A Panorama by Dirk Boer: Japan according to a Dutch merchant.

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Contents.

Introduction.

Chapter 1: Historical background.
   §1: 19th century Europe.
   §2: The Birth of ethnography in the Netherlands.
   §3: The three great collectors of the 19th century.

Chapter 2: Theoretical background.
   §1: Hermeneutics and reception history.
   §2: Foucault.
   §3: Orientalism.
   §4: Important sources for Legène’s research.
   §5: Diaries.
   §6: Autobiographies.

Chapter 3: Finding Japan in De bagage van Blomhoff en Van Breugel: Japan, Java, Tripoli en Suriname in de negentiende-eeuwse Nederlandse cultuur van het imperialisme.
   §1: Susan Legène.
   §2: Her goal.
   §3: Useful metaphors employed by Legène.
   §4: The contemporary debate to which she would like to contribute.
   §5: Legène and Japan.
   §6: Blomhoff’s bagage.
   §7: Boer’s ‘Bazar’.

Conclusion.

Bibliography.
Introduction.

Almost all credit for the unearthing of the richness of the qualities of Japanese aesthetics is given to the artists, art critics, art collectors, and art traders located in Paris. One much cited account written in 1905 by Léonce Bénédite\(^1\) claims Félix Bracquemont to be the first Westerner to be struck by the artistic qualities of Japanese art during a visit of a Parisian printshop in 1856. The prints that had this almost magical appeal upon Bracquemont were the *Hokusai manga* of 1814. However, the Americans were the first to open-up trade with Japan after its long period of seclusion (the policy of *Sakoku* (closed country) lasted from approximately 1639 to 1854) and this lays at the foundation of Henry Adams' claim that the American painter and collector John La Forge was the first 'Japoniste'\(^2\). Still others claim that full scale export to Europe only began in the 1860's and therefore the start of *Japonisme* was in that period\(^3\). The effect of the exceptional position the Dutch had previous to the French period for cultural interaction with the Japanese is largely neglected by historians of the period who see the opening of Japan in 1854 as the start of cross-cultural influence between Japan and the rest of the world.

An exception is the published dissertation *De bagage van Blomhoff en Van Breugel: Japan, Java, Tripoli en Suriname in de negentiende-eeuwse Nederlandse cultuur van het imperialisme* (1998) by Susan Legène. Her thesis centers around four members of a Dutch elite family who travel overseas to further the interests of the Dutch empire and while doing so paint a panorama to be seen for their landlocked compatriots. One of the family members to take for the sea is Jan Cock Blomhoff (1779-1853) who traveled twice to the man-made Island of Deshima to represent Dutch trade interests while complying to strict rules enforced by the shogun in the interest of controlling one of the last foreign elements in Japan. Through the experiences of Jan Cock Blomhoff, Legène wants to understand how images of Japan become fixed in the mental world map of the Dutch who remained at home and, informed in this way, were influenced by the Japanese, however slightly. Although Legène adequately researched the material available to the Dutch in the first half of the 19\(^{th}\) century to have a proper contextual basis for her thesis I find her conclusion on both the messenger, Blomhoff, as well as the message, the image of Japan in the Dutch culture of the first half of the 19\(^{th}\) century, unsatisfactory. She reaches an easy conclusion of Blomhoff being an Orientalist and the

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image of Japan in the Netherlands to simply be a continuation of Japan as a “mysterious” country while both Blomhoff as the image of Japan had more depth and color than that. But instead of offering a different reading of the historical figure of Blomhoff and therefore the image he transmitted back to the Netherlands I would like to offer an alternative route in understanding the Dutch image of Japan through another historical Dutch figure: Dirk Boer. My claim is that he is both more exemplary of a Dutch populariser of Japan in the Netherlands and more successful at it. I would like to move away from Blomhoff and his Mauritshuis and bring Boer and his stores into the story; and I would like to move away from Japan as “mysterious” to a Japan within grasp. I will use the abbreviation KKvZ for the 'Koninklijk Kabinet van Zeldzaamheden' most of the time.

My research question is twofold: First, I want to provide prove that the conclusion of Legêne in her dissertation De bagage van Blomhoff en Van Breugel: Japan, Java, Tripoli en Suriname in de negentiende-eeuwse Nederlandse cultuur van het imperialisme (1998) gives a wrong image of both Japan and Blomhoff; and secondly to present an alternative historical figure to tell the story: Dirk Boer as an unique figure in the Netherlands of the first half of the 19th century of presenting the “Other”, and most specifically Japan. My method will be a critique of Legene holding her research along the theory she uses herself: Orientalism. In the second part I will use hermeneutics as proposed by Jauss and Gadamer, as well as elements from Foucault's theory and most notably Power/knowledge.

My first chapter will give an historical overview to familiarize the reader with the defining characteristics of the 19th century. Additionally, Romanticism will be introduced since this counter movement particularly pertains to an important image of “the other” held in the 19th century that helped shape the image of Japan in the Netherlands. I will continue with a brief introduction of the Dutch republic and its relationship with Japan, especially restrictions and gains on trade. In the next paragraph I return to the Netherlands and give an overview of the ethnographic position of the Dutch held in general and in particular about Japan while giving a short introduction of Jan Cock Blomhoff, Overmeer Fisscher, and von Siebold, who sold their collections to the KKvZ and made it into the greatest Japan collection in Europe.

The second chapter is concerned with an theoretical overview of my thesis. The Hermeneutics and Reception history of Gadamer and Jauss in combination with Power/knowledge and supporting ideas of Foucault will provide the framework to present Dirk Boer as a worthy alternative to Blomhoff as someone to have created the panorama of Japan of the Dutch in the first half of the 19th
century. The paragraphs Orientalism, Diaries, and Autobiographies will provide a theoretical framework from which to critique Legène's dissertation.

The third chapter will give the critique on Legène and propose Dirk Boer as an important historical figure in the first half of the 19th century regarding public understanding of Japan.
Chapter 1: Historical background.

§1: 19th century Europe.

The culmination of the Age of Enlightenment, the main driving force and indicator of the early modern period that started in the 16th century, was the French revolution in 1789. Elsewhere, the industrial revolution that started in England marked the start of the late modern period and quickly spread through the rest of Europe. But the changes that were put in motion would not be limited to Europe or the Europeans and would reach all corners of the world. Europe started to climb to the center of the world much aided by its global desires summarized by the concepts of imperialism and colonialism. First was to push entrepreneurs and investors further land inwards from the European coastal factories; secondly by having the military and administrators follow the pioneers and expand European borders, business, and markets. The second part is the backbone of the second wave of imperialism. All these global movements of people and goods were enabled by- and required for the industrial revolution. New innovations gave the European nation-states the necessary equipment for communication, transportation, and destruction. In symbiosis with the technological advances came a mechanical mindset that focused on analytical objectives by breaking down the universe; nature; humans; society; and religion into small parts that were guided by universally applicable rules. The idea being that life would become perfect if we reduced it to its fundamental laws and designed our societies, economies, personalities, and desires according to it. Europe reordered the world with itself at the center motivated and backed by its technical know-how and intellectual attitude. So far for the introduction of the main drivers of the historical events in the 19th century and central to the explanation of the modern period. The greater economical and political possibilities and ambitions of the Europeans, in combination with safe, fast, and cost-effective transport made traveling outside of Europe for a larger and more varied segment of the European population both desirable and possible. The desire to travel to the “Orient” can be traced to the Romantic movement that placed in the “Orient” the antidote to the constraining rational mindset of the “Occident”. Western artists indulged their imagination and created from the spirit, and not the ration, pieces inspired by Western arts in the 19th century inspired by the perceived “Orient” (Hond, 2008: 19). According to Dutch historian de Hond the greatest divergence that is fundamental to all thoughts of the Occident-Orient division is that the former is dynamic and the latter is forever static\(^4\) which was positive for

\(^{4}\) Interview with Jan de Hond by Ger Jochems. (2008, Februari 7). De Avonden. Verlangen naar het Oosten. Radio show retrieved from
some, such as the Romantic movement which searched for the eternal wisdom and piece of mind that such intellectual and natural stability would bring, and negative for others, which saw in the “Orient” a societies that had stagnated or even retrograded and now were surpassed by the superior West. De Hond further discerns four notions of European Orientalism in the 19th century: the Holy land of the Christian faith could be visited and researched to further ends determined by the respective Christian denomination (Hond, 2008: 26); the sensual Orient as the opposite reflection of European (sexual) morale (Hond, 2008: 198); the notion infused by romanticism of the ‘fantastical’ Orient of a ‘larger than life’ dreamlike society (Hond, 2008: 142); the notion infused by the enlightenment ideas of social Darwinism of an inferior Orient (Hond, 2008: 268).

