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Legacies of colonial histories in museum exhibitions in Europe, Africa, North America, and the Caribbean

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A Postcolonial Museum? Legacies of Colonial Histories in Museum Exhibitions in Europe, Africa, North America and the Caribbean

The past two decades have seen a notable awareness and an outburst of public and academic debates of the legacies of colonial histories. Douglas Hamilton, Kate Hodgson and Joel Quirk describe this outburst in their book *Slavery, Memory and Identity: National Representations and Global Legacies* (2012: 1-4) as a 'transnational phenomenon', which stirs debates around how narratives of colonisation should be represented. This outburst aligns with a worldwide fixation to become aware and to commemorate our national pasts in narratives of colonisation. Particularly in Western societies, narratives on colonisation unswervingly include prevailing notions of civilisation and citizenship, whilst narratives of slavery and less victorious aspects of colonisation are silenced (Hamilton, Hodgson and Quirk, 2012: 1-4). The sentiment coming from this outburst of public and academic debates is predominantly geared towards acknowledgement for, and accountability of, the enduring impacts of colonisation within public representations, which increasingly challenges museums to rethink colonial histories from "social justice-oriented and anti-racist educational programming and exhibitions" (Feld, 2021: 1).

This study answers to Feld's call for research that better connects museums that deal with legacies of colonial histories with contemporary debates of colonialism. Feld's claim and call for more research compelled me to commit to this subject and led me to define the leading question: *how are colonial histories represented*

in museum exhibitions in Europe, Africa, North America, and the Caribbean? This question directs my research exploration and imagination of the (im-)possibility of the construction of a postcolonial museum, for which I explore concepts pertinent to museum exhibitions – 'representation', 'meaning-making' and 'visitor experience' – in relation to inclusiveness, identity formation, trauma and diasporic memory. These concepts are explored within museums variously situated along the colonial geography of the triangular trading route in the trans-Atlantic geography including The Netherlands, Curaçao, England, Ghana and the United States of America. This study seeks to generate new insights that contribute to the current academic debate about museums and colonialism through a tripartite approach by examining the relationship between the institution of the museum, the displayed objects, and the visitors' experiences and perspectives. I aim to create a reflective understanding of how inclusiveness, identity, trauma, memory and diaspora can be represented, understood and experienced in museum exhibitions, and I seek to provide input for museums in distinct colonial geographies to booster their connection with contemporary debates of colonialism.

CHAPTER ONE compares the representation, meaning-making and visitor experience of inclusiveness and identity at the Rijksmuseum's permanent collection (2017) and 'Slavery' exhibition (2021), and the Tropenmuseum' s 'Netherlands East Indies' (2017) and 'Afterlives of Slavery' (2020) exhibitions. In relation to representation, both exhibitions contain a comparable collection-based, top-down approach in a traditional system of representation explored in 2017, which is created of existing and available collections designed by a team of curators. This has resulted in a perceived biased and exclusive representation of Dutch colonial history through art and objects, and justifies an understanding of history as remembered by the official narrative. In terms of meaning-making and visitor experience, these representations triggered a sense of nationalism and citizenship among visitors who identify with the exhibition and a sense of not-belonging to those who do not identify with the exhibition. They suggested that the exhibition and collection in 2017 steer their feeling of

nationalism and sense of belonging to the Dutch culture through, particularly at the Rijksmuseum, 'heavy weights' objects, masterpieces of Rembrandt van Rijn and other Dutch painters for which a strong sense of place was experienced. Regardless of these feelings experienced as positive, a clear bias was confirmed by visitors that seemingly propagated nationhood and a desirable place identity. Whereas both museums' exhibition in 2017 were approached from an apparent traditional museology, a stronger sense of multiperspectivity within their newest exhibitions in 2020 and 2021 seemed to be reflected in the representation through new museological values. These new museological values include the usage of multiple interpretation methods such as arts, objects and personal storytelling, and mostly people-oriented and narrative-based exhibitions from a bottom-up system of representation. This bottom-up system of representation is based on collaborations and discussions with local community, representatives of the counter-perspective in the Dutch official narrative and various practitioners from various backgrounds. The new museological values signify a clear transition between a traditional museology embedded in the 2017 exhibition and collection, and new museology embedded in the 2020-2021 exhibitions resulting in a strengthened representation, meaning-making and experience of inclusiveness and a blended representation of identity.

