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Beyond the Dutch Indies

Colonial Memory of the Second and Third Generation Indo in
Literary Texts and Monuments

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For Pake.

Not a preface with your story, but a dedication.

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Introduction

“Een halfbloed is een mens die zich van beiderlei afkomst gelijkelijk bewust is. In mijn opstellen zoek ik naar een formulering van die bewustheid.” – Tjalie Robinson¹

The author Tjalie Robinson (1911-1974) was a leading figure in the Indo-community in the Netherlands during the 1950s and 60s. Indo-Europeans, henceforth Indos², are descendants of both Dutch and native inhabitants of the colony and, as a result of this double heritage, they have always moved between the Dutch colonizers and the natives. The hybridity of such an identity continued once large groups of Indos, after decolonization, moved to the Netherlands. Robinson's quotation illustrates the heightened consciousness of identity this group has. This study has emerged from the question of how this heightened consciousness manifests itself and is employed in the contemporary postcolonial Dutch society.

In 2008-2009 three books³ were published within the framework of the research project “Bringing History Home,” which charted “a history of identity politics in relation to ‘postcolonial immigrants’” (Legêne: 54). The project presents Indos as the ‘exemplary migrant’ who possesses a “postcolonial bonus” (Oostindie 2010: 14) and one of the scholars involved in the project even argues that Indos and ‘Indische’ culture have become part of the Dutch national heritage (van Leeuwen: 18-19). The observations of this study are meant to offer a contrast to the current issues with migrants from Morocco and Turkey, who are not perceived as model immigrants. In my opinion, considering Indos as ‘exemplary migrants’ downplays the necessity to look at the contemporary position of this group in Dutch society. Indos, as an ethnic group, are a living element of the colonial memory of the Dutch Indies, which is not without its tensions and contradictions. Contemporary generations of Indos struggle with the role this memory plays in determining their identity. Therefore, it is necessary to analyse how the memory of the Dutch Indies influences second and third generation Indo identity and how is it performed/ represented/ manifested through cultural artifacts.

¹ As qtd by Nieuwenhuis, Rob. “Jan Boon, Tjalie Robinson, Vincent Mahieu”. In: Mahieu, Vincent. *Verzameld Werk*. Amsterdam: Querido, 1992. p 489.

² This abbreviation is generally used as term for self-identification by Indo-Europeans and a common term since the early days of the Dutch colony.

³ Bosma, Ulbe. *Terug uit de koloniën: zestig jaar postkoloniale migranten en hun organisaties*. Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2009.

Leeuwen van, Lizzy. *Ons Indisch erfgoed: zestig jaar strijd om cultuur en identiteit*. Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2008.

Oostindie, Gerrit Jan. *Postkoloniaal Nederland : vijftenzestig jaar vergeten, herdenken, verdringen*. Amsterdam: Bakker, 2010.

The colonial memory of the Dutch Indies is a narrative that is a combination of 'Indisch zwijgen' (silence to cover up trauma) and nostalgia for Tempo Doeloe. The latter term expresses a longing for the Dutch Indies and the romanticized ease with which life happened in the East. This form of nostalgia was widespread in popular culture. Van Leeuwen states: "De Indische nostalgie als publieke cultuur bood echter in de eerste plaats een aantrekkelijk en risicoloos format om met de pijnlijke erfenis van het 'verloren Indië' om te gaan" (100). The form of nostalgia that was practiced, according to van Leeuwen, made the performance of 'Indische cultuur' a widely accessible and riskless enterprise, it became a "hegemonic discourse" (Legêne: 63). That the 'Indische cultuur' was so widely accepted, symbolized through the broadly spread 'Indische' cuisine, makes the Indo an 'exemplary migrant'—or so *Ons Indisch ergfoed* wants us to believe. While van Leeuwen argues that the 'Indisch cultuur' has become part of the whole Dutch community, the historian Andrew Goss states that the Indo-European culture or rather Dutch colonial history in general is always set apart, "bracketed", in the wider Dutch culture. Nevertheless, the colonial memory seen through the prism of nostalgia for Tempo Doeloe has become part of a discourse that is firmly embedded in Dutch (contemporary) culture, as Pamela Pattynama argues in several of her works. Indos are caught in-between: dealing with the discourse of the Dutch Indies and their status as postcolonial minority. This in-between position should be analysed through the notions of memory and identity-making.

The modes of nostalgia and 'Indisch zwijgen' interact and influence various elements of colonial memory. "Remembrance is never a singular, individual practice" (De Mul: 12) and the way that the former colony is still approached through the ideas of adventure and exoticism can be appropriated by a postcolonial minority such as Indos of the second and third generation in the Netherlands by both confirming their status as 'colonial product' and (re)claiming the memory that has been largely owned by Dutch. While colonial memory is usually regarded as a way to analyse the power opposition between West and East and the West's regret of losing its colonies and thus display of power, this thesis will look at the postcolonial minority, instead of the power position of the West.

Considering the conclusion of the project 'Bringing History Home' Susan Legêne concludes that "mobilising a postcolonial identity now is a matter of free choice, to which the postcolonial bonus is no longer relevant" (67). The Indos are no longer the wholly other and there are no longer "distinct postcolonial 'communities of remembrance'" (67). Indos have successfully adapted to Dutch society. Their difference has become a choice, which makes it unnecessary to consider the current generations as Legêne argues. I argue that this conclusion is too easily drawn, considering the discourse that surrounds Dutch colonial memory. Second generation Indos, for example, have struggled to find an identity that fits their postcolonial status and that breaks through the concept of 'Indisch zwijgen' of the first generation, and literature has given a fruitful platform for this struggle,

as writers such as Marion Bloem, Alfred Birney, Theodor Hollman and many others have shown. The colonial memory does not just vanish, nor does the memory of the integration of the first generation Indo and the identity-quest of the second generation disappear. Each new memory enlarges the older one and is present within the next generation. The third generation, as the academic magazine *Indische Letteren* thematizes in a special issue, has not spoken out yet, but it most certainly will. I indeed have not encountered third generation novels yet, but instead a new genre has entered the literary scene in 'Indische' literature: 'family chronicles' such as *Asta's ogen* (2010) by Eveline Stoel, Marion Bloem's *Een meisje van honderd* (2012), *De ogen van Solo* (2009) by Reggie Baay and *Soerabaja* (2012) by Pauline Slot⁴. The appearance of these 'family-chronicles' is a sign to me that in the search for identity, the background stories of one's own family are important. Even though the third generation Indo may not yet have attempted to write themselves, they are culturally active. Online platforms such as Indisch3.0 and the facebook page *Indo's Be Like*, which appeared last winter show that the performance of Indo identity is indeed something that concerns the third generation. *Indo's Be Like* invokes and confirms stereotypes, but it is created by members of the third generation. *Indisch3.0* is a more eloquent platform, created especially for the third generation, and it offers cultural reviews and organizes events. Maybe the struggle to be different that has been fought by the second generation opens the path for the third generation to be curious of their history and to desire a way to perform their identity that is their own. Therefore, it is necessary to study the way the memory of the Dutch Indies influences second and third generation Indo identity. This thesis will look at cultural artifacts that perform/represent/manifest this identity.

I will look at both novels and monuments as sites of memory. The novels that are most useful for my discussion are the 'family-chronicles' I mentioned earlier and have appeared in the last decade. I will mainly focus on Eveline Stoel's *Asta's ogen* and Marion Bloem's *Een meisje van honderd*. The former is written by a Dutch woman who seeks to unravel the hidden stories and attempts to break through the 'Indisch zwijgen' of her family-in-law. Married to an Indo, Stoel observes the family Hoyer with a certain distance and becomes fascinated by the family-traditions, especially the 'mater-familias' Asta Hoyer. First of all, she recognizes that there is an interesting story behind Asta's life. Later, however, after talking to various family-members, Asta's story turns out to be much bigger. Asta's story is part of a larger social story, about Dutch colonial heritage, the 'repatriëring' and integration. In conversation with many family-members it becomes clear that the story of Asta is scattered and that there are many things unspoken. Stoel then decides to break through this 'Indisch zwijgen' to shape the novel as a document to read for the children and

⁴ The latter novel is slightly different than the others, *Soerabaja* deals with a Dutch family in the last days of the Dutch Indies, in contrast with the other novels that specifically deal with Indo-Dutch families.

(great)grandchildren of Asta, but also because it is the story of “vele Indische families” (12). From the outset, Stoel already indicates her intention of using her novel as a way to cultivate group memory. As a counterpart to this novel that so actively attempts to be a site of memory I have selected *Een meisje van honderd* by the established Indo author Marion Bloem, who became famous by her debut *Geen gewoon Indisch meisje* (1983). This first novel is often characterized as a typical second generation Indo novel which deals with the hybrid identity that Indo-Dutch possess. *Een meisje van honderd*, written twenty years later revolves around one big Indo-family that is held together by the adopted Moemie. The novel covers roughly a century of this family’s history, in which Moemie (the girl of hundred years) is the key figure. *Een meisje van honderd* describes the history of the Dutch Indies: from the moment that Dutch women replaced the native women at the sides of their husbands, to the Japanese invasion in the Second World War, to the violent period of decolonization, to the migration to the Netherlands. Although this novel does not, as *Asta’s ogen*, seek to pin together all the different stories of one actual family, the dedication shows that it is likewise aimed at a new generation Indo: “voor mijn kleinkinderen” (8). In fact, the third generation depicted in the novel actively tries to find out more about their roots and identity. Both novels tell the story specifically to the new generation.

While reading novels is a rather personal experience that happens in the private sphere, monuments are public, often created by institutions, and form a wholly different way of commemorating than novels do. The monuments under consideration here are part of a selection of monuments that together make the book *Post-colonial Monuments in the Netherlands* (2011) by Gert Oostindie and Henk Schulte Nordholt within the framework of the project ‘Bringing History Home’. It offers a range of pictures and descriptions of postcolonial monuments that are widely spread across the Netherlands. The selection of monuments is introduced as follows: “*Post-colonial monuments in the Netherlands* presents an overview of memorials erected in the Netherlands in the post-war era that in one way or another relate to the colonial past. Often they also refer to the effects of this past on the present” (11)⁵. The Van Heutsz-monument at the Olympiaplein in Amsterdam is particularly striking because it has been a contested monument from the start, but it has not been subject to much analysis. The monument is only briefly mentioned in Ewald Vanvugt’s

⁵ The English translation is placed alongside the Dutch original and it is striking that in Dutch the word ‘postkoloniaal’ does not appear with hyphen. The previous quote shows that the use “post-colonial” is mainly meant as a time-indication. The monuments represented vary from very small like the cornerstone at Tjalie Robinson’s office in The Hague that reads: “Wie dit lees is gek” to the large artificial rice-terraces made by Marion Bloem and her sister in Bronbeek (Arnhem). The issues that are commemorated also vary; many monuments commemorate the victims of the Second World War or slavery, but there are a few that represent the migration to or the settlement in the Netherlands. Each section has a picture and a short explanation, and the document, as the afterword promises, is supposed to become a working-document online: everyone can add new pictures of other monuments.

De maagd en de soldaat: koloniale monumenten in Amsterdam en elders (1998) and the book does not really mention its turbulent history or paradoxical status. The more recent publication *Plaatsen van herinnering* (ed. Wim van Doel, 2005) does mention the Van Heutsz monument, but it does not discuss its status as colonial object of memory nor its role for Indos in the Netherlands. The authors of *Post-Colonial Monuments in the Netherlands* mention that it has a contested status and their conclusion is: “The memorial that was once erected as a tribute to colonialism now invited people to reflect on the colonial past, but still shied away from referring too explicitly to the Indonesian victims of Dutch colonialism” (20). Two years ago, on 5 May 2012, the monument went through an important modification, on which I will elaborate later. The second monument this thesis will analyse is the Indiëmonument Amstelveen (Netherlands East Indies Memorial) that was erected in 1994 on the initiative of residents of Amstelveen of “Netherlands East Indies descent” (50) to commemorate all victims of the war in the Dutch Indies. The monument is situated in the P.C. Broersepark in Amstelveen, but since 2007 it has a counterpart on the Zorgvlied cemetery. “This memorial consists of a miniature of the Netherlands East Indies Memorial in Amstelveen and the map of Indonesia. Organizations responsible for the Netherlands are often faced with requests to have the ashes of a deceased person scattered near the memorial” (50). Mainly to accommodate such requests the counterpart of this monument was erected at the cemetery. *Post-Colonial Monuments in the Netherlands* does not mention any contestations this monument may have caused, which seems rather unlikely since it came about on the initiative of Indos and others who had ties to the former colony. This study focuses on the Van Heutsz Monument and the Indië Monument Amstelveen in particular, because they are important across several generations of Indos. Moreover, while the Van Heutsz Monument has a contested status, the Indië Monument Amstelveen was erected by a foundation to support the need for commemoration of those with a connection to the Dutch Indies. These monuments form counterparts to the novels, because they form physical presences in public space, whereas novels provide a less forceful memorial presence. In addition, the physical presence of monuments is often connected to rituals such as commemorative ceremonies that can be performed. The ritual becomes a performance in public space, whereas the experience of reading a text can only be shared when readers consciously decide to share their reader’s experience.

This thesis is organized as follows: Chapters I and II provide, respectively, a theoretical and historical framework for the four case studies analysed in Chapters III and IV. The theoretical framework rests on the four conceptual pillars of ‘lieux de mémoire’ (sites of memory), nostalgia, trauma theory, and postmemory. In this thesis I regard both literary texts and monuments as ‘lieux de mémoire’ analysing both the sites of memory themselves and their ‘milieux de mémoire’. I argue against Nora, who states that sites of memory are ‘lieux’ because the memory is no longer performed by a corresponding, active ‘milieu’. I argue that, to the contrary, Indos form an active,

living 'milieu' of memory, which through commemorative activities seeks recognition, acknowledgement and ownership. Through these sites of memory I analyse the colonial memory of Indos. As I explained earlier, colonial memory consists of the elements of 'Indisch zwijgen' and nostalgia, the other two pillars of my theoretical framework. Moreover, since my focus lies with second and third generation Indos, it is more productive to speak of postmemory, an indirect type of memory, which is based not on actual recollection but on mediation.

In Chapter III I will analyse *Asta's ogen* and *Een meisje van honderd* with the help of the four concepts discussed in my framework, but I will also go outside the text and look at the reception of the novels in order to examine their role as transmitters within the 'milieu de memoire' of this particular group. This I will do by looking at reader's responses of the website Bol.com, responses that were sent to me by several individual readers, and reviews that appeared on forums such as Indisch3.0. I think especially the reader's responses on Bol.com break through the separation of public and private reviews. As Ann Steiner remarks in her article "Private Criticism in the Public Space: Personal writing on literature in readers' reviews on Amazon" (2008) these private reviews on the web show similarities with published reviews in magazines and on the web, but generally show more emotions and the act and place of reading are central. She, furthermore, concludes: "One strong motivation in writing criticism on the web appears to be the desire to connect with others, mainly through community-creating comments". This way, as Steiner argues, online responses became a way to perform identity (identification with a group). On the one hand, these reader's responses are a way to share the reading experience with others and in the case of Bol.com as a way to promote the novel to new readers. On the other hand, these responses are one of the very few ways to approach the reading experience of actual individual readers. And with the absence of authoritative voice that is usually provided by critics in magazines, the reader presents him/herself at the centre of the reading process.

In Chapter IV I will analyse the Van Heutsz Monument (or Indië Nederland Monument as it has been recently named) and the Indië Monument Amstelveen with its counterpart Gordel van Smaragd, by looking at the commemorative events and speeches that are held there, implying that speech acts are necessary for the memory to be maintained. As in Chapter III I will also consider the activity of the 'milieu', arguing that the speeches play an important role in the commitment of the 'milieu'. Finally, in the conclusion I compare the novels as 'lieux de mémoire' to the monuments, emphasize the differences in private and public commemoration. Further, I offer a perspective for future study.

This study contributes to the field of memory studies by offering a perspective that combines contemporary literature with an analysis of the role of monuments in society. Comparing monuments to literary texts and regarding both as 'lieux de mémoire' shows that commemoration

can be performed both in the public as in the private sphere. This study enlarges the consciousness of Dutch colonial memory, by looking not at the majority culture, but by offering the perspective of a minority group. Furthermore, this study analyses contemporary literary texts that have not yet been the subject of academic analysis. In selecting these very recent texts that are widely read I want to show that the Dutch Indies still play a major role in Dutch literature, but the perspective of Dutch Indies literature has changed. It is for this reason that I have selected two novels that can be regarded as 'family chronicles'. It is a trend that should be analysed, because it shows the important role memory plays across generations, and illustrates the shifts and transformations that underlie the process of transmission. These texts are specifically interested in the circulation of memory and present a 'family chronicle' in which history and the circulation of memory are combined. Both the literary texts and the monuments become a way to show a perspective of the colonial memory that has not received much attention. The Indo-perspective has largely been in the margins of Dutch history and this thesis will show how this memory has been moving from the margins to the centre with the help of these cultural artefacts.

Chapter I: Four Pillars that Sustain the Framework

1.1. Introduction: Literary texts and monuments as 'lieux de mémoire'

This thesis will revolve around four concepts: sites of memory, nostalgia, postmemory, and 'Indisch zwijgen' (trauma theory). They are the pillars that hold the theoretical framework of my thesis and I believe that especially the combination of these concepts offers a fruitful platform for the analysis of second and third generation Indo identity. At the basis of the entire framework is Pierre Nora's concept of 'lieux de mémoire' or sites of memory. I have chosen to regard both literary texts and monuments as sites of memory, because I think the combination literature-monument is not one that is quickly or easily made. A monument is created for the purpose of public remembering, whereas with a literary text the commemorative function is not its sole purpose. A literary work wants to be entertaining: it first and foremost tells a story. Narrative is very important. A literary work does not represent reality, or the reality of the past, it offers an interpretation. The combination is useful and illuminating precisely because of the differences between the commemorative function of literary texts and monuments. As a bookseller and enthusiastic reader I notice that novels are often handed from generation to generation in an attempt to learn about the past. But not only novels that themselves already have a long history, such as classic or canonical novels⁶, should be regarded as sites of memory. More recent novels should be looked at in this respect as well, since these recent works are part of an active 'milieu de mémoire', as I will explain. It is important to regard literary texts as 'lieux de mémoire', because when novels are regarded as sites of memory they are no longer only relevant because of their content, but their context, the way they are read and by whom become relevant as well. By analysing literature alongside monuments I have chosen to look at two different areas that cultivate and sustain memory: the public and the private sphere. A commemoration in public is something entirely different than a story that is told within the family, for example. While they may commemorate the same event, memory in the private sphere is always fused by a personal link, even when it extends across generations, as I will show in my discussion of postmemory. Novels are situated on the threshold between the public and the private sphere: they are written and read in private, but they are also in a sense public, because they are printed, sold and commented on in the media. Monuments, in contrast, are mostly part of the official narrative. They are always in the public sphere and they are usually commissioned by institutions.

⁶ Such as Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe*, Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables* or the Dutch classic *Max Havelaar*. For a study on *Ivanhoe* see: Rigney, Ann. *The Afterlives of Walter Scott: Memory on the Move*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Because they are static and part of the official narrative, they cannot offer a counter history⁷. On the other hand, novels are able to critique and challenge the official narrative in a flexible way. A literary work is subject to different interpretations by different readers. For example, *Max Havelaar* is seen by many readers as an anti-colonial work, inspiring even freedom-fighters in the Dutch Indies, whereas in fact the novel does not argue against colonialism, it only pleads for better conditions (Pattynama 2014: 77). That is what makes the combination of novels and monuments a fruitful subject for analysis.

Because the concept of sites of memory is at the basis of my theoretical framework I will first of all provide an explanation of this term, then I will continue with a discussion of my use of nostalgia, an important concept when regarding Dutch memory of the Dutch Indies. While nostalgia resembles a longing for an often idealized past, trauma avoids and represses it. At first glance, nostalgia seems to contrast or sit uneasily with trauma theory, but both should be seen in combination because the longing for the past also has a way of romanticizing it so that trauma can be overlooked. I think nostalgia is a form of dealing with trauma, an idea that I will exemplify later. Lastly, I will be looking at postmemory, a concept that was introduced by Marianne Hirsch. Postmemory is relevant especially for the third generation Indo now that the first generation is slowly fading away. Both the second and the third generation Indo were not themselves born in the Dutch Indies. The roots that they might seek in Indonesia are not really there, because the Dutch Indies no longer exist. What these generations deal with are memories that are mediated and framed by the first generation. So postmemory of second and third generations should be understood as a constructed memory of events that these generations did not actually experience.

1.2. 'Lieux de mémoire' (Sites of Memory) Defined

'Lieux de mémoire' produce and manifest memory, although their sites and objects are fixed, their function in society is subject to time and change. With 'lieux de mémoire' (sites of memory) a break with the actual historical event has occurred, so it is no longer part of an all-encompassing 'milieu de mémoire', which implies that it is no longer a memory that is actively lived, remembered and performed. A site of memory thus implies a distance between the historical event and what it commemorates, but also between the site and the memory itself.

A 'lieu de mémoire' is between history and memory, in the sense that it does not record history, but preserves a memory. According to Nora, history is a representation of the past, an

⁷ Unless, of course, it is a counter-monument. Counter-monuments do offer a critique on the official narrative. See: Young, James E. *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning*. Yale: Yale University Press 1993.

abstract form of recording the facts, and memory is “a bond tying it to the eternal present” (8). Memory is tied to the group it binds, but absent for those who do not belong to that group. History is for everyone. History and memory are thus presented as oppositions. Nora states that “[t]he moment of *lieux de memoire* occurs at the same time that an immense and intimate fund of memory disappears, surviving only as a reconstituted object beneath the gaze of critical history” (11-12). ‘Lieux de mémoire’ survive when memory does not. When memory, true memory as Nora understands it, is no longer present and is no longer performed, then only the physical object that represents the memory survives.

According to Nora, our age is too historical: it suffers from an obsessive inclination to archive and record everything. When the inclination of recording gets the upper hand, it is memory that disappears. This obsessive behaviour, however, occurs because this is an age in which we want to remember everything. He writes: “These *lieux de mémoire* are fundamentally remains, the ultimate embodiments of a memorial consciousness that has barely survived in a historical age that calls out for memory because it has abandoned it” (12). ‘Lieux de mémoire’ are created because memory does no longer occur naturally. In fact, ‘lieux de mémoire’ are artificial remains and the memory is forever tied to the site. Nora regards modern memory as ultimately archival and this kind of memory happens because it is no longer a “social practice” (14), but “an individual constraint” (14). It becomes a duty to remember, but it also changes the focus from the collective to the self. History has replaced memory, according to Nora, and that is a loss for literature. The desire to record everything, the desire to archive, has led to an obsession with (historical) facts. This has even reached the literary sphere, in which historical novels are based on real facts and the reader has become a fact checker. However, fiction, according to Nora, is precisely fiction because it does not need to be exclusively based on facts. The magic of fiction and the reflexivity of literature are lost this way (24). Moreover, memory functions best if it moves in the realm of fiction, but in an era that is focused on historization there is little room left for fiction and memory.

History just makes note of events, whereas ‘lieux de mémoire’, and I think memory in general, attempt in a reflective way to relive the moment. Sites of memory are used to maintain and create identity. For example, second, but especially third generation Indos in the Netherlands are part of a discourse centred around a place that no longer exists. Their social position as it was in the Dutch Indies, in-between Dutch and natives, does no longer apply. Their predecessors have migrated to the Netherlands because they obtained the Dutch nationality on the grounds of their mixed ethnicity and being recognized as Dutch. They hold on to a history that is in fact a memory.

Lieux de mémoire exist only if there is “a will to remember” (19) and when they are invested by a symbolic aura. However, this contradicts the breach between ‘milieux’ and ‘lieux de mémoire’, which implies that the memory has been lost. Nevertheless, ‘lieux de mémoire’ recur and have an

ability to adapt. Nora writes: “What is the essence of this quintessential *lieu de memoire*-its original intention or its return in the cycles of memory? Clearly both: all *lieux de memoire* are objects *mises en abime*” (20). Their ability to function as *mise en abime* means that they are self-reflective: they reflect upon their function as ‘lieux de mémoire’ and what they commemorate can be subject to change. However, the function of *mise en abime* is especially relevant in the case of novels. A novel, being a narrative in itself, can reflect on its own constructedness and on its function as a written construct. In my view, a novel can be highly conscious of the act and difficulty of remembering, because the narrator is remembering a certain event, or because it is used by readers to transmit a certain memory of events. And memory, just like narrative, is a construct.

Nora distinguishes two forms of ‘lieu de mémoire’: dominant and dominated (23), the first is top-down, and in the second “one finds the living heart of memory” (23). Dominant ‘lieux de mémoire’ are imposed by national authority and are generally distant. These are usually monuments. They do not require active participation in the act of remembrance. Dominated ‘lieux de mémoire’ are more spontaneous and generated from below. They are more active and more likely to be part of a community in which memory is alive and actively performed. Novels that are regarded as sites of memory function very well in such an active community, for they circulate among readers and are consumed as memory texts. This is how I oppose literature to monuments. Literature has to be part of a community that makes an effort to remember, whereas monuments are dominant ‘lieux de mémoire’.

After Nora’s introduction to the project of ‘lieux de mémoire’ appeared in English in 1989, the concept of ‘lieu de mémoire’ has become very famous and has been much criticized especially because of its development in the three volumes of *Realms of Memory*. The lack of a postcolonial reflection on sites of memory, or in fact the absence of the entire colonial past in the project, and the French nationalist approach make the concept of ‘lieux de mémoire’ appear very one-sided. Rothberg argues that the fact that Nora leaves “the imperial adventures and minoritarian inflections” (2010: 4) out of his narrative of French national memory proves that it is not as linear as it seems. These “imperial adventures” are exactly an element that would change the narrative and have different voices attached to it⁸. The top-down approach that supposedly creates a site of memory

⁸ Hue-Tam Ho Tai in his review of Nora’s project observes- like Rothberg- that the colonial past is ignored. He observes that Nora describes a top-down creation of memory. Sites of memory come into being by the interference of institutions, it is the nation-state that is central. However, especially France is a whole that consists of many different regional identities. Therefore, according to Ho Tai the question should be asked whether the regional identities of France are signs of diversity or element of resistance to the national idea (914). However, there seems to be little room for resistance within concept of ‘lieux de mémoire’, which is also Rothberg’s point. To Ho Tai there is a lack of “social frames of memory” (198). He wonders who defines the nation-state and the nation’s memory and his question is: who is in charge of creating sites of memory? I would

and the outspoken separation between 'milieux' and 'lieux de memoire' also problematize the use of the concept for this thesis. It makes the community, or society as whole, seem passive. In contrast to Nora, Rothberg thinks that sites of memory need the agency of individuals and publics to function. They require participation and that means the memory should still be alive and performed within the community. So, in fact, 'milieux de mémoire' still exist. At this point, a definition of 'milieux de mémoire' should be given. When using the term 'milieu' I refer to the group or community that sustains a certain memory. This group has a connection to the memory and is the main reason the memory is able to exist. In the case of this thesis I am examining the memory of second and third generation Indos and when I regard literary texts or monuments as 'lieux', I am considering this group of Indos as the 'milieu'.

The largest limitation of 'lieux de mémoire' that Rothberg sees is that they are not multidirectional enough. There is not simply one memory that has beaten other memories. As Rothberg also argues in *Multidirectional Memory* (2009): memories do not participate in a "zero-sum struggle for preeminence"(3), but are subject to a continuous negotiation and interact with other historical memories. Memory is productive and intercultural, Rothberg stresses, and therefore it should be considered as multidirectional rather than competitive. In defining the concept of memory Rothberg uses a definition from Richard Terdiman: "memory is the past made present" (2009: 3, as qtd by Rothberg). This notion of making present has two consequences: memory is foremost a contemporary phenomenon; while it is concerned with the past, it happens in the present. And memory is a form of work, it requires active participation. It is a continuous project. When memory is regarded as multidirectional and intercultural, and identity as non-linear (but determined by different social frameworks), memory has the potential to create new forms of solidarity and "new visions of justice" (5) by offering different perspectives. This way, multidirectionality shapes a public sphere in which different groups interact and not just voice their established positions.

Instead of using 'lieux de mémoire' Rothberg proposes the concept of 'noeuds de mémoire' (knotted memories). While sites of memory have been blamed to be too national and generated top-down by the nation-state, featuring a hegemonic kind of memory, both Rothberg and Ho-Tai, another critic of Nora, agree that there exist counter-hegemonic memories. With knotted memories Rothberg moves "beyond the framework of the imagined community of the nation-state" (2010: 7). Nora uses Maurice Halbwachs' idea that there are as many memories as there are groups, but

argue that with a top-down approach it is the nation that is in charge of the sites of memory. There will indeed be little room for other memories or resistance against the nation's versions of identity. Lastly, Ho Tai writes against Nora's claim that society suffers of a compulsive urge to remember causing memory to disappear that "what today looks like compulsive remembering may well be the result of decades of amnesia" (919). So, in a society that refound its ability to remember, the importance of counter-memory should be stressed.

'noeuds de mémoire' make no assumption of the content of these groups, what is more, they transcend the different memory-groups. All places and acts of memory are networks of temporality, they change over time, but also maintain certain elements. Nevertheless, Nora writes that the national history of France, which creates 'lieux de mémoire', is able to move between different groups and this way it creates a network (23). From Nora's point of view, there is one large narrative (French national history) that functions as a network and ties all the different groups together. Rothberg's idea that all places and acts of memory are networks of temporality is more open to different narratives, different identities and interactions. It is not that the memory ties all groups together, but it means that the memory is able to function and be performed in different groups. The knotted memory is also open to the different significations and it is non-hierarchical. This means it can also offer counter-memories.

'Noeuds de mémoire' are a more flexible concept than 'lieux de mémoire'. They are not limited to the nation-state and transcend communities and ethnic groups. In contrast to 'lieux de mémoire', knotted memories are not bound to territories. Knotted memories are about the memory itself that travels, and not the site that contains a certain memory. Important is that they are multidirectional and seem more open to 'counter-hegemonic memories,' as Ho Tai also claims. Rothberg's idea on multidirectionality and the function of knotted memories opens up the space for these counter-memories against the hegemonic discourse. Multidirectionality is a way for these counter-memories to appear. At the same time, while Nora's approach of sites of memory seems to leave no room for counter-memories, 'lieux de mémoire' are more multidirectional than they seem. They are, as Nora himself writes, "a site of excess closed upon itself, concentrated in its own name, but also forever open to *the full range* of its possible significations" (24, emphasis mine). That means sites of memory are indeed multidirectional.

My approach to sites of memory, in contrast to Nora, is bottom-up and is a combination of Nora's idea of 'lieux de mémoire' and Rothberg's knotted memories. Firstly, this means that the separation between 'lieux' and 'milieux' should be reconsidered. A memory is created, because there is a will (and a need) to remember, as Nora also points out, but to me this suggests an active participation within the community. 'Lieux' and 'milieux' are not actually separated, but because the distance between what the site commemorates and because the actual event becomes larger over time, they are not tied together either. In regarding literary texts as sites of memory, for example, there has to be an active 'milieu de mémoire' in order for these texts to circulate among other readers as a way to function as memory, or as postmemory. There has to be the will to remember and a need to tell the narrative to other generations. This can happen in at least two ways: the work is written with the intention to tell the subsequent generations the story of a past, or the reader considers a certain novel an adequate representation of the past and recommends the book to other

readers. Both ways require a conscious decision from either the author or the reader. At the same time this thesis examines monuments, which are situated more firmly within the public sphere than novels are (because they are read in private and circulate within an intimate circle of friends and family), but these monuments are contested for what they commemorate and are the centre of commemorative ceremonies during national days such as the 15th of August or 4th of May. These are rituals that require active participation: the ceremonies need to be attended and attendance asks for a certain awareness. Outside these commemorations the activity of the 'milieu' is limited.