The most eye catching development of European history of that period is the European expansion and its consequences for the conquered people, but much of the changes felt overseas were decided in Europe itself. The Republic of the Seven United Netherlands came to be 1581 while fighting a war of independence spanning eight decades against the Habsburg monarchy. The Dutch protestants, mostly Calvinists, needed to protect their spiritual independence from its southern catholic neighbors while simultaneously establishing its physical external borders by becoming a formidable European contender both politically and commercially. The centuries of struggle with the sea and its neighboring countries culminated in glorious victory as the Dutch build the most formidable navy and the largest sea-trading empire of the time during the Dutch Golden Age. However, by 1815 the Netherlands needed to re-establish themselves as an independent nation after their occupation by the French under Napoleon. The congress of Vienna started a period of relative peace since no single nation could aspire for military dominance on the continent and ideas about free trade and a newly emerging international harmony made nations to aspire to greatness on the global market. This became an impetus to create an empire and helped to instill in the Dutch mind the concept of a homeland and a world abroad. The world abroad was inhabited by people neither Protestant nor Dutch, and therefore inherently inferior. The views held by Dutch in the world abroad and the views held by the Dutch back home were conflicting: the Dutch liked to believe they were tolerant and egalitarian while at the same trading slaves and building an empire based on inequality. A sense of inferiority fell part to the Dutch since they were increasingly encroached

http://www.vpro.nl/programma/deavonden/afleveringen/37959304/items/39227205/

globally by the English empire. Everywhere the Dutch went they had to contend with the British Empire as superior militarily, politically, and economically. Everywhere, except for a tiny trading post in Japan called Deshima. Just off the coast from Nagasaki the Dutch traded silk, fabric, sugar, hides, and colorants in exchange for silver, gold, coins, lacquer ware, and camphor. Between 1641 and 1847 a total of 606 ships sailed to Japan (Brinkhorst, 1991: 8). At first the exclusive relationship with Japan seemed very promising but it wasn't long before the Japanese desire to be closed off from the world conflicted with the Dutch desire for free trade. The Shogun, the absolute ruler, limited the number of ships from around twelve to seven from 1641, and a mere two a year in 1715. Too much trade would detract resources from growing his internal market to stable and self-sufficient (Wolff, 1991: 82). Except for limit on the number of ships the currency of trade was also controlled by the shogun resulting in the ban on silver, the international currency of the day, to be used by Japanese traders for international trade from 1668. Additionally, trade with copper was limited and gold could only be traded as coins. (Wolff, 1991: 78). The VOC, and from 1799 state-run companies under different names, struggled to remain profitable but failed to achieve this from 1768 until 1854 when Deshima was dismantled as a trading post (Wolff, 1991: 82). Apart from trade the Japanese restrictions made it almost impossible to enjoy life on the tiny island who many had stayed there likened to a prison (Brinkhorst, 1991, 7). The Japanese shared with the Dutch the sense of being encroached by the expanding British empire, but did not consider the Dutch a threat, quite the contrary (Legêne, 1998: 176). The Dutch in Japan were subjugated to the will of the Japanese and were not able to exert their will. The Dutch-Japanese relationship was according to Japanese terms, much to the ridicule of the British (Legêne, 1998: 160, 170, 171). Instructions issued in 1650 by the VOC selected the Dutch to be stationed on Deshima to be 'bescheiden, nederige, beleefde en vriendelijke leden' who should 'de wensen van die schaamteloze, hooghartige en veeleisende natie goed in de gaten te houden en haar in alles tegemoet te komen' (Effert, 2000: 13, 14). Besides the restrictions imposed by the Japanese the highly lucrative black market trades by the Dutch employees stationed on Deshima was to the detriment of the treasury of their company. But it ultimately helped sustain the Dutch-Japanese relationship since the private gains made on the black market ensured the willingness of capable men to be stationed on the inhospitable trading post of Deshima (Wolff, 1991, 82). The three men that later became known as the three great collectors certainly were motivated by the expectation to sell their collections for a steep profit to the KKvZ (see §3: The three great collectors of the 19th century.). Additionally, the national prestige of an exclusive relationship with a foreign nation helped ensure the willingness to continue the difficult relationship even after it stopped making business-sense (Effert, 2000: 13). But what form did the image of the empire take back home?
§ 2. The birth of ethnography in the Netherlands.

The desire for establishing an ethnographic museum in the Netherlands (together with Russia and Denmark the first in Europe) was an evolution of the clubs and gatherings of 18th century Europe where amateur collectors and scientists would come together to discuss objects of scientific interest and broader societal appeal, a hobby for which the Dutch were notorious in Europe (Effert, 2003, 2, 13). With cartographers being increasingly capable of drawing the whole map and the discovery of territory drawing to an end the attention turned to, what later became, the ethnography of the mapped lands. Ethnography was thus seen as a subdivision and in support of geography, or Land-und-Völkerkunde in German, and many saw a great potential for benefiting European nations in its practice and findings. Reinier Pieter van de Kasteele, while simultaneously president of the 'Diligentia, an organisation for the promulgation of 'Natuur- en Letterkunde in The Hague, and of 'Koninklijke Kamer voor Rariteiten in the year 1827, gave a speech on the goal of ethnography in which he stated that it was to give a complete image of the differences but certainly also the similarities of all peoples in the world. Since science and the arts develop nationally ethnography is needed to order them hierarchically. In the case for Japan this meant that Ethnographic interest would be to give an encyclopedic insight into Japanese nature, culture, and life, for purely scientific reasons, since there was no undertone of colonizing Japan (Kuitenbrouwer, 2001). Van de Kasteele's speech would inspire many amateur collectors but his message backed by the considerable funds the art-loving first king of the Netherlands Willem I would make disposable also reached three collectors stationed on the Dutch trading post of Deshima in Japan. Their collection would become the mainstay and main attraction of the Japanese collection of the national Ethnography museum in Leiden.

Reinier Pieter van de Kasteele laid the foundation for the Dutch ethnography but also inspired many amateur-ethnographers to collect for the 'Koninklijk Kabinet van Zeldzaamheden'. As the first president of the newly formed national institute van de Kasteele had a less transnational and more nationalistic purpose for the collection than his speech for Diligentia would make you believe. The essence of the 'Koninklijk Kabinet van Zeldzaamheden' in his Handleiding tot de bezigtiging van het koninklijk kabinet van zeldzaamheden op Mauritshuis, in 's Gravenhage of 1824 was that the collection in the Mauritshuis would be a pearl in the crown of William the first where the Dutch and their international friends could revel at the exclusive relationship of the Dutch with the Japanese, fostering a sense of national pride for the Dutch, and jealousy for their guests. But beside its
symbolic value the collection could also give a boost to the national art, science, trade, and shipping according to van de Kasteele:

In een land, dagelijks door vreemdelingen van alle oorden der aarde bezocht, en door deszelfs betrekkingen met andere landen, ook in andere werelddeelen, uitmuntend geschikt, om door den tijd eene der rijkste verzamelingen, die ergens gevonden worden, aan het weetgierig en onderzoeklievend oog van in- en uitlanders aan te bieden, is zulk een kabinet onmisbaar. […] de volkskunde kan ophelderen; bovenal wat onze natie boven andere volken verheft, en den roem onze doorluchtige Voorvaderen vereeuwigt.

(Kasteele, 1824: 29)

The Dutch government saw a direct link between the KKvZ and Dutch science, nationalism, and its global financial position by adding what other cultures had to offer in the fields science, craftsmanship, and technology to their own expertise. The Rijksmuseum held the exposition 'Imitatie en inspiratie: Japans invloed op Nederlandse kunst van 1650 tot heden' in 1991 of which it also published an annotated catalogue with the same name. Great examples of how the Dutch learned of the Japanese is how 'Delfts Blauw' adapted Japanese Imari porcelain and how the Dutch started making “imitation” lacquer ware in a distinctive Japanese style (Rappard-Boon, 1991)

(Keblusek, 2000: 22).

§3: The three great collectors of the 19th century.

