RE-IMAGINING GERMANY

An analysis of travel accounts in Dutch magazines from 1946 to 1950

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Cover picture: Rubble women and men at work in Hamburg-Winterhude, ca. 1947

Source: SLUB/ Deutsche Fotothek, GERMIN

Summary

This thesis aims to take a closer look at the reconciliation process of Germany and the Netherlands by answering the research question what images have been produced in Dutch magazine articles based in journeys to Germany from 1946 to 1950 and what impact these did have on the travellers. In order to analyse the articles an inductive content analysis has been conducted. Theoretical concepts like Bruner's Tourist narratives, Larsen and Urry's Tourist gaze and Said's Othering supported the study. The concept of image was defined based on an Imagological approach. Three main images regarding the situation in Germany have been identified: Germany as a land of ruins and rubble, as a land of scarcity and as a land of contrast. Additionally, three main images regarding the inhabitants of Germany have been identified: Germans as displaced people, as egocentric and individualistic people and as people drawing from an old strength. Two groups formed an exception from this: the youth and the acquaintances of the travellers. Lastly, the impact that the journey had on the travellers – emotionally and on their own self-image – was analysed. The analysis has shown that the journey helped the travellers to organize their contradicting feelings about Germany and to find sympathy with the inhabitants of their neighbouring country. The journey made the travellers understand that the Germans are people just like anybody else, who in that particular moment of history were in need of help that the travellers wanted to offer after their journey.

Table of Contents

Introduction

The Netherlands and Germany are two countries that are closely connected. They have a long, shared history, their languages and cultures are intertwined and political as well as economic relationships are strong. Thanks to open borders and European-wide regulations, working and living on different sides of the border are barely problems anymore. The number of people that commute across the border rises (Aantal grenspendelaars tussen Duitsland, Nederland en België licht toegenomen, 09/07/2019). However, these close relationships between the two countries does not only occur at a professional level. Even before the Corona crisis, when international travel was still possible without having to fear lockdowns, Germans were by far the biggest group of travellers in the Netherlands as Germany was one of the favourite destinations of Dutch international travellers (NBTC Holland Marketing, 2019).

However, the connections between the two countries are much older than that: Their languages originated from the same language family,[1] the last three Dutch queens have married a German prince (Wielenga, 2008) and in 1921 the *Niederländisch-Deutsche Vereinigung* was founded with the objective to increase the cultural and political connection of the two countries (Lademacher, 1990). Next to these cultural connections, there also have been close economic relationships: Before the war Rotterdam was the most important haven for the Ruhr area, to name just one example (Lak, 2015).

Nevertheless, people were not always as free to cross the borders as we are today and the Dutch-German-relationships were not always as strong as in the examples. The last world war ended less than 80 years ago. During the war and especially in the first years after, it was hardly possible to cross the border between Germany and the Netherlands, especially for leisure activities. The German occupation had an immense impact on the Dutch-German-relations, first of all, because the Netherlands had declared itself neutral in the conflict, and second, because it was the first time since the beginning of the 19th century that enemy troops were on Dutch territory, so the shock of the invasion was great (Wielenga, 2000). After the war, initiating friendly co-operation between the two countries was quite complicated as one country wanted to forget the past (Germany), while the other was not ready to look beyond it (the Netherlands). Nevertheless, the two nations managed to reconnect quite quickly. The first few years after the war were crucial in this process.

[1] For more information on this topic see De Germaanse taal familie, 09/05/2014

In order to take a closer look into the topic of Dutch-German-relations, this thesis will concentrate on the first few years after the Second World War, on the impact that travelling to Germany had on Dutch travellers and how they perceived the neighbouring country during their journey. This thesis aims to answer the research question, what images of Germany were created in Dutch magazines based on journeys to or through Germany in the years 1946 to 1950 and what impact these did have on the travellers. Further questions that were asked were: What did the travellers have to say about the country that just had lost a war? What attributes did they assign to their former occupiers? How did they feel while travelling through the country that one the one hand, used to be close to them and on the other, brought much misery to them? And what does this say about the travellers and the role they assigned to their own country and themselves?

As the next chapter will show, there has been done a lot of research in the field of Dutch-German-relations and in the field of image forming between the two nations, especially since the Second World War. Researchers in this field are for example, Friso Wielenga or Martijn Lak. Most research about this has been done from approaches as history, politics or economics. The role that travelling and thus the actual meeting of the nations' citizens, however, has been neglected.

Tourism and travelling have many layers to it. On the one hand, it constitutes an industry, which is about making money and producing revenue, but on the other hand, there is also a personal level, where travellers want to connect with their host culture, learn about it and become friends with locals, thus form intimate relationships. Especially shortly after the Second World War the idea that travelling could help to rebuilt international relations, was something that was followed on a European-wide level (Jobs, 2017) and between Germany and the Netherlands in particular. Several organizations in the Netherlands were formed with the objective to re-enact the contact to the neighbouring country (Wielenga, 2000). This contact was organized along pillarized lines or it were business connections, so while there was a desire for contact, first this happened with people of the same background or the same interest (idem). This will be explained in more detail in the next chapter. Even though this idea is quite idealized, it cannot be neglected that one side effect of travelling is that travellers meet numerous people from other nations. As a traveller, one primarily meets people like hoteliers, sales persons or waiters. Travelling is the only way to see other countries and cultures with the own eyes.

However, not everyone can travel like they want to, so they rely on other sources of information to learn more about other countries. After the war, when Germany was occupied and divided

into four zones under Allied control, no one could travel to the country without a permit. In order to receive information about the current situation in Germany, people outside of Germany depended on the accounts they could receive via the radio, newspapers, letters or magazine articles, so it is interesting to see how Germany is depicted in such outlets. Here especially magazines form an interesting historical source of information, as they reflect the *Zeitgeist* of times they were published (Holmes, 2012).

Relationships between two countries can be quite difficult and multi-layered in general, but especially Dutch-German-relations were governed by different emotions, stereotypes and the multifaceted, shared history that has been brushed upon shortly before. The positive memories from before the war collided with the distrust and hatred that were planted into the minds of people on both sides of the border during the war. Such emotions and the own self-image in comparison to the other heavily impact the image that humans have of one another and how they portray the other, even when they come into direct contact, for example during travelling: "What travellers experience, how they experience and how this is represented, is closely connected with their cultural frame..." (Meier, 2007, p.448). It takes years to unlearn negative stereotypes and it is interesting to take a closer look on how the process of reconciliation between two nations can proceed. This study aims to add another layer to this field of research by investigating it from the tourism perspective – a perspective that is not used often to discuss this process.

Concepts like Bruner's Tourist Narratives (2005) and Edwards Said's Othering (1994) will help to understand how a traveller report on their journey afterwards and how the different surrounding images and narratives about their destination influence the messages they convey with their written words. Furthermore, Larsen and Urry's Tourist gaze support the analysis by awakening awareness for the focus of the travellers and (maybe even more important) for the things they left out of their accounts. For this thesis the concept of 'image' will be defined from an Imagological perspective.

The first chapter of the thesis will lay the groundwork and basis of the study. After a summary of the literature about the Dutch-German relationship as well as the tourism development between the two nations since 1945, the theoretical framework and methodology will follow. An inductive content analysis was used to determine the most frequently mentioned topics in the articles as well as to find out what has been said about these. In order to achieve a more thorough analysis, concepts like Bruner's tourist narratives, Said's Othering or Urry and Larsen's Tourist

gaze have been included, as well as notions about images and stereotyping based on the field of Imagology.

The main analysis will be structured as follows: First, the images regarding the situation in Germany will be analysed and the three predominant images will be explained. Next, the images regarding the people in Germany will be analysed: What were predominant images of the Germans, which groups were excluded from this, and, regarding that the war had just ended, how was the state of ideologies in the country? The last chapter will explore how the Dutch-German-relations, thus the Dutch feelings towards Germans and the role they assign to themselves, play into this. This last chapter is important, as it sheds light on the lens through which the Dutch viewed the Germans and thus the background of the images in the two preceding chapters.

It is important to note that due to the source material, the focus of this thesis will be laying on the Western Zones of Germany and not so much on the Eastern Zone, which is why the terms Germany and Western-Germany will be used as synonyms for what would later turn to be the Federal Republic of Germany. If there is a reference to the Soviet zone of Germany, specifically this will be specified. Furthermore, it is important to note that as some of the articles did not show the full name of the author, the singular they will be used in cases, where the gender of the author cannot be specified.

1. Status Quaestionis and Methodology

1.1. Dutch-German-relationships since 1945

The research done on the relationship between Germany and the Netherlands is quite extensive. Several researchers have looked at the topic with different approaches over the last few years. This chapter just focusses on the most extensive works of the recent years. Although most of these approaches have been multidisciplinary, there is a lack of research on the impact that tourism had on the relationship and the creation of imagines and stereotypes of the two countries.

As already mentioned above, the war and the occupation of the Netherlands by Germany lead to a breach in the relationship between these two countries. According to Wielenga in his book *Vom Feind zum Partner* (2000), the normalization of the relationship has happened in four phases: First, the economic normalization, which happened with the two countries being each other's most important partner after the Marshall Plan made European trade possible again in 1950. Then, the international-political normalization, which happened with Germany joining the NATO in 1955. Third, the bilateral-political normalization after the *Generalbereinigung* in 1963, when was decided how to deal with the damage of the war. Lastly, the personal-political normalization, which only happened in 1969 with chancellor Heinemann laying down flowers at the *Joodsche Schouwburg* in Amsterdam and speaking a formal excuse towards the Netherlands – a gesture most people have been waiting for since the war. Obviously, the normalisation of the relationship went not as gradually and smooth as this categorization makes it seem, many different factors played a role on the personal level. In the first years after the war, the relationship can be characterized by anger and hurt on the Dutch side. Different campaigns can be taken into consideration as examples of the feelings towards the Germans and Germany: There were discussions whether the German language should be taught in schools and there were inconsistent plans to on the one hand, deport all Germans and on the other, to annex big parts of Western-Germany, thereby forcing many Germans to become Dutch (Wielenga, 2000). These examples may not be representative of the feelings of the complete Dutch society, but they show what kind of thought about the Germans and Germany had the upper hand. Although there are chapters regarding the images of Germany in the Netherlands in Wielenga's *Vom Feind zum Partner* (2000), the focus of this work is on the political relationship between the countries. Furthermore, there is barely a mention of the tourism

industry and its influence, except for a short mention of flyers that were distributed in 1955 amongst German travellers to the Netherlands to make them aware of the significance and meaning of the May holidays. A more recent publication is the book *Tot elkaar veroordeeld* by Martijn Lak (2015). It analyses the relational development from an economic angle, hereby focussing on the first decade after the war. He describes a similar development as mentioned above: In spite of the strong anti-German feelings of the broad Dutch society, there was a need to work together and cooperate between the two countries. Again, there is barely a mention on the role that tourism played in the process of connecting the countries.

All of these works are focussed on political and economic issues and on the point of view in the bigger Dutch cities in the west, known as the *Randstad*. In the regions close to the border however the lives of people living on both sides of the border have always been more intertwined: cross border marriages, farmers owning land in the other country or people crossing the border to do some shopping – the examples of cross border encounters are many. Especially here, the closing of a border due to war and occupation are felt direly. There are only few studies done on how the war and occupation affected those living at the borders. One focusing on the Northern part of the border is the dissertation of Dirkje Mulder-Boers (2019), who concluded that especially the long closing of the border after the war, prevented reconciliation between members of the different nations and thus the normalisation of the Dutch-German-relationship. Furthermore, she gives a clear and recent overview over several other studies that look into this topic.

There never has been one certain image of Germany. Every single person in the Netherlands has their own connection to the other country, their own associations with it and a unique set of sources that inform them about the other country. This is why one can never speak of one Germany image, but instead steak of images of Germany (or vice versa). Still there are a few ubiqui-tous themes that and consistencies in the way the other nation is referred to. There are certain symbols and ways to portray a member of the other nation that will be understood by members of the first nation.

A certain stereotype of Germans being strict and quite militaristic has existed ever since the reign of the Prussians. During the Second World War, this stereotype was reinforced by the German military presence in the Netherlands. Even after the war, this view of Germans as violent and barbaric kept being propagated, especially in schools. There was a strong emphasis on dividing the society into “Goed” (those who fought against the Germans, thus in the self-imagery of the Dutch almost all of the Netherlanders) and “Fout” (those who actively

collaborated with the Germans and the Germans themselves). There was no room for any nuance. Only in the late Sixties, a more divers view of the history and the deeds of those that lived through the war became accepted (Lindthout, 2002). Wielenga (2000) collected a few opinion polls, which show that until the Fifties the majority of the Dutch population viewed the Germans as unfriendly and that the only nation that viewed the Germans even more unfriendly than the Dutch were the French. The difference between the two nations is that the Netherlands and Germany always have had a rather positive relationship, while Germany and France always viewed each other as rivals. The Dutch defined themselves by accentuating the differences between themselves and their bigger neighbour Germany and having the simple image of the "good" Dutch versus the "bad" German gave them the morally high ground. Interestingly, searching for contact between the two countries happened along pillarized lines. Especially religious groups like the Catholics were interested in rebuilding the good relationships from before the war and tried this by organizing tours to Germany in order to let the members of the parishes meet each other. The *Katholiek Genootschap voor Geestelijke Vernieuwing* and the umbrella organization *Coördinatie-Commissie voor Culturele Betrekkingen met Duitsland* are just two examples of organizations that supported cultural exchange with Germany by actually meeting the neighbour (Wielenga, 2001). In short, the previously existing stereotypes and images of Germans as strict and militaristic have been reinforced by the war and tried to be "corrected" by strengthening already existing bonds and creating new ones. Still, Lademacher (2001) claims that the adding of nuance to the strong stereotypes went more slowly than it was the case for other Western nations.

