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, ed. Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 1- 56.

¹⁸ Bijl, ‘Colonial Memory’ (2012). 447

completely ‘forgotten’.¹⁹ Public reminders, in the shape of material heritage stemming from these pasts, are often painful reminders of these difficult moments in time. The difficult heritage is sometimes obviously repurposed or neglected, to symbolically ‘move on’ from this past and to forget about it.²⁰

Simultaneously, Dutch colonialism is, in a way, remembered through a process called ‘colonial nostalgia’.²¹ This can be found, for instance, in capitalisation on the ‘good old colonial times’, which is generally referred to as *tempo doeloe*, meaning ‘the old days’ in Malay, or as it is understood in the Netherlands: ‘the good old days’.²² In specific *lieux de memoires*, on paintings or in popular media, the Dutch imperial age is portrayed as a great era in which the Dutch brought wealth to their colonies. What is conveniently left out is the fact that the Dutch were at war with the local population most of their imperial reign, massacring the local population in the process.²³ *Tempo doeloe*, here, can be understood as part of the cultural remnants of colonialism.

These paradoxical colonial perspectives prove that there is a wide-ranging problem with colonial memory. On the one hand, therefore, we can see a tendency to ‘forget’ colonial atrocities and on the other a will to remember the good things of colonialism. Even some scholars can be accused of pursuing ‘scientific colonialism’: attenuating colonial horrors or even glorifying colonialism to an extent.²⁴ This can be explained through Gloria Wekker’s interpretation of the Dutch cultural archive. Cultural archives consist of predominantly implicit knowledge.²⁵ Since the Dutch have an extensive colonial history dating back 400 years, colonial ideas of hierarchy, racism and exploitation are still part of the cultural archive of the Netherlands. This means that, often implicitly, various Dutch institutions, such as universities and museums, are still influenced by colonial nostalgic mindsets through their cultural

¹⁹ Ann Laura. Stoler ‘Colonial Aphasia: Race and Disabled Histories in France’, *Public Culture* (2011): 121–56.

²⁰ See Sharon Macdonald., *Difficult Heritage: Negotiating the Nazi Past in Nuremberg and Beyond* (London/New York: Routledge, 2009).

²¹ Lorcin, Patricia. “Imperial Nostalgia; Colonial Nostalgia: Differences of Theory, Similarities of Practice?” *Historical Reflections* (2013), 97-111.; Pamela Pattynama. ‘Cultural memory and Indo-Dutch identity formations’ In: *Post-colonial Immigrants and Identity Formations in the Netherlands*, ed. Ulbe Bosma (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2012)

²² Sarah De Mul. ‘Nostalgia for empire: “Tempo doeloe” in contemporary Dutch literature’, *Memory Studies* (2010) 3,4, 413 – 428; Bijl, ‘Colonial Memory’ 445,454.

²³ Bijl, ‘Colonial Memory’, 450-451.

²⁴ Sandew Hira., *Decolonizing the mind: een fundamentele kritiek op het wetenschappelijk kolonialisme*, (The Hague: Amrit, 2009).

²⁵ For the term cultural archive, see Wendy James. *The listening ebony : moral knowledge, religion, and power among the Uduk of Sudan* (Oxford: Oxford University press, 1999).

archive.²⁶ Subsequent colonial aphasia makes it hard to remain aware of the colonial structures that are reinforced in this way.²⁷

Because of the difficulty of dealing with colonialism in a postcolonial world, I argue we should create spaces to talk about ways to decolonise our institutions in an ethical way. Decolonisation consists of three phases. First, there is political decolonisation, where countries regain political independence. After this, former colonies are regaining economic independence from the metropolises, which is called economic decolonisation. The last phase is decolonisation of the mind. This decolonisation is mostly cultural and is about the removal of immaterial imperial debris, such as implicit biases towards former colonised countries. Thus, in order to become fully decolonised, there first needs to be a certain 'colonial awareness', both in the former colony and the former metropole.²⁸ This awareness can be established through talking and discussing colonial legacies today. Decolonisation of European minds, and acknowledgement of difficult pasts needs to happen from the inside out.²⁹ We should acknowledge that decolonisation of the mind is important, regardless of the presence of 'the colonial other'. As I have shown, colonial memory is a layered concept which holds an ambiguous position in Dutch society. Therefore, enforcing decolonisation on someone from the outside, can trigger unwanted anger.³⁰

This brief overview of why colonial memory holds such a difficult place in Dutch collective memory shows why the memory of the colonial depot has been slow to achieve official recognition in Harderwijk.

Colonial memory in Harderwijk

The historical heart of the city of Harderwijk is undoubtedly the city museum, or *stadsmuseum*. Public history institutions, such as museums, play an important role in the creation of local memory.³¹ The museum of Harderwijk has exhibitions on the University of Harderwijk which was closed in 1812, the Hanseatic league and fishery.³² These aspects of

²⁶ Gloria Wekker. *White innocence*, Duke University Press (2016), 19-20.

²⁷ Ann Laura Stoler, 'Colonial Aphasia', 156; Turunen, Johanna. 'Decolonising European minds through heritage.' *International Journal of Heritage Studies* (2019).1-16.

²⁸ Hira. *Decolonizing the mind*, 82-88.

²⁹ Turunen, Johanna. 'Decolonising European minds.', 11-13.

³⁰ See, for example, Micah Garen et al. 'Black Pete: Blackface character stirs debate during Dutch holiday'. *Al Jazeera*. Accessed on 24-02-2020. Published on 02-12-2019. URL: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/12/black-pete-blackface-character-stirs-debate-dutch-holiday-191202093805072.html>

³¹ Jay Winter. 'Sites of Memory.' In: S. Radstone and B. Schwarz, ed., *Memory Book Subtitle: Histories, Theories, Debates Book*. (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010), 312-324.

³² I visited the museum on 14 and 27 December 2019. Based on my own observations.

the local history of Harderwijk is what I will refer to as the city's local grand narrative. This historical story is promoted throughout the city. For instance, Harderwijk's Hansa-history is promoted under the name Harderwijk *Hanzestad*, with flags that can be found everywhere in Harderwijk (see: picture 0.1).³³ Even the gutters in the city centre of Harderwijk have a fishing boat on them, to remind visitors that Harderwijk used to be a fishing town (see: Picture 0.2). By implementing Harderwijk's grand narrative on all the gutters of the city, it symbolically distances Harderwijk from its 19th century colonial nickname: the Gutter of Europe.



Picture 0.1: Flags with the text Hanzestad Harderwijk. Picture is my own



Picture 0.2: gutter in the shape of a fishing boat. Picture by Mara Sassen.

The Colonial Recruitment Depot holds a peculiar place in relation to the city's grand narrative. As of December 2019, the city museum did not mention the Colonial Recruitment Depot in its collection at all. The Oranje-Nassau *Kazerne*, the building that used to house the Colonial Depot was refurbished into apartments in 1991, even though the enormous gateway is kept intact.³⁴ To an extent, therefore, some traces of colonialism have been repurposed, whereas the gateway still exists, with the words Colonial Recruitment Depot signed on its column. The gateway is an example of colonial nostalgia, as it is beautifully decorated and almost transmits a sense of pride.³⁵ The fact that I had never realised what the gateway meant before I started my research, can be explained because I lacked the capability to link the word

³³ See, for instance the city's tourist website: 'Hanseatic city at the shore of the Veluwemeer'. *Visit Harderwijk*. Last accessed on 28-10-2020. URL: <https://www.visitharderwijk.com/ontdek-harderwijk/hanzestad>.

³⁴ See, Website of Woonhave. 'Muntplein in Harderwijk'. *Woonhave*. Last accessed on 28-10-2020. URL: <https://woonhave.com/nl/muntplein-harderwijk>

³⁵ Lorcin, 'Imperial Nostalgia; Colonial Nostalgia', 97-111.

Koloniaal Werfdepot with the Dutch colonial empire. To an outsider, it may seem strange that I was unable to see this connection, but it is the perfect example of colonial aphasia.³⁶ While reflecting on my own colonial aphasia, I will thus research how the Colonial Recruitment Depot entered this specific realm of memory: aphasia.

Relevance

This is not a military or even diplomatic history of the Dutch colonial army. Previous research on the Colonial Recruitment Depot by Martin Bossenbroek focused on military and diplomatic aspects of colonialism. In this thesis, I diverge from this lens and focus on the cultural and local effects on society, memory and representation. Even though diplomatic history should play a role in the representation of the colonial, it influences socio-cultural aspects as well. As Edward Said states in his book *Culture and Imperialism*, colonialism and imperialism are not only constructed in military and economic forces, but also in ‘culture’, with its manifestation in representations and images.³⁷

As said, decolonisation of the mind does not happen until the colonial past is actively discussed, thus leaving colonial aphasia behind.³⁸ Most Dutch debates on colonialism and its place in Dutch society and education happens in the metropolitan area of the Netherlands, referred to as the Randstad.³⁹ Harderwijk, located in the middle of the Dutch Bible Belt, does not belong to this area. By focussing on a smaller town, I hope to re-frame the postcolonial debate by trying to decolonise Dutch minds outside the Randstad. Although it is often framed as such, Holland and Zeeland were not the only Dutch regions with colonial links: traces of a colonial past can be found everywhere in the Netherlands.⁴⁰ I argue that not only the Randstad has a ‘cultural archive’, but other places in the Netherlands as well. Implicitly, these places struggle with a colonial legacy within an aphasiac framework.⁴¹

Often, local or regional histories are disregarded for being too narrow. By showing that Harderwijk’s history is interconnected with global processes of imperialism, I argue that this is not the case. I aim to uncover how the national colonial memory and local colonial

³⁶ Ann Laura Stoler, ‘Colonial Aphasia’, 125.

³⁷ Edward Said, *Culture And Imperialism* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1993).

³⁸ Stoler, ‘Colonial Aphasia’, 121–56.

³⁹ The Randstad is an urban area, mainly located in North and South Holland. It refers to the urban area surrounding Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Den Haag and Utrecht. Most decolonization debates happen in Amsterdam, as the Black Archives and NiNSee are located here. For the gap between Randstad and ‘province’ see, for instance: Allers & Fraanje, ‘Randstadprovincie of infrastructuurautoriteit.’ In *Jaarboek overheidsfinanciën 2011*, eds. J.H.M. Donders, & C. A. Kam, de (Den Haag: Sdu Uitgevers, 2011), 109.

⁴⁰ See, for instance, Dienke Hondius et al. *Gids Slavernijverleden; The Netherlands Heritage guide* (Volendam: LM Publishers, 2019)

⁴¹ Gloria Wekker. *White innocence*, 25.

memory are intertwined. I thus aim to provide agency to those with local, marginalised histories that are often neglected in the national story.

Methodology

The research uses the method of critical discourse analysis (CDA) most extensively. As Norman Fairclough has shown, language has both a written dimension and a social dimension. This thesis therefore takes into account both dimensions when interpreting any form of text.⁴² Predominantly, I use this technique on newspaper articles. I see newspapers as shapers of local public opinion and as a reflection of popular opinion at the same time. They are both social constructs and constructed by the social.⁴³ This means that, by performing critical discourse analysis on articles, it is possible to discover people's experiences and socio-cultural structures. The people that create newspapers are agents within a structure, but are also influencers of the structure at the same time.⁴⁴ As memory is socially constructed and based on people's experiences, newspapers are tools that uncover how memory is produced and created by society at the time. Amongst others, I analyse regional and national newspaper articles that were published in 1850 to 1909 on the Colonial Recruitment Depot. Harderwijk's archive, the Streekarchivariaat Noordwest-Veluwe (SANV), consists of newspapers from 1850 onwards. Regional newspapers before this time are hard to find. However, my argument primarily focuses on the second half of the 19th century, which means I am largely not hindered by this. Other regional newspaper articles I will analyse stem from the 20th century, which I use in my analysis in chapter two.

On top of newspaper analysis, I will analyse pieces of art, such as the script of a theatre play, videos and images too. I consider these relevant representations of memory and public experiences. Analysis of visual images often reveal symbolic messages that are sometimes unable to be expressed in words. These images become unconsciously part of the cultural archive. I take into account that symbols often change in meaning depending on their historical and local context. By both analysing textual and visual sources, I gain more knowledge on both the implicit and explicit representation of the Colonial Recruitment Depot.

Another approach I pursue is oral history. In order to find information that cannot be found in written sources, I will conduct oral history interviews with inhabitants of Harderwijk.

⁴² Norman Fairclough. *Critical Discourse Analysis. A Critical Study of Language*. (London and New York: Routledge, 2013).

⁴³ For a good example of this, see: Jochen Hung. 'The Modernized Gretchen: Transformations of the New Woman in the late Weimar Republic.' *German History*, 33 (1) (2015), 52-79.

⁴⁴ See Anthony Giddens, *Constitution of Society*, 1984.

By also including oral histories into my research, I will gain more inclusive knowledge. I am aware that most traceable written sources are produced by the most privileged of society, as most people in the 19th century were illiterate or did not have time to record their life.⁴⁵ Even though the stories I am interested in stem from the 19th and early 20th century, the tradition of oral transmission of family histories should not be downplayed. The stories can illuminate past experiences in ways written sources are unable to.⁴⁶ Furthermore, I conducted qualitative interviews with some residents of the apartments located in the building of the Colonial Recruitment Depot and local experts, such as the museum director of the Harderwijk city museum. All my interviews are semi-structured or unstructured, so that the quality of the conversation is prioritised over a previously set up topic list. I do member checks, which are follow-up interviews that so that I know my interpretation aligns with my informants' experience.⁴⁷

I practiced the anthropological method of participant observation to I participated in a walking tour throughout the historical city of Harderwijk. I wrote extended fieldnotes from the experiences, both taking into account the tour guide's story and reactions of spectators.⁴⁸ I furthermore wrote fieldnotes based on my experiences in the archives of Harderwijk. I wrote down and analysed social interactions of archivists and visitors of the archives. My presence as a researcher of colonial history of Harderwijk did frequently provoke reactions. I identify as a young, white woman, which undoubtedly has influenced my position in the field. Most visitors of the archives are older, white men, who were often curious why I visited the archive. The extended fieldnotes based on these interactions act as empirical data, but are also useful to reflect on my own position in the field. During my research, I kept a research journal in which I reflect on my use of methods, findings and progress. This way I remain more aware of the variety of influences that might affect me and my interpretation of sources. As I have lived in or around Harderwijk for most of my life, I need to be aware of my own biases and reflect on them throughout my research.⁴⁹

It is important to keep in mind that my research for this thesis was undertaken during the international corona pandemic of 2020. This means that historical archives and libraries

⁴⁵ UNESCO, 'Chapter 8: The making of illiterate societies', from: UNESCO, Education for all Global Monitoring Report (2006) 189- 213.