CHAPTER TWO compares the representation, meaning-making and experience of trauma at Cape Coast Castle and the International Slavery Museum. The research shows that despite the contrasting colonial geographies of the museums, trauma was similarly represented at Cape Coast Castle and the International Slavery Museum, but narrated from a different perspective. As to the representation of both museums, trauma was evidently focused on the events and brutalities of slavery at the trans-Atlantic geography, as well as the impacts of slavery on society today. The representations were supported by a material display about African culture before European arrival, the events and brutalities of the triangular trading route in the trans-Atlantic geography and impacts of slavery and resistance on today's societies. As to the narrative, Cape Coast Castle largely focuses on the events of slavery in

Ghana and Western Africa with an emphasis on the memory and experience by the Afro-American community. The narrative of the International Slavery Museum is focused on local, national, and international impacts of the events of slavery. Remarkable is that both exhibitions include a significant contribution of resistance and human rights as part of the trauma, and draw connections between the impacts of slavery and the makeup of both societies today through textual or material interpretation methods. Both exhibitions are evidently represented by a narrative of trauma, which incorporates a counter-narrative that generates a mostly emotional understanding. In terms of the material display, Cape Coast Castle typically includes authentic and replicated objects, and simulated social environments, whereas the International Slavery Museum employs more interactive techniques such as storytelling, audio clips and interactive displays. Regardless of the different perspective from which the representation is narrated, both material displays seem clearly based on a trauma paradigm, as they are particularly characterised by (audio)visuals, personal, powerful, symbolic and authentic objects related to the trauma of colonisation and personal storytelling. The combination of these objects connected to personal storytelling leads to a cognitive and emotional understanding among visitors. With respect to meaning-making and the visitor experience, both museums are experienced as emotional, educational, confronting and significant for today's society, however different contributors to this experience are identified. Visitors at the International Slavery Museum experienced an overall feeling of cruelty of slavery and its implications for today's society through personal stories and experiences, and through diverse interactive interpretation methods. The experience at Cape Coast was predominantly constructed by a blended material and textual display, supported by the guided tour and the perceived authenticity of the site.

CHAPTER THREE studies the representation, meaning-making and experience of diasporic memory at the National Museum of African-American History and Culture [NMAAHC]. The research indicates that the NMAAHC is clearly characterised by new politics of memory that contains a unique showcase of American history

filtered through the African-American experience. The representation reflects an active remembering of a counter-perspective, which leaves an educational and emotional visitor experience through a combination of interactive, digital and audio-visual interpretation methods, personal storytelling, and a wide display of authentic, personal, trauma and symbolic objects and artefacts. The representation of the African-American experience evidently depicts the diasporic memory from the African-American community, supported by personal objects and individual storytelling and memories integrating elements of social recovery and justice. A paradigm of memory is embedded in the exhibition, as it visibly represents the African-American memory through a representation of individual and collective experiences of the Afro-American community, which is mainly supported by personal and individual storytelling, textual interpretation, photographs, archive-film footage, audio-visual performances, testimonies and oral history. With respect to meaning-making and the visitor experience, the NMAAHC is compared with the Museum of London. Whereas the Museum of London has mostly designed its experience around the official memory with limited references to contemporary British society, the NMAAHC has designed its experience around the diasporic memory of the African-American community that variously links to contemporary American society. The representation at the Museum of London was mostly perceived as traditional and lacks cohesion between the represented narrative of slavery in the museum and current understanding of slavery among visitors, which signifies an absent reflection of the new politics of memory. Although this absence was less experienced at the NMAAHC, as the multitude of interpretation methods contributed to a clear reflection of it, the overall representation was perceived as emotionally overwhelming here. The latter was experienced due to a wide scale of material display, narratives and interpretation methods that focus on individual and collective experiences of trauma, struggle, resiliency and personal achievement. Based on the outcomes of the Gap Analysis, the overall visitor experience at museums can be improved when carefully considering interpretation methods as part of the system of representation, especially

when methods, such as lighting at the NMAAHC, is intentionally used to evoke an emotional understanding. When museum buildings are grand and welcome a great number of visitors per day, intensive expectation management before and upon arrival, and the provision of audio-guides and guided tours, are essential for the achievement of relational meaning-making and potentially reduces incomprehension of the exhibition in its totality.