There are also other, more recent publications about the image forming between the countries but these usually focus on the more recent history, which is why they are not relevant for this thesis (see for example Schoonenboom, 2013). What is important to note here, however, is that the first attempts to reconnect have been by organizing visits of each other. In other words, the key to reshaping negative images and stereotypes was seen in travelling and getting to know each other, which is why looking at the whole topic from a tourism approach makes sense.

1.2. Tourism development between the two countries since 1945

Only a few publications look into the tourism development of the two countries. An essay of Sandra Hilbert (2001) focusses on tourism between Germany and the Netherlands. The short text describes the travel in both directions: Germans travelling to the Netherlands and

Netherlanders travelling to Germany. She points out that there was a big interest in travelling to Germany: In just five years, the number of Dutch overnight guests in Germany rose from just over 200.000 (1950) to more than one million (1955). Unfortunately, the essay is rather superficial and does not go into detail about where the travellers were staying or for how long, but still, it offers some interesting insights and forms a good starting point for further research.

Another, more recent research on the topic is the Master Thesis of Bas Nordkamp (2019). His thesis focusses on German tourists in the Netherlands and the way the Dutch reacted to their coming. Although this research focusses on the opposite direction of travelling between the two countries than this study, it helps understanding what misunderstandings could happen between Dutch and Germans during their holidays. He determined that there was a distinction between the personal interests of the Dutch and their business interests. On the one hand, especially in the first years after the war the unfavourable behaviour of the German tourists was emphasized in the press, thereby not only reinforcing negative stereotypes about the German tourist, but also generalizing this group and defining a clear difference between "them" (the Germans) and "us" (the Dutch). Furthermore, he found that over the years there was a clear development towards more open and objective reports and that by the middle of the fifties only singular incidents managed to make negative headlines over German tourists. (Nordkamp, 2019).

Kopper (2009) gives an extensive overview of developments in the German tourism branch in the years after the war. He analysed the breakthrough of the package tour in Germany and although it focusses on German outgoing tourism, it helps understanding the German vacation culture. Another author who dealt with the role of tourism after the war is Richard Ivan Jobs. He did extensive research on how Germany was integrated into the Western World with the help of youth tourism. He points out that there was a special effort made to let young people travel, to let them see other nations and cultures and meet other travellers. The aim of this was to heal the wounds that the war had left and ultimately to deconstruct the stereotypes and hatred that war and propaganda had created in the minds of the young for the bigger parts of their lives. His research focusses on youth tourism, but still his insights in the plans of the encouragers of tourism are very helpful for this research and although there is no focus on the relation between Germany and the Netherlands specifically, there are a few mentions of the special features of it. For example, does he point out that especially in the Fifties and Sixties tourism and travelling was seen as more than merely a way to spend leisure time and, to come back to the topic of this thesis, that young Dutch viewed travelling to Germany as a form of "missionary work" with which they tried to teach the Germans how to be proper Europeans (Jobs, 2017).

1.3. Theoretical Framework

In order to research this topic not only the knowledge of the images of Germans and the Dutch is needed, but also about how these images change and the ways, tourism can play into this. One concept that deals with the way tourism changes the way we look at places are the tourist narratives as Bruner (2005) defined them. Stemming from an anthropology background, he suggested that the tourist is told different stories about a destination before going there (via novels, letters, TV, radio, images in brochures etc.). He calls these the "pretour narratives". They form what the traveller expects to encounter at the destination and influence the tourist's story about their trip, as it is much easier to tell a story that fits within a pre-known narrative. Here it is not the tourism industry that creates new stories, but stories are built around older narratives, which are then applied to destinations. Therefore, narratives about destinations do not necessarily stem from a touristic source, but rather are reinterpretations of older stereotypes and images of a place that are reinforced by tourism. So important questions that need to be asked are not only what stories are told about a place, but also who tells them and in what context are they told (Bruner, 2005).

This goes hand in hand with the Tourists gaze, a term that John Urry and Jonas Larsen (2011) coined. They suggest that there are many different ways of seeing and that the way of seeing as a tourist is learned. With other words, the tourist looks through a very subjective vein when visiting a destination. Inspired by Foucault and what he called the medical gaze, Urry and Larsen concluded that "Gazing is not merely seeing, but involves cognitive work of interpreting, evaluating, drawing comparisons and making mental connections between signs and their referents" (p.11). Therefore, the tourist mostly pays attention to what they have learned that is worth paying attention to. This can be for example unique objects, particular signs or ordinary aspects of life in an unfamiliar context. Important is that the tourist gaze (in contrast to a non-tourist gaze) pays attention to things that are different from the everyday life of the tourist and to things that fulfil certain expectations to what the tourist will find. Obviously, the initial idea of the tourist gaze is very focussed on the visual experience like photography or filmmaking. In the context of this thesis, it helps to analyse the written texts by asking questions like: What type of sights are described (Unique objects? Particular Signs?); is the writer describing a romantic (in this case private) gaze or a collective one; and what is left out of the descriptions (as in: What is seen as less important/worth of recognition?).

Another concept relating to this is the concept of Othering. This concept has been referenced in this text before and is closely connected to stereotyping and image forming. The origin of the

concept lays in Edward Said's so-called Orientalism. He indicated that Westerners tend to make a strong distinction between "us" (the Westerners) and "them" (the Orient) and that it is always the differences between the two that are emphasized. Furthermore, "them" are usually viewed as inferior to "us" and that "they" do not change or develop themselves, but stay static without ever learning (Said, 1994). This concept is usually applied in contexts surrounding the developing world, but it is also be helpful to understand the Dutch tendency to form their identity by differentiating themselves from Germans, thus making the Germans to "the Other".

Another last concept to keep in mind is the Tourist versus Traveller discourse. Most people prefer to see themselves as travellers instead of tourists. Especially in middle or higher classes, the tourist has a negative image of being only a consumer and of not engaging with the host culture. The traveller however, follows in the footsteps of the explorer and makes the place they visit their home (Fussel, 1980). While this discourse is not necessarily an active part of the following analysis, it is handy to keep this in mind, as the authors of the texts might have manipulated the accounts of their own behaviour in order to fit into the description of the traveller instead of the tourist.

Next to the tourism theory, the understanding of the concept of a national "image" is important. In this case, it is understood as defined by Beller (2007b) as "mental imaginations, ideas and *Vorstellungsbilder*" (p.4, emphasis by the original author). This means that what we think, how a typical representative of another nation should be like, is not the product of what we know, but what we believe to be true. Everyone has certain stereotypes about other nations or cultures and tends to look to have these stereotypes confirmed. This view, coming from the study of Imagology, assumes that certain stereotypes and prejudices are culturally learned. Experiences with others turn into simplified ideas and assumptions about them and are given further via amongst other things writing and stories, especially if they confirm what is already "known". Defining the concept of image based on the School of Imagology is the best choice for this thesis as Imagology originated from literary studies, thus bringing together writing and the concept of image.

1.4. Methodology

When analysing written texts two things should be kept in mind. First, it is important to know whether the text must be understood as history or as a story and second, the perspective of the writer should be considered. A text never presents an objective truth; the author always can

manipulate the messages for example by the choice of words or by presenting themselves in the best possible light (as mentioned already concerning the Tourist versus Traveller discourse above). Often texts (as for example travel writing) reveal more about the writer than about the ones they are written about (Beuving & de Vries, 2014; Meier, 2007)

The aim of this thesis is to find out what images of Germany have been produced based on journeys to the country. In order to identify them, magazine articles from the first years after the war will be analysed by using an inductive content analysis. Benefits of the inductive content analysis are that a benefit of content analyses is that they offer a mix of quantitative and qualitative approaches: It will not only be analysed which themes were important, but also what has been said about these topics (Stepchenkova, 2012). Patterns in the texts are identified, telling the researcher what type of things has been paid attention to/was interesting enough to be written about (Quantitative, Tourist Gaze: What is seen) and the way in which these topics have been described (Qualitative, Tourist Narratives: What is passed on). Furthermore, this method is often used in studies where the researcher cannot obtain the data directly from a human object due to constraints as for example time (in this case the data is almost 70 years old). An example for a similar study in which the inductive content analysis has been used to learn about images is "A Paradox of Images" of Xiao and Mair (2006) in which the images of China in international, English language newspapers have been analysed.

However, for this study the media chosen to be analysed are not newspaper, but magazine articles. They offer different benefits in regard to answering the research question. First, they capture the *Zeitgeist* of their times by reacting to and creating trends (Holmes, 2012). Hereby they have very specialized audiences (in case of the Netherlands for example, magazines were founded along pillarized lines; van Dijk, 2006), and react to their specific wishes, values and interests. The reader thus feel ownership over the magazines and might even regard them as a special form of friend (Holmes, 2012). Articles in magazines do not have to present the latest news, thus there is more freedom to include articles just because the editors like to include them or because the editors expect their audience to be interested by them and enjoy them. This is helpful for the study as this means that the chosen articles are less likely a reaction to a certain (political) event instead of a reflection of a journey. Furthermore, magazine studies as a whole have been rather overlooked, although magazines have been an important medium for more than 300 years (Holmes, 2012). Holmes (2012) assigns different types of value to them:

> "…the pleasure they bring, and the ways in which they bring it, give them a social value; their ability to influence patterns of behaviour or consumption or

> aesthetics a cultural one; and their role as educators and informers an intellectual one." (p.1)

In short, magazines are an important historical source that is often overlooked, but nonetheless can offer interesting insights, especially into the trends and interests of the population apart from news.

The focus of this analysis will lay on the first years after the war, meaning 1945 until 1950, when it can be assumed that the anti-German feelings were the strongest, societal accepted (maybe even wished)[2] and when every journey to the Eastern neighbour must have felt like an exploration and was thus met with excitement.

In order to have an overview that is as broad as possible magazines from different background have been chosen. The includes amongst others magazines such as *De katholieke illustratie* (Catholic), *Tijd en Taak* (Protestant-Socialist), *De vlam* (Socialist) as well as catering towards different target groups, for example *Gereformeerd jongelingsblad* (Protestant children's magazine), *Vrouwenbelangen*, (women's magazine).

The chosen magazine articles have been searched and retrieved via the internet platform delpher.nl, which was founded by the Dutch Koninklijke Bibliotheek. Here Dutch historical newspapers, magazines and books are collected, digitalized and made public. It was searched for the keywords "Duitsland" and "reis" in the time frame from 1945 until 1950 in order to find articles that deal with this topic. Unfortunately, the search engine of the website can only search per page and does not differentiate between different articles on one page, which is why the initial number of results is very high, so the initial findings needed to be filtered. The condition to be counted as relevant is that either it is an article that is about a journey to the destination Germany or, if it is about a journey with many different destinations, that destinations in Germany made up a significant part of the journey and thus a significant part of the article. Another point of importance for the analysis is that until 1950, when the border patrols were loosened, travelling from and to Germany was quite complicated (Jobs, 2017). This is why the definition of travel and tourism is quite loose in this analysis. As long as the article in question in based on an actual journey to or through Germany after the war, it will be counted as relevant, even if the author did not travel as a tourist in the traditional sense, but for example as a journalist, as a representative at a congress or for business reasons. After filtering out the non-relevant articles, a collection of 80 relevant ones has been made. Due to many stories stretching over more than one article, the total of different stories is 48 of which about ten respectively

[2] Wielenga (2000) claims that being anti-German belonged to the „bon ton" in Amsterdam/The Hague elite rings.

twelve can be sorted to each of the three big pillars (Catholic, Protestant, and Socialist). The remaining 15 stories cater towards readers with special interests like a certain hobby or a certain company/branch of industry, resulting in a relatively even distribution of the different viewpoints.

As mentioned before, travelling as a form of leisure activity was not possible in the time frame. The fact that one had to have a reason to travel is one part of the explanation, why there is a clear favour of cities as destinations. The German rural landscape is only mentioned in passing. Only a few articles talk about a stay in a village or small town. Furthermore, the majority of the texts describe a journey to one or more of the Western zones. Only three articles describe first-hand experiences in the Eastern zone and one describes the border region between the British and Russian zone, which is why there barely is any information about this side of the border. Most journeys have been made to or through the British occupation zone (27), with the American (16) on the second place and far less to the French zone (3).

Based on the texts a few main topics have been identified. The first topic is the ruinous situation of the country, which on the one hand regards the huge amounts of rubble and on the other hand the lack of supply of food and goods. The second topic is the attributes that the travellers and authors of the analysed texts assigned to the German people as well as to the two groups that got special attention of the travellers: their acquaintances and the German youth. A last main topic is the Dutch-German relationship. This refers the one hand, to the way in which the journey has influenced the travellers' self-image as well as the emotions they felt during their stay in Germany and on the other hand, to the solution the Dutch proposed for the many problems in Germany.

One last point that should be brought to attention is the fact that it can be assumed that the authors of the travel accounts did not represent the group within the Dutch society that had extremely strong anti-German feelings. Even though some of them showed resentments againsz German, they still agreed to travel to Germany. Therefore, they apparently were open to interacting and getting into contact with the Germans.

