

Rethinking Immigration with the Ethnographic Museum

A Case Study on

Multidirectionality and Implication in the Wereldmuseum

Name: Martha Echevarría González

Student number: 477368

Supervisor: Dr. Hanka Otte

Master of Art, Culture, & Society

ERASMUS UNIVERSITY ROTTERDAM

ERASMUS SCHOOL OF HISTORY, CULTURE & COMMUNICATION

MASTER THESIS

Date: June 18, 2021

ABSTRACT

To take responsibility for their complicity in colonial activities and crimes such as creating racialized stereotypes and owning looted objects, European museums have revised their collections and exhibitions and turned towards contemporary issues such as immigration in their exhibitions. In Rotterdam's Wereldmuseum – the case study of this research – the interlacing narratives and histories of colonialism, nation-building, and immigration become apparent. Today, the public debate surrounding immigration, which is strongly connected to histories of colonization, continues to affect the livelihood of immigrants trying to build a life in The Netherlands. This debate often highlights the importance of immigrant integration which ignores the continuities of colonialism and reproduces racialized power structures. To find narratives that go beyond the discourse of integration, this study looks at the role of museums as producers and distributors of knowledge and poses the following question: How does the Wereldmuseum change the dominant narrative of immigrants in The Netherlands? To find an answer, this interdisciplinary research bridges theories from cultural memory studies, postcolonialism, museum studies, and migration studies. More specifically, this research uses Michael Rothberg's concepts of *multidirectional memory* and *implication*, which offer the analytical depth and clarity to understand the connections between historical violence and contemporary injustices. This research explores their role and function in the museum space through careful dissection of these concepts and qualitative content analysis. After collecting and investigating hundreds of texts and objects from two exhibitions in the Wereldmuseum, this research finds that there are two meaningful ways in which the museum changes the narrative around immigration: by addressing its own and the visitors' implication in past and present injustices and by showing networks of multidirectional memory in the entangled histories of colonialism and immigration. While further research needs to be conducted studying the effectiveness of the exhibition through, for example, surveys and interviews of museum visitors, this paper already contributes to a growing collection of literature on the aftermaths of colonialism and provides a clear methodological example of how to analyze Rothberg's concepts in the context of an ethnographic museum.

KEYWORDS: *Ethnographic Museum, Immigrant Integration, Multidirectional Memory, Implication, Colonialism*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	2
TABLE OF CONTENTS	3
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	4
1. INTRODUCTION	5
1.1 STRUCTURE	6
2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	9
2.1 IMMIGRANTS IN THE NETHERLANDS	9
2.1.1 <i>The Museum's Connection to Immigrants</i>	11
2.2 CULTURAL THEORY AND MUSEUMS	12
2.3 CULTURAL MEMORY STUDIES	14
2.3.1 <i>Implication</i>	14
2.3.2 <i>Multidirectional memory</i>	16
3. METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN	18
3.1 OPERATIONALIZATION: IMPLICATION AND MULTIDIRECTIONALITY	18
3.2 CASE STUDY	22
3.3 SAMPLE & DATA COLLECTION	23
3.4 DATA ANALYSIS: QUALITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS	24
4. RESULTS	25
4.1 OVERVIEW OF RESULTS OBTAINED	27
4.2 IDENTIFYING IMPLICATION IN THE MUSEUM	28
4.2.1 <i>Critical Connection between Past and Present</i>	29
4.2.2 <i>Reflexivity: curating with a focus on self-implication</i>	31
4.2.3 <i>Addressing visitors</i>	33
4.2.4 <i>Overall presence and uses of implication in the exhibition</i>	35
4.3 IDENTIFYING MULTIDIRECTIONALITY IN THE MUSEUM EXHIBITION	36
4.3.1 <i>Encounters</i>	37
4.3.2 <i>Transnational & Non-Western Perspective</i>	40
4.3.3 <i>Multidirectionality in the Space</i>	43
4.3.4 <i>Rotterdam, Global City: Combining Encounters with Transnationalism</i>	45
4.3.5 <i>Overall Presence and Use of Multidirectionality in the Exhibition</i>	47
5. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION	48
REFERENCES	51
APPENDIX	55
A1. CODEBOOK	55
A2. OVERVIEW OF COLLECTED MATERIAL	60
A2.1 <i>Rotterdam Crossroads</i>	60
A2.2 <i>Remix Rotterdam</i>	64
A3. ABBREVIATIONS	68

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In a year as unusual, unpredictable, and changing as this one, research projects of such scope and speed would not be possible without our human need for each other. This project has taught me a great deal about academics and research, but more importantly, it has reminded me about the importance of mutual work, cooperation, and peer support. It is for that reason that I want to extend my gratitude first and foremost to my supervisor, Dr. Hanka Otte, for her support and constant enthusiasm in this large interdisciplinary endeavor. When all bridges seemed to be burning down and doors kept on closing, it was her belief in this research project that inspired me to continue working and finding alternatives. I also want to thank the Wereldmuseum staff for their willingness to help and their flexibility during the pandemic, which allowed me to visit the museum venue and conduct this research in times when it seemed impossible.

I am forever grateful to my peers, whom I now call friends, for their academic guidance during those long days at the library, for all those (un)necessary coffee breaks, for the never-ending philosophical debates, and for their emotional support in times of stress, crises, but also joy and success. And all in all, I want to thank the cosmos for putting such wonderful people in my path throughout the last year. Finally, and most importantly, I am infinitely grateful to my family who, even after years without understanding what I study, continue believing in me and supporting my academic and life choices. I want to send all my infinite love to my parents who have backed me all the way, my brother and sister for being my role models, and my best friend and partner for his endless patience, love, support, and delicious food. This research project would have not been possible without you.

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years and with the rise of postcolonial research and activism, cultural institutions and nations have been placed in the spotlight of the debate for their involvement in colonial looting, exploitation, stereotyping, and othering of non-Western people. Ethnographic museums have received particular attention due to the enormous number of non-Western objects, artworks, and artifacts they possess and the ways they exhibit them. For years, museums have used these objects to create stories about 'strange' and 'exotic' foreign cultures with 'backwards traditions' that amaze Western audiences. As part of the European colonial enterprises, these negative representations were used to uphold a narrative of Western superiority and justify colonial violence. They were also used to create an imagined community formed by those who belonged to Western ideals and values and those who did not (the West vs the rest). In other words, imagined communities – in this case, nations – were partially built through cultural institutions like museums, whose representations supported the idea that one group belongs to this community and another one does not.

Today, practices of Othering and exclusion of non-Western groups are still reproduced in mainstream media, cultural institutions, and governmental policy. These practices affect the narrative around people who live in remote parts of the world and those who live in the West and do not comply to Western expectations. With the high influx of migration to Europe, these Othering narratives and practices continue affecting all immigrants with non-Western backgrounds. Therefore, it is partially the responsibility of institutions of power and knowledge production to reframe the colonial narratives that have affected non-Western groups for centuries. Across The Netherlands, museums – such as The Wereldmuseum – have shown great interest in joining social reparation movements, giving visibility to colonial injustices, and changing the contemporary narratives around Dutch citizens with non-Western backgrounds and other migrants. For this research, I examined the Wereldmuseum as a case study of this phenomenon occurring in museums across The Netherlands and other parts of Europe.

The Wereldmuseum was founded in 1885 in Rotterdam as an ethnographic museum with objects obtained by Dutch collectors, researchers, sailors, and other travelers. Its early policy was focused on making expeditions to non-Western parts of the world, collecting documents and objects, and funding anthropological research (Wereldmuseum, n.d.-a). Today, along with three other ethnographic museums across the Netherlands – Tropenmuseum in Amsterdam, Museum Volkenkunde in Leiden, and the Afrika Museum in Berg en Dal – The Wereldmuseum is part of

a partnership named National Museum for World Cultures. The NMWC foundation has already established its compromise with the repatriation of claimed objects looted from the colonies and its interest in researching the implications of its exhibition practices and possibilities of repairing colonial injustices (Museum Volkenkunde, n.d.).

In 2020, the Wereldmuseum inaugurated its semi-permanent exhibition *Rotterdam Crossroads: At the Crossroads of Culture*, where they invited contemporary Rotterdammers with immigrant backgrounds to share their experiences in the city. In addition to an ethnographic collection, the exhibition showcases contemporary artworks by artists with non-Western backgrounds who live in The Netherlands. By having an exhibition about the experiences of immigrants in an ethnographic museum, the Wereldmuseum raises questions about the complicated and interlaced histories of Dutch colonialism and contemporary immigration to The Netherlands. In this research, I argue that through this exhibition, the museum has the potential to create new narratives about immigrants. More specifically, I answer the following question: *How does the Wereldmuseum change the dominant narrative of immigrants in The Netherlands?*

To tackle this question, I have looked towards the Humanities, particularly the field of cultural memory studies and postcolonial studies, to apply their theories in the context of social science research. Through a concrete case study, I materialized the theories of cultural memory studies, namely *implication*, *multidirectional memory*, and *transnational memory*, to understand the tangible effects that these concepts and theories can have on museums. By developing a method to identify these concepts in the Wereldmuseum, I aimed to understand how the museum pushes to create a new narrative of immigrants in The Netherlands. To carry out this research, I tested how and to what extent the current exhibitions meet the concepts of multidirectional memory and implication as tools that can change the dominant discourse of immigration. By identifying these concepts in the exhibition, I can also find how the Wereldmuseum deals with its political responsibility towards its colonial past and its social responsibility regarding contemporary issues.

1.1 Structure

In [chapter 2](#), – Theoretical Framework – I introduced the current immigrant situation in The Netherlands and its ties to Dutch colonial history to argue that current models of immigrant integration are ineffective neo-colonial practices. I then situated this research around the frame of cultural theory by presenting the role of the museum as a power-knowledge institution and

suggested that it uses its symbolic power as a tool to address unresolved claims for justice. I introduced the concept of **diachronic** and **synchronic implications** as used in cultural memory studies to argue that the museum can make visitors aware of their implication to the practices of colonization, segregation, and violence. Finally, I introduced the concept of **multidirectional memory** and **transnationalism** to study how they can be used as tools to generate new narratives in the museum. A transnational and multidirectional perspective asserts the productive effects of different cultural memories encountering each other. Theory shows that using this approach of memory can change ongoing memories and narratives about immigration. It might further contribute to an understanding of cultural identity as historically contingent and not naturally produced. This, in turn, is relevant for times of globalization where people are in constant migration and bring their traditions and memories with them.

In [chapter 3](#), – Methodology and Research Design – I developed the research methodology and operationalize the central concepts for this study. To analyze the Wereldmuseum, I collected visual and textual data from two exhibitions at the museum – *Rotterdam Crossroads* and *Remix Rotterdam*. The former, which is the current central exhibition of the museum and with approximately 300 objects on display, was my primary source of data. The latter, with 120 objects, was used only as a complementary source to show examples in which it makes use of more innovative approaches than *Rotterdam Crossroads*. Most objects at the exhibition were accompanied by detailed descriptions, labels, or videos. With this data, I carried out a qualitative content analysis through which I was able to identify the presence of implication and multidirectionality in their various forms. Since both concepts are brand new in the field of memory studies (2019 and 2009, respectively), there is currently no methodology available on how to measure them in the context of a museum space. Therefore, in the process of operationalization, I developed a series of indicators that can help identify these concepts in the museum context. To make sure the analysis is reliable, most of the content analysis is based on the textual information (labels) in the museum, and only a small section is based on the visual information (curation and space). This way, I could rely on fixed textual indicators such as keywords rather than changing visual cues.

In [chapter 4](#), – Results – I present the results of this study in the following structure: First, I give an overview of the total data collected in the museum, the differences and similarities between both exhibitions, and the extent to which I identified implication and multidirectionality in the exhibition. Second, I show the process through which thematic coding led to a series of indicators that point out the presence of implication in the museum's labels and texts. The

indicators for implication are a critical connection between the past and present, reflexivity, and addressing visitors directly. I explore each one of these indicators in detail with examples from the exhibition to show the process through which I elaborated them and the nuances between different texts. Third, I introduce the indicators for multidirectionality: encounters as generators, a transnational and non-Western perspective, and the arrangement of objects in the museum space. I then explore these indicators with examples from the exhibition to show the process through which they emerged. Finally, I make a close analysis of a section of the exhibition that discusses immigrants' lives in Rotterdam.

Finally, in [chapter 5](#) – Conclusion and Discussion – I show the different possibilities that the results offer in the process of changing the dominant narratives around non-Western immigrants. I discuss how the museum incorporates both concepts in its exhibition and their effects in the process of shaping new narratives. Finally, I discuss the limitations of this research and possibilities for further research.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Immigrants in The Netherlands

The growth of non-Western immigrant populations in Europe and in The Netherlands in our currently conflictive and globalized world is increasing faster year after year. Immigration to and within the European Union in the last decades has been of interest to academics, policymakers, and governments who are trying to find ways to help immigrants and non-immigrants coexist and work together. In The Netherlands, the government categorizes immigrants as anyone who is not born in The Netherlands and anyone born there but who has at least one parent with a migrant background. To be considered indigenous Dutch or a person of Dutch descent, one has to be born in The Netherlands from two parents who were also born there (Crul et al., 2019; Bosma, 2012).

The majority of the non-Western immigrant population is mainly characterized by three different groups: postcolonial immigrants from the Antilles, Suriname, and Indonesia, labor immigrants from Turkey and Morocco, and asylum immigrants from different parts of the Middle East and Northern Africa (Bosma, 2012). The immigrants connected to the Dutch colonies arrived in different waves throughout the 20th century. The first wave, between 1945 and 1962, saw around 300,000 immigrants (mostly repatriated Eurasians with Dutch citizenship) travel from Indonesia to The Netherlands (Bosma, 2009). These immigrants had Dutch citizen rights and were, therefore, a privileged group within colonial society (Bosma, 2012). During the second wave in the 1970s, another 180,000 immigrants traveled from Surinam. Finally, during the third wave in the 1980s, around 90,000 immigrants arrived from the Antilles to The Netherlands. Most of these postcolonial immigrants are connected to violent and painful histories of colonization, war, and slavery. On the other hand, labor immigrants from Turkey and Morocco began arriving in the Netherlands in the 1970s as guest workers and eventually settled down there (Huijnk, 2018). The current public debate around non-Western immigrants tends to be focused on those of Turkish and Moroccan descent partly because of their fast population growth and their contribution to the presence of Islam in the highly secular country. Before their arrival in the 1970s, the Muslim population in The Netherlands was less than 1%, while now it accounts for approximately 6% of the population (Huijnk, 2018).