⁴⁶ See, for example, Jessica Millward. *Finding Charity's Folk*. (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia press, 2015).

⁴⁷ Hennie Boeije. *Analysis in Qualitative Research*. (London: Sage Publications, 2010), 192.

⁴⁸ See, Kathleen Musante DeWalt, and Billie R. DeWalt. *Participant Observation*. (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011), 87.

⁴⁹ Boeije, *Analysis*, 91-92; DeWalt & DeWalt. *Participant Observation*, 182.

were closed for a significant amount of time. What's more is that this pandemic drastically limited the number of oral histories and semi-structured interviews I could conduct and the amount of walking tours I could attend. Even though the qualitative data I have acquired is limited in this regard, the events and experiences are still relevant and real and therefore should not be disregarded. To overcome biases, I make use of a broad variety of methods and techniques. I have chosen this research approach, because methodological triangulation, or the use of multiple research methods in the same study, increases the validity of findings.⁵⁰ It also serves to create a well-rounded set of sources that illustrate the workings of colonial memory and aphasia, in physical spaces, collective memories, and public heritage sites.

Chapter overview

In my first chapter, I discuss what the Colonial Recruitment Depot meant for the city of Harderwijk. I discuss the experiences of the colonial soldiers that resided in Harderwijk. Who were these people that came from all over Europe to serve in the Dutch military army, and what did they do in Harderwijk? I also focus on their encounters with inhabitants of Harderwijk. How did the citizens of Harderwijk react to the colonial soldiers dwelling in Harderwijk? How did the increasingly Christianising population of Harderwijk deal with continuously incoming strangers from other areas of the world? In order to answer these questions, I use archival sources, such as newspaper articles and egodocuments such as diaries from colonial soldiers and citizens of Harderwijk. I acquire these archival sources in the provincial archival the Streekarchivariaat Noord-Veluwe and the National Archive.

Chapter two examines how the Colonial Recruitment Depot was left out of the grand narrative of Harderwijk, focusing on the fishing history. This way, I can show how and why other histories are prioritised over the Colonial Recruitment Depot. I trace the formation of the local historical grand narrative to the 20th century, at a time when the Zuiderzee gradually turned into the IJsselmeer and Harderwijk's fishing culture slowly met its end. I argue that collective trauma, tourism and commercialisation influenced the construction of a collective memory. I do this by analysing newspaper articles from local newspapers stemming from the 1930s and 1980s.

The third chapter focuses on the position of the Colonial Recruitment Depot in the city today. This chapter includes qualitative interviews with people living in the former military facility and local experts. I analyse the colonial architectural *lieux de memoires* of the city,

⁵⁰ Boeijs. *Analysis*. 173.

and analyse representations of the Colonial Recruitment Depot. There are active plans to change the museum into a more interactive medium through which marginalised stories are told. If all goes according to plan, the new museum will reopen in April 2021.⁵¹ It will be interesting to see if and how the museum will be able to face up to the city's colonial past.

⁵¹ As can be read on the website of the city museum Harderwijk: "Stadsmuseum Harderwijk verbouwt en werkt aan herinrichting Stadsgeschiedenis". *Stadsmuseum Harderwijk*, Accessed on 26-10-2020. URL: <https://www.stadsmuseum-harderwijk.nl/verbouwing-en-herinrichting/> ; Herma van Reenen. "Stadsmuseum Harderwijk presenteert geschiedenis met een ruig randje". *De Stentor*. Published on 18-04-2019. Accessed on 23-01-2020. URL: <https://www.destentor.nl/harderwijk/stadsmuseum-harderwijk-presenteert-geschiedenis-met-een-ruig-randje~a86486a7/>

*At dusk, Harderwijk transforms
Into a den of iniquity
Where [pimps and cafe owners] rule
The smell of the salty sea
Makes way for that of desire and beer
Civilian women make their way
For the ladies of pleasure⁵²*

Chapter One: Christian consciousness in the Gutter of Europe

In August 1814, one of the two mayors of Harderwijk, Johan Cornelis Francois de Vries, visited the national government in the Hague. His goal was clear: persuading the East Indies Governor Johannes van den Bosch to place a new colonial training facility in Harderwijk.⁵³ This new facility was necessary, because the Netherlands needed a new way to occupy foreign territory. Previously, the trade organisations *Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* (VOC), the Dutch East India Company, and the *West-Indische Compagnie* (WIC), the Dutch West India Company, were controlling territories and trading posts in Africa, South America and South East Asia. Both organisations focussed on trading products, such as spices, ammunition and weapons, but they also participated in slave trade.⁵⁴ At the beginning of the 19th century, however, both companies went bankrupt under the Batavian republic and their companies' property became state-owned. After France lost its political control over the Netherlands, the Dutch regained their overseas territories from Great Britain. Simultaneously, 19th century imperialism rose. Political and military control in overseas territories of Suriname and the Dutch East Indies, or Indonesia, became more important to hold on to the land and create a lucrative empire in the process. To impose power, a colonial empire needs 'tools of empire', such as ships, weapons and money to function. Arguably, the most important 'tools of empire' are those that are alive: the living tools of empire, or colonial soldiers, serving in a colonial army.⁵⁵ Therefore, regular civilians needed to be shaped into these 'living tools of empire', where they became part of the colonial

⁵² Oenema, Bart. "Stadsgezichten: *Script Harderwijk deel 1*". (Script of theatre play, Stichting Podiumspektakel, 2015), 12-13. Original text: De schemer zet in. Harderwijk transformeert in een poel des verderfs waar Van Worgum regeert. De geur van zout en van zee maakt plaats voor die van lust en bier. De burgervrouw die wijkt voor de meisjes van plezier. My own translation.

⁵³ Nationaal Archief, Den Haag (hereafter NL-NaHA) Collectie 115 J. van den Bosch, 2.21.028, inv. Nr. 6.

⁵⁴ For instance, see Gert Oostindie. *Postcolonial Netherlands; sixty-five years of forgetting, comemorating and silencing*. (Amsterdam University Press, 2010), 130-164

⁵⁵ Bossenbroek, *Volk voor Indië*, 12, 81

structure: they needed to become colonials, or *kolonialen*. This required a colonial training facility, or a Colonial Recruitment Depot.⁵⁶ Hence the reason Mayor J.C.F. de Vries went to The Hague to discuss colonial matters with minister Van den Bosch.

In 1814, the mayors of Harderwijk, J.J. van Loenen and J.C.F. de Vries, were actively lobbying to guarantee the settlement of the colonial facility in Harderwijk. J.J. van Loenen wrote letters, while J.C.F. de Vries made the journey to the national government in The Hague. Not only were the mayors convinced that Harderwijk was the ideal candidate for this new training facility, they knew that the facility was necessary to secure the financial situation of Harderwijk. The French occupation had left Harderwijk depleted. The city had lost its status during the Napoleonic era, as king Louis Napoleon had decided to close the Provincial Mint to centralise coinage in 1806. On top of this, the University of Harderwijk had to close in 1811, which caused a brain drain from Harderwijk to other University cities like Utrecht and Leiden.⁵⁷ Harderwijk, thus, needed an economic boost.

The endeavour to bring the Colonial Recruitment Depot to Harderwijk fitted Mayor J.C.F. de Vries' own colonial background. He was born in the Dutch West Indies, where he and his family participated in slave trade and owned several plantations.⁵⁸ As a result, De Vries became part of the aristocracy. He set up a meeting with minister of colonial affairs Jeroen van den Bosch, who had set up criteria for the perfect location of the colonial training facility. According to Van den Bosch, the city had to be considered 'healthy', meaning it had to have rural surroundings. There needed to be an abundance of fresh vegetables and cheap meat to feed the soldiers. Furthermore, Van den Bosch knew that the population of the Netherlands was not self-sufficient enough to maintain large colonies in terms of 'living tools of empire', which is why the training facility had to be easily accessible for foreigners. This way, the Netherlands could recruit 'living tools of empire' from other European countries as well.⁵⁹ De Vries convinced minister Van den Bosch that Harderwijk fit all of these criteria. It was enclosed by city walls and surrounded by forests and fields on one side and sea on the other, making desertion difficult. Lastly, Harderwijk was chosen because it was said to have

⁵⁶ Ibid., 20

⁵⁷ The most famous alumnus of Harderwijk's university is Carl Linnaeus. He was enrolled for just two weeks and chose Harderwijk, because the university was very cheap. A famous poem goes: "Harderwijk is a city of transactions. One can buy herring, blueberries and doctorates." Translation of: Harderwijk is een stad van negotie. Men koopt er bokking, blauwbessen en bullen van promotie. See: J. Duinkerken. "De plaats van de Gelderse Universiteit in de Harderwijkse samenleving." In: *Het Gelders Athene: Bijdragen tot de geschiedenis van de Gelderse universiteit in Harderwijk (1648-1811)*, (eds.) J.A.H. Bots et al. (Hilversum: Uitgeverij Verloren, 2000).

⁵⁸ His grandfather, J.F.C. de Vries, was Governor-General of Suriname in 1734-1735. See: 'Surinaamsche Staatkundige Almanach voor den Jaare 1794'. *Surinaamsche staatkunde almanach* (Paramaribo, 1794), 36.

⁵⁹ Bossenbroek, *Volk voor Indie*, 12, 31-33.

‘willing inhabitants’, signifying that citizens wanted the Colonial Recruitment Depot in their city.⁶⁰ This would prove to be a defining factor at the end of the century.

The following analysis shows how the training facility gradually changed into something the orthodox-Christian population of Harderwijk was not proud of. Only when the material historical event of the Colonial Recruitment Depot is understood, can its position within collective memory be placed in historical context. Thus, this chapter focuses on the formation of the memory of the colonial recruitment depot and how this relates to changes in *mentalité* regarding the place of religion in society.

The Colonial Recruitment Depot in Harderwijk

On the 30th of December 1814, the efforts of the two mayors paid off: Colonial Recruitment Depot was officially located in Harderwijk by royal decree. The old facility of the Provincial Mint was refurbished into a colonial training facility.⁶¹ After a training period of approximately six to eight weeks, they would be shipped to the Dutch East Indies.⁶² It is fair to state that this decision changed the face and reputation of Harderwijk in the 19th century. The city changed from a small, but regionally important town into a city that played an important role in the Dutch Colonial empire. Even though Harderwijk was just a small city with 4869 inhabitants in the year 1833, it became of global importance and a gateway to the colonies.⁶³

The colonial recruits came from different classes, countries, races and religions. Recruits came from all over Europe. They were adventurers who wanted to see the world, or desperate beggars who needed to gain some money. They could be deserters from other armies, or people without any previous military experience.⁶⁴ Up until 1888, returning soldiers too came to Harderwijk, to officially be dismissed from their duty in the Dutch army. This meant that about 3000 men, originally from the Ghanaian coast had to visit Harderwijk. From 1831 till 1875 these men were recruited in Elmina, present-day Ghana.⁶⁵ The Indonesian term for these men was *Orang Blanda Itam*, meaning black Hollanders in Malay.

⁶⁰ Bossenbroek, *Volk voor Indië*, 31.

⁶¹ Ibid., 32-33.

⁶² A small fraction of soldiers would be shipped to the Dutch West Indies as well. See: Bossenbroek, *Volk voor indie*. 88.

⁶³ The colonial soldiers were included in the census. See: *Kroniek van Harderwijk 1231-1931*, 240.

⁶⁴ Leonard van Laar, *De reis van Harderwijk naar Oost-Indië : uit het dagboek van een koloniaal soldaat*, (Samarang : Van Dorp, 1868.)

⁶⁵ St. George d’Elmina was a Dutch colony in until 1872. It was a former slave trading post. Voluntarism is highly questioned and many Ghanaian soldiers were previously enslaved. See: Ineke van Kessel. *Zwarte Hollanders: Afrikaanse Soldaten in Nederlands Indië*. (Amsterdam: Kit Publishers, 2005).

After a period of twelve years, these men came to Harderwijk, where they would be observed and even exoticised by the inhabitants of Harderwijk: ‘And now you see [an African colonial soldier] parade through the streets, admired by young and old!’⁶⁶ After their stay in Harderwijk, the men were shipped back to St. George d’Elmina.⁶⁷

When new European recruits arrived at the Colonial Recruitment Depot, they were instantly given their wages: *handgeld*. If people registered voluntarily, they received approximately 250 guilders immediately.⁶⁸ This was a normal worker’s annual salary. As there was no requirement to deposit this money in any form, many of these soldiers, often coming from poor backgrounds, spent their money immediately in the city centre. The new colonials were unsure if they would survive the long, dangerous journey to the colonies, and many of them decided to enjoy their last few weeks on land. Consequently, cafes, merchants and brothels took advantage of the situation. Soon, many bars and brothels would surround the Colonial Depot.⁶⁹ The city quickly became reliant on the colonial soldiers spending their money. The municipality created special taxes to profit from the alcoholic beverages sold to colonial soldiers. This meant that in times of increased colonial warfare, when there were a lot of new trainees, the city’s income increased. On contrast, the city’s income decreased drastically in times of relative peace.⁷⁰ Indirectly, colonial warfare and imperialism thus provided for the city’s treasury and the livelihood of many Harderwijkers in the 19th century.