Secondly, the specific group that this thesis focuses on is a minority group that is marked by its (post)colonial heritage of the Dutch Indies. But their right to have their own memories and traumas has been overshadowed by the Dutch sense of loss of the colony and the Dutch war-trauma and need to recover of the Second World War. This means that this thesis deals with a memory that has not been prominent in public, and remembering becomes a way to claim identity for this group. The multidirectional aspect of Dutch memories that are reappropriated or influenced by Indo (or colonial) memory is important for this thesis.

Thirdly, Rothberg's sense that memory transcends groups is something that I would like to tie to the sites of memory. This thesis deals with memories of the Dutch Indies, the Second World War, the struggle for independence of Indonesia and the migration of a large group to the Netherlands, and these memories are not exclusively owned by one group. Even though this thesis is concerned with one specific identity-group, namely second/ third generation Indos in the Netherlands, the memories often transcend this group and extend into the large and diverse Dutch society. This means that the memories that are lived by this group are a combination of minority memories and memories that did circulate in the public discourse. One memory can be seen as a knot in a larger framework of memories. In short, one single memory consists of many different elements: personal narrative, national narrative, and narrative that is created by popular media⁹.

Lastly, although I see 'lieux de mémoire' as created bottom-up by a living 'milieu de mémoire' and I regard memory as a knot of memories I do not entirely want to let go of Nora's idea of 'lieux de mémoire'. I consider sites of memory a combination of 'lieux' and 'noeuds de mémoire'. Indeed, as I have argued earlier, a memory is not a single entity, but it consists of knotted memories. However, I would also like to stress the importance of 'lieux'. Sites are important containers of memory, because they are bound to their physicality and not to time. 'Lieux' are "like shells on the

⁹The recent publication *Bitterzoet Indië* (Amsterdam: Prometheus Bert Bakker, 2014) by Pamela Pattynama analyses the different elements of these memories. Pattynama considers the Dutch Indies as a 'lieu de mémoire' in itself, arguing that the former Dutch colony is part of the memory of many different groups and people. She deconstructs the popular images of the colony and shows how the memory has developed. This thesis has a similar subject of study and a number of times I will refer to this book.

shore" (Nora 12), physical remains of something that has long been gone, but that maintains and transfers the memory. 'Lieux', the way Nora sees them, are hybrid because they move between the collective and the individual and because they are open to all significations. This means that as physicality, 'lieux de mémoire' "materialize the immaterial", serving as a handhold in the framework of knotted memories.

1.3. Nostalgia: A Longing For A Home that Never Was

The word nostalgia is derived from the Greek words *nostos*, which means return home, and the word *algia*, which means longing (Boym: xiii). Nostalgia, as Svetlana Boym defines it, occurs with exiles, or rather those people that cannot return to their home because their home no longer exists. However, she complicates the notion by claiming that the home that is longed for is always non-existing and the longing is motivated by a fantasy: "Nostalgia is a sentiment of loss and displacement, but it is also a romance with one's own fantasy" (xiii). The notions of loss and displacement are crucial, because nostalgic sentiment only survives when there is distance from home. When abroad the longing for home becomes apparent. The home is romanticized and idealized, as a place of ultimate comfort and belonging, whereas the exiled lives abroad with (perhaps) a feeling of displacement. Nevertheless, it is not really that concrete as a struggle between the new and the old home, a tension between past and present. This tension is inevitable, because when resolved the sentiment of nostalgia would disappear. Boym writes:

Nostalgia itself has a utopian dimension, only it is no longer directed toward the future.

Sometimes nostalgia is not directed toward the past either, but rather sideways. The nostalgic feels stifled within the conventional confines of time and space. (xiv)

This is interesting, because it means that nostalgia deals with an ideal that is not connected to temporalities. Rather it is a sentiment that comes into being when there is a discontent with the present situation. According to Boym it is hard for nostalgics to describe what exactly they long for, meaning that nostalgia is undefined and rather unpredictable.

Important to Boym's argument is that nostalgia is seen as a taboo, as paralyzing, as not fruitful. She notes: "First-wave immigrants are often notoriously unsentimental, leaving the search for roots to their children and grandchildren [...]" (xv). Nostalgia for Tempo Doeloe, however, can be encountered with the first generation of Indo immigrants. It is a way to deal with the trauma of the abrupt end of the colony. Nevertheless, first generations are indeed more focused on building a new life than on looking back. The taboo on nostalgia has to do with a struggle of adaptation and survival in the new country and yet, paradoxically, this same struggle awakens the feeling. Nostalgia goes beyond the individual and creates a sense of mutual understanding: one is united in the longing for a home that no longer is. This explains why this particular sense of longing is experienced, even when it

is covered in taboo. In the place that causes displacement, experiencing nostalgia creates an unexpected unity between people. The fact that nostalgia moves between collective and personal memory is very important for my argument. Nostalgia is fed by a memory that is partly personal and partly collective. In fact, one could argue that the memory of a homeland or, in the case of this thesis, of the Dutch Indies, becomes collective through nostalgia. Nostalgia is the shared sentiment within these memories.

Boym distinguishes two kinds of nostalgia: restorative and reflective. Restorative nostalgia is focused on a return to the place of origin, or restoration of the past. Leading is the idea that everything used to be better and the need to return to that situation. Reflective nostalgia is not so focused on the actual past and is more open to change and different interpretations. Reflective nostalgia is concerned with both, past and present, the new home and the old. It is aware of the double consciousness that can be caused by dwelling upon the old home, while living in the new and tries to use this as an advantage for the present. According to Boym these two forms of nostalgia allow to distinguish between national memory that is based on a singular idea of national identity and social memory "which consists of collective frameworks that mark but do not define individual memory" (xviii). Reflective nostalgia is clearly the more productive form of longing. I argue that reflective nostalgia allows room for multidirectionality because it is not a longing that expects a concrete return home, whereas restorative nostalgia is based on the anticipation of this return. Without this expectation, the different images of the home can be regarded, leaving out the necessity of a romanticized home. Restorative nostalgia remains in the past, reflective nostalgia forms a collective framework that is at the same time open to other identities. Reflective nostalgia, thus, can be directed more towards the future. Moreover, Boym claims that nostalgia is a strategy of survival when homecoming is impossible.

Boym argues that when displacement is experienced, intimacy is impossible and nostalgia is at the surface. Nostalgia invokes a new sense of belonging that is defined by un-belonging and can be felt through the telling of stories, by creating a narrative. Connecting to Boym I argue that through longing a bond is created that comes into being through the shaping of stories and secrets. Nostalgia, the reflective form, opens a platform that is fruitful¹⁰, it opens a conversation between past and present. The loss of the Dutch Indies in the late 1940s generated a mode of nostalgia in the Netherlands that is characterized as *Tempo Doeloe*, which means something like: the good old days.

¹⁰ Linda Hutcheon notes that irony and nostalgia are tied together and that nostalgia (and irony) are active responses of subjects. Nostalgia then allows to be reflective, because it creates a certain distance between the subject and the object that invokes the nostalgic emotions. See: Hutcheon, Linda. "Irony, nostalgia, and the postmodern." *Methods for the Study of Literature as Cultural Memory*. no. 6, 1998. p 189-207.

The Indies were referred to as the 'Gordel van Smaragd' (the girdle of emerald) and seen as a lost paradise. This sentiment was (and is) shared both by Dutch and Indos. Pamela Pattynama writes:

This idyllic representation of a paradise lost has become a metaphor for the colonial past as a whole and often crops up both in private family histories which are passed on from generation to generation, and in public histories such as academic oral history projects.
(2012: 97)

As we saw in Lizzy van Leeuwen's *Ons Indisch erfgoed*, this mode of nostalgia became widely spread. The nostalgia for Tempo Doeloe was very dominant and seemed to overrule the sense of trauma, or even guilt, that might also have been emotions that were born with the loss of the Indies. In a country that was already filled with its own trauma of the German occupation and a strong drive to rebuild after the damage done during the Second World War, other traumas were not part of the public debate. Instead, a longing for Tempo Doeloe appears and the past is idealized.

As Pattynama points out, nostalgia has been severely criticized as being inauthentic. Nostalgia would simplify the past, or even falsify it. In the line of this critique it is clear that there is a notion of true history opposed to false memory. Also, it leaves out the reflective feature of nostalgia that Svetlana Boym has theorized. However, in contrast to being a simplification of the past, the variety of ways in which nostalgia can come into being rather complicates the memory. Pattynama looks at the way in which the former colonies are remembered and longed for. She observes that the colony has always been seen as the "exotic mysterious Other" (2012: 99). From the first contact with indigenous people, images and texts have been circulating telling an adventurous story relating to national pride and "provided the Calvinistic motherland with an erotic space filled with "piquancies", and adulterous characters" (2012: 99). What happened overseas appeared far more colourful than life in the motherland. The spread of these images did not end with decolonization. Pattynama observes that the Dutch Indies, as 'lieu de mémoire' inhabit the Dutch cultural memory, and nostalgia for Tempo Doeloe has become one of the ruling motives in contemporary Dutch literature. According to her, novels with such a theme regularly reach the bestseller's charts. As an example, among others (Hella S. Haasse, Reggie Baay), she gives the author Eveline Stoel, whose novel *Asta's ogen*, also subject of this thesis, quickly became very popular and has been reprinted several times since its publication in 2010. That texts like these reached such popularity is not surprising according to Pattynama. They share: "familiar themes, stylistic elements and standard images emerge time and again, consolidating and embedding the constant presence of the beloved colony in the Dutch cultural imagination" (2012: 99-100). The Dutch Indies appear in different manifestations from

movies to markets (so called 'Pasar Malams'¹¹). And these manifestations become "acts of transfer", a phrase by Paul Connerton (38-40) that explains how such manifestations become vehicles to transfer memory. Even though no longer a personal memory, each cultural manifestation carries a memory of the Dutch Indies. To Pattynama, all these kinds of memory interact and are supported through a common theme of nostalgia.

Pattynama argues that nostalgia for Tempo Doeloe is an important feature of collective memory when the Dutch Indies are concerned, but, according to her, nostalgia appears hand in hand with amnesia. Drawing on theories of collective memory by Aleida Assmann and Halbwachs, Pattynama distinguishes different 'mnemonic' communities. A memory, then, is tied to a distinct group and even though it happens, the memory does not often transcend different groups. Although Pattynama seems aware of the multidirectionality of memory, but memory communities for her remain distinct. In fact, the multidirectionality of memory is part of what makes nostalgia an important element in memory studies, according to Pattynama. To describe this, she argues that Indos, being of mixed race, formed a separate group both in the Indies as in the Netherlands after decolonization. This group of people, as I pointed out earlier, arrived in a postwar society that was dealing with its own World War II traumas and was not waiting for a reminder of the colonial past. Indos were silenced and the memory of their past remained in the private sphere:

All of this, the prevailing amnesia in the public domain, the silencing of personal memories and the marginalizing of postcolonial critique, perpetuated existing myths of an idyllic era a source of national pride. The exclamation: 'daar is wat groots verricht!' (those were our glory days!) is heard to this day. (Pattynama 2012: 103)

The negative memories are pushed to the background, and what remains in the public domain is the exotic tale of adventure, romance and great deeds. This remains a rather safe way of remembering the colonial past, for both Indos and Dutch. The nostalgia, and that is also in part why it is criticized so much, is widespread because it only features a bright romantic past; atrocities and traumas are not dealt with. This changed, as Pattynama argues in several articles, when in the 1960s, J.E. Hueting (a military veteran) appeared on national television telling about war crimes that were committed in the colony. This interview caused an enormous shock. Pattynama remarks: "It forced the nation's self-image to shift from one of a victim under Nazi Occupation to one revealing the Dutch to be perpetrators of war crimes in the lost colony" (2012: 103). This challenged the public memory and predominantly nostalgic narrative and opened up a space for trauma to appear¹². Pattynama's

¹¹ Typical Indo combination of market and cultural festival.

¹² For example, when the two canonical novels *Max Havelaar* (Multatuli 1860) and *Oeroeg* (Haasse 1948) were made into films, in 1976 (Fons Rademaker) and 1993 (Hans Hylkema) respectively, the Dutch were portrayed as perpetrator.

argument is that stories about the Dutch Indies play with this mixture of nostalgia and trauma. This is especially relevant for second generation Indos, who are born in the Netherlands, but grew up with stories that were either bitter or overly romanticized. They had, as Pattynama puts it “a confusing sense of the past” (2012: 108). Not in possession of personal memories of the Dutch Indies, second generation Indos created postmemories from the “emotionally charged silences” (2012: 109) and stories told by their parents. I will elaborate on the concept of postmemory later on in this chapter, but this “confusing sense of the past” makes nostalgia for Tempo Doeloe more than just a romanticization of the past. Through silence and nostalgia a new kind of memory is created, one that is highly mediated.

Sarah De Mul analyses contemporary literature written by people who grew up in the colony, but had to move to the Netherlands after decolonialization in 1949. They do not belong to Indonesia, but neither do they identify with the Dutch in the postwar society of the fifties. Their longing for the past is framed by the beautiful, innocent, memory of childhood. De Mul goes a step further than Pattynama in arguing that the memory of the Dutch Indies is mainly mediated through literary texts and is not based on pure memory. The memory of childhood, then, is false. The “repatrianten”¹³ formed a memory community that, driven by a longing for the country that no longer is, created literary texts fused with nostalgia, and through these texts they formed a unity. Literary texts from before decolonization were likewise surrounded by a form of nostalgia. The memory that is dealt with comes from a mainly Western imagination. It seems that memory is “an unreliable instrument” (De Mul: 14), when analyzing the colonial past. Unreliable, because the Western Self imposes images on the colonial memory. Colonial memory consists of several versions of the past that co-exist and interact. The nostalgia for the colonial past voiced in the novels analysed by De Mul has come into being because the colonial past as such has been ignored for a long time in Dutch society. To De Mul, the nostalgic memory is multidirectional and it is nostalgic because it is a memory that came to life because a general sense of displacement was experienced.

Nostalgia for Tempo Doeloe was widely spread within Dutch society and was not only prominent after the loss of the colony, but was a general tendency even before decolonization. Paul Bijl writes: “Tempo Doeloe is, in fact, part of a broader mnemonic culture in which the colonial order of things, if not the colonial system, is seen as a state of affairs to which a return is preferable” (129). It is, as Svetlana Boym also argues, a feature that appears with modernity. It is a longing for the good-old-days when change comes too fast to be digested. Tempo Doeloe, as Bijl describes, is a form

¹³ Those who “returned” to the motherland. Possessing Dutch citizenship these people were allowed to come to The Netherlands. This was not actually a return as the term implies, for most of them had never been to the Netherlands.

of nostalgia that was embedded in the way the colony was perceived. If this is the case, then the appearance of nostalgia after decolonization is only an extension of the widely accepted way to regard the colony anyway. Nostalgia, then, from the part of the colonizer, has an air of superiority around it. That Indo-memory is also fused with nostalgia has to do with the loss of an actual home (the Dutch Indies), but also with the adaption to Dutch culture.

So, nostalgia for Tempo Doeloe is a widely spread and accepted sentiment that, according to Bijl, fits into a tendency that was already common even before decolonization. Nostalgia, then, is integrated into Dutch thinking about colonial times. The word nostalgia is a Latin translation of the German word 'Heimweh'¹⁴, meaning the pain for home or homesickness. My use of nostalgia ties in with Bijl's idea that it has long been a common tendency of looking at the Dutch Indies. This feature combined with the longing for a home by diaspora, makes the nostalgia employed by Indos in cultural artifacts interesting. While the nostalgia of the first generation Indos is still directed towards an actual home that is lost, the later generations employ this mode of nostalgia without an actual object of longing. It is a nostalgia that becomes part of their being different. It is this use of nostalgia I will analyse in this thesis.

1.4. Trauma Theory and 'Indisch Zwijgen'

While nostalgia is longing for the past, trauma is an involuntary repetition of the past. And yet, the concept of trauma, and more particularly the idea of 'Indisch zwijgen,' combined with nostalgia shape a story of the past in which traumatic events are eliminated and in which one dwells on romanticized memories. The concept of 'Indisch zwijgen' is important for the second and third generation Indo. Trauma can occur during the colonial period, the Second World War (the camps of the Japanese, etc.) the violent and chaotic period of decolonization, but also during the immigration to the Netherlands or by discrimination and a sense of non-belonging. The second and third generation Indos deal with 'Indisch zwijgen' because they are confronted with unfinished stories of their parents' or grandparents' past. Also, for the first generation Indo adaptation in Dutch society was the priority and they were not so much concerned with their identity as Indo as are subsequent generations. The notion of 'Indisch zwijgen', of silencing the past, can be connected to a way of working through trauma. The phrase 'Indisch zwijgen' comes from the expression "spreken is zilver, zwijgen is Indisch" (Wouter Muller as qtd by Bosch: 2001), which is an adaption of the expression 'speech is silver, silence golden'. However, the silence in this case is less positive and meant rather sarcastically. Because there was no room for the first generation Indo to acknowledge their trauma, this aspect became silent.

¹⁴ A full definition is found on <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/nostalgia>.

In defining trauma, Cathy Caruth begins with Freud, explaining that trauma is a “pattern of suffering” (1) that keeps recurring in the lives of individuals. Certain events characterized as catastrophic and traumatic repeat themselves, much against the will of the survivor. Trauma comes from the Greek word wound and was initially meant as an injury to the body. With Freud, this injury is extended to the mind. Freud used literary examples to describe the effects of trauma and Caruth argues that: “If Freud turns to literature to describe traumatic experience, it is because literature, like psychoanalysis, is interested in the complex relation between knowing and not knowing” (3). In the case of trauma it is the wound that cries out, argues Caruth. It is repetitive, but returns in different forms. Trauma haunts the victim.

Geoffrey H. Hartman writes that trauma consists of two contradictory elements: “one is the traumatic event, registered rather than experienced. [...]. The other is a kind of memory of the event” (537). And he continues explaining that the “literary construction of memory” (540) is a way to relate to the moment that cannot be “adequately experienced”. The moment is expressed through an artistic representation that is driven by the desire for knowledge. Trauma theory focuses on this constructedness of memory and seeks to explain the use of poetic language and the symbolic process. Literature, then, offers a way to work through trauma. The novels I regard as ‘sites of memory’ either describe traumatic events or a search for identity that is heavily influenced by the traumatic experiences of the first generation. Also, the monuments I discuss deal with events that have been highly traumatic for the colonized in colonial times. Similar to Caruth, Hartman argues that literature opens up a space in which trauma can be analysed. When trauma is uncovered in a patient-therapist relation, the “ultimate explanation” of trauma is attempted to be discovered. According to Hartman this leads away from the actual story of trauma. He argues that the story must be returned to the patient and art is a good way to achieve this. Art is both testimony and representation. And the way trauma comes to the surface is through narratives. The “ultimate explanation” of trauma is not relevant for Hartman.

Stef Craps argues that trauma theory should be revised to include an on-going form of traumatization that is suffered by minorities through discrimination:

One such incident alone may not be traumatizing, but traumatization can result insidiously from cumulative micro-aggressions: each one is too small to be a traumatic stressor, but together they can build to create an intense traumatic impact. (26)

Craps argues against a conception of trauma that is exclusively based on a single event; to him trauma can be an on-going process. He relies on Fanon’s *Black Skin, White Masks*¹⁵ where the

¹⁵ Fanon writes: “For not only must the black man be black; he must be black in relation to the white man” (82-83). And: “[...] I had to meet the white man’s eyes” (83). In confrontation with the white man, the black

everyday experience of racism is presented as a cause of ongoing trauma. When the idea of trauma is broadened and extended to the trauma of minorities and when trauma is no longer seen as event-based, Craps hopes for a new global future: “By enabling us to recognize and attend to the sufferings of people around the world, an inclusive and culturally sensitive trauma theory can expose situations of injustice and abuse, and open up ways to imagine a different global future” (9). While this sounds rather optimistic, shifting the view from event-based trauma to on-going forms of trauma is very useful for postcolonial studies. When being other is traumatic as well, this also shifts the view of narrative in literature.

This thesis operates with both senses of trauma: trauma that is event-based (to use Craps’ term) and the on-going form of trauma that is experienced in ‘being other’. Event-based trauma is trauma that is caused by one single event, such as war. For this thesis the trauma that is caused by the Second World War, the Japanese occupation and the camps are considered to be event-based. While it did not cause trauma overnight, it is a trauma that is caused by one single event: the war. Another event-based trauma is trauma that is caused by the violent period of the ‘Bersiap’. During this struggle for independence the environment for many Indos once again became unstable and unsafe. On both events I will elaborate later, but for now it is sufficient to say that I consider these events as traumatic. Upon arrival in the Netherlands there was not much room to deal with these traumas; first generation Indos were focused on starting a new life and surrounded the war and the ‘Bersiap’ with silence. Nevertheless, together with the first generation, the second generation is highly influenced by this trauma. The (post)memories that they shaped were coloured by this and the silence and the actual trauma have become a motive in many postwar literature and especially literature written by second generation Indo¹⁶. On-going trauma as Craps defines it are forms of racism and discrimination. ‘Being other’ means being regarded as non-Western, as exotic. I follow Craps in my definition of on-going trauma. I consider the attempt by the Indo community to behave as Dutch as possible, both in the colony as in the Netherlands, as the result of the on-going trauma of racism. Although there is a slight difference: in the colony, behaving Dutch and being considered as such, despite being Indo, granted social status, whereas in the Netherlands it was a way to blend in as quickly as possible. This focus on being Dutch was carried to the extreme, as I will later show. Both versions of trauma are events or occasions that haunt generations. Trauma, especially in consideration with the notion of ‘Indisch zwijgen’, influences the narrative enormously: to compensate for silence, nostalgia becomes the main subject of memory. Rather than reliving

subject’s identity is questioned, creating an inferiority complex that is always at the heart of the black man’s actions, according to Fanon.

¹⁶ Theodor Holman, for example, has written many novels that deal with his father’s war-trauma. The most recent one being *De grootste truc allertijden* (Amsterdam: Nieuw Amsterdam, 2013).

traumatic events, the past is romanticized and idealized. Even though the causes of trauma need to be recognized and commemorated, the notion of 'Indisch zwijgen' complicates the commemoration. With 'Indisch zwijgen' trauma is dealt with through an absolute silence that blocks the memory. However, through narrative and story-telling elements that have caused the trauma reach the surface. In analysing the novels and monuments with this in mind, this thesis shows how trauma is dealt with and how it is connected to nostalgia.

1.5. Postmemory: Transgenerational Transmission of Memory

Marianne Hirsch has described the phenomenon of postmemory, which implies a memory of the individual or group that is not their own; defining it as follows:

I see it [...] as a structure of inter- and transgenerational transmission of traumatic knowledge and experience. It is a *consequence* of traumatic recall, but (unlike post-traumatic stress disorder) at a generational remove. (106)

Postmemory has five characteristics. Firstly, it is connected to traumatic events and concerns memories that the first generation cannot easily deal with and that have a profound impact on the lives of members of the first generation. Secondly, Hirsch implies that a memory can be owned, there is a "personal/familial/ generational sense of ownership" (104). This suggests that a deep connection to the past of descendants of both victims and perpetrators exists. It follows that memory can be transmitted to those who did not actually live the event. To Hirsch, this transfer mainly happens within the familial, generational relations, because only in the intimate family-circles the sense or burden of the past can be adequately transferred. Living with such intimate connection, a child will feel the burden the parent carries.

Thirdly, postmemory is mediated and constructed and is therefore not the same as memory. Hirsch describes it as follows: "Postmemory describes the relationship that the generation after those who witness cultural or collective trauma bears to experiences of those who came before, experiences that they 'remember' only by means of the stories, images, and behaviours among which they grew up" (106). It is thus a memory that is transported to and reappropriated by the next generation. Second generation Indo- authors¹⁷ regularly are concerned with identity as their main theme. The major part of the first generation Indo in the Netherlands felt dislocated and their sense of dislocation is reflected onto their children. They start a quest, as De Mul calls it, for identity: "It is rooted in a desire to uncover the hidden memory of the Indo experience in the colonial past, their migration and subsequent experiences in post-imperial Holland" (84). It is important for postmemory that it is transmitted through the means of story-telling. However, the experiences of these stories

¹⁷ Such as Alfred Birney, Marion Bloem.

affect the second generation so deeply that they “seem to constitute memories in their own right. Postmemory’s connection to the past is thus not actually mediated by recall but by imaginative investment, projection and creation ” (Hirsch 107).

Fourthly, postmemory is distinct from what the real contemporaries remember and hence ‘post’. Postmemory is not an actual memory. According to Hirsch “the ‘post’ in ‘postmemory’ signals more than a temporal delay and more than a location in an aftermath” (106). Hirsch uses the preposition ‘post’ on purpose, because it “inscribes both a critical distance and a profound interrelation” (106). ‘Post’ does not mean the end but a continuity, and at the same time it invokes a certain rupture. In short, the memory is transferred to the next generation and thus continues to exist and yet, it is not a memory of the actual event.

Hirsch writes: “it is ‘post’, but at the same time, it approximates memory in its affective force” (109). This leads to the fifth and last implication of postmemory, namely that there is an affective connection. This affective connection is linked to the fact that postmemory can be owned. The memory can be owned when there is an affective connection that is created by the familial. Linking to Aleida Assmann—who distinguished four memory ‘formats’: individual memory, family/group memory, national/political memory and cultural/archival memory—Hirsch concludes that “family is the privileged site of memorial transmission” (110). Postmemory is in some ways still individual, because it has not reached the larger scope of cultural memory yet. The familial tie that carries this memory makes it personal and this affective connection enable the memory to be transferred to subsequent generations. Hirsch writes:

Postmemorial work, I want to suggest [...] strives to *reactivate* and *re-embody* more distant social/national and archival/cultural memorial structures by reinvesting them with resonant individual and familial forms of mediation and aesthetic expression. Thus less directly affected participants can become engaged in the generation of postmemory, which can thus persist even after all participants and their familial descendants are gone. (111)

Hirsch goes a step further here by saying that the mediation can be carried on even if the actual affected participants are gone.

To sum up, it can be said that postmemory requires a certain intimacy. This intimacy is reached within the familial/generational bonds and is strong because it is driven by an “affective force” (Hirsch 109). This “affective force” I consider to be empathy, which offers an emotional connection. The empathy that is invoked by the narrative of the memory personalizes this very same narrative and enables another generation to appropriate it. Hirsch describes that “even the familial knowledge of the past is *mediated* by broadly available public images and narratives” (112). Postmemory therefore can be carried by images and stories that are widely available, however these public images or stories are always connected to a family story and the empathy that is felt is

enlarged by the familial connection¹⁸. This thesis deals with a specific group and therefore with memories that are tied to this specific Indo-community. These are particularly postmemories that come into being through the trauma induced “Indisch zwijgen” (silence) of the first generation. This silence has left a gap in the family’s past and therefore is filled with public stories such as provided by certain novels that awake a feeling of recognition and are therefore appropriated. The transference occurs because the next generation experiences a deep connection to the past of their parents. This connection, I argue, comes through roots, but is not limited to the family.

1.6. The Theoretical Framework

In the previous pages I have explained the four concepts that I use as the pillars that sustain my theoretical framework. The analysis of the objects that follow is based on my main assumption that ‘lieux de mémoire’ are generated bottom-up. I regard both novels *Asta’s ogen* (Stoel 2010) and *Een meisje van honderd* (Bloem 2012) as sites of memory, because they are part of an active ‘milieu de mémoire’. The novel can only be part of this ‘milieu’ when the reader is involved and carries a will to remember. In contrast to novels, the monuments I analyse are more likely to be ‘lieux’ as Nora sees them. They are built on initiative of certain institutions and serve as a visual reminder, even if what they commemorate is not actively remembered. However, monuments can become part of traditions that involve active remembrance. As I will demonstrate in my analysis of the Van Heutsz-monument in Amsterdam. This monument has been reappropriated and re-claimed, activating a new memory. By this reclaiming the monument becomes part of an active ‘milieu de mémoire’. The memory I examine, that of the Dutch Indies and the way this influences the generations of Indo that have their roots in the former colony, is filled with a tension between nostalgia and trauma: nostalgia, being traditionally a manner in which the Dutch colony is regarded and trauma being a way of silencing the past. While trauma silences the past, I assume it also tends to focus on romanticizing the past, like

¹⁸ Alison Landsberg’s concept of prosthetic memory is similar to postmemory, but without the implication of intimacy of the family. Prosthetic memory in that sense is broader and does not require a personal attachment to the event or story that is remembered. Prosthetic memory, like postmemory, is a memory that does not belong to the person that remembers it. However, where postmemory implies a familial tie or at the very least a collective identity, prosthetic memory moves beyond the collective identity. Prosthetic memory “emerges at the interface between a person and a historical narrative about the past, at an experiential site such as a movie theater or museum” (Landsberg 2). Landsberg focuses on mass-culture, because it reaches a large public and she argues that such expressions of culture such as film are not consumed in a naïve manner as it might seem. Film, for example, evokes a kind of empathy that comes into being because the viewer physically experiences the movie (such as the facial expression of fear and shock) and a movie is consumed within a movie-theatre or viewed at home, but less likely to be experienced in parts as a novel is. Mass-culture, obviously, reaches a larger and diverse public and the memory of this experience becomes a prosthetic memory that is likely, as Landsberg hopes, to achieve more empathy and a new subjectivity within the individual. To prosthetic memory the empathy is the sole factor that transfers the memory. This makes that the concept can be appropriated widely. As this thesis shows I do not think a memory can transferred solely by the intervention of empathy, it needs more personal ties as I argue in this chapter.

nostalgia. Nostalgia offers a way to remember without addressing the trauma. However, memory and sites of memory especially, are multidirectional and can be a mixture of different memories tied together. Following careful analysis the trauma will appear. Lastly, because this thesis deals with a memory that has been transmitted across three generations (or even four, in some cases) I stress the importance of postmemory. I use postmemory because I value the generational aspect of postmemory. I argue that postmemory needs empathy to be carried on to the next generation. The memory of the Dutch Indies does no longer revolve around an existing place, but the (post)colonial identity that this memory brings with it is cherished. The memory of the Dutch Indies has travelled generations, it is transported and altered, but it is still circulating.

The next chapter offers an historical overview to provide a necessary background in understanding the memories that are analysed in the following chapters. It explains the trauma that was caused by various events such as the Second World War, the 'Bersiap' and the migration to the Netherlands, but the chapter also explains the term 'Indo' (or Indo-European) that is used to refer to this particular ethnic and social community that originated in the Dutch Indies.

Chapter II: A Historical Overview

2.1. Introduction

Providing a history of the Dutch Indies and the aftermath of the colonial empire is not an easy matter, nor is it accomplished within a single chapter. It requires a study of its own, nevertheless in order to reach a sufficient analysis of the colonial memory of Indo-Europeans in the Netherlands at least a brief historical overview is necessary. I will limit myself to the position of Indos in the colony, during the Second World War and the period of decolonization and the early days of their arrival in the Netherlands.