2. Every day's life in post-war Germany

2.1. Germany after 1945

The end of the war did not mean the same thing for everyone. For some it was a defeat, for others liberation. From a Dutch point of view especially the last few months of the war had been dramatic: After the German occupiers had taken away many raw materials and supplies and called many young men to work in Germany, the Netherlands had been one of the front-lines of the fights, resulting in the devastation of landscapes and cities, as well as months of famine in the north-western parts of the country, which later became known as the *Hongerwinter*. In the Netherlands, the German capitulation meant the return of freedom and self-determination and thus the start to work on the reconstruction (Zondergeld, 2004).

However, in Germany the end of the war seemingly was just the beginning of the problems. Specifically in the last months of the war German cities had been bombed, leaving piles of rubble all over the country. By 1945, the amount of rubble is estimated to have been about 500 million cubic meters (Jähner, 2019). Contemporaries could hardly comprehend how much rubble this was and how it was ever to be cleaned up. To this day, icons such as the *Trümmerfrauen* (Rubblewomen) occupy an important place in the German collective memory (idem). The allies divided the country into four zones, the British, the American, the French and the Soviet zone, which were isolated from each other and in which the occupying forces did not really work together as every occupier was taking care about their own interests (Lak, 2015). The heavy bombings at the end of the war destroyed the German infrastructure and agricultural land was covered with mines, so that the industry could not operate efficiently, resulting in famine and poverty for the German population (idem).

On top of that, the inhabitants had to cope with the fact that the ideology that they had been fed for more than a decade was taken away from them and they were confronted with the horrible crimes that had been done in the name of it. Strong feelings of happiness about the liberation collided with feelings of shame about the capitulation (Sabrow, 2020). Even today, the question remains whether the end of the war is to be regarded as liberation or defeat[3]. Contemporary witnesses often viewed 1945 as *Stunde Null*, although the exact definition what that meant

[3] See for example Fürstenau (07/05/2020) or *Vor 76 Jahren: Befreiung vom Nationalsozialismus und Ende des Zweiten Weltkriegs in Europa* 906/05/2021)

varied greatly depending on the position of each person: It could refer to the possibility of a resurgence or to the final extermination of the German people (idem).

Important dates that need to be kept in mind when talking about the development of Germany in the first years following the war are the 8th May 1945 as the official day of capitulation, the 20th June 1948 as the day when the new currency, D-mark, was introduced in the Western Zones and the 23rd May or respectively the 7th October 1949 as the days on which the two German states were founded (Sabrow, 2020).

Furthermore relevant for this study is the process of the reopening of the borders. Until 1950, travelling to and from Germany barely was possible. To cross the border the traveller needed a visa, which, for example, the British, whose zone was bordering the Netherlands, only reluctantly issued (Mulder-Boers, 2019). Travelling to Germany without an important reason was out of question. Only in 1950, the rules were loosened up and travellers could get a visa more easily (idem). However, Dutch banks were still reluctant to exchange Dutch for German currency, making longer trips to Germany rather unattractive (idem). This is why travel accounts like these can be viewed as very important: The majority of the Dutchmen could not get information about Germany in other ways.

2.2. Land of Rubble and Ruins

One topic that returned in almost all of the stories (43 of 49) was the ruins and the rubble in Germany, especially in the cities. Ruins have been interesting sites for travellers since the Grand Tour. Arnold-de Simine (2015) describes them as "trauma made visible" (p.96/97) and points out that they confront the visitor with a multitude of emotions and thoughts, including an understanding of destruction as well as change or loss as well as new-start. These statements apply in particular to the ruins and rubble of the Second World War in Germany, due to the special situation described above. Many Germans developed an obsession with the ruins of the war, even though they have had a considerable amount of time to get used to the look of them as much was already destroyed during the war (Jähner, 2019). Soon people started to travel to the cities to take photography courses in the ruins and thus a form of what could be called ruin-tourism became popular (idem). Therefore, it is no surprise that also the Dutch travellers were interested to see them with their own eyes.

Ruins were not only one of the most frequently mentioned topics of the analysed articles, it is also one of the most prominent ones as it appeared in several titles (either quite directly: *Jeugd*

tussen puin, Duitsland, land van ruines en puin, or implicit: *Afbraak en opbouw, Wederopbouw in Duitsland, Herstel vordert langzaam*). Additionally, if the articles featured pictures, these pictures depicted the ruined cities (see for example Duitsland herstelt zich, 22/01/1949; K., 25/08/1949; Kanter-van Hettinga Tromp, 01/10/1948; or as illustration: Macintosh, 11/1948). This topic was what caught the attention of the reader, but what was said about the ruins and the rubble in Germany?

The many descriptions of the "troosteloos" (B., 14/10/1949, p.7; Berk, 02/1949, p.22; K., 25/08/1949, p.1062; Kupers, 01/05/1946, p.3; Mettrop, 07/1950, p.226) rubble which could be walked through for hours and which stretched for many kilometres (Hollants, 18/10/1946; Knoppers, 22/08/1947; Knoppers, 03/10/1947a), created an image of an overwhelming amount of rubble. The idea that the rubble was never-ending and omnipresent was supported by repetitions of the word "rubble" (Cr.-d. V., 23/01/1948, p.20; Macintosh, 02/1948, p.47; Muller, 03/11/1949, p.4) and enumerations of cities that lay apparently completely decayed (Berk, 02/1949; Convooi naar Praag, 08/1947; Reitsma, 25/03/1948). In the eyes of the authors, these cities had lost every feature that distinguished them from others and they became one "grey mass" (Muller, 03/11/1949, p.4) that apparently stretched over the whole country.

Another way in which the authors tried to express the sheer amount of rubble to the readers, was by drawing comparisons to natural phenomena as deserts ("[puin]woestijnen", Meertens, 25/07/1947, p.6; "steenwoestijn" Convooi naar Praag, 08/1947, p.13), as well as mountains ("Na de parade der puinhopen zagen wij de parade der bergen", Schuh, 01/07/1950, p.5; "Hoge bergen puin…", E., 04/11/1950, p.5; "...kaal heuvelland van steengruis", K., 25/08/1949, p.1064). Both of these are references to places that are unimaginable in their size and in which one is hardly able to survive. Deserts stretch farther than the human eye can see; mountains rise higher than any man-made structure. In both environments, living beings suffer from a lack of water and food. References to this kind of habitats created a very particular image in the readers' mind: never-ending, towering piles of rubble and cities where barely any house could be identified as such. Interestingly, there are no deserts or mountains in the Netherlands, so it became even more foreign to the Dutch reader.

The ruins determined the atmosphere of the cities, which was illustrated as dark and grey (Cr.-d. V., 23/01/1948; K., 25/08/1949; Muller, 03/11/1949). They were described as "spookachtig" (Cohen, 07/12/1946, p.5; Fortman, 1947, p.169; Knoppers, 22/08/1947, p.258; Ruitenberg, 13/11/1948, p.2), suggesting that they were empty and left by all but the ghosts of those who used to live there. The reminder that there were still many dead bodies buried under the rubble

supported the representation of the atmosphere of scariness and the uneasy feeling. Such mentions were especially emotionally potent when they were put into strong contrast, either with descriptions of dancing children (Sch., 21/10/1947) or with an account of a recently reopened nightclub (Muller, 03/11/1949).

The authors proved that this was not merely their subjective impression of the situation, but that it was an actual, objective fact that the whole country lay in ruins. As mentioned before, the amount of rubble in Germany in 1945 was barely conceivable (Jähner, 2019). Of course, the travellers back then could not give an estimation for the whole country as we can do today. However, they tried to express the amount by citing the percentage of destroyed living space in the cities (E., 04/11/1950; Grabandt, 1947; Kupers, 01/05/1946; Peters, 24/10/1947) and by describing the living situations of individuals who remained in the cities or returned to them. According to the authors, most families only had one room at their disposal (B., 10/11/1949; Kupers, 01/05/1947; Muller, 03/11/1949; Ruitenberg, 12/07/1947) or lived in cellars, former bunkers or the halls of the buildings they once had called their homes (Fortman, 1947; Macintosh, 02/1948; Reitsma, 25/03/1948; Sussmann, 01/07/1947). The writers were surprised when they saw lights in a ruin at night (Convooi naar Praag, 08/1947; Fortman, 1947) or when they noticed smoke coming out of a chimney that stuck out of rubble (Cr.-d. V., 23/01/1948, Haas, 25/08/1949). These occurrences indicated that there were people living there and it prompted the authors to ask themselves: How are the people even living there? (Convooi naar Praag, 08/1947; St., 18/05/1950).

Furthermore, they barely saw an improvement of the situation. Even years later one author asked: “Wanneer is de oorlog hier geëindigd? Vanmorgen of drie jaar geleden?” (Fortman, 1947, p.169). Authors wondered where all of the rubble had to go (Kupers, 01/05/1946) and how it could ever be cleaned up. There were assumptions about the time that it would take to achieve this (Cr.-d. V., 23/01/1948; Knoppers, 22/08/1947), which prompted them to assume that it was “[p]uin, haast niet om op te ruimen” (Knoppers, 22/08/1947, p.257). Instead of new flats and living spaces, trees and weeds grew in the cities (Joseph, 06/09/1947; K., 25/08/1949; Macintosh, 11/1948; Reitsma, 25/03/1948), reinforcing the idea that local individuals did not merely fail to clean up the rubble, but, in fact, had not touched the rubble at all since the end of the war.

Nevertheless, the travellers noticed a few small improvements. Free streets and tidy sidewalks indicated that people were living there (B. F., 23/09/1949; Macintosh, 02/1948). After the currency reform proper stores reopened in the cities, as did cafes and restaurants, as well as bars

and nightclubs (K., 25/08/1949; Muller, 03/11/1949). Ruins might still line the streets, but at the same time normality returned in the form of window-shoppers. However, despite the fact that this development was met with a certain kind of admiration of the hard work (see page 30); the accounts still featured critique for the reconstruction process: While cities could be visited again, there were hardly any restored flats or newly built houses (St., 18/05/1950; Verwey-Jonker, 01/04/1948). Although the cities may seemed nice and worth living at first glance, in reality the inhabitants were still living in very poor conditions.

To conclude, it can be said that the ruins of the German cities became one of the most distinguishing sites in Germany. Several references to earlier articles or journeys (either by themselves: Macintosh, 11/1948; Ruitenberg, 13/11/1948; Schuh, 01/07/1950; or by others: Hollants, 18/10/1946; Rot, 05/02/1949) show that the Tourist Gaze was directed at the ruins. The travellers described ruins with attentiveness and told their story about them, thereby reinforcing the narrative of Germany as a land of rubble and ruins. Another argument in support of this statement is the fact that interest in the ruins did not decrease during the investigated period. The few stories in which the topic was not mention were evenly distributed over the period analysed. The more time passed after the end of the Second World War, the stranger it must have seem to the travellers to constantly be reminded of it in the cities. They became memorials of what could have been (Convooi naar Praag, 08/1947).

2.3. Land of Scarcity

Another reoccurring image was that of Germany as a land of scarcity. Like in the rest of Europe, many products were rationed for years after the war. Mostly this affected the food situation of the Germans. Even though the amount of people living in the German zones had not changed since before the war, the food production was reduced to only 60% of what had been produced then (Lak, 2015). However, the whole economy was suffering from the ruinous state for example of the infrastructure, as mentioned earlier. What set Germany apart from other states in Western Europe was that not only its own reconstruction needed to be taken care of but, as the country that started (and lost) the war, Germany was required to pay reparations for the destruction caused in other European countries. Furthermore, Germany still had financial problems, due to the small worth of the German currency (idem).

Poverty present in Germany did not go unnoticed by the Dutch travellers. As it was the case with the ruins, the topics of famine and lack of supplies was mentioned in the majority of the

stories that have been analysed (40 of 49). Here a clear pattern can be identified in the way the Dutch authors described the situation of scarcity in Germany and how they compared it to a situation, they knew themselves, the *Hongerwinter* of 1944 and 1945.

In the first year after the war (1946), they acknowledged that the food situation was not good in Germany although they also claimed that "[h]ongersnood is een te groot word…" (Cohen, 07/12/1946, p.4). The authors pointed out that the main problem of the scarcity of the food supply was that no improvement was to be expected. The war was over and the country was occupied, but no one knew for how long this situation would last. Still, they did not fail to point out that the Germans "…vallen niet dood van den honger zooals duizenden Nederlanders…" (Hollants, 18/10/1946, p.2) in the times of the *Hongerwinter* did, so the situation was by far not percieved as bad as it was during the German occupation of the Netherlands. By 1947, the tone changed and the situation became an "…oneindige uitgestrekte hongerwinter…" (Joseph, 06/09/1947, p.8) and in early 1948, the lowest point was reached and it was literally said to be "…veel, veel erger dan bij ons in de hongerwinter…" (Reitsma, 25/03/1948, p.98). Thus, for two and a half years a constant worsening of the situation was described. In fact, until 1948 the food rations in Germany were even lower than during the war (Lak, 2015).

However, the currency reform of summer 1948 brought the turning point to this narrative. By November 1948 the accounts started mentioning that the "[voedselpositie] is inderdaad aanzienlijk verbeterd" (Ruitenberg, 13/11/1948, p.2). Although most consumer goods were still very expensive and scarce, their availability itself was interpreted as a step towards the improvement of the situation.

Being hungry became one of the main attributes appointed to the Germans. When describing them the authors pointed out that one could see the hunger on their faces (Macintosh, 02/1948; Reitsma, 25/03/1948; Ruitenberg, 12/07/1947; Sch., 21/10/1947). A problem that the Dutch travellers saw was that the thought to find something to eat was apparently omnipresent in the minds of the Germans and pushed out every other thought, thereby preventing them from engaging with their past (Fortman, 1947; Joseph, 06/09/1947; Meertens, 25/07/1947). In the eyes of the Dutch, the Germans cared only about their own hunger – not about the future, not about long-term solutions for their problems and clearly not about the past or the course of action that brought them into this position: "De vraag naar eten is de enige die het gros der mensen nog interesseert" (Fortman, 1947, p.173).