Jan Cock Blomhoff (1779-1853) was 'pakhuismeester' in 1809-1813 and was promoted to 'opperhoofd' during his second stay in 1817-1823 on Deshima. He sold his Japanese collection as the first of the three great collectors in 1826 to the humiliated Dutch state that just had gained its independence back from the French empire. The Japanese collection was welcomed as a source of national pride since Deshima was the only place in the world where for almost twenty years the Dutch flag could be raised (Legène, 1998: 160). Van Overmeer Fisscher (1800-1848) sold his collection in 1832 to the Dutch state, and Von Siebold (1796-1866) was the third of the three great collectors and sold his collection in 1838. All three of them had been stationed on Deshima and collected with the purpose of selling for a steep profit when returned to the Netherlands to the KKvZ. According to Von Siebold, the scientifically most active of the three great collectors, the ethnographic purpose of the important Japanese collection owned by the Dutch state was to offer a platform to educate the officers, tradesman, and others that would have to represent the Dutch
internationally, but especially in its colonies. By exhibiting the products in which the Dutch trade the museum would have a didactic function for future trade. In addition it would preserve the Japanese products and artisan methods that would inevitably be lost by force of contact with the superior European products, as is the natural course of affairs when an inferior civilization comes in contact with a superior one (Effert, 2003: 141). A temporary exhibition was held in Leiden in 1845 in to improve trade and industry and to stimulate the import of Japanese products to the Netherlands and Europe (Effert, 2003: 142). Functionality and possibilities for application were the main concern of study of the Japanese objects in Dutch hands and it was only in Paris of the 1860's that the shift was made from the focus on ethnographically curiosity and craftsmanship to the artistic qualities of Japanese objects.(Keblusek, 2000: 53). Ultimately the KKvZ closed in 1883 and its collection would be divided among several museums in the Netherlands, but most of its collection remained in Leiden (Keblusek, 2000: 16).

Despite the public availability of “Oriental” objects and the prevailing discourse of these public ethnographic collections to be in function of the betterment of the national industry, trade, and craftsmanship, the realization of Dutch industrial products as inferior in artistic design to their crafted “exotic” counterparts had to wait until the Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of all Nations in London in 1851. The unrecognizably and decadently decorated European industrial goods exhibited decay, while the crafted goods from other nations were of simple character exhibition a recognizable unity, concluded the majority of Western critics (Hond, 2008: 303). The European-wide search for fundamental laws and styles of modern aesthetics this inspired looked for inspiration to ancient and non-European art (Hond, 2008: 304). Again, a narrative change in the discourse of Japanese objects is placed outside of the Netherlands.

The reason for the interest in the art of a different manifesting itself at one time and not another is usually not determined by the availability of cultural expressions of that culture, but instead by a specific artistic question internal to the host culture (Rappard-Boon, 1991: 133). No impression is left by the object on the subject without the subject being susceptible to impressions, even with the right institutional presentation as was the case in the Netherlands with Japan by the KKvZ. The Dutch artists and industrialists followed the English and the French in their discovery of the Japanese and other “exotic” aesthetics but in the first half of the 19th century their unique relationship with Japan was not a response to a question underlying the fabric of their artistic community. In the second half of the 19th century in France painters such as Gauguin, Degas, and Monet searched for an alternative to the French Académie painting that asked of the artists to paint according to rational and mathematical principles, much to their chagrin. The French critic Astruc,
among others, saw in the Japanese model of expressive originality an antidote to the belabored and stifling academic tradition.

End of chapter.
The first chapter gave an historical overview to familiarize the reader with the defining characteristics of the 19th century. Additionally, Romanticism was introduced since it is the counter movement that particularly pertains to an important image of “the other” held in the 19th century that helped shape the image of Japan in the Netherlands. I continued with a brief introduction of the Dutch republic and its relationship with Japan, especially its restrictions trade that hurt the company but not the private gains. The ethnographic mission and the state of ethnography on Japan and the KKvZ were introduced. A short introduction of Jan Cock Blomhoff, Overmeer Fisscher, and von Siebold, who sold their collections to the KKvZ and made it into the greatest Japan collection in Europe was given to emphasis the availability of Japanese cultural products. The last point made regarded the principle in art that it is from a crisis within a culture that it becomes susceptible to new influences, not because of the ready availability of new influences.

In the next chapter I will provide the necessary theoretical background to answer my research question. It will cover Hermeneutics and reception history, Foucault, Orientalism, and notions regarding diaries and autobiographies.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Background.

§1: Hermeneutics and reception history.

Gadamer’s student Hans Robert Jauss proposed a hermeneutics consisting of seven theses in order to have a methodological and scientific way of studying reception in his inaugural speech ‘Literary History as a Challenge (or Provocation) to Literary Theory’ (Literaturgeschichte als Provokation der Literaturwissenschaft) of 1967. This form of studying reception came to be known as ‘reception


history’. The more rigid character of Jauss’s theory compared to the one of Gadamer is reflected in the way 'interpretive horizons' are formed: not a mere passive fusing as with Gadamer, but a more active mediation of horizons where language is used as a tool by the co-participants in a conversation wherein both the text as well as the social situation of the interpreter are far less static. Anthony C. Thiselton summarizes it as follows in his book *Hermeneutics of Doctrine*: “texts have a formative influence upon readers and society; but changing situations also have effects on how texts are read.” The conversation on the part of the interpreter happens through a ‘horizon of expectation’ formed by the ‘pre-understandings’ and social situation of the interpreter regarding the text. The formative effect of the text is in a large part decided by its deviation from the ‘horizon of expectation’. This is reflected in Jauss’s ‘hermeneutics of alterity’ since it is what strikes us as ‘most strange, adversial, challenging, or provocative that encounters us with the most creative, formative, transformative, and life-changing effects’. But to understand oneself in a new way one must approach the other on their own terms to achieve a differentiation of horizons, and not a fusion. The 'interpretative horizon' and the 'horizon of expectation' are concepts proposed in order to better understand what happens when people come in contact with what is unknown to them, such as “the other”. To think of someone as an active mediator between someone else's horizon and what is unknown to them makes the mediator an important “landscaper” of the horizon of a third party. In the last paragraph of my thesis I will explain how the set-up 'Bazar' of Dirk Boer was conducive to the 'hermeneutics of alterity' while Dirk Boer himself provided a visitors with a horizon of expectation for his audience that is open and playful, and unfettered by ideological motivations. His motivations, according to himself, were equally to teach as to sell. To understand the formation of knowledge regarding Japan as well as to deepen our knowledge of Legêne's, Said, and my work, we turn to Foucault.


§2: Foucault.

Foucault's theory is fundamental to both Legêne and Said books, as well as my thesis. As a post-constructionist thinker on the nature of meaning he believes that meaning cannot be finally fixed. Rather, it is something constructed through forms of language and between people.

Michel Foucault studies discourse as a ensemble of statements to represent knowledge of a certain subject at a certain time. The state of knowledge throughout institutions and texts regarding one specific subject is called the *episteme*. The *episteme* of Japan in the first half of the 19th century was largely determined by the ethnography in that period since it was the scientific discipline concerned with “the other”, and science the only acceptable method of acquiring knowledge. According to Foucault language is about dialogue and practice; what one says and does. This he calls 'discourse' and the impact of his work on the field of humanities was of such importance that one could speak of a 'discursive turn' in humanities when Foucault's idea became known. According to Foucault 'Nothing has any meaning outside of the discourse' which should not be confused with nothing exists outside of discourse. But all that exists outside of meaning is however stripped of meaning and falls outside of the spectrum of human existence even to its widest extent (Hall, 2011: 45). An example of information falling outside of an *episteme* is the reaction of the Dutch statesman Falck to the information about Japan provided by Blomhoff (See §5: Legêne and Japan.).