In the last 20 years, the population in The Netherlands has grown by 1.5 million people, of whom 96% have a migration background (whether first or second generation). Currently, 25% of the population in The Netherlands has an immigrant background. The *Centraal Bureau Voor de*

Statistiek (CBS) expects that by 2070, the number of immigrants, including children of immigrants, will grow to 42% of the country's entire population (CBS, 2020). At the same time, the presence of far-right groups and populist politicians – Geert Wilders and Thierry Baudet – has increased, becoming a threat for immigrants looking to build new lives in The Netherlands (Van Selm, 2019). The accumulation of histories of violence, the current social and political polarization, and the politicization of Islam, have led to precarious living situations, unfair stereotyping of immigrants, and further social division (Damhuis, 2019).

Since the early 2000s, and with the assassination of anti-Islamist politician Pim Fortuyn, the public debate on immigrants and integration has become central to Dutch politics (Vasta, 2007). A survey on Dutch public opinion about non-EU immigrants shows that 40% of respondents feel 'fairly negative' about immigration of people from outside the EU to the Netherlands, a significant 11% feel 'very negative.' In comparison, 41% feel 'fairly positive,' and only 4% feel 'very positive' about it (European Commission, 2017). This polarized view on non-EU immigrants has been strongly fueled by the presence of anti-Islam and right-wing politicians in the last 30 years (Damhuis, 2019).

Most of this public debate is centered around the different modes and levels of integration and the responsibility that immigrants have to assimilate into the host society (Vasta, 2007). The aim of many current integration policies is to build programs and systems that help immigrants blend into the culture they are arriving in and conform to the norms of living to find better job opportunities and live more harmoniously with the rest of society. However, many scholars are now debating whether the idea of integration should be eradicated and substituted for a more just term (Schinkel 2017; Favell 2019; Saharso; 2019).

For Willem Schinkel (2017), integration is a normative concept and a form of neocolonial practice in which immigrants are seen as outsiders of an imagined society, an idea that echoes Benedict Anderson's 'imagined communities' (Anderson, 2006). "'Society' is imagined as a pristine, pure domain that is without problems" (Schinkel, 2018, p. 5). Therefore, social problems reside outside of society, around individuals who still need to be integrated into this. The 'society' to which migrants arrive at forms the norms that they need to learn. The problem is that "what people are supposed to be integrated in is never questioned, and is assumed to be constant, and to be entirely unaltered by the presence of those needing to be 'integrated' in it." (Schinkel, 2018, p. 7). Schinkel (2017) considers that this systematic integration of immigrants to The Netherlands is a neocolonial practice that is not necessarily improving the dominant narrative around immigration. In such neocolonial systems, immigrants and their (in)ability to integrate become

the problem rather than the structures of power that they need to normalize. In line with Schinkel's thought, I attempt to find new ways to address the contemporary issues of immigration, abandoning the idea of integration and hoping to find more constructive ways of approaching immigrants' relationship to the country they live in.

The so-called 'migration crisis' and the struggles that many non-Western immigrants are going through is not only a matter of politics and international relations. The arts and culture also have an important role in this issue by offering a path for the indigenous Dutch and those with immigrant backgrounds to share and exchange their cultural backgrounds and beliefs, and thus modify narratives that affect the lives of immigrants. Museums are particularly significant for today's Western world, economically, socially, and culturally. UNESCO recognizes that museums "play an important role in the transmission of knowledge, learning, and understanding of cultural identities." (Brugman, 2012), and therefore they should be considered when looking at how they can reshape dominant narratives and understandings of other cultures.

2.1.1 The Museum's Connection to Immigrants

The increase of immigration populations in the Netherlands, combined with growing interest towards colonial remnants within European societies, exemplified by the emergence of "postcolonial studies" as a discipline, have moved ethnographic museums to reassess their collection and exhibiting practices. Moira Simpson (2001) explores how museums in the 'postcolonial era' can better provide for the needs of culturally diverse communities such as people with immigrant backgrounds. She believes that even though "museums are still struggling to identify and meet the needs of the communities they serve" (Simpson, p. 51), curators are well aware of their responsibility in addressing the needs of diverse audiences. This applies to when we speak of immigrants and their presence and involvement in the museum. While the connection between ethnographic museums and immigration might not be immediately apparent, several reasons show why they are inextricably linked.

Firstly, ethnographic museums played a crucial role in European nation-building as, by definition, the museum would show "other" societies and their cultural artifacts (Lidchi, 2013). Thus, through a process of differentiation, ethnographic museums contributed to the exclusionary mechanics of national identity formation. As immigrants are still subjected to

“Othering¹,” ethnographic museums and their ability to define the borders of national identity have the opportunity to reformulate inclusion and highlight interconnectedness. Secondly, as some immigrants have genealogical roots to colonized places, certain objects in the collection have cultural importance for this population group. Thirdly, as Schinkel (2017) has demonstrated, the current policies concerning immigration take neocolonial shapes or at least operate under similar power dynamics. Thus, the call for decolonizing immigration policies echoes in the same discursive space as the demand for rethinking the ethnographic museum.

Several ethnographic museums have decided to pay attention to the connection between immigrants and the museum's role. The Wereldmuseum, in collaboration with the NMWC, has decided to be a museum for "World Citizens," as written in their mission statement:

The new Wereldmuseum wants to fulfill an active and connecting cultural-social role in the city. We do this by opting for current exhibition subjects, a contemporary collection policy, in which the new Dutch also recognize themselves” (Wereldmuseum, n.d. -b, p.2).

This educational and multicultural outlook, therefore, combines issues of immigration with post-coloniality to send a message of diversity and fair representation. Before exploring the museums' responsibilities, it is important to mention their role as educational institutions and the power that comes with that.

2.2 Cultural Theory And Museums

Museums are socially approved sources of knowledge, education, and culture, and therefore they function as power-knowledge institutions. It is of great interest to scholars to investigate what these cultural institutions can contribute to society, including the ways they can improve the narrative around immigrants and other minorities. It is important to note that the museum's role as a power-knowledge institution has been widely analyzed by critical theorists, postcolonial and post-structuralist scholars (see Clifford 1997; Mason 2006; Hall, 2013), who have been primarily inspired by the works of Michel Foucault.

In Foucault's theory, regimes of truth, which are linked to systems of power, "are not ideological superstructures but material practices" (1980, p. 133), and therefore, to understand and transform systems of power, we need to change "the political, economic, institutional régime

¹ Othering, coined by Gayatri Spivak (1999), refers to the dialectic “process by which imperial discourse creates its others.” (cited in Ashcroft et al., 2007, p.156). In this process, the construction of the dominant colonial Other occurs at the same time as the colonized other is produced.

of production of truth" (1980, p. 133). Therefore, systems of power are understood as those that can define what is true and real and who is allowed to make legitimate claims about the world. Henrietta Lidchi (2013), director of curation at the NMWC, argues that since cultural producers are involved in the creations of myths², they are holders of symbolic power. As a producer and distributor of culture and knowledge, the museum is an example of a material practice linked to a system of power. By dealing with objects and ideas, museums "generate representations and attribute value and meaning in line with certain perspectives or classificatory schemas which are historically specific." (Lidchi, 2013, p. 127). In other words, museums classify and exhibit objects under specific frameworks of knowledge, and consequently, they have the symbolic power to "establish notions of what the world is or should be" (Lidchi, 2013, p. 127).

Other Foucauldian scholars, such as Tony Bennett (1988) and Eilean Hooper-Greenhill (1992), have explored the emergence of the 'disciplinary museum' as a means through which the museum and government could civilize people. Bennett argues that "museums should be understood as reformatory institutions that [are] engaged in programs of governance aimed at regulating forms of behavior and conduct." (cited in Harrison, 2013, p. 109). However, their Foucauldian perspective has also been criticized because it ignores the role that visitors play in learning and interpreting the content of an exhibition. Hooper-Greenhill (2006) recognizes this in her later essay "Studying Visitors," where she examines the ongoing development of museum visitor studies and their meaning-making processes. Similarly, James Clifford (1997) argues that museums function as 'contact zones.' The term, first coined by Mary Louis Pratt, refers to a space of colonial encounters where people from different social, historical, and geographical backgrounds can come together. For Clifford, museums function as contact zones because they are a space where interaction between various subjects can occur. Instead of being a disseminator of knowledge, "the museum functions more as a permeable space of transcultural encounter" (Mason, 2006, p. 25). This means that all subjects involved in the museum play an equally important role in disseminating and interpreting knowledge, and consequently in (re)shaping narratives.

Today's postcolonial debates urge us to remember the colonial origin and history of museums and to keep in mind their role as power-knowledge institutions in order to propose

² In his book *Mythologies*, Roland Barthes (1972) develops the theory that myths are used to naturalize specific worldviews and ideologies. "Myth is not an object, idea, or concept, but rather a form of signification" (Buchanan, 2010, para. 3), which is widely accepted as truth.

new future possibilities for the 21st-century museum. One of these possibilities is offered by the field of cultural memory studies, and more specifically by Michael Rothberg's concept of the implicated subject and multidirectional memories.

2.3 Cultural Memory Studies

The field of memory studies is relevant to this research for it can help understand how museums as a cultural producer can function as spaces of memory work and remembrance. Memory, at its most basic, is the past made present. Hence, memory studies are not concerned with the past how it really was, but rather how the past is seen from today's standpoint. Its main interest is the discursive reconstruction of the past, whether it is summoned in personal memoirs or political speeches. Maurice Halbwachs (1992), one of the pioneers of memory studies, argues that memory, whether on a personal or public level, is always a collective phenomenon (*memoire collective*). He also emphasizes the difference between history and memory. While the former is universal and objective, the latter is particular and carried by people in specific times and spaces. Since memory is shaped by its carriers, it is "strongly evaluative, and hierarchical" (Erl, 2011, p. 17), and therefore it is also a discursive construct subjected to power structures.

By creating exhibitions with certain topics or a specific focus, the museum, as opposed to an archive, curates the past and is thus engaged in the discursive construction of memory. Because museums are institutions with expertise in historical matters, their way of portraying the past is highly influential in terms of how society perceives the past and present. As such, museums also have a special responsibility to construct a collective memory that is self-critical and inclusive. To see how museums shape memory, I will utilize two well-known concepts from the field of cultural memory studies: implication [2.3.1] and multidirectional memories [2.3.2].

2.3.1 Implication

To explore what implication entails, I refer to Michael Rothberg's (2019) book *The Implicated Subject*. Rothberg argues that when remembering histories of war and violence, we often categorize the involved subjects in a binary of victims and perpetrators. However, this is not entirely representative of how actors are involved in these histories. Instead, he argues, most people are involved as implicated subjects, occupying privileged positions that benefit from the harm inflicted on others. Implicated subjects "contribute to, inhabit, inherit, or benefit from regimes of domination but do not originate or control such regimes." (2019, p. 1). Implication is

both historical and contemporary, or what Rothberg calls diachronic and synchronic, respectively. Diachronic implication is linked to how a beneficiary or implicated subject is connected to the historical violence inflicted on others; synchronic refers to how the subject profits from a contemporary inequality that emerges from this historical violence.

When referring to the role of museums, the idea of implication serves to explore the role that these institutions play in engaging visitors in their historical and contemporary implications. For example, to discuss diachronic implications, the museum can inform visitors about the history of colonization and be self-reflective about its own presence in these events. To discuss synchronic implications, the museum can also explore contemporary issues like immigration and racial segregation and show their connection to the past. Talking about implication can be useful and productive because it guides subjects to the responsibility they have towards certain histories. Rothberg (2019) believes that by moving away from the victim/perpetrator binary and towards an idea of implication, we can begin thinking about our social and political responsibility.

But what does he mean by political responsibility? When studying the aftermaths of the Holocaust, philosopher Karl Jaspers (1965) coined the term 'political guilt' which refers to citizens "having to bear the consequences of the deeds of the state whose power governs [them] and under whose order [they] live." (p. 25). In other words, Jaspers believed that all German citizens have to carry the guilt of the Holocaust for being part of a nation that benefitted from this crime. Regarding the colonies, this would mean that indigenous Dutch people should carry a political guilt for the processes of colonization that their ancestors were involved in. Rothberg argues that this guilt is not productive and proposes the idea of political responsibility instead. In other words, Dutch people now have the responsibility to recognize and address the injustices of the past. This political responsibility applies to individuals as well as institutions. The Wereldmuseum is a Dutch national institution with a colonial history. As a cultural producer, it is a site of implication where colonial subjects and structures meet and where new forms of responsibility emerge. Even though the museum is not necessarily the main responsible for resolving the claims for justice that emerge from Dutch colonial history, it is still involved in this process and therefore has the political responsibility to address these claims and to call for better future practices in its exhibitions. As a public cultural producer, it can also involve and engage its visitors in the process of political responsibility.

The Wereldmuseum has already shown an active interest in discussing how it can use the concept of implication to improve its exhibition. In a webinar with Michael Rothberg, the director of the Wereldmuseum, Wayne Modest, raised the following question:

How may we fashion **narratives** that invite visitors to think themselves **implicated** in the contested past as we try to fashion a **responsibility** for what is happening in the present and how we can imagine different, more just futures? (Research Center for Material Culture, 2020, 7:28).

In other words, Modest suggests that incorporating the concept of implication to the museum space can invite visitors to think about the ways they are entangled in historical and present injustices. The museum believes that this awareness of implication can be a productive tool in reframing narratives about the past and present and imagining better futures.

2.3.2 Multidirectional memory

Multidirectional memory is a concept coined by Rothberg in his seminal work *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (2009). As a relatively new term within cultural memory studies, multidirectionality is first introduced as "a dynamic in which multiple pasts jostle against each other in a heterogeneous present, and where communities of remembrance disperse and reconvene in new non-organic forms" (2013, p. 372). In other words, multidirectionality entails a comparison and interaction between different memories without them being competitive but rather productive. Instead of arguing that memories are in competition and will result in, what he calls, a zero-sum game, Rothberg suggests that a multidirectional approach to memory is generative and can produce more memories. If, in addition, we consider Rothberg's idea of political responsibility, we can argue that a multidirectional approach to memory can guide implicated subjects in producing intercultural dynamics and "new forms of solidarity and new visions of justice" (2013, p.5).