CHAPTER FOUR contrasts the envisaged visitor experience at the Rijksmuseum's 'Slavery' exhibition and Kura Hulanda Museum.[520] The research identifies several discrepancies and similarities between both museums, starting with the system of representation and the perspective from which the exhibition is narrated. The 'Slavery' exhibition at the Rijksmuseum moves away from a perspective embedded in the official narrative and a traditional pedagogy, as represented in their permanent collection in 2017. Through a combination of source data ranging from oral, written and archival history, and a variety of interpretation methods, the 'Slavery' exhibition enables the counter-perspective to be brought forward more prominently through personal, individual experiences. This counter-perspective and these experiences are unlocked through a popular education pedagogy and the implementation of a multicultural museum education model in the process of development, as well as in the system of representation. The envisaged experience at the 'Slavery' exhibition is perceived as emotional, personal, co-creational, participatory and inclusive due to the employment of various types of sources and data and a revised system of representation that includes multiple and multisensory interpretation methods. Up until Kura Hulanda Museum closed its doors, it narrated the Dutch colonial experience from a traditional pedagogy and system of representation, which provided a slight immersive and emotional experience. Although new museological values were noticeable in the system of representation, it did not reflect an inclusive,

520 Since I was not able to generate an understanding of the visitor experience from the visitors' perspective directly due to the enduring measures of Covid-19, the visitor experience in this chapter is envisaged reflected by the museums' perspective.

interactive or co-creational visitor experience. It is striking that, despite the contemporary visitors' need to experience authenticity, the perceived authentic location of the museum was neither represented nor experienced. The research further implies an absence of the Afro-Curaçaoen perspective in the narratives of the transatlantic slave trade, the impacts of Dutch colonisation, slavery and slave trade on the island, and how this history resonates with the construction of the Curaçaoen society today. This potentially ties in with a seeming lack of intrinsic motivation such as self-awareness, identity-formation, contextual education and personal reflection by the local community to visit the museum, who seem to be driven by mostly extrinsic motivation.

The concluding chapter yields an overall understanding of museum exhibitions in relation to the representation, meaning-making and visitor experience of colonial histories in various geographies. It reflects how this understanding can connect museums better with contemporary debates of colonialism through the imagination of the (im-)possibility to construct of a postcolonial museum. This study shows that this imagination reflects new museological values, a maximisation of multiple meaning-making or a construction of meaning from a local perspective, a consideration of suitable museum pedagogy, a facilitation of a contemporary museum experience and a representation of a postcolonial identity in the museum is essential. Museums are tasked to reflect new museological values in the development of people oriented and narrative-based exhibitions, and through a bottom-up system of representation that allows communities and visitors to co-create exhibitions. For museums in former colonising geographies, representations typically reflect concepts of trauma and migration as a counter-narrative in the official narrative to create a shared notion of history. For museums in former colonised geographies, narratives typically include concepts of emancipation, dignity, cultural respect, creativity and self-awareness to enrich the official narrative, which brings a local perspective forward based on a new type of knowledge that is created from a local or regional, non-Eurocentric perspective. As new museology requires museums to produce multivocal,