The famine was something that the traveller was confronted with on several occasions during the journey through Germany. When travelling by train, one could expect that there were

children of all age groups begging for food along the train tracks. They were mentioned to be seen by train passengers directly upon entering the country (Joseph, 06/09/1947) or when the train was passing obstacles like bridges that forced it to slow down: "Hier als elders waar wij vaart minderen, springen en dansen kleine, haveloze kinderen langs de spoorbaan, om de aandacht te trekken en wat van onze rijkdom te krijgen" (Schaik, 15/10/1949, p.9). Furthermore, travellers were advised to bring their own food because "…in Duitsland krijgt men het niet" (D., 02/08/1947, p.2). Stipulated rations were available, but the authors doubted that these actually reached the population. Several authors described that food vouchers were barely accepted (Hollants, 18/10/1946; Verwey-Jonker, 01/04/1948) and if they were, it did not deliver more than "…dunne sneedjes droog brood" (Reitsma, 25/03/1948, p.99). The last resort that most Germans saw was selling personal belongings on the black market or exchanging what they owned for food, other necessities or cigarettes – with the latter forming a much more valuable form of payment than the German currency.

The travellers observed that black markets rose "…als paddestoelen uit de grond…" (Kupers, 26/06/1946, p.3). Personal belongings, family heirlooms, valuable jewellery – what could be sold, was sold, and even the travellers themselves could not completely ignore the new currency of cigarettes. When looking at the Germans, the travellers constantly focussed on the clothing, trying to determine the financial situation. People on the streets were described as "haveloos" (Sch., 21/10/1947, p.2, Schaik, 15/10/1949, p.9) and those with better clothing were thought to be "…bezig [hun] laatste reserves op te teren" (Kupers, 01/05/1947, p.3; in other words also in Reitsma, 25/03/1948, p.98). Travellers were warned not to wear clothing of good quality and not to go out unchaperoned during night-time, because "[e]r wordt veel en geraffineerd gestolen" (Macintosh, 02/1948, p.45). Even one year later this author still was warned by the worker of a travel agency not to leave the train before reaching the destination, as otherwise they would surely be robbed (Macintosh, 11/1948).

When discussing the possible reasons for such a dire situation, the authors pointed out the worthlessness of the German money and the failures of the German industry. According to them, many Germans just wandered through the ruins on the search for their next meal, instead of looking for a job or something productive to do (see page 28). This was caused by the fact that one could barely buy anything with the money one earned, so trying to find a job was seen as pointless. The Germans themselves blamed the occupiers (Fortman, 1947; Joseph, 06/09/1947): They were the ones regulating the wages and prices. And in fact, prices and wages had been frozen by the occupying forces. "… [T]en koste van alles…" (Kupers, 17/05/1947,

p.3) they wanted to prevent another hyperinflation. The mistakes of the interwar years should not be repeated.

The scarcity of coal and other heating material was seen as especially problematic, not only in regard to the restart of the economy, but also due to the fact that it led to everyone in the country (including the travellers) being unable to heat their chambers. “Steenkoud kwamen we dan 's avonds in ons hotel aan, waar meestal de centrale verwarming maar matig brandde” (Kupers, 01/05/1947, p.3). In addition, the rationing of paper was criticized: Not only because it affected the schools and prevented the spreading of news and knowledge of the past (Kupers, 31/05/1947; Macintosh, 02/1948; Reitsma, 25/03/1948), but also because the only German zone that did not have paper rationing was the Soviet zone, leading the Christian authors to fear that large amounts of anti-theistic, Communist literature would be distributed all over Germany (Fortman, 1947).

As mentioned before, shifts took place with the currency reform being introduced. Until 1948 the travellers observed that products were expensive and of low quality (“Ersatz”, Hollants, 18/10/1946, p.2; Kupers, 01/05/1947, p.3), wages were low and everything that was not an immediate necessity, was a luxury that only a few could afford. However, after the new currency of D-mark was introduced in the summer of 1948 the illegal markets disappeared and instead little shops opened between the ruins. Although the products that could be bought were still very expensive (especially considering the low German wages), the fact that there was something on sale again, already lifted the spirits on German streets and thereby marked the coming of better times. According to some authors, window-shopping became one of the most popular hobbies of the people on the streets: “En het is opvallend, dat voor deze winkels de mensen rijen dik staan; niet om te kopen, maar om te kijken” (Macintosh, 11/1948, p.233).

As the general sentiment in the cities changed, they became much more inviting again. The life returned to the streets and “…de grote, luxueuze winkels en café’s zijn bijna alle weer opgebouwd” (K., 25/08/1949, p.1061). However, there was also another side to this. On the one hand, the opening of the stores was seen as a sign that better times were coming, while on the other hand, there was critique on where the priorities were apparently laid. As mentioned above, there barely were any new or restored houses, but in the cafes and especially nightclubs, prodigality in form of gambling and excessive drinking could be seen.

2.4. Land of Contrasts

The images that have been presented by now have one thing in common: They are illustrations of the many different problems that were taking place in Germany. These problems led to several contrasts: First, a great disparity between life in the countryside and life in the cities, second, the high economic inequality and third, a conflict between the way the landscape was described and the way the people that came from there were perceived.

Starting with the first disparity, it can be said that while the travellers predominantly saw Germany as a land of ruins, there were many hints that suggested that this was not true for the whole country. Here the concept of the Tourist gaze is a helpful tool for the analysis, as it reminds to not only pay attention to what is described, but also to what is left out. The authors focussed on the cities, as these were their main destinations. However, in order to reach these destinations, the travellers needed to cross the country. The majority of the authors described cities as one single, huge rubble hill, with the remnants of war being visible everywhere. However, relocating out of the city centres revealed a different picture: "…het centrum van [Bonn] werd weliswaar volkomen verwoest, maar de buitenwijken met hun grote villa's aan lommerrijke lanen bleven gespaard" (K., 01/09/1949, p.1095). While some (especially those that travelled by train and thus needed to cross almost every city on their route), barely mentioned the differences between rural and urban Germany, those that travelled by car had a more diverse view of the country. They needed to pass regions like the thinly populated region close to the Dutch border or the Bavarian Alps. The travellers were looking out for the ruins and the rubble: "Er werd naarstig gespeurd of er reeds nu iets te bemerken zou zijn van de verwoesting en het puin van de achterliggende oorlogsjaren" (B. F., 16/09/1949, p.349). However, such traces were hardly to be found. Other examples are the smaller villages between the heavily bombed cities Cologne and Frankfurt that had lost "…niets van hun bekoring…" (K., 08/09/1949, p.1140).

However, a large difference between rural and urban Germany was demonstrated not only with regard to the traces of the bombings (or lack thereof): The whole economic situation was different. This ranged from the earlier mentioned phenomenon that city dwellers left the cities to exchange their belongings for food that farmers provided to the phenomenon of young men preferring to work at smaller companies or farms because these did provide a higher pay than that which was allowed by the occupiers, what indicates that these farmers and owners of such smaller companies could afford to pay more (Kupers, 26/06/1946).

There was a high economic inequality in general. While one part of the German population was struggling to survive and needed to sell their belongings, another was gaining from this situation. These were not only the farmers that could sell what they were producing at high prices, but also the vendors on the many black markets, who were selling everyday necessities at highly inflated prices.

The authors of the Catholic and the Protestant magazines of the later years were especially perceptive to the high economic inequality, and they criticized it. The authors discussed their frustration when they witnessed the nightlife at certain cities, where "…bedragen stuk gegooid worden die voor meerdere gezinnen maand-inkomsten betekenen" (Muller, 03/11/1949, p.4). They considered this and the high rates of gambling they observed to be highly immoral, as the majority of the people still struggled with their everyday needs.

While the Christian authors criticized the behaviour of the people as individuals, the critique of texts with socialist background mostly was aimed at store owners who withheld their products, when they could not earn from selling them or at the occupiers (as a stand-in for the German government) who were in the eyes of the travellers failing to end the state of division between the zones and thereby were hindering the economy from starting.

The last point of contrast stems from the difference that the travellers saw between the beauty of the German landscape and people that emerged from it:

> „...wat is het toch geweest dat een volk als het Duitse, beschikkende over een cultuur als in geen tweede land van Europa en een grondgebied dat tot een der mooiste behoort, zich heeft kunnen laten leiden door een groep waanzinnigen?"
> (M. P. v., 21/05/1949, p.6)

The landscape was described as "prachtig" (Convooi naar Praag, 08/1947, p.12; St., 18/05/1950, p.3) and beautiful (B., 14/10/1949; Convooi naar Praag, 08/1947; K., 29/09/1949; M. P. v., 21/05/1949; Muller, 03/11/1949; Ontdek een andere wereld, 02/12/1949) as well as peaceful and calm (K., 29/09/1949; Muller, 03/11/1949). However, this description did not match with the atmosphere in the ruins, which was grey and dark. Furthermore, the beauty of the landscape did not match the rather negative descriptions of the people that lived there (which will be expanded on in the next chapter). For now, it is important to understand that the authors saw many sources of contrast and conflict, which made them understand "…hoe moeilijk het is naar waarheid over dit land te schrijven" (Schuh, 01/07/1950, p.5). They acknowledged that the short amount of time that a traveler spends in a country was not enough to understand it fully and the short space they had to tell their story was not enough to express all that could be

said (Cohen, 07/12/1946; Geus-Smelt, 18/12/1948; Kanter-van Hettinga Tromp, 01/10/1948; Ruitenberg, 12/07/1947; Ruitenberg, 13/11/1948; Sussmann, 01/07/1947).

2.5. Conclusion: The many problems of Germany

The situation in Germany was not illustrated in a positive light: ruins, rubble, hunger and scarcity – "Hoe hebben deze mensen het in die hel nog zo lang kunnen uithouden?" (St., 18/05/1950, p.3).

Regarding the situation in Germany, the authors illustrated three main images: Germany as a land of rubble and ruins, Germany as a land of scarcity and Germany as a land of contrast. The first two images help to identify pretour narratives as defined by Bruner (2005). The authors of the articles refer back to other media outlets or to what they have heard before about the situation in Germany. This shows that their attention for these topics had been awakened before they went on their trip. The journey to Germany thus was not a new discovery of the country, but the authors (unconsciously) wanted to confirm or to disprove whether these narratives and mental imaginations were close to the reality or not. As the analysis showed, the narrative that the authors used to describe Germany did not differ too much from these pretour narratives.

However, the last main image, Germany as a land of contrast, is a better example of how Urry and Larsen's Tourist Gaze works. "Places are chosen to be gazed upon…" (Urry & Larsen, 2011, p.4), so what is left out tells a lot about what the travellers found less interesting. Many authors, for example, barely discussed their journeys to the destinations, and if they did, it was only in one or two short sentences. Furthermore, Urry and Larsen (2011) state: "Particularly as tourists, we see objects and especially buildings in part constituted as signs. They stand for something else" (p.11). This is also the case here. The beauty of the landscape in their stories only served as contrast to the situation in the cities. The ruins were a sign of Germanies defeat, the poor clothing and hungry looking faces were signs of Germany's (deserved) poverty. The idea that all of Germany was starving and living in ruins was reinforced repeatedly.

There are some underlying intentions behind the way the stories are told: For example, the illustrations of spending one's life amongst ruins awakened pity in the reader, while simultaneously putting them into contrast with the prodigality of the nightclubs. The authors did not deny that the food situation is bad; however, they did not forget to remind the reader that it was not as bad as it was in the Netherlands during the *Hongerwinter*. The authors suspected that the reader would feel Schadenfreude when hearing about the bad situation the Germans were

confronted with (Convooi naar Praag, 08/1947; Cr.-d. V., 23/01/1948; Reitsma, 25/03/1948), however, their texts also awakened a certain level of sympathy for the Germans, while not pitying them too much. Here another narrative comes into play: The situation in Germany was bad (first narrative), however, the Germans have brought this upon themselves and deserved to be punished for their deeds (second narrative).

However, as Bruner (2005) puts it: "…no story is told in a vacuum…" (p.16), so not only the narratives that influenced the interpretations during the journey are important to keep in mind, but also the context in which the stories are told. The travellers did not just go to Germany in order to take a vacation; they were the victors visiting their former enemy. Seeing the country in shatters, surely filled them with a certain kind of satisfaction, thereby making it even more easy to pass the narrative of Germany as a destroyed country (literally and economically) on. These magazine articles were published in a time, when the Dutch were divided over their understanding of the Dutch-German-relationship: On the one hand, they demanded different types of punishment for the Germans (financial restitution, annexation of land, deportations of Germans), on the other hand, they started to understand that they needed a strong Germany as a partner. The journeys and seeing Germany with their own eyes had convinced the travellers that the Germans have already been punished, as they have spent years living in hell, as the author at the begging of the conclusion put it, so maybe it was time to slowly start rebuilding close and positive relationships again. However, before diving too deep into the topic of Dutch-German-relationships, which will be explored further in Chapter 4, the images of the Germans must be analysed.