Pivotal to Foucault's theory is the composite term he coined of Power/Knowledge (*pouvoir/savoir*). Knowledge in this sense must be taken as the kind of implicit 'common-sense' knowledge that 'breathes' through society effortlessly and in turn shapes the explicit knowledge institutionalized in disciplines (*connaissance*) (Foucault, 1972: 182-3). Power must be understood as both power and ability, similar to the French *pouvoir*, that can be read as a noun and a verb. For Foucault it did not have the static and authoritative character of the English term. It is not a superimposed 'foreign' entity to individuals, groups, and societies, but rather something that is produced between individuals, groups, and societies by way of their interactions. Power therefore circulates through society by, what Foucault calls, 'meticulous rituals' or the 'micro-physics' of Power found in localized circuits, tactics, mechanisms, and technologies (*techniques*) that shape, limit, and determine behavior, possibilities, and outcomes. These processes 'root[s] [power] grounded in forms of behavior, bodies and local relations of power which should not at all be seen as a simple projection of the central power' in a process that Foucault calls the 'capillary movement' of Power.
(Hall, 1997: 50). In this metaphor the ‘meticulous rituals’ are the capillaries transporting the oxygen, or power, to all tissues of the human body, or social body. A notoriously difficult term to translate into English left the literary theorist and translator Gayatri Spivak with no choice but to resort to defining the term:

if the lines of making sense of something are laid down in a certain way, then you are able to do only those things with that something that are possible within and by the arrangement of those lines. Pouvoir-savoir – being able to do something – only as you are able to make sense of it.¹²

Power/knowledge effectively makes itself true by confirming itself by a process that Foucault calls its ability for ‘will-to-power’: Knowledge in combination with power does not only assume the authority of ‘the Truth’ but also has the capacity to make itself true since it has the capacity to become ‘the Truth’ through all the different minor and major acts and choices throughout the entirety of the social body by agents that corroborate it being true. Meaning and meaningful practice exists only within the ‘regime of truth’, which is similar to a ‘paradigm’ of a specific subject as Kuhn had envisioned, and in that way guide human life. We saw a good example of the corroboration of a Truth earlier in Chapter 1 § 2. The birth of ethnography in the Netherlands.: The KKvZ through its president van de Kasteele acted upon “the Truth” of the Dutch republic benefiting greatly of their relationship with Japan through the acquiring of profit, the applying of new insights in the national industry informed by Japanese cultural objects, the Dutch national character being represented in far eastern Japan, and the acquiring of international prestige through an unique trade relationship. Retrospectively we might say the the “Truth” according to the national ethnographic institute of the Netherlands told a truth it wanted to bring into existence. In the last paragraph we will see that Dirk Boer employed this narrative in order to sell both this truth as well as his stock to the clients of the ‘Bazar’.

But first the theory that underpins the thinking of Legène regarding Blomhoff needs to be given in order to properly critique the image Legène gives of Blomhoff and Japan in the minds of the Dutch in the first half of the 19th century.

§3: Orientalism

Edward Wadie Said (Jeruzalem 1935 – New York 2003) was a professor of English at Columbia university of Palestinian-American identity. Controversial for his pro-Palestinian activism and best known for his groundbreaking work Orientalism (1978) that received as much admiration as critique. Any study of the “West’s” relationship with its “Eastern” counterpart will have to be contextualized within the debate which Said’s work helped to initiate since it shifted the attention of “Orientalism” inwards by questioning “knowledge” and practices previously taken for granted by way of new concepts such as discourse theory, postcolonialism, and postmodernism. Said identifies a main current of the European world views of 19th and 20th century Europe, which he calls Orientalism as: “absolutely anatomical and enumerative: to use its vocabulary is to engage in the particularizing and dividing of things Oriental into manageable parts” (Said, 2003: 72). This artificially divided manageable parts can then be part of a narrative of dominion by the “West”.

With the disappearance of the empires however the ideas of Orientalism, some of them unchanged since the middle ages, remain, which for both Said and his readers sympathetic to his ideas is a clear sign that it bears little to no resemblance with reality. Many researchers have had their eyes opened by Said’s reflective framework and used it to research their own field of interest. Legêne is such a researcher and adapts his thinking to her own research for De bagage van Blomhoff en Van Breugel: Japan, Java, Tripoli en Suriname in de negentiende-eeuwse Nederlandse cultuur van het imperialisme.

Said’s theory is not without its flaws. Allow me to start by pointing out a problem of definition of Said that affects the whole book since it is its subject proper: Said himself never comes to terms with what he means by “Orientalism” but uses different definitions that he considers interdependent although he never explains how exactly (Said, 2003: 2). The first definition is of anything produced by anyone claiming expertise of oriental cultures; secondly it is a style of thought with the bipolar division of “Orient” and another, most commonly “Occident”; thirdly it is a “Western style for dominating, restructuring and having authority over the Orient’ (King, 1999; 58). Legêne implicitly accepts the first two and is most concerned with the third. The lack of definition results in a style that is sometimes clear and concise then almost unintelligibly dense; sometimes structured but then scattered; sometimes straightforward but then backwards. All Orientalism, says Said, no matter how lofty, must be understood in final analysis as ‘a relationship of power, domination, of varying degrees of complex hegemony’ (Said, 2003:5) of the empire over the Orient. The three empires that Said himself discusses are the English, the French, and the American empire, and because of the
close connection of empire expressing and representing ‘that part [the Orient] culturally and even ideologically as a mode of discourse with supporting institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery, doctrines, even colonial bureaucracies and colonial styles’ the Orient is everywhere where empire is. This is a claim Legêne takes to apply to the Dutch regarding Japan, but only ideologically, since the Dutch lacked any instrument for coercion which needs is necessary to take this ideology out of its dormant state and into effect. I argue that she debases this claim by eroding basic tenets to Orientalism which I will explain in Chapter 3 §5: Legêne and Japan.

Far from being scholarly neutral Orientalism is a function of power since the ‘Orient’ is a western construct, ‘a system of ideological fictions’, whose purpose is to reinforce and justify Western power over the Orient, and that Western knowledge of the Orient ‘has generally not only from dominion and confrontation but also from cultural antipathy’ (Said, 2003: 155, 321). Orientalism is thus Imperialism cloaked thinly in scholastic ideals and practices from its earliest conceptions in 1312 up to today. Said elaborates that ‘Philosophically…anyone employing Orientalism, which is the habit for dealing with questions, objects, qualities, and regions deemed Oriental, will designate, name, point to, fix what he is talking or thinking about with a word or phrase which then is considered either to have acquired, or more simply to be, reality.’ (Said, 2003: 72).

“Orientalism” is not without its philosophical problems. Said’s acceptance and usage of Foucault’s philosophy makes his work susceptible to be self-referential since it could be no more than just another discourse vying for dominance just as the “West” is vying for dominance over the “Orient”. In addition, Said’s accusation of flattening of the “Orient into manageable parts by Orientalism could be turned upside down since, in order to prove this, Said believed in an one-minded effort from the West which was a remarkably persistent framework in time and all disciplines: theology, literature, philosophy, and sociology. This monolithic view of ‘Occident’ constructing ‘Orient’ as a single discourse undifferentiated in space, time and across political, social, and intellectual identities is itself an example of an ‘essentialising’ and totalizing strategy of traditional historiography in which differences are flattened out in pursuit of some trans-historical perspective (Clarke, 1997: 31). Said doesn’t explain this process to his readers, so it never becomes clear in what way, shape, or form a document written by a man of letters visiting Damascus influences imperial policy exactly. Furthermore, Foucault spoke of a power that is not mere top-down and mono-centric, but one that circulates through all that it incorporates, but Said does not allow for enough agency of people and ideas from the “Orient” that negotiate with those from the “Occident”.

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Said leaves open the question if there is a ‘real Orient’ outside of the ‘textual universe’ created by Orientalism and thus backs out of a pure representationalism as proposed by Foucault (Said, 2003: 52). He further adds as a nuance that “All cultures impose corrections upon raw reality, changing it from free-floating objects into units of knowledge” that undercuts the uniqueness of Orientalism as a phenomenon. (Said, 2003: 67).

The controlled and even produced “Orient” within the “Occidental” discourse consisting of science, militarily, ideologically, politically, and imagination meant that the “Orient” ultimately only existed as an adjective to the “Occident” and could not exist outside of it. In order for Legêne to become familiar with the discourse that shaped mental map of the protagonists of her story she needs to do extensive research in the scientific material available to them but she also needs to become as close as possible to the psyche of the men themselves.

§ 4: Important sources for Legêne's research.

A few words on the sources used by Legêne. From the previous introduction of “Orientalism” the reader is well aware that knowledge about a certain period is considered tainted since Orientalist writers use a narrative that is part of a wider discourse of colonialism and economical- as well as political control of the “the West” over “the East”. It remains so even today. A researcher thus needs to turn to material of that period, and thus to primary resources, since in Said's sense the past needs to be salvaged from a superimposed “literary world” created by Orientalist writers. This entails both the judging of the character and intentions of historical figures as well as reading primary sources of that time. I will provide a few insights on diaries and (auto)biographical texts in writing history in order to better understand the method Legêne used in order to create the knowledge to enable a empathetic understanding of Blomhoff. The trip to Edo and back that Blomhoff made in 1818 provides and interesting illustration since Blomhoff made daily notes in his journal during the trip but also wrote a letter to his wife about the trip in after having returned in Deshima from Edo (Effert, 2000: 33).