inclusive representations for a wider audience, the team of curators is tasked to introduce a diversity of perspectives and expertise to the team from various communities and backgrounds. Furthermore, museums typically focus on the popular education pedagogy in the development of exhibitions to stimulate a co-creational process that upholds the new politics of memory and accepts (counter) memories *as* history. For museums in former colonised geographies, a popular education pedagogy invites (local) visitors to bring in personal memories, memoirs and experiences to the exhibition, and invites visitors from various cultural backgrounds, minorities and the diaspora, to bring in their personal experience. For museums in former colonising geographies, this pedagogy is typically accompanied by the multicultural museum education model as this ensures a stronger reflection of cultural pluralism in an official narrative. For both geographies, a combination of authentic, personal, trauma and symbolic objects, a combination of oral and written history and individual and personal storytelling and through multiple and multisensory interpretation methods that stir a cognitive, emotional and relational meaning-making are embedded in exhibitions of colonial histories. Narrating colonial history from a trauma paradigm and paradigm of memory through individual and personal storytelling serves here as a starting point, in which trauma becomes encircled and a new politics of memory reflected in the representation. A combination of (re)sources and data inputting the narrative assures critical questioning of history through different perspectives and promotes multiple meaning-making. For museums in societies with multicultural communities, exhibitions characteristically narrate colonial history from a transculturation paradigm, as this enables a blended representation of identity to which a diversity of groups can identify with and elevates a perceived inclusiveness among visitors.

SAMENVATTING (DUTCH SUMMARY)

Een Postkoloniaal Museum? Erfenissen van Koloniale Geschiedenissen in Museum Tentoonstellingen in Europa, Afrika, Noord Amerika en de Cariben.

De afgelopen twintig jaar kenmerkt een opmerkelijke bewustwording en uitbarsting in het maatschappelijk en academisch debat van de erfenissen van kolonialisme en slavernij. Douglas Hamilton, Kate Hodgson en Joel Quirk beschrijven deze uitbarsting in hun boek 'Slavery, Memory and Identity: National Representations and Global Legacies' (2012: 1-4) als een transnationaal fenomeen, dat discussies oproept over hoe verhalen over kolonialisme en slavernij vertegenwoordigd zouden moeten worden. Deze uitbarsting sluit aan bij een wereldwijde fixatie op collectief bewustwording en het herdenken van het nationale verleden rondom Europees kolonialisme en slavernij. Vooral westerse samenlevingen bevatten verhalen over kolonialisme die onwankelbaar zijn en worden verteld vanuit het perspectief van de heersende burgerschap, terwijl verhalen over slavernij en minder zegevierende aspecten van kolonialisme het zwijgen wordt opgelegd (Hamilton, Hodgson en Quirk, 2012: 1-4). Het sentiment dat voortkomt uit deze uitbarsting is voornamelijk gericht op een erkenning voor, en verantwoordelijkheid van, de blijvende gevolgen van kolonialisme en slavernij in ons bewustzijn. Dit daagt musea in postkoloniale samenlevingen steeds meer uit om representaties over kolonialisme en slavernij te heroverwegen en hierbij te focussen op sociale gerechtigheid-gerichte en antiracistische, educatieve programma's en tentoonstellingen (Feld, 2021: 1).

Deze studie beantwoordt Feld's oproep tot onderzoek dat musea die zich bezighouden met de erfenissen van koloniale geschiedenissen beter verbindt met hedendaagse debatten over kolonialisme. Deze oproep tot onderzoek moedigde mij aan om me aan dit onderwerp te binden en bracht me ertoe de leidende vraag te definiëren: *hoe worden koloniale geschiedenissen weergegeven in museumtentoonstellingen in Europa, Afrika, Noord-Amerika en het Caribisch gebied?* Deze vraag stuurt mijn onderzoek en mijn inbeelding van de (on)mogelijkheid van de bouw van een postkoloniaal museum. Hiervoor verken ik concepten die relevent zijn voor museale tentoonstellingen – 'representatie', 'betekenisgeving' en 'bezoekersbeleving' – in relatie tot inclusiviteit, identiteitsvorming, trauma en de herinnering van de diaspora. Deze concepten worden onderzocht in musea die zich bevinden aan de route van de driehoekshandel in het trans-Atlantisch gebied, waaronder Nederland, Curaçao, Engeland, Ghana en de Verenigde Staten van Amerika. Dit onderzoek genereert nieuwe inzichten die bijdragen aan het huidige academische debat over musea en kolonialisme vanuit een tripartiete benadering die de relatie tussen de instelling van het museum, de tentoongestelde objecten en de belevenissen en perspectieven van de bezoekers onderzoekt. Ik wil hierbij een reflectief begrip creëren van hoe inclusiviteit, identiteitsvorming, trauma en de herinnering van de diaspora kunnen worden weergegeven, begrepen en beleefd in museumtentoonstellingen. Hiervoor levert dit onderzoek praktische input voor musea in verschillende koloniale gebieden om hun verbinding met hedendaagse debatten over kolonialisme te versterken.