While Rothberg's work is mostly focused on the interaction of traumatic memories, such as the Holocaust or colonialism, where the idea of comparison is extremely contentious, his theories also apply to non-traumatic memories. His formulation of multidirectional memories not only shows that memories are produced in a transnational context, but it also defies the idea of ownership as the production of memories no longer happens in a socio-geographically defined community.

It becomes clear that the concept of multidirectional memories is highly valuable for discussions on migration and museums. While Pierre Nora's (1989) famous concept *Lieux de Mémoires* shows that memories are often tied to specific locations, in today's globalized society, memories, as well as the people who carry them, travel around the world (Erl, 2011). Following Rothberg's logic of comparing memories without erasing differences, the memory of colonialism

can be placed side-by-side with the memories of migration, which are often characterized by discrimination and hardship. In other words, the already established language of postcolonial debate can be used to facilitate the fight against discrimination of immigrants. As Cesari and Rigney (2014) write, "Globally circulating memories (...) have helped provide a language in which to articulate other narratives of suffering and loss (...) in an increasingly transnational yet fragmented public sphere." (p. 10). Such comparisons, argues Rothberg, can lead to new solidarities and illustrate the transnational aspect of memory. The concept of multidirectional memories thus has the ability to disrupt the notion of a 'national memory' or 'national history' that many museums have presented in the past.

Even though academics tend to be critical about museums, we cannot ignore their relevance and increasing popularity in the Western world. We should recognize their ability to share knowledge and culture, not without forgetting its role as a source of power to size its social and political impact. Postcolonial studies have had a strong effect on the way some Dutch museums curate their exhibitions and present themselves as institutions. Little by little, museums have begun to readapt themselves to redeem their history of epistemic violence and create new forms of exhibitions that make justice to all the subjects involved in both the objects and the space of exhibition. The museum's role in the world of politics and society is more evident than ever. This relevant relationship between culture and politics is often recognized by academics but yet again ignored by policymakers and governments who regard both realms as separate entities. Therefore, through this research, I aim to look at the intersection between migration and museums to answer the question: *How does the Wereldmuseum change the dominant narrative of immigrants in The Netherlands?*

To tackle this question, I also need to explore the following: How does the Wereldmuseum deal with its political responsibility towards its colonial past and its social responsibility regarding contemporary immigration issues? How and to what extent do the exhibitions meet the concepts of multidirectionality and implication? How do these concepts contribute to the museum's engagement in modifying the narrative of immigration in The Netherlands?

3. METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

This study lays in the intersection between cultural sociology and cultural memory studies. The ambition of this research was to use theories and methods from diverse disciplinary fields. More specifically, the aim was to transform Rothberg's concepts from the humanities – implication and multidirectionality – into measurable categories usable in sociological research. Arguably, through this interdisciplinary approach, insights from different perspectives can be brought together to understand the interplay between narratives, memory, and social function of the museum.

For this research, I carried out a qualitative content analysis of two exhibitions in the Wereldmuseum. To classify and analyze the data, I created a series of indicators that reflect the nuances of the theories from memory studies. These indicators are carefully explained in the first section of this chapter. The following section explains the methodology used in this research and the process through which I translated theory to analytical tools.

3.1 Operationalization: Implication and Multidirectionality

To study the museum's exhibitions, I created a series of indicators that would help me identify theories of cultural memory studies previously defined such as implication, multidirectionality, and transnationalism. These indicators address the visual and textual ways in which the museum deals with these concepts in more tangible ways.

Implication

First, it is necessary to understand what is meant by **implication** and how it can be made visible by the museum, and why this is important. The museum functions as a space where implicated subjects and systems of power meet (RCMC, 2020). Subjects, however, are not necessarily conscious of their own implication. Rothberg (2019) argues that memory can serve as a resource in fighting the conditions that produce implications. Therefore, it is partly the task of social, political, and cultural institutions like museums to make this implication visible through the use of memory. In order to identify whether and how the Wereldmuseum alludes to issues of implication, I created three indicators: critical connection between past and present issues, reflexivity, and addressing visitors (Table 1).

The first indicator – critical connection between past and present– implies identifying texts that simultaneously discuss the connections between historical and contemporary problems.

In practical terms, I used Rothberg's classification of diachronic and synchronic implication to identify texts that engage with past or present issues. **Diachronic implication** is characterized by its historical dimension. In other words, for the museum to make reference to a diachronic implication, it must demonstrate a critical and relevant historical interest as well as a self-reflexive perspective. Indicators of diachronic implication are any texts or objects that give information about how contemporary subjects and institutions (such as the museum) are connected to historical injustices and histories of violence. Talking about the connections between the museum and colonialism, slavery, war, or other negative historical events is an indicator of this form of implication. **Synchronic implication** is characterized by present-day injustices that stem from historical ones. For the museum to engage visitors in questions about synchronic implication, it should discuss contemporary social and political issues and show their connection to the present. Indicators of synchronic implication are texts that discuss how contemporary injustices emerge from historical ones. An example from the exhibition is a contemporary art installation that discusses the negative effects that Christianity had in the Dutch colonies.

The distinction between synchronic and diachronic implication serves mainly as an analytical and methodological tool, for in the end, Rothberg (2019) argues, "both dimensions (...) are in reality, inseparable." (p.9). This statement gives space to the next step which is to separate only those texts that deal with both synchronic and diachronic implication simultaneously. By including both dimensions, a text creates a critical connection between past and present issues and thus engages with issues of implication.

The second indicator – reflexivity – implies identifying texts where the museum refers to itself, its history, and its social and political role. This includes first person language, and references to the origin of the museum's collection, the museum's presence in Dutch history, the museum's recognition of its involvement in historical injustices, and any other texts that show the museum raising questions about its social and political role. By being reflexive of its own position, the museum engages with its implication in historical and contemporary issues.

Finally, the third indicator – addressing visitors – is about texts and labels that guide viewers to think about how the events of the past connect and affect contemporary issues and injustices. Indicators of 'addressing visitors' are the use of personal language (you), and the presence of some interactive exhibitions that encourage visitors to think about their presence in the space of the museum. By doing this, visitors can reflect on their present and understand how they may benefit or be affected by their connections to the past. A beneficiary subject should understand that they "profit from the historical suffering of others as well as from contemporary

inequalities.” (Rothberg, 2019, p. 14). The objective of bringing awareness to one’s implication is to encourage people to reflect on their own histories, and their present privileges without creating a dichotomy of victims and perpetrators. By informing visitors of their present and past implications, the museum is also endowing them with the “responsibility to reflect on and act against [their] implication” (Rothberg, 2019, p. 10) in systems of racial and social hierarchies.

Multidirectionality

A second concept that we need to inspect is ‘**multidirectional memory**.’ The objective of multidirectionality is to conceptualize memory as comparative rather than competitive, and to create productive interactions between different histories (Rothberg, 2009). Building on theories of collective memory, Rothberg (2009) argues that “the content of a memory has no meaning but takes on meaning precisely in relationship to other memories in a network of associations.” (p. 16). In other words, as different memories interact with each other they generate meaning.

In practical terms, exploring whether the museum is calling for a production of multidirectional memory requires interpretation of individual objects and artworks but also of the overall curation. To identify multidirectionality in the exhibition, I created three textual indicators – generative encounters and transnational and non-Western perspectives – and one visual one: the presence of multiple memories in one space (Table 2). I will now explore each one of these in detail.

The first indicator of multidirectionality – generative encounters – refers to moments when different cultures and their memories meet resulting in the production of new memories, ideas, and even objects. The first step to identify this indicator is to find texts that use associative language. Words like association, networks, crossroads, points of contact, encounters, meetings, and any other texts that connect two groups or memories together. An example would be a text that discusses the encounter between Dutch and Congolese people. After separating these texts, the next step is to identify the ones that use productive language, i.e., language that highlights the productive effects of cultural encounters. Some keywords are: generate, produce, create, modify, influence, inspire, and change.

The second indicators are a transnational and non-Western perspective in texts. Both refer to texts that include multiple perspectives that go beyond a national or local one. Rothberg argues that the “new emphasis on multidirectionality (...) also tends to be transcultural and transnational” (Rothberg, 2014, p. 128). In other words, multidirectionality is often transnational and therefore, identifying the latter can point to the former. To establish whether the museum is

engaging in a transnational perspective, I looked at the language that is used to describe the exhibition and the objects. Some indicators are words like global and universal, as well texts that go beyond the national aspect of historical events. However, in some cases, this ‘transnationalism’ can get stuck in Eurocentric or Western points of view and thus is not truly global. To make sure that more perspectives are present, I also searched for indicators of non-Western standpoints. In other words, any object or text that is written/spoken directly from the perspective of Non-Western groups and with little to no interpretation from the museum, offers a non-Western perspective.

The third indicator – multiple memories in a space – allows us to see how objects can visually communicate with each other and create associative networks. Through case studies of artworks, Rothberg shows that a single text or object can be producing comparative memory work by “seeking points of contact between apparently separate histories” (Rothberg, 2009, p. 115). However, it is also possible to identify these comparative points of contact within a collection of objects in a museum space by looking at how these interact with each other. Objects placed in an open space can communicate better than those separated by walls and rooms. Similarly, objects placed within one cabinet create associations, as opposed to those placed in separate ones.

Table 1. Operationalization of Implication

Indicators of Implication	Characteristics and Elements of the indicators
1. Critical Connection between Past and Present	Simultaneous engagement with synchronic and diachronic implication
2. Reflexivity	First person language Recognition of: - the museum’s historical mistakes - biases in the exhibition - the origin of the museum’s collection - the museum’s presence in Dutch history
3. Addressing Visitors	Direct language: You Interactive exhibitions and installations where visitors engage with the space: installation speaks to visitors, visitors have to move around the space, visitors interact with their surroundings.

Note. Detailed version in Appendix

Table 2. Operationalization of Multidirectionality

Indicators of Multidirectionality	Characteristics and Elements of the indicators
1. Encounters as Generators	Associative language: association, networks, crossroads, points of contact, encounters, meetings Productive language: generate, produce, create, modify, influence, inspire, and change.
2. Transnational & Non-Western Perspective	Beyond national language: universal, global, international, travel, trade. Highlighting different worldviews: local myths and stories, non-anthropological descriptions, raising local voices
3. Multiple Memories in a Space	Associative placement: objects appear in the same cabinet, curated proximity, objects facing each other, objects are in the same room

Note. Detailed version in Appendix

3.2 Case study

For this research, I examined the Wereldmuseum as a case study of how museums across The Netherlands can face the unresolved claims for justice that are emerging from their legacies of historical violence and colonial involvement. Dutch museums stand out as points of interest and today many of them recognize the responsibility they have in addressing these historical injustices and contemporary issues.

The Wereldmuseum is a great case study to investigate how museums can deal with their political responsibility and address contemporary societal issues for several reasons. Firstly, it defines itself as a museum about people and cultures in the present and the past, and it is interested in telling the stories of local Rotterdammers for and by them (Wereldmuseum, n.d.-a). In other words, it is interested in addressing the cultural diversity of the Netherlands that sprouts mainly from its immigrant population. This interest is also seen in the research projects carried out by the Research Center for Material Culture such as “States of Migration” (RCMC, n.d.-b). It has also shown its commitment to immigrants by introducing new policies such as free museum entrance to refugees and their mentors. Secondly, it has clearly established its compromise in the current reparation and repatriation debate by collaborating in research projects that aim to bring settlement to colonial injustices, such as “Entangled in History” (RCMC, n.d.-a). Even though this ethnographic museum might not be representative of all other types of museums across The

Netherlands, it can still show relevant aspects that any museum can focus on when looking to address its political responsibility and reshape its exhibiting practices.

3.3 Sample & Data Collection

Currently the museum has four exhibitions, two temporary and two semi-permanent ones. For this study, I selected the semi-permanent exhibition called *Crossroads Rotterdam: At the Crossroads of Culture* as the main source of data and the temporary exhibition *Remix Rotterdam* as a secondary source. The first, *Crossroads Rotterdam*, displays a large part of the museum's ethnographic collection under three overarching themes. At the same time, it attempts to bring awareness about the diverse population of Rotterdam and connect their backgrounds to the histories of Dutch colonialism. I chose this exhibition because it uses a large collection of ethnographic artworks and artefacts to discuss Dutch colonial history while giving it a contemporary twist that pays attention to today's issues. Also, because it is the main exhibition of the museum, and it is likely to stay in display for many years. The second exhibition, *Remix Rotterdam*, is a collaboration between the Wereldmuseum and Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen. While the former museum has objects from Asia, Africa, and the Americas, the latter has focused on building a Western collection. By mixing the collections of both museums under 23 different themes, the exhibition aims to show how different objects, artworks, and artefacts have emerged from the encounters between people and cultures (WM. 2021). I chose this exhibition to show its innovative and comparative curatorial approach, which in many occasions also resonate with the idea of multidirectional memory and transnationalism.

To carry out this research, I collected data – texts, images, objects, and videos – from the previously mentioned exhibitions. Originally, I intended to visit the museum a couple of times and talk to the curators and managers of the museum. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the process of visiting the museum and collecting data was quite unusual. Since museums were officially closed throughout the entire period of this research, staff members were busy sketching future plans for the museums and therefore not available for interviews. For the same reason, I had to request a private visit to the museum, and consequently, I was only able to see the exhibition once and collect as much data as I could in that single visit. I arrived to a completely empty museum, had indefinite time to walk around the exhibitions, and meticulously gathered photographs of all texts and objects. Of course, this resulted in an abnormal experience of the museum space which in usual circumstances is filled with people and life. Once I organized all the data in my computer, I collected images from the museum's archive and created

a digital version of the museum exhibition. I did this so I could remember the arrangement of the exhibitions as well as possible. Then, I coded all the data to finally carry out a thematic content analysis to identify when and how each exhibition makes use of a multidirectional perspective in its exhibition as well as to what extent they are engaging the visitors with issues of implication.