§5: Diaries.

_Gottfried Kellers_ remarked in 1838 that 'a man without a diary (whether on paper or in his head)' resembles 'a woman without a mirror', which is exemplar for the 19th century's golden age of (secular) diary-writing. The ‘continual reflection and strict self-observation’ that comes with keeping
a diary would preserve the 'intellectual independence' of a writer. (Hämerle, 2009: 143,144).

The 'age of enlightenment' moved away from the perception of human beings as a collective and created space for the concept of the individual and thus the self. For Foucault this meant that the expression of self, by extensive writing and speaking, even in a personal diary, ultimately was a social practice engaged in social discourses. Christa Hämerle adds “The modern diary then, just as any other source, is located in the tense relationship between the society and the individual, which sometimes can be too complex to ravel.” (Hämerle, 2009: 146, 147). Strictly personal languages of course do not exist and diary writers therefore use 'borrowed language' from discourses that constitute their society:

Rather, they also use 'borrowed languages' from the wide field of literature and other media, from the institutions... and they appeal to terminology, metaphors and other rhetorical devices... diary writers choose particular – not always coherent – textual strategies to carry the narration in particular personal, social, political or historical situations. This also applies to the strategies of silence, insinuation and periphrasis chosen by the author. (Hämerle, 2009: 150,151)

Hämerle adds that is the task of the historian to:

work out the different traditions of discourse and the fragments and strands of discourse on self-thematisation and self-reference – all of which often clash and contradict one another in real examples of diaries – and make them relevant for a historical perspective on the many forms of modern diary-writing. When we carry out the essential task of putting diaries in the context of their medium, of history and of their authors' biographies, we can ascertain why diary writers choose particular – not always coherent – textual strategies to carry the narration in particular personal, social, political or historical situations. (Hämerle, 2009: 150)

§6: Autobiographies.

The concluding section of the chapter on Autobiographies in Reading primary sources is particularly pertinent to this paper since it corroborates with Said view on the correct reading of
autobiographies in *Orientalism*:

“If we ask ourselves not just what and autobiography says, but why and how it says, we enable ourselves to develop alternative understandings of the interactions between creative human minds and the social institutions that surrounds them.” (Carlson, 2009: 189)

In other words: An historian has to read an autobiographical text in such a way that he understands the process of self-narration by using 'personal, biological, environmental, and cultural parameters.' (Carlson, 2009: 183). By writing an autobiography an author retrospectively selects and organizes past events and weaves these into a meaningful narrative intended for a certain audience. This begs the question of how the imagined reader (either desired or dreaded) could have affected the text. In the case of Blomhoff the intended audience was the cultured elite in the Netherlands that were interested in the “colonies” of the Netherlands and/or the new emerging sciences, even though he lacked the formal training to write for such an audience.

Historians have the momentous task of having to unravel conscious and subconscious motivations for writing down one event and not the other, one interpretation and not the other, one concept and not the other, determined by the subject. Finally the historian needs to give a meta-view with his or her own historical interpretation and place. Diaries as well autobiographies have a very specific challenge in that the historian needs to study the most particular subject in historical writing, trying to achieve an empathetic connection with a historical figure, while not losing the contact with historical artifacts and structures that the subject and his structures has left behind. Lastly, the historian will have to remove himself from the perspective he just gained and put it in his own analysis of the situation from his own standpoint, either overtly or covertly.

In the letter to his wife Blomhoff omitted matters relating to money, worries about the safe arrival of the gifts to the emperor, and the visitations of prostitutes, but did provide information not deemed appropriate for the journal (Effert, 2003: 33). It is in the juxtaposition of the two wherein lies the possibility for a historian to understand his or her historical subject more deeply. Legène puts great emphasis on the discrepancy between the historical figure that presented itself on Deshima and the historical figure that presented itself in the Netherlands because of what she describes as a world of difference between the experiences in the colonies and the stories back home (Legène, 1998: 24).
In this chapter I have tried to provide the reader with the theoretical framework to of my own as well as Legène's research. The paragraph on Hermeneutics will help will give an insight to what happened to the visitors of the 'Bazar' as they experienced their 'horizon' to be stimulated by the sight of something new. Foucault is fundamental to the work of Said, Legène and myself; but also instrumental in explaining another dimension of the 'Bazar' as Dirk Boer “grounded”, through the micro-physics of power, the greater ethnographic Power/knowledge on Japan by his didactic ambitions. Orientalism underpins the thinking of Legène in her dissertation and facilitates her conclusion of Blomhoff as a nationalist and orientalist as well as Japan as unintelligible to the “West”. Lastly, by deepening the understanding of self-narration in writing history the task that laid before myself as well as Legène has been high-lighted to the reader.

In the next chapter I will start by presenting Susan Legène and the method I used to analyze her research, before beginning my in-depth analysis with her main goal. At the end of the chapter I will dismiss Blomhoff as proposed by Legène as being of great importance for the creation of a Japanese panorama in the collective mind of the Dutch and continue by proposing Dirk Boer as an alternative.
Chapter 3: Finding Japan in *De bagage van Blomhoff en Van Breugel: Japan, Java, Tripoli en Suriname in de negentiende-eeuwse Nederlandse cultuur van het imperialisme*.

§1: Susan Legène.

Susan Legène authored and co-authored several books that made her an expert on colonialism, nationbuilding, the history of migration, and writing the history of cultural heritage. She currently holds the position of professor of political history and works at the VU University Amsterdam since 2008\(^\text{13}\). She is a member of the Royal Tropical Institute (RTI) since 1985 and became the Head of the Curatorial Department at the Tropenmuseum in Amsterdam in 1997. A position she held until 2008\(^\text{14}\). She wrote her dissertation *De bagage van Blomhoff en Van Breugel: Japan, Java, Tripoli en Suriname in de negentiende-eeuwse Nederlandse cultuur van het imperialisme* in 1998 while employed by the RTI, and it is this dissertation that is of special interest to my research.

The course “Historical Methodology (2009)” taught at Tilburg University gave me a framework consisting of thirteen questions to methodologically investigate academic historical research\(^\text{15}\). The purpose of these thirteen questions is to contextualize the text within contemporary historical and public debate; weigh the arguments of the author; and lastly to give a meta-view of the text. I will use these to familiarize the reader with Legène's work. I will give greater attention to the information she provides on Blomhoff and the interpretation of Blomhoff as a historical figure with a specific lasting legacy.

§2: Her goal.

My thesis is that the method, unknown but to a few select insiders, between 1815 and 1848 that consolidated the colonial empire as an integral part of the Dutch state and the lack of public debate concerning it were essential for the make-up of Dutch society.


\(^{14}\) Website debating the Western gaze on non-Western art. Retrieved from [http://framerframed.jorislandman.com/nl/people/susan-Legène/](http://framerframed.jorislandman.com/nl/people/susan-Legène/)

\(^{15}\) The lecture slides can be found on [https://edubb.uvt.nl/@@/7425EC0400DA04412910F0ED47CDD6F5/courses/1/840028-0910/content/_423887_1/HM%20slides%203%20part%202.pptx](https://edubb.uvt.nl/@@/7425EC0400DA04412910F0ED47CDD6F5/courses/1/840028-0910/content/_423887_1/HM%20slides%203%20part%202.pptx)
then, and still influences Dutch culture today [own translation] (Legêne, 1998: 14)

Legêne frames her research by use of Edward Said's notion of 'imperialistic attitudes and imperialistic frameworks' of the Dutch. She defines imperialism as the the purposeful acquiring of influence overseas, as well as the colonial expansion and direct rule of territory overseas. (Legêne, 1998: 14). In the Netherlands today Said's 'Universalizing discourse' of Europeans being superior and the non-Europeans voiceless is still prevalent. An example she gives is an interaction at a panel discussion 'Feiten en Herinnering: koloniale geschiedschrijving in Nederland' with a selection of noted experts on the Dutch-East-Indies in 1993. But when a former colonial bureaucrat wants to partake in the discussion he is denied by the experts since his direct involvement in the colonial rule made him unfit to contribute 'knowledgeably' to the discussion (Legêne, 1998: 19). She states not to understand the exclusion of the colonial bureaucrat in this exchange but she makes a very clear statement regarding the motivations and the inner working of those men and women returning from the colonies in which she portrays the same thinking as the experts she claims not to understand:

I am convinced that many Europeans that had lived in a colonial situation, remained 'on stage' after having returned to Europe. The discomfort and embarrassment of the colonies (not just the political missteps [...] but the whole of the colonial internal relations and the pervading questions regarding the motives of the overseas expansion) were transformed into expertise. That expertise was used to maintain the status quo and to improve and criticize the colonial rule. Colonialism, however, could not be rejected, there was no alternative without Europe. [Own translation] (Legêne, 1998: 24).