HET EERSTE HOOFDSTUK vergelijkt de representatie, betekenisgeving en bezoekersbeleving van inclusiviteit en identiteitsvorming in de vaste collectie van het Rijksmuseum (2017) en de tentoonstelling 'Slavernij' (2021), en de 'Nederlands-Indië' (2017) en 'Afterlives of Slavery' (2020) tentoonstellingen van het Tropenmuseum. Met betrekking tot representatie bevatten beide tentoonstellingen een op een collectie-gebaseerde, top-down benadering in een traditioneel representatiesysteem die in 2017 werden verkend. Deze tentoonstellingen zijn gecreëerd

rond bestaande en beschikbare collecties en ontworpen door een team curatoren. Dit heeft geresulteerd in een vermeend bevooroordeelde en exclusieve weergave van de Nederlandse koloniale geschiedenis met kunst en objecten, en rechtvaardigt deze geschiedenis zoals herinnerd wordt door het officiële verhaal. In termen van betekenisgeving en bezoekersbeleving leidden deze voorstellingen een gevoel van nationalisme en burgerschap bij bezoekers die zich identificeren met de tentoonstelling, maar ook een gevoel van niet-behoren tot degenen die zich niet identificeren met de tentoonstelling. Hierbij werd gesuggereerd dat de tentoonstelling en collectie in 2017 het gevoel van nationalisme en van verbondenheid met de Nederlandse cultuur wordt gestuurd door, met name in het Rijksmuseum, 'zware gewichten' objecten, meesterwerken van Rembrandt van Rijn en andere Nederlandse schilders. Ondanks dat deze gevoelens als positief werden ervaren, werd een duidelijke vooringenomenheid bevestigd door bezoekers die een natie en een wenselijke identiteit propageerden. Waar de tentoonstelling van beide musea in 2017 werd benaderd vanuit een ogenschijnlijk traditionele museologie, leek een sterker gevoel van multiperspectiviteit binnen hun nieuwste tentoonstellingen in 2020 en 2021 tot uiting te komen in de representatie, door middel van nieuwe museale waarden. Deze nieuwe museale waarden omvatten het gebruik van meerdere interpretatiemethoden zoals kunst, objecten en persoonlijke verhalen, en meestal mensgerichte tentoonstellingen vanuit een 'bottom-up' representatiesysteem. Dit bottom-up representatiesysteem is gebaseerd op samenwerkingen en discussies met de lokale gemeenschap, vertegenwoordigers van het tegenperspectief in het Nederlandse officiële verhaal en praktijkmensen met verschillende achtergronden. De nieuwe museale waarden betekenen een duidelijke overgang tussen een traditionele museologie ingebed in de tentoonstelling en collectie van 2017, en nieuwe museologie ingebed in de tentoonstellingen van 2020-2021. Deze transitie resulteert in een versterkte representatie, betekenisgeving en bezoekersbeleving van inclusiviteit en een gemengde identiteit.

HET TWEEDE HOOFDSTUK vergelijkt de representatie, betekenisgeving en bezoekersbeleving van trauma in Cape Coast Castle