3.4 Data Analysis: Qualitative Content Analysis

The central part of the research method is an analysis of the objects and documents in the museum's exhibitions, including a variety of visual objects such as video material, artworks, and photographs, as well as documents, object labels, brochures, and digital descriptions. Even though document analysis is more often used as a complementary research method in addition to other sources such as interviews and observations, it can also be used as a stand-alone method (Bowen, 2009). This form of analysis entails collecting large amounts of objects and documents, and once collected, a "considerable interpretative skill is required to ascertain the meaning of the materials that have been uncovered" (Bryman, 2012, p. 543). For the process of interpretation, I used the theory previously described, with a particular emphasis on multidirectional memory and implication.

Qualitative content analysis is particularly suitable for several reasons: First, when studying the construction of narratives in an exhibition, the content held in texts and documents can say a lot about what the museum is trying to communicate and the discourses that it agrees with. Second, translating the concepts from the humanities into social sciences requires a process of interpretation and close literary analysis that cannot be quantified. Third, content analysis can provide a clear overview of the most effective ways for the museum to include both concepts in its exhibition space.

To make sure that this analysis is valid and reliable, I based the translation of concepts into measurable categories solely on the theories and examples provided by cultural memory studies that I previously explained. Also, to make sure the analysis is reliable, most of the content analysis is based on the textual information (labels) in the museum, and only a small section is based on the visual information (curation and space). This way, I could rely on fixed textual indicators such as keywords rather than on changing visual cues.

4. RESULTS

The data collection of this study consists of all the objects and texts within two exhibitions of the museum. The first, *Rotterdam Crossroads*, showcases approximately 300 ethnographic objects and contemporary artworks out of the museum's 80,000 object collection. The exhibition is divided into three sections (Table 1). The first one, "A Global Connection" has seven subthemes: trade, expeditions, missionary work, spoils of war, donations, tourist art, and sister cities. This section focuses mainly on showing the process through which the museum obtained most of its objects, and therefore makes a lot of mention to the period of colonization and imperialism. The second section, "Culture in Motion" has four subthemes: change, dissemination, representation, and exchange. It focuses mainly on how culture is in constant change, especially when encountered with other cultures. Through its subthemes, it emphasizes that cultural dynamics can produce new meanings. Finally, the third section, "Rotterdam, a Global City", has four subthemes: bittersweet memories, new perspective, changing traditions, and music. This section focuses on telling the story of contemporary Rotterdam and how it has been shaped by its diverse population. For this, it displays contemporary artworks by artists with migrant backgrounds. The entirety of the exhibition functions in a linear and thematic way, going from the early Dutch colonial periods to today's multicultural and diverse city of Rotterdam.

The second exhibition, *Remix Rotterdam*, explores what happens when the Wereldmuseum places its collection of non-Western artworks and objects next to the Western collection of the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen. The central premise of *Remix Rotterdam* is that the objects that are on display have emerged from different encounters between people and cultures from across the world. The exhibition has 120 objects which are divided into five overarching themes and 23 subthemes (Table 2). The first four themes – universal, artistic, colonial, and trade encounters – are curated by the museum in an attempt to showcase what happens when different cultures meet. 'Universal Encounters' points out how some themes, such as life and death, are present in all cultures, times, and places. 'Artistic Encounters' shows how artists often use objects from diverse places as sources of inspiration for their own work. 'Colonial Encounters' explores the negative effects of colonialism and how artists have incorporated this history in their works. Finally, 'Trade Encounters' evidences the spirit of commerce and trade that exploded during modernity and showcases how objects have travelled from all corners around the world. The fifth theme in the exhibition – Associative Encounters – was curated by a guest artist Paul van der Erden who was invited to create free associations between objects from both collections. I

separate this from the previous four, because while the first four encounters are focused on more material circumstances, the last one is a lot more abstract, subjective, and arguably arbitrary. This probably occurred because it was up to a single artist to create the associations, as opposed to the other four encounters which were selected by a team of curators. Table 3 and 4 show a clear arrangement of the exhibition themes:

Table 3. Overview of Content at Rotterdam Crossroads

1. A Global Connection	2. Culture in Motion	3. Rotterdam, Global City
1.1 Trade 1.2 Expeditions 1.3 Missionary Work 1.4 Spoils of War 1.5 Donations 1.6 Tourist Art 1.7 Sister Cities	2.1 Change - Asmat Shields Decorations 2.2 Dissemination - The Tulip The Shadow Play The Tughra The Fez 2.3 Representation - Worked Ivory Stereotypical Images of Africa Stereotypical Images of Europe La Sape 2.4 Exchange • Silk from China Islamic Clothing from the Middle East Patola from India Flowers, Fairy Tales, and Beads from Europe Contemporary Fashion	3.1 Bittersweet Memories • Karela or Sopropo 3.2 New Perspective • Curaçao • India 3.3 Changing Traditions 3.4 Music

Note. Detailed version in Appendix

Table 4. Overview of Content at Remix Rotterdam

Universal Encounters	Artistic Encounters	Colonial Encounters	Trade Encounters	Associative Encounters
1. Power of expression 2. Security 3. Death 4. Beyond Nationalism	5. Reassessment 6. Recognition 7. Inspiration	8. Reconciliation 9. Influence 10. Stereotyping 11. Fascination	12. Cultural Hybrids 13. Natural Treasures 14. Porcelain Traces	15. The infinite gaze 16. Being Thus 17. Cosmic Quality 18. Interplays 19. Transformation 20. Not All is What it Seems 21. Red 22. Stylized Beauty 23. Signs of Meaning

Note. Detailed version in Appendix

4.1 Overview of Results Obtained

Before delving into the main analysis of results, I give a brief overview of the total results obtained for each concept and indicator in the exhibition *Rotterdam Crossroads*. The total results of *Remix Rotterdam* are not necessary for this analysis for a couple of reasons: This specific exhibition is only temporary and involved several parties, thus leaving the frame of the ethnographic museum. While it's style is interesting and innovative and offers great examples for this case study, it is not completely representative as a case study of what ethnographic museums can achieve.

Adding up the results from all three indicators of implication, I found that total of 38 out of 220 labels and texts where *Rotterdam Crossroads* refers to issues of implication. Most of these references are about the museum's implication in histories of violence, but many others about the implication of the Dutch nation and of Europe as a colonial power. Most of the references to implication, 34, are in the first two sections of *Rotterdam Crossroads*, mainly because these are interested in acknowledging the colonial history of the museum and in showing its implications in this and other historical injustices. The third section of the exhibition, mostly interested in the

contemporary issues of migration in The Netherlands, only makes reference to issues of implication 4 times when discussing the past of the artists showcased in the exhibition.

When it comes to multidirectionality, I found a total of 47 labels and texts that refer to this perspective. Most of the texts that I identified as multidirectional discuss examples and cases in which encounters between different groups and cultures have produced new things. Other texts show the contrast between a Western and non-Western perspective on the same object, issue, or historical account which also offers the possibility of a multidirectional perspective. Finally, some more specific examples, especially in the last section of the exhibition, show a clear multidirectional approach in the comparison between memories of migration and colonization. Most of the labels that deal with multidirectionality are not the same as the ones that deal with implication, which means that almost half of the texts in the exhibition (85 out of 220) are incorporating either a multidirectional perspective or dealing with issues of implication.

The next section of the results deals with the main data analysis which is centered around materializing concepts from memory studies to then identify them across the museum exhibitions. A constant comparison between theory and examples from the museum is needed to explain how the exhibition addresses abstract concepts like implication and multidirectionality. The results section is divided into the two main concepts and their corresponding indicators. For each indicator, I selected examples from the exhibition that show how these indicators point to the presence of the concepts in the museum space and what that implies for the process of changing narratives in the museum. I first develop the findings for implication with its three indicators, and then those for multidirectionality. In the following sections, I use examples to show the process through which I created the indicators for implications and multidirectionality and how I identified these concepts throughout the exhibition.

4.2 Identifying implication in the museum

For the museum to showcase its own implication and engage others in this issue, it must show that it is aware of its historical ties and invite visitors to reflect upon these. To identify and study implication, I created a series of indicators that show how the museum deals with historical issues and how it reflects upon its own social role. The indicators, which I will explore in more detail, are the following: a critical connection between past and present issues [\[4.1.1\]](#), reflexivity [\[4.1.2\]](#) (which includes recognizing historical mistakes and recognizing the origins of the museum collection), and addressing visitors [\[4.1.3\]](#).

In the next section, I explore in detail how these actually refer back to the idea of implication. To do so, I decided to only select examples from *Rotterdam Crossroad* because data from both exhibitions resulted equivalent. *Remix Rotterdam* has a very similar approach to questions of implication, and it is possible to identify it in texts that are reflexive and that critically discuss the relationship between past and present injustices. The main difference is the distribution of implication across the exhibition. While *Rotterdam Crossroads* had an even distribution of implication throughout the entire space, *Remix Rotterdam*, had some themes which were strongly focused on implication and some others that made no reference of it at all. This is most likely due to the nature of *Remix Rotterdam*, whose 23 heterogeneous categories call for very different topics.

4.2.1 Critical Connection between Past and Present

The labels and curation throughout the exhibition *Rotterdam Crossroad* show that there was a conscious interest in addressing the Dutch history of colonization and its contemporary consequences. In other words, the exhibition is constantly dealing with questions of implication regarding itself, the country, and the visitors. For the museum to engage in issues of implication it has to show a critical approach to historical and contemporary events, as well as a reflexive perspective: Simply calling attention to historical or contemporary events is not sufficient to argue that the exhibition is interested in talking about implication. Implication entails being critical about the past but at the same time acknowledging its connection to the present. As Rothberg (2019) argues, the distinction between past and present is useful to identify different ways in which implicated subjects are entangled with power and violence. Furthermore, both dimensions – past and present – are inseparable as “implication emerges from the ongoing, uneven, and destabilizing intrusion of irrevocable pasts into an unredeemed present (p. 9)”

Therefore, the first step into identifying ‘implication’ in the museum’s perspective, was to identify all references to historical and contemporary issues and then select only those that acknowledge the ongoing relationship between both past and present. When a label only makes reference to a historical event or a contemporary issue, it can be significant and informative, but does not necessarily lead to a sense of implication. For example, during the first part of the exhibition (A Global Connection), under the section “Sister Cities” there is the following text:

- I. When the People's Republic of China opened up to trade with foreign countries after the death of communist leader Mao Zedong, Rotterdam was among the first to

respond. In 1979, the city signed an agreement with the important port of Shanghai: they became twin cities.

As previously mentioned, the text is clear and informative, but does not engage with how the past connects to the present, and therefore it is not sufficient to argue that it relates to implication. We then need to identify those texts that show some important connections between past and present and finally, assess whether they are critical and reflexive enough to suggest a subject's implication. The following example found further in the same section of the exhibition connects past and present:

- II. Mao Zedong (1893-19976) was the founder and totalitarian leader of communist China. Although his political campaign, such as the Cultural Revolution, resulted in tens of millions of deaths, the official position after Mao's death was that his merits outweighed his mistakes. Today, portraits of Mao can still be found in schools, offices, canteens, and living rooms in China.

This text addresses one of the effects of Mao's totalitarian regime, i.e., that one can still find his portraits across China. This connection between past and present is relevant, and it helps visitors get a more complete understanding of contemporary China. However, this example does not necessarily refer to histories of injustice and/or cases in which the museum or the visitors could be implicated. In other words, identifying texts that connect the past and present is not sufficient to classify them as engaging with implication. So, we might now ask 'what is missing?'

Implication is about how subjects are connected to historical and contemporary injustices, and therefore, a certain degree of reflexivity is necessary.

The following text shows a clear connection between past and present issues accompanied by a critical and reflexive perspective:

- III. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Catholic and Protestant clergy travelled to the **Dutch colonies to spread the Christian faith**. ... The local population sometimes gave up religious objects as proof of their conversion to the Christian faith. Some **objects were destroyed, but many ended up in Dutch museums**. The **Wereldmuseum** bought for instance 500 objects from the Nederlandsch Zendeling Genootschap, in 1955 and 111 objects were acquired from the Sacred Heart Fathers H. Nollen and E. Cappers. Many people in the former colonies now live according to Christian values and norms. Colonialism and the conversion to Christianity, **meant to a lot of communities however a great loss of culture, traditional identity and values**.

I argue that this text is engaging in issues of diachronic and synchronic implication by touching upon the museum's history and obtainment of objects, as well as on some of the contemporary issues that these past events have led to. First, the text shows that during the Dutch colonial empire, Christian missionaries went to different colonies to convert natives and spread their religion. In this process, missionaries gathered many native objects and brought them back to The Netherlands. The museum shows that it is implicated in this history by discussing how many of the objects that the missionaries took with them ended up in the collection and exhibition from which the museum profits today. To make its implication visible, it is essential for the museum to show the connection between the past and present. Otherwise, "without a link to the present, historical injustices do not implicate us; they remain of strictly antiquarian interest" (Rothberg, 2019, p. 9). The text addresses the current situation of former colonies and how historical injustices still represent a loss of culture and identity for them.

In some other instances in the exhibition, the labels suggest implication in a more subtle and simple way, for example: "Colonialism still has an impact, not only overseas but also in the Netherlands." This concise text addresses past and present and shows that contemporary issues in one country can be connected to a complex and transnational history of colonialism. In other words, it shows the complex relationship between the past and present.

4.2.2 Reflexivity: curating with a focus on self-implication

Another way to identify the theme of implication is through the museum's reflexive practices. In this case, reflexivity refers to instances where the museum talks about itself, its institutional role, its decision-making practices, and its social significance. Also, it refers to the process through which the museum recognizes its historical mistakes and addresses its implication in events like the looting of objects during colonial expeditions. When the museum is reflexive, it opens a space to recognize its own ties to histories of violence.

Throughout the exhibitions, the museum shows different degrees of reflexivity, from talking about the objective of the exhibition in third person – "Rotterdam Crossroads explains how the objects have ended up in the Wereldmuseum" – to speaking in first person about the problematic obtainment of the objects in their collection: "By now, we, the Wereldmuseum, realize that these illegally obtained objects do not necessarily belong in the museum." These two different degrees of engagement show that on the one hand, the museum wants to maintain its role as a nonpartisan institution with a seemingly objective perspective on history, but on the other, it cannot ignore its role and political responsibility in these histories.