The following account is based on a number of studies. *De geschiedenis van Indische Nederlanders* (2006) by Ulbe Bosma, Remco Raben and Wim Willems is a summary of a study that appeared between 2001 and 2004 in three volumes, describing the history of Indos and others who were born in the Dutch Indies. It has proven to be a useful source on the lives of Indos, both in the colony and later in the Netherlands. *In Indië geworteld: de twintigste eeuw* (2004) is part of this three volumes study, but the author Hans Meijer did not contribute to the summary. Especially this book has been a great help, because it describes the past days of the colony and the migration of Indos to the Netherlands. Lizzy van Leeuwen's *Ons Indisch erfgoed: zestig jaar strijd om cultuur en identiteit* (2008) and Gert Oostindie's *Postkoloniaal Nederland: vijftenzestig jaar vergeten, herdenken, verdringen* (2009) form an important source of background information for this entire thesis, but these two books have been also very helpful for this chapter. Both books describe the position of Indos in Dutch society, from the early days in the fifties to contemporary times. Lastly, for historical details around the first steps of colonization and the development (and decline) of the colony I have used two studies that are co-written: the article "Dutch Attitudes towards Colonial Empires, Indigenous Cultures, and Slaves" (1998) by Oostindie and Bert Paasman and the book *Decolonising the Carribean: Dutch Policies in a Comparative Perspective* (2003) by Inge Klinkers and Oostindie.

2.2. The Early Days

In the sixteenth and seventeenth century the VOC (Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie¹⁹) expanded its trade-position in the Indonesian archipelago and the Indian Ocean. They did not settle into colonies, but their position remained focused on trade and was therefore of a more temporary nature. The largest trading post was Batavia, on the island Java, which remained the most prospering city of the Dutch Indies during colonial times. Being a trading post it was a coming and going of all kinds of nationalities, and in time the city became a mestizo-city. Nevertheless, its main inhabitants

¹⁹ East India Company

remained slaves and freed slaves (Bosma, Raben, Willems: 26). Many female slaves became the sexual partners of men that worked for the East India Company, they were a 'common component' of the household overseas. The children who came forth from these kinds of arrangements had two options in life: either they were recognized by their Dutch father and received a European education or they stayed with their mother and grew up as slaves. The East India Company tried to guard the virtue of their employees. Even though the VOC-cities were full of different nationalities, formally there was a strict separation between European and non-European. A mix with the Asian communities was to be avoided. However, the company tolerated marriage with a native woman as preference over keeping her as mistress. Quickly there existed a large group of Indo-Europeans²⁰, born in the mixed marriages or as concubines' children. When acknowledged by their Dutch (European) father they had the same status as the new arrivals from Europe. This "tradition of equivalence" highly influenced the Dutch Indies' society till the end (Bosma, Raben, Willems: 28). Gert Oostindie and Bert Paasman write that Indo-Europeans (when acknowledged by their Dutch ancestors) became an important group in Dutch Indies (349).

Around 1800, when the VOC ceased to exist, the islands became state colonies (Oostindie, Paasman: 351). During the nineteenth century the Dutch Indies became more important for the Dutch economy (Oostindie, Klinkers: 59). More and more Dutch settled in the colony. The VOC had always had the policy to let the native nobility govern, and by creating an alliance with the existing principalities they initially did not intervene. However, Oostindie and Paasman write:

By intervening in Javanese succession wars, the Company gradually extended its power throughout Java in the eighteenth century. The famous "Empire of Insulinde" (the present Indonesia except for East Timor) was not unified until the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. (351)

This means they did expand their position. While the plantations during VOC-time were mostly an investment of servants of the company, the owners now tried to keep the land in their own family. Bosma, Raben and Willems remark that most families that owned such plantations had an Indo-European background and newcomers from the mother country tended to marry into such old families (33). Modern facilities increased and contact with the Netherlands became stronger. A tradition for officers of state was to go on leave to the Netherlands and when the time came to retire, prospering planters moved across the ocean to the Netherlands. The six months leave or the

²⁰ Indo-European from Indo (Indonesian, native) and European (Dutch, or even other European nationalities that lived in the colony). Indo-European, in this case, does not refer to the language family. Eurasian is another term to refer to this ethnicity.

plans to move to the Netherlands gained high social status. This created a culture that had both strong ties in the Dutch Indies and Europe (Bosma, Raben and Willems: 34).

Not only mobility increased, but access to education as well. From the end of the nineteenth century it was no longer necessary to have a diploma from a school in the Netherlands to become a civil servant, this degree could be obtained in the colony as well. The community in the Dutch Indies (Indische gemeenschap) was divided between “trekkers” and “blijvers” (Bosma, Raben, Willems: 36), those who possessed the means to go on leave to Holland and send their children back for their education and those who could not afford that. Social status was determined by the connection with the Netherlands. Higher official positions were also gained more easily by Dutch people, but it did not always depend on being Dutch instead of Indo.

Within the Indo-community, as Bosma, Raben and Willems remark, a feeling of discrimination was maintained but these authors claim that it is not so much actual discrimination as the lack of educational means in the colony that caused inequality. The colony, according to these authors, is a hybrid community which is exemplified in the figure of the Indo. While I think it is true that in a colony in general and perhaps especially in the Dutch Indies, different cultures and ethnicities lived rather peacefully together, it is too naïve to blame unequal opportunities on the lack of educational means only. The white Dutch were privileged and enjoyed more wealth and therefore education, because their privileged positions provided well-paid jobs. Indos lived in-between the Dutch and the natives. Their social position and status depended on being regarded as Dutch or on maintaining their native status. The Indo community was quite prosperous as well and Indos held positions as civil servants. Very privileged and wealthy families were even able to go on leave to the Netherlands, something that provided enormous social status. The focus and loyalty of the Indo-European community was on being Dutch and on the Netherlands, even though most of them had never seen the country. Nevertheless, although Indos lived striving to be Dutch, they, at the same time, felt that they would never be equal to the ‘totoks’ (Dutch born in the Dutch Indies).

2.3. The Second World War, the ‘Bersiap’ and the Ending of Colonial Rule

Regardless of the economic crisis in the 1930s, where even Europeans faced unemployment and poverty, the life of the ‘Indische Nederlanders’ (both Indo and ‘totok’, but born in the Dutch Indies) is sketched in the history books as romantic and easier than in the Netherlands. However, these inhabitants maintained strict social rules, which implied the importance of determining your position as being Dutch. This romanticized life with its strict social rules and its obsession with social status changed abruptly when the Japanese invaded the Dutch Indies in 1942. From the start of the occupation all soldiers and high officials were captured and placed in camps. This concerned mainly Dutch, but also a large group of Indo-Europeans who worked for the Dutch government. These

prisoners were often forced to work as labourers for war purposes and they were moved over large distances to build railways, mines and airports. Famous is the Burma railway, but the workcamps were also spread all over the Dutch Indies. Not much later, all 'totoks' (mostly women and children, because most men were already captured) were forced to live in ghettos and later they were transferred to camps. The Japanese occupiers tried to clear the Indonesian islands from all Dutch (and European) inhabitants. Everyone registered as Dutch, regardless of the colour of their skin and origins (Bosma, Raben, Willems: 46) was locked away in camps or ghettos. On the island of Java this proved problematic: on the island lived so many Indo-Europeans that there was too little space to capture them all. Nevertheless, they all had to register themselves with the Japanese occupiers. Registration as Dutch meant capture, but being registered as Asian meant freedom (Bosma, Raben, Willems: 46). They also had to sign a certificate of loyalty to the Japanese. Both measures were met with great difficulty by the Indo-European community. Indos were reluctant of letting go of their Dutch 'identity' and their loyalty to the Dutch throne proved very strong. However, for their own safety many met the demands of the occupier, preferring to stay outside the camps.

The end of the war made clear that things had changed in the Dutch Indies. An Indonesian nationalist awareness had been growing even before the war, but when the Dutch Indies were freed by the American and British allied forces, the Indonesian nationalist movement lead by Sukarno sought to take over. Oostindie and Klinkers make two very apt observations concerning the independence of Indonesia. Firstly, they write: "The loss of Indonesia was perceived as a nightmare because of its crucial economic and geopolitical interest; it was also widely believed by the Dutch that their presence was crucial to Indonesia's stability" (70). Secondly, they remark that after the Japanese defeat, Sukarno made an "immediate proclamation of independence" (70) on 17 August 1945, but the Dutch ignored this claim and hoped to restore administrative and military power. Between this proclamation and "the official transfer of sovereignty by the Dutch to the Indonesian government, on 27 November 1949" (71), four years elapsed. What happened in these four years illustrates the Dutch idea that the Dutch presence was important for the stability of the islands. The common saying 'Indië verloren, rampspoed geboren'²¹ derives from this widely believed idea. These four years are generally indicated as the 'Bersiap'²² period. This was a violent time for the colony in transition, marked by atrocities of both the Indonesian nationalist movement and the Dutch military that made futile attempts to restore peace.

When the Japanese surrendered, the ghettos and camps were not immediately dismantled. The 'prisoners' were kept in the camps by the allied forces in order to protect them against the

²¹ An expression meaning: when the Indies are lost, disaster is born (my translation).

²² Meaning: 'be prepared'. The motto of the Indonesian nationalist movement.

violence that was initiated by the nationalists. The Japanese capitulation on 15 August 1945 was not known by the inhabitants of the Dutch Indies until eight days later and the news “did not stir an ecstatic outburst of joy” (Meijer: 236, my translation). There were no allied forces to confirm the renewed freedom and there was a famine and dire need of medical attention. Moreover, the confusion increased by the lack of information and the sudden change of heart of the Japanese occupiers. As the allied forces had demanded, the Japanese were responsible for maintaining peace until the British troops arrived (Meijer: 237). In the midst of this confusion, Indonesian independence was declared by Sukarno. The people in the camps, however, still thought the Dutch Indies would remain Dutch, having in mind the wartime speech of the queen. And when the camps were opened and accessible, they were faced with a world that was shattered. Their homes, for instance, had been raided and often occupied by Indonesians (Meijer: 240). As Meijer observes, this was a great shock, some even returned to the camps when they realized how unsafe and unstable the situation outside was. Others sought help with Indo-European friends, family or Chinese acquaintances who had remained outside the camps during the war (240).

While Sukarno declared independence and assembled and armed as many young enthusiastic nationalists as possible, he also tried to include Indos in his revolution. But the appeal was largely in vain, following the Dutch government, Indo-Europeans did not take the declaration seriously and waited till order was restored. Within the Indo community there was a need to show and prove their patriotism towards the Dutch kingdom (Meijer: 241). This led to hostility, because the Indonesians cherished strong national feelings. The Indonesian nationalists also increased display of power and violent behaviour against everyone who did not share their nationalist feelings. Meijer writes:

Vooral de niet-geïnterneerde Indo-Europese groep werd het mikpunt van de zich ontwikkelende nationalistische Indonesische krachten. Hun loyaliteit jegens het vaderland en pertinente weigering zich als gelijkgezinden aan de zijde van de Republiek [Indonesië] te scharen werd hun zeer kwalijk genomen. (242)

When, finally, the allied forces together with the Dutch military arrived, this was regarded as threatening to such an extent by the Indonesian nationalists that this arrival marked the start of the most violent period of the Indonesian revolution: the ‘Bersiap’. However, the British maintained a non-intervention policy. Indos who remained outside the camps often became the victims of violent attacks and raids. When the prisoners of war were released, they felt inclined to do something against this violence and formed groups that launched, operating without the permission of the Dutch army, counterattacks on the Indonesian nationalists that had turned into guerrilla-warriors.

During the decolonization period atrocities were committed both by the Dutch²³ and the Indonesian nationalists and Indos were caught in-between. Generally, they remained loyal to the Netherlands, but were pressed to become Indonesian. On the political level the Netherlands were not willing to let go of their colony and “by 1948 [...] the Americans actually threatened to withhold the badly needed Marshall Aid programme” (Oostindie & Klinkers: 72), this forced the Dutch government to consent and transfer sovereignty to the Republic of Indonesia governed by Sukarno. The official transfer made way for a large wave of immigration towards the Netherlands and the Indo-Europeans were forced to choose between Indonesian citizenship or remain Dutch.

2.4. Migration to the Netherlands

Between the end of the war and the handover of New Guinea in 1962 almost all Europeans in the (former) Dutch Indies opted for repatriation, this included Dutch, ‘totoks’ (Dutch, born in the Dutch Indies) and Indos. The repatriation of the Dutch was expected, but the choice of Indos, who were thought to feel more loyal towards the Indonesians, to migrate to the Netherlands was met with surprise. Far fewer Indo-Europeans opted for Indonesian citizenship with the transfer of sovereignty than the Dutch government expected, but the choice did tear apart some families (Bosma, Raben, Willems: 135). The migration happened in waves. The first wave of immigrants were helped and supported financially during their long journey overseas towards the Netherlands. The second wave consisted of ‘spijtoptanten’ (those who ‘regretted’ their stay in Indonesia) and they were met with less support²⁴.

Even before the war the Netherlands (Bosma, Raben Willems: 190) had made known that the country would be unable to process large groups of immigrants from the Dutch Indies. The distinction, before arrival, was made whether the migrant was “oosters georiënteerd” (those with an oriental orientation, Bosma, Raben, Willems: 190)²⁵ or whether the migrant was more focused on being Dutch. The Dutch government did not use explicit racial distinctions to allow the immigrants from Indonesia access to the country, as *De geschiedenis van Indische Nederlanders* notes, but the distinction that was made was based on a fear to allow too much oriental culture into the Netherlands. The distinction is based on racial considerations, even when it is not explicitly mentioned. This distinction hurt the feelings of Indos, who felt they were Dutch (190). Many totoks

²³ Most known, but also most controversial and repressed in Dutch memory are the two ‘politieele acties’ (police actions) in 1947 and 1948, which were interventions by the Dutch army. As Oostindie and Klinkers write: “the U.S. State Department, among others, had already concluded even before the act that this was nothing short of ‘a new colonial war’ ” (71).

²⁴ In total about 400 000 Indos migrated to the Netherlands. Source: Centraal Bureau voor Statistiek

²⁵ Oriental orientation meaning a focus on the Oriental way of life, being as simple as eating rice for lunch for example. Or dressing in oriental fashion.

and Indos regarded the Netherlands as “a familiar, but foreign country” (my translation, Bosma, Raben, Willems: 191).

There are, of course, many individual stories to tell concerning migrants from the former Dutch Indies towards the Netherlands and the story of the ‘totoks’ is, not unexpectedly, different from the Indos that arrived in a country that they had (in general) never seen before, but had always regarded as the motherland. What is described here, is my attempt at a general story of the first generation Indos. While there are many individual details, there is also a broader story to tell.

As the large ships departed from Indonesian harbours towards the Netherlands, Indos had left everything behind that was left of their possessions after the war and the ‘Bersiap’. Often, the clothes packed for the journey turned out to be quite useless when arriving in the cold and rainy Netherlands. Upon arrival, Indo families were greeted by social workers who registered them and placed them in pensions, where they were to remain until better housing was found for them. The hostess in the pension was to ‘educate’ them in being ‘proper’ Dutch: how to peel potatoes, one shower a week, no rice or other oriental food, etc.²⁶ The Indo families were met with a lot of prejudices against their darker skin, but what was more, their manner of adaption determined whether they would be assigned a house for themselves. Eventually, a house would be assigned to them, often in a remote town. In the new neighbourhood they would stand out. Once again, their skin-colour caused consternation and surprise. The distinction between Indo and Indonesian was not made by many Dutch people and it remained difficult for Indos to point out the difference when they were viewed as exotic. Diplomas that had been gained in the former colony turned out to be of lesser value in the Netherlands, work experience from the Dutch Indies did not count for much in the new homeland, and requests for compensation for lost property and unpaid salaries during the war were turned down by the government (Bosma, Raben, Willems: 138 and Oostindie 2011: 27)²⁷.

In the 1950s, Dutch society was structured according to ‘verzuiling’ (pillarization): each social group had its own pillar and social activity was mainly restricted within that pillar. While churches were generally quite actively concerned with the reception of the Indos, it became important to form an individual pillar for the ‘Indische Nederlanders’. In *Ons Indisch erfgoed* Lizzy van Leeuwen shows the efforts that were made to achieve this pillar. The Indo community, led by the famous (and

²⁶ This part of the stay in the pension is often mentioned when memories of these times are told. The novel *Asta’s ogen* illustrates this example perfectly, describing the confusion and the insult that the Hoyer-family felt. (Stoel: 161)

²⁷ A very recent and controversial publication on the reception of the Indos and the unpaid financial claims this group made is *Opgevangen in andijvelucht: De opvang van ontheemden uit Indonesië in kampen en contractpensions en de financiële claims op basis van uitgebleven rechtsherstel* (Amsterdam: Quasar Books, 2014) by journalist Griselda Molemans.

perhaps infamous) Tjalie Robinson²⁸, attempted to break through the mode of nostalgia that was a general tendency among Dutch society. Although the nostalgia for Tempo Doeloe joined both Indo, Dutch and 'totoks' in their longing for the former colony, Robinson felt that this mode of nostalgia was ultimately a colonizer's attitude and he sought to achieve a form of identity that was not determined by being 'other'. Indos, and especially Tjalie Robinson as leading figure, did much to achieve their own identity, which was founded in the Dutch Indies, but which should be maintained and growing in the new decolonized era²⁹. However, in full tradition of the 'verzuijing' they remained a secluded group, focused mainly on itself.

2.5. Memory and Identity Making

The war traumas of Indo-Europeans and all other 'Indische Nederlanders' had been largely ignored, because the postwar Dutch society was busy rebuilding itself. Only in the 1980s recognition for the war in the Dutch Indies began, for example in 1988, the 'Indische Monument' was built in The Hague, and 'Het Gebaar' of 2002, began to compensate for some financial losses. Slowly there was more room within Dutch memory culture for the Indo-community. Second generation Indos tried hard to establish their own identity. In contrast to the generation of their parents, they did not feel such a need to blend in but felt they had a right to be different. Moreover, they met with the silence and traumas of their parents' past. In general, this second generation had to fight less to survive, like their parents did, but struggled to find their own identity that answered for both the Dutch culture and the 'exotic' culture that was brought home by their parents. The 'Indische' culture that has formed over the decades is a mixture of nostalgia and exoticism with which the newer generations of Indos identify whenever it suits them. The problems of the second generation proved to be 'good food' for literature, but the third and fourth generation is, as far as I know, not very active in the literary scene. Media such as webpages and Facebook seem to become a new way to perform identity for these younger generations. It is hard to say whether memorials and commemorations are often visited, but the past remains very much alive.

²⁸ Pseudonym of Jan Johannes Theodorus Boon, born in Nijmegen (1911) when his Dutch father and Indo mother were on leave in the Netherlands, died in The Hague (1974). He was a journalist and editor of the influential journal *De Brug*, which later became *Tong Tong* and is now named *Moesson*. Although the magazine went through several name changes in its essence it remained a cultural journal aimed at Indos. Both Robinson and the development of the magazine *Moesson* would be an interesting topic to analyse cultural memory of the Indo-community. However, the life and works of Robinson have been studied numerously and *Moesson*, being such a long going magazine with a wide audience would be a too big object for this thesis. For a larger project it would be interesting to analyse how Indo-identity is presented in the magazine, from its origin days to contemporary publications.

²⁹ A good source on Indo-cultural life, along with van Leeuwen's *Ons Indisch erfgoed*, is the biography of Tjalie Robinson by historian Wim Willems: *Tjalie Robinson: biografie van een Indo-schrijver* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2009).

As I have repeatedly written, the second generation Indos are characterized with their struggle for identity, to balance both the 'exotic' and the Dutch element in their lives. Literature that is produced by this generation also features this element. Marion Bloem (Arnhem 1952) is usually considered to be a figurehead of this generation authors. In 1983 she published *Geen gewoon Indisch meisje* (not an ordinary 'Indische' girl) which fights the image of the exotic Indo woman, but at the same time highlights the struggle and difficulties such a hybrid identity can cause. That year, 1983, is regarded as "the breakthrough of second generation Indo authors" (Captain 260, my translation). Adriaan van Dis (Bergen 1946) published his debut, *Nathan Sid*, that same year, about a boy that is raised between two cultures and the different ways of the first and second generation Indos to adapt to Dutch society. Ernst Jansz (Amsterdam 1948) published his first novel, *Gideons droom*, about a boy that does neither feel at home in Dutch society, nor in the former colony. About ten years later, Alfred Birney (Den Haag 1951) published his debut *Vogels rond een vrouw* (1991), followed by Theodor Hollman's *Apenliefde*. Especially Marion Bloem and Adriaan van Dis are famous authors, who still publish novels on this topic that are widely read. Birney and Hollman are also mainly known because of their Indo-roots. Their literature concerns life in the Netherlands that is highly influenced by a feeling of non-belonging.

In contrast, the third generation Indos have so far not published many novels. Esther Captain claims that this is because the second generation is still publishing. However, the younger generations Indos have various ways to perform their identity. The Facebookpage *Indos Be Like* shows memes that deal with clichés and confirm them. It is a humorous way of dealing with prejudices, but also finding confirmation in being different. The online platform *Indisch 3.0* is a more intellectual webpage, highlighting novels, news items and cultural events that might concern members of the third generation Indo. It also has to be mentioned that there *are* third generation authors, as Captain observes. But the themes they employ are not a continuation of the second generation's themes, rather, they are proud of their background, but no longer feel they live in two worlds, as the second generation did³⁰.

Alongside the performance of identity through 'liking' on Facebook and participating in cultural events, third generation Indos search for means to commemorate their background. This includes reading novels about the past in the colony, but also about the difficult transition to Dutch society. Recently, a number of novels have been published that deal with family histories in the Dutch Indies and their arrival in the Netherlands. These novels are 'family-chronicles' that mix historical facts with fiction or the genre of the memoir. This thesis examines Eveline Stoel's *Asta's ogen* (2010) and Marion Bloem's *Een meisje van honderd* (2012) and the next chapter will demonstrate how these

³⁰ Peter van Dongen, for example, makes graphic novels with a historical theme.

novels function as 'lieu de mémoire,' especially for the third generation Indos. As I will demonstrate, *Asta's ogen* in particular is a source of information for the readers who find recognition in the novel and use it as a way to fill in their own family history.

Chapter III: Novels as Sites of Memory

3.1. Introduction

In this chapter I analyse two novels: *Asta's ogen* (Stoel 2010) and *Een meisje van honderd* (Bloem 2012). Both novels I examine as 'lieux de mémoire', arguing that these literary texts sustain the memory of the Dutch Indies and of the period of migration of Indos by narrating the story of several generations. *Asta's ogen* and *Een meisje van honderd* are, what I call, family-chronicles. This genre is specifically interesting as memory-text, because it covers longer time-periods, often including historical details, as well as narrating the personal story of the characters. A literary text functions as a 'lieu de mémoire' mainly through the reader. Although the text can be designed to tell a story to the subsequent generations (as both *Asta's ogen* and *Een meisje van honderd* are), it is up to the reader to make use of this notion or ignore it. Eventually the reader decides the value of the novel, by recommending it to others, for example. Important for this process is the reading experience. Before continuing, it is necessary place the study of the reader response within its theoretical context. After that, I will analyse *Asta's ogen* and *Een meisje van honderd* before focusing on the reception of the novel through reviews and reader's responses. I distinguish between reviews and responses, arguing that reader's responses approach the reading experience in the private sphere, whereas reviews in newspapers and magazines (or on blogs) give an idea of the novel's reception in public sphere. My aim is comparative and I have therefore chosen to analyse both novels individually before comparing them.

3.2. The Reading Experience and Reader's Response Theory

Piet Verhesschen, following Paul Ricoeur, defines three stages that lead to a reading experience and form the basis of the reader's response theory that I employ. The first, mimesis 1, begins with the understanding of action and the knowledge that action is always symbolically mediated (Verhesschen 453). It creates the ability of the reader to understand a temporal structure of action. This is followed by mimesis 2, what Ricoeur calls 'emplotment' (Verhesschen 453), which is the mediation between the separate events and the story. And finally, mimesis 3 concerns the relation between experience and narrative (Verhesschen 454). This is the act of reading: an intersection between the world of the text and the world of the reader. Mimesis 1,2, and 3 follow the process the reader goes through while reading. And it is this last stage that is of importance for this thesis. According to Ricoeur a text is nothing without its reader (164). By reading, the reader activates the workings of the narrative, but at the same time the reader is captured by the narrative. He/she follows the path that the narrator has implied. Reader and text are thus not independent, but they complement each other. Nevertheless, besides following the path that the narrator (or rather implied author) intends, the

reader has the ability to read reflectively as well. Ricoeur quotes Hans Robert Jauss in defining the 'reflexivity of reading': "[...] what allows the act of reading to free itself from the reading inscribed within the text and to provide a response to the text" (as qtd by Ricoeur, 166). The reader is thus able to respond to the text.

The reading phase mimesis 3, where the world of the text and the world of the reader meet, is driven by empathy and an affective (familial) notion. I assume that the reader, in this case, selects the text, because it relates to the own family history, using the text as a way to understand/explain the personal history. Empathy is reached through the affective (familial) connection that is experienced. The selection of the text is based on this affective (familial) notion in order to achieve empathy and understanding. These two notions are also a major contribution to the status of the text as 'lieu de mémoire' as I will explain in this section. Alicia Dorothea Angemeer argues that through empathy a certain understanding is reached which makes the Other appear less 'other'. This thesis, in contrast to Angemeer, does not deal with the West reading about the Other, but rather considers how a group that is a postcolonial minority living within a majoritarian culture reads about its own history. Empathy is an important element in the reading process. It is of great influence for the value the reader attributes to the text. While Angemeer argues that through empathy an understanding of the 'other' is reached, I argue that through reading family-chronicles, an understanding of the past is reached by the second and third generations that was largely covered up in silence by first generation Indos.

To approach the process of reading access can be gained by focusing on the third stage of mimesis, because that is where the reader interprets the text and adds value to it. However, a reading experience can only reach us through mediation of the reader him/herself. I have obtained a number of reading responses by second and third generation Indos, through an online request³¹ and I have selected short reviews by individual readers on Bol.com. I have also selected a number of (formal) reviews, which are not specifically written by/aimed at Indos. In total, for both *Asta's ogen* and *Een meisje van honderd* I received 13 responses to my online request, 6 responses I obtained during an earlier project. For both novels 30 responses were written on Bol.com and for my analysis of both novels I used 31 reviews from newspapers, magazines and online blogs. These responses should be analysed and interpreted, which I have focusing on the question of whether the text functions as a memory-text.

On the online platform Indisch3.0, the editor kindly allowed me to place a request for reader's responses concerning *Asta's ogen* and *Een meisje van honderd* that were aimed at second

³¹ The responses can be found in the appendix.

and third generation Indo.³² In the request I asked the following questions in Dutch. This is my own translation:

- Are you an Indo and which generation? What is your connection to the Dutch Indies or Indonesia?
- What are the reasons you started reading *Asta's ogen/Een meisje van honderd*?
- Did you experience feelings of recognition and/or acknowledgement while reading? Please explain.
- Does the novel connect to your idea of being 'Indisch'? Please explain.
- How is your own background involved in the reading experience?
- Do you think the novel sustains the memory of the Dutch Indies (het Indische verleden) and would you recommend the novel to others for this reason? In other words: would you use the novel as a vehicle to transfer the memory?
- What do you think of the book?

The second to last question already assumes that both novels can be used a vehicle to transfer memory, but the earlier questions allow the respondent to explain his/her motivation for reading the book. I formulated the questions in a way that would enable me to analyse the mode of empathy that the reader experiences, assuming that empathy can be reached through recognition. For the circulation of texts it is important to know how the reader came across the text and whether the respondent has purposely selected the text for its theme or interest in the reader's personal background. In the end I received a dozen emails by readers, which were mainly focused on *Asta's ogen*. In these responses and the responses by my own family that I requested in the summer of 2013 while working on a similar topic, it was stated that the respondents read the book because it was recommended by others, mostly family. This inspired me to look at both the text itself and the reader in my research. As I will show, *Asta's ogen* is a straightforward novel that is easily picked up by readers as a memory-text, whereas *Een meisje van honderd* has a complicated structure, requiring more participation and knowledge of the reader, and as a result, the novel is not often approached as a memory-text, although it is presented as such.

3.3. Eveline Stoel's *Asta's ogen*

Asta's ogen was first published in 2010 with the publisher Nijgh & van Ditmar (Amsterdam) and since then it has been reprinted fifteen times³³, one of which was an e-book and the last print was a special

³² The request can be found here: <http://www.indisch3.nl/oproep-lezers-van-astas-ogen-of-eeen-meisje-van-honderd/>. The request also featured on the weblog Indisch4ever: <http://indisch4ever.nu/2014/06/15/lezers-gevraagd/> and many people shared my message with their Facebook network.

³³ The publisher was not allowed to inform me of the number copies that were sold with each print.

(hardcover) print with family-tree and index. The appearance of the special edition in 2013 is significant, since it confirms that three years after the first publication there is still an interest in the book. In 2012 Fu Works bought the rights for a film adaptation of the novel (Kort), but no further details have been announced. The novel has received quite a number of reviews, most of which appeared in the first year of its publication. As far as I know, *Asta's ogen* has not been used for educational purposes: not at university, nor in secondary school. It has not been subject of study yet, either. Nevertheless, Pamela Pattynama mentions the text as an example of the fact that the colonial past still fascinates readers (2012: 99).

The novel is a family-chronicle about the Indo-family Hoyer with Asta Hoyer as the 'mater-familias'. Asta, born in 1917, lived in the Dutch Indies when the colony was in its prime, but she also witnessed the decline of the empire and migrated with her children to the Netherlands. Asta Hoyer, her children and all the other characters in the book have actually existed and the novel can be regarded as a biography. Eveline Stoel, married to a grandson of Asta, observes the family Hoyer and becomes fascinated by the family-traditions. Stoel herself is Dutch, not an Indo, but her close tie to the family and expecting a child (Stoel 12) inspired her to write the novel in order to have a story to tell to the next generations that belong to this family. After talking and corresponding with various family-members Stoel realizes that the Hoyer's story is part of a larger historical story: they are not a singular family but are part of a large group with similar background and similar experiences. During her research into the family-history it becomes clear that the story of Asta is scattered and that there are many things unspoken. Stoel then decides to break through this 'Indisch zwijgen' to shape the novel that she has written, as a document to read for the children and (great)grandchildren of Asta, but also because it is the story of "vele Indische families" (12). Thus from the outset, Stoel indicates her intention of using her novel as a way to cultivate (collective) memory. I think this is a striking feature of *Asta's ogen*, but it also determines the reader's experience from the start.

Asta's ogen is a novel with little to no literary tropes. Stoel has limited herself to the facts she knew and tried to integrate the written statements of family-members as literally as possible: "In eerste instantie stelden zij zelf hun herinneringen op schrift, die praktisch integraal in het boek konden worden opgenomen. Later volgden afspraken bij hen thuis" (13). Stoel recognizes that she deals with memories (herinneringen) that come into being through dialogue. The first step of using the family's personal notes was only sufficient to a certain extent, as this quote seems to suggest. However, what follows is a text that is more a historical account with facts than an actual story. A review of *Asta's ogen* in the weekly *Groene Amsterdammer* states: "Zwijgen is de eerste fase van vergeten. Met *Asta's ogen* heeft Stoel die zwijgzaamheid doorbroken en bewezen dat Indische geschiedenis Nederlandse geschiedenis is" (Peek 2010). And Stoel is quoted in a review in the daily newspaper *Trouw*: "Voor de jongere generaties Indos, merk ik aan m'n vriend, is het een soort

introdactie tot hun eigen geschiedenis en cultuur” (Welgraven 2010). The novel, then, clarifies the family history, but at the same time it breaks through the larger social phenomenon of ‘Indisch zwijgen’. The stories Stoel intended to tell were not all at the surface, it seems. Her intention was to face trauma by giving a description. As an outsider Stoel writes her book, because she feels there is a lack in information for the future generations.