en het International Slavery Museum. Het onderzoek toont aan dat ondanks de contrasterende koloniale geografie, trauma op dezelfde manier wordt vertegenwoordigd in Cape Coast Castle en het International Slavery Museum, maar vanuit een ander perspectief wordt verteld. In de tentoonstelling is trauma duidelijk gericht op de gebeurtenissen en wreedheden van de slavernij in het trans-Atlantisch gebied, evenals de impact van slavernij op de hedendaagse samenleving. De voorstellingen werden ondersteund door een materiële vertoning over de Afrikaanse cultuur vóór de komst van Europa, de gebeurtenissen en wreedheden van de driekshoekshandel in het trans-Atlantisch gebied, de impact en verzet van slavernij op de hedendaagse samenlevingen. Wat het verhaal betreft richt Cape Coast Castle zich grotendeels op de gebeurtenissen van de slavernij in Ghana en West-Afrika, met de nadruk op de herinnering en beleving van de Afro-Amerikaanse gemeenschap. Het verhaal in het International Slavery Museum is gericht op de lokale, nationale en internationale impact van de gebeurtenissen rondom slavernij. Opmerkelijk is dat beide tentoonstellingen een belangrijke bijdrage van verzet en mensenrechten als onderdeel van het trauma bevatten. Hierbij worden verbanden gelegd tussen de gevolgen van slavernij en de samenstelling van beide hedendaagse samenlevingen door middel van tekstuele en materiële interpretatiemethoden. Beide tentoonstellingen worden duidelijk vertegenwoordigd door een verhaal van trauma vanuit een tegenperspectief dat een overwegend emotioneel betekeningeving genereert. Wat de materiële weergave betreft omvat Cape Coast Castle typisch authentieke en gereplicceerde objecten en gesimuleerde sociale omgevingen, terwijl het International Slavery Museum meer interactieve technieken gebruikt zoals storytelling, audioclips en interactieve displays. Ongeacht het verschillende perspectief van waaruit de tentoonstelling wordt verteld lijken beide materiële weergaves duidelijk gebaseerd op een traumaparadigma. Dit paradigma wordt vooral wordt gekenmerkt door (audio)visuele, persoonlijke, krachtige, symbolische en authentieke objecten die verband houden met het trauma van kolonisatie en slavernij vanuit persoonlijke verhalen. De combinatie van deze objecten gekoppeld aan storytelling leidt

tot een cognitief en emotioneel betekenisgeving bij bezoekers. Met betrekking tot de bezoekersbeleving worden beide musea ervaren als emotioneel, educatief, confronterend en betekenisvol voor de huidige samenleving, waarvoor verschillende bijdragen aan deze ervaring zijn geïdentificeerd. Bezoekers van het International Slavery Museum ervoeren een algemeen gevoel van wreedheid van slavernij en de implicaties ervan voor de huidige samenleving door persoonlijke verhalen en ervaringen, en door middel van diverse interactieve interpretatiemethoden. De ervaring bij Cape Coast werd voornamelijk opgebouwd door een gemengd materiaal en tekstuele weergave, ondersteund door de rondleiding en de waargenomen authenticiteit van de site direct gelinkt aan de trauma.

HET DERDE HOOFDSTUK bestudeert de representatie, betekenisgeving en bezoekersbeleving van de herinnering vanuit de diaspora in het National Museum of African American History and Culture [NMAAHC]. Het onderzoek geeft aan dat de NMAAHC duidelijk wordt gekenmerkt door een 'new politics of memory' die een unieke showcase van de Amerikaanse geschiedenis bevat, gefilterd door de Afro-Amerikaanse beleving. De representatie weerspiegelt een actieve herinnering van een tegenperspectief wat een educatieve en emotionele bezoekersbeleving achterlaat, door een combinatie van interactieve, digitale en audiovisuele interpretatiemethoden met persoonlijke verhalen en een brede weergave van authentieke, persoonlijke, traumatische en symbolische objecten en artefacten. De representatie van de Afro-Amerikaanse beleving toont duidelijk de 'diaspora-herinnering' vanuit de Afro-Amerikaanse gemeenschap, ondersteund door persoonlijke objecten en individuele verhalen en herinneringen die elementen van sociaal herstel en rechtvaardigheid bevatten. Een herinneringsparadigma is helder ingebed in de tentoonstelling aangezien de Afro-Amerikaanse herinnering zichtbaar vertegenwoordigt wordt door individuele en collectieve ervaringen van de Afro-Amerikaanse gemeenschap. Deze ervaringen worden voornamelijk weergegeven door persoonlijke en individuele verhalen, tekstinterpretatie, foto's, archief- en- filmbeelden, audiovisuele uitvoeringen, getuigenissen en mondelinge geschiedenis. Wat betreft betekenisgeving en de bezoekersbeleving wordt de NMAAHC vergeleken met het Museum