3. Attributes of the German People after the War

3.1. The typical German

Obviously, the authors also wrote about how they viewed the German population. “After 1945, Germany (and the German image) was burdened with the inheritance of the Nazi regime...” (Beller, 2007a, p.163). Especially from a Dutch point of view, Germans were seen as occupiers, who sneakily attacked their smaller neighbours and brought nothing but famine, death, violence and misery. These kinds of pictures are obviously based on experiences made in a very certain situation (during the war in an occupied country), but travelling to another country brings the traveller into contact with quite the variety of people – hoteliers, waiters, taxi-drivers and others (mainly in the service sector). Thus, the interactions between the Dutch and the Germans are very different in this context. This does not even take into account the switched roles of the former occupiers, who were now occupied themselves and the former overpowered country, which was now on the side of the victors.

The authors of the articles portrayed the Germans in many different ways. Some of them have been hinted at in the text before, for example, the Germans as poor and hungry. There were two groups that are differentiated from “the Germans” as a whole. These are the people to whom the authors could find a connection, and those who were too young to be blamed for the events of the Nazi era. In short, it can be said that these two groups were drawn in a better light than “the German”. The images of these two groups will be discussed separately later in this chapter.

Returning to the first group, Germans as the whole population, some general remarks were made by the authors. Several times, they pointed out the unequal division of the sexes (B. F., 23/09/1949; Knoppers, 24/10/1947; Kupers, 26/06/1946; Kupers, 17/05/1947; Ruitenberg, 12/07/1947). The surplus of women was explained by the high number of fallen soldiers and, in the beginning of the period under investigation, by the fact that many young men were still being held as prisoners of war. In addition, many of the authors seemed shocked or surprised at the large number of mutilations, especially among the civilian population (B., 29/09/1949; B. F., 23/09/1949; Ruitenberg, 12/07/1947; Sch., 21/10/1947). Apparently, they did not expect the consequences of the war to be so openly displayed on the people.

Often the Germans were described with general stereotypes that still exist today, for example their thoroughness (Fortman, 1947; Kuiper, 05/11/1948), their love for bureaucracy (Met de Weense ploeg op reis, 25/08/1950) and their over-correctness (Ruitenberg, 13/11/1948), or

referencing to Germans as "Feldwebel" (Macintosh, 02/1948, p.46; indirectly in St., 18/05/1950). While these stereotypes are not inherently negative, they have acquired a negative connotation due to the context of how these traits were perceived during the war. It is interesting to note that he Dutch swear word for Germans that gained high popularity during the wartime, *Mof*, originated from a word that means grumpy (Lindthout, 2002)

Next to these general remarks about Germans, three main images can be identified in the texts: First, Germans as displaced people, second, Germans as individualistic people and third, Germans as people drawing from an old strength.

Germans as displaced people

According to several of the authors the German people were "…totaal uit [hun] evenwicht [...] geslagen" (Kupers, 21/08/1946, p.3). Concepts like *Heimat* (home) and being German had lost their meaning. According to Jähner (2019), more than 40 million people could be counted as displaced in one way or another. Displaced in this context means geographical as well as mental.

The first meaning regards, for example, the millions of refugees that streamed to the Western parts of Germany. These were people who had left everything behind except for what they could carry. This group mainly consisted of women, children and elderly (Deelen, 11/10/1946), whose sons and husbands either had fallen, were missing or were still held as prisoners of war (R., 03/1950). They, together with those that had lost their homes and families, roamed the country in search for a place to live. Considering the difficult housing situation, this was not an easy task. This constant movement of large groups of people could be observed, for example, in the trains, which were described as overcrowded. One reason for this was that the bombing raids during the war had almost completely destroyed the German infrastructure (Lak, 2015), so that not many trains ran and the passengers could not be distributed among many waggons. As another reason however, the authors gave that "[i]edere Duitser was in die tijd onderweg" (Berk, 02/1949, p.22): Either searching for family, for work and food or for a new place to live. These people had lost everything and thus needed to start a completely new life somewhere unknown to them.

This is connected to the second meaning of the word displaced. Many had not only lost their homes or loved ones, but additionally their whole view of the world had changed. The inhabitants of Germany used to be surrounded by an omnipresent ideology, that did not accept any other view of the world than its own. For more than a decade, the Germans had been told

that being German was what made them better than others. By the end of the war, this ideology had been declared false and inhuman and taken away from them, creating a vacuum that had to be filled. Especially the young people suffered from this. Without the security that the ideology used to give them and without the leaders that they used to follow, the Germans seemed to be in a constant state of shock. The people on the streets were described to have "…lege onverschillige blikken…" (Convooi naar Praag, 08/1947, p.12) and that their faces did not seem very "opgewekt" (R., 03/1950, p.26). It seemed like they did not care about their surroundings or their situation anymore: "Er is geen plaats meer voor sensatie: de mensen hebben alles meegemaakt. Ze hebben niets meer te verliezen" (Macintosh, 03/1948, p.70).

In combination with the unfortunate and insecure circumstances that many people lived under, this resulted in a "doelloos geslenter" and a "stuurloos en nutteloos leven" (Cohen, 07/12/1946, p.4; *stuurloos* is also used in Knoppers, 26/09/1947, p.308). As already indicated in Chapter 2.3, many people simply lived from one day to the next, caring for nothing but the next day or even their next meal (Meertens, 25/07/1947). The numerous mentions of unemployment and the warnings of gangs of robbers roaming the ruins, support this image. Securing a future in Germany was no longer worthwhile, because people hardly earned enough to make ends meet, and because the future of the whole country was uncertain, which drove the people into fatalism and apathy (Muller, 03/11/1949). The grey and somewhat eerie atmosphere of the cities (see p.20) surely did not help to lighten the mood and motivate the inhabitants.

To sum up, the German people were displaced, either literally, seeking refuge or seeking a new home, or in the figuratively speaking, that they had to break with their past, redefine their identity (what does it mean to be German?) and find the strength to work for a new future.

Germans as individualistic and egocentric people

The second image of the Germans was one of them as egocentric and individualistic people who were unable to see beyond their own interests and sufferings. This trait of Germans was regarded as a universal truth, dating back to the pre-war period: "Het zich inleven in de ander is voor dit volk altijd een moeilijke taak geweest" (Fortman, 1947, p.177). Nevertheless, with the end of the war and thus the end of dictatorship and ideology, this view of the Germans intensified: "Het Duitse volk is uiteengevallen in een ordeloze hoop egocentrische individuen…" (Cohen, 07/12/1946, p.4).

On a personal level, they only cared for themselves and did what was best for themselves, rather than for society as a whole. They had lost any feeling for personal responsibility (Cohen,

07/10/1946). One author supported this claim by telling a story about how a group of rowers almost let a canoeist drown, because no one had given them the order to help the man (K., 15/09/1949). Stories like this supported the idea that the Germans did not dare to act, at least not as long as they were not themselves in danger, thus proving the assumption of the individualistic character of these people.

Of course, this story was a quite extreme example, but there were other everyday interactions (or lack thereof) that supported this assumption. On trains, for example, as crowded as they were, it was observed that every passenger formed "…een eiland op zichzelf" (Macintosh, 02/1948, p.45). The passengers were silent (Macintosh, 02/1948) and lonely (Muller, 03/11/1949).

This impression of the Germans was also is also reflected in the descriptions of the German perception of guilt. The authors claimed that "[n]ergens in Duitsland hebben we iemand ontmoet, die zei nationaal-socialist te zijn geweest" (Kupers, 26/06/1946, p.3; in other words this statement can also be found in K., 01/09/1949, p.1097) and talked about encounters with Germans like this:

> ",Ik durf hier in het hotel niet eens te zeggen, dat ik halfjood ben. Dan heb ik geen leven meer.'
>
> Hebben ze ,dan zo weinig geleerd?' Ze leren nooit, zegt hij" (Joseph, 06/09/1947, p.11)

Again, this implied that the Germans refused to look beyond their own lives and chose to ignore the long-term consequences of their actions or the actions of their peers. While the authors themselves were convinced that this land had "…een van de meest ten hemelschreiende misdaden in de geschiedenis van deze wereld bedreven..." (Sussmann, 01/07/1947, p.11), the average German refused to see it as that, as they themselves did not do anything. The conclusion for many authors seemed to be: "Berouw, begrip, schuldgevoel? Ver te zoeken" (Joseph, 06/09/1947, p.11).

Additionally, on a broader level every consideration for large-scale, international connections was missing. Nazi propaganda continued to work in the form of mistrust of the occupiers' intentions and the information they received from them. The Germans not only believed that the occupiers intentionally treated them badly (Joseph, 06/09/1947; Verwey-Jonker, 01/04/1948), they were also convinced that they were the only people living in bad conditions (K., 22/09/1949; Kupers, 01/03/1947). The years of isolation in their own country, that did not

end with the war, had led them to lose the "…vermogen de dingen in breed internationaal verband te zien" (Ruitenberg, 12/07/1947, p.5).

Germans as people drawing from an old strength

Although such negative descriptions of Germans were predominant, there were also positive traits attributed to them. The Germans were still regarded as strong people, who, despite all the setbacks of the twentieth century, had not lost their strength (Cohen, 07/12/1946; K., 25/08/1949).

Especially appreciated was the hard work that could be seen in the ruins. Where places were cleared-up and where newly built houses were to be found, the people living there were working on these themselves. They were rebuilding their lives literally with their own hands (B. F., 23/09/1949; K., 08/09/1949; Muller, 03/11/1949). This labouring gave the authors the impression that the Germans were an "…ijzersterk volk, dat te trots is om zijn hand op te heffen voor en aalmoes" (Schuh, 01/07/1950, p.5) – what they had achieved, they had achieved themselves. Additionally, there were reports of the former theatre and musical culture reviving in the midst of the ruins (Macintosh, 02/1948; Sussmann, 01/07/1947), indicating that the Germans in general were working against the apathy that had gripped many of their fellow men.

Also in this context, the women were put in the spotlight. Not only was their role in the economy during the war emphasized (Hollants, 18/10/1946), but also their ability to remain positive even under the worst imaginable circumstances: The authors told about a refugee woman who was just thankful for having a roof over her head after having travelled for months (Deelen, 11/10/1946) or a woman who still did not know what had happened to her son, but at least she could find some nice flowers to make her room in the ruins look like a home (Macintosh, 11/1948). Such stories confronted the reader with their own post-war situation and reminded them to appreciate and be thankful for what they have, as there were people who had less and yet found the strength to be happy with the small things.

While the Germans had made mistakes in the past, they also used to be closely connected to the Dutch and would become close partners in the future. This last image shows that despite all that happened, the Dutch still remembered that there was a time before the Nazi era and before the two countries drifted apart. The inner strength of the Germans would help them to overcome their bad situation and make them reliable partners again. This hopeful and friendly view of the Germans is even clearer when taking the two groups in the following chapter into account.

3.2. Exceptions prove the rule – German acquaintances and German youth

As mentioned before, two groups received particular attention from the authors: Firstly, the people the travellers felt connected to and secondly, the youth. For the first group the connection between the authors and the Germans could either be very direct, for example, staying at their home during the journey, or rather vague, for example, identifying them as people with the same religious or political background as themselves. Here the fact that cross-border contact was reorganized along pillarized lines becomes apparent. The second group in this context included all persons under the age of thirty, thus those that were either unborn or were still children or teenagers when Hitler became chancellor in 1933.

Focussing on the first group, the authors judged those with whom they felt connected less rigorously and wrote more forgiving and friendlier about them than about the typical German. They described their hosts, for example, as very polite and friendly on several occasions (B., 27/10/1949; B., 14/10/1949; E., 04/11/1950; Knoppers, 22/08/1947; Macintosh, 11/1948; Reitsma, 25/03/1948; Schuh, 01/07/1950). Furthermore, several authors concluded that with the realization that there are people with the same interests as oneself everywhere you could find friends even in Germany (Kanter-van Hettinga Tromp, 01/10/1948; Meertens, 25/07/1947; Nolte, 02/06/1949). When they felt connected to someone, the nationality did not matter anymore and they started to see them as individuals instead of representatives of their nationalities (B., 27/10/1949; Meertens, 25/07/1947).

Christians were most eager to identify other Christians and to feel connected with them. Both, Catholics and Protestants, cared about the situation of their respective churches. They were concerned about the perceived loss of religion among the Germans ("…de kerk heeft heel weinig invloed meer", Knoppers, 03/10/1947b, p.314; in similar words in B. F., 30/09/1949, p.378) and were glad when they met Germans who were religious anyway (Fortman, 1947; Kuiper, 15/10/1948; Mettrop, 07/1950). It was especially these people they viewed as strong and hard-working, adoring how they managed to work on their own Christian education in spite of the bad situation they were in (Fortman, 1947; Peters, 24/10/1947) – especially the young ones (Oijen, 15/11/1948).

In comparison, Socialist authors were more concerned about the interests of working-class people. They felt that this group always suffered the most from the bad situations that other, more powerful people caused (Meertens, 25/07/1947). However, they also saw improvements that happened after the war. For example, did they praise the close cooperation between the

German unions and the occupiers (Kupers, 15/05/1946; Kupers, 01/05/1947) and agreed that the new German approach of "vakbondseenheid" was a good one (B., 10/11/1949; E., 04/11/1950; Kupers, 15/05/1946).

In addition, authors whose articles cannot be assigned to one of the major pillars tended to prefer the company of like-minded people. For example, the author of a magazine for the workers of the Dutch railway company praised how hard German railway officials were working to get as many trains as possible to run as reliably as possible in a country where many railway tracks, waggons and locomotives had been destroyed: "Een spoorman schijnt internationaal een bijzonder mens te zijn, die van aanpakken weet en zijn plicht tegen de gemeenschap kent" (Reitsma, 25/03/1948, p.98). The journalist for a Jewish magazine, who visited refugee camps, was shocked by the living conditions of his fellow Jews and by the thriving Anti-Semitism on German streets, but at the same time the author was impressed by the joy and will to live that could be seen in the refugee camps, especially by this group that recently had a lot to suffer (Sussmann, 01/07/1947).