This signifies how imperialism affected the metropole and its community on a social, economic and political level. Increased connectivity caused the small community of Harderwijk to change holistically. Imperialism quickly globalised the small city of Harderwijk, which had far-reaching consequences.

Side effects

Harderwijk soon got a bad reputation, and would eventually be known as the ‘gutter of Europe’. This was mostly caused by the colonial soldiers, who were often from lower classes and therefore did not have much prestige in society. A good example of this is the case of French poet Arthur Rimbaud, who came to Harderwijk in 1876, after he left Paris and his

⁶⁶ Overveluwsch Weekblad/Harderwijker Courant, 1899-06-10; p. 2. Original tekst: en alzo ziet men hem door de straten flaneren, bewonderd door jong en oud.

⁶⁷ Ineke van Kessel. *Zwarte Hollanders*, 186.

⁶⁸ The amount of *handgeld* varied from the period of registration. In 1870, when the army needed volunteers, it would be as much as 300 guilders.

⁶⁹ Martin Bossenbroek & Jan. H. Kompagnie. *Het mysterie van de Verdwenen Bordelen: Prostitutie in Nederland in de negentiende eeuw*. (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Bert Bakker, 1998).

⁷⁰ Clemens Verhoeven. *Het vergeten korps: de geschiedenis van de koloniale reserve*. (Nijmegen: Fragma, 2012), 118

lover Paul Verlaine. He was an adventurer and wanted to see the world, so the idea of free travel while getting paid for it appealed to him. After his arrival in the Dutch East Indies, Rimbaud deserted after two weeks of service, before the fighting even began.⁷¹ This shows that volunteers were not always model citizens, which regularly caused disturbances.

Soldiers that did finish their time in the army caused problems in the city too. Returnees had spent six, but mostly twelve years in the Dutch colonial army. This meant that these people were usually mentally or physically injured. Resulting problems, such as alcohol abuse and even suicide were unfortunately not uncommon amongst the colonial soldiers in Harderwijk. A clear regulation on alcohol use or prostitution was not put in place, especially since the city gained money from it.⁷² 'Without alcohol, a soldier is not willing to live,' was the reasoning behind this.⁷³ Regularly, however, colonial soldiers would die of alcohol poisoning or even kill themselves, signifying how truly troubled these people were. In the *Overveluwsch*

Weekblad a sentence simply reads: 'Yesterday evening when a cattle train arrived, a colonial soldier has put his head on the train track, which ended his life.'⁷⁴ The regional newspaper does not pay further attention to the incident, whereas national papers do, describing it as a 'tragedy'.⁷⁵

On top of this, the small police force was often unable to keep out-of-control soldiers in line. Bars officially had a curfew of 11PM, but in reality, there was no strict regulation. An anonymous colonial soldier described the situation in the Christian magazine *Het maandblad: Getuigen en redden*: 'It is almost the vestibule of Hell! One cannot imagine the lack of order and regulation... Every evening, soldiers come home drunk; then there's fights, which frequently leads to police arrestation.'⁷⁶ When soldiers would be counted, there were always soldiers missing, that would be found drunk, or worse:

⁷¹ Rimbaud survived deserting the army by using a fake name and in December he was back home in France again. See: Graham Robb, 'Rimbaud – A biography' (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2003.)

⁷² Dirk Jan Wolffram. *Bezwaarden en verlichten. Verzuiling in een Gelderse provinciestad - Harderwijk 1850-1925*. (Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis, 1993), 213.

⁷³ *Sumatra Courant*, 18-07-1899, p. 2.

⁷⁴ *Overveluwsch Weekblad* 18-12-1875, p. Original text: Gister avond bij aankomst van een vee-trein heeft zich een soldaat van het Koloniaal Werfdepot met het hoofd op de rails gelegd waardoor hij een einde aan zijn leven maakte

⁷⁵ *Het vaderland*, 22-12-1875, p.2

⁷⁶ Koloniaal D.J.H. 'Iets over Harderwijk', *Het maandblad; getuigen en redden*, 4, 7, (1882), 53-54. Original text: "waarlijk, zoo ergens, het voorportaal der hel... Iederen avond komen de meeste in een hoogst beschonken toestand huiswaarts; dan wordt er gevochten wat niet dikwijls ten laatste met een arrestatie afloopt."

in the arms of a 'lady of pleasure'.⁷⁷ 'The guys in Harderwijk are worse than cholera', reported the Sumatra Courant in 1899, reflecting on the new colonials arriving from the Depot.⁷⁸

The neglect of the local newspapers from Harderwijk show how seemingly normal the situation had become. In practice, citizens did not come into contact with the colonial soldiers all that often. These were (self-proclaimed) hard-working, God-fearing protestants, farmers and fishers and they tried to avoid the people from the Depot. By night, Harderwijk changed, indeed, to a different place. 'The smell of the salty sea, makes way for that of desire and beer', as the theatre play *Stadsgezichten* describes fittingly.⁷⁹ On Sundays, the Christian inhabitants would pray, hoping for God's forgiveness of their amorality. The other days of the week, Harderwijk was full of whatever God forbade, and was regularly compared to the Biblical Sodom: the place of destruction and sin. A woman once heard passengers on a train talk about her city: 'Harderwijk is so Godless that, like Sodom and Gomorra, it will sometime sink into the sea.'⁸⁰ Gradually, it became this prejudice that would force drastic reorganisations within the Colonial Recruitment Depot.

Growing Christian consciousness

In the 19th century, Harderwijk is relatively liberal in comparison to nearby villages and towns. Governance in Harderwijk always stood relatively apart from the church, to a certain extent. Usually, mayors came from specific aristocratic families (*regentenfamilies*).⁸¹ Even though the ruling class was Protestant, religion did not play a huge role in governing. Church matters were mostly ignored by the municipality. Still, Harderwijk was a Protestant city, in which religion played a huge role in daily life. For instance, fishers and farmers were usually very religious.⁸² These poorer classes felt that they were underrepresented by the local and national government. This would gradually change when the Anti-Revolutionist Party of Abraham Kuyper made its entrance into politics in the second half of the 19th century.

⁷⁷ STD's in Harderwijk were prominent. The ministry of war often checked if the prostitutes were 'clean', as a matter of national health. Colonial soldiers were at risk of getting STDs, because they often visited (il)legal brothels. See: Bossenbroek and Komagnie, *Mysterie van verdwenen bordelen*, 37-38.

⁷⁸ *Algemeen Handelsblad*, "Het Koloniale Leger", 15-09-1888, p.1.

⁷⁹ Oenema, *Stradsgezichten deel 1*, 13. Original text: De geur van zout en van zee maakt plaats voor die van lust en bier

⁸⁰ De Harderwijker, 08-15-1922, p.2 Author writes about the past, during the 'time of Aceh'. Original text: 'dat Harderwijk is zoo goddeloos, dat het gelijk Sodom en Gomorra nog eens in de zee zal verzinken.'

⁸¹ J. Duinkerken. *Schepenen aan de Zuiderzee. De magistraat van Harderwijk 1700-1750*. (Zutphen, 1990); Wolfram, D.J. "Harderwijk 1813-1920: een eeuw van verandering." In: *Geschiedenis van Harderwijk*, edited by J. Folkerts. (Amsterdam: Boom Publishers, 1998), 101-144.

⁸² Wolfram. *Bezwaarden en verlichten*, 168.

The ARP was officially founded in 1879 and was the first political party of the Netherlands. Kuyper was an orthodox Christian who was popular with the Protestant *kleine luyden*, the ‘normal people’, or the ‘little guys’ who felt underrepresented in the Dutch liberal governments. Kuyper proclaimed that the normal Christian people were not represented by the elitist government at the time, that was slowly drifting away from Christianity. The party’s main goal was to create suffrage extensions, so that ‘normal people’ were able to vote. They wanted to make sure that every head of a family was allowed to vote (‘naturally’ excluding women), so that ‘everyone’ was represented in democracy.⁸³ As suffrage increased, citizens had to decide on what ideology to vote for. In Harderwijk, for instance, citizens needed to choose between their liberal or Protestant part of their identity. This generated a social way of organising society called pillarization, or *Verzuiling*. Protestantism gradually became a social way of life and interaction between people from other pillars, such as socialists, liberals or Catholics was minimised.⁸⁴ Generally, Harderwijk became a Protestant city, instead of a liberal safe haven, voting for the ARP and Abraham Kuyper.

Kuyper and colonialism

Abraham Kuyper made statements concerning the Dutch empire and how it should be governed. In his program statement of 1888, Kuyper claimed that he wanted to ‘improve the life in the [colonial] base, both in the Netherlands as in the colonies... and create a better regulation of the military legal relations’.⁸⁵ Kuyper argued that there should be a better regulation of missionaries going to the colonies and spread the Christian roots of the nation into the colonies. The ARP wanted to improve the morality of soldiers, both in the Netherlands and in the colonies. In their party program of 1891, it says they wanted to ‘take away everything that clashes with religion, morality and decency’ in military life, ‘both in the Netherlands and in the colonies’.⁸⁶

It is important to keep in mind that even though the ARP made harsh critiques against the way the colonies were ruled, the party was not anti-colonial. They did not agree with the way the colonial soldiers behaved and how the colonies were ruled, but that did not

⁸³ Abraham Kuyper, ‘Het Program van actie bij de stembus van 1888.’ In *Ons Program* (Hilversum: Hoveker en Wormser, 1907), second part, article one.

⁸⁴ Wolfram. *Bezwaarden en verlichten*, 248.

⁸⁵ Kuyper, ‘Het program 1888,’ Article 18

⁸⁶ Abraham Kuyper, ‘Het Program van Actie bij de stembus van 1891’. In *Ons Program* (Hilversum: Hoveker en Wormser, 1907), Article 7. Original text: ‘wegneming uit het kazerneleven van wat met godsdienst, zedelijkheid en welvoerlijkheid in strijd is; en zulks zoowel in Nederland als in de Kolonien.’

mean that they believed the colonies should not be ruled at all.⁸⁷ If the colonies were to be controlled properly, they were something to be proud of. The colonial subjects needed to be shaped into good Christian subordinates of the Dutch empire, which could only be done by creating the right ‘living tools of empire’.⁸⁸ The right living tools of empire, then, are Christians that are willing to spread the word of God to these ‘savage’ people. If the Netherlands is able to create the ‘right’ living tools of empire, colonial enterprise was something conscientious and righteous. Both on a spiritual and secular level, colonialism was assumed to be right. People needed to be shaped into pawns, without agency, to serve the colonial structure of the Dutch Empire in order to retain and gain more territory and therefore more international prestige. In order to achieve, for instance, the evangelisation of Muslims in the Dutch East Indies, the anti-Christian behavior of the soldiers needed to be controlled

The battle of the brothels and religious extremism

The Calvinist-populist Christian message of Kuyper against the amoral behaviour of the colonial soldiers was well received by the lower classes of Harderwijk. Citizens recognized what Kuyper said, as they had experienced the unethical, unchristian behaviour of soldiers in their own town. The people of Harderwijk gradually recognised that there needed to be some changes in order to create a moral colonial army, which is exactly where Kuyper and the ARP stood for. The moniker ‘Gutter of Europe’ was not something to be proud of and therefore, the city needed to be ‘retaken’ from the colonial soldiers. The soldiers were othered as being non-religious or non-Dutch. The ‘colonial others’ polluted the streets of Harderwijk and turned the city’s women into whores, according Christian magazine *Het Wekkertje*.⁸⁹ Increased around prostitution was necessary to clean up the streets of Harderwijk.⁹⁰

Norms and values on purity, or ‘cleanness’ are socially constructed and therefore created by society and its morale.⁹¹ The sex workers were considered to be ‘dirty’, as they sold their God-given body to strangers outside of the holy bondage of marriage. The women involved in sex work are rarely discussed in newspapers from the 19th century, and were

⁸⁷ One of the parties’ future party leaders and premier of the Netherlands, Hendrik Colijn, was a colonial soldier and spent some time in Harderwijk for training.

⁸⁸ This policy backfired on the ARP, as most people in present-day Indonesia are Islamic and did not wish to become Christians. See: Kuyper, *Ons program*, 339.

⁸⁹ Jac. Post. ‘De middernachtzending te Harderwijk’, *Het Wekkertje* 05-09-1890, p. 3.; The term ‘colonial other’ is often used to describe people in the colonies. However, because the colonial soldiers were part of the colonial system, they were othered in a similar way and seen as less than the Christian population of Harderwijk.

⁹⁰ Wolfram, *Bezwaarden en verlichten*, 144.

⁹¹ Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*. (London: Routledge, 1984).

considered taboo. In a similar fashion, female sex workers were considered bad women, because they participated in ‘dirty’ behaviour, such as premarital sex. As a result of this, they were placed outside of society and inhabited the liminal, in-between spaces of society. They were part of Harderwijk, but simultaneously, they were erased out of the narrative, occupying liminal taboo-spheres. Female bodies and sexuality were considered to be passive objects, bound to be subdued and controlled by male desire, within the ‘right circumstances’, e.g. after marriage.⁹² Contrasting the idea of the ‘bad, sexual woman’ stands the Christian ideal, holy woman: the Madonna. These women are virgins, and therefore not ‘polluted’ by men outside marital bonds.