A clear example comes up in part 2 of *Rotterdam Crossroads*, titled *Culture in Motion*, which deals with cultural changes caused by the encounter of cultures. In section 2.3 Representation, the exhibition focuses on the theme of representation, and more specifically, on how Europe has represented people from Africa throughout the years. They argue that “many European museums presented stereotypical images of the African continent, showing objects in such a way that they supported and justified the colonial worldview.” The objective of the Wereldmuseum is to open a space of reflection to think about how exhibitions have been used to spread colonial worldviews by emphasizing the differences between inhabitants of Europe and Africa. To do so, it offers a new perspective on African artwork, allowing the objects and artists to speak for themselves rather than through the voice of a European interpreter.

In *Representation*, the museum presents many objects that were originally carved in Africa and often sold to Europeans as souvenirs and collectibles for museums. For example, the following sculpture (Figure 1) is accompanied by a text that describes how it used to be sold to European travelers who saw it as an illustration of the discomforts of using a hammock. However, the museum wants visitors to pay closer attention to the sculpture by pointing out the tears on the back bearer and the rifle on the European’s lap. Both elements suggest that the Congolese men have been coerced into doing this and are in actual pain. Instead of showcasing the exotic life of a European in Africa, this sculpture is criticizing it.

Here, the museum wants visitors to understand how interpretations of an artwork and the narratives that guide these interpretations can change throughout the years and how museums are partly responsible for this. It shows that interpretation often depends on the historical period as well as on the eyes of the observer and on their social and political agenda. As Europeans wanted to disseminate a colonial worldview, they encouraged interpretations that supported this, especially in distributors of knowledge such as museums. Now, as stated in the exhibition, the museum “has changed its perspective [and] this results in other stories that can contribute to a new view of the past and the present.” Through the example of *Representation*, it is possible to identify that the Wereldmuseum acknowledges its own implication in the historical and current process of meaning making that has Othered minorities for a long time.

As the museum moves towards a framework of implicated subjects, it not only deals with its own political responsibility, but also with its social role by making audiences reflect about their own implicated positions. This leads to the next important point in identifying implication: the extent and ways in which the museum addresses visitors.



Figure 1. Two Congolese men carrying a European man on a hammock.

4.2.3 Addressing visitors

For the museum to have a real impact in modifying the dominant narratives, it needs to not only recognize its own responsibility and implication, but also invite visitors to think about their own roles in this process. In other words, after the museum has shown a critical and reflexive understanding of historical and contemporary injustices, it can invite visitors to see themselves as part of this history and consequently recognize that they also have certain political responsibilities in reshaping narratives. To address visitors, the museum can implement different curatorial techniques and languages, including texts and interactive pieces.

The first one, texts, is the most obvious option for the museum to explicitly address the readers. Some examples found in *Crossroads Rotterdam* are:

- I. In this gallery, **you** will learn more about the varied collection of the Wereldmuseum, become acquainted with the origin of the objects and get to know the people who collected them.
- II. If the karela is a symbol for the bittersweet experiences of migration, **you** could ask **yourself** what is the meaning of the market place?

These two texts are the only instances in which the exhibition addresses the visitors textually. Example I. is part of the introduction to the exhibition, and it informs people about what they are about to see and learn. Therefore, it is acknowledging their presence in the exhibition but not necessarily inviting them to reflect. Example II. is part of 'Bittersweet Memories,' a section that is trying to show the connections between India, Suriname, and the Netherlands, through a

vegetable that is found in all three countries: the karela. The text, placed next to the image of a market in Suriname, is directly inviting visitors to create think about how the karela and the market relate to a migrant's experience. Throughout the exhibition, I found 3 texts that speak directly to the visitors, including the two previous examples and one that I will now explore in more detail for its interactive character.

Another way for the museum to address visitors is through interactive objects or installations that can encourage people to think about their role in the exhibition space and consequently in the themes presented by the exhibition. For example, “If **you** want to read the text, **you'll** have to take action by going exploring and completing the puzzle.” This text belongs to a mural that functions as the introduction to the third part of the exhibition – Rotterdam Global City. After raising many questions about our understanding of time and progress, the text invites the visitor to walk around the mural and fill in the gaps by themselves (Figure 2). The text creates a verbal and physical invitation for visitors to participate in the exhibition space. In other words, the museum goes beyond textual cues, making use of space and interactivity to engage visitors. Similarly, a photography installation by a contemporary Dutch/Indian artists, invites visitors to walk throughout the space and the images (see Figure 3). This installation does not automatically guide viewers to think about their presence in the space of the museum, but it has the potential to do so by making viewers walk through this space.



Figure 2. Frontal side of the Mural. Artwork by Guido de Boer, 2020.

Throughout the exhibition I found 4 interactive pieces, including the mural, the installation with hanging photographs, and two touch screen applications. In the first application, users can take a close look at different styles of Asmat shields and the meaning behind all the symbolism they use in their designs. In the second one, users can learn about the traditional technique used to create and print patterns on Batiks. Both applications try to give the user some insight into how other cultures perceive the world, but they do not make them think about their role in the museum space. Overall, in an exhibition with approximately 300 objects, having a total of 3 texts and 2 installations that engage or address visitors is a very small percentage.



Figure 3. Hanging cyanotype on cotton. Artwork by Sarojini Lewis, 2020.

4.2.4 Overall presence and uses of implication in the exhibition

In *Rotterdam Crossroads* and *Remix Rotterdam*, I identified the following: the museum recognizes the negative effects of colonial encounters and the memories of violence in which Europeans have been implicated, and at the same time, the museum acknowledges its own implication in these memories of violence. According to the museum's objectives, by recognizing their own implication, they can invite visitors to think about their own social and political

implications (RCMC, 2020). To find out whether this objective is actually being fulfilled or not, research into the experience of museum visitors is needed. Furthermore, implication is a way for the museum to deal with its political responsibility because it can address the ways that it has benefitted from historical injustices. In line with Rothberg (2019), by recognizing its different modes of implication while inviting visitors to think about them, the museum opens possibilities for future dialogue and new paths towards justice.

It is also important to note that there are many other instances where the museum refers to historical injustices and memories of violence without making reference to their contemporary consequences or to the subjects implicated in these. Even though the museum's attempt for historical recognition is already visible, there are many elements that can still be improved if it wishes to continue addressing its social and political responsibility, while educating its visitors.

4.3 Identifying Multidirectionality in the Museum Exhibition

To study the presence of multidirectionality in the museum and the different approaches there are to curating this, I created two textual indicators – productive or generative encounters [\[4.3.1\]](#) and a transnational and non-Western perspective [\[4.3.2\]](#) – and one visual one: the presence of many memories in one space [\[4.3.3\]](#). To clearly show how I created these indicators, I will show examples using data from both exhibitions: *Crossroads Rotterdam* and *Remix Rotterdam*. Both exhibitions show a strong interest in addressing multidirectionality, but they do it by using very different tools and techniques. By selecting outstanding examples from both exhibitions, I show some insight into the central elements in multidirectionality and the various possibilities behind it. Even though the idea of multidirectionality is never explicitly mentioned, through these findings I argue that the museum is interested in discussing the productive effects of multidirectional encounters. There are key elements or themes throughout the exhibition that help identify a multidirectional perspective, including the use of comparative or associative language, a transnational focus, the presence of different memories in one space, and the visual comparisons between these. The following analysis on multidirectionality is divided into three themes. Each theme includes the findings and data for each exhibition and a comparison between both approaches.

4.3.1 Encounters

The first element that I focused on when analyzing the data to identify multidirectionality, was the concept of ‘encounters’ which I borrowed from the exhibition *Remix Rotterdam*. The word encounter is defined by the Merriam-Webster Dictionary as “a meeting between hostile factions or persons: a sudden often violent clash” (n.d.). In other words, it carries the connotation of being an abrupt or unplanned reunion with possible friction. However, in the exhibition, it seems to be used with many different connotations which I will explore with the following examples. These are part of the introductory texts to three different sections of *Remix Rotterdam*, namely Artistic Encounters (I), Colonial Encounters (II), and Universal Encounters (III):

- I. “Objects from other cultures are a source of inspiration for the production of art and everyday objects.”
- II. “Europeans looted and collected objects from the new cultures they encountered on a massive scale. Sometimes to display them, sometimes to study - out of fascination with the unknown”
- III. “The fascination with subjects like life, birth, interpersonal contact and death is evident across time and cultures... You encounter these themes all over the world.” – universal encounters

On the one hand, the exhibition refers to encounters as moments in which different cultures have been in contact causing an inspirational and generative effect for each other. Example I. shows how encounters between cultures can be generative in the production of new objects. On the other hand, the exhibition refers to encounters as moments in which the museum was able to obtain objects for its collection. More specifically, it refers to colonial encounters and the obtainment of objects for the museum. Example II. shows how encounters have been a source of object acquisition. Finally, ‘encounters’ is also used with a comparative connotation to refer to the way in which very different geographical places and cultures can have contrasting or shared ideas and beliefs. Example III. shows encounters as comparison by talking about similarities that occur around the world without being productive.

In these examples, we can see that the museum talks about encounters without making any specific distinction between different connotations. Therefore, after identifying all different types of encounters (cultural, colonial, artistic, trade, religious, etc.), I created three separate theme codes to identify between encounters that generate new things, encounters as sources of object obtainment, and encounters that are comparative. The distinction between these three

types of encounters is important because it is only through generative encounters that we can identify the presence of multidirectionality across *Remix Rotterdam*. The first connotation – the generative or productive one – is of particular interest to this section because its meaning, connected to the generation of new objects and ideas, is in line with the idea of multidirectionality.

Generative encounters in Remix Rotterdam

As Rothberg explains in his theory, multidirectional memory is generative in the sense that it can produce new memories and therefore new forms of solidarity. Therefore, identifying encounters that have a generative connotation guides us directly to the idea of multidirectionality. In *Remix Rotterdam*, I identified this encounter in the following subthemes: inspiration, influence, cultural hybrids, natural hybrid, and porcelain traces. These are some examples of texts that include a generative encounter perspective:

- I. **7. Inspiration:** Artists and makers have always **copied** each other; for example, during the nineteenth century, when all things Japanese were fashionable. The Netherlands was inundated with Japanese *objets d'art* and clothes because of the country's unique **trading** relationship with Japan. The East was also popular at that time and Western **adaptations** of Arabic styles were the order of the day. (Figure 4)
- II. **9. Influence:** Encounters, whatever the circumstances, often have **creative** consequences. People **adopt** cultural or social expressions from one another. While the **influence** is usually reciprocal, it is often not equal: the non-dominant group often **changes** the most. (Figure 5)

Example I. shows how objects from different parts of the world have been a source of inspiration in the creation of new objects, while example II. highlights the creative effects of encounters. In both cases, it is possible to identify that encounters produce new objects, ideas, and even cultural expressions. The objective of *Remix Rotterdam* is to show how encounters have occurred throughout different times and places, generating new ideas, artistic currents, objects, and more. The next section explores the presence of generative encounters in *Rotterdam Crossroads*.

Figure 4 and Figure 5 are part of “Inspiration” and “Influence” respectively. They show examples of objects that have been created out of inspirations obtained from other cultures. The first one is a European woman wearing a kimono, and the second one is a North American sprinkler inspired on Syrian and Persian flasks.



Figure 4. *The Earring*, by George Hendrik Breitner, 1893



Figure 5. *Rose Water Sprinkler*, Tiffany & Co., 1897

Generative encounters in Rotterdam Crossroads

Firstly, it is important to mention that while the term ‘encounters’ is central in *Remix Rotterdam*, it only appears a total of 4 times in *Rotterdam Crossroads*. However, there are other keywords and phrases that can also refer to productive encounters, such as crossroads, points of contact, links, combinations, or crossing paths. The title, *Rotterdam Crossroads*, suggests that Rotterdam is a place where things come and go from many different directions. The different sections and subthemes constantly emphasize the idea that objects, people, and ideas are in constant movement and encounters. It is through this movement that different memories can meet in multidirectional networks and produce new memories.

In this exhibition, the idea of generative encounters is most often found in words associated to moments when cultures meet. After identifying texts with those words, a process of interpretation is needed to find out whether these meetings or encounters have been productive. These are some examples of generative encounters with a variety of keywords:

- I. **Contacts** between people from different regions affects the appearance of their objects.
- II. People influence one another when their **paths cross**. As a result, cultures are always changing.

- III. They were in frequent **contact** with each other, for instance through trade. As a result, the different peoples emulated each other's traditions and customs.
- IV. Indo-European women set up their own batik enterprises. In their designs, they **combined** bright colors with European motifs, such as flowers and fairy tales.

Even though the term encounter is not present in these examples, it is possible to identify the idea that meetings or contacts have productive effects. Through a broad description, Example II. shows that encounters provoke constant change. Similarly, Example I. and IV. show that contact between people can have material consequences in the objects they produce. Finally, Example III. Explores how through encounters, people can imitate each other and reproduce other's customs. These examples show that the generative side of multidirectionality can be present in many words (not just 'encounter') as long as they show the productive effect that contact between different cultures and people can have.

4.3.2 Transnational & Non-Western Perspective

Another element that I focused on when analyzing the data to identify multidirectionality, was the presence of a transnational perspective which, according to Cesari & Rigney (2014) and Rothberg (2014), is a central characteristic of memory. As previously explained, there are no precise methods to identify a transnational memory. Therefore, in this analysis, I identified certain keywords that pointed towards a perspective that would go beyond the national such as international, universal, global, and non-Western. However, some of these keywords might still be used from a more local or national perspective and thus, they have to be analyzed in the context that they appear.

Since most of the subthemes in *Remix Rotterdam* combined Western with non-Western objects, transnationalism was seemingly easy to identify throughout the exhibition, especially in the first 4 themes. Some examples are:

- I. **8. Reconciliation:** To the indigenous peoples the coyote was sacred, to the colonists it was a nuisance and was shot on a large scale.
- II. **12. Cultural Hybrids:** Syrian potters in Damascus copied Chinese porcelain: their apothecaries' jars have similar decorations. Around 1430 we see blue-and-white Arabian pottery for the first time in a painting by the Flemish artist Jan van Eyck. Similarly European coppersmiths were inspired by inlaid brassware from Syria and Egypt

The first example shows the contrast between two very different geographical perspectives (indigenous Native American vs European colonizers), with no particular bias. The second example shows the emergence of hybrid cultural objects that have emerged across the world thanks to cultural encounters. The idea of hybrid shows that mixing elements from different places can give birth to new objects.