Interestingly, the authors of all backgrounds tried to prove that they were only associated with "good" Germans. Many of them pointed out that their acquaintances were victims of the Nazis themselves, like the author of *Een snoepjesreis over de grensen* did. They told their readers that the small Protestant group that had been visited was not only "partijvijandig" (Cr.-d. V., 23/01/1948, p.2) but was to be exterminated by the Nazis as soon as the war was over – a fate worse than that of the Dutch (Cr.-d. V., 23/01/1948). Another example is the author of *Reisindrukken uit West-Duitsland II* (B., 14/10/1949), who explained that they stayed with a couple who as resistance fighters used to be spied on by the rest of the villagers and still did not trust them fully. More examples for stories like this can be found in *Bezoek aan Duitsland* (Fortman, 1947) and *Voorlopige conclusies* (Ruitenberg, 19/07/1947). Alternatively, it was pointed out that the hosts of the travellers understood and acknowledged their own guilt and that of their people (B., 27/10/1949; Fortman, 1947; Geus-Smelt, 18/12/1948; Knoppers, 24/10/1947; Macintosh, 12/1948; Peters, 24/10/1947), which was another important point that set them off from the general perception of the rest of the German population.

As already said above, another group that received special attention of the authors was the youth. The young Germans held a special position because they were either too young to change anything about the course that Germany was taking in the Thirties, or to understand what was happening around them – if they were born that early at all. Still, they had to suffer the consequences just like the adults that caused them.

There were several concerns that the authors had about the German youth. First, they saw the problem that it was still under a strong influence of the National Socialist ideology it had been fed with from a young age or even their whole life. The autocratic government that propagated it might be gone but National Socialist ideas and understanding of the world were still within the youth, like poison (Knoppers, 17/10/1947; Kupers, 12/06/1946). Additionally, the National Socialist ideology did not disappear without leaving a hole that yet needed patching; leaving especially the young that never knew the freedom to choose for themselves floating in a vacuum (K., 15/09/1949; Knoppers, 26/09/1947). In combination with the uncertain situation of the post-war years, this left the youth insecure and even afraid: "En ze zijn bang, bang om te denken, bang om te handelen, bang voor de toekomst" (K., 15/09/1949, p.1170).

The second problem was closely connected to this. Many young Germans had no or barely any active memory of the time before the Nazi era – all that they had known was an autocratic dictatorship and war. They never had seen democratic elections and thus would not know what to make of them (Hollants, 18/10/1946; Joseph, 06/09/1947). However, the end of the war did not bring any improvement to their situation. They were hungry and miserable and did not know what the future would bring, and on top of that, they had little education to help them understand the whole situation. There were hardly any books (Reitsma, 25/03/1948), schools only worked under harsh conditions (Fortman, 1947), and there was a lack of anti-National Socialist teachers (Kupers, 01/03/1947). In short, they lacked experience with the new system imposed on them, and it was hardly possible to learn anything about it. All of this came on top of the general trauma of having lived through a war, which especially in the last years demanded of many that were too young for this to become soldiers (Fortman, 1947).

Living with such trauma made them known as a generation that was quite apolitical and that longed to maintain (political) stability for the rest of their lives (however, the ones born after 1938 are excluded from the last point of this characterization; Hodenberg, 20/01/2020). All the same, in later German historiography, it also was referred to as the "sceptical generation": They were the ones who questioned the importance of the nation state and out-of-date national traditions, but instead worked on democratization and westernization of the state later in their lives (idem). The travellers also saw this potential of the youth. The German youth was "…nog niet verknoeid en voor opbouw onbruikbaar geworden.." (Knoppers, 26/09/1947, p.309). They made references back to the years after the First World War and claimed that the youth now was opener than it used to be in those days (Ruitenberg, 19/07/1947). The authors praised the youth for its humble wishes, for it did not wish for a happy childhood or a complete exclusion

from the punishment of the German people. What it instead wished for was "…contact met de jeugd van Europa, omdat het met de jeugd van alle landen samen wil arbeiden aan een nieuwe wereld" (Meertens, 25/07/1947, p.7). Therefore, the fear that the German youth was beyond saving was unfounded, although much still needed to be done to help these young people. They were seen as resilient, more open to change and capable to learn and reshape its view of the world.

Because of their special position as the only ones who could really be excluded from the collective guilt of the Germans (Fortman, 1947; St., 18/05/1950), the young also received a special form of pity from the Dutch. This was reflected, for example, in the fact that German children came to the Netherlands to help them regain their strength (Macintosh, 12/1948; Verwey-Jonker, 01/04/1948) or in the way the authors wrote about the pity they felt, when they saw their small bodies missing limbs (Sch., 21/10/1947) or their small hungry faces (Macintosh, 03/1948).

The authors were not alone in their interest in the youth and in their hope that the young Germans might change the world. Prominent political figures, for example the head of the French occupation Pierre Koenig, or international organizations like the UNESCO supported the idea that the German youth should be treated differently than the adults, especially in regard to their ability to travel (Jobs, 2015).

Nevertheless, these exceptions in no way lessened the rather bad image of the German population in general. For every example of a good German, there were several examples of bad ones: In contrast to the Protestant village, which was to be exterminated, stood those who wanted to exterminate it, in contrast to the married couple who did not trust their neighbours, stood the rest of the village that had spied on them and the misery of the German youth was the fault of the German adults. So, there may have been those in Germany that were better than the typical German, but their stories have only shown that this was not the norm, and so these exceptions confirm the rule, as the saying goes.

3.3. The State of Ideologies

One topic that interested the people outside of Germany in particular was the question about the state of National Socialism (and other ideologies) and how it was perceived in Germany. For years, non-Germans had only known them as members of military without own thoughts or own will. One of the first measures that the Allies took after occupying Germany was starting

the denazification. High profile National Socialists were arrested, others lost their jobs, the structure of the state system was renewed and the four zones were placed under Allied control.

Of course, this was also mentioned in the articles. The state of Nazism among the youth was of special interest for the Dutch travellers. One event that marked this and their impression of the young Germans was the Youth conference in Munich in 1947. Two authors attended the conference and wrote about their impressions afterwards: P. J. Meertens for the Socialist magazine *De Vlam* (25/07/1947) and N. B. Knoppers for the two Protestant youth magazines *Gerefoormeerd Jongenligsblad* (he mainly reported about the conference in 12/09/1947b) and *Bouwen en Bewaren* (here mainly in 17/10/1947). Both authors agreed that one of the most memorable moments of the conference was the speech of a young girl, as she was speaking about her doubts about the occupiers and the democracy. Apparently, she spoke in a rather National Socialist style. Although the authors obviously disagreed with the girl, they felt they could at least believe that this was the true opinion of the youth. It was really "[u]it het hart gesproken" (Knoppers, 12/09/1947b, p.286). In later discussions with smaller groups of young Germans, the authors found that this impression was true: Most young Germans did not actively believe in National Socialism anymore, but still had some sympathies towards the ideology. The authors' conclusion was that although the young people knew that National Socialism is not the right path, they still did not understand this yet. And how should they? They were not familiar with other systems or had the time or opportunity to learn about them.

However, the German population was generally accused of being quite National Socialist. National Socialism was "…nog op geen stukken na […] uitgeroeid…" (Kupers, 15/05/1946, p.3) and even if the Germans would not follow Hitler anymore "…een gedeelte van de naziphilosophie leeft nog sterk onder het Duitse volk" (K., 25/08/1949, p.1065). As proof for this the authors cited that there were still National Socialist underground organizations (Kupers, 21/08/1946), that there was a National Socialist party operating under a new name (B., 08/12/1949) and that anti-Semitism was publicly shown (K., 01/09/1949; Sussmann, 01/07/1947). Another proof was that some Germans themselves claimed that the bad living circumstances in their country would push them back to Nazism. According to the German proverb "Früher war alles besser" (Everything was better in the old days), the Germans longed for times when there was food and housing – those were when the Nazis were in power (K., 15/09/1949).

There were a few points of critique of the authors of the process of denazification process of the allied forces. First, they criticized the fact that this happened primarily on a political level

and less on an economic level, although they acknowledged the self-initiative in some companies where the workers themselves had taken it into their own hands to drive out National Socialists (Kupers, 12/06/1946). Second, they found it problematic that the focus was on arresting and punishing the well-known Nazi leaders and not so much on re-educating the silent mass of followers, although this was equally important because "…uitroeiing van het nationaal-socialisme [moet] allereerst een taak van het Duitse volk zelf [...] zijn…" (Kupers, 01/03/1947, p.3). In this context too, the problem of paper scarcity, and hence lack of information is a major issue (Reitsma, 25/03/1948), especially when thinking of the many people who may never have been convinced National Socialists, but who lived in an authoritarian state and were therefore influenced by constant propaganda for years (B., 27/10/1949).

Even though on this point, National Socialism was not yet seen as a problem of the past, the travellers also paid attention to another ideology, which, in their view, could become a problem in the future: Communism. As mentioned before, the loss of the Nazi regime left a hole that needed to be patched again and especially Protestant and Catholic authors feared that it might be patched by Communism (Duitsland, land van ruïnes en puin!, 19/02/1949; Knoppers, 29/08/1947). In one text, it literally was called the one thing that was worse than the present and past situation (Duitsland, land van ruïnes en puin!, 19/02/1949). Actually, the prevention of Communism in West Germany, was one of the main reasons for the authors to advocate a more generous policy of occupation towards Germany and its people (in an economic sense). They feared that the occupiers' measures would lead the Germans to this new ideology, rather than preventing this and they claimed that the main reason why communism was not a bigger problem was because of the refugees and the stories they told (Fortman, 1947; Ruitenberg, 19/07/1947). Even from a Socialist point of view, remarks about communism were made, but the conclusion here was that "[e]r schijnen dus in Duitsland ietwat fatsoenlijker, maar verder even gevaarlijke, communisten te zijn…" (E., 04/11/1950, p.5). So, they were not as afraid as Christian authors, but still regarded the Communists with a certain kind of suspicion.

To sum up it can be said that the authors agreed that National Socialism was not yet dead and gone and that it would take logner to get rid of it entirely. However, although the situation was bad and many circumstances endangered the Germans, they were not lost yet. They could be saved in the terms that they were recovering from the Nazi-propaganda and that they seemed to be resilient against the threat of another ideology (Communism). The authors concluded that people who were "…jarenlang ziek [...] door dwang, verraad, geweld, misleiding, bruutheid, hoogmoed, eerloosheid, zo'n volk kan alleen genezen door liefde, geduld en menselijkheid"

(Macintosh, 03/1948, p.71). Thus, it took only a little time, affection and help from people outside of Germany to help them to overcome their past deficiencies and become a valuable part of the bigger continental and worldwide society again.

3.4. Conclusion: Did they learn from their mistakes?

Bruner (2005) states that travellers are hunting for stories, preferably stories in which the traveller is the main character. However, the travellers in this case were also journalists and thus were content to take the role as observers. Still, instead of just saying, what they think about the Germans, the authors described their behaviours and reported stories they witnessed, thereby letting the readers draw their own conclusions. Here the stories that are least familiar with the experiences they brought from home are the ones that strike the most (Bruner, 2005).

Three dominant images of Germans in general could be identified: Germans as displaced people, Germans as individualistic people and Germans as people drawing from an old strength. The first two described them in a rather negative light. Germans did not know who they were, they did not know where they belonged and who to follow and they did not care about anything else than their own interests. The last image contradicts this to a certain degree. The Germans were in a bad situation at that moment, but nevertheless an old strength carried the people, and with the help of this strength, they would eventually get out of that bad situation.

This is what the above-mentioned idea of the end of the war as *Stunde Null* implies. The loss of home, past and future (Germans as displaced people) could result in two types of behaviour: It either pushed the person into despair, making them selfish and only caring for themselves (Germans as individualistic people) or give them motivation to start anew and try to build better world from the ruins (Germans as people drawing from an old strength). Of course, these are not exclusionary and people could do both.

All of these images can be connected to the ones that the Dutch authors had before their journeys (the pretour narratives). When they wrote that the Germans did not care for others than themselves, the authors were probably thinking back to the brutal military; when they wrote that the Germans lost a part of their identity when they lost their Führer, the authors were probably thinking about the blind obedience of the administrative staff during the Dutch occupation and when they wrote about the hard work of the Germans, they were probably thinking about the efficiency with which the occupation had been organized. Wielenga (2000) has collected several quotes of Dutch politicians from this time period that attribute the same

qualities to Germans. Thus, these images were in no way a new definition of what "being German" meant to someone who grew up in the Netherlands.

Two groups were excluded from this view of the typical German: People the authors to whom the authors felt connected (either by a direct connection or by a similar background) and the youth. Members of these groups were regarded with less strict eyes and were thus judged less harshly. This is a good example of how the Dutch viewed Germans as the "Other". In their own narrative and view of history, all Dutch were "good" resistance fighters, while all Germans were "bad" Nazis. Obviously, this clashed with the reality, which was much more nuanced. In order to explain how the authors, as good Dutch, could be close to someone who was apparently a bad German, they had to prove that this particular German was less of the "Other" (less German) than other Germans. So, they searched for the common ground, which they found in the fact that they had both fought against the Nazis, that they had both been persecuted by the Nazis, or at least that this particular German understood how much the Dutch had to suffer and acknowledged their guilt.