With the exception of the prologue, the novel follows a chronological order of events. It is almost as if Stoel has copied her narration from the history books, adding here and there the events in the personal lives of Asta and her family. The novel employs a third-person narrator and the focalization is external. Often, but not always, Asta is the focalized and the narrator is able to present the focalized from within. The third-person narrator gives the illusion of neutrality that fits the historical aspect of the novel. It also serves to maintain the idea that Asta and her family are real-life persons that cannot be fully understood by an outsider, and that the novel deals with facts. The absence of literary tropes enhances this idea, making the novel a relatively easy read.

Asta's ogen consists of two parts: Asta's life in the colony and Asta's new life in the Netherlands. Asta's childhood is characterized by luxury, when her father is still alive. Through her father's connections, Asta pays a visit to the court of a Javanese sovereign and this visit illustrates how Asta moves between two worlds: the oriental and the European. Asta has a privileged position in comparison to the Javanese who are not royalty, but it is also clear that ‘being Dutch’ grants a certain status: “Wilde je als Indo-Europeaan iets bereiken in de kolonie, dan diende je je zo Europees mogelijk te gedragen. Die boodschap had Asta met de papelel binnengekregen en ze zou haar nooit vergeten” (23). Although life is not always easy, the main image that the first part of the novel sketches is one of dancing, parties, holidays and wealth. Asta falls in love with George Hoyer, who is a good dancer and together they often go dancing. George has a job as civil servant, but is an entertainer in his free time: he organizes parties and dance shows and performs with his friends and family. The couple has a ‘baboe’ (nanny) to take care of the children and a few other servants to run the household. All in all life is easy and relaxed for Asta. This part beautifully shows what is meant with *Tempo Doeloe* and also illustrates the later feeling of nostalgia that is often experienced after the decolonization of the Netherlands. In this part, the novel is not critical of colonialism, nor does it show any awareness that the Hoyer-family's privileged position is only due to their connection to the colonizer. Their wealth is not gained by George Hoyer himself as civil servant at a railway station, but comes from their richer ancestors who must have owned a plantation. There is no acknowledgment that their luxury life with servants (who are natives) and their wealth depend on the oppression of the native people.

The second part makes an abrupt shift from the easy, relaxed life to the Japanese invasion in the Second World War. Once again, the extent to which a person is considered Dutch makes a great

difference. This time it is not a privilege, but being Dutch (or European) qualifies as being the enemy. As I showed in the second chapter, the Japanese tried to divide the Dutch Indies society into categories, the more Asian there was in the bloodline the better. Although Asta and her family were intent on being Dutch, they sensed the danger and went into hiding. They turned themselves into Javanese. They possessed the ability to adapt, and when the allied forces came they just as easily behaved European again to be saved: “[ze waren] gered door een combinatie van geluk en het vermogen om als kameleons precies op het goede moment hun oosterse of juist hun Europese wortels de boventoon te laten voeren” (95). This ties into the idea that Indo-identity is hybrid, moving between the Oriental and the Western worlds.

The war marks a definite turning point; life after the war is filled with more anxiety than before. Even though Asta and George have managed to stay outside the camp³⁴, the war was a traumatic experience, which is illustrated by how the couple divides their stories into “before the war” and “after the war” (105). Throughout the ‘Bersiap’ their lives are in danger and the contact with their native friends is broken. What Stoel does not mention, but what returns in many interviews of first generation Indos, is the surprise of the many Indos that the Javanese and native inhabitants turned against them. During the war the roles have changed and suddenly the Dutch are seen as oppressors. The surprise of many Indos was motivated by the idea that they had always treated their servants well. The inequality was not recognized and is not recognized by Asta and her husband. Shock persists.

When her husband is killed, Asta no longer feels safe and decides to migrate with her family to the Netherlands at the end of the 1950s. When the family arrives in the Netherlands they are confronted with a Dutch society that is very different from what they learnt in the colony. Asta’s children seem to have more geographical knowledge about ‘Holland’ than the Dutch children, for example. In the colony the Netherlands (as country) served as the ideal, the standard the Indos had to live up to. They are uncomfortably aware that they stand out with their light brown skin colour. Even after many years, their skin-colour still is reason for not being promoted: “Hedy kreeg op haar werk ooit te horen dat ze nooit zou promoveren tot directiesecretaresse ‘omdat ze haar kleur niet mee had’” (250). Although the life of the Hoyer family does not seem to be determined day by day by this discrimination and racism, I would argue that these events give a good example of the on-going

³⁴ The Hoyer family is exemplary in this case. While most Dutch family were interned in camps, most Indo families remained outside the camps. They are the so-called ‘buitenkampers’. The suffering and trauma of ‘buitenkampers’ has long been absent from the public narrative. They were not in the camps so they must have suffered less, is the assumption. The documentary *Buitenkampers* (2013, Hetty Naaijken) is one of the first that recognizes the trauma, breaking through the ‘Indisch zwijgen’ by interviewing several generations, showing what role the events during the war and the Bersiap have on the lives of people who witnessed.

trauma, as Craps puts it, of racism. Especially, Asta's focus on being and behaving Dutch, almost denying her roots is a reaction to this kind of trauma. Asta, being unsentimental, leaves the doubting and longing to her children, creating an aura of silence and determination.

Asta is determined: she wants to make her new life work. The past is covered with a veil of silence and Asta focuses on blending in as quickly and quietly as possible in the community of the small town Oss where the family ended up:

Ze verbood ze in elk geval om nog Maleise woorden en uitdrukkingen te gebruiken, [...]. Zelf probeerde ze het goede voorbeeld te geven door zich zoveel mogelijk op de Hollanders om hen heen te richten en nauwelijks om te gaan met de andere Indische families in het pension. (160-161)

This quote shows the importance of language for identity formation. In the Dutch Indies the Dutch language was a sign of education and speaking the Dutch language separated the speaker from the native inhabitants of the islands. On the streets, however, Dutch and 'Maleis' were mixed. Children picked up Malaysian words when playing on the streets and the language was also used to communicate with street vendors. In the Netherlands the use of Malaysian words marked a speaker as different. Adapting fully to the Dutch language is an attempt to let go of the exotic image that surrounds a migrant from the (former) colony. Asta's silence can be characterized as 'Indisch zwijgen', the past is not discussed, but rather hidden. It helped Asta's family to adapt relatively easy to Dutch society, but for later generations, especially second generation Indo, this silence proves to be problematic. In search of their roots³⁵ or at least in search for identity, the second generation Indo feels misplaced. In *Asta's ogen* this becomes clear when Asta's children, once they have become adults, begin to organize parties that are full of nostalgic elements, paying attention to all the cliché ideas of the exotic colony and playing old songs that praise the Tempo Doeloe life. There is a split between the first and second generation, which is, in *Asta's ogen*, characterized by silence:

Ook Shelly had vaak het gevoel gehad in twee werelden te leven. Niet dagelijks, maar vroeg of laat werd ze er toch weer aan herinnerd dat ze 'anders' was. [...]. Voor haar Hollandse vriendinnen verzwegen Shelly de gang van zaken binnen haar beschermende, Indische familie, uit angst vreemd gevonden te worden. En met haar moeder sprak Shelly maar zelden over haar leven 'buiten'. Ze zou het toch niet begrijpen. (Stoel 208)

Shelly, as second generation living in postcolonial Netherlands, feels that she moves between two worlds. However, her mother must have had a similar feeling in the colony itself. In the Dutch Indies Indos, being from mixed origin (both Dutch and indigenous) always moved between two parties. Not everyone in the Hoyer family is focused in the same way or with the same intensity on their

³⁵ Second generation Indo literature is characterized by the search for identity.

childhood memories. However, they are interested in their roots. Some become member of a “Indische vereniging” (Stoel 298), or make a “heimweereis” (306) to Indonesia. However, this nostalgia in *Asta’s ogen* is highly motivated by Asta’s silence:

Ze zag hun interesse. Liet soms iets los over de familiegeschiedenis. Maar ook Asta’s kleinkinderen merkten dat de voormalige kolonie niet haar favoriete gespreksonderwerp was. Hun eigen ouders wilden best vertellen over Indië en Indisch-zijn, maar wát? Zelf wisten ze ook maar weinig. (298)

As this quote shows, there is obscurity around the question of identity and yet there is a strong need to manifest this identity somehow. In this respect, the feature of a “heimweereis” is striking, because that is exactly what De Mul argues Indo-authors do, in the novels she analyses in her book that studies colonial memory and women’s travel writing (published in 2011). Indo-authors, mostly belonging to the second generation, describe a search for their identity and their past; in novels this is often illustrated by a journey to modern day Indonesia, a way to search for traces of the past³⁶, but also in real life trips to the former colony are quite popular. As De Mul argues memories establish partly identity, but are never singular. Memories are multidirectional and that also means that when memory is used to determine identity, it will never be a simple case. Within colonial memory there are several versions of the past and these all co-exist: traumatic memories that are repressed and the mode of nostalgia that takes the place of the trauma. There is not one version and each memory influences the other. What is problematic, however, is when memories are used to establish identity, especially concerning the Dutch Indies. The memory of the former colony is different for each group that remembers.

The novel ends with Asta’s last days in a nursing home. At this point, the narration only presents the messages of Asta’s children in the diary that they use to note their mother’s wellbeing. The last pages of *Asta’s ogen* consist of a ‘justification’ that explains Stoel’s use of references and a bibliography. This ‘justification’ clarifies that the citations that are used when Asta resides in the nursing home are all original. This connects to what Stoel writes in the preface, that she was often able to literally integrate the written statements of various family members in the text. Knowing this, it becomes unclear in to what extent she has used literal quotations at other points in the book. In some cases, as with the messages from the diary in the nursing home, Stoel gives the written statement as quotes, centring them in the text. Often, though, the statements are integrated in the text. Thus, the words of the family members are not always clearly marked. Moreover, there is little

³⁶ For example, in *Geen gewoon Indisch meisje* (Bloem 1987) the main character makes a journey with her mother. They visit places the mother used to live and have to return a token from the past to a family-member that remained in Indonesia.

direct speech in the novel. This ties into Stoel's assumption that she is writing an (historical) account of the family's story. Stoel has used external sources, which she sums up in the bibliography. She also states that a certain degree of narrativization and the use of some literary tropes was necessary, but that she tried to keep this to a minimum. All in all, Stoel attempted to limit herself to facts.

Therefore, the novel is not reflective in any way. On the one hand, the 'justification' and bibliography support the idea that *Asta's ogen* is a historical account. On the other hand, Stoel's persistence in describing 'facts' proves to be a limitation of the novel. Elements of trauma and nostalgia could have been used in a more critical manner by employing fictional elements and other narrative techniques that add an extra, self-reflective layer that demands a critical attitude of the reader.

Additionally, the novel itself is not reflective on its status as memory work. In the preface, Stoel describes her intentions of writing the novel, mentioning her attempt to provide a story for future generations, but she does not reflect on the status of her novel, on her own (problematic) role as family chronicler, or the employment of memories in *Asta's ogen* itself. Consequently, the novel cannot be regarded as a critical memory-text. Stoel's unreflective position can be associated with her intention to write a 'factual' story. When the illusion is maintained that reality is represented without mediation, reflection seems unnecessary. This once again limits the novel, leaving out many opportunities to engage the reader in a more general reflection on issues of memory, forgetting and repression. Currently, even without reflections on the workings of memory, *Asta's ogen* is picked up by the reader as a text that sustains Indo-memory. As I will later demonstrate, the novel offers recognition and this recognition ensures that the book is also recommended to others. The recognition ('it seems as if it is the story of my own family') combined with the idea that Stoel has written a historical account also impedes the reader to think critically about their personal family memories. It suffices that the story of Asta is similar to their own story, and by reading the novel the memory is sufficiently contained to transfer to further generations.

3.4. *Asta's ogen* and the Reader

When memory is used to establish identity, it is not the memory of a single event, but rather the memory of a place, an era, combined with romanticized ideas that have circulated for centuries. In the case of Indos, the mixture between the exotic colony and the familiar Dutch features they have cherished for centuries become the elements that sustain the Indo-identity. What becomes most important for this identity are the roots in the former colony. This exotic element has long been ignored and yet has fascinated Dutch society for centuries. The Dutch Indies have become a 'lieu de mémoire' itself (Pattynama 2014: 19). The actual past is not what matters, but the elements from this past that we carry into our present-day society. Pamela Pattynama has researched many examples that carry the memory of the Dutch Indies. In her recent book *Bitterzoet Indië* (2014) she

argues that the way these memories are used and recycled say more about the present than the past. The Dutch Indies address the imagination, and within Dutch society numerous stories circulate, especially in literature. The 'Indische literatuur'³⁷ is often of an autobiographical nature and the Dutch Indies were themselves enough inspiration to produce a good story (Pattynama 2014: 25). Story-telling then is an important element for the sustenance of colonial memory. In respect to the autobiographical nature and the element of story-telling Pattynama argues that 'Indische literatuur' has an aura of realism, but that the distinction between the real and the imaginary is blurry: "De realistische suggestie die aan de Indische literatuur is blijven hangen komt voornamelijk door de vertelstijl die uit de Indische orale cultuur van 'het mooie verhaal' stamt" (2014: 26). Oral tradition does not only play an important role in the creation of 'Indische literatuur', but also in the creation of Indo-memory. Indo identity is fickle and hybrid, not only because it traditionally moves between the East and West, but also because the memory is shaped by story-telling. In the following part of this chapter *Asta's ogen* will be analysed as a 'lieu de mémoire', focusing on the attention that is paid in the reviews to the historical facts that Eveline Stoel provides. She distances herself from 'Indische literatuur', presenting herself as an outsider that provides knowledge, but also purposely breaks through the idea of 'Indisch zwijgen' and fills in the gap.

A novel functions as a 'lieu de mémoire' when the 'milieu de mémoire' has an active role in sustaining the memory. The 'lieu' is not generated top-down, as Nora argues, but bottom up. A novel as 'lieu' deals with a memory that is not accessed easily. While the 'milieu' is aware that certain events should be commemorated and remembered, it is unable to do so without the intermediacy of a 'lieu'. Moreover, literature tends to preserve or express those memories that are uncomfortable, repressed, or counter the mainstream. Literature has an ability to counter the public narrative, making it a multidirectional 'lieu'. It needs an object to break through silence as Stoel aims to do with *Asta's ogen*. The aspect of 'Indisch zwijgen', the silencing of trauma and the veil of nostalgia, which are the main ingredients of Indo-memory make that the events remembered are never fully accessible. In most reviews of *Asta's ogen* Stoel's position as an outsider is stressed. The Hoyer family's lack of knowledge about their own past and their inability to question their (grand)mother is regarded as a certain disinterest, which, in turn, is interpreted as a sign that integration leads to the forgetting of roots. The reviews that were sent to me by the publisher Nijgh & van Ditmar are mostly from leading newspapers and magazines such as *Het Parool*, *Trouw*, *De Groene Amsterdammer*, *NRC Handelsblad* and popular women's magazines such as *Margriet*, *Esta* and the Christian oriented *Eva*. None of these papers and magazines are especially focused on ethnic groups. They reach a wide

³⁷ All (Dutch) literature that concerns the former colony, or is written by authors with a connection to the Dutch Indies.

audience, but are mainly aimed at white Dutch readers. Interviews with Stoel suggest two things: firstly, Stoel assumes that the story of the Hoyer-family was a story of many families. And secondly, Stoel argues (as she also does in the novel's preface) that there should be a story available for the next generations. Stoel interviewed many family-members and little by little she was able to piece together the story of the Hoyer-family. She combined this single story with a larger historical background. The novel, instead of being focused on the story, is in fact focused on historical details. Stoel aims to tell a historical story in order to provide a background for future generations. Stoel expects her readers to lack this historical information, but she also intends to create a literary work that is able to carry a memory that has long been silenced.

The reviews indicate a curious attitude towards the story of Indos in the Netherlands. Several suggest that it is a story that has not often been told. They stress Stoel's position as outsider and seem to think that the distance is necessary to create a story. They also identify with Stoel's curiosity. The Hoyer family are regarded as an exemplary family and the silence around their past that is broken by Stoel is seen as an effect of integration. It should be noted that it is not the Hoyer family themselves that stress the importance of their roots, but Stoel, the outsider, who is worried about this. Somehow it is regarded as a lack of the Hoyer-family. The reviews imply that other Indo-families will identify with the novel. But these are reviews that aim at a wider Dutch public. What does the Indo community itself think about this novel? A review of June 2010 on the online platform *Indisch 3.0* states:

Verrassend is daarbij de objectieve schrijfstijl van Stoel die, wellicht doordat ze een 'ingetrouwde' Hollandse is in de familie Hoyer, haar blik niet laat kleuren door vooroordelen of eigen ervaringen. Hopelijk spreekt dit een brede en 'onwetende' groep lezers aan die meer willen weten over het koloniale verleden van Nederland. (Vernout)

Here too, Stoel's objectivity is considered important. The reviews regard objectivity as a condition for a story to be told. However, the novel is indeed quite factual, this connects to Nora's idea that we live in an age of historization. The facts are needed, however, to fill in the gap of knowledge concerning the Dutch colonial past as most of these reviews suggest. *Asta's ogen* then is mainly educational.

Although the novel is clearly published with the intention to spread a story, it does not commemorate one single event. In fact, one could say it commemorates a family, but it does so with the intention to have a story to tell to the next generations. Stoel remarks in an interview that many Indos recognized themselves in the novel. As one comment on the review of the online platform *Indisch 3.0* puts it: "Veel bevestiging, vooral herkenning en veel onbeantwoorde vragen zijn nu wél

beantwoord. Geweldig en vele emoties losmakend! Een must voor iedere Indo en alle Belanda's³⁸ (Rob, 2010)³⁹. In this first instance, the novel seems to be a source of information. A way to fill in the gap that was caused by silencing the past. That *Asta's ogen* is a source of information makes it different from other literary works published on the topic of the colonial past and Indo-identity. It does not mainly deal with the struggle of hybrid identity, nor is it only filled with adventurous stories from the tropics.

As a source of information, it is used by (Indo) readers to find their roots. The reader responses on Bol.com, for example, often indicate that *Asta's ogen* contributed to an understanding of the (grand)parents' past: "Door het lezen van dit boek ben ik de wereld van mijn grootouders en moeder en van mijn hele schoonfamilie beter gaan begrijpen" (Astrid Brunt, 2013). And BonitaH writes: "Het was of ik mijn eigen familiegeschiedenis aan het lezen was" (2012). But what is more striking is that the novel is recommended to other family-members: "Heb drie exemplaren aangeschaft. Voor alle drie onze kinderen één, want via dit boek krijgen ze een gedetailleerd overzicht van hun roots" (Ekelina, 2012). It is regarded as a way to understand the roots of the reader him/herself and used as an educational tool for the next generation.

Like the Bol.com reviews these respondents of my online request replied that there was recognition. The mode of recognition varies, from the behaviour of the different Hoyers and their functioning as a family, to more historically oriented recognition claiming that it seemed as if they were reading the story of their own ancestors. Ellen de Bats, a second generation Indo, writes: "De boeken sluiten aan bij de - schaarse - verhalen die overgeleverd zijn door de naaste familie". And Dewi van Beek, third generation, writes: "Ik herken veel onderdelen uit de verhalen van mijn oma". The novel is read because the background of the reader provides an interest. Heidi Kerkhof Mogot, second generation, writes: "Ik heb dit boek gelezen met dus eigenlijk in mijn achterhoofd steeds de vraag naar mijn eigen identiteit, zonder daar echt een antwoord op te verwachten, maar misschien wel een beetje houvast". All readers that sent me a response are in one way or another occupied by their background, but while most second generation readers ensured me that the past should be left the past, third generation readers are more aware that they need these stories to provide them with a background. However, both generations use *Asta's ogen* as a source of information and recommend it to others.

The element of recognition and the way that the novel is used as a source of information make that *Asta's ogen* is used as 'lieu de mémoire'. It is the reader who decides to circulate the novel

³⁸ Belanda: a term from the former colony referring to white Dutch people.

³⁹ When I use reader responses or comments I found online, I will refer to name of the author (if present), the year it is written and the source. When I quote comments from my own survey I will only indicate the name of the author. Full comments can be found in the appendix.

within the family or recommend it to others that might find an interest in this history. While the novel functions as a 'lieu de mémoire', it answers to nostalgic values of the family-bond, the typical 'Indische eten' (food) and the Indo ability to be hospitable and to party. The memory, then, is a mixture of nostalgic clichés, historical facts and family stories and is supposed to function as a postmemory for Stoel's child in an attempt to fill in the gap of knowledge that is left by the silence of the first generation. Stoel presents herself as an outsider (a position that is also emphasized by many reviews) and thus she cannot create her own postmemory. The constructedness and the element of narration are important aspects of postmemory. Stoel offers a construct that can be used by future generations, especially her own son, as a source of information about their past. This is problematic, because it means that Stoel functions as a mediator between the postmemory and her son. The postmemory in this case would then be even more mediated than Hirsch implies. Moreover, Stoel's text does not show any signs of self-reflectivity and it is precisely this self-reflectivity which is one of the most important aspects of postmemory. Additionally, the recognition and acknowledgement that many respondents experience, combined with the fact that they recommend to book to other people (often family) make that *Asta's ogen* can potentially be used as postmemory for the reader as well. I assume that the reader, in experiencing recognition, also feels empathy. As Hirsch explains, postmemory is created through an "affective force" (109). This "affective force" is empathy. The gap, caused by 'Indisch zwijgen', that is felt by second and third generation Indos is filled with stories such as Stoel's novel. Postmemory is often coloured by stories that circulate in the public narrative and therefore, *Asta's ogen* could be used as a medium of postmemory.

Reading the story stirs a form of empathy that is strongly motivated by the idea that it concerns the reader's own family. Sabina de Rozario writes in her reader's response: "Ja, boeken dragen bij tot de overdracht van de Indische cultuur. En ja, dat is zeker de reden dat ik het zou doorgeven". And Dewi van Beek writes: "ik denk dat wanneer je het boek leest, dat je weet wat Indisch zijn is, ook als ik het lastig in woorden te vatten". Leonne Joosten writes: "Ik heb het boek gekregen van mijn tante en heb het doorgegeven aan mijn moeder. Het optekenen van onze geschiedenis geeft me een gevoel van trots." This last response is especially striking: Leonne Joosten emphasises that the novel concerns "our" history and that it makes her very proud this is written down. Van Beek and de Rozario are aware the novel is a medium through which the 'Indische' culture can be transmitted to others and Joosten enlarges this idea by identifying with the history. While there is a sense that *Asta's ogen* illustrates a larger story that consists of many individual varieties, the novel is used to communicate the past and because many readers recognize and identify their family with the Hoyer's story, the novel functions as a postmemory.

Prominent in the function of *Asta's ogen* as 'lieu de mémoire' is the idea that Indo roots are important and, having been ignored for so long, deserve attention. Without directly questioning the

personal past, the novel offers a way to relate to the past through the story of Asta. When there is only recognition, a certain distance is maintained to the traumatic memories of the own grandparents. I argue that this emphasizes the idea that Stoel offers an historical account, not a personal account of Asta. It goes against Hartman's argument that literature is able to 'work through trauma', offering both testimony and representation. *Asta's ogen* does not 'work through' trauma, by remaining rather factual the novel only makes note of events. Leaving the emotions and psychological consequences for the characters out of the narration. And yet, the war is marked as turning point in the novel and George's murder is the main reason Asta decides to migrate to the Netherlands. That these events are presented as such isolated events that motivate change should be seen as a feature of the trauma. As Cathy Caruth argues, trauma haunts the victim and literature should be able to pay attention to the relationship between "knowing and not knowing" (Caruth 3). The events in *Asta's ogen* that are traumatic are life-changing, but the novel hardly looks back on these events. On the one hand, this is in line with Asta's policy of silence and connects to the general tendency of 'Indisch zwijgen' in the Indo-community and it gives, in this respect, a true historical account. On the other hand, it fails to exploit the consequences of trauma, omitting a critical attitude and merely presenting an easy read to the reader. The reader responses confirm this suspicion. The feature of recognition overshadows the burden of trauma that many (especially second generation Indos) must have experienced. The idea that finally a full account of the story of many Indo-families is told, ignores the element of trauma.

3.5. *Asta's ogen* as 'lieu' and Second/Third Generation Indos as 'milieu de mémoire'

Asta's ogen is a 'lieu' because the readers use the novel as a vehicle to transfer memory. The novel contains many historical details alongside the experiences of the Hoyer family. These two features stir a feeling of recognition in the readers that is such a revelation that the book is recommended to others. The idea that the story of the Hoyer family could have been the story of the reader's family is leading in this respect. The 'milieu de mémoire' of this 'lieu', then, is very active. The 'milieu' I consider to be second and third generation Indo. Although the novel has a larger audience than the Indo-community, it is the Indo-readers that experience recognition while reading. That does not mean that other readers do not experience the text as a carrier of memory, but they probably do not identify with it to the same extent. *Asta's ogen* can be considered as a historical family chronicle, and as such it can enlarge the phenomenon of colonial memory by offering a narrative that is not often told in such a way. Namely, it offers the perspective of an Indo-family. Moreover, the novel is not used for educational purposes and is thus not institutionalized. I argue that *Asta's ogen's* status as 'lieu' is constituted in the private sphere. In the public sphere, in media such as newspapers and magazines, Stoel's position as outsider is emphasized and that enlarges the novel's status as

historical account. In the personal reader responses, Stoel's position as outsider is also valued, but recognition of a personal story is more relevant. These readers find in *Asta's ogen* a medium that transfers memory, because the first generation Indos are either no longer there, or have veiled their past in silence.

In conclusion, *Asta's ogen's* status as 'lieu' is caused by the reader's attitude. In this respect, the 'lieu' is generated bottom-up. The readers as 'milieu' make *Asta's ogen* a vehicle because they recognize elements of the story. Although, the novel does not critically address the notion of trauma, nor nostalgia, Indo-readers seem to be content with the element of recognition that the novel *does* offer. The 'milieu' in this case carries the initiative. Granting the fact that Stoel has written the novel to provide a story for future generations, *Asta's ogen* does not reflect on the workings of memory nor has it an explicitly commemorative function. The commemorative element is added by the reader.

3.6. *Een meisje van honderd* by Marion Bloem

Een meisje van honderd, written by Marion Bloem, was first published in 2012 by the Arbeiderspers (Amsterdam). Bloem has published numerous novels and poems, but also works as an artist and movie director. The Dutch Indies, modern day Indonesia and Indos in the Netherlands play a significant role in her works. The title of her most recent novel, *Een meisje van honderd*, echoes the title of her most famous semi-autobiographical novel *Geen gewoon Indisch meisje* (1983). This earlier novel fights the image of the exotic Indo woman, but at the same time highlights the struggle and difficulties such a hybrid identity can cause. The novel deals with a second generation woman who tries to balance her Indo-background with the day to day life in the Netherlands during the 1980s. The story provides little background and has a narrative that is reminiscent of a stream of consciousness technique. *Een meisje van honderd*, on the contrary, has a clear timeline and the narrative is placed firmly within the historical context. This novel does not deal with a young woman in her twenties, but centres around the ancient character Moemie, whose age is unknown and whose presence is almost spiritual. *Een meisje van honderd* covers a long time period, from the early days of the twentieth century to the first years of the twenty-first century. Moemie is the character that holds together a large Indo-family. During her childhood she is adopted into this family, which has a privileged position in the Dutch Indies, she is regarded as maid, nanny and sister. While the family goes through many changes that are caused by war and migration, Moemie remains the central figure who knows all the secrets. From early childhood on she has visions from the past and the present, and receives messages from the dead.

Moemie's gift to function as a medium can be linked to the trope of the Voodoo woman. In Afro-American or Haitian literature the trope of the Voodoo woman is practiced as form of resistance

and empowerment, as Tara Green argues (282). However, Voodoo is often associated with black magic and witchcraft. The form of Voodoo that Green refers to emphasizes the connection with the spirit of ancestors. The African-based religious practices of Voodoo are “[employed to] resist constraining domains of power, namely southern racism and gender oppression” (283). Voodoo both connects to the association of the exotic woman as possessing evil powers, but also summons a supernatural power that is stronger than the forces of the colonizer. As I will show, the trope of the voodoo-woman is easily combined with the supernatural force of ‘goena goena’ that tortures the Dutch in the colony. The supernatural connection that Moemie has is thus a form of resistance and makes her more powerful than any other character in the novel. However, Moemie experiences her talent as a burden. The voices of the dead and the images of the future force themselves upon her and Moemie often cannot help but exclaim the information that comes to her in this way. Although it may be regarded as a form of resistance, Moemie derives little power from her talents in the colonized world, besides driving away evil spirits. She cannot alter the future, she can only prepare herself for what is to come. Moreover, her sudden exclamations with strange information make that she is often regarded as being ‘odd’. Moemie as person is never fully understood by her adoptive family and she can be seen as an embodiment of Indonesian resistance to the colonizer.

Een meisje van honderd was first published in hardcover, but a year later it appeared in paperback. The publisher is not allowed to tell how many copies have been sold, but the book has been printed three times and appeared in ebook since it was first published in August 2012. On all three editions (hardback, paperback and ebook) the picture of a young, dark skinned girl appears on the front cover. The picture gives the impression that the girl secretly appears from behind something, as if she sneaks to have a look at something she is not supposed to see. However, she has raised two fingers, giving the impression she knows she is not unnoticed. As the title and the picture suggest, Moemie is ageless. There are two interesting aspects here: Moemie’s agelessness and the sneaking of the girl. The former ties into Moemie’s supernatural talents. In a way, Moemie’s presence is magical, surrounded by mystery. Her agelessness connects to the importance of her presence for the other characters in the novel. Her importance never ceases and in a way she functions as a mediator between the country of Indonesia and the Dutch, as my analysis will show. On the one hand, the sneaking little girl also explains Moemie’s role in the novel. Moemie, in a way, witnesses the decline of the empire. On the other hand, the girl is displayed as a funny and curious little thing, emphasizing the ‘otherness’ of Moemie.

The novel has a dedication that reads: “voor mijn kleinkinderen” (8). Like *Asta’s ogen*, this novel is dedicated to a future generation, and it also offers a family history. Unlike *Asta’s ogen*, the narrative of *Een meisje van honderd* is not straightforward and it ultimately tells the history of Indonesia. The former colony plays an important role in the novel, not only as the place of origin, but

also as a country in the making. The time-period and focalizer vary, creating a multi-vocal and multi-layered narrative. This novel asks more from the reader than *Asta's ogen*. Each character has his or her own story and I will highlight only a few, but everyone is in some way connected by family-relation.

Een meisje van honderd employs a third person narration and the focalization often switches between the many characters of the novel. However, no changes in focalization occur within chapters. The novel has a complex structure due to the switches between characters and the use of flashbacks. Considering the structure chronologically, one can say that the narration begins with Beila's (third generation Indo in the Netherlands) memory of Moemie predicting 9/11, leading Beila to dig into her own past involving other members of the family. This causes flashbacks of both first generation and second generation family-members. At the heart of this structure is Moemie's own story that is developed chronologically in the chapters in which Moemie is the focalizer. The complex structure is made accessible by the third person narration. Although the distance between narrator and focalizer is small, this distance gives the impression that 'a story is told'. This should be connected to the importance of story-telling that Bloem stresses in various reviews of her novel. The distance also enables the narrator to connect the different plotlines together. Even though the narration ties the plotlines together, this happens very indirectly providing only hints for the reader. This mode of narration, thus, also asks a certain activity of the reader. Not only does the reader have to connect all the plotlines together, he/she also has to understand the many intertextual links, which I will explain later on.