The imperialistic attitude is thus, according to her, a colonial discourse to consolidate the division of power and diffusion of knowledge as it was, as well as to disqualify opinions that stem from the mindset back home. Legêne explicitly states that Jan Cock Blomhoff, and the other protagonists in the book, framed the image of Japan in function of the patriotic perception of the Dutch role in the world, just as the Europeans in general shaped the world in function of European power by navigating between discovery and control of territory. A sense of national duty made their personal experiences of genuine appreciation to be adapted to the political and scientific discourse of leading the non-Europeans into the civilization and the control of the Europeans (Legêne, 1998: 88, 127, 275).
The colonial men take part in weaving the fabric of society into a shared framework for the Dutch by use of materials such as 'family pictures, houses, cities, landscapes, memorials and monuments, paintings, books, movies, music, names and skin tones, families and individuals marked by history'. She took this insight from Frank van Vree, an important Dutch historian, and adds the possibility of connection between the collective framework to individual memory and purpose of the past. Legène considers this to be an important objective for her research. (Legène, 1998: 18). In other passages she uses language that seem to come directly from Said's *Orientalism*: she speaks of an "essentializing" narrative by the collections in the Dutch museums; the personal stories by the colonial men is the creation of a imagined literary construction for a Dutch audience with questionable bearing on reality; Europe universalized the world according to their own definitions [my emphasis] (Legène, 1998: 174, 203, 394).

Said's method in *Orientalism* has been criticised for being too a-historical and not being rooted in individuals, periods, and places. To avoid these pitfalls Legène limits her period to the first half of the 19th century, her place to the Dutch society as influenced by its overseas connections, and the way the Dutch producers and audience related to the cultural products, be it artifacts, personal diaries, novels, paintings, or scientific texts, from the perspective of Dutch nation-building. The 'producing' of a cultural product must be defined as both its creation, as in the case of a novel by a Dutch author, as well as its bringing forth, as in the case of Blomhoff sending his collection to be displayed in the Royal chamber of Curiosities. (Legène, 1988: 16). The 'Grote Burgerij' held an overwhelming majority in the parliament for the entire 19th century while consisting of only three percent of the population and Legène focuses on one of such families. The brothers Jan Eliza, Jacques, and Gaspard van Breugel and their brother in Law Jan Cock Blomhoff traveled to represent Dutch interests overseas (Legène, 1998: 27). By doing so she allows for the kind of agency and 'capillary movement' of Power/Knowledge that allows her to 'witness' how Power/Knowledge by way of one her colonial men becomes Power/Knowledge of the Dutch nation. It subsequently allows for a better understanding of how it becomes part and parcel of the Dutch social body in its entirety. Through the hermeneutic method she undertakes to acquire the 'horizon' of her protagonists, it will thus not be their experiences that will be most crucial to her research, it will be their perceptions. By use of reception history and reading the material that were available to the protagonists she wants to recreate their world and, in combination with their 'horizon', research how these influenced the Dutch culture then and now. (Legène, 1998: 27).

§3: Useful metaphors employed by Legène.
In order to make her study more lucid she makes good use of a few metaphors. The Panorama Mesdag is a panoramic painting by 'Haagse School' painter Hendrik Willem Mesdag first unveiled in 1881 in the Hague, where it remains one of the last remaining panorama's in the world. The cylinder shaped painting of 120 meters long and 14 meters high gives you a view of Scheveningen, The Hague, the North Sea, from the Dunes. Panoramic painting was at its height of popularity in the 19th century and became an attraction for people to both be amazed by the visual grandeur and beauty as well as to get an understanding of a foreign place while the onlooker remains still and center. As such it was one of the greatest devices for the home bound 19th century citizens to transpose themselves into an environment they likely would never see because of its distance in time, in the case of historical panorama's, or space, such as the one of Japan exhibited by Dirk Boer. The panorama of Mesdag is used by Legène as a metaphor for the goal of her research. By entering the mind of four Dutch 'expats' representing Dutch interests in Tripoli, Suriname, Indonesia, and Japan she recreates the panorama of the world transmitted to the homeland and with the Dutch state, society, and culture as the center. By use of this panorama she tries to uncover if that world view still underlies the Dutch contemporary view of the world and if so, how it influences the debate and view the Dutch have of their own past and of foreign countries. This panorama substantiates the Dutch society invisibly. To explain how exactly Legène mentions Dutch historian Niek van Sas who finds that the Dutch society has qualities similar to a sponge (made of the before mentioned fabric of society) in that it makes the influences by which it is inflated disappear without a trace. Legène disagrees with the disappearance act ('verdwijntruc') (Legène, 1998: 15, 16) and wants to expunge the sponge to be able to name and explain the different cultural products and how they relate to their producers, audience, and the creation of the Dutch state. Seemingly she accepts culture to be "structurally" similar to a sponge and to have its absorbing properties while remaining the same, or in other words, change being (almost) unnoticeable and untraceable, but in the last paragraph of her work however, Legène claims to have explicated the political dynamism, meaning the balance between 'Dutch culture' and Dutch nation-building after 1815, to a point where the Dutch can have meaningful dialogue with their colonial past and change "the sponge" into a more transparent, integral, and reciprocating fabric of Dutch society (Legène, 1998: 397).

§4: The contemporary debate to which she would like to contribute.

Another historical work on the Dutch outward gaze she refers to is Blacks in the Dutch world (1993) by Allison Blakely, professor of European History and Comparative History at Howard University, which similarly points to the influence of the global network of Dutch traders not being
accounted for in the creation of the Dutch culture today. It doesn’t become clear if she consider this to be particular to the Dutch culture or that it can be applied more generally, for instance to the Japanese culture. It must be reminded that the Japanese state during the Shogunate period was geared to remaining static since its inception until it collapsed and is therefore considered exceptional by most historic accounts, but explicable nonetheless. It is not just with van Sas that Legêne has a problem but overall Legêne has a problem with the contemporary debate on the Dutch colonial past, or more accurately, the lack of it. This so called “doopspotmentaliteit” avoids the hard questions that the past as a colonial power and supposes a hard cut from the undesired influences that it could entail. But more generally, Legêne finds that the Dutch discourse on its colonial past simply does not accept the possibility of the thoughts, actions, and impact of the Dutch traders and colonizers abroad in its past to reach the Dutch in their homeland today and she hopes her work would be a step in the direction of reconciling the Dutch with that part of their past. According to Legêne's research into the political debates of the fledgling modern state the Netherlands did not have any debate on the legitimacy of their colonial endeavors since it did not happen 'on the people's watch' but was entirely under the royal prerogative of William the first since 1815. It was not until 1848 that both the finances- and government of the colonies fell under ministerial duties and the 33 years prior to this were enough for the questions of the justification and the right of the Dutch ruling over foreign people and land to be replaced with questions of the right policies to do this. As a possible explanation for the lack of debate during the first decades of the colonial empire in the concluding part of her book she adds the limited role of the orientalists in public debates in general and the separation of science and colonial rule in particular (Legêne, 1998: 340). Dutch Oriental scholars, usually associated with the University of Leiden, defend their long academic tradition but argue that the Dutch oriental scholarship was not in function of Dutch colonial expansion, without giving a reason for the absence (Legêne, 1998: 30).

The Dutch in the homeland and the Dutch in the empire had differing accounts on the definition of their national character. The two accounts were made by Dutch citizens, sometimes even by the same person, but the message adapted to a different audience in a different place. In the Netherlands the Dutch in Japan were thought to be proud, protestant, seafaring, defiant, and profiting while ultimately remaining true to their tolerant and egalitarian heritage; certainly not constraint the physically and religiously constrained meek and barely trading merchants to be found on Deshima.