However, there are some cases where the exhibition makes use of transnational language while remaining in nationalist territory. For example, in the theme 'Beyond Nationalism,' the museum provides two examples stemming from the Netherlands: the supra-national philosophy of Desiderius Erasmus represented here by a painting (Figure 6) and a photographic collection of supposedly universally recognizable hand gestures taken by the Rotterdam photographer Robert de Hartogh (Figure 7).

Arguably, because the museum chose two examples from the Netherlands, the dedication to transnationalism in this section seems put on. Whether Erasmus' philosophy and de Hartogh's findings contributed to a transnationalism based on cultural differences or they are another instance of Western universalism is open to discussion and further research. What remains important for now is that transnational terms such as 'beyond nationalism' or 'universalism' do not necessarily relate to the productive potential of transnationalism as depicted in the previous examples. In other words, while specific vocabulary might appear to fit the same coding, the context in which they are used is also essential to consider.



Figure 6. *Portrait of Desiderius Erasmus* by Lucas Cranach de Oude, 1530-36



Figure 7. *The World in Hands*, by Robert de Hartogh, 1970s-1990s

In *Rotterdam Crossroads*, a transnational perspective is also visible through similar keywords in examples such as:

- I. The **international recognition** is a great source of pride for the Asmat and has resulted in a boom in the production of art.
- II. This presentation follows three women who, each in their own way, try to give new meanings to traditions as part of their **Chinese- Dutch identities**.
- III. Instead of using the collection to represent Africa, it is the other way around: the focus is on the **African view of Europeans**.

The previous three examples have very different approaches to transnationalism, and yet, all of them relate to how a transnational perspective contributes to the way the exhibition creates a network of memories that go beyond a national imaginary. While Example I. emphasizes the international recognition of an object, Example II. shows the emergence of new multicultural traditions, and Example III. attempts to give a non-Western perspective.

Identifying the extent to which the museum offers non-Western perspectives that go beyond the standard European and Western worldview was primary in the search for transnationalism. To identify how much space there is for non-Western perspectives in the museum, I looked for descriptions and information that would allow non-Western voices to speak for themselves and describe how they perceive the world around them. It is important to note the issue that throughout the exhibition, the main speaker is predominantly the museum which stands as a representative of Western culture, values, and knowledge. Therefore, 'allowing' others to speak could also be seen as a patronizing move, depending on how it is handled. An example of an effective way to give a non-Western perspective is the documentary about La Sape in the section of representation (2.3).

The documentary tells the story of a subculture and fashion movement in Congo known as La Sape. In the video, we hear a third person narrator as well as interviews of sapeurs (members of La Sape) who describe what the movement is to them and how it emerged. The subculture can be seen as the object of exhibition, while the narrator functions as the museum labels. While the main narration comes from a Dutch perspective, the development of the documentary is told from the voices of the Congolese men. Before arguing that we equally see a Western and non-Western perspective in a same space, it is necessary to question whether they are given the same room to speak. Since the Dutch narrator has control over the story and

therefore stands in a position of privilege, I carefully analyzed its text. I found that throughout the narration, the text seems to be constantly objective/informative and includes little to no judgment (transcript in Appendix). Therefore, this documentary does serve as an example that offers a non-Western perspective in parallel to a Western one. Consequently, it opens up a space through which viewers can compare both perspectives and create a multidirectional understanding of this cultural movement in Africa.

4.3.3 Multidirectionality in the Space

Even though most of the analysis of data in this research is based on textual information, it is also important to point out the importance of the spatial arrangement of objects in the context of multidirectional memory. Multidirectionality, often an abstract concept, entails creating a comparative network of memories. By doing a visual analysis of the exhibition space, it is possible to see how the museum is creating these networks of comparative memory, particularly by placing multiple memories in one space and through an emphasis on transnationalism. To analyze this, I looked in a broad sense at how different sections of the exhibition were arranged. More specifically, I looked at whether each space of exhibition allowed for a juxtaposition of contrasting objects or whether it was creating physical separations by using walls and separate cabinets.

In *Rotterdam Crossroads* I found the following: part 1 – A Global Connection – showcases, in a single room, objects from all over the world that were obtained during the Dutch colonial enterprise. In this space, there are cabinets placed around the walls but also in the center of the room. Visitors have to walk back, forth, and around the space – as if drawing a web – to see the exhibition. There is no specific order nor hierarchy in the arrangement of themes which allows visitors to see all of them as equally important. Having all these objects in this arrangement shows how different experiences of colonialism – from trade to military expeditions and missionary work – can be compared within one space of networks. In other words, through the use of an open space with no implicit hierarchies, the museum is showing how all these objects that come from different places and which seem to have no inherent relation between each other, actually share a similar memory of violence and colonial past. By encouraging a walk around this space, the museum can potentially make visitors think about the comparative aspect of these objects.

Part 2 – Culture in Motion – actually does the opposite, for it uses walls to divide the space into themes and regions. First, the museum presents objects from New Guinea and the

Asmat people; then after walking around a wall, there is a section on the Middle East that presents mainly objects from the Ottoman Empire; and finally, after walking through another dividing wall, the museum presents African sculptures and questions about African representation. Put differently, in order to see the entire section 'Culture in Motion', one has to walk through three separate rooms. The use of walls and separate rooms in the space do not guide viewers to see the objects in this section as connected. Even though the texts on this section claim to focus on how cultures change when encountering other cultures, when it comes to visual indicators, it does not emphasize this goal. Separating rooms into different world regions not only diminishes the possibility of comparing memories but also of seeing a transnational perspective. Therefore, I conclude that in part 2, there are no visual networks that could produce a multidirectional perspective.

Finally, part 3 – Rotterdam, a Global City – uses one large open space to showcase works by many different contemporary artists with non-Western backgrounds. Similar to the first part of the exhibition, one can navigate back and forth in the space, going through the artists' memories and stories. Even though the artworks might require more textual explanation to be understood, the open space shows that they are all interconnected by the theme of migration and a colonial past. A multidirectional network is clearly present in this space of multiple memories.

In both exhibitions, but mainly *Remix Rotterdam*, I found a multidirectional perspective in their seemingly transnational character seen in the obvious juxtaposition of objects that come from all over the world. This contrast is particularly shocking in *Remix Rotterdam* because of how it places contemporary Western artworks next to non-Western ethnographic objects, artifacts, and artworks. The exhibition is arranged in a single, almost circular room. The few half-walls around the space serve to hang paintings and therefore do not really divide the room into sections. This results in one large space where objects from all around the world are in constant communication with each other. Showcased inside the same cabinet, one can find a Nkisi Tutelary Figure from Congo next to a Virgin and Child sculpture from Germany. Similarly, hanging on the same wall, one can find a European painting of the head of Christ next to a mask made by the Tsimshian people in Canada. The curators show that these objects are interconnected by placing them under overarching themes that link these seemingly distant objects together such as death, recognition, inspiration, fascination, etc. However, it is important to note that the perspective that the museum speaks from in its labels and descriptions can also influence this transnationalism and make it more local by situating it in the context of Europe or The Netherlands. Most of the texts in this exhibition, (as seen in the example of Erasmus), do

not offer a transnational perspective. Since both exhibitions decided to work with a lot of textual information, whatever they communicate through text has a great impact on the objects they are displaying.

By studying the spatial arrangement in the exhibitions, it is possible to see how the objects, their placements, and their accompanying texts are constantly influencing each other and the narrative that they produce. Each one of these elements could of course be researched in a lot more detail, but for this research, the focus will remain on the texts.

4.3.4 Rotterdam, Global City: Combining Encounters with Transnationalism

When identifying multidirectionality in the museum's texts and content, I found that in most cases, encounters were only mentioned in the context of historical events, and a transnational perspective was only present in more contemporary happenings. However, there was one outstanding section of *Rotterdam Crossroads* which dealt with both concepts simultaneously. Part 3 of the exhibition – Rotterdam, Global City – showcases works from contemporary Dutch artists with non-Western backgrounds and immigrant artists, all who have been inspired by their personal multicultural backgrounds and histories of migration. Their artworks have been born from a process of cultural encounters and they reflect a multidirectional character in the way they approach the theme of memory and transnationalism. The artists discuss questions of memory by exploring their ancestor's past and the elements that have led to who and where they are today.

The section is divided in 4 – Bittersweet memories, New Perspective, Changing Traditions, and Music. Through the example of Bittersweet Memories and Music, I will now show how the objects in this section have emerged from a contemporary process of cultural encounters and most importantly, from a collection of different transnational memories and perspectives.

Bittersweet memories (3.1)

This installation by Dutch/Indian artist Sarojini Lewis explores the migration of the karela, a vegetable that has been a symbol of home and comfort for Indian and Surinamese migrants living in The Netherlands. The section includes three elements: a small sculpture of a karela, a film, and a series of photographs. The description of the sculpture states that the karela's global migration is a symbol of "the human experience of belonging to many places at once." In

the film, Lewis digs deeper into the symbolism of the karela by visiting sites of memory of her family, and “acknowledging the bitter past of the plantation space and its contemporary effect on Surinamese identity.” Finally, through the photographs which are set in New Delhi and Rotterdam, Lewis uses the karela to show that in these cosmopolitan cities it is possible and desirable to have a multicultural background. Lewis uses these three artworks to explore questions of memory by looking at the karela as a symbol of migration, as a reminder of the horrors that occurred in the plantation space, and as an example of how one can belong to multiple places at the same time. From this installation, I conclude that multidirectionality is present thanks to three elements: Lewis’ artworks as an example of generative encounters which effectively produce new solidarities, the transnational character of the artworks, and the position of the exhibition within the context of this museum. I will now explore these:

First, I identified the presence of generative encounters in the artwork and in the space. Clearly, the pieces in this installation were born out of the encounter between Lewis’ memory of migration and slavery and her connection to today’s cosmopolitan city of Rotterdam. The installation creates a network of memories between past and present histories that explain how her past as a non-Western migrant affect her experiences living in contemporary Rotterdam. By placing all these memories within one installation, viewers can generate new understandings of her past and the past of all the other migrants she represents. Consequently, this can create new forms of solidarity by making viewers think about how her past as a non-Western migrant with a connection to histories of colonialism and slavery affects her present life in a Western city.

Second, I identified the transnational character of *Bittersweet Memories* in the following: the emphasis that the artist herself has a background of migration with her ancestors traveling from India to Suriname, and finally to The Netherlands, and the use of food as a symbol of migration. In her artwork, Lewis argues that foods, just like people, are not only in constant migration, but also can belong to many places at the same time. For Lewis, foods and people do not belong to a specific nation, and this is symbolized through the karela.

Finally, I found that a multidirectional perspective emerges in part 3 due to the organization and curation of the entire exhibition space. While part 1 and 2 of *Rotterdam Crossroads* mainly discuss the history of colonialism, part 3 is focused on the contemporary experience of Dutch people with migrant backgrounds in Rotterdam. By placing a section about immigration after exhibitions that discuss colonialism, the Wereldmuseum brings these two memories together and highlights the continuity between past and present. In line with Rothberg’s theory,

by guiding visitors to compare two separate memories, the museum can ease the production of new memories and narratives.

Music (3.4):

The section on music presents three brief documentaries about Rotterdam-based musicians: the Dutch band Broederliefde whose members originate from Cape Verde, Dominican Republic, and Curaçao, the Dutch/Cape Verdean singer Djocy Santos, and Dutch/Cape Verdean singer Américo Brito. All these artists have a background as non-Western immigrants who have lived in The Netherlands for almost their entire lives. In the labels, the museum argues that encounters between different cultures have given rise to unique sounds that mix Cape Verdean music with Western pop, Dutch language, and other cultural and musical backgrounds. So not only does this exhibition show that the encounter between contemporary migrant cultures gives rise to new forms of culture, but it also offers a broad transnational and non-Western perspective by showcasing the importance of Cape Verde for the Rotterdam music scene.

4.3.5 Overall Presence and Use of Multidirectionality in the Exhibition

Textually, all sections of *Rotterdam Crossroads* engage, to different extents, with questions of multidirectionality. However, when considering texts and the visual composition of the space, I found that only two out of three parts of the exhibition succeed in offering a multidirectional perspective. *Remix Rotterdam* on the other hand, could be described almost entirely as a multidirectional exhibition in its spatial arrangement and the themes that it deals with. However, many of its descriptive labels and texts do not support this perspective because they do not invite readers to compare the objects in the exhibition. Instead, the texts were mainly written from a Western perspective and with no comparative focus.

5. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

In this research, I have attempted to collect and analyze data to answer the question: *How does the Wereldmuseum change the dominant narrative of immigrants in The Netherlands?*

By gathering data from two exhibitions at the museum, I explored how and to what extent were these exhibitions engaging with the concepts of multidirectionality and implication as two tools to change the dominant narrative. After having given an overview of the current academic literature on immigration and integration, post-colonialism and museums, memory and responsibility -- and how all of these connect productively -- I continued to lay out my methodological approach. As the concepts of multidirectionality and implication originate in the discipline of cultural memory studies, I translated them into measurable elements for data collection and analysis through cultural sociology methods. The findings that followed brought me to the following answer of my research question:

I found that there are two meaningful ways through which the museum changes the narratives around immigration: one, by **addressing its implication** in histories of violence and injustices and by allowing visitors to think about their own implication; and two, by showing the **networks of multidirectional memory** in the entangled histories of colonialism and immigration. Through these networks, the museum can produce new narratives and new understandings of the past and present.

Implication, firstly, is shown by the museum's recognition that there is a link between colonialism and its contemporary consequences, such as the discriminatory treatment of immigrants. Drawing this connection between past and present, does not immediately change the dominant narrative of immigration but is a first necessary step to situate the debate historically and think critically about the past. Secondly, the museum's reflexive stance towards its own history -- its complicity in colonial atrocities and representational practices of "Othering" -- further solidifies the foundation for new narratives on immigration to be built upon. The fact that the Wereldmuseum, for example, acknowledges that its collection benefited from objects that were "acquired" within the sociohistorical context of colonialism is representative of a self-critical understanding that could lead to political responsibility, as formulated by Rothberg. Furthermore, the museum recognizes that previous ethnographic exhibitions painted a stereotypical image of non-Western societies which supported a colonial worldview that stretches into today's debate on integration. The dedication to a more critical and nuanced representation within the exhibition but also through research projects, opens the possibility for new narratives.