Public houses or brothels were these contested spaces of amorality, where the soldiers went to visit ‘women of indecency’, or sex workers. Because solitary men were considered sexual beings, brothels and premarital sex was allowed by the municipality of Harderwijk in order to ‘relieve them of their natural urges’. The city had a total of four brothels where twenty registered prostitutes were employed, though at least as many women worked illegally.⁹³

To completely ‘erase’ the sex workers out of society and create more of these Madonna’s, sexuality, the ARP municipality of Harderwijk increasingly policed sexuality and the brothels. Sexuality and bodies are often policed by society, as sexual behaviour influences the future nation and influences current sexual health (in terms of venereal diseases). Foucault refers to social regulation regarding sexuality as ‘biopower’.⁹⁴ This was not new: the Ministry of War would regularly check if the sex workers were ‘healthy’. Venereal diseases were considered a danger to the colonial enterprise, as they would weaken soldiers.⁹⁵ Sexuality, thus, proved to be a powerful influencer of the strength of the ‘living tools of empire’. If sex was controlled, the colonies were controlled. Things, however, got out of hand and regulation did rarely happen. The confessional parties such as the ARP, pushed for increased regulation in the brothels. In 1891 the city of Harderwijk prohibited prostitution completely.⁹⁶ It was a victory for the confessionals, but sex work would prove to be a small part of the social unrest generated by the Colonial Recruitment Depot.

⁹² Margo DeMello, *Body studies: an introduction*. (London: Routledge, 2014), 120,142.

⁹³ Liek Mulder. ‘Koloniaal Werfdepot Harderwijk 1814 – 1909’, *Texts of museum exhibition ‘gelegerd in Gelderland*, Stadsmuseum Harderwijk, 2012.

⁹⁴ Foucault in DeMello, *Body studies*, 138.

⁹⁵ Johannes van den Bosch knew this already. NL-NaHa, Collectie J. van den Bosch, 2.21.028, inv. Nr. 7.

⁹⁶ *Kroniek van Harderwijk* (1931), 324.

Increased ‘Othering’

At the end of the 19th century, the benefits of having colonial soldiers spend their income in the city centre started to be outweighed due to growing polarisation between the colonial soldiers and the self-proclaimed moral, Protestant inhabitants of Harderwijk. Even though the city gained a lot of income from the colonial depot, gradually the people of Harderwijk became fed up with the seemingly endless flow of colonials into the town. Some citizens even developed an animosity against the soldiers, which would sometimes result in extremist behaviour, such as violence.⁹⁷ A willingness to act violently based on your religious beliefs or identity can be seen as extremist behaviour. Violence against colonials increased, as they were framed as the intruders of Protestant society. They were not considered part of the city and therefore needed to be removed.⁹⁸

An example of this behaviour against colonial soldiers is the case of my great-aunts late husband’s grandfather, Nikus Mons, who had an encounter with a colonial soldier. Nikus ‘*de beul*’ Mons was a man from Harderwijk who lived from 1888 till 1971. He was a fisherman and a member of the crew of the fishing boat HK 6. He had a very peculiar nickname: *de beul*, the executioner.⁹⁹ He got his nickname, because of something that happened once on a Sunday morning. Nikus was a young man, as he must have been no older than 25 when the incident took place. He had just been to the morning church service when some strangers, *vreemden*, or foreign colonial soldiers, caused disturbances near Nikus’ church. The soldiers supposedly shouted at the churchgoers and called them names. Nikus got angry at the colonial soldiers for mocking his Christian religion. Fishermen generally were very religious, and took their faith very seriously. Nikus got so mad that he lifted one of the passing colonial soldiers up from the ground and impaled him on a pointy fence. Ever since that moment he was known as ‘the executioner’.¹⁰⁰ It is unclear when this felony happened exactly and what its consequences were. There are sources that state that on Sunday

⁹⁷ Ruthven, Malise. *Fundamentalism: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.; Bossenbroek, *Volk voor Indie* (1992); Philipp, Krauer. “Welcome to Hotel Helvetia! Friedrich wuthrich’s illicit Mercenary Trade Network for the Dutch East Indies, 1815-1890.” *BMGN- Low Countries Historical Review* (2019), 122-147

⁹⁸ Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, 95; Arjun Appadurai, *Fear of small Numbers. An essay on the geography of anger* (Durham and London: Duke university press, 2006).

⁹⁹ Families and people generally had nicknames in order to differentiate them. Family names such as ‘Foppen’, ‘Timmer’ and ‘Hop’ were, and are still, very common in the area of Harderwijk. Each family had their own nickname, or *scheldnaam*, in order to find out instantly who you are related to. My grandfather was known as a *Koater* or Tomcat. Fishermen also had their nicknames, often related to character traits. See: Cor Jansen, ‘Effen kieken, effen Proaten’(Harderwijk: Oudheidkundige vereniging Harderwijk, 2008); Interview with Annetje Mons-Timmer, 20-04-2020.

¹⁰⁰ Herma C. Geukes Foppen. *Foppen: Vissen in 400 jaar Familiegeschiedenis* (Schoorl: Uitgeverij Pirola, 1998); Interview with Annetje Mons-Timmer, 20-04-2020

night, the 13th of June 1909, Nikus was shouting, cursing and screaming in the streets of Harderwijk and that an officer took him to the police station, which might be related.¹⁰¹ The family always thought of Nikus as a ‘difficult man’.¹⁰²

The case of Nikus Mons was not a one-time incident, as can be deduced from looking at newspaper articles from that time. For instance, in 1894, there was a fight between citizens and ‘some soldiers’ from the Colonial Recruitment Depot. The fight had originated in a café, but continued outside. Several people were injured.¹⁰³ In another newspaper article, a 20-year-old fisherman ‘J.K.’ was accused of beating a colonial soldier, because the soldier refused to state his nationality and ‘did not want to say good evening’ to him.¹⁰⁴

A particular xenophobia, thus, can be discovered, as the people of Harderwijk saw a clear distinction between them (the Christian moral citizens) and ‘the others’ (unlawful outcasts and foreigners). Thus, there is a specific link between increasing religious identification (e.g. pillarization) and increasing violence against the colonial other. The colonial soldiers’ behaviour, once seen as a necessary evil, gradually became intolerable for the religious-orthodox citizens of Harderwijk. In the end, there was one feasible solution: the Colonial Recruitment Depot needed to be reformed, or it needed to move from Harderwijk to another, less polarising place.

To relieve the city of its struggles to cope with all these colonial soldiers, the Colonial Reserve (*Koloniale Reserve*) opened in Nijmegen in 1890, already causing a gradual decrease in colonial visitors in Harderwijk. This Colonial Reserve did not allow any foreign volunteers into their colonial training programme, which helped to create order in the Dutch Colonial Army.¹⁰⁵ Still, the Colonial Recruitment Depot in Harderwijk remained under scrutiny.

The final days of the Colonial Recruitment Depot were numbered when the eligible voters of the city grew by more than 80% in 1896. These new voters were primarily protestant-orthodox farmers or fishermen, and they did not support the liberal candidates that were in favour of keeping the Colonial Recruitment Depot.¹⁰⁶ In 1903, the first anti-revolutionist mayor of Harderwijk, M.G.J. Kempers took office. Kempers had been an officer in the Colonial Army and had trained in Harderwijk before. When he was elected as mayor,

¹⁰¹ Geukes Foppen, *Foppen*, 56.

¹⁰² Interview Annetje Mons-Timmer, 20-04-2020.

¹⁰³ Overveluwsch Weekblad, 10-20-1894, p 2.

¹⁰⁴ Overveluwsch Weekblad, 10-18-1890, p.2

¹⁰⁵ Clemens Verhoeven. *Het vergeten korps*, 11

¹⁰⁶ Wolfram, *Bezwaarden en verlichten*, 159

he was a proponent of changing the Colonial Recruitment Depot into a regular garrison, because this would lead to 'less tension'.¹⁰⁷

With the ARP gaining more ground in local politics, the anger against unrest in the city grew. The populism of the ARP played into this, now that the *Koloniale Reserve* proved a good alternative. In 1907, the recruitment depot closed officially, but it took two years to finally move every part of the depot to the reserve in Nijmegen.

Conclusion

Harderwijk's citizens increasingly distanced themselves from the non-Dutch, non-Protestant or non-white colonial soldiers and the sex work industry. Conflicts on gender, sexuality, race, religion and class can be distinguished here, signifying how the Colonial Recruitment Depot affected social life in Harderwijk in an intersectional way. Othering on the basis of a shared Christian identity proved to be a useful strategy to socially distance Harderwijk's citizens from the soldiers of the Colonial Recruitment Depot. The brothels and the Colonial Recruitment Depot became spaces of profanity, whereas Harderwijk was supposed to be sacred. When strategies of moral 'cleaning' did not work, eventually, the Depot merged with the Colonial Reserve in Nijmegen, far away from the sacred town of Harderwijk. However, cognitively and socially, the Depot had already entered the realm of taboo before it got disbanded.

Finally, it is important to note that the abolishment of the Colonial Recruitment Depot was not an anti-colonial or anti-imperialist action. Instead, a combination of pride, xenophobia and Christian values were important reasons to rearrange the production of living tools of empire. Even though Harderwijk's Christian orthodox citizens were, in the end, negative about the living tools of empire, the empire itself was never critiqued.

The Colonial Recruitment Depot and its soldiers did not consolidate with Harderwijk's Christian paradigm of thought, or *mentalite*. Because they were incompatible, tensions arose, which caused stress and disturbances amongst both soldiers and citizens. Silencing became a coping mechanism to mentally 'remove' the Colonial Recruitment Depot and its negative consequences from Harderwijk even before it was physically removed. The Colonial Recruitment Depot can therefore be regarded as a local cultural trauma, which had a significant effect on the collective memory of Harderwijk. The effect of cultural or collective trauma on collective memory and public history is discussed in the next chapter.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 168

Chapter Two: Collective trauma and nostalgia in a changing city

The Waterfront project

In 1996, the city of Harderwijk first presented plans to increase the city's connection to water. The project 'Waterfront' was meant to solve the parking problems and increase tourist activity in the boulevard area of the town. People that used to visit Harderwijk's boulevard did not have a so-called 'water experience'.¹⁰⁸ Instead, they looked out over a parking lot. This had to change, according to the municipality of Harderwijk. In 2012, the municipality executed the first plans of the project, which changed parts of Harderwijk drastically, as can be seen on the aerial photos from 2010 and 2018.¹⁰⁹



Picture 2.1: Situation 2010: There are many cars next to the water area



Picture 2.2: Situation 2018: Harderwijk now has a city beach and the Dolphinarium (recognizable by the blue dome) is an island

¹⁰⁸Rudi Engel. 'Waterfront Harderwijk: communicatie is het sleutelwoord.'. *Water, wonen, & ruimte*, 6, 1, (2013) p. 1

¹⁰⁹ The waterfront project consisted of much more than just the reformation of the boulevard area. If you want to know what the project entailed, see: *Waterfront Harderwijk*, URL:www.waterfrontharderwijk.nl

The difference on pictures 2.1 and 2.2 shows there is increased water connectivity. One of the reasons for this decision was historical, as described on the project's website:

"Harderwijk has always been inextricably linked to water. In earlier times, boats from the Hanseatic city sailed to the North and Baltic Seas to trade. Fishing boats brought herring and eel ashore... From the second half of the last century, the historic city centre was gradually cut off from the water. ... To turn the tide, the municipality of Harderwijk is developing the Waterfront, in close collaboration with other parties. A comprehensive project that offers the city plenty of future as a tourist attraction, as an attractive residential city and as a regional economic centre. With the Waterfront, a new attractive coastline is created that is designed for the requirements of modern times, with respect for nature and the historic character of Harderwijk."¹¹⁰

From the second half of the last century, thus, Harderwijk lost its touch with water completely. To reclaim the historic connection, the Waterfront project was initiated. Why is the connection to water so important to the municipality of Harderwijk that they are willing to undertake a massive project to create a 'water experience' for tourists? This chapter explores this question and aims to understand why the city focuses on its historical connection to water instead of representing its colonial history.

The fixation on water and its additional historical connection to Harderwijk proves that there is a historical consciousness in the town. Additionally, Harderwijk often describes itself as a town with a 'rich history'.¹¹¹ Why are specific histories, predominantly histories with a connection to water, represented more frequently than the cities' colonial history? In order to fully understand why the history of the Colonial Recruitment Depot is underrepresented, it is important to explore the histories that are prioritised over it.

Aftermath of the Colonial Recruitment Depot

When mayor Kempers decided to close the Colonial Recruitment Depot officially in 1907, an important prerequisite was that he had to find a good replacement for the loss in income. As the mayor was a former colonial soldier and Aceh-veteran, he was very keen on keeping some connection to the military. Therefore, although Harderwijk would lose its colonial base, he managed that the city would not lose ties to the military in general.¹¹² This is the reason why in 1909, when the final colonial soldiers left to the East Indies from Harderwijk, a new national military division was already situated in the city. The new Jan van Nassau base would officially open its doors in 1913, which was strategically built two kilometres away

¹¹⁰ "Aanleiding voor het project", *Waterfront Harderwijk*. URL: <http://www.waterfrontharderwijk.nl/over-waterfront/project-waterfront/aanleiding/>

¹¹¹ Amongst others, Folkerts, *Geschiedenis van Harderwijk*, 15

¹¹² SANV, 5002, Gemeentebestuur Harderwijk, 1813 – 1943. Stukken betreffende de legering van veldartillerie te Harderwijk, en de geschillen daarover tussen rijk en gemeente, 1909-1927'. Catalogue number 4736.

from the city centre, so that soldiers and citizens did not share the same space like they used to do. The soldiers could not easily visit cafes the same way as the colonial soldiers used to do, which led to a more organised military life.¹¹³

Not long after the new division arrived in Harderwijk, world war one officially broke out. By international law, the neutral Netherlands had to repatriate refugees from Belgium. Fleeing Belgian soldiers needed to be disarmed and interned in several *interneringsdepots* throughout the country.¹¹⁴ The biggest two camps were located in Amersfoort and Harderwijk. This meant that only five years after Harderwijk lost its colonial base, another group of foreign ‘*vreemden*’, strangers, needed a place to stay. This time, however, the barracks were placed even further outside of the city limits. This decision was undoubtedly influenced by the scars that the Colonial Recruitment Depot had left. The colonial soldiers clearly left their marks in policies. Soon, however, an event hit Harderwijk which had an even greater impact on the city’s future policies and historical representation: the closing and drainage of the Zuiderzee.