16 September 28th, 2006, the then prime-minister of the Netherlands, Jan-Peter Balkenende, implored his fellow parliamentarians to exhibit more of the 'VOC mentality' that was so dearly lacking in the Netherlands. Retrieved from http://vorige.nrc.nl/binnenland/article1727855.ece/Trotse_premier_mijdt_politieke_vragen
The Dutch on Deshima however grudgingly complied to large denial of their supposed national character in order fill their wallets, effectively selling a cherished self-understanding from back home down river. Today there remains a divergence between these accounts and Legêne hopes that her research will be able reconcile the diverging statements; or at least give an explanation, as to how, even retrospectively, the Dutch have trouble understanding what happened in their past (Legêne, 1998: 24).

§5: Legêne and Japan.
It is astonishing to find that Legêne contradicts fundamental tenets of Said's work as they become incommensurable with the findings she progressively makes in her research. However indebted to Said's Orientalism she questions how the Dutch colonial empire could thrive lacking the scientific endeavor of Dutch scholars to understand “their Orient” from the very beginning of her study. (Legêne, 1998: 30). It is important to find Dutch academics that purposefully constructed the “Dutch orient” to be an extension of Dutch power, otherwise the basis of the Orientalist claim becomes shaky. She finds Anton Reinhard Falck, a high representative in post-Napoleonic Netherlands, to be one of the people that fits the category of orientalist, but mentions in the same breath that Falck had motivations concerning- and views of Japan that were at odds with the Dutchmen that were stationed in Deshima. Falck did not find the right narrative to fit the political episteme and disqualifies the texts provided by Blomhoff as being trivial. Falck was particularly dumbfounded by the fact that Blomhoff, and many who went before him, found the Japanese civilization to be at least at par with the European civilization. (Legêne, 1998: 280). Legêne thus perpetuates the notion that Blomhoff and his counterparts do not easily fall into an orientalist category, because of their lack of creating a narrative of control of Japan and the subsequent disconnection with the policymakers in Japan. This holds true all the way to her conclusion. But the biggest defect of her study is that she finds the main premise of Said, academic scholarship to be in function of narrow national political and economical interests of the “West”, not to hold. The scientific disciplines and its practitioners were both limited and isolated and therefore were not stimulated, called-upon, or engaged in the policy-making of the Netherlands until at least 1848, the year that the colonies came under ministerial responsibility (Legêne, 1998: 338, 340). She regrets the Dutch oriental scholars in Leiden not to substantiate their claim of academic independence, but when she reaches a similar conclusion at the end of her research, she does not account for it being incommensurable with the fundamental premises of her research. Especially in the case of Blomhoff and Japan she leaves a big gap between her theoretical premise and her findings to which I will turn shortly.
Legène's closing remarks on her Japanese protagonist are that he tried to give a systematic overview of Japan but lacked the scientific tools to do so. But texts and materials on the Japanese culture close to his own experience did make it to Europe. Its reception in the Netherlands, besides leaving an impression of Japan as a 'highly-developed non-Western contemporary culture' in early Dutch anthropological studies, was limited to a very small circle. Painters such as Van Gogh and Breitner, famous Dutch Japonisme painters, were not influenced by Japanese culture in the Netherlands but were so in France (Legène, 1998: 360). I quoted her presumptions on the motivations and reasoning of colonial men, but she does not know how to fit these in with the findings she herself makes in her study about the lack of political connection these men or their academic work have upon returning home. Politically neutered knowledge cannot be part of an orientalising discourse but knowledge about Japan was precisely that according to Legène. Her fondness of making the unseen seen in Dutch culture is in stark contrast with her acceptance of Japan as a mysterious realm, never to be understood by the Dutch. Research tradition aligns with the historical relation one has with a particular area and it simultaneously contains information of the Dutch culture and imperialism in the Netherlands. Since Japan was mostly unknown the result of Dutch scholastic endeavors results in admission an admission of defeat: it would forever remain unknown to the Dutch (Legène, 1998: 29, 360). Explaining the lack of a political dimension in Dutch scholarship on Japan by stating that Japan and the Japanese are considered too mysterious to be understood as an political entity is denying it its orientalism by becoming part of the orientalising discourse: Japan and the Japanese were to idiosyncratic a people to make the Japanese susceptible to colonization since they could only be ruled by one form of government that was perfectly adapted to their national character; a national character forever incomprehensible to the Dutch.

This perpetual “not-knowing” between the Netherlands and Japan ultimately means that she either equates the Dutch, including Blomhoff, to an essential flat entity, or Japan. Maybe even both. Another possibility is that Legène did not do an extensive enough research on Blomhoff and reached a false conclusion since he actually does fall in the Orientalist category created by Said. I ask these questions provocatively and I certainly do not believe this to be the case for either Legène or Blomhoff. But I do think Legène does not adequately answer the question she set out for herself of how Japan existed in the Netherlands and how and what image became part of the Dutch culture. Blomhoff’s importance to Dutch ethnography on Japan through his collection is momentous, but the
impression he left on the Dutch public is minimal. Upon returning to the Netherlands in 1824 he took to the country and tried to avoid people whom he found selfish and hungry for power. Scorn by his successors and having lost his wife he kept to a small circle of contacts and remained out of the public eye for the remainder of his days (Effert, 2003: 85). I would like to propose an alternative for the panorama of the of Japan in the Netherlands during the first half of the 19th century. I can merely provide a sketch and not an image as full and vivid of color as Legêne, but I hope to provide the reader a better understanding of how Japan was part of the Dutch culture at the start of its nation-building. In order to do this I would like to introduce a new protagonist to continue the story.

§7: Boer’s Bazar.

Blomhoff’s friend baron van Zuylen van Nijevelt had a help in his house in The Hague called Dirk Boer, a man who despite his humble background would arguably become one of the greatest popularisers of Japanese objects and culture in the Netherlands of the 19th century (Keblusek, 2000: 39) (Noeska, 1997: 61). The baron was friends with Blomhoff and this made it possible for Boer to have access to his great Japanese collection. Greatly enamored by Japan he claimed it to be a great gift from God that the Dutch were the only ones, beside the Chinese and the Koreans, to be allowed contact with the Japanese (Keblusek, 2000: 29, 30). He developed his keen sense of business as well as his love for these “exotic” goods and started trading by buying objects from seamen repatriating from Deshima and selling these to collectors in his growing network of clients. Besides a thirst for profit Boer was also gifted with a thirst for knowledge and he read several of the great works on Japan available. Works that we know for sure he read were Engelbert Kaempfers De Beschryving van Japan (1729); Isaac Titsingh’s Bijzonderheden over Japan (1773) and Annales des Empereurs du Japon (1824); and van Overmeer Fisscher’s Bijdrage tot de kennis van het Japansche rijk (1833). Especially Fisscher was important for Boer: both by his extensive knowledge on Japan, which Boer would “ honor” by plagiarizing17 entire passages of his works in his own writings; and by imprinting on him the importance of using imagery in order to inform your audience (Keblusek, 2000: 31, 35). During his long spanning career Boer would carry a large number of Chinese and Japanese paintings, most of which were copies of originals, most likely made by the famous Kawahara Keiga, but it also included originals (Keblusek, 2000: 32). Blomhoff’s conviction that exotic objects could only be rightfully seen and understood when presented in their functional...

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17 The modern concept of plagiarism was not known at the time and is used to convey meaning to the modern reader.
context would similarly leave a deep impression on Boer, who placed miniatures, scale models, and life-sized dolls in his stores (Keblusek, 2000: 33).

It wasn't long before he established himself as the foremost trader in “exotic goods” tirelessly expanding his network of clients, including a client I have mentioned before. Van de Kasteele himself was approached by Boer personally to buy objects for the KKvZ successfully from 1825 until 1831 when the funding of the KKvZ was cut by Willem I (Keblusek, 2000: 10, 17). Despite being employed as a help around the house the baron recognised Boer's business talent and loaned him 1500 gulden to start his own business (Noeska, 1997: 60). The store opened in 1833 in The Hague under the name of “Japansche Winkel”, later changed to “Japansch Magazijn” in 1835. This was the first of several establishments in The Hague and Scheveningen that drew intellectual and tourist alike. The adjective “Japansch” was mostly to entice potential costumers with an aura of exoticism, since the official catalogue of the store written by Boer named only one item, a lantern, as actually Japanese (Keblusek, 2000: 21, 22). It is likely that Van Gogh frequented establishments run by Dirk Boer, one of the greatest popularisers of Japanese culture in the Netherlands (Dam, 1987: 17).