As for the youth, the Dutch were not alone in their special attention for them. Directly after the war several projects were started to educate the German youth – especially by encouraging them to travel in order to break through the isolation that the Nazi regime had brought to them (Jobs, 2015). They were too young to be held responsible for the past, so they were the ones that needed to carry the hope for a better future.

As a last important point, the relationship between Germans and ideologies has been focussed on. The Dutch authors were sure that it would take more time to free Germany entirely of National Socialism and they saw their own role in helping the Germans to do this. Furthermore, even though the division between Eastern and Western Germany was not a fact yet, the first signs of it could be seen: Not only in the fact that there was significantly less travellers to the Soviet zone than to the Western zones, but also in the way that the authors (especially those with a religious background) wrote about Communism. They were as worried about it as they were worried about National Socialism. Interestingly, this brought the Germans and the Dutch closer together, as they had a common opponent. Suddenly all the Germans were less of "the Other" than everything that was east of the German border.

Again, the context of Germany just having lost a war in which the Netherlands was on the opposing side is important. The authors were free to look down upon the Germans and thus negative stereotypes of them prevailed. Nonetheless, the Netherlands and Germany used to be close partners. There are many cultural similarities as well as economic connections and

uncountable personal relations across the borders, so the Dutch could not turn away from Germany completely.

4. Dutch-German-relations as seen by the travellers

4.1. Dutch emotions and Dutch self-image

Travel literature often reveals more about the traveller than about the host they are writing about (Meier, 2007). Their own background (thus the culture and upbringing) always heavily influences the image one has of someone else (Beller, 2007b). In other words, the understanding of oneself influences how one sees the other (idem). This is why it is important to not only look at the way the Dutch authors wrote about Germany and the Germans, but also to understand the Dutch self-image (especially in comparison to the Germans). Not only did the texts reveal what images the authors had of Germany and its inhabitants, but they also exposed the authors' feelings towards Germans and what they thought about the role their own country played in contrast to Germany's. Additionally, they revealed what emotions the authors felt during their journeys through Germany. All of this puts the earlier identified images into context.

The journey to Germany awakened many emotions in the Dutch travellers. On the one hand, Germany and the Netherlands always had strong relationships, politically, economically and not the least culturally. The most recent past experiences with Germans however, had an impact on the prospects of travelling to this country. Several authors reported that they started their journey with mixed feelings (B. F., 16/09/1949; Joseph, 06/09/1947; Sch., 21/10/1947; Schuh, 01/07/1950; Sussmann, 01/07/1947). They looked forward to the trip and were excited to learn about contemporary Germany, but they could not yet leave the memories of the five years of occupation behind.

One range of emotions that was revived not unexpectedly were anger and frustration. Germans who treated the travellers in an unfavourable way or who apparently lied to the travellers – especially about what had happened during the war – easily irritated them (K., 25/08/1949, Kanter-van Hettinga Tromp, 01/10/1948). They were convinced that their anger and their frustration were justified and that they thus did not need to hold back on expressing them (Een congres in Duitsland, 28/02/1948; Kanter-van Hettinga Tromp, 01/10/1948). Especially at the border, where German customs officers still wore uniform and held a certain form of authority it came to disputes (Joseph, 06/09/1947; Knoppers, 22/08/1947). For example, one group of travellers on their way to Prague who needed to pass through Germany with quite big cars that needed to be searched at the border reported that it made you "…even kregel, zo'n Duitser in je spulletjes te zien grabbelen" (Convooi naar Praag, 08/1947, p.12). Another example is a

traveller who, by the look and his way the customs officer spoke, felt reminded of his time at the *Polizeiliches Durchgangslager Amersfoort* (St., 18/05/1950). In general, seeing the German uniform and hearing the commanding tone that some Germans used, reminded the travellers of the war, which in some of them awakened strong desire for revenge. One of the authors asked the hypothetical question what a Dutch person who would be sent to Germany with a weapon would do. He suspected: "…waarschijnlijk zullen […] allen hetzelfde antwoorden: 'We zullen ze krijgen de Moffen'" (Deelen, 11/10/1946, p.6), and he approved of this. Others talked about this in a rather sarcastic tone: "Het was een soort beleefde tegenvisite voor het iets te lange en zeer ongewenste bezoek dat men hem gedurende de oorlog had gebracht" (Joseph, 06/09/1947, p.8). Nevertheless, readers were also warned not to let themselves be controlled by such negative emotions of hatred and anger and not cling on these feelings because they did not help anyone to build a better and more peaceful future (B. F., 16/09/1949; Duitsland herstelt zich, 22/01/1949; Een congres in Duitsland, 28/02/1948; Knoppers, 12/09/1947a; Macintosh, 03/1948; R., 03/1950; Reitsma, 25/03/1948).

Next to this rather negative range of emotions, there were also feelings of connection and admiration towards the Germans – especially towards those that the authors could find a common ground with. The longer they spent time in Germany the more

> "…groeit onze eerbied voor de eenzamen in Duitsland, die de internationale positie wèl zien, die wèl erkennen, dat wat thans over Duitsland komt, gevolg is van Hitlers wanbeheer, en die hun schouders onder het bovenmenselijk werk zetten, om orde te scheppen in deze gestolde chaos." (Ruitenberg, 12/07/1947, p.5)

As mentioned in Chapter 3.1 (p.34), they admired the hard work in the midst of the ruins – especially of those that had to work in sectors as public transportation and in schools. Here the contemporary German situation formed particularly bad conditions (lack of working infrastructure or respectively lack of paper and proper classrooms; Fortman, 1947; Kanter- van Hettinga Tromp, 01/10/1948; Peters, 24/10/1947; Sussmann, 01/07/1947). Furthermore, little acts of kindness by Germans who did not have much themselves moved the travellers to their cores (Reitsma, 25/03/1948). Coming to Germany had made some of the travellers realise that the people living in this country were people – just like anyone else: "En zo zagen wij, die de Duitsers jaren lang nooit anders dan in uniform hadden gezien, ze nu voor het eerst weer in hun ware gestalte, als mensen van gelijke beweging als wij" (Meertens, 25/07/1947, p.7). Wherever they went they met "...waardevolle mensen en dingen..." (Kanter-van Hettinga Tromp, 01/10/1948, p.97). In the end, one conclusion the travellers drew was that they needed to let go

of the feelings of anger and hatred and instead should share love and friendship with the Germans.

A resolution like this was easier said than done. However, after having spent time in Germany and seeing the bad living conditions of most Germans with their own eyes, the anger of most travellers transformed into pity automatically. In spite of the anger about what the Germans had done to the Netherlands they had to admit that "...wie Bremen, Hamburg en Kiel heeft gezien, weet, dat de bevolking ook daar verschrikkelijk is getroffen, erger dan in ons land" (Sch., 21/10/1947, p.2). They chose to not be dominated by their negative emotions, but to learn from what had happened to Germany and the Germans: "Ik ben eerder geneigd er bedroefd over te zijn. Want zolang wij ons er af maken met minachting, hatelijkheid, onverschilligheid... zolang wij de nood niet zien willen...zolang zullen *wij* de wereld niet verder brengen!" (Macintosh, 03/1948, p.71; emphasis by original author). Some of the editors of the magazines even asked for donations to help the Germans or respectively told their readers about donations that had been done in the name of the editorial department (Macintosh, 03/1948; Oijen, 15/11/1948). Their pity was directed above all to young Germans. The way in which their youth had been taken away and what this had done to them was a situation "…die meer medelijden dan afkeer in ons wekte" (K., 15/09/1949, p.1170).

From most of these emotions, a certain feeling of superiority can be concluded. This Dutch feeling of superiority dated back to the pre-war period. The Dutch saw their country as a country of neutrality, justice and less power hungry than other European countries (Wielenga, 2000). Additionally in these early years after the war, the self-image of the Netherlands as country of resistance still prevailed. Statements like "...wij, Nazivijandige Nederlanders..." (Cr.-d. V., 23/01/1948, p.2) and "We hadden immers allemaal mensen te verbergen in onze huizen!" (Geus-Smelt, 18/12/1948, p.6) matched this Dutch self-image. Furthermore, the Dutch authors set their country on one pedestal with the Allied forces, in spite of the rather passive role as occupied country during the war. In their perspective of history, they had actively fought against the Germans: "We hebben toch niet alleen geslagen om te slaan..." (Knoppers, 10/10/1947, p.324 and also in Knoppers, 12/09/1947a, p.1) and "…wij – de geallieerden" (Hollants, 18/10/1946, p.2). In some of their assumptions about Germans, the travellers seemed to forget that there was a time before the war. Whenever someone told them they had been to the Netherlands before, the authors assumed it must have been during the war and as member of military (M. A., 09/12/1949).

The authors clearly felt as victors over the Germans and thus as superior to them. Several authors told "…hoe dankbaar [de Duitsers] waren omdat juist wij Hollanders hen in staat stelden dit mee te kunnen maken" (Oijen, 15/11/1948, p.II; another mention of thankfulness in Grabandt, 1947). The Germans were thankful because people from the Netherlands came to talk to them, teach them and connect with them. Being Dutch made them inevitably interesting for the Germans: "Er kwamen binnenlopers, die gehoord hadden, dat er mensen uit Holland waren" (Kuiper, 15/10/1948, p.310). By pointing this out, they made it clear that they believed they had something to give to the Germans, or respectively that the Germans expected to receive something from them.

Next to this, they did not neglect their own victim role. Especially in the first few years after the war, many believed that the German occupation had the objective to make the Netherlands dependent on Germany (Lak, 2015). The authors showed that they also agreed with this mind-set, for example by pointing out, "…dat wij – mede dank zij [sic] de uitnemende handigheid en de niets ontziende efficiency van [Duitslands] legers en soldaten – niet alleen niet meer rijk zijn, maar zelfs arm" (Joseph, 06/09/1947, p.9). The question of guilt for the Dutch was quite clearly equivalent to the question whether the Germans understood and felt sorry for what had happened in the Netherlands during the war. Unfortunately for them, they could not "…durven beweren, dat wij overal volledig begrip hebben gevonden voor de gevoelens…" (Fortman, 1947, p.177). The authors felt that the Germans did not care (enough) about the feelings of their Dutch neighbours, which fits in with the image that the Dutch had of the Germans as individualistic and egocentric people as explained above (Chapter 3.1, p.32). Here it should be noted that this role of victim was mainly related to the occupation of the Netherlands and less to the Holocaust. With the exception of the Jewish article (Sussmann, 01/07/1947), there is little mention of crimes against Jews and other victims.

To sum up, the Dutch travellers had mixed feelings about Germany. However, on the journey these mixed feelings mostly transformed into pity or admiration. They mostly looked down upon the Germans and viewed themselves as people of resistance that had fought and won the war.

4.2. Dutch proposals for the solution of the "German problem"

Despite the mixed emotions that the journeys awakened in the travellers, they still felt connected to Germany. The earlier mentioned relationships did not only exist on an economic

and political level, but also on personal level. Authors such as W. G. Joseph, who was born and raised in Germany, M. Macintosh, who on the trip stayed with old friends, or P. J. Meertens, who believed in the cultural unity of the two countries, are just a few examples of authors of the texts that had a close connection to Germany. So, it is no wonder that, when talking about Germany and its different problems, the authors also discussed possible solutions.

There was no clear definition of what they called the "German Problem". The problems covered by this term ranged from material scarcity, to problems of housing (Chapter 2.2 and Chapter 2.3). It also referred to the attitude of the Germans, for example, to ideologies and their view of the world in general (as explained in Chapter 3). Christian authors focussed more on religious problems and Socialists more on material problems.

In their self-assigned role as the morally superior neighbour, the Dutch authors felt it important to propose possible solutions for these problems. While on the one hand there were many negative emotions regarding the Germans, on the other hand they could not neglect that "…de minst schuldigen het meest [lijden]" (Cohen, 07/12/1946, p.5).

Starting with the Socialist authors, they proposed that the most important step in helping Germany out of its misery was to refuel the economy, thus ending the famine, the material scarcity and giving the people something useful to do (D., 02/08/1947). Furthermore, there was criticism of the policies of the Allied forces. First, the authors demanded an end to the division of Germany, because the resources of the zones were not evenly distributed and the different leaders of the zones did not follow one political line (Kupers, 26/06/1946); second, they demanded that the occupiers should put more effort in printing and distributing books and thus information. The lack of paper made books a kind of luxury: "Wat wordt hierdoor een massa propagandamateriaal tegen het Nazisysteem aan het volk onthouden! Wat zouden goedkope volksuitgaven in massaoplage hier een goed werk kunnen verrichten" (Reitsma, 25/03/1948, p.99). Another interesting statement by Socialist sources was that one of the strongest forces against Nazism were the workers' unions. By distributing the power towards the workers and giving them insight into the doing of their bosses, for example, the financial support of political figures by big companies, could have been prevented or so they argued (E., 04/11/1950; Kupers, 26/06/1946). However, in the end the authors lay the responsibility with the Germans themselves and explained that "…alle bevolkings-groepen de handen ineenslaan [moeten] en onder leiding van de zelf gekozen overheid de wederopbouw planmatig ter hand nemen" (B., 08/12/1949, p.4).

When focussing on the Protestant point of view, slightly other preferences can be identified. The Protestant travellers, too, recognized the importance of giving people the opportunity to work and thus giving them a useful task, but they saw the most important part of the solution in teaching them Christian values as "barmhartigkeit" (Knoppers, 12/09/1947b, p.284), "geduld" and "naastenliefde" (Macintosh, 03/1948, p.71), as well as trust in God, as he was the one who could save the motherland of Luther (B. F., 14/10/1949).