Moemie's story begins with the ritual suicide of a royal family at Bali in 1906. The royal family is attacked by unidentified soldiers and realizes it is powerless. But rather than giving in to the colonial empire, they decide to kill themselves. Moemie is a baby and the only survivor of the massacre. She has no real memories of the event, but the trauma remains with her. Despite being a novel with many protagonists, it is Moemie's story that is the main plotline. Accordingly, the importance of Moemie's presence is stressed throughout the entire novel. Moemie's importance is even more emphasized by the coincidence of her survival during the massacre. Moemie herself has suffered great trauma and the coincidence of her survival only enhances her status as medium. Her connection with the spiritual world is reminiscent of Toni Morrison's figure of *Beloved*. *Beloved* is a ghostlike figure that serves as the embodiment of trauma. Prior to her arrival is the dramatic event in which Sethe kills her baby-girl to protect her child from slavery. Moemie's situation is similar, but here the baby is not killed, but instead is the sole survivor. The massacre that precedes Moemie's story is actually a ritual suicide to prevent domination, like Sethe, Moemie's family sought to avoid being dominated by others. While Sethe does not deal with the traumatic experiences of her time as a slave and the dramatic murder of her child, *Beloved* comes back to haunt her. Likewise, Moemie's

survival turns Moemie into a figure that serves as a constant reminder of the beings that are oppressed. The event of the massacre is a literal wound, Moemie at times still tastes blood: “Ze proeft nog altijd midden op de dag vanuit het niets opeens de smaak van bloed, en de geur ervan herkent ze van ver, maar ze weet niet waarom” (31). And Moemie’s gifts of being a medium can also be linked to this event. Beloved’s disturbing presence can only be resolved when Sethe works through her own traumas. Linda Krumholz suggests that this process can be extended from the individual level to an historical level (395). Krumholz also involves the reader in the process, as both the reader and Sethe are confronted with Beloved’s haunting presence, they are forced to engage with the presence of slavery. Correspondingly, Moemie’s presence serves as a reminder of the ‘guilt’ of the Dutch colonizer. Unlike *Asta’s ogen* it shows the atrocities that were committed by Dutch in the colony.

The opening scene is an allusion to a picture that was taken in 1904 by H.M. Neeb after an army massacre in the villages Gajo and Alas on the island Atjeh. The picture shows a group of soldiers in a village surrounded by dead bodies. Looking closely a little baby can be spotted, the sole survivor of the massacre (Pattynama 2014: 85). This picture, as both Paul Bijl⁴⁰ and Pattynama (2014: 85) observe, has become an icon, numerous times it has been forgotten and rediscovered again, and it was subject to many heated debates. This same scene was remade in the movie of *Max Havelaar* (1974): not an original scene in Multatuli’s novel, this scene was added to emphasize the innocence of the native inhabitants, invoked by the image of a crying baby (Pattynama 2014: 84) and to change focus⁴¹ to the abuses committed by the Dutch colonizers. The film uses a modern anti-colonial focus, and inserting this image, the film draws attention to the position of the Dutch as perpetrator in the colony. In alluding to this same scene in the opening of her novel, Bloem draws on both the film and the picture enlarging the impact of Moemie’s small life, bringing it into a historical perspective. This especially cruel scene haunts every image of colonial times in Indonesia. Similarly, Bloem inscribes the novel into the canon of works dealing with Dutch colonialism. On the one hand, this allows for criticism on the colonial history. On the other hand, by drawing on *Max Havelaar*, Bloem places her novel in a larger framework of exoticism, nostalgia and a Dutch national hero. In other words, although *Een meisje van honderd* is very critical of the colonial system, it also compromises cliché ideas that persist in Dutch society to this day.

⁴⁰ The following book by Bijl, a recent publication, might be interesting with respect to visual memories of colonial times: Bijl, Paul. *Emerging memory: photographs of colonial atrocity in Dutch cultural remembrance*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2014.

⁴¹ Multatuli’s *Max Havelaar* was not anti-colonial as is widely believed outside academia, but merely tried to draw attention to injustice, arguing for a colonial system that was more humane and fair.

Moemie functions as the family's tie to Indonesia, a living reminder of the atrocities committed by the Dutch perpetrator. While the family climbs the social ladder and becomes more Western, Moemie's dark skin remains exotic and when Paul (the oldest son), his wife and children are on leave in the Netherlands,⁴² Moemie stubbornly persists in wearing traditional clothing as a silent reminder to her adoptive family that they move between worlds. During the Second World War and the Japanese invasion, Moemie becomes their protector. Moemie is registered as Indonesian, which in the end means she can stay outside the camp, whereas the family stresses their Dutch background and is captured. Moemie tries to smuggle food inside the camp, to save her family.

The story of Moemie's existence makes her into a representation of trauma. Moemie experiences a wound (the taste of blood) that is caused by colonization. However, Moemie's presence and role in her adoptive family is not recognized by them. And Moemie, having no recollection of the massacre other than the taste of blood, cannot testify to the trauma that is done. This causes a disruption, but the impossibility of representing trauma is in a way an acknowledgement of colonial trauma. Nevertheless, Moemie, as a person, is never really acknowledged by her adoptive family. Even though she is indispensable and serves as a maternal figure, tending to her adoptive family when they are haunted by the trauma of the Second World War, her importance is never recognized and her status remains inferior. Moemie submits willingly to this position. Moemie is always considered to be 'other', even when the family moves to the Netherlands and must have been confronted with racism themselves. The trauma that Moemie embodies, then, is not only event based, but also embodies an ongoing form of trauma that is caused by racism.

Moemie's adoptive family moves to the Netherlands and Moemie remains behind, occasionally visiting whichever family-member needs her. In the Netherlands, Charlotte, as an old woman recalls the decision to migrate as a good one: "Hun keuze om hun geboorteland te verlaten was de juiste geweest" (42). Looking back is something Charlotte and her husband have hardly done, but now that her husband has died and Beila, Charlotte's granddaughter, is asking questions about the past, Charlotte finally opens the box with old pictures; they are disorganized and she hardly knows who's who. This scene illustrates how much they were focused on their new life and did not look back. While Charlotte remembers Moemie and the Dutch Indies fondly, Indonesia has no attraction for her. This is different for the next generations; her daughter Daisy and granddaughter Beila both feel an undefined attraction towards the exotic country. Daisy has a travel agency that

⁴² A visit to the Netherlands gained enormous social status. This kind of leave was granted to civil servants every six years.

organizes adventurous trips to Indonesia. Daisy's role as travel agent gives a twist to the "heimweereis" motivated by nostalgia that is a feature in many Indo-literature and also connects to the many real-life travel agencies that arrange similar trips to Indonesia. Bloem offers a twist to the nostalgic "heimweereis", that usually is about discovering the roots of one's Indo-family, by making Daisy's connection to Indonesia mostly businesslike.

Beila, on an independent trip to Indonesia falls head over heels in love with an Indonesian girl from the Netherlands who is searching for her biological mother. Beila abandons her Dutch boyfriend, with whom she was making the trip, to help Lisa with her search. Beila's obsession with Lisa and the search for her biological mother can be seen as an obsession with Beila's own roots, her Indonesian side that has been ignored for generations. When the mother is finally found, it is a big disappointment for Beila. The decay and poverty revolt her. Lisa's biological mother is a prostitute and that frightens both girls. Because Lisa refuses to talk to her, Beila does the talking and she carries the heavy memory of Lisa's mother with her for the rest of the time. On their return to the Netherlands Beila and Lisa marry, but their marriage is short-lived and consequently, Beila's obsession with the search for Lisa's biological mother is placed in a different perspective. The disappointment that was experienced from the beginning and Beila's passionate feelings for Lisa now all seem to have been a revolt against her parents and a search for her roots, but Beila's personal search does not end with Lisa. Her almost formalized divorce forces Beila to continue her search and it is with Moemie that her search ends.

Central to Beila's narrative is Moemie's prediction of 9/11. It is this prediction that draws Beila towards Moemie. Beila remembers: "Moemie zag de torens telkens weer instorten, had vele brieven naar de burgemeester en zelfs naar de president geschreven [...]"(19). As an adult Beila realizes this prediction came true. At the time Moemie appeared to be a curious old woman, who knew people's secrets and made predictions such as the one of 9/11. No one really believed her, but Moemie was persistent and Beila, at thirty, realizes Moemie was right. Beila recalls this incident, when her marriage seems to be at its end and she does not really know where her life is going. The actual outcome of Moemie's prediction of 9/11 makes the vague remarks about Beila's personal life more relevant. Moemie predicted that Beila will have to make an important, life changing decision. Beila realizes this time has come and she thinks Moemie will show her the way. However, throughout the novel Beila (as adult) never meets Moemie again.

Moemie's prediction of 9/11 can be seen as the motive behind the development of the plot, but also serves as a multidirectional link. As Rothberg argues, memories interact with other memories. 9/11 is considered as a moment in which East and the West collided. In Western cultural memory the attack on the twin-towers has become a sign of revolt from the East against the West. Then again, 9/11 is also presented as a great tragedy in which many lost their lives in horrible ways

and it has been seen as the beginning of the war against Iraq. Moemie's prediction brings the relationship of the Netherlands with Indonesia in connection with the clash between the East and West that is associated with 9/11. I argue that this way, *Een meisje van honderd* demands a critical attitude of its reader, revising the Dutch role in Indonesia. However, it also connects the 9/11 prediction to the conflict between colonizer-colonized, implying a disturbance in the power-balance between East and West.

The novel opens with the attack on Moemie's biological family. The significance of this attack and Moemie's existence becomes clear at the end, when Beila's father Fons receives a letter from his grandfather. His grandfather apologizes for the violence he committed when in service in the Dutch Indies. He confesses that he has murdered an entire family, following orders. The next day it appeared that a baby was still alive. And he writes: "Totdat de onschuld mij vragend in de ogen keek had ik geen geweten" (454). This baby was obviously Moemie, although Fons and his loved ones do not know this. Moemie's survival made Fons' grandfather realize his position as colonizer and Moemie becomes an important influence in the family of his wife. Along with the letter, Fons and his daughter Beila find a 'kris'⁴³. The letter requests Fons to return the 'kris' to its rightful owner. Fons, being ill, is unable to fulfill the request. Beila realizes that she will have to return the 'kris' and free Moemie of her obligations towards the family. With this realization the novel ends. There is one remaining chapter entitled "Moemies thuis", describing Moemie's death. The one-hundred year old girl (*een meisje van honderd*) has finally died, her mission on earth seems completed.

The ending suggests that Beila, as third generation, will return the 'kris' to Indonesia. The letter is an apology and, when the 'kris' is returned, order will be restored. Beila as Indo moves between the colonizer and the native, it is her place to restore the balance that was destroyed with the massacre of Moemie's family. It is this sequence of events bringing perpetrator and victim together in one family that complicates the narrative of nostalgia for Tempo Doeloe and acknowledges colonial trauma. This complication makes *Een meisje van honderd* different than *Asta's ogen*, which only focuses on the position of privileged Indos and their lives upon arrival in the Netherlands. *Een meisje van honderd* shows that the hybrid position of Indos is not only difficult and open to different significations in contemporary Dutch postcolonial society, but has been since colonial times a position that negotiated between colonizer and native, perpetrator and victim.

While *Asta's ogen* uses the elements of trauma and nostalgia without complicating or questioning matters, *Een meisje van honderd* is not so straightforward. The novel's magical realist style places it in line with the nostalgia for Tempo Doeloe tradition that is common in the

⁴³ Traditional Indonesian battle knife, which is surrounded by myths. It is supposed to possess magical forces and will have disastrous influences when in possession by someone who does not rightfully own it.

Netherlands, referring to canonical novels such as *Stille kracht* and *Max Havelaar*. But the reference to the famous ‘surviving baby’ picture give a critical perspective on the colonial period. Even though Bloem’s novel deals with an Indo family, the whole plot is motivated by this one severe trauma of Moemie, who has lost her entire family due to colonization. The presence of Moemie within the Indo-family places everything in perspective. Moemie is used as a way to access the past by the third generation Beila. While Moemie is always a reminder of the past in the Dutch Indies, her presence is not easily accepted once the family is in the Netherlands. Moemie also serves as a reminder of the hybrid position Charlotte, Daisy, Beila and their entire family occupy. Ever since colonial times they move between the perpetrator and victim position and after decades it is time to recognize and accept this.

3.7. *Een meisje van honderd* and the Reader

Een meisje van honderd appeared in August 2012 to coincide with Bloem’s sixtieth birthday on 24 August 2012 (marionbloem.nl). Although this suggests that the launching of this novel must have been set up with great care and a pre-publication of the first chapter in a brand new budget edition of *Geen gewoon Indisch meisje* appeared two months before (marionbloem.nl), there were fewer reviews in large newspapers than of Eveline Stoel’s *Asta’s ogen*. I have found reviews from September 2012 in *Vrij Nederland*, *Algemeen Dagblad*, *Haarlems Dagblad* and the *Volkskrant*. Strikingly, more (extensive) reviews appeared on blogs, such as Indisch3.0, Frontaalnaakt.nl, boekgrrls.nl, Bezijdendewaarheid.nl and Garuda-blog.nl. The latter being a blog on all topics related to Indonesia, it is sponsored by Garuda Indonesia, an Indonesian airline. While the blogs I look at here are focused on specific groups of readers, the few newspaper articles that appeared on *Een meisje van honderd* are written for more diverse groups of people. All newspaper reviews stress the supernatural element that features in the novel. *Vrij Nederland* published an interview with Bloem (Mulder and Hartmann, 2012) in which Bloem herself introduces *Een meisje van honderd* as being based on actual events and the character of Moemie as inspired by an actual woman: “Het hoofdpersonage van het boek is gebaseerd op een bijzondere vriendin die ik in 1978 leerde kennen in New York” (*Vrij Nederland*, 2012). This same fact, returns in several interviews, on Garuda-blog.nl and during the interview in the television programme ‘Boeken’ of 28 October 2012. On the Garuda-blog, however, Bloem stresses the importance of story-telling: “Al wil ik wel altijd een verhaal vertellen” (Garuda-blog.nl, August 2012). Bloem goes on explaining that *Een meisje van honderd* contains autobiographical elements and is a family-chronicle, but at the same time contains fictional elements. She has written the novel with the intention to show the bond between the Netherlands and Indonesia.

I argue that the focus on the supernatural is part of the nostalgia for Tempo Doeloe. As Frontaalnaakt.nl points out: ‘goena goena’ plays an important part in the novel. On the blog is written:

Paranormale talenten, inderdaad, *want we hebben het wel over een Indische roman*. Geen Indische familie waar geen verhalen worden verteld over tovenaars, toekomstvoorspellers en goena goena, geen historisch keerpunt in de geschiedenis van Indonesië waar geen aura van bovennatuurlijkheid omheen hangt. (October 2012, emphasis mine)

This remark illustrates how much the supernatural element has become an accepted and respected part of the stories surrounding Indo-families, colonial history and modern day Indonesia. Couperus’ *Stille kracht* (1900), one of most famous texts in Dutch literature on the Dutch Indies, deals mainly with this ‘goena goena’, the supernatural element that fights the Dutch colonizers and that the Dutch cannot grasp. It is frightening and forceful, but the natives seem to be able to live peacefully together with these forces and are able to use them in their advantage. As Frontaalnaakt.nl puts it, Moemie embodies this ‘goena goena’. This supernatural ‘goena goena’, or the supernatural element, of the image of the Dutch Indies fits with the nostalgia for Tempo Doeloe.

In contrast to the reviews of *Asta’s ogen*, these reviews hardly ever stress the historicity of the novel. Nevertheless, the blogpost on Boekgrrls.nl states: “Het koloniale verleden, maar ook de periode na de Tweede Wereldoorlog wordt helder weergegeven, tot en met het actuele leven in zowel Nederland als op andere plaatsen op de wereld” (November 2012). It seems that the historical time period does matter for the story, but the historical facts are of less importance. The fact that the novel harbours a family-history that stretched over a period of hundred years only functions to show the development of Indonesia, as Tim Notten writes on the page Bezijdendewaarheid.nl:

In een eeuw familiedrama schetst ze een beeld van een land dat ooit was en de mensen die het maakten, als een droom waarvan de schoonheid voortdurend wordt onderstreept door de onvermijdelijke gruwelijkheden van oorlog en ongelijkheid. (February 2013)

But Jennifer Valentijn in her review on Indisch3.0 writes:

Marion Bloem zet een goed tijdsbeeld neer en zorgt voor net wat meer bewustwording van het Indische verleden. Soms is dat hard en confronterend, maar belangrijk als je geïnteresseerd bent in je roots. Na het lezen van dit boek begrijp ik het zwijgen van de eerste generatie veel beter. (November 2012)

Indisch3.0 has a specific audience, that of third generation Indos who are searching for their roots. This review stresses that confrontation is necessary, and that it leads to an understanding of the first generation Indos. In contrast to *Asta’s ogen*, the historical facts and details are not of much importance, but the larger image that is painted by Bloem in *Een meisje van honderd* does show a history that is partly colonial and partly postcolonial.

From the thirteen reactions to my post on the online platform Indisch3.0 and the six reader's responses my family sent me, only three people read *Een meisje van honderd*. On Bol.com *Asta's ogen* received twenty-three reviews, whereas Bloem's latest novel only received 7 reviews; of which one is written by Ivan Wolffers, Bloem's husband. In contrast to the responses on Bol.com for *Asta's ogen* only one reader hinted at his/her background and the way the novel fills the blanks in the history of his/her parents. Fengari writes: "Marion Bloem geeft me, naast het enorme plezier om te lezen (hoe vreselijk bepaalde gebeurtenissen ook zijn) ook een stukje van het verleden van mijn ouders" (Bol.com, February 2013). The responses on my post on Indisch3.0 are explicit about their background, because I specifically asked members of the second and third generation Indo to respond. *Een meisje van honderd*, despite being written by a famous and established author, seems to have fewer readers than *Asta's ogen*. This is curious, because Bloem's followers are probably in bigger numbers, whereas Eveline Stoel still has to establish her position as author. On the other hand, *Een meisje van honderd* uses more literary tropes and the structure of the plot and the relationships of the different characters are more complicated and less straightforward than in *Asta's ogen*. All in all, *Asta's ogen* is an accessible novel, whereas *Een meisje van honderd* requires a more experienced reader. Also, equally important to note is that Bloem's latest novel was only published in 2012, whereas *Asta's ogen* was published two years earlier.

Sabine de Rozario writes: "Meisje van 100: Alles uit de indische geschiedenis staat in het boek. Naslagwerk. Boeiend verhaal vaak". She considers the book as a good overview of the history of the Dutch Indies and later Indonesia. She uses the word "naslagwerk", the book can be used as a reference to the past. Without going into details, this reader gives enormous credit to the novel and it indicates that the historical details are of great importance. This reader also writes: "Ja, boeken dragen bij tot de overdracht van de Indische cultuur. En ja, dat is zeker de reden dat ik het zou doorgeven", referring to both *Asta's ogen* and *Een meisje van honderd*. To de Rozario books can be used as a medium to transfer culture. Ellen de Bats, second generation Indo, writes: "Het doorgeven van het Indische verleden is in beide boeken heel goed gedaan. Er is ook zoveel gebeurd in Indië. Het is een groot avontuur geweest." To her as well, both books contribute to the transferring of the past to different generations. But de Bats also alludes to the well-anchored idea that the Dutch Indies "have been a great adventure", connecting to exoticism and nostalgia for Tempo Doeloe. The reactions on Bol.com often refer to the complicated plotline and the lively enchanting way it is written. Alan1970 writes: "Met deze familiekroniek overstijgt Bloem haar eerdere boeken met glans. Het is een grote roman in de traditie van bijvoorbeeld "Aarde der mensen" van Pramoedya Ananta Toer en "Honderd jaar eenzaamheid" van Gabriel García Márquez" (september 2012). He places the novel in line with the Nobel prize winner Márquez and nobelprize nominee Anata Toer. Comparing Bloem to Márquez, Alan1970 not only implies great significance to *Een meisje van honderd* likening it

to Nobel prize winning books, but also connects the novel to magic realism. He recognizes the magic realist elements, but he does not combine this with the *Stille kracht* tradition of 'goena goena' as a motive in literature about the Dutch Indies. Likening Bloem to the anti-colonial writer Anata Toer also brings Bloem as author from the colonizer's perspective to the native voice of Indonesia. Although Bloem writes from the position of a woman raised in the Netherlands, her latest novel attempts to reconcile Indonesia and the Netherlands. It also indicates that the perspective of Indonesia is well represented.

The readers are well aware of the details the novel provides, but far less than *Asta's ogen* is the book used as a medium to transfer memory. For most readers the book is a good read. Jennifer Valentijn, who also wrote the review on Indisch3.0 wrote to me that she finds acknowledgment of the pain that was suffered by her grandmother in the war and afterwards. Valentijn's grandmother kept silent and in more than one sentence in her email she hints at the silence in her family and the gap in her own knowledge. The novel made her realize how little she knew:

Ik realiseerde me tijdens het lezen van het boek hoeveel ik eigenlijk niet wist en hoe afschuwelijk het leven voor de Indo in Nederlands-Indië geweest moest zijn. [...] Ik heb dat als zeer schokkend en pijnlijk ervaren.

Valentijn also writes that she experiences this lack of knowledge as painful. The book, in this case, functioned as a way to fill in the gaps or at least colour the imagination. As Valentijn also expresses in her review on Indisch 3.0, this book can serve those who know little about their family's history. This novel is indeed a source of knowledge, as more readers indicated, and I agree with Valentijn that the novel can serve the break through silence, 'Indisch zwijgen'. I also think that, although the reader responses do not show it, *Een meisje van honderd* has the potential to function the same way as *Asta's ogen*.

3.8. *Een meisje van honderd* as 'Lieu'

For me, as a literary critic *Een meisje van honderd* harbours all elements that make it a productive 'lieu de mémoire': it places itself within a tradition of (critical) novels on Dutch colonialism and offers a historical story of the Dutch empire that is represented critically, operating multidirectional memory. What is more, the novel suggests a solution to the contemporary relationship of (ex)colonizer and colonized hinting at the hybrid position of Indos. It offers a view of a historical period and at the same time it is critical towards the way this period is remembered, referring to modes of nostalgia and suggesting a way to work through trauma. Despite this credit, *Een meisje van honderd* is not picked up by the readers as such: they do not recommend the book to others.

Een meisje van honderd as a 'lieu de mémoire', does not have a 'milieu de mémoire' that is as active as the 'milieu' with *Asta's ogen*. Bloem's novel is written with the intention to function as a

'lieu'; for example, the novel is dedicated to "mijn kleinkinderen" and it contains a lot of historical information. And yet this intention is not so easily reciprocated by its readers. This can have several causes, the complicated structure might be a feature, or the publicity around the novel and the critical perspective towards Dutch colonialism. Bloem's established position as author plays a role as well. Generally associated with 'Indische letteren', the literary qualities of the novel and Bloem's abilities as author are more important than the content of the novel. Her fame also makes the novel less accessible, whereas *Asta's ogen* is a straightforward novel without the expectations an established author might raise. Nevertheless, I think *Een meisje van honderd* will maintain its function as 'lieu'. The plotline, the amends that the colonizers make at the end of the story, the timeline and the family history it contains, make the novel a source of information for the reader. Although the novel contains many references that are only picked up by well-read readers and those who have more background knowledge, these references (to Bloem's debut novel, to *Stille kracht* and *Max Havelaar*) also enlarge its function as 'lieu'.

3.9. A Conclusion

As I have shown, the functioning of a novel as 'lieu' depends greatly on the value the reader attributes to the text. Through the reader's responses I have tried to approach the reading experience and even though my questions hinted at the idea of the novel as a carrier of memory, not all respondents agreed with me. Moreover, my sample size was small, so more and longer term research would need to be done. Through the mode of recognition a certain empathy is achieved, but this curiously occurs more frequently with *Asta's ogen* than with *Een meisje van honderd*. The reason for this might be that *Een meisje van honderd* has a too complicated structure, meaning the reader is more involved in the reading process instead of liking it to his/her own life. What is more, Stoel's position as outsider makes her novel more able to function as memory than Bloem's insider's position does. Stoel's intention of writing the novel as a source of information for her son and the story functions as a medium to fill in the gaps of 'Indisch zwijgen'. A novel is subject to many different interpretations, depending on the associations of the reader. *Een meisje van honderd* plays with this, through the many different references to the larger colonial past of the Netherlands and the references to other novels and media. This way, *Een meisje van honderd* becomes a knot in a network of memories concerning the colonial past. When both novels are considered within the larger perspective of the public sphere, in the newspaper reviews for example, it is once again Stoel's outsider's position that enhances the ability of her novel to function as a transference of memory, whereas Bloem's novel is determined by way of Bloem's own fame. *Asta's ogen* is a novel that is recommended by readers as a source of information about the (grand)parents past, Bloem's novel is not. While *Asta's ogen* has the potential to function as a postmemory text, *Een meisje van honderd*

as 'lieu de mémoire' is as easily approached as postmemory. Nevertheless, following Hirsch the text does function as a postmemory for the writer.

These two novels, as 'lieu,' offer recognition of both trauma and the significance of Indos in history. As 'lieu,' both novels have a specific 'milieu de mémoire', namely second and third generation Indos, but novels are also a medium that have a larger audience. As such, these novels also contribute to the collective memory of Dutch colonialism by offering a perspective of the Indo community, both in the colony as during the 1950s and 60s in the Netherlands.

Chapter IV: Monuments and Countermonuments

4.1. Introduction

This chapter examines the Van Heutsz Monument in Amsterdam and the Indië Monument in Amstelveen. Both monuments offer a contrasting image of 'lieux de mémoire' in comparison to the novels in the previous chapter. As this chapter will show, monuments are a more institutionalized form of 'lieux', which would suggest that commemoration is imposed upon a more or less existing 'milieu de mémoire'. This chapter will show, however, that, although institutionalized, both monuments require activity of the 'milieu,' in this case, the Indo 'milieu,' which shows engagement through performative acts such as speeches. These speeches that always accompany a commemorative event are acts that link the 'milieu' to the 'lieu'. In this light I will analyse several speeches given during commemorative events. Both, novels and speeches are a way to narrativize and testify to trauma and other memories. This way, the memory is personalized and claimed. The memory is given a countervoice.

4.2. The Origins of the Van Heutsz Monument in Amsterdam

On the Olympiaplein in Amsterdam, situated between the Amsterdams Lyceum and a recreation park is a pool which harbours a statue of a woman with two lions beside her. It is the van Heutsz monument or, Het Indië Nederland Monument as it has been called since 2001. In 1935 it was built to commemorate General Johannus Benedictus van Heutsz (Coevorden 1851 – 1924 Montreux, Switzerland), also known as the "Pacifier van Atjeh" (the peacemaker of Aceh⁴⁴) and it was designed by the architect Gijsbert Friedhoff and the sculptor Frits van Hall. Since its erection, the monument has been contested, which I will explain in this chapter.

Van Heutsz became famous after the 'Atjehoorlog'. The war was from the start (1873) motivated by two main concerns of the Dutch colonizer: an expansion of territory and a display of power, fearing a protest of the indigenous people. The 'Atjehoorlog' was started in the light of the European conquest and display of power. It is in definite contrast with the VOC-mentality, where trade was the key concept and not Dutch (as state) rule. Until 1890 the war dragged on without any clear results, but in 1890 van Heutsz and the orientalist C. Snouck Hurgronje developed mobile military units that were designed to isolate the leaders that were supposed to oppose the Dutch colonial government. It was very successful, in 1902 the sultan of Aceh capitulated to Dutch rule, but it took the Dutch until 1912 to subject the whole of Aceh to their colonial rule. In 1902 the 'Van Heutsz myth' was born, according to Andrew Goss. He writes that van Heutsz was remembered as

⁴⁴ Aceh is situated on the island Sumatra.

the men who kept the empire together (627) and he became a national hero. Nevertheless, his fame is founded on Dutch expansionism. His success has made him a perfect example of a colonial perpetrator. Several monuments have been built in his honour, not only is there the impressive Indië Nederland monument on the Olympiaplein, but there is also his grave in at the Nieuweroosterbegraafplaats in Amsterdam and busts in Arnhem and Coevorden (van Heutsz's place of birth).

In 1935 the monument on the Olympiaplein was built with the money that was left after building van Heutsz's tomb. Considering it was built from surplus money it is a big and impressive monument (see appendix). Nevertheless, it was not van Heutsz himself who was depicted on the monument. *De Volkskrant* (August 2000) describes that Van Heutsz was not the hero of the monument, but a woman who represents Dutch authority. Two towers symbolize the Netherlands and the Indies, separated by water, but existing under the same sun. From the start, the monument was multi-interpretable, because since 1935 the monument's status was contested. Especially in the 1960s it was a popular target for the 'provo's'⁴⁵ and the monument was seen as a symbol of Dutch oppressive colonialism. It suffered two bomb-attacks, in 1967 and 1984. The second bomb attack in 1984 only caused minor damage, but what is more significant is that the same year the plaque with van Heutsz's name and image was stolen and never recovered. While several attacks and protests against the monument attempted to de-value the monument's status, the disappearance of the plaque is the ultimate form of degrading. Without the plaque nothing really reminds the spectator that it is a monument in honour of J.B. van Heutsz.

De Trouw of 30 October 1998 writes as a report on a discussion night the City Council of Amsterdam had organized to discuss the possibilities of renovating the monument: "Je kunt Atjeh ons Vietnam noemen. Wat Van Heutsz daar heeft uitgespookt, is heel erg. Je kunt geen lintjes uitreiken aan foute heren" (van Haastrecht 1998). It is striking that a link to the Vietnam-war is made, this seems to recognize the gravity of the historical event. Eventually the monument is only cleaned. Not long after its renovation there was much talk of changing the function and meaning of the monument. The article further reports that the status should change from 'colonial' to 'postcolonial', implying that the 'Atjehoorlog' is no longer only seen as the glorious victory by J.B. van Heutsz, but that it is now seen as an example of colonial atrocities. However, in May 2000 *Het Parool* writes, discussing the possibilities of changing the monument's function: "Als relict uit een koloniale tijd dient het monument juist zijn huidige bestemming te behouden, als tastbare herinnering aan onze geschiedenis" (Janssen). The monument was neglected, but this newspaper article argues against changing the monument's function. Deleting questionable episodes from the cultural memory would

⁴⁵ Protest group against Dutch mentality in the sixties.

be counterproductive. Janssen seems to argue that even atrocities should be remembered. Or in fact, they should not be deleted. Frits Abrahams perfectly describes in *NRC Handelsblad* why the monument is such a sensitive subject: “Amsterdam-Zuid voelt zich met een soort steenpuist opgescheept die nodig moet worden uitgeknepen” (21 September 2000). Abrahams stresses van Heutsz’s position: although recognized as perpetrator, van Heutsz’s hero-status is not yet fully declined. In another article in a edition of *NRC Handelsblad* a few months later (December 2000), Elisabeth Ety refers to the van Heutsz monument as one of the “tough symbols” (taai symbolen), linking the monument to Nazi-symbols that are removed in Berlin. These symbols are removed, for fear they will become a place of pilgrimage for Neo-Nazis. Such a past should be remembered but not commemorated. Almost similar to the removed Nazi-symbols, the van Heutsz-monument has to change its name. According to Ety this is a fear for the strength of symbols. They remain symbolic, even when time changes. It is curious that Ety links the Van Heutsz monument to Nazi-symbolism. Lacking a frame of reference to the Dutch crimes committed during the colonial past, the larger framework of the Second World War is addressed. Nazi-symbolism is widely recognized as dangerous and violent, invoking images of the Holocaust. The impact of these crimes are felt worldwide. Addressing such a framework enhances Van Heutsz’s status as perpetrator.