In 1841 the 'Kabinet van zeldzaamheden' was opened in Scheveningen, with a presentation similar to the one of his namesake at the Mauritshuis. Boer took the advice of imagery and presentation in a functional context to an extraordinary experience and look into Japanese life. The exhibition was enlivened by a 'beweegbaar Panorama voorstellende de Baai van Nangassakki (in Japan) met beweegbare Zee en Scheepjes, waarvan een Schip en relief dat opgetuigd de haven kan worden binnengelaten, in staat gesteld tot het doen van Salutschoten.' In a different room a life-sized Japanese family of five dolls were placed in a 'Japanese room' and enjoyed their tea. In another room thirty large dolls depicted Japanese from all walks of life and in different contexts to be at the guest's leisure (Keblusek, 2000: 32, 33).

Boer moved his first store to a much larger space in Zeestraat, just down the street from where Panorama Mesdag would be installed a few decades later, and changed its name to 'Bazar' as made fashionable by establishments in London and Paris. A purveyor to the royal household since 1837 Boer acquired the right to use 'royal' on his facade and changed the name to 'Groote Koninklijke Bazar' in 1849 (Keblusek, 2000: 42). Apart from prestige this also indicates the longstanding and close personal relationship Boer had with Willem the second, who made the building at the
Zeestraat available to him\textsuperscript{18}, and Willem the third. A review by Jan J.F. Wap (1806-1880), who would become a life-long friend of Boer, described the 'Groote Koninklijke Bazar' in 1854 as follows:

\begin{quote}
\begin{itemize}
\item een koopmagazijn, een kabinet van zeldzaamheden, eene galerij van kunst, eene leerstoel voor land- en volkenkunde, eene verklarende bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van de ouderheid, eene schatkamer van natuurlijke historie, eene plantentuin. (Noeska, 1997: 63)
\end{itemize}
\end{quote}

Dirk Boer obscured the line between curios, playthings, museum pieces, consumption articles, and decorum in a way that made the objects on display to be discovered and open for interpretation. The visitor, either one that came with the purpose of intellectual stimulation or one just looking to escape the rain, would not know where to look and would have his 'horizon of expectation' shattered. Walking through the 'Bazar' an unsuspecting visitor would experience the 'hermeneutics of alterity' while puzzling over the objects, be it an animated representation of Japan, a Buddha-statue, or a life-size family of five dolls enjoying some tea; that surround him in the garden, the gallery, and all the different rooms. According to Jauss this kind of mediating of horizons with a large deviation from the 'horizon of expectation', where the 'pre-understandings' must largely be abandoned, realizes the most transformative and life-changing effects. Another component that determines the effects, is the social situation of the interpreter. As a popular attraction of the city people both large in number and great in variation must have visited the 'Bazar' realizing a large "net transformative effect" on the citizens of The Hague and Scheveningen especially, but nationally and internationally as well. I will elaborate on this point further but I will first turn to another aspect that characterized the visit of the 'Bazar'.

Boer enjoyed trading and educating equally, declaring 'dubbel zal zich mijn moeite beloond zien' if clients both learned and bought. With the addition of a 'luisterrijk Japansch en Chineesch panorama' Boer created an unique learning experience. Including the Mesdag the Zeestraat boasted three panoramas and became a beloved and popular stop for people traveling between Scheveningen and The Hague (Noeska, 1997: 61). The Japanese panorama, the more beautiful of the two in the 'Bazar', comprised of seven tableau's that represented Japanese at different life-stages, different Japanese ceremonies, as well as a variety of landscapes. Not just a space to place

\textsuperscript{18} According to the micro-history website of the neighborhood in The Hague where the 'Bazar was located. Retrieved from \url{http://www.zeeheldenkwartier.nl/straten/zeestraat.html}
merchandise, the 'Bazar' was a place for Boer to exhibit his love and knowledge of Japan. In the catalogue Dirk Boer wrote for people visiting the 'Bazar', *Catalogus of omschrijving van het luisterrijk Japansch en Chineesch Panorama van D. Boer*, he displayed his genuine appreciation for Japan and his desire to educate his public on Japan and proudly declares in his introduction:


This quote gives an clear image of Boer as a “translator” of Japan to a Dutch audience and of power/knowledge in effect. Japan was to be admired, Japan was to be discovered, Japan was to be learned from, and Japan was to be traded. Knowledge of Japan was not a neutered knowledge that barely left the Mauritshuis. As a vibrant and interactive part of the city it left a mark on the visitors in the different establishments exploited by Boer. He was not an academic himself but he was well-read and applied the lessons drawn from the intelligentsia to his practice as a merchant. Boer knew the Japan-studies of his time and some of its experts personally. He did not come from the “Grote burgerij” but moved among them and knew some of the most politically powerful men of the time. By accepting and employing the ethnographic understanding of Japan and promulgating these views in innovative ways, such as the 'luisterrijk Japansch panorama', and the animated bay of Nagasaki, the micro-physics of power found a particularly effective “chemist” to transmit the Power/knowledge of the KKvZ. For example, in the case of the bay of Nagasaki the importance of that location in Japan was an, albeit understandable, a typical interpretation of what defined Japan by the KKvZ.

The relationship between the Netherlands and Japan can be researched through the movement of goods, consumption, consumption patterns, and taste, since these are the physical manifestations of cultural interaction in the modern period because of its increasingly integrated global market. But
despite the KKvZ intentions to force the change of the Dutch 'horizon of expectation' for the Japanese cultural objects from mere lifeless and static curiosa to interactive inspiring stylised products the national ethnographic institution failed. A principle in art that has stood the test of time dictates that a society is not susceptible to outside change unless a specific artistic dilemma or question presents itself from within that society. This means that despite the innovations and the freedom for visitors of the 'Bazar' for a transformative experience due to the 'hermeneutics of alterity' or a didactic experience due to the institutional framing by Boer in line with the Power/knowledge of the KKvZ, a change in the taste of aesthetics cannot be changed by external influences without internal questioning. No matter where the image comes from, what it is made of, what the subject is, no matter what the size is, the size and variation of its audience, and no matter how many moving parts it has... It is a still life.
Conclusion.

Men of science in the first half of the 19th century ethnographic tradition in the Netherlands had a clear idea of what the Japanese collection in the KKvZ had to help to achieve: form a ensemble that would help innovate and improve Dutch industrial and artistic goods. However, the questioning of the quality and the subsequent need to change the European industrial goods would happen in London at the Great Expo of 1851; while the “discovery” of Japanese aesthetics to lift European arts from deadlock would happen in Paris a few years later. The Dutch society obviously not was looking for the answers provided by the cultural objects in the KKvZ or the 'Bazar', which means that the interpretive horizon of the Dutch audience would not allow for a mediation that is transformative in an applicable and innovative manner, and remain an isolated occurrence.

The idea of familiarizing yourself with the information available at the start of the nineteenth century, in combination with familiarizing yourself with the personalities and personal experiences of a family, provides an exceptional empathetic base for writing history. It is a admirable scholastic endeavor but I suspect that in the case of Blomhoff Legêne was ultimately not successful because of an idée-fixe by Legêne about colonial men in combination with inadequate research into his character, work, and experience. Furthermore, her acceptance of Japan as “mysterious” as its determining characteristic is intellectual laziness. These flaws made her Blomhoff and her Japan an unconvincing protagonist with an unconvincing story to tell. This left the Japanese panorama in the Dutch mind to be indistinguishable and timid, a void which I tried to help to fill by introducing Dirk Boer as both a populiser and connoisseur of Japan that gave the Dutch in The Hague and beyond a vivid image of Japan.

In Boer you find an enthusiastic merchant with a large, varied, and international audience that delighted in his presentation of Japan in line with the Power/knowledge of the KKvZ while simultaneously creating a space that was a playground for interpretation of the large and eclectic collection of Dirk Boer. I am not sure of what Said would make of Boer. Of course he would point out that he never went to Japan and that the importance of trade and commerce is a discourse spoken in the “Occident” and was very foreign to the Japanese at the time. Putting a price tag on the cultural objects of a foreign culture is a form of control and part of the prevailing mercantilism power structure in the Netherlands and subversive to the Japanese Confucian power structure where the merchant was the lowest of classes. But his panorama of Japan in the Netherlands, both the physical and the mental, contributed to a large degree to the image of Japan in the first half of the
19th century in the Netherlands.
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