The dying Zuiderzee

Plans to drain the Zuiderzee already existed in the 19th century, but in the early 20th century this plan was officially put into practice. In 1927, the construction of the Afsluitdijk had begun. This artificial dike was built to close the Zuiderzee off from the Wadden Sea, with the plan to first make an artificial fresh water lake. After this, the lake would slowly be drained. Due to this, fish that weconclre thriving in the salty waters of the sea were already disappearing in the 1920’s, creating a hard time for the fishermen of Harderwijk. Even though Harderwijk had a relatively high fisher’s population, fishing had always been a risky career.¹¹⁵ Fishing families lived in poverty for most of the 19th and 20th century.¹¹⁶ In the beginning of the 20th century, the fishers were able to create a steady income because of new fishing techniques. Now that fishing, and subsequent fishing culture blossomed in Harderwijk, the plans to reclaim the Zuiderzee were disastrous for the future of Harderwijk.

Eibert den Herder, an entrepreneur and fisherman from Harderwijk became an activist against the drainage of the Zuiderzee, as he foresaw the effects it could have on his business.

¹¹³ Martin Elands and Wim Timmers, *Uitgediend: Harderwijk als garnizoensstad*.(Harderwijk: Drukkerij Wedding, 2005), 13-15.

¹¹⁴ Reijngoudt, Anton. *Gehalveerde mensen: Het Belgenkamp in Harderwijk 1914-1918*. (Barneveld: BDU uitgevers, 2004)

¹¹⁵ Wim Timmers and Frits David Zeiler. *Nooit Uitgevist: Harderwijk en zijn vissers*(Harderwijk, Drukkerij Wedding, 2004), 23.

¹¹⁶ Petersen, Harmen. *West Over: Harderwijk 750 Jaar Vissersplaats*.(Bussem: Uniekboek b.v., 1981)

He published books, printed pamphlets and ordered the creation of a film that captured a romanticized view on life in fishing towns and villages that were awaiting their imminent downfall because of the construction of the Afsluitdijk.¹¹⁷ Den Herder even managed to create a political party with the goal to ‘save the Zuiderzee’, the Zuiderzee Party.¹¹⁸ The activism of Den Herder and Harderwijk’s fisher population made Harderwijk a centrepiece in the protest movement against the construction of the Afsluitdijk.

Simultaneously, the international economic crisis of the 1930’s hit the region of Harderwijk hard. With high unemployment and the decreasing fishing industry, Harderwijk’s future looked bleak.¹¹⁹ It is therefore understandable that the 700-year anniversary of the city of Harderwijk in 1931 was celebrated with mixed feelings.¹²⁰ Mayor De Jong Saakes performed an encouraging speech to uplift his citizens. Transcripts of the speech from the 11th of June 1931 were published in at least two local newspapers.¹²¹ In his speech, he reflects on the vast history of the city, but also tries to explain why Harderwijk is not a ‘dead city’.¹²² Amongst others, he only briefly mentions the Colonial Recruitment Depot, but he does not want to elaborate on it. He said: ‘I will not focus, amongst others, on the era when our city was infamous for its Colonial Recruitment Depot and when it did not enjoy a good name’. Instead, the mayor wanted to on how beautiful Harderwijk was at that time, and how much the city has improved in the last 20 years. ‘The past brought prosperity and adversity... from which we can learn to draw strength and trust to count on a better future.’¹²³

Instead of focusing on the ‘bad history’ (e.g. the Colonial Recruitment Depot), the 1931 anniversary celebrated the University of Harderwijk, the Hansa and its complete fisher’s fleet. There was a need to pursue an identity politics based on fishing and the sea, as this part of Harderwijker life was in danger. A very significant moment of the 1931 celebration therefore was the sailing contest and boat parade. The complete fishing boat fleet of Harderwijk sailed in a celebratory manner over the Zuiderzee. The local newspapers described the event in a grandiose manner, writing that ‘thousands and thousands of tourists’

¹¹⁷ The film, called the *Zuiderzeefilm*, was destroyed in a fire, but because there was so much material shot, a new version of the film was created. The film is owned by the Stadsmuseum. Theo Bakker, *Passagiersschepen in Harderwijk*. (Dieren: Diepenmaat, 2010), 32.

¹¹⁸ The party was quickly disbanded after losing the elections of 1933. Bessel Vrijhof. *Herinneringen aan Oom Eibert. Eibert den Herder, Industrieel te Harderwijk 1837-1950*. (Harderwijk: Oudheidkundige Vereniging Harderewich, 2010), 12.

¹¹⁹ Folkerts, *Geschiedenis van Harderwijk*, 181

¹²⁰ *Overveluwsch Weekblad/Harderwijker Courant*, 1930-12-31; p. 1

¹²¹ Both *De Harderwijker* and *Schilders Nieuws- en Advertentieblad*. I have used the transcript of de Harderwijker in my analysis.

¹²² *De Harderwijker*, *Bijvoegsel van de Veluwe bladen*. 12-06-1931, p. 5

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 6

were amazed by the ‘extraordinary skills’ of the Harderwijker fishermen, who participated enthusiastically, even though they knew what would await them in the future.¹²⁴ The 1931 celebrations were, for the fishing community, one of the last opportunities to promote the fishery of Harderwijk and the Zuiderzee while this was still possible. The boat parade was painted by Eibert den Herder, immortalising the event.



Picture 2.3: Harderwijker fleet, 1931. Painted by Eibert den Herder. Painting owned by Stadsmuseum Harderwijk.

The 1931 celebrations would be the last time the complete fishing fleet was together. In 1932, the construction of the Enclosure Dam was still completed. At the exact moment of closure, fisherman Kees Foppen and his crew were fishing with trawl nets that were pulled forward by the ebb tide. All of a sudden, the boats stopped, which was the moment Kees knew: ‘the tides stopped. The sea died.’¹²⁵ On the new Afsluitdijk, flags were raised in celebration, whereas fishing boats on the former sea lowered their flags to half-mast. They were in mourning.¹²⁶ Harderwijk’s fleet of fisher boats was disbanded and fishermen had to find their refuge in industries elsewhere.¹²⁷

Even though the loss of the Zuiderzee was imminent, it was still a shock. In five years’ time, the salty waters of the Zuiderzee turned into fresh water, which meant that animals like herring and shrimp disappeared gradually. 40 percent of people in Harderwijk were dependent on the fishing industry. Socio-economically, thus, the city changed drastically in a short amount of time. The loss of the Zuiderzee can be regarded as a local cultural trauma, as the event had drastic consequences for the group consciousness. A part of the identity of Harderwijk, celebrated only a year before the Enclosure Dam was built, was now in decline and would eventually disappear almost completely.¹²⁸

¹²⁴ Petersen, *West over*, 8.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 103-104

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 104

¹²⁷ *Kroniek van Harderwijk*, 01-01-1929, p.426; Timmer and Zeiler, *Nooit uitgevist*, 57.

¹²⁸ Emiel Hakkenes, *Polderkoorts: Hoe de Zuiderzee verdween*. (Amsterdam: Thomas Rap, 2017).

As mentioned in the introduction, Alexander proposes the idea of a cultural trauma as an event that leaves traces on group consciousness and has its effect on their sense of identity construction. The fishing industry became heritage through which citizens could express their identity through nostalgia, as a tool to deal with cultural trauma. The rest of this chapter focuses on the way Harderwijk dealt with the trauma of losing its fishing industry and what this meant for the position of the Colonial Recruitment Depot in Harderwijk's grand narrative.

From *Ville Morte* to tourist attraction

In the years after the enclosure, Harderwijk became colloquially known as a dead city. Poet Anthony Donker (pseudonym of Nico Donkersloot) wrote in 1938: 'Harderwijk. *Ville morte* on a quiet coast. There is no fame, no more wealth to be gained. It is fortified, blocking in its tranquillity.'¹²⁹ The rhetoric of the dead city is used in the poem to explain the tragedy of the loss of the Hansa, the university, the sea and even the Colonial Recruitment Depot (he explicitly states: no more colonials). Only a small garrison of soldiers and the waves of a dead sea remained. The poem perfectly describes how Harderwijk was perceived by outsiders.¹³⁰ While actively campaigning against complete impoldering of the IJsselmeer, entrepreneur Eibert den Herder also saw opportunities to attract more 'livelihood' towards the city. To minimize damages, in order to deal with the loss of the sea and to 'save' his city, Harderwijk needed a financial boost, and Den Herder secured this by attracting '*dagjes mensen*': day trippers. Already in the 1920's, Den Herder did his best to dredge the port of Harderwijk so that bigger boats could dock there. The boat '*Kasteel Staverden*', named after a castle in the Veluwe area, could make its first trip in 1931, carrying approximately 600 people and 600 bikes.¹³¹ The boat was part of a ferry connection of the Holland-Veluwe Line (HVL), also created by Den Herder, which would attract day trippers from Amsterdam to the 'beautiful Hanseatic fishing town' Harderwijk and national park the Veluwe, while also giving them the opportunity to see the 'wonders' of the Zuiderzee works by crossing the new lake.¹³²

Tourism, similar to the Colonial Recruitment Depot, brought 'outsiders' to Harderwijk, that would not always appreciate the religious idea of Sunday rest. The debate

¹²⁹ Anthonie Donker, 'Harderwijk' *de Stem*, 18.(1938), p.1095

¹³⁰ The poem was published in a regional newspaper. Above the poem it said: 'how other people view our city'. Overveluwsch Weekblad/Harderwijker Courant, 30-11-1938; p.2. Original text: *Ville morte aan in zichzelf gekeerde kust. Er valt geen roem, geen rijkdom meer te halen. Het ligt ommuurd, gemetseld in zijn rust.*

¹³¹ Visitors were advised to bring their bikes, so that they could visit National Park the Veluwe as well. *Kroniek van Harderwijk 1931-1981*, 9.

¹³² Bakker, *Passagierschepen in Harderwijk.*, 42-44.

whether or not the ferry boats were allowed to dock on Sundays made business difficult for the HVL. Religion, still, played an important role in the way the Harderwijker economy was run. In the end, however, the boats were allowed to dock, although tourists from Amsterdam were sometimes fined for dressing ‘indecently’ on Sundays.¹³³

After this difficult start, tourism became a very important source of income in the 1960’s and 1970’s. Increasingly, bigger boats docked in the port of Harderwijk, and the three sons of Eibert den Herder, Coen, Egbert and Frits, started to realise that it was important to keep tourists in Harderwijk. Egbert started the Restaurant Ijsselmeer and Frits and Coen den Herder eventually started a sea park, the Dolphinarium, to entertain tourists in the 1960’s. The fact that this is not just a zoo but a sea park is a reminder that Harderwijk used to be a seaside town and that it is still coping with the loss of the sea.

Although most tourists visited Harderwijk for the beach, water sports and the forest, some tourists were interested in history and heritage as well. This generated a new way of representing history to outsiders. The Overveluwsche Oudheidkamer was created in 1931, which was the precursor of the present-day city museum. Harderwijk’s history was presented here, targeting tourists that increasingly visited the city. Aspects that had great renown, such as the Hanseatic history and the University of Harderwijk were highlighted, whereas aspects regarded as ‘negative’, such as the Colonial Recruitment Depot, were strategically left out. Fishing became increasingly more dominant in the way Harderwijk represented itself and its heritage, because it was easy to capitalise on.¹³⁴ It symbolized how Harderwijk still saw fishing as part of its collective identity.

The Colonial Recruitment Depot and its role in historical celebrations

The history of the Colonial Recruitment Depot did not completely fit in the way history was used to attract tourists. Even though the tourist industry promoted the fishing and Hansa history, this does not completely explain why the city’s colonial history was not exploited in a similar way by local historians. Memory, nevertheless, is multidirectional, and does not function as a zero-sum game; when one history gets a podium, it does not explain why another history is not discussed.¹³⁵ Therefore, to fully understand this development, I will analyse an exhibition that took place during the 750-year anniversary of Harderwijk in 1981.

¹³³ Ibid., 23-24.

¹³⁴ Den Herder owned a restaurant near the docks, so tourists arriving by boat would eat fish at his restaurant.

¹³⁵ Rothberg, *Introduction*, 20.

Similar to the 1931 historical celebrations, a new wave of historical interest resurfaced in Harderwijk in 1981.¹³⁶ A lot had changed in the 50 years since the previous celebrations, both on a local and national level. Amongst others, the former colonies of the Netherlands, Indonesia and Suriname, had gained their independence, respectively in 1945 and 1975.¹³⁷ The Netherlands was, at least politically, decolonised.¹³⁸ Officially, colonisation was considered a ‘memory’ and as something from the past. Even now, however, the effect of colonialism still lingers in language, culture and thought patterns. Even though political colonialism is over in most cases, this does not mean that the colonising mindset immediately disappeared from historiography as well.¹³⁹

As political colonialism ended, strategies of colonial and imperial nostalgia arose. As stated in the introduction, both colonial and imperial nostalgia are postcolonial strategies to cope with changing times and loss. The wave of colonial and imperial nostalgia, sparked by the decolonisation of Indonesia and Suriname, influenced an increased interest in the Colonial Recruitment Depot. For instance, both imperial and colonial nostalgia are recognizable in an exhibition that was part of the 750-year anniversary of Harderwijk in 1981. The municipality of Harderwijk spent at least 300.000 guilders on ‘building the bridge between present and past’.¹⁴⁰ Again, similar to 1931, the history of the Hansa, fishing and the university are promoted in multiple festivities. Even Queen Beatrix came to Harderwijk to celebrate the city’s history.¹⁴¹ Different from 1931 is that colonial history got a larger podium during the historical celebrations. For instance, the commission that was in charge of organising the anniversary decided to commemorate military enterprises in an exhibition called ‘seven hundred and fifty years though a military lens’. The exhibition was free of charge and held from 24 November till 19 December 1981.¹⁴²

In the exhibition, the military history of Harderwijk was discussed, with a special focus on the Colonial Depot. Because of limited exhibition space, details were not discussed,

¹³⁶ Many historical books are published around 1981. For instance, a new version of Chronicle of Harderwijk (Kroniek van Harderwijk) was published to commemorate the 50 years since the previous rendition.