Not much later the ‘Comité Herdenking Gevallen Nederlands-Indië’ requested to change its name. *De Volkskrant* of 16 August 2000 remarks in an article entitled: “van Heutsz Loses Pedestal” (my translation) that nothing on the monument reminds of van Heutsz and that is the reason that the name should be changed. The new name will commemorate the colonial period, but without commemorating the violent suppression van Heutsz embodies. Van Heutsz is no longer a colonial hero, but a perpetrator and the monument should be neutralized. In 2001 its name was changed to ‘Monument Indië Nederland 1596 – 1945- 1949’ as the new plaque reads (see appendix). At the same time an artist was asked to add to the monument a depiction of the relationship between Indonesia and the Netherlands. Its appearance thus slightly changed, with small reliefs showing characteristic features of Indonesia. Nevertheless, its old name is still commonly used. These newspaper articles show the confusion and controversy that the monument raises. On the one hand, since the 1960s Van Heutsz is recognized as a colonial perpetrator, but on the other hand his status as national hero does not easily disappear. Moreover, recognizing Van Heutsz as perpetrator means questioning the colonial past and discussing its legacy. A connection to the Nazis and the Vietnam War is made, showing a multidirectional link. While these are recognized as war crimes and their impact is fully acknowledged, the Dutch colonial past is either downplayed or neutralized. The question whether these atrocities should be ignored or remembered is repeatedly asked. Even during the most recent event that contested the monument’s meaning, this question is discussed.

4.3. The Van Heutsz Monument as Countermonument

In 2012 on the 5th of May, Framer Framed in cooperation with Amsterdam 4 en 5 Mei Comité organized a brainstorm session called ‘Hacking History’, about “the relationship between the Netherlands and the Indies and its representation the public sphere” (framerframed.nl, my translation). Highlighting the importance of colonial history, the programme intends to seek a way for the monument to function as a site of memory again. Linking this to Nora’s idea of ‘lieux de mémoire’ it does not mean that the monument itself has stopped being a ‘lieu’, but the initiative wants to create awareness around the monument. In my opinion, the event ‘Hacking History’ intends to re-activate the ‘milieu de mémoire’ of this monument. What is more, it addresses a new ‘milieu’, aiming at a minority group that feels the consequences of colonialism instead of the general Dutch population that in the 1930s commemorated the colonial triumph of Van Heutsz. As I will show, this monument commemorates several elements of colonial history. It commemorates van Heutsz’s ‘achievements’ in the Aceh war, and after its name change it commemorates the bond between the Netherlands and its former colony. The organizers of the event ‘Hacking History’ seem to imply that the name-change in 2001 was not enough. With this brainstorming –session they intended to create a monument that is constantly re-considered and re-negotiated. Emma Boelhouwer writes in *Het Parool* of 1 May 2012 announcing the event, explaining the name ‘Hacking History’: “het is een ingreep in een ontwerp om een beter resultaat te krijgen”. It is thus an intervention in history, a way to re-activate the memory and inviting a new ‘milieu de mémoire’, Indos. The memory is re-activated in allowing this ‘milieu’ to participate in the brainstorm session.

The programme of the day was characterized by the unveiling of the monument by two artists, Iratxe Jaio and Klaas van Gorkum, and self-proclaimed *spoken word artist* Olympia Latupeirissa. Sarah Klerks, a student, also spoke about what the monument means to her, as a member of the third generation. The unveiling was accompanied by a diner which hosts a number of speakers who reflect on the monument, located in the Amsterdams Lyceum across the monument. For the programme outside entrance was free, but for the diner a small contribution of 15 euros was asked. It is characteristic that the programme outside was freely accessible, it fits the idea that the ‘milieu de mémoire’ should participate in the creation of the monument. The free entrance also assumes that everyone has a say in the brainstorm-session that the event is meant to be. The event answers to traditions surrounding new monuments. Although, not changed physically, the monument was unveiled, as if through the brainstorm-session the monument would gain new meaning. The diner at the Amsterdams Lyceum consisted of an ‘Indische rijsttafel’ which connects to nostalgic ideas around the consuming of an traditional ‘Indische’ meal. Later, I will elaborate on this nostalgic element.

The meaning of the Van Heutsz monument has been challenged throughout its history and this new unveiling by the artist-duo Jaio and van Gorkum challenged it in optima forma. Unveiling the monument yet again implies a change in the status of the monument. In combination with Latupeirissa's speech this change is very strong. She performed a speech called "Foute Keuzes" in which she reclaims the monument as third generation Indo⁴⁶: "I "OLYMPIA MARIAM HAWA LATUPEIRISSA" TAKE POSSESSION OF THIS EFFIGY" (original in capital letters). At the start of her speech she says: "It is up to us to reaffirm again and again what this statue stands for. And if we cannot agree on that between ourselves, then let this site turn back into the battleground of yore, on which we settle our disputes". Latupeirissa makes a connection to war: "battleground of yore". However, she does not draw this link to illustrate atrocities and highlight trauma, but she invokes the idea that memory (and commemoration) are an ongoing debate. Memory is always a struggle with two sides, and no resolution is the best resolution, as James Young argues as well. She is making an appeal to refuse stigmatization and remaining true to oneself, but she is also appealing to solve the conflict between different ethnic groups. She appeals to clear the air of a colonial past for contemporary Dutch society full of 'postcolonial products'. Latupeirissa is addressing a trauma that might be caused by Dutch colonization. It is not only the Aceh war that was traumatic, but many events during the colonial period and afterwards. This period in history should not be forgotten and she is claiming that especially members of the third generation Indos (or others) are aware of this.

In her speech Latupeirissa uses a quote from Queen Wilhelmina. By starting her speech with this quote, Latupeirissa is reclaiming the words of the queen. In fact, it can be seen as a form of 'the empire writes back'. She quotes:

It is a privilege to perform this transfer of sovereignty in the face of history, or rather: in the presence of God, who alone knows why this union in freedom was not achieved earlier nor later, and who knows of the generations' failures, but who also sees how we may serve the plan for the progress of mankind. (Queen Wilhelmina in 1949)

With this quote Latupeirissa evokes an even larger framework. First that of national Dutch history, recognizing that although she is reclaiming, hacking history as it were, she cannot deny that it also belongs to the nation that caused such atrocities in Aceh. Second, in the presence of God, each (hi)story exists in a larger framework of the entire world. What she is doing, in fact, is placing it in the large framework of time itself. Latupeirissa also adapts the words of the queen from her standpoint as member of a (post)colonial minority, making herself heard by appropriating the words of the colonizer's head of state. Using Queen Wilhelmina's words enlarges the speech act that reclaims the monument.

⁴⁶ To be precise, she is a third generation Mollucan, e.g. from the island Mullucas

To Latupeirissa, the monument is something that is assigned meaning by society. The power to make meaning is in the hand of the people, and Latupeirissa, as third generation of a colonized minority, is ready to take this power. She further says: "I DEMAND....MERDEKA for my PEOPLE on the Moluccas as well as here in the Netherlands". Latupeirissa takes possession of the monument and demands merdeka (freedom) more than a century later. Her speech act attempts to transform the monument of the perpetrator into its exact opposite. However, the concept of 'merdeka' becomes more, it becomes "my info I provide about Moluccan history, through Moluccan Eyes.." and "the story I tell to the ignorant.." Instead of commemorating the perpetrator, the monument becomes, through her very words, a sign of freedom and emancipation. Not the oppression or subjection of the Dutch Indies is the marker of this monument, but independence of the Mollucans (and Indos, but I would argue that it goes for all groups with a colonial heritage). It now highlights their right to be who they are in this postcolonial society.

Latupeirissa's speech is a performative act, turning around (hacking) Dutch colonial history, seeking recognition. According to Paul Connerton, rites give value and meaning to those who perform them. It is not so much the content that matters, but the form. I think this is significant concerning the unveiling of the Van Heutsz monument. The name had already been changed, the monument had been contested from the start, but it had never been reclaimed. Framer Framed and Comité 4 en 5 mei, in inviting a *spoken word artist* and organizing a debate (with Indonesian dinner) after the unveiling created an event that exists especially because it is performed. Latupeirissa's self-invented term *spoken word artist* already implies a speech act. And as Connerton explains, in the performance of rituals (which he especially combines with speech acts and utterances of repetitive phrases) one is seeking a form of self-representation. But performing also specifies the relationship between the performer and the act. In the case of Latupeirissa she extends this relationship from herself to the whole community of Mollucans, second (but especially) third generation. Connerton writes: "That act takes place in and through the enunciation. Such verbs do not describe or indicate the existence of attitudes: they effectively bring those attitudes into existence by virtue of the illocutionary act" (58). The *spoken word artist*, as someone who performs, and the debate and dinner afterwards (acts that themselves perform a certain connection to the theme of reclaiming the monument) are in this light the acts that call the change of attitude into being. Latupeirissa is making a call for recognition, recognition from the Dutch but also from her own generation Mollucans. In regarding the speech act of Laturpeirissa as a ritual in itself (and not just the unveiling, which is of course also a common ritual implying a certain triumph or at least celebration in Western societies) the unveiling of the Van Heutsz monument becomes a countermonument, as James E. Young calls it. Countermonuments are "brazen, painfully self-conscious memorial spaces conceived to challenge the very premises of their being" (Young 27). The speech and the unveiling become acts that reclaim

the monument. In fact, Latupeirissa is changing the monument's status around, aiming not at the original 'milieu de mémoire', but claiming it for a new 'milieu': Indos.

While Latupeirissa's speech can be seen as a performative act, claiming the monument and claiming recognition, Sarah Klerks's speech is more reflective. The speech is entitled "Een koloniale wond" and it is not directly connected to the unveiling of the monument. Klerks distances herself and her speech as not to make claims for an entire generation:

En als derde generatie Indische-Nederlander, of liever 'Indo', sta ik hier om mijn kijk te geven op dit monument. Daar bij moet ik zeggen dat ik, hoewel ik een derde generatie Indo ben en vanuit die positie spreek, niet spreek namens alle Indo's of alle andere derde generatie Indo's.

Although speaking at the public event as a member of the third generation, Klerks does not want to represent the entire group. Nevertheless she is bringing her personal reflections into the larger perspective of the different generations, by invoking both her own position and her parents' position. The colonial past, according to Klerks, is a daily reality: "De 'koloniale periode' roept bij mij namelijk heel veel op en het bepaalt mijn dagelijkse realiteit, ik kan daar niet aan ontsnappen". Being aware of her roots means that she cannot escape the past: both the nostalgia of her parents and the larger trauma of the colonial past return to her, being part of a "postkoloniale minderheid" as she calls herself. As part of a minority she feels that her idea of the colonial past is not the same as the dominant ideas. Although she does not make it explicit, speaking while standing next to the monument, she addresses the differences in cultural memory. She does not want to erase the atrocities committed during colonial past from the collective memory, whereas that is what happens when changing both name and meaning of the monument. As product of this past, Klerks feels it would be better to recognize van Heutsz's position as perpetrator. She wants to move beyond the feeling of guilt and victimization. As "postcolonial minority" she wants to be recognized and an awareness of the violence and atrocities committed in the past will contribute to this. According to Klerks, the monument cannot just be given any meaning, even if it is multi-interpretable. It should always name the "colonial suffering" (koloniaal leed). But first and foremost, the monument is a sign to Klerks of the inability of the Netherlands to deal with its colonial past. She concludes with a striking claim:

Tot slot, vat ik deze stand van zaken ook op als een waarschuwing. Ik ben gewaarschuwd dat ik als lid van een postkoloniale minderheid misschien moet stoppen te gaan verwachten dat monumenten er ook voor mij zijn en mijn perspectief zullen bevestigen. Deze monumenten komen voort uit de gevestigde orde en zijn voor de gevestigde orde. Maar ondertussen blijft de koloniale wond broeien.

Like Nora, Klerks seems to think that 'lieux de mémoire' are generated top-down, which makes her feel underrepresented, and according to her that will not heal the "colonial wound". It is striking that

she makes this remark at the end of her speech, a speech that is held at an event that is meant to initiate activity from a new 'milieu de mémoire'. It seems a useless attempt, according to Klerks.

The dinner that followed is significantly called a "vrijheidsmaaltijd" (Framerframed.nl). During this dinner a number of speeches were held. Sylvia Pessireron, author and second generation Indo, explains the injustice she feels that the history of the Dutch Indies is hardly described, or commemorated. And she emphasizes that especially if there is a notion of shame and guilt these events should be told and retold. She says: "Als je verhalen uitwisselt, gevoelens deelt en meningen prijsgeeft, kom je tot nieuwe inzichten. Inzichten die zullen bijdragen om dat wat is gebeurd, een plek te geven". With this remark Pessireron agrees with the intention of the 'Hacking History' event, designed to discuss the representation of memory. She hopes that the monument becomes a symbol of "openheid over het Nederlands-Indisch verleden". Like Klerks, Pessireron wants to create a space in which the various memories can be discussed and exchanged. Nevertheless, she is more optimistic than Klerks, in having good hopes for the monument.

Nancy Jouwe, one of the initiators of Framer framed, reflects critically on the monument. She highlights the selective way in which the colonial past is remembered, claiming that the Second World War is more prominent in Dutch memory and Dutch memory the uncomfortable colonial past was ostensibly forgotten. Jouwe realizes that commemorations are part of a healing process. Although she does not mention it, she seems to believe that changing the name of the monument does not contribute to the processing of the colonial past. As Klerks also mentions, it is characteristic of the way Dutch society remembers the colonial past. It is still evading the trauma and atrocities, the Dutch position as perpetrator.

John Jansen van Galen, researcher at the 'Instituut voor Migratie en Etnische Studies' (IMES), problematizes van Heutsz's position as perpetrator. He explains that van Heutsz in the twentieth century was considered a "national hero" mainly because of his actions in Aceh, ending the war. Although this was done very violently, Van Heutsz also created unity in Indonesia: all islands were now under Dutch rule. And this, in turn, made it possible to educate and organize the local population, "ethische politiek" as it was called. Jansen van Galen says Van Heutsz is considered a unity-maker and that is the way he is seen in Indonesia to this day. On the one hand van Heutsz was a perpetrator, but Jansen van Galen claims that we also should not forget that van Heutsz created the possibility of development and progress for Indonesia. He claims: "Onderdrukking en vooruitgang, exploitatie en ontwikkeling: ze gaan altijd samen in de koloniale geschiedenis en zijn niet te ontwarren, hangen vaak zelfs met elkaar samen". A bold claim to make, and undoubtedly quite shocking to the audience. Klerks is shocked, when Jansen van Galen suggests that van Heutsz should be remembered. I think Klerks' shock can be seen as exemplary, for third generation Indos. As she pointed out in her speech, she is aware she is part of a minority group and she sees herself as a

direct result of the colonial situation. She is a 'postcolonial product'. Her status as such makes her very aware of her position, her ancestors' position and the Dutch position within this long history of colonial past and postcolonial present. There are two intentions that play a role. On the one hand there is the need of claiming the memory, as Latupeirissa demonstrated with her speech act. On the other hand, as Klerks specifically points out, it is important not to omit details of the colonial past. Klerks is referring to injustices and atrocities committed by the Dutch colonizers, but John Jansen van Galen carries this idea further, by claiming that history is never black and white. Jansen van Galen suggests to give van Heutsz full credit, both for the good and bad deeds he caused. He attempts to nuance the events associated with the monument. The brainstorm-session is an example that memory should be negotiated, that it is moving and that it changes over time. Although there is no solution to the issue of the van Heutsz monument, or the Indië-Nederland monument as it is presently called, the session indicates how much the memory of the colonial past is alive and how contested it still is.

4.4. The Van Heutsz Monument as 'Lieu'

'Hacking History' is an interesting event that is highly conscious of the notion of memory. It plays with the distinction between 'milieu' and 'lieu de mémoire', allowing a 'milieu' to form and to have an active say in the meaning of the memory. As we see during the event, the 'milieu de mémoire' that is addressed is not the 'milieu' the monument was intended for. As the various newspaper articles have shown, the monument's status was contested from the beginning, but over time van Heutsz's status as 'national hero' also changed. Jansen van Galen's speech shows that there can be a separation between history and memory, something that Pierre Nora has pointed out as well. Although Nora sees history and memory as opposites, I do not think that in the case of the Van Heutsz monument history and memory contradict each other. The struggle actually is about how the facts should be interpreted and remembered. The 'milieu' that is now active around the monument is constituted by a minority and does not have many monuments that represent its memory. The history of the Van Heutsz monument is exemplary for the difficulties that institutions face (in this case the city council of Amsterdam) when the remembrance of the colonial past is concerned.

Considering the Van Heutsz monument, I think it can be seen as both a dominant and a dominated 'lieu' (Nora 23). On first instance, the name change and renovation was an initiative of the city council. With this, from top-down, the council attempted to change the monument's status. Nevertheless, the monument remained known as the Van Heutsz monument. As a dominant 'lieu de mémoire,' it failed to connect to the Indo 'milieu', but the 'Hacking History' event changed the monument into a dominated 'lieu'. In allowing members of the different Indo-generations to speak, the monument's status changes. It becomes part of the "the living heart of memory" (Nora 23).

Latupeirissa's speech act: claiming the monument and the memory as her own, changes the monument status around, making it a countermonument. Considering countermonuments, Young focuses on memorials of the Holocaust made by artists that themselves no longer have a direct link to the horrid events. These artists "explore both the necessity of memory and their incapacity to recall events they never experienced directly. [...] Instead of seeking to capture the memory of events, therefore, they remember only their own relationship to events, the great gulf of time between themselves and the Holocaust" (27). This can be connected to the notion of postmemory. The memory is owned through the personal/generational link. Latupeirissa is doing exactly that. In her speech she establishes the relationship *she has* with the Dutch Indies by mentioning her grandfather, but at the same time she realizes what the monument recalled and now recalls:

The numbers that refer to the birth and death of the controversial General have also been removed. Instead, six new dates have been chosen to represent the past. The proclamation of independence of Indonesia in 1945, and the transfer of sovereignty in 1949, are mentioned in the same breath as the town council's decision to change the name and function of the monument itself.

The act of reclaiming the monument is strengthened by Latupeirissa quoting queen Wilhelmina. From a monument that displayed Dutch colonial power to an object of protest to countermonument, the Van Heutsz monument has made a long journey. As countermonument it does not deny its previous status, what is more, the traces are not erased: the monument still looks essentially the same with some additions that symbolize Indonesia as country itself. As countermonument, a step towards a postcolonial society is made that does not deny history, that allows the second and third generations to come to terms with their (grand)parents past, their roots. Perhaps it even allows for the creation of a hybrid identity that no longer is just Dutch, or even the more flexible Indo, but something even more extended that is fitting for a postcolonial society.

In a way, the 'Hacking History' event and especially Latupeirissa's speech allow the monument to become multidirectional. In the heart of the city it is a monument that cannot be ignored, by claiming the monument, Latupeirissa makes room for her own memories to be commemorated here. Sarah Klerks, Nancy Jouwe and Sylvia Pessireron also indicate their personal connection the Dutch Indies, their memories are not necessarily connected to the Aceh war or van Heutsz, but they offer a contrast. These personal connections shift the focus from perpetrator to a minority group in the Netherlands. Moreover, these personal connections imply a certain ownership (as does the claiming of memory by Latupeirissa). As is well known, the trauma of the first generation can be carried by subsequent generations as well. This is the basis concept of postmemory. However, because there is a distance between the actual event and the memory, namely a distance of generations, the memory becomes more and more mediated. To access the event, other media such

as stories or films are necessary. The link to such media becomes a personal one, as is exemplified in the emphasis on personal connection in the speeches during the 'Hacking History' event. In a sense the need to commemorate is motivated through the notion of postmemory.

The 'Hacking History' event also invokes nostalgic elements such as food culture, as the "vrijheidsmaaltijd" illustrates. The Indonesian cuisine in the Netherlands is food that was eaten in the colony combined with Dutch elements. It was a tradition that was adapted by the Dutch colonizers, but the food was also transported to the Netherlands by the many Indo migrants. Eating an Indonesian meal together became a way to perform Indo-identity. In many cases, especially for the first generation, it was the only concession made in the process of adapting to the Dutch society. This infused the meal with nostalgic emotions. Inviting the guests of the event to join this Indonesian meal, then, is in fact a way to perform identity. By entitling it "vrijheidsmaaltijd" it also links the performance of the Indo-identity to freedom.

4.5. The Origins of the Indië Monument Amstelveen

The Indië Monument Amstelveen (Netherlands East Indies Memorial) was erected in 1994 on the initiative of residents of Amstelveen of "Netherlands East Indies descent" (Oostindie, Schulte Noordholt, Steijlen: 50) to commemorate all victims of the war in the Dutch Indies. The monument is situated in the P.C. Broersepark in Amstelveen, but since 2007 it has a counterpart in the Zorgvlied cemetery, called Gordel van Smaragd. Both the monument in the park and the monument in the cemetery are designed by Ella van de Ven. The monument in the P.C. Broersepark consists of two bronze objects with a narrow space in between (see appendix), which allows the visitor to walk through the two objects. The left object is a curved segment in which figures of human beings are etched. The right object is also curved, consisting of a group of human statues. On the left side is etched the following text in capital letters: " 'N SPIEGEL/ HET VERLEDEN/ DE TOEKOMST/ WEERSPIEGELING/ WIJ WAREN ER/ WIJ ZIJN/ HIER/ HEDEN/ TEZAMEN/ BIJEEN". This part of the monument resembles the past. It is polished and therefore functions more or less as a mirror. How we interpret the past says something about the present. The right side also displays a text: "8 DECEMBER 1941/ NED-OOST-INDIË IN OORLOG/ STRIJD/ BEZETTING/ BEVRIJDING...?/ ALLEN DIE GINDS HET LEVEN LIETEN/ GEDENKEN WIJ". This side resembles "a large group of people that returns" (4en5mei.nl) from the war and 'Bersiap', they are not etched in the wall, but actual figures, indicating their presence in the present. They have to live with the memories. The experience of walking through the two objects is described by the website indieherdenkingamstelveen.nl as a way to reflect on the past, while being surrounded by the present. The monument plays with the past's presence in the present. One uses the past to reflect, but at the same time the present should not be forgotten. The text on the left side of the monument connects to this idea.

Both the Indië Monument Amstelveen and its counterpart on the cemetery Zorgvlied, Gordel van Smaragd (on which later more), are financed by the foundation 'Herdenking Gevallenen en Slachtoffers in Nederlands-Indië'. The website informs us that both monuments are erected for those who feel connected to the Dutch Indies by birth or otherwise. The purpose of the foundation is twofold: on the one hand, it wants to commemorate the victims of the Second World War in the former colony. On the other hand, the foundation intends to enlarge the knowledge of both culture and history of the Dutch Indies (indieherdenkingamstelveen.nl). The foundation organizes an annual memorial service at the Indië Monument and since 2007 the Gordel van Smaragd at the Zorgvlied cemetery offers a place to scatter the ashes of the deceased. This replica of the Indië monument is a response to the many requests to scatter ashes of deceased Indos at the original monument. As the website indicates, the emotional, even nostalgic connection to the Dutch Indies plays an important role. That the connection to the Dutch Indies concerns nostalgia for Tempo Doeloe becomes apparent during the initiation of Gordel van Smaragd on December 8, 2007 as I will explain.

The smaller version of the monument at the Broersepark was inaugurated by red earth that was especially imported from Indonesia and the inauguration was accompanied by a number of speeches and a performance of Wieteke van Dort⁴⁷ followed by a 'rijsttafel'. The element of nostalgia begins with the name of this monument. Whereas the original monument in the Broersepark is simply called the Indië Monument, its counterpart at Zorgvlied being named Gordel van Smaragd is a direct link to Multatuli and *Max Havelaar*. 'Gordel van Smaragd' is an expression used by Multatuli to refer to the islands of Indonesia, indicating beauty and romance associated with the island, invoking an Orientalist discourse.

Ankie Werner on behalf of the foundation Herdenking Gevallenen en Slachtoffers in Nederlands-Indië speaks of the multiple requests the foundation received to scatter the ashes of deceased around the Indië Monument, she explains these requests by the "eternal longing to return to Indonesian earth" (amstelveenweb.nl, my translation). She argues that the longing is motivated by a longing for youth and nature. These are romantic values that are associated with the former colony. The very name Gordel van Smaragd entails this notion of youth, adventure and wild nature, connecting to the Orientalist discourse surrounding the Dutch Indies. Furthermore, Werner adds:

Het verlangen naar hen die daar achterbleven in de Indische aarde knaagt altijd. Mijn moeder vertelde mij over haar verdriet toen zij en mijn grootmoeder gerepatrieerd werden en zij

⁴⁷ Van Dort was born in Soerabaja, in 1943 and has become famous as an actress in the Netherlands with her performance as 'Tante Lien', a character that personates a cliché Indo woman, who sings and tells stories about the former colony. As 'tante Lien,' van Dort presented 'De Late Late Lien Show' from 1979 to 1988 on television. More often than not Wieteke van Dort is mentioned as an example of nostalgia for Tempo Doeloe. (van Leeuwen, Pattynama).

mijn opa daar eenzaam in zijn oorlogsgraf achter moesten laten. En dát gevoel delen velen met haar. Een terugkeer naar het Indië van toen, dat kan niet meer. Maar nu symbolisch in gebondenheid rusten in Indische aarde dat kan wel. Vanaf vandaag, hier, op Zorgvlied. (amstelveenweb.nl)

In this quote, Werner speaks of both trauma and longing. She expresses personal loss that was experienced during the war, the awareness that a return is impossible. But that feeling of loss and longing her mother experiences is shared by many (“En dát gevoel delen velen met haar”). The monument Gordel van Smaragd provides a symbolic way to return to the Dutch Indies (“Indische aarde”). Referring to the “Indische aarde” (earth) and not to the country serves the purpose of separating the country and politics. In short, it lets go of the colonial history, but implies that the earth of the islands itself is what is longed for. After all, the monument was inaugurated with earth that was especially imported from Indonesia. Any critical connotations of the past are hereby eclipsed, forming a nostalgia that connects to the traditional nostalgia for Tempo Doeloe, but that is highly unreflective. This is enhanced by Van Dort’s performance and the consuming of a ‘rijsttafel’, all elements which express a longing for the Dutch Indies. To use Svetlana Boym’s definition, it is a form of restorative nostalgia that is practiced here. The ‘Gordel van Samargd’ as monument is focused on a return. Although, it is a return in death, it is a return nevertheless. When an actual return is impossible, the ashes of the deceased can be mixed with the earth that is transported from Indonesia and the deceased is reunited with the country of his/her birth. At last the longing is fulfilled. In this case, the focus is on the fulfilling of longing, whereas the longing itself is not the subject. In reflective nostalgia the longing itself becomes the motive. Emphasizing the desire allows for a critical attitude. Reflective nostalgia, then, combines the notion of reality with a romanticized past.

While Gordel van Samargd is focused on nostalgia and emphasizes a longing for the lost country, the original monument in the Broersepark is, in my opinion, more focused on the processing of trauma. Built on the initiative of inhabitants of Amstelveen who come from the Dutch Indies, the monument commemorates the casualties, both civilian and military, of the Dutch Indies. Thus, it is not solely focused on the commemoration of Indos, but whoever feels a connection to the former colony, as the website emphasizes. Centred around casualties of the Second World War, the monument deals with traumatic events.

4.6. Commemoration as a Way to Give Voice to Memory

The annual commemoration always provides a number of speeches, of which one is given by a member of the younger generations or an eye-witness. The foundation’s website publishes the speeches online after the yearly event. I would like to highlight the personal speeches that were held during the commemoration of 2011. It is entitled: “1940: het einde van een gezin”, 3 generaties

vertellen het verhaal van het gezin Schild". Three generations spoke that day, each telling about their experiences with the trauma. Firstly, Hein Schild, first generation, explained how his parents and sister died during the war. Schild voiced his desire to bring this lost family back to life by telling their story. Mirjam, his daughter, sees herself as a bridge between Schild's granddaughter and Schild. She is the bridge between the first and third generation. Mirjam carries the trauma of her father, but her daughter does not experience the same pain. Mirjam considers her father and her daughter as opposites, her father having known such great suffering and a loss that determined his life and her daughter who does not know any of this, who has grown up in wealth and happiness. Dalith, as third generation, is aware of this. She recites a poem written by herself, in which she highlights the silence that characterized her grandfather's generation, the 'Indisch zwijgen' that has become such a famous motive and the way that such stories are shared during her own lifetime. Listening to her grandfather, she recognizes his sufferings and her role will be to uphold the memory. There are three aspects here: firstly, the trauma of the grandfather and his ability to tell the story during the commemorative event. Secondly, the trauma that is carried to another generation and thirdly, Dalith's ability to listen to her grandfather's story. There is the implication that trauma can only be processed when it is told. As Geoffrey Hartman would argue, it is not the "ultimate explanation" of trauma that is sought, but through testimony and representation trauma is processed. Hein Schild does exactly that: he both testifies and represents the trauma by telling history during the event on 14th of August. As he himself says: "Door dit verhaal breng ik mijn ouderlijk gezin weer tot leven en geef ze opnieuw een plaats in de tijd". The story-telling allows him to give his lost family "a place in time". By speaking at such a public event Schild testifies: he admits the trauma and the pain. Connecting this to the speech of his daughter Mirjam, this is quite extraordinary. She emphasizes the element of 'Indisch zwijgen' and her father's urge to move on. This same urge, ignoring pain against all odds, is something she has as well. Indirectly, Mirjam carries her father's trauma. The transference of trauma to the next generation can be connected to the theory of postmemory, in my opinion. As Hirsch defines the term it is connected to traumatic events. Hirsch also implies that memory can be owned, but postmemory is also mediated and constructed. In the story of the Schild-family we can see these aspects. The memory of the loss of his family and Second World War is owned by Hein Schild, but he transfers both the memory and the trauma to his daughter. Another generation further, Dalith recognizes her connection to this particular memory. What has defined both her grandfather and her mother, indirectly defines her as well. Dalith stresses the ownership of the memory: "Ik ben uit hen geboren./ Zijn genen, haar genen, ben ik" (2011). However, the memory has altered somewhat, as both Dalith and her mother recognize. Dalith is a child that has grown up not knowing suffering, but by listening to her grandfather's stories she will carry the memory.

That such a personal account of three generations is told in a public space at a commemorative event is extraordinary. It can be seen as a speech act, claiming commemorated event. The three speeches give a personal addition to the monument, offering a countervoice of three generations. The speeches are also testimonies, especially Hein Schild's. By speaking in public, the memory is no longer only private, but the public is invited to join in. On the one hand, this is meant to give a voice. On the other hand, this invokes recognition by the 'milieu'.