of London. Terwijl de beleving in Museum of London grotendeels bestaat vanuit de officiële herinnering met beperkte verwijzingen naar de hedendaagse Britse samenleving, is de bezoekersbeleving in NMAAHC vooral gebaseerd op de herinnering vanuit de Afro-Amerikaanse gemeenschap die op verschillende manieren verband houdt met de hedendaagse Amerikaanse samenleving. De representatie in het Museum of London wordt voornamelijk als traditioneel ervaren en mist samenhang tussen het weergegeven verhaal van slavernij in het museum en het huidige begrip van slavernij onder bezoekers, wat duidt op een afwezige weerspiegeling van 'new politics of memory.' Hoewel deze afwezigheid minder werd ervaren bij de NMAAHC, mede doordat de verscheidenheid aan interpretatiemethoden bijdroeg aan een duidelijke weerspiegeling van de 'new politics of memory,' werd de algehele representatie hier wel als emotioneel overweldigend ervaren. Dit laatste heeft te maken met een breed scala aan materiële weergaven, verhalen en interpretatiemethoden die zich richten op individuele en collectieve ervaringen van trauma, strijd, veerkracht en persoonlijke prestaties. Op basis van de uitkomsten van de Gap-analyse kan de algehele bezoekersbeleving in musea worden verbeterd wanneer interpretatiemethoden zorgvuldig worden overwogen als onderdeel van het representatiesysteem, vooral wanneer methoden zoals verlichting bij de NMAAHC opzettelijk worden gebruikt om een emotioneel betekenisgeving op te roepen. Wanneer museumgebouwen groot zijn en een groot aantal bezoekers per dag verwelkomen zijn intensief verwachtingsmanagement voor en bij aankomst, en het aanbieden van audiogidsen en rondleidingen, essentieel voor het bereiken van een relationele betekenisgeving en voor het verminderen van mogelijk onbegrip van de tentoonstelling in zijn totaliteit.

HET VIERDE HOOFDSTUK contrasteert de beoogde bezoekersbeleving van de tentoonstelling 'Slavernij' van het Rijksmuseum en Kura Hulanda Museum.[521] Het onderzoek identificeert ver-

[521] Omdat ik vanwege de aanhoudende maatregelen van Covid-19 niet rechtstreeks inzicht kon krijgen in de bezoekersbeleving vanuit het perspectief van de bezoeker, wordt de bezoekersbeleving in dit hoofdstuk gereflecteerd door het perspectief van de musea.

schillende discrepanties en overeenkomsten tussen beide musea, te beginnen met het representatiesysteem en het perspectief van waaruit de tentoonstelling wordt verteld. De tentoonstelling 'Slavernij' in het Rijksmuseum wijkt af van een perspectief dat is ingebed in het officiële verhaal en een traditionele pedagogiek, zoals vertegenwoordigd in hun vaste collectie in 2017. Door een combinatie van brongegevens variërend van mondelinge, tekstuele en archiefgeschiedenis en een verscheidenheid aan interpretatiemethoden, maakt de tentoonstelling 'Slavernij' het mogelijk om het tegenperspectief prominenter naar voren te brengen door persoonlijke, individuele ervaringen. Dit tegenperspectief en deze ervaringen worden ontsloten door een populaire educatieve pedagogie en de implementatie van een multicultureel museumeducatiemodel in het ontwikkelingsproces, evenals in het representatiesysteem. De beoogde beleving voor de tentoonstelling 'Slavernij' wordt gezien als emotioneel, persoonlijk, co-creatief, participatief en inclusief vanwege het gebruik van verschillende soorten bronnen en gegevens en een herzien representatiesysteem dat uit meerdere en multisensorisch interpretatiemethoden bestaat. Totdat Kura Hulanda Museum zijn deuren sloot vertelde het de Nederlandse koloniale ervaring vanuit een traditionele pedagogie en representatiesysteem wat een licht meeslepende en emotionele beleving creëerde. Hoewel nieuwe museale waarden merkbaar waren in het representatiesysteem van Kura Hulanda Museum weerspiegelde het geen inclusieve, interactieve of co-creatieve bezoekersbeleving. Opvallend is dat, ondanks de behoefte van de hedendaagse bezoeker om authenticiteit te ervaren, de ogenschijnlijke authentieke locatie van het museum niet vertegenwoordigd of beleefd werd. Verder impliceert dit onderzoek een afwezigheid van het Afro-Curaçaose perspectief in de verhalen van de trans-Atlantische slavenhandel, de gevolgen van het Nederlandse kolonialisme, slavernij en slavenhandel op het eiland, en hoe deze geschiedenis resoneert met de Curaçaose samenleving van vandaag. Dit sluit mogelijk aan bij een schijnbaar gebrek aan intrinsieke motivatie zoals zelfbewustzijn, identiteitsvorming, contextuele educatie en persoonlijke reflectie, maar enkel lijkt te worden gedreven door extrinsieke motivatie.