¹³⁷ The date 1945 is not acknowledged by the Dutch state, although this was the moment on which Indonesia declared independence.

¹³⁸ It is hard to say exactly when a country is politically decolonised. The Netherlands, for instance, still has overseas territories in the Caribbean. I make this statement, because the two largest overseas colonies had declared their independence.

¹³⁹ Wekker, *White Innocence*, 21; Hira, *Decolonizing the mind*, 9-10.

¹⁴⁰ Oxfoort, A. ‘Harderwijk 750 en de Derde Wereld’, *Schilder's nieuws-en advertentieblad*, 1981-01-08; p. 3

¹⁴¹ Ter Hoeve, H. B. Overeen, R. Marks *Harderwijk 750: Fotoboek*. (Harderwijk: Veluws Dagblad, 1982).

¹⁴² SANV 5920 Collectie Affiches Harderwijk. 0585, Tentoonstelling: Harderwijk, 700 jaar, Militair bezien, 24 november t/m 19 december 1981.

unless deemed explicitly ‘from Harderwijk’.¹⁴³ On a macrolevel, therefore, colonialism was discussed, though minor ‘details’ like the conflict between the soldiers and the church and the ethics of colonial warfare were left untouched. Instead, famous and contested Dutch ‘heroes’ were claimed as being ‘from’ Harderwijk, because they started their colonial endeavour here, like general Jo van Heutsz and Hendrik Colijn.¹⁴⁴ In this context, Harderwijk was described as ‘the cradle of colonial soldiers’.¹⁴⁵

In many ways, the exhibition is the perfect example of imperial and colonial nostalgia. For example, the implications made by both the exhibition itself and newspapers reviewing the exhibition romanticises militarism, colonialism and imperialism. Jo van Heutsz, for instance, never actually trained in Harderwijk, though newspaper articles seem to ‘claim’ him as someone from Harderwijk. Arthur Rimbaud is also claimed as ‘ours’, even though he deserted quickly after his arrival in the East Indies.¹⁴⁶ Furthermore, referring to Harderwijk as ‘the cradle of colonials’ neglects the many Indonesian, native colonial soldiers that served in the Dutch East-Indies colonial army. The statement is Eurocentric and therefore one-sided, highlighting only the parts of history that fit within a nostalgic mindset.

Conclusion: further commodification of fishing culture

Through an imperial nostalgic perspective, the Colonial Recruitment Depot was sometimes represented. However, in the years after 1981, the interest around the colonial history of Harderwijk faded again. After 1981, the increase in nostalgia regarding fishing culture increased. The first edition of the Fishery days (*Visserijdagen*) was held in 1982. The festival was meant as a modest commemoration of fishing culture, and was organised for former fishermen. Slowly, the Fishery days turned into a large festival at the end of summer.¹⁴⁷ History formed the basis of the festival, but in the end, the commercialisation of fishing played a role. Fish is a product that can be sold to tourists. As colonial history was considered too ‘difficult’, both from the perspective of the Christian Harderwijkers and tourists expecting a ‘fun’ trip to the city, the Colonial Recruitment Depot was left out of the narrative.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴³ ‘Harderwijk 750 jaar militair gezien: Expositie geeft goed beeld van opvallende garnizoensstad.’ *Schilders nieuws- en advertentieblad*. 23-11-1981, p. 1

¹⁴⁴ ‘Expositie geeft beeld van een garnizoensstad’. *Elburger Courant*, 1981-11-27; p. 4

¹⁴⁵ Jac. Lelsz. “Harderwijk, de bakermat van de ‘kolonialen’”. *Trouw*, 05-12-1981, p. 17

¹⁴⁶ In 2001, Rimbaud got a memory stone in the garden of the former Colonial Recruitment Depot. Jos Kunne, “Rimbaud terug op plaats”, *Schilder’s nieuws- en advertentieblad*, 22-02-2001, p.2

¹⁴⁷ At the beginning of summer, the *Aaltjesdagen* are held, celebrating Eel fishing. See: Theo Bakker, *Op z’n Harderwieks 25 jaar Visserijdag in Harderwijk* (Harderwijk: Flevodruk, 2007), 16

¹⁴⁸ Macdonald, *Difficult Heritage*.(2009).

Even today, water is used to attract tourists. The Waterfront project, mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, shows how important the municipality regards the cities ties to water. As David Lowenthal states, nostalgia tells it like it wasn't.¹⁴⁹ Both the colonial nostalgia as encountered in the 1981 exhibition and the nostalgia regarding the lost fishing culture are strategies to make sense of a changing world. Nostalgia is also dangerous, as the strategy neglects critical perspectives. It is driven by a one-sided perspective of history.

Why, then, does fishing nostalgia find a platform, whereas colonial nostalgia does not? The minimal representation of the Colonial Recruitment Depot can be traced back to the traumatic position the depot had to the citizens of Harderwijk, but also to the fact that fishing, as an alternative history, proposed a much more effective and commodifiable narrative. Fish, nevertheless, can be sold in restaurants. The Zuiderzee and fishing were regarded as something positive, taken from Harderwijk by the government. The Colonial Recruitment Depot, instead, was voted out from within the city, and therefore was generally regarded as negative. Colonialism and colonial warfare, however, were rarely discussed and questioned, leaving room for a different kind of colonial nostalgia that was only partially linked to local history. This explains why the cultural trauma of the loss of the Zuiderzee had a different effect on Harderwijk's collective memory than the trauma the colonial soldiers left behind.

¹⁴⁹ Lowenthal, D. (1989) 'Nostalgia Tells it Like it Wasn't', in C. Shaw and M. Chase (eds) *The Imagined Past: History and Nostalgia*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press

Chapter Three. Facing the colonial past: the representation of local colonial history.



Picture 3.1: Sketch of the future statue of the Black hands.¹⁵⁰

In 2021, the city museum of Harderwijk wishes to reinstate its historical exhibition in a new and different light.¹⁵¹ By means of an interactive historical walking tour, the museum wants to visualise history through statues and art pieces. The plan is to install a total of twelve bronze statues all around the city. Each statue represents the heritage of prominent historical visitors to Harderwijk. They are ‘raw and tender’, like the city itself.¹⁵²

One of the future statue wants to highlight the history of the 3000 African soldiers that were recruited in and around St. George d’Elmina. These soldiers were mostly Donko people, originally from northern Ashanti (present-day Ghana). The Donko people were often enslaved by the Ashanti as they were said to be ‘hardworking and obeying’.¹⁵³ As part of a deal with the Netherlands, the Ashanti gave the Netherlands ‘volunteers’ for the Dutch colonial army, in exchange for weapons. After twelve years of service, the soldiers first had to come to

¹⁵⁰ Picture from Natasja Bennink. “Pension Harderwijk Twaalf Bronzen Props voor de stad Harderwijk.” Sketches and descriptions of twelve bronze statues, Stadsmuseum Harderwijk, March 2020, p. 4.

¹⁵¹ Reenen, van Herma. “Stadsmuseum Harderwijk presenteert geschiedenis met een ruig randje” *De Stentor*. Published on 18-04-2019. Accessed on 23-01-2019. URL: <https://www.destentor.nl/harderwijk/stadsmuseum-harderwijk-presenteert-geschiedenis-met-een-ruig-randje~a86486a7/>

¹⁵² Bennink. “Pension Harderwijk,” p. 2,4.

¹⁵³ Van Kessel, *Zwarte Hollanders*, 72.

Harderwijk to be officially discharged. Even though people of colour were not uncommon in some places in the Netherlands such as The Hague, the black colonial soldiers were sometimes treated as a curiosity in Harderwijk.¹⁵⁴

To commemorate the African colonial soldiers, a statue will be placed in the window sill of the former Colonial Recruitment Depot. It will consist of two large ‘manly’ hands.¹⁵⁵ The person is wearing soldier’s clothing, as the sleeves of a uniform can be seen, signifying the man has some status within the army. The hands, too, are marked with a scar, showing how ‘rough’ the soldier’s life can be. The scar is significant because it shows how the military left an impact: it leaves the soldier branded for the rest of his life. His hands are constant reminders of the physical (and mental) transformation he has endured while fighting in the Dutch East Indies.¹⁵⁶ Still, the man wishes to return to the man, or rather, the place he was in before: to return to Ghana, which is symbolised by the red soil in his palms.¹⁵⁷ The hands melancholically cherish the homeland, hoping to soon return to it, but simultaneously, they are marked by what they have encountered in service of a colonial power. In this statue, the hands embody loss, melancholy and hurt, as they were taken from their place they belonged and were the victim of an colonial order that was out of their control. The displaced hands paid the price of imperialism.

A significant factor is that the hands are not only displaced from the soil, but also from their body. This is not clear on picture 3.1, but part of a sleeve will be added simulating an illusion of a continuing body. The face, belonging to the hands, remains invisible. Viewers never ‘meet’ the colonial soldier in person and cannot look him into the eye. The only recognisable aspect of the anonymous soldier are the scars on his hands. Why did the city museum choose to incorporate only the hands of the colonial soldier in this sketch of the future statue?

By analysing various representations of the Colonial Recruitment Depot in Harderwijk, I show how this future statue fits within the cognitive framework of colonial aphasia and colonial nostalgia. As experiences of people from Harderwijk are important to take into account, I use empirical data, which I have collected through participant observation

¹⁵⁴ Blakely, Allison. *Blacks in the Dutch World. The Evolution of racial imagery in a Modern Society.* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993).

¹⁵⁵ I use the word ‘manly’ in quotation marks, because it is the word is used in the description of the statue.

One’s gender, in practice, cannot be derived from the size of hands alone, as women can have large hands as well. However, because of the artist’s description, I refer to the statue as male. Bennink, *Pension Harderwijk*, 4.

¹⁵⁶ Margo DeMello. ‘Tortured, punished and convict bodies’. In: *Body Studies: an Introduction*. 248.

¹⁵⁷ Even though red soil can be found in many places across the world, here, it is meant to represent Africa, and more specifically, Ghana.

in a city walking tour and multiple interviews with councillors of the municipality, local historians and inhabitants of apartment block the Gelderse Munt, the building of the former Colonial Recruitment Depot.¹⁵⁸ I start by analysing the colonial *lieux de memoires* of Harderwijk.

The visible history of the Colonial Recruitment Depot

On most historical buildings in Harderwijk, there are standardized brown information plates with basic, factual information. Usually, this information indicates the previous function of the building and its construction year. However, on the Gelderse Munt, the building of the Former Colonial Recruitment Depot, there is no such plate.¹⁵⁹ Marc Bouw, municipal monument policy advisor, explained that there is no record on why this decision was made. In fact, there is not even a record of when and where the information plates were placed to begin with. Bouw gave multiple reasons why there is no information sign put up on the wall. What can be said is that the organisation that placed the signs was not interested in the ‘recent’ history of the Colonial Recruitment Depot. It simply did not see the historical value in the building and did not see why tourists would like to know more about the building.¹⁶⁰ This argument, however, can be easily debunked, as the building that housed the Colonial Recruitment Depot has a long history, that goes back to the 15th century. The building’s first served as a nunnery for the Grey Sisters, a Franciscan nun order. After the Protestant Reformation, as I briefly mentioned in chapter one, the building served as the Provincial Mint.¹⁶¹ For about 200 years, the mint manufactured coins for, amongst others, the province of Gelderland and, interestingly, the Dutch East India Company (VOC). This shows that the building that used to house the Colonial Recruitment Depot has an ‘older’ history than just its military function 200 years ago. Thus, it would seem illogical that the plate does not exist, because the building does have a broad history.

¹⁵⁸ Unfortunately, due to the corona crisis, I could only interview two inhabitants of the apartments of the Colonial Recruitment Depot. Some names of informants are pseudonyms to ensure anonymity. All informants allowed me to use their actual name, but in the end, I decided to give some informants a pseudonym to protect them. See, DeWalt&DeWalt, *Participant Observation*, 222 for ethical consideration.

¹⁵⁹ According to municipal monument policy advisor Marc Bouw, it is impossible to track down exactly where the brown information signs come from. They are originally placed ‘a long time ago’ by the Royal Dutch Touring Club (ANWB). When exactly, however, is impossible to track down. Interview with Marc Bouw. 24-06-2020.

¹⁶⁰ Interview Bouw. 24-06-2020.

¹⁶¹ Timmers, Wim. *Verassend Harderwijk: bespiegelingen over een veranderende stad*. (Harderwijk: Uitgeverij Wedding, 2002)

Another reason, Bouw explained, might be that the owner of the building did not give consent to place an information sign on the wall.¹⁶² To investigate this, I need to uncover the who used the building around the 1980s, when the information signs were (presumably) put up. After the Colonial Recruitment Depot was disbanded in 1909, the Dutch State remained ownership over the building. Several battalions were housed in the Oranje-Nassau Base.¹⁶³ In 1951, the School for the Military Intelligence Agency (SMID), colloquially referred to as ‘the spy school’, was placed in the building and remained there until 1988. Recruits, amongst others, learned Russian and learned to interrogate prisoners of war.¹⁶⁴ Presumably, it is very likely that, when the brown information signs were put up, the military school did not want to be a tourist attraction, as everything that happened behind its walls was classified.

In 1988, the SMID moved out of the building, because it had become too small for the expanded training programme. In 1992, the building was refurbished into the Gelderse Munt apartments. The name refers to its time as the provincial Mint, which was its function before the military owned it.