4.7. The Indië Monument Amstelveen as 'Lieu'

Both monuments are supported by the foundation Herdenking Gevallenen en Slachtoffers in Nederlands-Indië, situated in Amstelveen. Being a foundation it is supported by financial gifts and the board of directors are all volunteers. It was founded because there was a 'milieu de mémoire' that felt the need for a 'lieu'. To speak with the words of Nora there is a "will to remember" (19). From its origin then, the Indië Monument Amstelveen is generated bottom-up. Once the monument was there, however, the foundation's function becomes more top-down. The need of the 'milieu de mémoire' has been institutionalized through the foundation. That does not mean the 'milieu' ceases to be active. The foundation still only survives on gifts that are provided by the 'milieu'. The foundation has two purposes: a commemorative and educational purpose. Its existence is emancipatory, I argue. Having an educational purpose, the foundation implies there is still a lack of knowledge and commemoration alone is not enough. It has an informative function, but by educating about historical facts the foundation, on behalf of the 'milieu', also seeks recognition. The foundation organizes projects in cooperation with schools, but it also organizes various lectures, most notable is the annual lecture on 8 March, International Women's Day. This lecture is meant to highlight the lives of women in the Dutch Indies and especially during the Japanese occupation. On the one hand, the foundation's educational intentions fit to Nora's idea that we live in an age of historization. Offering historical education is part of an obsession with historical facts, but on the other hand it is also a call for recognition.

While through the foundation the Indië Monument Amstelveen has become institutionalized, it does not mean the monument is a dominant 'lieu de mémoire', as Nora defines it. Dominant 'lieux de mémoire' are imposed by national authority and are generally distant. These are usually monuments. They do not require active participation in the act of remembrance. It is true that the monument does not require active participation. It is the foundation that organizes the annual commemorative events, but the foundation requires support, implying that the 'milieu de mémoire'

has not lost its interest.⁴⁸ Dominated 'lieux de mémoire, however, are more spontaneous and generated from below. They are more active and that is why they are in "the living heart of memory" (23). In my opinion, they are less national and although Nora argues otherwise, I think these dominated sites of memory are more likely to be part of a community in which memory is alive and actively performed. Considering the Indië Monument Amstelveen and its counterpart Gordel van Smaragd, I think that both monuments can be seen as dominated 'lieux de mémoire'. The presence and activity of the foundation implies that the 'milieu' is active and aware of the need of commemoration. However, it also seeks to enlarge knowledge of the history of the Dutch Indies and the events of the Second World War outside the specific 'milieu' that is tied to the 'lieu de mémoire'. Moreover, active participation of the 'milieu' can specifically be seen around the Gordel van Smaragd. The initiative to scatter ashes of a deceased around the monument is not something that the foundation suggested, the foundation answered to a need. The Gordel van Smaragd, more than the Indië Monument Amstelveen uses the notion of nostalgia for Tempo Doeloe but at the same time requires a certain active participation, based on individual choice and personal ways of mourning.

As I mentioned earlier, I think that the Gordel van Smaragd is restorative, the mode of nostalgia that is practiced is aimed at finally fulfilling the longing for 'Indonesian earth'. However, when we consider the two monuments as a whole, combined with the foundation 'Herdenking Gevallenen en Slachtoffers in Nederlands-Indië' they are self-reflective. Not only does the sculpture of both monuments refer to the link of past, present and future, realizing that as a visitor of the monument you move in-between these times, the foundation itself is conscious of the functioning of memory and how events should be remembered, and its educational purpose is part of this. The visitor can move in between the monument in the Broersepark, seeing on the one side a group of statues and on the other a group of people that is etched on the wall. The etching functions as a mirror, reflecting both the visitor and the group of statues behind the visitor. The text that accompanies the monument also raises awareness of past, present, future. It seems to invite the visitor to consider how the casualties of the Second World War in the Dutch Indies should be remembered. When keeping the activities of the foundation in mind, the project as a whole actively wants to participate in the memory-culture of the former colony.

The Indië Monument Amstelveen is not a national monument, but it was erected for a specific group of people, namely those who had ties to the former colony. Such a group, however, is still very diverse and does not only consist of Indos with whom this thesis is concerned. The monument, so to speak, unites several groups, recognizing the need for an active community of

⁴⁸ The annual event has the same format every year and a report (together with the speeches) can be found on the website.

memory that remembers a history that is not part of the national narrative. It is not that the memory ties all groups together, but it means that the memory is able to function and be performed in different groups. With this in mind a step towards Rothberg's concept of knotted memories can be made. 'Noeuds de mémoire' are a more flexible concept than 'lieux de mémoire'. They are not limited to the nation-state and transcend communities and ethnic groups. In contrast to 'lieux de mémoire', knotted memories are not bound to territories. Knotted memories are about the memory itself that travels, and not the site that contains a certain memory. It follows that the memory we are concerned with here is multidirectional. Commemorating the casualties of the Second World War in the Dutch Indies, it opens up the space to a wider scope of memory of the Dutch Indies, and even perhaps the aftermath of the colony. The memories that are lived by this group are a combination of minority memories and memories that did circulate in the public discourse. One memory can be seen as a knot in a larger framework of memories. In short, one single memory consists of many different elements: personal narrative, national narrative, and narrative that is created by popular media. Also, the separation of the two monuments: Gordel van Smaragd that is fused by nostalgia and the Indië Monument Amstelveen that deals with the processing of trauma make the monuments multidirectional. Gordel van Smaragd shows that the memory of the Dutch Indies is part of the daily life of many people. It caters to a wish that at last the ashes can be scattered and mixed with the earth of the country of their birth. It answers to a nostalgic need, but the presence of this nostalgia is also perhaps a sign for an underlying wish of recognition. The monument itself is not reflective, but in combination with the larger monument in the Broersepark, it opens up a space for reflectiveness. While the larger monument is a connection to nationwide commemorative events such as the capitulation of Japan in 1945, its smaller version at the cemetery is a more personal and individual commemorative 'lieu'. I think this distinction between collective and individual and the connection of both monuments allows the spectator or visitor to be more critical and more active. On the one hand, there is the restorative form of nostalgia that is significant for Gordel van Smaragd. This monument emphasizes individual mourning, but also pays attention to the connection the Dutch Indies. On the other hand, there is the larger perspective of the commemoration of the capitulation of Japan that places individual stories such as the story of the family Schild into the national narrative.

4.8. Conclusion

The two monuments I have examined in this chapter are part of the public space. They are a physical presence in the cityscape and anyone casually passing by cannot miss them. However, for the pedestrian that walks past either monument, the monument itself has no significant meaning. That is to say, the pedestrian and monument do not cooperate in a commemoration. There is no active

participation from the spectator in this case, since he is merely passing by. The monument, at this point, functions as Nora's description of a 'lieu de mémoire', the monument is a 'lieu' that contains the memory and the 'milieu de mémoire' is inactive. Yet, commemorative events, such as the 'Hacking History' event at the Van Heutsz Monument and the annual commemoration at the Indië Monument Amstelveen, are opportunities for the respective 'milieux de mémoire' to show their activity and commitment. Analysing such events, as I have done in this chapter, shows that the memory of the Dutch Indies is continuously negotiated and its commemoration depends on the different 'milieux' that are involved. The case of the Van Heutsz Monument shows that time changes and celebrating such a famous figure in colonial history, who is currently seen as a perpetrator, becomes controversial. With the change of the monument's status, a new 'milieu de mémoire' becomes active. Since the monument is now commemorating ties between the Netherlands and the Dutch Indies it also involves the migrants that came to the Netherlands after decolonization. But because it is basically the same monument as when it commemorated Van Heutsz, the monument is the subject of a public debate. The 'Hacking History' event plays with this notion. The monument is unveiled anew, a conventional act that usually inaugurates a new monument, but in this case a revolutionary act of reclaiming and resignification.

What is important for these two monuments are the commemorative events and the performances such as speeches and the minutes of silence (during the commemoration at the Amstelveen monument). A speech is an act that only functions with an audience. A speech needs listeners. Paul Connerton writes in his introduction to *How Societies Remember* that memories sustain as they are performed, memories are created through a performative act. According to Connerton, rites give value and meaning to those who perform them. It is not so much the content that matters, but the form. The ritual of speaking at a commemorative event is a common one and such speeches usually include a story of the personal connection to the event that is commemorated. However, in the two cases I have examined, I argue that the content does matter, specifically the personal connection that is related in the speech. This implies that the speaker/performer also has an important role. Latupeirissa and the other speakers whose speeches I have analysed, are part of a minority culture and with speaking they step away from the side-line into the limelight. Latupeirissa does not only reclaim the monument by her act of speaking, but the very words of the Dutch queen. This is good example of performative empowerment, using the language (the queen's speech) and formal rituals (unveiling) of the colonizer. What is more, the personal connection that is spoken of both makes a claim for the memory, but is also part of the working of the memory. It shows the involvement of the 'milieu'. It recognizes trauma, as can be seen in the speech of Schild at the Indië Monument Amstelveen and in the case of the speakers at the Van Heutsz monument it is a call for recognition. The idea of postmemory is also important in respect to the speeches. In proclaiming a

personal connection to the event that is commemorated, often it is the familial tie that plays a role. It suggests that the memory is owned. And it is another layer of the juxtaposition of public and private, imposed and living memory. This comes back when Latuperissa claims the monument for herself and her ancestors, but also in the story of three generations that was told at the Amstelveen monument. In speaking the threshold between public and private is crossed. A personal link is added into the collective memory.

The element of nostalgia is apparent in all acts of commemoration examined in connection to these monuments. The cliché of longing for a country that no longer is remains a strong motive during the commemoration. This is very obvious with Gordel van Smaragd, employing the argument of longing that is fulfilled in death, but also comes at the surface in connection to the two larger monuments. The consuming of a communal 'rijsttafel' as part of the commemorative event connects to this nostalgia for Tempo Doeloe. In it can be seen as an act of performing Indo-identity. While the 'rijsttafel' can be regarded as a collective element of the performance of Indo-identity, the scattering of the ashes of a deceased is an individual act of mourning. The longing for the Dutch Indies as described by this monument is something that unites, the ritual in which presumably only the close relatives join, is private. My analysis of nostalgia shows, that the memory of the Dutch Indies, however critically engaged is never entirely free of cliché elements. However, these nostalgic elements can be seen as rituals as well, connecting the personal with the public idea of performing Indo-identity. The personal speeches that are performed during the commemorative events are only powerful, because they are catalysed through the format of the ritual that enable the speaker to cross the threshold from private to public. Enhancing this with the communal 'rijsttafel' or the longing of to a country that no longer exists ties in to a long tradition of remembering the former Dutch colony.

Conclusion

Departing from the notion of the hybridity of Indos, who traditionally have a position between colonizer and colonized, this thesis has sought to analyse how the memory of the Dutch Indies influences second and third generation Indos in the Netherlands and how their identity is performed/ represented/ manifested through cultural artifacts. While during colonial times and the period right after decolonization Indos were focused on 'being Dutch', after the 'coming out' of second generation Indos in the 1980s the emphasis shifted to the more hybrid aspects of Indo-identity and a renewed appreciation and cultivation of Indonesian culture. Whereas the first generation is notoriously surrounded by 'Indisch zwijgen', employing modes of nostalgia for Tempo Doeloe, the second generation Indos had to deal with their parents' trauma and sought to break through the silence and nostalgia. The break with the first generation occurred especially through literature, but also through other forms of cultural artifacts. For third generation Indos the way was paved by their parents, so to speak. They struggle to balance the exoticism that surrounds the remains of the Dutch Indies with their identity as 'postcolonial product' in the Netherlands.

In this thesis I have analysed both novels and monuments that play an important role for second and (especially) third generation Indos as 'lieux de mémoire'. The purpose of this thesis was twofold: on the one hand I wanted to examine the memory of the Dutch Indies that is shaped by trauma and nostalgia. Colonial memory in the Netherlands is characterized by a discourse of nostalgia that persisted since the beginning of the colony. This same discourse is prominent in Indo memory. Nostalgia, surprisingly, is an aspect that unites Dutch and Indos. Second and third generation Indos reappropriate this discourse, developing a reflective mode of nostalgia that uncovers the complicated position of Indos in the Dutch Indies. On the other hand, I intended to analyse what role these memories play in the performance of Indo-identity in the Netherlands. I argue that commemoration and the circulation of memory in the form of stories play a significant role in the shaping of Indo- identity. The colonial legacy is what determines this identity. It is also something that is cherished and maintained within families. The memory is contained within the familial bond, implying ownership. It concerns narratives that are told and retold within the family. Novels that serve as 'lieu' have taken the place of this oral narrativization, and the speeches held during commemorative events serve the same purpose: telling a personal story that is carried by different generations. The notions of 'Indisch zwijgen' (trauma theory) and nostalgia have been prominent in this analysis of the colonial memory, but the concept of postmemory has a significant role as well. I have analysed *Asta's ogen* by Eveline Stoel, *Een meisje van honderd* by Marion Bloem, the Van Heutsz Monument in Amsterdam, the Indië Monument Amstelveen and its counterpart at

Zorgvlied through the prism of these three concepts, showing how these artifacts function as 'lieux de mémoire'.

Both *Asta's ogen* and *Een meisje van honderd* are family –chronicles, representing the story of one family through several generations, featuring both the Dutch Indies and the Netherlands. The colonial time in its prime, the Second World War, the period of decolonization and migration to the Netherlands are important historical elements of the plot. I have analysed both novels according to plot, reviews, and reader's responses. Seeking a way to represent the significance the novels have for the reader, I interpreted reviews from leading newspapers and online blogs to analyse the novels' public position. The reader's responses from Bol.com and the responses I obtained as a result of my own inquiry I analysed in an attempt to approach the private reading experience of the reader. A critical note should be added that the approach of these reviews and responses is based on interpretation and that they are not used as empirical evidence. Nevertheless, I argue that interpretation of such reading responses offers a good image of the novel's reception and gives insight into whether the commemorative potential of these novels is actualized in their readers.

Asta's ogen is represented by both the individual readers and its reviewers as a historical account that is based on facts. The novel contains a combination of historical details and the personal experiences of the Hoyer-family. The idea that the story of the Hoyer-family could be the story of many Indo-families is a leading feature both in the creation of the novel (as Stoel stresses in her prologue as well as in interviews) as in the experience of the readers. In this respect the novel can be seen as a carrier of memory. The reader recommends the novel to others, mostly family, based on an experience of recognition. As 'lieu,' *Asta's ogen* has an active 'milieu de mémoire', consisting of Indos of second and third generation who use the novel as a source of information and as a carrier of memory, recommending the book to other family-members in an attempt to show 'what it is was like'. Stoel's position as outsider supports the reliability of the novel in the eyes of both reviewers and readers. While in the private sphere, the element of recognition is regarded as significant, Stoel's position as outsider is stressed in the public sphere. The historicity of the novel is highly valued in this respect. The development of the plot and the form of narration connect to this idea. Stoel mainly uses facts and employs a distant third-person narration. The plot contains no references to other literary works and employs notions of trauma and nostalgia without critical reflection. Stoel's position as outsider and the distant narration support the novel idea that the novel is a 'historical account' that only narrates facts. Granting the knowledge that Stoel has written the novel to provide a story for the future generations, *Asta's ogen* does not reflect on the workings of memory nor has it an explicitly commemorative function. The commemorative element is added by the reader.

Een meisje van honderd by Marion Bloem differs from *Asta's ogen* in many respects. Not only does this novel have a much more complicated plot, it also makes use of numerous intertextual links. Central to the plot is the figure of Moemie, representing the eternal connection that is genetic, but also fused by guilt, of Indos to Indonesia. Moemie's presence serves as a reminder of the 'guilt' of the Dutch colonizer. Unlike *Asta's ogen* it shows the atrocities that were committed by Dutch in the colony. Bloem inscribes the novel into the canon of works dealing with Dutch colonialism. On the one hand, this allows for criticism on the colonial history. On the other hand, by drawing on *Max Havelaar*, Bloem places her novel in a larger framework of exoticism, nostalgia and a Dutch national hero. In other words, although *Een meisje van honderd* is very critical of the colonial system, the novel is critically engaging cliché ideas that persist in Dutch society to this day. Moemie also serves as a reminder of the hybrid position Charlotte, Daisy, Beila and their entire Indo- family occupy. Ever since colonial times Indos move between the perpetrator and victim position and after decades it is time to recognize and accept this. The novel also uses multidirectional elements, as the plot is driven by Moemie's prediction of 9/11. It offers a view of a historical period and at the same time it is critical towards the way this period is remembered by referring to modes of nostalgia and suggesting a way to work through trauma. To me as literary critic the novel seems the perfect memory-text to commemorate colonial times, but *Een meisje van honderd* is not received by the reader as such. While readers seem engaged with their background and pick up *Een meisje van honderd* as a result of this interest, they do not recommend the book to others, like readers did with *Asta's ogen*.

Although Bloem dedicates her novel to her grandchildren, supposedly creating a document for the subsequent generations, the reader's responses do not show that the novel functions as a carrier of memory. The novel is determined by Bloem's own fame as author. I think that *Een meisje van honderd* can be seen as a knot in a network of memories concerning the colonial past with its many intertextual links offering a reconciliation of perpetrator and victim. These elements of the plot make *Een meisje van honderd* able to function as 'lieu'. Nevertheless, considering the reviews and responses of readers the 'milieu' is not active as with *Asta's ogen*. This can have several causes, the complicated structure might be a feature, or the different kind of publicity around the novel. *Een meisje van honderd* is not an easy read, whereas *Asta's ogen* is very accessible with a straightforward plot. Perhaps, Stoel plays more into the nostalgic urge of the reader than Bloem does. Bloem adopts a critical attitude that requires a reader that is equally critical. The absence of intertextual links and critical notions, make that *Asta's ogen* is picked up more easily as a memory-text.

A whole other form of 'lieux de mémoire' are the monuments I have examined. As physical presence in the public space they embody the need to commemorate certain events. However, by itself the monument has no significant meaning other than the embodiment of memory. In a way, 'lieu' and 'milieu' can be separated. The monument does not need active participation of its 'milieu',

but it also means that the memory is not really alive. Nevertheless, both the Van Heutsz Monument and the Indië Monument Amstelveen are closely linked to the 'milieu' of second and third generation Indos.

The Van Heutsz Monument is since 2001 officially named the Indië Nederland Monument and does no longer commemorate the 'peacemaker of Aceh' general Van Heutsz, but the ties between the Netherlands and its former colony. The monument's physicality has not changed, this causes the monument to be the centre of a discussion surrounding colonial memory: how to combine the memory of perpetrator with the trauma of the victims. While the monument's status is already the subject of debate, the 'Hacking History' event shifted the focus to a group for whom the "colonial past is part of their daily life", as Sarah Klerks described it in her speech during the event. Indos, the key audience of the event, are a minority group that seek recognition for colonial suffering with the 'Hacking History' event. The monument is unveiled, a conventional act that usually initiates a new monument. Unveiling it yet again in combination with Latuperissa's speech, the monument is reclaimed, showing an example of the 'empire writes back' in the language of the colonizer. Unveiling is a ceremonious act and Latuperissa re-uses the words of the queen. Latuperissa's speech and the other speeches become a performative act, linking the monument to the colonial memory of second and third generation Indos.

While this is only a one-time event, the Indië Monument Amstelveen is the object of an annual commemorative event on the 14th of August, preceding the yearly commemoration of the capitulation of Japan on the 15th of August. Speeches play an important role during this event, hosting a number of officials, but also always one speaker with a personal connection to the Dutch Indies. Considering the speeches at the 'Hacking History' event and the annual commemoration at Amstelveen I argue that speech acts form an important element of the commemoration. Speech acts are a way to work through trauma offering both representation and testimony. A personal connection is made, claiming the memory, but it is also a call for recognition. Especially, for the Van Heutsz monument these speech acts are of great importance. It foregrounds the 'milieu de mémoire' that has not always been directly connected to the monument, but that was always concerned as well. The Indië Monument Amstelveen is a different matter, from the beginning the 'intended' was actively involved in creating the monument. The speeches give an extra dimension to the 'lieu' and make that the monument is not merely a 'monument', but is able to function as a 'lieu de mémoire'.

The Van Heutsz monument is a 'lieu' that is created top-down on initiative of the city council of Amsterdam, it has also been renovated on the city council's initiative. The monuments in Amstelveen are generated bottom-up, but by being supported by a special foundation they have become institutionalized as well. As the speech acts show the monument needs a personal connection to function properly as 'lieu', but the case with such monuments is that they are always

public. The Indië Monument Amstelveen is a reflective monument, reflecting on the notion of memory in past and present. The form of the monument offers a way for the spectator to move between past and present, seeing the images of the past reflected in the statue of the present. Its counterpart Gordel van Smaragd, on the cemetery Zorgvlied, employs the nostalgic notion of a longing for the Indonesian earth, offering a way to fulfil this longing in death by providing the opportunity of scattering the ashes of a deceased on the monument.

The performative act of speaking is important with respect to the commemorative events. Consequently, it is significant for the monument to be approached as a 'lieu'. On the one hand, giving a speech contains an element of recognition. While speaking in public, there is a need to be heard and recognized by the audience. Giving a speech in this case is tied to a single event, the commemoration. The process in regarding a novel as 'lieu' is similar, but works the other way around. In the act of reading, a search for recognition is made⁴⁹. When the need for recognition is answered, the novel can be recommended to other readers. Recognition is the main drive behind the circulation of the literary text. And this is also, why it gets problematic if a literary text presents a critical or uncomfortable position as is the case with *Een meisje van honderd*. On the other hand, the performative act of speaking offers a way to testify. The personal story is both testified to and represented through the speech. Giving a speech is also a form of narration and being heard in public the speech offers possibilities to retell the story. Tied to a singular event that requires an audience, the act of speaking is different from the form of narration that is found in a novel that is a 'lieu'. Although a novel needs an audience as well, the act of reading is not tied to a singular event and can also be repeated. It is different to the act of speaking or writing, because the reader does not testify, but consumes a text. Reading should be regarded more as an experience and reading occurs in the private sphere, making reading an individual act. However, a text can be read with the intention of performing the memory, of keeping the memory alive. Reading a text such as the novels examined here, offers images of the past, in order to make the memory more accessible. A performative act should also be tied to the notion of rituals, as Connerton points out. Rites are valuably and meaningful to those who perform them. It is not so much the content that matters, but the form. Speaking during a commemorative event is a common ritual, enhancing the meaning of the event. Reading and circulating the novel within families can be seen as a ritual as well in this respect. The reading and circulating of the novel is a way to carry the memory to different generations.

Both *Asta's ogen* and *Een meisje van honderd* offer a fictionalization that can be transferred to memory, whereas both monuments refer to actual historical events The Van Heutsz monument

⁴⁹ The act of writing is not considered in this study, but a note should be added that writing can be regarded as a speech act as well, offering both testimony and representation.

originally referred to General Van Heutsz and the Indië Monument Amstelveen refers to the casualties of the Second World War in the Dutch Indies. As I have shown, for *Asta's ogen*, the aspect of reality is regarded as an important feature by the reader. Its realist approach causes the novel to be circulated among readers. While *Een meisje van honderd* employs the notion of magical realism, embedding the novel in a tradition of colonial writings, but also offering a more critical perspective than *Asta's ogen*. Both monuments I have examined depart from a historical event, but as such also play a part in the perception of contemporary Indos. Both the fictionalization and the representation of a historical event are important for the memory to be 'lived'. This means the memory is constantly negotiated, requiring an active participation of the 'milieu de mémoire'.

As I have shown, the notions of 'Indisch zwijgen' and nostalgia are alternately used. Nostalgia is a way to cover up trauma, but also forms a discourse that is adapted when the Dutch Indies are approached. Especially, for the notion of 'Indisch zwijgen' the importance of recognition should be stressed. When dealing with the colonial memory of second and third generation Indos, one deals with a minority. The trauma of first generation Indos has long been ignored, suppressed by the trauma of the Second World War in the Netherlands. What is more, the migration to the Netherlands and adaptation to Dutch society has always been regarded as a smooth process, whereas the difficulties and the racism that Indos encountered was ignored. In memory, the recognition is most important. The element of both perpetrator and victim, colonizer- colonized should be featured, as the speeches at the Van Heutsz Monument show. It is a question of balance. Important is also that these stories remain told and retold. There is a space for literature to be filled. Particularly, *Een meisje van honderd* has shown how literature can offer a solution to use the in-betweenness of Indos in the postcolonial context.

However, in the end the 'lieu' always depends on the activity of the 'milieu'. Does the 'milieu' pick up the notions of memory and commemoration that the 'lieu' offer and become active or does the 'lieu' remain a 'lieu' the way Nora described it? I argue that the 'milieu' of second and third generation Indos is especially active, and it seeks a way to remember the colonial past, so as to balance the minority story to the larger national narrative.

This thesis could be placed in the tradition of studies that examine cultural artifacts from the colony or studies that analyse the traces of the colonial period in contemporary culture. I have followed the footsteps of Pamela Pattynama and Paul Bijl, but my thesis has also been an attempt to add a new element to these studies by focusing mainly on third generation Indos, study literary texts as 'lieux de mémoire' and by combining literary texts and memorials. However, my analysis of reader responses and speeches at commemorative events could be extended, a more thorough study of reader responses could be made, focusing on the element of empathy and the workings of the text. Similarly, the impact of the monuments should be analysed to reach a full conclusion. As such, my

thesis can be seen as the beginning of or foundation for a much larger study, placing the study of second/third generation Indo memory into a comparative perspective of other migrant generations in both the Netherlands and abroad. I am thinking of literary texts that are written by children of 'gastarbeiders' (guest workers) who arrived in the Netherlands around the 1960s. A colonial relation is absent in this respect, but these nationalities were likewise approached as 'other'. The motivation of this first generation is different from the need to migrate to the Netherlands by first generation Indos and the relationship between colonizer-colonized is absent. A more international and comparative perspective could be reached by extending the analysis to the colonial memory in France or England. In France, for example, there is a long tradition of Algerian writers. The question how to balance the colonial memory is a broader question and it is important that Dutch colonialism is analysed in an international perspective. This thesis has shown how the second and third generation Indos deal with colonial memory and bring their perspective from the margins through the centre by employing literary texts and (re)claiming memorials and will hopefully be the starting point of much more study.

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Appendix I: Reader's Responses Online Request

Request can be found on *Indisch3.0*: <http://www.indisch3.nl/oproep-lezers-van-astas-ogen-of-een-meisje-van-honderd/>

Questions:

1. Ben je Indo? Zo ja, welke generatie? En wat is je link met Indonesië en Nederlands-Indië?
2. Waarom ben je *Asta's ogen* van Eveline Stoel en/of *Een meisje van honderd* van Marion Bloem gaan lezen?
3. Had je een gevoel van (h)erkenning? (leg uit)
4. Sluit het boek aan bij jouw beleving van 'Indisch' zijn?
5. Speelt je achtergrond mee bij het lezen van het boek en zo ja hoe?
6. Houdt het boek de herinnering van het Indische verleden in stand en is het een roman die je zou doorgeven om die reden?
7. Wat vond je van het boek?

Responses:

Ellen de Bats

1. Ik ben Indo, 2e generatie. Ik ben in 1947 geboren in Biak (voormalig Nederlands Nieuw-Guinea, Nederlands-Indië; mijn vader was er voor een jaar vanwege zijn werk gedetacheerd), en ik ben overwegend opgegroeid in Bandoeng (West-Java) tot mijn twaalfde jaar.
2. Ik ben dol op lezen. Ook in de boeken over de Indische geschiedenis ben ik - vanwege mijn achtergrond - geïnteresseerd.
3. Er is zeker een gevoel van herkenning bij het lezen van de boeken. *Asta's ogen* is een vlot, leesbaar verhaal. Marion Bloem schrijft wat gecompliceerder.
4. De boeken sluiten aan bij de - schaarse - verhalen die overgeleverd zijn door de naaste familie. Ik heb een gedeelte van de dekolonisatie meegemaakt, maar niet bewust, want ik was nog een kind. Ik herken in de boeken wel een stuk tragiek in onze Indische geschiedenis. Maar ik herken ook de grandeur van het Indische verleden, het Tempo Doeloe (de enkele verhalen van mijn oma, de oude foto's).
5. De Indische achtergrond van mij is herkenbaar in de boeken. Hoewel ik sommige gedeeltes uit *Asta's ogen* b.v. niet toepasbaar vind op mij. Ik heb de bootreis naar Nederland heerlijk gevonden, en de aankomst in Nederland was vanwege het klimaat koud en kil, maar ik heb de mensen altijd heel aardig gevonden. Maar misschien komt het doordat het de beleving van een kind is. Een kind neemt veranderingen vaak als vanzelfsprekend aan. Een kind past zich snel aan.
6. Het doorgeven van het Indische verleden is in beide boeken heel goed gedaan. Er is ook zoveel gebeurd in Indie. Het is een groot avontuur geweest.
7. Ik vond de boeken interessant om te lezen. Omdat er zoveel is gebeurd in Indie, denk ik, dat er ook nog zoveel over geschreven kan worden. Dat zie ik ook aan het aantal boeken en verhalen die de laatste tijd over Indie en Indonesië worden uitgegeven.

Dewi van Beek

1. Ben je Indo? Zo ja, welke generatie? En wat is je link met Indonesië en Nederlands-Indië? Mijn oma is geboren in Bandung en had een Indische vader en een Indonesische moeder. Zij trouwde

met een Nederlander en kwam in 1956 met mijn twee ooms naar Nederland, waar mijn moeder vervolgens geboren werd. Ik ben zelf 24 en beschouw mezelf derde generatie (op basis van de definitie als in het boek *Indisch* is een gevoel.

2. Waarom ben je *Asta's ogen* van Eveline Stoel en/of *Een meisje van honderd* van Marion Bloem gaan lezen? Ik ben *Asta's ogen* gaan lezen omdat ik graag een keer een roman wilde lezen over Indische mensen in Nederland. Bovendien was het boek net uit tijdens mijn stage bij Moesson waardoor ik sowieso al meer open stond voor mijn Indische kant en de geschiedenis.
3. Had je een gevoel van (h)erkenning? (leg uit) Ik herken veel onderdelen uit de verhalen van mijn oma. Ik heb haar geïnterviewd dus ik weet wel veel over haar leven. Het mooie van *Asta's ogen* is dat het boek eigenlijk over de hele Indische gemeenschap gaat, omdat iedereen er denk ik wel iets uit herkent. Verder herken ik vooral de dingen aan het einde, mijn oma lijkt in veel dingen best wel op *Asta*. Ook de familie aangelegenheden, al heb ik dat niet zo'n mate meegemaakt omdat ik als jongste van de hele familie alleen mijn naaste Indische familie heb meegemaakt, waar mijn moeder echt al die 'ooms en tantes' had.
4. Sluit het boek aan bij jouw beleving van 'Indisch' zijn? Jazeker, ik denk dat wanneer je het boek leest, dat je weet wat Indisch zijn is, ook als ik het lastig in woorden te vatten.
5. Speelt je achtergrond mee bij het lezen van het boek en zo ja hoe? Jazeker, ik denk dat juist omdat ik Indisch ben dat ik dit boek ben gaan lezen, anders had ik het wellicht laten liggen.
6. Houdt het boek de herinnering van het Indische verleden in stand en is het een roman die je zou doorgeven om die reden? Ja, absoluut omdat het een meer gangbare, toegankelijke manier is om de geschiedenis te vertellen en door te geven. Ik denk ook dat veel mensen hierdoor misschien juist gaan vertellen over hun leven. Ik heb het mijn moeder aangeraden zij weer mijn oma.
7. Wat vond je van het boek? Ik vond het een prachtig boek, zeer herkenbaar en zeer informatief. Ik denk dat veel Indische mensen er herkenning uit kunnen halen.