Het afsluitende hoofdstuk geeft een beeld van museumtentoonstellingen in relatie tot de representatie, betekenisgeving en bezoekersbeleving van koloniale geschiedenissen in diverse koloniale gebieden. Verder verschaft dit hoofdstuk inzichten in hoe musea beter kunnen aansluiten aan de hedendaagse debatten over kolonialisme door de inbeelding van de (on)mogelijkheid om een postkoloniaal museum te bouwen. De studie laat zien dat voor deze inbeelding, een weerspiegeling van nieuwe museale waarden, een maximalisatie van meervoudige betekenisgeving of een betekenisgeving vanuit een lokaal perspectief, een afweging van passende museumpedagogiek, een facilitering van een hedendaagse museumbeleving en een weergave van een postkoloniale identiteit in het museum essentieel is. De verbeelding van een postkoloniaal museum suggereert dat musea de taak hebben om nieuwe museale waarden aan te nemen bij de ontwikkeling van mens – en verhaalgeoriënteerde tentoonstellingen, en door middel van een 'bottom-up' representatiesysteem dat gemeenschappen en bezoekers in staat stelt om samen tentoonstellingen te creëren. Voor musea in voormalige koloniserende gebieden worden de concepten trauma en migratie gereflecteerd in de tentoonstellingen vanuit een tegenperspectief in het officiële verhaal om de notie van een gedeeld geschiedenis te stimuleren. Voor musea in voormalige gekoloniseerde gebieden weerspiegelen concepten als emancipatie, waardigheid, cultureel respect, creativiteit en zelfbewustzijn doorgaans in de tentoonstellingen om het officiële perspectief te verrijken ent een lokaal perspectief naar voren te brengen. Het lokaal perspectief wordt naar voren gebracht door een nieuw type kennis dat is gecreëerd vanuit een lokale of regionaal, niet-eurocentrisch perspectief. De nieuwe museologie vereist van musea dat ze meerstemmig, inclusieve voorstellingen maken voor een breder publiek, waarbij curatoren de taak hebben om een diversiteit aan perspectieven en expertises verschillende gemeenschappen en achtergronden te introduceren. Daarnaast richten musea in postkoloniale samenlevingen zich doorgaans op de populaire educatiepedagogiek bij de ontwikkeling van tentoonstellingen om een co-creatieproces te stimuleren dat de 'new politics of memory' hooghoudt en (tegen)herinneringen

als geschiedenis accepteert. Voor musea in voormalige gekoloniseerde gebieden nodigt een populaire educatieve pedagogie lokale bezoekers en bezoekers vanuit verschillende culturele achtergronden en de diaspora uit om persoonlijke herinneringen, memoires en ervaringen in de tentoonstelling te brengen. Voor musea in voormalige koloniserende gebieden gaat deze pedagogie meestal gepaard met het multiculturele museumeducatiemodel, omdat dit zorgt voor een versterkende weerspiegeling van cultureel pluralisme.

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