Even though the building does not have a visible brown information sign which states its historical relevance, this does not mean it is free from any historical references to its time as the Colonial Recruitment Depot. Perhaps the most prevalent example of this is the big, decorated fence, which functions as the city-side entrance to the apartments and the communal garden. The gate consists of two columns. The entrance was built when the Depot celebrated its 50-year stay in 1864. The decorated fence was gifted in 1894 by the municipality of Harderwijk, 50 years after the name of the base was changed *Koloniaal Werfdepot*.¹⁶⁵ The weapon of Harderwijk is on the right side, and the weapon of the Netherlands stands on the left side of the decoration.

The fencing was supposed to be removed when the municipality turned the building into apartments, but the antiquarian society of Harderwijk (*oudheidkundige vereniging Herderewich*) opposed this and took action to stop the plans. According to them, the gate is part of Harderwijk’s past and it should not be torn down.¹⁶⁶ In the same line, Marc Bouw said: ‘Monuments are part of the heart of the city... They are not only for tourists, but the people

¹⁶² Interview Bouw 24-06-2020.

¹⁶³ Interestingly, during the Indonesian wars of independence, right after the second world war (1945-1949), the bases in Harderwijk, again, provided soldiers that fought in Indonesia. Presumably, they trained in the Orange-Nassau Base as well; See: Elands, *Uitgediend*, 32.

¹⁶⁴ Ingrid van der Vlis, *Militairen op de Veluwe. Een geschiedenis van landschap & bewoners*. (Amsterdam: Boom publishers, 2012.)

¹⁶⁵ See, footnote 4

¹⁶⁶ Interview Carolyn, 26-05-2020.

from here can feel an attachment to them too.’¹⁶⁷ The gate, thus, clear sign of a specific history, which should be shown to both tourists and the people from Harderwijk. However, the history itself, as said, is hardly discussed. People that now live in the Gelderse Munt apartments, love the historical gateway too. ‘When I explain people where I live, I always refer to the recognizable gate,’ says Carolyn, a teacher in secondary education. She has been living in her apartment for four years now and still loves it. ‘I love how the building is old from the outside and modern on the inside,’ she explains to me while she eats a bit of homemade cake. We are sitting in her living room on the first floor and classical music is playing softly. From where I am sitting, I see some of the trees that grow in the communal garden, the terrain that used to be the parade ground for the soldiers. The garden is beautiful and peaceful, which Carolyn is regularly reminded of by the many walking tours that walk through it. ‘There are sometimes five groups of tourists passing through here in a day, especially in summer and in weekends.’ Although this sometimes causes some minor irritations, generally, Carolyn sees it as a justification for her beautiful home and garden.¹⁶⁸ As a member of the housing committee, Carolyn explains that the inhabitants are thinking of new ways to design the garden. ‘The problem is that there is only 40 centimetres of soil in between the garden and the parking garage underneath the building.’ Therefore, the plants dry out. The committee is inspired by old photos of the Colonial Recruitment Depot and the way the grounds were designed back in the day.¹⁶⁹ History, thus, remains an inspiration for future reconstructions.



Picture 3.2. Balconies at the former colonial training facility. Picture by Mara Sassen.

Another inhabitant, Henry, explains that he had recently seen some old pictures of the home he moved in to a few months ago. One thing he noticed immediately was that there used

¹⁶⁷ Interview Marc Bouw, 24-06-2020.

¹⁶⁸ Interview Carolyn, 26-05-2020.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

to be no balconies (see:, which he found odd, because they looked quite ‘colonial’. This observation, too, was made by one of the people during a walking tour. An elderly person pointed out that the balconies have a colonial feel to them. The tour guide, a woman with short blonde hair, responded: ‘Indeed, the balconies do have a colonial feel, but they are added when the building was made into apartments. Maybe it’s a nod to the past?’¹⁷⁰ The fact that balconies, here, are considered as ‘colonial’ has a historical context. Balconies were, quite often, installed in European-owned buildings in colonies. Balconies create a good view over colonized lands, which could be visually ‘accessed’ without leaving the comfort of the house. Balconies, as structures, form a liminal bridge between private and public life, a liminal space between the colonised and the coloniser.¹⁷¹ Without ever having to physically go to the dangerous and unknown lands of the colonial world, the imperial powers could still watch over their claimed territory. Without accessing the land, the owner of the balcony gains a sense of power, as he controls the outside space by gazing over it, without leaving the comfort of his house.¹⁷² When taking this into account, the decision to construct wooden balconies on the building that used to be the Colonial Recruitment Depot is significant. It shows how the colonial is still present on people’s minds, without actually being talked about.

A sense of colonial aphasia can thus be discovered in the architecture of the building. While lacking a vocabulary to discuss colonialism, it is still, subtly referred to in a visual manner.¹⁷³ The building, although bearing many architectural reminders of its colonial past, is not referred to as the ‘Colonial Recruitment Depot’, but as the Gelderse Munt (The Mint of Gelderland) or het *Muntgebouw*, the Coin Building. The communal garden is referred to as Coin square (Muntplein) and each doormat has ‘Gelderse Munt’ written on them, to remind inhabitants where they live.¹⁷⁴ All of these names are, of course, references to the time the building functioned as a Mint. The history of the colonial, is completely removed from the vocabulary that refers to the building, even though the architecture highlights colonialism (e.g. the balconies, communal garden and the gateway). There is a clear discrepancy between what can be seen (a beautiful, though colonially inspired, architecture) and what is discussed.

¹⁷⁰ Participant observation. Walking tour with Gidsen Harderwijk, 04-03-2020.

¹⁷¹ Riitta Laitinen and Thomas V. Cohen, ‘Cultural History of Early Modern European Streets- an introduction.’ In: *Cultural History of Early Modern European Streets*, (eds.) Laitinen, Riitta, and Thomas V. Cohen. (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 4.

¹⁷² The balcony functions almost as a panopticon. The colonials subjects behave, because the coloniser might be watching. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: the birth of the prison*. (New York: Pantheon group, 1977[1975]), 190.

¹⁷³ Nora, *Between memory and history*, 23

¹⁷⁴ For instance, see Timmers, *Verassend Harderwijk*, 34.

Colonial nostalgia

The sketch of the future statue of the African soldier aligns with the tendency to show the colonial history without providing actual context or information that enables understanding. Instead, necessary colonial awareness is then, sometimes implicitly, replaced with colonial nostalgia and pride. ‘I feel like the housing corporation really takes pride in owning this building’, states Henry, who has lived in his apartment for two months now. ‘I just think the housing corporation is content owning such a magnificent historical building... I deduce this by looking at the way the housing corporation maintains it.’ Henry later tells me he already knew about the history of this building before he moved in, because he was born in Indonesia. When he lived somewhere else in Harderwijk, he incidentally encountered the history and the connection Harderwijk had with Indonesia, though he would like to know a bit more. Then, he explains that the people of Indonesia do not see colonialism in a bad way, rather they are appreciative of it.¹⁷⁵ Carolyn, too, had some kind of connection to Indonesia. As I sit in her apartment, I noticed a painting of a brown-skinned farmer, working on the land with traditional tools. I asked her about the painting, and she explained that it reminds her of her ex-family-in-law. Her ex-husband had Indonesian roots, which increased her interest in the country. She had even planned to travel there this summer, but this had to be cancelled due to the corona pandemic. She really wanted to visit a museum in Medan where colonial plantations are explained ‘how they were’. In the Tropenmuseum [a Dutch colonial museum], she explains, ‘there is a very opiated way of explaining colonialism. We now think it was all bad.’ Carolyn thinks the Indonesian people have a different way of explaining colonialism, as they focus on what good the process of colonialism brought them (e.g. plantations and an economic infrastructure).¹⁷⁶

Even though I only had the opportunity to interview two inhabitants due to the covid-19 pandemic, I do not dismiss my participant’s experiences, as they still hold valuable information. It is interesting to note that they both use a *tempo doeloe*-narrative to explain their frustrations with the way colonialism is critically remembered by institutions such as the Tropenmuseum in Amsterdam. To find out how the colonial history is remembered in Harderwijk, I now analyse the 200-year anniversary commemoration of the colonial depot in 2014.

¹⁷⁵ Interview Henry, 25-05-2020.

¹⁷⁶ Interview Carolyn, 26-05-2020.

Celebrating 200-years Colonial Recruitment Depot

On the 21st of June 2014, a memorial day was organised, to remember the colonial recruitment depot in Harderwijk. The whole day, events took place, mostly centred around the city museum and the former colonial recruitment depot (Geldersche Munt). The memorial day started in the morning around 10:30, with a several speeches and the revelation of a memorial plaque. After this, there was an ‘*Indische Markt*’ (Indian market), where, amongst others, Ghanaian art could be bought to raise money for a hospital in Ghana. The country of Ghana was chosen consciously, because the African soldiers that came to Harderwijk after their service in the army came from Ghana as well. There was an expositions and workshops in the city museum and people could eat Indonesian dishes such as spring rolls and satay.¹⁷⁷ Even though I was not present on this day, footage is available of the 21st of June 2014 and the memorial. What follows is a description and analysis of the events that day. I do acknowledge that this footage only provides a small part of everything that happened that day and only provides a framed perspective on the speeches and acts performed on that particular day. Still, it provides substantial information and creates a way to still, somehow, know what partially took on that particular day, without actually being present.

‘We will start with a song....to try to get into the East-Indies [colonial] spirit,’ says a man talking through a microphone.¹⁷⁸ A choir, mostly consisting of white-haired men start singing the song ‘*Brandend Zand*’, originally by Anneke Gronloh, accompanied by trumpeting music.¹⁷⁹ The singing men are dressed in a traditional uniform, consisting of *klompen* (wooden shoes), blue-striped blouses and red braces. They all have a red handkerchief around their necks. As they sing about ‘the burning sands of a lost land’, the camera focuses on the people in the crowd. The people are mostly white- or grey-haired and stare at the singing choir. In opposition to the crowd, about seven older, white, men in soldier-like uniforms with medals stand in a row. One of the men proudly presents an orange banner, representing his military division.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁷ ‘Harderwijk een dag lang in het teken van 200 jaar Koloniaal Werfdepot.’ *Alles van Harderwijk*. Published on 16-06-2014. Last accessed on 29-10-2020. URL: <https://harderwijk.allesvan.nl/nieuws/detail/page/171/id/228845/Harderwijk-een-dag-lang-in-het-teken-van-200-jaar-koloniaal-werfdepot>

¹⁷⁸ Koloniaal Bewind Harderwijk, onthulling replica 2014. YouTube. Jan van Os video. Published on 23-06-2015. Last accessed on 29-10-2020. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pRihIU8t-Jw>. (1’46”-1’57”)

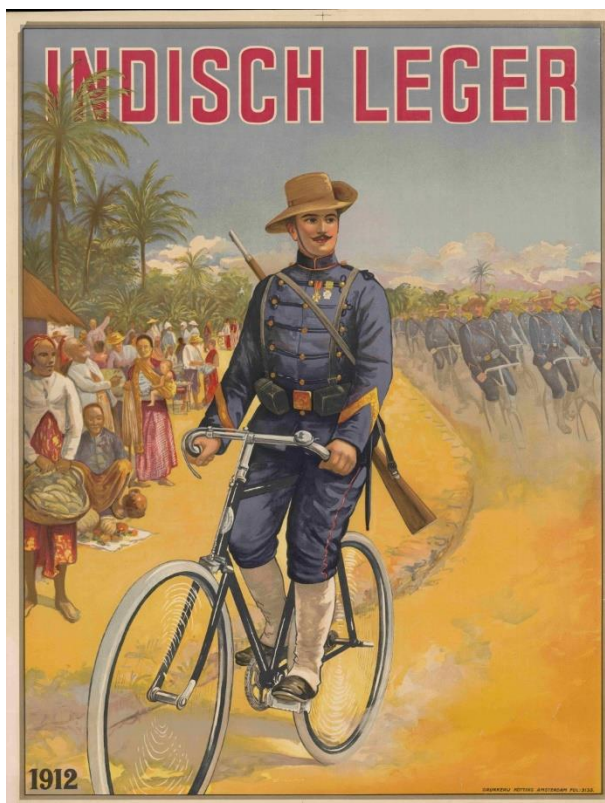
¹⁷⁹ Anneke Gronloh was born in Indonesia, and sang in Dutch and Malaysian. She was a very famous singer in the 1960’s. See, Pattynama, *cultural memory*, 178, on popular media and cultural memory in Dutch Indonesian identity.

¹⁸⁰ Song is performed by the choir the *Tippeangers*. Koloniaal Bewind Harderwijk. YouTube. Jan van Os video. Published on 23-06-2015. Last accessed on 29-10-2020. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pRihIU8t-Jw>. (1’57”- 4’25”)

A few moments later, a honorary citizen of Harderwijk performs a speech. ‘History. The history that belongs to this building. The history that belongs to Harderwijk. The history that belongs to the Netherlands. It is the history of the former colonies in which Harderwijk played a part. This is not just something. With this memorial, we make this history visible.’ He continues to describe a recruitment poster that was used to advertise enlisting for the colonial army. ‘On a recruitment poster, there stood a soldier on a bike, with a friendly face, riding through the Desa [general term for a rural Indonesian village]’.¹⁸¹ This ‘friendly-looking soldier’ would later be revealed as the central focus of the new memorial plate, serving as ‘another place where we can reflect on Harderwijk’s history.’¹⁸²



Picture 3.3. Glass memorial plate. Picture is my own



Picture 3.4 Image on the glass memorial plate. Recruitment Poster from 1912, owned by the Rijksmuseum. URL: <http://hdl.handle.net/10934/RM0001.COLLECT.391484>

The plate centers around the image of a soldier on a bike. In the background, more soldiers on bikes are speeding past a group of *inlanders*, people from Indonesia, who are looking at the cycling soldiers. The group of soldiers must be going fast, as they stir up dust. The difference between the soldiers and the *inlanders* is clearly distinguishable: the soldiers move fast on their vehicles, they are dressed in blue uniforms and are armed with guns. The group has technology and a mode of transport suitable for modern people. The indigenous people are wearing traditional clothing. It seems as if there is a market in the background, as people are carrying goods. Some people are waving at the soldiers, but others are staring at them. The front soldier proudly wears his medals and looks as if he has power and control over

¹⁸¹ Ibid., (6'33"-6'40").