The multidirectional approach that I have discovered in my results is the second method the museum employs to rethink the narrative of immigration in The Netherlands. While implication and multidirectionality built on each other, the latter reconsiders the nature of collective memory. Multidirectionality, firstly, is shown by the museum's emphasis on the productive effects that cultural encounters can have. In line with Rothberg's theory, by emphasizing that memories do not exist in competition (resulting in a zero-sum game) but instead are formed through borrowing, exchanging, or appropriating, the museum removes memories from a space of ownership and into a public sphere. By highlighting the generative potentials of encounters, the museum employs this multidirectional understanding of memory. Secondly, multidirectionality is identifiable in the museum's conscious attempt to bring a transnational and non-Western perspective to its exhibition. The entangled histories of colonialism, global trade, and migration, which are mentioned in the museum's labels, make Rothberg's argument that memories are formed through transnational and transcultural dialogue even more plausible. Furthermore, since collective memories are constitutive elements of national identities, the understanding that memories themselves have been constructed through transnational dialogue shows that the process of nation-building is also always influenced by other cultures. The museum shows this through, for example, artworks created by Dutch artists who have been inspired by aesthetics or styles from different cultures. These artworks, exhibited in a national museum and belonging to a national visual canon, are proof of the "foreign" influences in the midst of the national consciousness of the Netherlands, whose purified, ethno-nationalist ideal is so often evoked by right-wing politicians. Arguably, by communicating this to visitors, the dominant narrative of immigration can be changed and sentiments of fear or scepticism transformed into openness and respect. Finally, multidirectionality is visible in some of the spatial arrangements of the exhibition, where open spaces allow objects and subjects to create associations and networks.

Relevance

This research is contributing to bridging the theories of cultural memory studies, museum studies, and cultural sociology, by materializing concepts that are mostly utilized in the humanities. The conclusions I have drawn in this research are the result of a careful analysis of the museum's exhibitions. Here, I have shown how the topics of immigration, colonialism, and national memory are connected. Also, I exemplified how theories from memory and post-colonial studies could be used to improve the public narrative around immigration. This

hopefully contributes to a more nuanced and critical and less discriminatory public debate. Future research that wants to explore similar topics can make use of the operationalization of the concepts of implication and multidirectionality that I have translated into measurable elements for cultural sociology methods.

Limitations and Further Research

So far, this research has shown that, theoretically, utilizing the concepts of memory studies can provide new alternatives in reshaping narratives. Also, this research has shown that the museum is already implementing these concepts in its labels and spatial arrangement and that it is changing dominant narratives within its exhibition space. However, since most of the analysis was centered around texts, the results still offer an incomplete picture of the role that these concepts play in the exhibition. Even though I did acknowledge some outstanding elements of the spatial arrangement – such as the presence of interactive spaces or the effects of walls – this area can still be studied. Further research could do a more in-depth analysis of the specific placement of objects in the exhibition and the meanings that this can produce.

Also, to increase the relevance of this study, it would be essential to find out the degree of effectiveness that these changes in narrative have beyond the exhibition space. In other words, whether these changes in narratives can actually change the ways visitors perceive the idea of immigrants in The Netherlands. For this research, I was not able to interact with anyone beyond the exhibition space. Curators and museum staff were too busy (or unresponsive) for interviews and at the time of data collection, there were no visitors in the museum. Therefore, further research should look at the experience of visitors in the museum space to find out whether the techniques specifically identified in this research can change their perception of immigrants in The Netherlands.

REFERENCES

- Anderson, B. (2006). *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London, UK: Verso.
- Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G., Tiffin, H. (2007). *Postcolonial Studies: The Key Concepts*. 2nd Edition. London: Routledge
- Barthes, R. (1972). *Mythologies* (A. Lavers, Trans.). New York: Hill and Wang. (Original work published 1957).
- Bennett, T. (1988). The Exhibitionary Complex. *new formation*, 4, 73-102
- Bosma, U. (2009). *Terug uit de koloniën: Zestig jaar postkoloniale migranten en hun organisaties*. Amsterdam: Bert Bakker.
- Bosma, U. (2012). Introduction: Post-colonial immigrants and identity formations in the Netherlands. In Bosma U. (Ed.), *Post-colonial Immigrants and Identity Formations in the Netherlands* (pp. 7-26). Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt45kfpq.3>
- Bowen, G.A. (2009). Document Analysis as a Qualitative Research Method, *Qualitative Research Journal*, 9(2), 27-40. <https://doi.org/10.3316/QRJ0902027>
- Brugman, F. (2012). Contributions of Museums to Development. *Culture and Development*, 8, UNESCO.
- Bryman, A. (2012). *Social Research Methods*. 4th Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Buchanan, I. (2010). *A Dictionary of Critical Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- CBS. (2020, December 6). *Forecast: Population growth unabated in the next 50 years*. CBS.
<https://www.cbs.nl/en-gb/news/2020/51/forecast-population-growth-unabated-in-the-next-50-years>
- Cesari De, C. & Rigney, A (2014). Introduction. In C. Cesari De & A. Rigney (Eds.) *Transnational Memory: Circulation, Articulation, Scales* (pp. 1-25). De Gruyter.
- Clifford, J. (1997). *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Crul, M., Lelie, F., & Keskiner, E. (2019). The Second and Third Generation in Rotterdam: Increasing Diversity Within Diversity. In P. Scholten, M. Crul & P. van de Laar (Eds.) *Coming to Terms with Superdiversity* (pp. 57-71). IMISCOE Research Series. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-96041-8_3

- Damhuis, K. (2019, July 24). *"The biggest problem in the Netherlands": Understanding the Party for Freedom's politicization of Islam*. Brookings.
<https://www.brookings.edu/research/the-biggest-problem-in-the-netherlands-understanding-the-party-for-freedoms-politicization-of-islam/>
- Erlil, A. (2011). *Memory in Culture* (S.B. Young, Trans.). Palgrave Macmillan. (Original work published 2005).
- European Commission. (2017, November). Public Opinion in the European Union. *Standard Eurobarometer 88*. <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2143>
- Favell, A. (2019). Integration: twelve propositions after Schinkel. *Comparative Migration Studies*, 7(21), <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40878-019-0125-7>
- Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews & Other Writings, 1972–1977*, New York, NY: Pantheon Books.
- Furseth, I & Everett, E.L. (2013). *Doing Your Master's Dissertation: From Start to Finish*. Sage Publications.
- Halbwachs, M. (1992). *On Collective Memory* (L.A. Coser, Ed.). The University of Chicago Press. (Original work published 1925).
- Hall, S. (2013). The Work of Representation. In S. Hall, J. Evans & S. Nixon (Eds.) *Representation* (2nd ed., pp. 1-56). SAGE Publications.
- Harrison, R. (2013). *Heritage: Critical Approaches*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Huijink, W. (2018). *De religieuze beleving van moslims in Nederland. Diversiteit en verandering in beeld*. Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau.
<https://www.scp.nl/publicaties/publicaties/2018/06/07/de-religieuze-beleving-van-moslims-in-nederland>
- Hooper-Greenhill, E. (1992). *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge*. London: Routledge.
- Hooper-Greenhill, E. (2006). Studying Visitors. In Sharon Macdonald (Ed.) *A Companion to Museum Studies*. (pp. 362-376). Blackwell Publishing.
- Lidchi, H. (2013). The Poetics and Politics of Exhibiting Other Cultures. In S. Hall, J. Evans & S. Nixon (Eds.) *Representation* (2nd ed., pp. 120-211). SAGE Publications.
- Mason, R. (2006). Cultural Theory and Museum Studies. In Sharon Macdonald (Ed.) *A Companion to Museum Studies* (pp. 17-32). Blackwell Publishing.
- Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). Encounter. In *Merriam-Webster.com dictionary*. Retrieved June 1, 2021, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/encounter>

- Neuman, W. L. (2014). *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (7th edition). Pearson Education Limited.
- Nora, P. (1989). Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire. *Representations*, (26), 7-24, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2928520>
- Research Center for Material Culture. (n.d.-a). *Entangled in History*. RCMC. <https://www.materialculture.nl/en/research/projects/entangled-history>
- Research Center for Material Culture. (n.d.-b). *States of Migration*. RCMC. <https://www.materialculture.nl/en/research/themes/states-migration>
- Research Center for Material Culture. (2020, July 22). Thinking With | Michael Rothberg | The Implicated Subject [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=29Bc2JHAbX8>
- Rothberg, M. (2009). *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization*, Stanford University Press.
- Rothberg, M. (2013). Remembering Back. Cultural Memory, Colonial Legacies and Postcolonial Studies. In G. Huggan (Ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of Postcolonial Studies* (pp. 359-379). Oxford University Press.
- Rothberg, M. (2014). Multidirectional Memory in Migratory Settings: The Case of Post-Holocaust Germany. In C. Cesari De & A. Rigney (Eds.) *Transnational Memory: Circulation, Articulation, Scales* (pp. 123-145). De Gruyter.
- Rothberg, M. (2019). *The Implicated Subject: Beyond Victims and Perpetrators*. Stanford University Press.
- Saharso, S. (2019). Who needs integration? Debating a central, yet increasingly contested concept in migration studies. *Comparative Migration Studies*, 7(16), doi.org/10.1186/s40878-019-0123-9
- Schinkel, W. (2017). *Imagined Societies: A Critique of Immigrant Integration in Western Europe*. Cambridge University Press.
- Schinkel, W. (2018). Against 'immigrant integration': for an end to neocolonial knowledge production. *Comparative Migration Studies*, 6(31), <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40878-018-0095-1>
- Scholten P., Crul M., & van de Laar, P. (2019) Introduction. In P. Scholten, M. Crul & P. van de Laar (Eds.) *Coming to Terms with Superdiversity* (pp. 1-18). IMISCOE Research Series. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-96041-8_1

Simpson, M. G. (2001). *Making Representations: Museums in the Post-Colonial Era* (Rev. ed.).

London: Routledge.

Spivak, G. (1999). *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present*. Harvard University Press.

Vasta, E. (2007). From ethnic minorities to ethnic majority policy: Multiculturalism and the shift to assimilationism in the Netherlands. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 30(5), 713-740,

<https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870701491770>

Van Selm, J. (2019, May 1). *Migration in the Netherlands: Rhetoric and Perceived Reality Challenge Dutch Tolerance*. Migration Policy Institute

<https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/migration-netherlands-rhetoric-and-perceived-reality-challenge-dutch-tolerance>

Wereldmuseum. (n.d.-a). *About Wereldmuseum*. Wereldmuseum

<https://www.wereldmuseum.nl/en/about-wereldmuseum>

Wereldmuseum (n.d.-b). *History Wereldmuseum*. Wereldmuseum

<https://www.wereldmuseum.nl/en/themes/history-wereldmuseum>

Wereldmuseum (n.d.-c). *Mission*. Wereldmuseum.

<https://www.wereldmuseum.nl/en/about-wereldmuseum/mission>

APPENDIX

A1. Codebook

Concept: Multidirectionality			
<i>Indicators and Definition</i>	<i>Sub-indicators</i>	<i>Codes/Keywords</i>	<i>Example</i>
<p>Encounters as generators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact between different cultures and people that had productive, creative, and/or generative effects. 	<p>Associative Language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Texts that associate two or more objects with each other. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Association - Networks - Crossroads - Meetings <p>Points of contact Encounters</p>	<p>Encounters, whatever the circumstances, often have creative consequences (RR, p. 25)</p> <p>Contacts between people from different regions affects the appearance of their objects (RC, p. 7)</p>
	<p>Comparative Language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Texts that compare different people, cultures, or histories. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encounters as comparison - Like - As Such 	<p>Some have a long history while others have emerged as part of an acculturated Christian practice. (RC, p. 57)</p>
	<p>Productive language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Texts that describe how something emerges or is generated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Generate - Produce - Create - Modify - Influence - Inspire - Change 	<p>The craftsmen creatively adapted their products so they would appeal to the image of the country that their customers wanted to show. (RC, p. 35)</p>
	<p>Different types of encounters</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Artistic encounter - Trade encounter

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The exhibition discusses many different types of encounters, some which are more generative and others more comparative. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Universal encounter - Religious encounter - Cultural encounter - Food encounter - Music encounter - Encounter as comparison 	<p>amounts selling Indian opium in China. (RC, p. 39)</p>
<p>Transnational & Non-Western Perspective</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text that makes reference to multiple perspectives that go beyond a national or local one. 	<p>Beyond a national language</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Universality - Global - Universal encounters - Beyond nationalism 	<p>Not pigeonholing people according to their nationality or ethnic background – it is a topical subject (RR, p. 13)</p>
	<p>Highlighting different worldviews</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - African perspective - Turkish perspective - Chinese perspective - Indian perspective - Curaçaoan perspective - Non-Western perspective - West vs non-West 	<p>Instead of using the collection to represent Africa, it is the other way around: the focus is on the African view of Europeans (RC, p. 73)</p>
<p>Presence of different memories within one physical space</p>	<p>Associative placement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reference to different histories of violence within one space. After identifying the different themes in the exhibition, one must determine whether they 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Migration - Violence - Colonialism - Othering - Military/war - Oppression 	<p>Themes of colonialism and migration are in the same space in section 3 of RC (Rotterdam, Global City) and can therefore interact.</p>

	are spatially allowed to interact with each other)		
<p>Concept: Implication</p>			
<p>Critical Connection between Past and Present</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simultaneous engagement with synchronic and diachronic implication 	<p>Diachronic implication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Texts that deal with how the museum is entangled in historical events 	<p>History of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Colonialism - War - Trade - Missions - Exchanges 	<p>During Colonial rule in Indonesia, the Royal Dutch East Indies Army carried out a great number of military expeditions. (RC, p. 24)</p>
	<p>Synchronic implication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Texts that deal with contemporary injustices that emerge from historical ones. 	<p>Contemporary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stereotyping - Othering practices - Negative representations of non-Westerns - Neo-colonial practices 	<p>The rise of the sapeurs is linked to the colonial past. (RC, p. 81)</p>
	<p>Connecting past and present histories</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Texts that connect the previous two indicators together, i.e., that show how historical and contemporary events are connected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Colonial practices seen today - Origins of stereotypes - Repeating negative representations through history - Continuing practices of othering and exclusion of non-Western groups. 	<p>The documentary by the same name focuses on the Chinese contribution to Dutch society. It is an ode to a culture of adaptability and resilience that seeks to counter stereotypes and clichés surrounding the Chinese community. (RC, p. 101-2)</p>