Catholics had a very similar view of the problems, although instead of worrying about empty Protestant churches, they worried about empty Catholic churches. Improvement of the material situation and cleaning up of the rubble were seen as necessary steps on the way, but more important it was to be "grootmoedig" (Fortman, 1947, p.178) and to forgive. They emphasised that "Alleen het Christendom…" (Muller, 03/11/1949, p.5) was in state to save the Germans. In the end, they even asked their readers to include the Germans in their prayers (Mettrop, 07/1950).

As the most important element of the solution, on the one hand to help the Germans out of their misery and, on the other hand, to make them valuable members of the international community, the need to strengthen contact with Germany was agreed on. By the end of the war, the Germans had been isolated in their own country for more than a decade. Not only did they (especially the young) crave the contact with the rest of the world, but they also needed it, as this was the most effective way to wipe out the stereotypes that had been planted in the minds of the population by the Nazi rulers.

There were three basic ideas about the role of personal and direct international contact in the post-war future: First, it should be an answer to the German desire for contact, second, the Dutch regarded it as their personal responsibility to provide this contact, and third, in the long run, close contact between people was considered the only thing that would prevent the outbreak of another war.

Starting with the first idea regarding the role of contact, the travellers noticed that "…contact met het buitenland hevig wordt begeerd" (Fortman, 1947, p.178). Since the beginning of the Thirties, the inhabitants of Germany barely could get any trustworthy information about other nations. Especially for the young this lack of diversity of information was hard. So as soon as they had the chance to, they expressed "…het dringende verzoek om hen tot in contact te brengen met de jongeren uit andere landen" (Meertens, 25/07/1947, p.6). They yearned to learn about the world, directly from others, rather than through state-sanctioned, probably propaganda-influenced channels.

However, this was not a one-sided wish. The travellers who visited Germany observed that the Germans were thankful for their attention and thus viewed it as their responsibility to help to rebuild the contact that used to exist between the countries: "En dat is, wat wij, Nederlanders, kunnen geven: Verlossing uit het lange isolement. **CONTACT**!" (Kanter-van Hettinga Tromp, 01/10/1948, p.98, emphasis by original author). Nevertheless, there was a need for structuring of the contact that was established. "Men leert eens andere gewoonten en gebruiken kennen..." (Sch., 21/10/1947, p.2), which was a benefit of travelling. However, there was also the other side, namely that one "...ziet daarnaast toch ook weer vele punten van overeenkomst" (Sch., 21/10/1947, p.2). In other words, the authors thought that getting together with someone who comes from another place was something beneficial in order to gain a new perspective, however, there still needed to be some common ground to really connect with this person. The travellers felt the responsibility to connect with Germans, but only the ones with the same background as themselves: *"...dat wij ook in vruchtbaar expansief contact moeten treden met gelijkgezinden daarbuiten*." (Peters, 24/10/1947, p.7, italics by original author) and "laten wij er voor zorgen, dat er contact komt. Geestelijk contact" (Ruitenberg, 19/07/1947, p.3).

They also saw a practical reason behind searching for contact with Germans. After having to endure two world wars started by this country, there were great fears that this could happen a third time. The only thing that authors from all backgrounds agreed on that could prevent a third world war was that there had to be contact. Direct contact was needed because "[a]lleen dit levende contact zal het mogelijk maken, dat wij elkaar als mens weer naderen en dat de betrekkelijkheid van elk menselijk oordeel ons duidelijker voor ogen komt te staan" (Een congres in Duitsland, 28/02/1948, p.2).

Travelling and thus getting into contact with others would teach them about the post-war morality and thus help them become trustworthy again. Furthermore, one of the major images of Germans was their lack of ability to look beyond their own problems. Here having contact was the solution to correct this negative German trait as well: "Juist dit geestelijk contact met andere volkeren schijnt ons de beste weg om het Duitse volk heen te helpen over de grenzen van een al te beperkte visie…" (Fortman, 1947, p.178). There were even first mentions of a European Union: "Een Europeese [sic] Unie is absoluut noodzakelijk" (Fortman, 1947, p.178), and "...de voorhoede kunnen worden van Europa's eenheid" (Rot, 05/02/1949, p.4).

The travellers understood that the German people were in distress and that this was "[e]en nood, waaruit het zich zonder buitenlandse hulp niet bevrijden kan" (B., 27/10/1949, p.6). After times of war, it was of the utmost importance to meet each other in order to find humanity in each

other and to come closer together again (Een congres in Duitsland, 28/02/1948). Hereby the importance of meeting average people that were just trying to get on with their lives may not be underestimated (Prakke, 09/1947). If this was done then the long lasting effect would be that "…twee mensen nooit elkaars vijanden kunnen blijven wanneer ze elkaar hebben leren kennen…" (Meertens, 25/07/1947, p.6/7).

4.3. Conclusion: The Netherlands as the good neighbour

The authors described very complicated emotions when they wrote about the Germans. Macintosh (03/1948) summed this up quite perfectly: „Ik word geslingerd tussen verbazing, afkeer, medelijden, verontwaardiging, wanhoop en bewondering. En ik merk, dat al deze gevoelens ontoereikend zijn" (p.70).

The anger and hatred that were awakened during years of war and occupation stood opposed to pity with the contemporary German situation and feelings of sympathy towards former friends. All of these contradicting emotions were difficult to understand and made it difficult to interpret their experiences during the journeys. Narratives help to make meaning of them (Bruner, 2005). Positive emotions and experiences were attached to the narrative of Germany as the old friend and neighbour who needed help. Negative ones however, were attached to the narrative of Germany as the aggressive and as untrustworthy occupier.

Furthermore, this chapter illustrates how the Dutch formed their self-image by emphasising that they were not German. The narrative they used for this (the Netherlands as country of resistance) actually originated during the times of the Dutch revolt in the 16th century, which started the Eighty Years' War, and the "Batavian myth" that became popular and widespread during this time (Krol, 2007). After World War II, this could easily be applied to the recent history. Nevertheless, the Dutch also saw themselves as the victims of the German oppressors, so correspondingly the Germans were the vicious attackers that rightfully were overthrown and defeated.

These contradicting emotions and narratives are another example of the dilemma Dutch-German-relations found themselves in after the war: The Dutch wanted punishment and restitution, but at the same time Germany used to be an important partner and the Dutch knew that they needed a strong Germany for their own reconstruction as well as to protect them and support them on an international level. Personal feelings clashed with the desires of the broader community.

Their journey to Germany helped the travellers to find sympathy with the Germans and they started seeing them in a more nuanced way. Not only did the journey make them aware of the bad situation in Germany and convince them that feelings of revenge and claims for compensation would not help anyone, but it also prompted them to realise that there are possible friends everywhere, if one just gets to know the people. This brought at least some nuance to their writing and their personal feelings about the Germans.

The travellers understood that it was especially the direct contact to each other, may it be by writing letters, by exchanging literature or by actually travelling and meeting each other, that helped to reshape certain images and they concluded that this was the best long-term solution to reintegrate their neighbouring country into the world community.

This in combination with their own feelings of superiority prompted them to propose different solutions for Germany's problems. After all, who would be more qualified to show the Germans how to properly behave than their smaller neighbours? As Jobs (2017) has shown in his book, the Dutch were not the only ones that used travelling and tourism (and thus contact) as a tool to connect with Germany and reintegrate it into the European community. Trying to "heal" Germans (especially the youth) from National Socialism by letting them see the world and ending their isolation in a broken country was something that initiators from all over Europe and the United State supported, so here the Dutch were not on their own in their efforts to help the Germans.

Final Conclusion: Germany-images in the Netherlands

The objective of this thesis was to find out, which images of Germany Dutch travellers in the late Forties had, how these were conveyed in magazine articles and what impact these did have on the travellers. Important topics were for example, what attributes the travellers assigned to Germans, whether the images differed from the general (negative) images of Germany and what this revealed about the travellers and the role they assigned to themselves. In order to answer these questions an inductive content analysis of 80 articles from the years 1946 to 1950 has been done.

Three main images regarding Germany as a country have been identified: Germany as a land of ruins and rubble, Germany as a land of scarcity and Germany as a land of contrast. According to the authors, almost all of Germany lay in ruins and almost everyone in Germany was starving. However, at the same time, they acknowledged that Germany was a big and complicated country what led to several contrasts. Interestingly, this was quite similar to the German contemporary self-image. Still today, the first few years after the war are memorized as times of poverty, creating national icons like the *Trümmerfrauen* (Jähner, 2019).

Next to the images of the country, images of the people have been analysed. For this, the three main characteristics that have been attributed to Germans were identified. The travellers saw them as displaced people, as individualistic and egocentric people and contradicting to these, as people who were drawing from an old strength. Two exceptions were made from this: the youth and people the authors felt connected to. Separating these two added nuance to the image of the typical German by explaining the different ways in which the German acquaintances either felt guilt or were resisting the Nazi regime and how the youth tried to find their place in the new world, thereby showing that there were also Germans that were not entirely “fout”. Furthermore, the German state of ideologies has been focussed on, revealing that the authors thought that while it might take a little longer to eliminate National Socialism, the “new” threat of Communism should not be ignored.

In the last chapter, the emotions and the role that the travellers assign to themselves as Dutch have been explored. In general, the journeys made them rethink and re-evaluate their emotions towards Germany and it seems like they tried to ease the reader into doing the same thing. Seeing Germany as a land of ruins and rubble and as a land of scarcity turned the anger that the travellers felt at the start of their journey into pity with those that needed to experience these bad circumstances. Something similar happened when the travellers met Germans who had the

same political or religious background as themselves. When they felt connected to someone frustration turned to friendship and admiration, thereby changing the whole tone that was used to report about the Germans. This newfound sympathy (that was based on the close relationship between the two countries from before the war) in combination with the Dutch feelings of moral superiority prompted the authors to propose some ideas on how the different German problems (most importantly that of reintegrating Germany in the world community) could be solved. The idea that was most frequently named was that the contact to Germany needed to be re-established and the close relationships between the countries needed to be strengthened. So in short, the thesis has shown that travelling to Germany has changed the way the travellers viewed Germany, if only by awakening pity in them.

The analysis has shown that the impressions of the travellers and thus the narratives they used, were strongly influenced by their experiences with Germany and the Germans during the war. Their emotions and the way they viewed themselves were connected to the images and narratives they used to talk about their journeys. Anger turned to pity, frustration to friendship and thus the image of the typical German as egocentric, individualistic and displaced turned into that of the German as hard-working. Seeing the demolished country helped them to understand that it was not only their own people that suffered from the war, but that also the Germans did have to endure its consequences.

So while on a basic level the journey did not change what the travellers thought about Germany, the impressions they gained, the people they got to know and the friendships they formed along the way helped them to see the Germans more nuanced and to better understand that a stable Germany is important for a stable Europe. This lesson they tried to pass on to their readers.

By now, the topic of Dutch-German-relations mostly has been analysed from a political and/or economic approach. So, the opinions and statements of political figures were in the spotlight. By focussing on travellers and the medium of magazines, this study looked at the topic from a different, more “in touch with the people” perspective. The articles were written (mostly) by average people for average people. This study reveals how images and stereotypes like the ones about Germans were not only distributed in political debates and newspapers, but also in popular culture as magazines. Wielenga (2000) for example acknowledges that contact had been re-enacted along pillarized lines, but he also stated that this did not reach the majority of the Dutch inhabitants. Through magazine articles like the ones analysed, the amount of people that could at least learn about effects of travelling was greater than anticipated. Additionally, does it show how the big political lines and trends that have an impact on commercial

relationships that Lak (2017) focusses on, have been interpreted for and by usual citizens. Both researchers emphasize the inconsistent decisions on economic and political levels. On the one hand, the Dutch did not trust the Germans; on the other hand, they needed them for their own reconstruction and as a partner against the East. These contradictory messages did also reach the average citizen and made it hard for them to know what to think about their neighbouring country. This study shows that travelling to Germany helped the travellers to understand the situation and to organize their feelings towards their neighbours. Furthermore, do other researchers that take the tourism approach into account, like the short observations of Wielenga (2000) and Nordkamp (2019) focus on German travellers to the Netherlands and not the other way round, as this study does.

Tourism studies offered some valuable tools for the analysis. Especially Bruner's remarks on narratives and storytelling helped to analyse the articles and to understand how the different pre-existing motions about Germany influenced the statements of the authors as well as how the context in which the articles were written, played a role in the message they conveyed. Additionally, the concept of Tourist Gaze was beneficial when trying to identify where the attention of the travellers was directed at and contrastingly, what they might have overlooked. The concept of Othering served to analyse how the Dutch travellers differentiated themselves from the Germans. Lastly, the study of Imagology offered a better understanding of the notions about national images and how they are translated into writing.

Still, there are many more ways in which the tourism perspective can help further the understanding of cross-cultural reconciliation after times of crisis. These approaches could for example be to increase the time frame of a study similar to this or to conduct a study that focusses on early travel magazines and other travel media that aim to convince people to travel to a certain destination, in order to analyse how the images changed when more people were able to travel. Additionally, even a more personal level could be researched, by analysing travel diaries, where the traveller describes their journey and the effect that it had on them personally in more detail. Furthermore, the German point of view is hardly taken into account. This study as well as others were either written by Dutchmen or focussed on the impact that tourism and travelling had on the Dutch. How the Germans regarded this, is overlooked.

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