¹⁸² Ibid.,(8'38"-8'42").

both his vehicle and the people he passes. The soldiers are active and powerful, whereas the indigenous people are pictured as underdeveloped, passive subordinates.

The poster stems from 1912, which is three years after the final colonial soldiers from the depot left Harderwijk, which is probably why the year '1912' is cut from the picture on the glass plate. The picture was still chosen, as 'it perfectly fits the time period and it is a good depiction that represents the Dutch East Indian Army beautifully', as explained by a local historian, 'And the picture says a lot about the army and how the government wanted to attract colonial soldiers to the depot'.¹⁸³ The text, however, does not contextualize the picture, which takes up most of the plate. The text underneath the picture says the following:

'At the end of 1814, King Willem I signs the agreement that the former building of the Guelders Mint was refurbished into a training centre for colonial troupes. This COLONIAL RECRUITMENT DEPOT stays in Harderwijk until 1909. Approximately 150.000 soldiers from Europe and Africa stay in Harderwijk for a short amount of time due to their service in the Dutch East and West Indies.'¹⁸⁴

The text is rather factual and does not provide a lot of meaning as to why the Colonial Recruitment Depot was used (e.g. imperialism and colonial wars). In order to fully understand the text, historical knowledge of broader topics is necessary. On top of that, the image shows that the poster was merely used to attract white European people to join the Colonial army. White men in power, whereas non-white people are powerless. However, in reality most of the colonial soldiers active in the Dutch East Indies were not white. They were natives from Indonesian islands.¹⁸⁵ A section of the Dutch army were African too, which will be acknowledged by the future statue of the black hands. On the image, these people of colour are not represented, which recreates the binary of power and powerless: those who are white are in power and the natives are powerless. Reproducing this colonial image within a postcolonial context without clearly contextualizing it is therefore a good example of colonial and imperial nostalgia. It furthermore establishes a sense of colonial aphasia, as the provided information is not explained or given meaning within a postcolonial framework. Colonialism

¹⁸³ Interview Liek Mulder, 20-12-2019.

¹⁸⁴ 'Eind 1814 tekent koning Willem I het besluit het voormalige gebouw van de Gelderse Munt in te richten als opleidingscentrum voor koloniale troepen. Dit KOLONIAAL WERFDEPOT blijft tot 1909 in Harderwijk. Ongeveer 150.000 soldaten uit Europa en Afrika zijn korte tijd in Harderwijk in verband met hun dienst in toenmalige Nederlands Oost- en West-Indië. Met dank aan Stichting Burger Weeshuis Harderwijk en Gemeente Harderwijk

¹⁸⁵ See, for example, Bossenbroek, *Volk voor Indie*, 38; Ewald Vanvugt, *Roofstaat: Wat iedere Nederlander moet weten*, (Amsterdam: Nijgh & Van Ditmar, 2016), 414.

and, in in this case, the Colonial Recruitment Depot remains invisible, because historians do not provide a framework or a vocabulary to the public that enables them to discuss it.

Education is a tool that can establish such a vocabulary. To teach the history of the Colonial Recruitment Depot to children of primary schools in Harderwijk, an online history education module was created by the same committee that was in charge of the memorial day in 2014.¹⁸⁶ The educational programme centres around a fictional soldier named Piet Donker, who is said to be the prominent soldier on the recruitment poster (see image 3.1). He was an orphan and trained in Harderwijk to fight in the Aceh war. Through the eyes of the soldier, his motivations are explained in the following way:

“Of course we had already heard a few things about the Aceh war in Harderwijk. Over there they had been fighting for about fifteen years against a bunch of savage Acehers. Those people did not feel like recognizing the rule in our East-Indian capital Batavia. It is logical that the Dutch did not accept that at the time. Hence the war.”¹⁸⁷

Even though this text is written from a colonial soldier’s perspective, it still normalises colonial wars and colonial rule in a way that the Dutch colonial rule was seen as ‘natural’. On the other hand, the indigenous Aceh people were savages that could not understand how great Dutch colonial rule in Batavia was. Of course, it is clearly written from the perspective of the colonial, which can explain the heavy colonial pride and naturalisation of colonial rule. Still, when this is taught to young children aged 11 to 12, they will have trouble differentiating someone’s subjective perspective from objective truth, especially if this is not explicitly explained. The colonial perspective of Piet Donker is taught as the only and objective truth to fairly young children. This way, children are taught, through an imperial nostalgic lens that Dutch people ‘were supposed to’ rule in Aceh and that the people from Aceh were ‘merely savages’. By distributing the educational module, a colonial hegemony is reproduced in a postcolonial time.¹⁸⁸

The extensive use of the image of the colonial soldier is the perfect example of imperial nostalgia. It celebrates empire and colonial soldiers in a subtle, non-critiquing way,

¹⁸⁶ The module is still available on the website of the city museum: Stadsmuseum Harderwijk. “Lespakket Tweehonderd jaar Koloniaal Werfdepot in Harderwijk” Last accessed on 28-10-2020. URL: <https://www.stadsmuseum-harderwijk.nl/lespakket-200-jaar-koloniaal-werfdepot-in-harderwijk/>

¹⁸⁷ Liek Mulder, “Wat gebeurde er met Piet Donker? Lesbrief voor de bovenbouw van het basisonderwijs”, *Comité Tweehonderd Jaar Koloniaal Werfdepot*, 2014, p. 16. URL: <https://www.stadsmuseum-harderwijk.nl/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Lesbrief.200-jaar-Koloniaal-Werfdepot.Cultuurkust.pdf>.

¹⁸⁸ Because the module can be found online for free, it is hard to say how popular it was (or is) in primary schools today.

because it is presented from the soldier's perspective. Other sides of the story, however, are not presented on the image, and therefore also in Harderwijk's collective memory. The image is not contextualised properly, and the public (and children) is not be able to place it within a specific historical context.



Picture 3.5. Photo taken during the *Stadsgezichten* musical. Colonial soldiers are visiting sex workers. Photo by Fotostudio Merjenburgh, 2015.

Collective memory is performance

The glass plate in the former Colonial Recruitment Depot is the only permanent 'information plate' that currently exists. However, as Jay Winter stated: collective memory is performance.¹⁸⁹ Every two years, a literal performance of collective memory takes place. Podiumspektakel Harderwijk produces a 'spectacular' open-air play around the history of Harderwijk. As the organisation describe their objective the following way: "All editions of the Podiumspektakel Harderwijk are more than "just a play". It is a representation of the history of Harderwijk. [It is] a unique piece ... to create a performance that takes the audience in a whirling way to the past. ... the performance of the piece also has an educational function."¹⁹⁰

The first edition, in 2015, was a play called '*stadsgezichten*', or cityscapes. The word *stadsgezichten* literally translates to 'faces of the city'. The play takes place in 19th century Harderwijk, when colonial soldiers, sex workers, but also fishermen, Christians and aristocrats were the beating heart of the city. An advertisement poster for the colonial recruitment depot hangs on an advertising column that is part of the décor.

¹⁸⁹ Winter, 'The performance of the past'. 11-34.

¹⁹⁰ Stichting Podiumspektakel Harderwijk, 'Doelstelling podiumspektakel', Accessed on 16-06-2020. URL: <https://podiumspektakel.nl/organisatie/doelstelling-podiumspektakel>

The play serves as a way to educate the people of Harderwijk about local history, and therefore has a public historical function.¹⁹¹ Playwright Bart Oenema explained that the time of the Colonial Recruitment Depot was chosen as a setting, because ‘it was a very interesting time period for Harderwijk.’¹⁹² It served the perfect setting for a dramatic play, as there was a lot of friction between several social groups. For instance, at the beginning of the play, colonial soldiers harass a sex worker. The main character, a young fisherman named Maarten, stands up to protect her. The fishermen and the colonials fight, but the café owner, interrupts them.¹⁹³ The play shows tensions between the Christian fishers and the colonial soldiers and how they shared a city.

Throughout the play, colonialism is merely discussed. Instead, the sexual behaviour of the colonial soldiers and the rejection of that behaviour takes up a central position in the story of the play (see: picture 3.5). The aristocracy of Harderwijk does their best to close the Colonial Recruitment Depot, because the soldiers cause chaos in the streets. The soldiers are presented as overly sexual. They warn citizens to keep their daughters locked up, otherwise they will have sex with them.¹⁹⁴ In the script of the play, the sex workers are often condescendingly described as ‘little whores’ or *hoertjes*. Sex workers are part of the problem, but they are also victimized, as they are controlled by greedy a café owner. The play ends when the Colonial Recruitment Depot closes its doors and the last colonial soldiers leaving.¹⁹⁵ Although the play is based on real-life, Oenema tells me, it remains a work of fiction.¹⁹⁶ The histories of the soldiers and the sex workers in relation to the fishermen are sensationalized for an audience, meaning those histories are presented in a memorable way. However, this dramatization does not explain Harderwijk’s role in the colonial system and colonialism.¹⁹⁷ The focus, once again, is on the main character of the play: a fisherman.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, I have given recent examples of representation of the Colonial Recruitment Depot in Harderwijk. I have shown that the colonial is not invisible in Harderwijk and that traces of the colonial memory are represented, albeit without clear

¹⁹¹ Winter, *Performing the Past*, 12.

¹⁹² Mail conversation with Bart Oenema, 16-06-2020.

¹⁹³ Oenema, *Stadsgezichten deel 1*, 4-5.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 16.

¹⁹⁵ Oenema, *Stadsgezichten deel 2*, 19-20.

¹⁹⁶ Mail conversation with Oenema, 16-06-2020.

¹⁹⁷ I make this statement, because for the story, it does not matter whether the soldiers are ‘regular’ soldiers, or colonial soldiers, as their link with colonialism is completely left out. Oenema, *Stadsgezichten deel 1*; Oenema *Stadsgezichten deel 2*.

explanation. However, a common critique on the representation is that ethical reflection of Harderwijk's position within the colonial structure is lacking.

The statue of the African soldier's hands misses a similar ethical reflection. Even though the image of scarred hands symbolises a specific story, the choice to disembodiment the hands from a face influences the way the message is perceived. The disembodiment creates a passive dynamic, in which the soldier is unable to tell his own story. Instead, his story is told through a white, colonial nostalgic framework, aligning with the way the Colonial Recruitment Depot was represented during the memorial. It is still difficult to face the colonial past.

Conclusion

At the beginning of the 20th century, the Colonial Recruitment Depot was not remembered fondly by the predominantly Christian population of Harderwijk. Even before the colonial training facility got disbanded, citizens wanted to avoid the soldiers and their disrupting behaviour. This is the reason why Harderwijk was often referred to as the gutter of Europe. The loss of the fishing industry and the partial drainage of the Zuiderzee influenced the way particular histories are remembered. Nostalgia as a tool to deal with collective trauma created a way of romanticizing fishing and Harderwijk's relation to water in local historiography and representation. Tourism and commercialisation, too, played a role in this process, signifying how memories of historical events are constructed in ways society wishes to be perceived by outsiders. They are reflections of the norms and values of society within a historical timeframe.¹⁹⁸ As a result, fishing, the Hansa and the University became the 'holy trinity' of historical commemoration.

The memory of the Colonial Recruitment Depot is constructed over time by societies within specific historical contexts. Although this thesis focuses predominantly on a unique case in a small Dutch town, it fits perfectly within the broader process of memory making. I utilised and combined theories from scholars like Bijl, Winter and Stoler to create an in-depth knowledge on broader postcolonial processes of Dutch colonial memory making, without forcefully imposing them on the case of Harderwijk. Instead, the case of Harderwijk contributes to a deepened and enriched understanding of Dutch colonial memory by bringing together theories from a multitude of academical backgrounds. As Harderwijk's case shows, colonialism is still a topic that is difficult to discuss without fully acknowledging the extent of the history.¹⁹⁹ Small communities on microlevel influence bigger processes and vice versa, which is why the role of the local in relation to the national should never be downplayed.

Dutch colonial representations are often paired with strategies of colonial and imperial nostalgia, but also with aphasia. The strategies of nostalgia hinder the memorability of a specific occurrence of memory.²⁰⁰ If no clear information is provided, a vocabulary around colonialism, or in this case the Colonial Recruitment Depot will not manifest. Dutch metropole towns remain seemingly 'uneventful' and without colonial history. It is, however, not the traces of colonialism that are lacking, but the ability to remember them.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁸ Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*. Translated by Lewis A. Coser. (Chicago: Chicago University Press. 1992).

¹⁹⁹ See, for example, Vanvugt, *Roofstaat*, 2016.

²⁰⁰ Bijl, *Emerging Memory*, 204.

²⁰¹ Dienne Hondius et al. *Gids Slavernijverleden.*; Stoler, Colonial Aphasia,

I want to emphasise that more research to postcolonial tendencies of aphasia in local metropole communities is necessary. Specifically, in the case of Harderwijk, a gendered lens could generate more knowledge regarding the position of women in prostitution in relation to colonial soldiers. The importance of taking into account local histories that are often disregarded as ‘non-historical’ cannot be stressed enough.

To combat colonial aphasiac tendencies of local historical representations, colonial history needs to be explained through focal vocabularies. They need to be understandable by communities that have previously distanced themselves from the particular history. By using a vernacular that people understand, communities from metropolises are able to place themselves within the narrative of colonial history. This contributes, in the end, to the decolonisation of the mind.

Bibliography

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