			[The artists] use the karela to conduct a cleansing ritual, acknowledging the bitter past of the plantation space and its contemporary effect on Surinamese identity. (RC, p. 97)
<p>Reflexivity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When the museum notes its own presence in Dutch history, in their collection’s history, and when it critically refers to its social role 	<p>First person language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When the museum speaks about itself. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We (the museum) - Referencing the exhibition - Referencing the collection 	<p>By now, we, the Wereldmuseum, realise that these illegally obtained objects do not necessarily belong in the museum. (RC, p. 25)</p>
	<p>Obtainment of Collection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Texts that recognize just and unjust ways in which the museum obtained objects from their collection. 	<p>Modes of obtainment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Illicit - Donation - Purchase - Trade 	<p>Large quantities of gold, weapons, and jewellery were stolen from the palaces of royal families. (RC, p. 25)</p>
	<p>Recognizing the museum’s historical mistakes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The labels address ways in which the museum has been involved in historical injustices (beyond the looting of objects) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Production and distribution of negative stereotypes within the museum space. - Biases in the exhibition 	<p>Many European museums presented stereotypical images of the African continent, showing objects in such a way that they supported and justified the colonial worldview. (RC, p. 73-74)</p> <p>There is a gender bias favoring men in the collection. (RC, p. 56)</p>

<p>Addressing visitors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When the labels in the museum address the visitor directly or when the objects in exhibition guide the visitor to think about themselves and their role in the museum space. 	<p>Direct language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Texts that address the visitors directly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - You - Your - Yourself 	<p>In this gallery, you will learn more about the varied collection of the Wereldmuseum (RC, p. 3).</p>
	<p>Interactive objects and installations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visitors engage with the objects - Visitors move around the exhibition space to understand it - Visitors interact with their surroundings. 	<p>If you want to read the text, you'll have to take action by going exploring and completing the puzzle. (RC, p. 95)</p>

A2. Overview of collected material

A2.1 Rotterdam Crossroads

<i>Section of the Exhibition</i>	<i>Titles and content</i>	<i>Brief summary</i>
ROTTERDAM CROSSROADS	Introduction text (1 paragraph)	Rotterdam is a diverse population comes from around the world. The history of the city's population is showcased in the exhibition.
1. A GLOBAL CONNECTION	Introduction (1 paragraph)	The different origins of the museum's collection are discussed in this section.
	1.1 Trade: - Introduction (2 paragraphs) - Number of photos: 4 - Number of objects: 5 - Total labels: 8	Hendrik Muller Sr was responsible for a lot of the trading with Congolese people. This section shows some of these traded objects.
	1.2 Expeditions: - Introduction (1 paragraph) - Number of photos: 4 - Number of objects: 19 - Total labels: 23	Dutch researchers in Suriname would buy and exchange items with the locals. Here we see objects of that were of everyday use for the Surinamese.
	1.3 Missionary Work - Introduction (2 paragraph) - Number of photos: 2 - Number of objects: 8 - Total labels: 10	Clergy that travelled to the Dutch colonies collected religious objects from the native people as part of the conversion process. Some religious objects are showcased here.
	1.4 Spoils of War - Introduction (2 paragraph) - Number of photos: 2 - Number of objects: 10 - Total labels: 12	During the military expeditions carried out in Indonesia, the Dutch military stole large quantities of gold, jewelry, and weapons, now showcased in the museum.
	1.5 Donations - Introduction (1 paragraph) - Number of photos: 3 - Number of objects: 6 - Total labels: 6	Scholar Elie van Rijckevorsel was a collector who donated his collection of 900 objects from all around the world to the Wereldmuseum.
1.6 Tourist Art - Introduction (2 paragraph) - Number of photos: 5 - Number of objects: 7 - Total labels: 10	Chinese craftsmen used to create and sell souvenirs that depicted 'strange' Chinese customs. These depictions were very attractive for foreigners.	

	<p>1.7 Sister Cities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction (2 paragraph) - Number of photos: 4 - Number of objects: 13 - Total labels: 19 	<p>In 1979, Shanghai and Rotterdam began a partnership through which the Wereldmuseum was able to record the daily life of Chinese people and collect 500 objects.</p>
<p>2. CULTURE IN MOTION</p>	<p>Introduction</p>	<p>Culture is very dynamic and very often influenced through encounters with other cultures. Objects can help us understand how cultures have changed through time in different places.</p>
	<p>2.1 Change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction (2 paragraphs) - Asmat Shields: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction (1 paragraph) • Number of objects: 10 • Number of labels: 15 • 1 interactive application - Decorations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of objects & photos: 9 • Number of labels: 9 	<p>The museum has a large collection of objects from the Asmat people including large shields and bodily decorations. Since their introduction to the West, Asmat shields have gained international recognition. Most of these objects were collected during colonial interventions.</p>
	<p>2.2 Dissemination</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction (1 paragraph) - The Tulip: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction • Number of objects: 7 • Number of labels: 5 - The Shadow Play: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intro • Number of objects: 1 • Number of labels: 3 - The Tughra: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intro • Number of objects: 15 • Number of labels: 8 - The Fez <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intro • Number of objects: 17 • Number of labels: 11 	<p>The museum showcases its Ottoman-Turkish collection to show how some objects, including the tulip, the fez, the tughra, and the Turkish shadow play spread within the Ottoman Empire and beyond.</p>
	<p>2.3 Representation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intro (1 paragraph) - Worked Ivory 	<p>Museums have long used African collections to spread a colonial worldview. The Wereldmuseum showcases some</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of objects: 6 • Number of labels: 1 - Stereotypical images of Africa <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intro (1 paragraph) • Number of objects: 5 • Number of labels: 5 -Stereotypical images of Europe <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intro (1 paragraph) • Number of objects: 8 • Number of labels: 8 - La Sape <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intro • 2 films, 3 photos, 2 objects • Number of labels: 3 	<p>objects to discuss how they used to be displayed and to offer new insights such as seeing the perspective of the African view on Europeans.</p>
	<p>2.4 Exchange</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intro (1 paragraph) - Silk from China <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intro (1 paragraph) • Number of objects: 5 • Number of labels: 5 - Islamic Clothing from the Middle East <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intro (1 paragraph) • Number of objects: 4 • Number of labels: 4 - Patola from India <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intro (1 paragraph) • Number of objects: 3 • Number of labels: 3 -Flowers, Fairy Tales, and Beads from Europe <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intro (1 paragraph) • Number of objects: 8 • Number of labels: 8 - Contemporary Fashion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of objects: 2 • Number of labels: 2 	<p>Ports in Indonesia were of great importance for overseas trade routes and cultural exchanges. They saw products, ideas, and religions arriving from places like China and the Middle East. The museum shows some of these objects.</p>
<p>3. ROTTERDAM, GLOBAL CITY</p>	<p>Introduction</p>	<p>The museum wants to reflect Rotterdam’s diversity by showcasing artworks from local contemporary artists. These provide</p>

		insights into the city’s colonial past, migration, exchange, and change.
	Mural	The mural is used as a point of pause and transition between part 2 and 3 of the exhibition. Its text is part of the frame that visitors have to walk through. The objective is to invite visitors to see the mural from different angles and discover its content by themselves.
	3.1 Bittersweet Memories <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction (1 paragraph) • Number of objects: 5 • Number of labels: 4 	The museum showcases a film, a sculpture and some photography from artist Sarojini Lewis. The main element of her work is a karela which represents the struggles of migration and the comforts of home.
	3.2 New Perspective <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mester Blouse <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction (1 paragraph) • 7 photographs, 1 film - Photo Collage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of objects: 1 digital photo and 5 photographs hanging in an installation format. • Number of labels: 2 	Mester Blouse is an art installation by Curaçao artist Kevin Osepa. Through his photography and film, he tries to portray his process of understanding his Caribbean identity while living as a migrant in The Netherlands. ----- In the Photo Collage, Saojini Lewis shows images of people in New Delhi and Rotterdam, two cities whose citizens come from everywhere in the world.
	3.3 Changing Tradition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction (1 paragraph) • Number of objects: 9 • Number of labels: 9 • Number of photos: 4 	A selection of objects and photos showcases what it means for some people to have a Chinese-Dutch identity. This section shows how some people have kept their traditions and some others have adapted them to fit into Western standards.
	3.4 Music <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction (1 paragraph) • 4 documentaries • 1 wall with 20 record sleeves 	Many contemporary musicians from Rotterdam have immigrant backgrounds. The documentaries show how their music is inspired in sounds from different genres, especially Cape Verdean music.

A2.2 Remix Rotterdam

The information was not placed physically in the museum. Visitors can either buy a booklet with all the labels and descriptions or scan QR-codes that are placed next to each section of the exhibition. The first four sections of the exhibition were selected by a group of curators from both museums, while the fifth one was created as a process of free association by artists.

<i>Section of the Exhibition</i>	<i>Titles and content</i>	<i>Brief summary</i>
Remix Rotterdam	- Introduction text (3 paragraphs)	The Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen and the Wereldmuseum come together to show how their different collections have emerged from encounters between people.
1. Universal Encounters	Introduction (1 paragraph)	Throughout the world there is a common fascination with themes like life, birth, and death. Objects from both collections show these universal themes.
	1. Power of Expression - 10 objects with labels	Hand gestures and hand language is diverse, from evocating, repelling, or imploring meanings.
	2. Security - 7 objects with labels	Life begins with mothers who nurture us but also give us knowledge and strength. Images of motherly love, protection, and connection are universal.
	3. Death - 4 objects with labels	The universal theme of death is represented in Western art with skulls and extinguished candles. For the Asmat people, skulls can be used to contact their ancestors. Death is approached very differently.
	4. Beyond Nationalism - 2 objects with labels	Desiderius Erasmus developed a supra-nationalism approach, i.e., that in encountering others, we are firstly human beings before any ethnicity or nationality. Similarly, Rotterdam photographer Robert de Hartogh captures hand gestures across the world that remain universally recognizable.
2. Artistic Encounters	Introduction (1 paragraph)	The creation of many everyday objects has been inspired in arts from other parts of the

		world. Globalization keeps on blurring borders and more hybrid objects emerge.
	5. Reassessment - 4 objects with labels	Objects from non-Western parts of the world was always placed in ethnographic museums. These institutions are now reassessing their policies and broadening their understanding of non-Western art.
	6. Recognition - 2 objects with labels	Jean-Michel Basquiat and Gordon Bennet encounter one another in their opposition to parochialism. Neither of them wanted their work to be racially defined.
	7. Inspiration - 8 objects with labels	Artists have always used objects from other cultures as sources of inspiration for their own work.
3.Colonial Encounters	Introduction (1 paragraph)	Paintings created during the colonies were used to maintain social inequalities. Europeans created negative images of those oppressed to justify their actions. At the same time, indigenous populations were inspired by European objects and used them as status symbols.
	8. Reconciliation - 1 object with label	Artist Joseph Beuys attempts to address the history between European colonists and indigenous people of the Americas. For the latter, the coyote was a sacred animal, but colonists saw it as a nuance and thus killed them on a large scale.
	9. Influence - 6 objects with labels	Encounters between different people have creative consequences. However, the influence is often non equal because there is always a dominant group and a non-dominant which undergoes the most changes.
	10. Stereotyping - 7 objects with labels	To promote colonial expansion, the powers created idealized images of the colonial landscapes, hiding the reality of those enslaved and working in the plantations. Stereotypes of Africans were also very prominent in advertisements and cartoons, showing them mostly as <u>subservient</u> .

	11. Fascination - objects with labels	Many Europeans were fascinated by non-Western cultures and would therefore do anthropological research about them and collect their objects.
4. Trade Encounters	Introduction (1 paragraph)	Trade across the world has been happening for centuries. Collectors and craftsmen have used traded objects to display them and to produce cheap imitations of popular goods.
	12. Cultural Hybrids - 6 objects with labels	Cultural exchanges since the middle ages have shown the creation of new hybrid cultural artefacts and artworks.
	13. Natural Treasures - 12 objects with labels	Natural products have often been used as artistic and religious status objects. This section shows the original introduction of Tulips to The Netherlands and how these along with other natural objects like shells have been used in decorations.
	14. Porcelain Traces - 11 objects with labels	Chinese porcelain has been imitated and collected all around the world. Asian porcelain became a status symbol and was often used to decorate European houses.
5. Associative Encounters	15. The Infinite Gaze - 4 objects with labels	The artist selected four objects that depict faces staring, focused on a different world.
	16. Being Thus - 3 objects with labels	These three objects reflect the idea of being displaced or alienated, especially when being far from home. At the same time, this feeling can be serene and peaceful.
	17. Cosmic Quality - 5 objects with labels	According to the artist, all these objects communicate a feeling of cosmic harmony through their colors and proportions.
	18. Interplays - 3 objects with labels	Many ethnographic objects show processes of in-between stages (transformations between human figures to animal figures for example).
	19. Transformation - 4 objects with labels	The artist is asking the visitors to think about what they see in these objects and think about how their own perception might shape what they see. These specific

		objects do not represent one specific but rather can look like many different things.
	20. Not Everything is What it Seems - 3 objects with labels	The three objects look similar and suggest a similar function. However, they come from different places and had very different uses
	21. Red - 3 objects with labels	Red has similar connotations of desire, danger, and violence throughout different periods.
	22. Stylized Beauty - 3 objects with labels	These are three objects that are so beautiful that one would enjoy having them as home decorations.
	23. Signs with Meaning - 3 objects with labels	Many decorations have symbolic meanings that are not apparent right away.

A3. Abbreviations

NMWC - National Museum for World Cultures

RCMC – Research Center for Material Culture

RC – Rotterdam Crossroads

RR – Remix Rotterdam