Monique van Bruggen-Rufi

1. Ben je Indo? Zo ja, welke generatie? En wat is je link met Indonesië en Nederlands-Indië? Ja, 2^e generatie, geboren in 1962. Beide ouders zijn Indisch, gerepatrieerd in 1950.
2. Waarom ben je *Asta's ogen* van Eveline Stoel en/of *Een meisje van honderd* van Marion Bloem gaan lezen? Ik heb alleen *Asta's ogen* gelezen. Het werd mij aanbevolen door een collega die weet dat ik veel affiniteit heb met deze doelgroep, vanuit mijn eigen roots natuurlijk, maar ook vanuit een wetenschappelijke belangstelling. Ik heb ooit een scriptie geschreven over de specifieke hulpvraag van eerste generatie ouderen.
3. Had je een gevoel van (h)erkenning? (leg uit) Absoluut! Het was alsof ik het verhaal van mijn moeder las. Ik wist fragmentarisch wel wat er in haar verleden gespeeld had, maar door dit boek werd mij veel meer helder.
4. Sluit het boek aan bij jouw beleving van 'Indisch' zijn? Jazeker, het sluit niet alleen aan maar het heeft de beleving versterkt.
5. Speelt je achtergrond mee bij het lezen van het boek en zo ja hoe? Zie ook antwoord hierboven. Het verhaal van *Asta* zou het verhaal van mijn oma en moeder kunnen zijn. Met name omdat het vanuit de vrouw is geschreven, mijn moeder had alleen maar zussen, vader overleden tgv de Japanse krijgsgevangenschap.
6. Houdt het boek de herinnering van het Indische verleden in stand en is het een roman die je zou doorgeven om die reden? Na het lezen van het boek heb ik het aan mijn hele familie doorgegeven, en iedereen was unaniem....

7. Wat vond je van het boek? Een heel goed boek, heel herkenbaar, enfin, zie de antwoorden hierboven....

Kim van Dijsseldonk

1. Ja
2. 3^e generatie. Mijn moeders familie komt er vandaan
3. Mijn tante had asta's ogen gelezen en vertelde me dat het een mooi boek was over de ervaringen doe ook onze familie had meegemaakt
4. Ja, ik herkende verhalen van mijn opa, oudtantes en overgrootmoeder.
5. Ja, door de herkenbaarheid, voorbeelden van verhalen, gebruiken en familiepatronen
6. Ja, zie de aanleiding van het lezen. Plus het boek maakte me nieuwsgierig naar hoe mijn familie het allemaal beleefd heeft.
7. Ja, het boek is inmiddels ook de hele familie door!
8. Ik vond het een erg mooi boek. Ik houd van boeken die een cultuur, tijd beschrijven vanuit menselijk oogpunt. Dat dit over een Indische familie ging maakt het extra bijzonder.

Ron Geenen

1. En wat is je link met Indonesië en Nederlands-Indië? Ik ben Indo, geboren 1936 in Sawahlunto bij Padang, west Sumatra. Generatie 1 1/2 en net als de hoofdspeler Asta. Zie mijn weblog <http://www.MyIndoWorld.com> voor mijn link met Indie.
2. Asta's ogen verteld de hoofdpersoon haar ervaringen in Nederland (Oss). Het Geenen gezin, moeder met kinderen, en ik als oudste hebben bijna de zelfde ervaring opgedaan in Beuningen bij Nijmegen.
3. Ja zeker, de discriminatie van de plaatselijke bevolking, dat bestond uit boeren en arbeiders, die nooit ver zijn geweest. Problemen met de katholieke kerk, omdat mijn moeder hertrouwde met een protestante Indo. (Mijn vader was gemarteld en vermoord door de Jappen.) De bekrompenheid van de dorps bewoners, het vaak onverstaanbare dialect, dat er werd gesproken, het uitschelden met woorden als apen.
4. De Indische ervaring van Asta was iets anders, want dat speelde zich af op Java. Wij waren gevangenen o.a. in het Japanse concentratie kamp Bangkinang voor 3 1/2 jaar. Maar de ellende van de oorlog waren het zelfde.
5. Ja, mijn achtergrond was van invloed bij het lezen van het boek. Zie mijn website.
6. Ja, het boek herinner mij aan mijn jeugd en ik wil dat een iedere Indo van de generatie na mij dat hoort te weten. Per slot van rekening ben ik een Indo met een eigen cultuur dat uniek is. Ik ben geen Indonesier en ik ben geen Nederlander, al heb ik een Ned. paspoort.
7. Goed boek voor een ieder die onze ervaringen in Indie en ook in Nederland willen weten. Want ons jonge Indische leven en jeugd was totaal verknald. Eerst door de Jappen, dan tijdens de bersiap door de Indonesiers, totaal 8 jaren en daarna door de slechte behandeling door Nederland. (De bevolking, de opvang in de contract pensions en de uitbuiting en de behandeling als tweede rang burgers door de regering)

Mike Heineman

Ben Indo, tweede generatie en in 1937 in Bandung geboren. Vader was NL bij het KNIL en moeder Javaanse.

Heb Asta's ogen gelezen en vond het zo treffend, dat ik het boek gekocht heb om aan mijn dochter te geven die in 1962 geboren was in Zeist, toen ik op NwGuinea als marinier op patrouille was. Een leuk verjaardags cadeau.

Alles in het boek was voor mij herkenbaar en voor mijn dochter vooral Asta zelf. Het had haar oma kunnen zijn.

Sprekend !!!!

Leonne Joosten

1. Ja ik ben Indo. 3e generatie. Mijn moeder is dochter van twee Indischen.
2. Ik heb veel interesse in de Indische cultuur. Al op de middelbare school las ik veel Indische boeken. Het geeft me inderdaad een gevoel van herkenning, het vinden van iets waar je deel van uitmaakt zonder dat het voor anderen tastbaar is.
3. Inderdaad gevoel van herkenning. Het belang van familiebanden, het respect voor ouderen, de ongeschreven regels, de centrale rol die eten speelt, het doorgaan met je leven nadat je alles kwijt bent geraakt, het eeuwige aanpassen
4. Met name Asta's ogen sluit heel goed aan, zie ook de antwoorden bij de vorige vraag.
5. Ja, omdat ik ook zoek naar herkenning. Ik qua uiterlijk 100% hollands, maar heb qua karakter veel Indische trekken. Bescheidenheid, aanpassen, belang van harmonie etc. Dus ik voel me vaak thuis in dit soort boeken.
6. Ja, ik heb het boek gekregen van mijn tante en heb het doorgegeven aan mijn moeder. Het optekenen van onze geschiedenis geeft me een gevoel van trots.
7. Te lang geleden gelezen om in detail op te kunnen antwoorden. In ieder geval Mooie boeken, speciale plekje in de boekenkast!

Mercia Kerkhof

1. Ik ben tweede generatie Indo. Zowel mijn vader als mijn moeder zijn indo's en zij zijn in 1958 naar Nederland gekomen. Voor de volledigheid: ik ben de jongste dochter van oom Bosje, het jongste broertje van oom Hennie.
2. Ik heb alleen Asta's Ogen gelezen. In eerste instantie op aanraden van een (Indische, ook tweede generatie) vriendin.
3. Er was een groot gevoel van herkenning. Mijn vader en moeder zijn in Surabaya opgegroeid, hoewel mijn moeder pas op latere leeftijd naar Surabaya kwam, zij is op Madura geboren. Zowel mijn vader als mijn moeder vertelden veel over hun jeugd in deze stad (plekken waar ze vaak kwamen, scholen, uitgaansgelegenheden) en we hebben nog heel veel foto's. Ook waren er veel overeenkomsten met de tocht naar Nederland en de eerste jaren hier. Ik ben pas in 1966 geboren, maar mijn ouders spraken vaak over deze tijd en de moeilijkheden die zij hebben ondervonden bij het opbouwen van een bestaan hier.
4. Ik ben trots op mijn Indische roots, maar ben daar niet dagelijks mee bezig. "indisch zijn" vind ik een lastig begrip, omdat het voor iedereen iets anders betekent. Ik denk dat men de overeenkomsten voornamelijk vindt in woorden en gebruiken, opvoeding, normen en waarden (vooral: de Indische mentaliteit van hard werken en vooral niet opvallen).
5. Ja, achtergrond speelt zeker mee. Maar ook als je niet Indisch bent, is het een mooi boek om te lezen.

6. Ja.
7. Ik vond het boek prachtig. Ontroerend. In sommige stukken van het boek zag ik niet Asta maar mijn moeder voor me of moest ik sterk aan mijn vader denken. Ik denk dat ik Asta's verhaal uiteindelijk meer op mijn eigen ouders heb betrokken. Overigens heeft mijn moeder het boek overigens nog maar recent gelezen. Ze raakte er niet over uitgepraat en ze was best emotioneel toen ze het uit had.

Betty van Leeuwen

1. Ja, ik ben indo. geboren in Surakarta (Solo) 28-07-1937. tweede generatie. ik heb met mijn ouders en broertje de oorlog in Indonesie meegemaakt en in 1950 zijn we naar Nederland vertrokken om dat het moet. Mijn vader was van de KNIL.
2. Ik ben op advies van een Ind. vriendin geweest om het boek Asta's ogen te gaan lezen. Ook mede door de club Tempo Dulu van seniorweb.nl. Eveline Stoel werd me aan bevolen.
3. Van het begin tot het einde had ik het gevoel van herkenning. Sterke vrouw ondanks ze klein en teer van stuk (lees grote) zijn. Volhouden en jezelf weg cijferen. Leven voor de kinderen en anderen.
4. Ja het boek sluit bij me aan. Heeft me gebracht tot wat ik hier in Nederland kon doen voor en bij het Ned. Rode Kruis. Ben 40 jaar lid geweest. En ben lid geworden van de Club Tempo Dulu. Waar bij we nog veel herinneringen bespreken.
5. Herinneringen aan mijn moeder en Oma. Hoe? samen horigheid.
6. Herinneringen blijven maar je moet wel nuchter blijven. We leven wel nu. Het boek heb ik wel gepromoot naar anderen. Wel of geen mensen uit Indonesie.
7. Het boek vond ik goed, gevoelig, liefdevol geschreven. Met dank aan Eveline Stoel

Ellen van Polanen-Petel

1. Ben je Indo en zo ja welke generatie? En wat is je link met Indonesië en Nederlands-Indië? Vanwege mijn afkomst zal ik wel Indo genoemd kunnen worden. Zelf heb ik niet zoveel met deze naam of welke andere aanduiding van nationaliteit dan ook. Het is maar een naam, wij zijn hier allemaal mensen met elkaar op aarde en zullen er ook samen iets van moeten maken. Landsaard doet er voor mij dus niet veel toe. Wat overigens niet wil zeggen dat ik niet nog een en ander herken van de manier van leven van de mensen die in het land wonen/woonden dat Indonesië wordt genoemd. Net zoals ik ook een aantal dingen herken van die mensen die - bijna geen van allen vrijwillig - zijn verplaatst naar deze koudere streken. Tot welke generatie van deze groep ik hoor, weet ik niet eens, ik heb me er niet in verdiept. Mijn beide ouders hebben een Nederlands paspoort. Als ik de stamboom van mijn vaders kant bekijk, zie ik dat de stammoeder uit Nederland komt, mijn stamvader uit Frankrijk. Allochtonen. Sommige van hun kindertjes hebben zich verbonden met - zoals dat vroeger werd genoemd - inlandse mensen. Autochtonen dus. Eenzelfde soort verhaal speelt bij mijn oma van vaders kant. Van mijn moeders kant ligt het voor mij wat ingewikkelder, de sporen zijn niet zover terug te leiden wat mijn opa betreft. Als ik zijn foto bekijk, zie ik wat negroïde kenmerken. De juistheid hiervan is voor mij niet te achterhalen. Waarom niet? Mijn moeder wilde niets weten van enig feit dat haar vader misschien zou kunnen afstammen van mensen uit Afrika. In elk geval is wel duidelijk dat zijn vader het heeft aangelegd met een inlandse, terwijl hij getrouwd was. Het kan dus net zo goed zijn dat mijn inlandse overgrootmoeder zo donker was. Er zullen vast volkeren geleefd hebben in dat deel van de

wereld die ook zo donker waren, wie zal het zeggen? Hoe dan ook, mijn opa had een Nederlands paspoort. Zijn vrouw, mijn andere oma, had een Duitse achtergrond, terug te voeren naar Köln. Haar moeder had Indische ouders, naar ik begrepen heb. Zowel mijn ouders als ik zijn geboren onder de tropenzon. Het gezin waar ik toe behoor is begin jaren '60 naar Nederland gekomen.

2. Waarom ben je Asta's ogen van Eveline Stoel en/of Een meisje van honderd van Marion Bloem gaan lezen? Ik ben het boek Asta's ogen gaan lezen op aanraden van een vriendin. Een meisje van honderd wil ik ook lezen, maar daar ben ik nog niet aan toe gekomen.
3. Had je een gevoel van (h)erkenning? (leg uit) Het gevoel van herkenning was voor een deel zeker aanwezig. Toevalligerwijs zijn ook wij terechtgekomen in de stad Oss. Ik was weliswaar een stuk jonger dan de oudste zonen, maar ik heb op dezelfde middelbare school gezeten. Wat mij in het verhaal opviel, was in elk geval dat de familie Hoyer heel erg zichzelf bleven en zo haar leven heeft geleefd. Wat ik nog weet is dat zulks bij ons niet het geval was. Mijn ouder - en dan met name mijn moeder - probeerden heel erg het leven van de mensen hier te leven, niet op te vallen, keurig Nederlands te spreken en zich keurig en muisstil te gedragen. Dit werd de kinderen ook opgelegd. Vrij heb ik mij onder het juk van mijn moeder nooit gevoeld. Vuile was werd absoluut niet buiten gehangen. De familie Hoyer werd in elk geval door mijn moeder enigszins als vulgair beschouwd en wij mochten daar beslist niet mee omgaan. De herkenning was wat mij betreft ook hoe bij de opvang in Nederland met ons gezin en medelotgenoten is omgegaan.
4. Sluit het boek aan bij jouw beleving van 'Indisch' zijn? Hierop weet ik geen antwoord. Ik herken wel gevoelens en gewoonten en waarschijnlijk daarom ben ik Indo. Maar ik ben zoveel meer en weiger me in een hokje te laten duwen.
5. Speelt je achtergrond mee bij het lezen van het boek en zo ja hoe? Ja, mijn achtergrond speelt zeker mee bij het lezen. Ik wil(de) weten hoe het is voor andere mensen, die, net als wij, daar min of meer verdreven zijn. Mijn moeder heeft, voor zover mogelijk, het contact met Indischen zo veel mogelijk vermeden. Om niet te zeggen dat ze dit zelfs afzwoer. Dit zal voor mijn vader, die daar veel soepeler mee omging, niet makkelijk zijn geweest. Indisch is en was voor mij voornamelijk het niet te versmaden eten.
6. Houdt het boek de herinnering van het Indische verleden in stand en is het een roman die je zou doorgeven om die reden? Ik houd niet van in stand houden van het oude, wat dat oude ook is. Leren van het oude tot daaraan toe. Ik leef vanuit het hier en nu en dat bevalt me prima. Zo wil ik het ook. Ik besef dat dit een discrepantie kan inhouden tussen de mensen die het Indo-zijn coûte que coûte in stand willen houden en mijzelf. Het zij zo. Mijn man (die vee, meer dan ik) een hang heeft naar het Indische, en ik hebben geprobeerd onze kinderen bij te brengen dat (hun) levenslessen in het hier en nu liggen. Ook dat dit niet uitsluit dat je nieuwsgierig bent naar vroeger, wil weten van vroeger. Wat totaal iets anders is dan het oude te laten standhouden.
7. Wat vond je van het boek? Het boek was voor mij interessant omdat het voor mij wel een licht heeft geworpen over hoe anders, ook in oorlogstijd, het leven van mijn moeder is geweest ten opzichte van die van Asta en haar gezin. Hoe anders en bekrompener eigenlijk zij hun leven (later) hebben ingericht ten opzichte van Asta.

Sabina de Rozario

1. Ben je Indo? Zo ja, welke generatie? Ja, 3e generatie
2. En wat is je link met Indonesië en Nederlands-Indië? Grootouders en vader in Indie geboren. Link met Indonesië: ik woon er.

3. Waarom ben je *Asta's ogen* van Eveline Stoel en/of *Een meisje van honderd* van Marion Bloem gaan lezen? Ik lees bijna alles als het over Nederlands-Indie of de Indische cultuur te maken heeft,
4. Had je een gevoel van (h)erkenning? (leg uit) Herkenning vanuit opvoeding, cultuur, Indisch-zijn. Erkenning voor de afkomst in zijn algemeen misschien? Geen persoonlijke erkenning van deze twee boeken.
5. Sluit het boek aan bij jouw beleving van 'Indisch' zijn? Ja en nee.
6. Speelt je achtergrond mee bij het lezen van het boek en zo ja hoe? Speelt mee, ik herken alles in de verhalen, niets is vreemd. Dat maakt het makkelijk maar soms voorspelbaar.
7. Houdt het boek de herinnering van het Indische verleden in stand en is het een roman die je zou doorgeven om die reden? Ja, boeken dragen bij tot de overdracht van de Indische cultuur. En ja, dat is zeker de reden dat ik het zou doorgeven.
8. Wat vond je van het boek? *Asta's ogen* erg goed, alleen zijn niet alle verhalen van de familie zelf. De schrijfster heeft veel geschiedenisboeken geraadpleegd en die informatie bij de verhalen geplaatst als zijnde dat het authentieke herinneringen van de familie zijn. Dat is niet zo. Ze is een goede schrijfster en journalist en heeft als buitenstaander de Indische cultuur vaak goed beschreven en begrepen. *Meisje van 100*: Alles uit de indische geschiedenis staat in het boek. Naslagwerk. Boeiend verhaal vaak.

Hennie Samuels

1. Ben je Indo? Ja, in Nederland geboren. Zo ja, welke generatie? 2e generatie. En wat is je link met Indonesië en Nederlands-Indië? Indische ouders naar Nederland gekomen in 1953.
2. Waarom ben je *Asta's ogen* van Eveline Stoel en/of *Een meisje van honderd* van Marion Bloem gaan lezen? Ik heb *Asta's ogen* gelezen doordat ik een artikel in een blad hierover heb gelezen.
3. Had je een gevoel van (h)erkenning? (leg uit) Ja, ik heb zeker een herkenning als indisch meisje uit een gezin van 6 kinderen en opgegroeid in de jaren 60/70.
4. Sluit het boek aan bij jouw beleving van 'Indisch' zijn? Ja het is herkenning.
5. Speelt je achtergrond mee bij het lezen van het boek en zo ja hoe? Jazeker speelt mijn achtergrond mee door mijn "Indische" opvoeding.
6. Houdt het boek de herinnering van het Indische verleden in stand en is het een roman die je zou doorgeven om die reden? Het houdt het het Indisch verleden in stand. Ik heb het boek doorgegeven aan mijn zussen en verder aan mijn nichtjes.
7. Wat vond je van het boek? Het is fijn om boeken te kunnen lezen waarin dezelfde dingen uit mijn eigen familie terugkomt. Het is alweer een paar jaar geleden dat ik het boek heb gelezen dus de details zijn niet meer zo helder. Aangezien ik het boek niet meer heb kan ik ook niet even bladeren.

Ik ben in 1959 geboren en heb met mijn oudste zus geboren in 1951 Surabaya vaker discussies over het indisch-zijn. Ik vind het belangrijk dat onze indische geschiedenis doorgaat en mijn zus vindt dit veel minder belangrijk.

Mocht je nog meer informatie nodig hebben dan hoor ik het graag. Ook zou ik graag willen weten hoe je onderzoek verder gaat. De 3e generatie, dus mijn kinderen (zonen) zijn zich erg bewust van hun indisch-zijn. Ik ben benieuwd hoe de generaties daarna er over denken.

Jennifer Valentijn

1. Ja, ik ben Indische via mijn vader, derde generatie. Hij is geboren in Djakarta;

2. Ik ben het boek gaan lezen omdat mij dat gevraagd werd voor Indisch 3.0, waar ik freelance artikelen voor heb geschreven. Na het lezen van de achterflap werd het antwoord daarop een volmondig ja;
3. Ik had zeker een gevoel van herkenning. Dan heb ik het over de personages zoals Charlotte en Daisy. In mijn familie heb ik ook dat soort oudtantes en tantes. Bijgelovigheid, zich jong kleden en cetera. En de erkenning heb ik vooral teruggelezen in het leed dat de hoofdpersoon, Moemie, heeft meegemaakt in Nederlands-Indië. Mijn oma heeft vergelijkbaar leed meegemaakt en er de rest van haar leven over verzwegen. Zij heeft altijd het gevoel gehad dat hetgeen haar is overkomen niet belangrijk of erg genoeg werd gevonden.
4. Dat zeker. De familieband die enerzijds erg hecht is, maar anderzijds worden er veel geheimen bewaard, worden er dingen niet gezegd en weten de 'nieuwere' generaties niet alles wat er in de geschiedenis van de familie is gebeurd. Ook de bijgelovigheid zie ik terug in mijn eigen familie, maar ook in mijn eigen handelen;
5. Mijn achtergrond speelt mee omdat mijn vader en mijn grootouders in Djakarta hebben gewoond. Mijn oma heeft tijdens de Tweede Wereldoorlog in een Jappenkamp gezeten - en daar kwam ik pas achter tijdens haar begrafenis. Ik realiseerde me tijdens het lezen van het boek hoeveel ik eigenlijk niet wist en hoe afschuwelijk het leven voor de Indo in Nederlands-Indië geweest moest zijn. Vooral over de bersiap periode wist ik eigenlijk te weinig, wel de historische feiten, maar nooit qua gevoelsmatigheid. Ik heb dat als zeer schokkend en pijnlijk ervaren;
6. Dat doet het boek en daarom is het een boek dat ik velen heb aangeraden, en niet alleen Indo's. Mijn Nederlandse tante heeft het boek ook gelezen en was er zo van onder de indruk dat zij het binnenkort nog eens wil lezen;
7. Ik vond het een prachtig boek, een boek waarin gebeurtenissen, gevoelens en familiebanden met zoveel diepgang zijn geschreven dat ik het gevoel had de mensen echt te kennen, alsof ik over hun schouders mee keek en vanuit hun perspectief kon begrijpen waarom ze bepaalde keuzes maakten. Ik heb soms zelfs met tranen in mijn ogen gezeten tijdens het lezen. Daarnaast ben ik blij dat ik het heb gelezen, want ik begrijp veel beter wat het heeft gemaakt dat er door mijn grootouders werd gezwegen - en waarschijnlijk vele andere grootouders met hen.

Appendix II: Reading Responses by My Family on *Asta's ogen*

Saskia Bossard- Kerkhof Mogot

Nu heb ik het boek gelezen en ik heb een nieuwe kijk gekregen op al die mensen die in ons kikkerlandje zijn gekomen.

Ook hoe moeilijk het was de laatste tijden in Indonesië, voor deze mensen dan.

Maar ik voel me absoluut niet emotioneel betrokken bij deze mensen. Het staat ver van me af ...Voel me ook echt geen indo of wat dan maar ook.

Dus ik heb je niet veel te vertellen , dan interessant boek en vlot geschreven.

Inger Delfgou- Kerkhof Mogot

Het boek ben ik gaan lezen, op aanraden van Heidi, of Rolf, omdat zij er veel in herkenden.

Ik zelf vond het interessant om iets meer te weten over de belevenissen van Indische-Nederlanders tijdens de oorlog en hun verhuizing naar Nederland

Omdat het ook de geschiedenis is van mijn grootouders en Pake, en ik niet zo veel weet over hun belevenissen uit die tijd, hun gevoelens en emoties.

Bij het lezen speelde zeker mijn achtergrond een rol, omdat ik weet dat onze familie ook zulke belevenissen hebben doorgemaakt,

Dat ook zij Indonesië na de oorlog tussen 2 partijen klem zaten. Alhoewel dat tijdens familie bezoeken nooit ter sprake kwam.

Wel het verhaal van Pake, dat er 2 keer een aanslag op hem is gepleegd en hij daarom moest vluchten uit Indonesië. Ook heb ik een beeld van oma die alleen op een kamertje zat in een pension, en wanneer we daar kwamen met Pake hij altijd vroeg, wat heb je gekookt?

Maar ook hoe ze stil voor zich uit kan kon zitten kijken.

Ik voelde dan dat ze veel had mee gemaakt maar wist niet wat.

Door het boek ben ik meer gaan begrijpen hoe de overgang naar Nederland voor haar moet zijn geweest.

Een stukje erkenning heb ik zeker in dit boek, hoe Indische families met elkaar omgaan herken ik iets van mijn tantes. Maar maakt me ook bewust dat door het gemengde huwelijk van Pake en Beppe,

We een groot deel van het Indische zijn niet van huis uit hebben mee gekregen.

Ik vind het een belangrijk en laagdrempelig boek om te lezen en om een stuk van het Indische verleden levend te houden.

Ik kan me herinneren dat ik tegen een vriendin heb gezegd dat wanneer ze iets van mijn Indische familie wil begrijpen ze dit boek moet lezen.

Ook heb ik een collega die pas op 10 jarige leeftijd naar Nederland is gekomen , dus begin jaren 80.

Haar heb ik het boek gegeven voor haar verjaardag, omdat ik dacht dat het ook voor haar goed was om een andere kant te lezen van de strijd na de WO II .

Dus ik vind het zeker een boek om door te geven.

Kortom, het boek maakt me meer bewust van mijn Indische roots, dat een deel vormt, waardoor ik ben wie ik ben.

Aan de andere kant heeft het me meer inzicht gegeven in de geschiedenis van de familie.

Rolf Kerkhof Mogot

Natuurlijk zijn er verhalen in de Indische kant van mijn familie. Sterker nog, ik associeer zelfs Indisch zijn met goede verhalen. Zo zijn er de vele verhalen die mijn vader wel vertelde. Als een soort sprookjes, met een sterke moraal, uit een vreemde tijd en een vreemd land. In de loop der jaren heb ik veel van anderen gelezen. Zo kreeg ik een beeld van de algemene historische context van het kolonialisme en Nederlands-Indië in het bijzonder. Niet alleen mijn vaders verhalen, maar ook geschreven verhalen van anderen, en zelfs officiële geschiedschrijving van Nederlands-Indië zit vol met moraal. Toch wordt mij nooit duidelijk wat de bron was van deze sterke moraal. Het geweld en de tragiek van de Bersiap periode en Japanse bezetting ligt als een soort sluier over ons beeld van vooroorlogse Nederlands-Indische samenleving.

Ondertussen, hier in mijn vaderland Nederland, woekert de identiteitsvraag door de samenleving en het publiek debat. Steeds vaker wordt ik rechtstreeks gevraagd naar mijn identiteit. Ook steeds vaker, in werk en privé, blij ik niet alleen een sterke moraal te hebben, maar kom ook steeds vaker in aanraking met morele vragen. Vaak wordt ik gevraagd naar observaties en argumentatie in dit soort vraagstukken.

En dan lees ik Asta's ogen. Voor het eerst wordt de sluier opgelicht. De vooroorlogse Indische samenleving, met haar vele verschillende etnische groepen. De formele Nederlandse omgang met die pluriformiteit, worden in Asta's ogen niet alleen maar beschreven. Door Asta's ogen ontdek de allesbeheersende rol van etniciteit en moraal in het dagelijkse leven van vooroorlogs Nederlands-Indië, speciaal voor de niet Nederlandse groepen. Ik herken het hoe en waarom van de vele keuzes en beslissingen die de generaties van mijn vader en Indische grootouders moesten maken. Heel veel in Asta's ogen is herkenbaar. Eveline Stoel's benadering en knap geschreven boek heeft mij niet alleen erg geholpen mijn achtergrond te begrijpen, maar ook om mijn plaats in en kijk op de Nederlandse samenleving van nu beter te begrijpen.

Het boek is niet alleen monument voor mensen met een Indische achtergrond, maar voor de hele Nederlandse samenleving. Een ieder die betrokken is, of wil zijn, bij het maatschappelijk debat van vandaag kan ik dit boek van harte aanbevelen. Het geeft een intieme en diep menselijk kijk op de koloniale bronnen van onze Nederlandse samenleving en onze gepolariseerde omgang met identiteit.

Heidi Kerkhof Mogot

Ik ben het gaan lezen op aanraden van Hilly (Rolf's partner) in een tijd dat ik wat sterker dan normaal bezig was met mijn roots. Het Indische zijn van Pake (Fries voor opa, e.g. she is referring to her father, my grandfather) en ook zijn oorlogsverleden komen steeds weer de kop op steken en dan

met name ook door de vraag: In hoeverre ben ik nog Indisch, wat weet ik van deze cultuur, van Pakes verleden en in hoeverre herken ik mij daarin.

Ik heb dit boek gelezen met dus eigenlijk in mijn achterhoofd steeds de vraag naar mijn eigen identiteit, zonder daar echt een antwoord op te verwachten, maar misschien wel een beetje houvast.

Ja, er zat heel veel herkenning in het boek. Niet zozeer uit mijn eigen belevingen, maar wel in dat wat ik me herinner van de komst van mijn oma en opa, maar vooral ook van tante Lenie en oom Bosje. Pas na het lezen van het boek realiseerde ik me in wat voor vernederende situatie mijn familieleden in die pensions moeten hebben gezeten en dat ze eigenlijk de voorlopers van de asielzoekers waren.

Bij het gedeelte over Nederlands Indië moest ik steeds aan tante Toetie denken, die ook zoveel gedanst heeft in die periode en volgens mij een echt fuifnummer was, ik zag haar steeds voor me bij dit gedeelte van de verhalen. De 'gevaarlijke' scènes riepen het beeld op van mijn opa en oma die daar met hun gezin moesten overleven en ook aan Pake zelf met name het gevaar dat hij liep toen hij op de suikerplantage werkte. Zijn oorlogsgeschiedenis komt niet echt aan bod.

Het feit dat Pake een politieke vluchteling was, is me misschien niet zozeer door dit boek, maar meer door "Ik beken" duidelijk geworden dat ik in dezelfde periode las.

Latent wist ik dat natuurlijk allemaal wel, maar er werd niet over gesproken en ik was altijd bang om te overdrijven. Hoe Indisch mocht ik zijn met een Nederlandse moeder, wat begrepen mijn vriendinnen van deze verhalen en instinctief ook, wat wil Pake dat ik ervan weet?

Hij was altijd wel van de mooie verhalen, maar achteraf gezien, had hij wel degelijk een posttraumatisch stresssyndroom.

In de feitelijke geschiedenis heb ik me veel minder verdiept dan Rolf, het blijft voor mij hoofdzakelijk een emotioneel iets. Toch heeft mijn Indische achtergrond en met name ook het Indische oorlogsverleden van Pake me meer gevormd dan ik ooit had durven denken. Tweede generatie oorlogsslachtoffer, dat woord had ik vroeger niet in de mond durven nemen, maar nu weet ik dat ik dat wel degelijk ben. Dit feit heeft me mee gevormd tot wie ik nu ben, zowel in negatieve als positieve zin. "Asta's ogen" heeft me een soort bevestiging hiervan gegeven.

Ja en nee, het is het verhaal van mijn familie en van hun Indisch zijn en hun Indische geschiedenis. Maar het is niet mijn verhaal, ik blijf ten dele een buitenstaander, terwijl ik mezelf wel zoek in die verhalen.

Maar de geschiedenis die in het boek wordt beschreven voldoet wel helemaal aan mijn voorstelling van Indisch zijn. Deze geschiedenis en het hele koloniale verleden hebben de Indische mensen gevormd, ook het feit dat ze hun moederland min of meer gedwongen verlaten hebben. Ze werden overheerst, voor de 2e wereldoorlog verguisd door zowel de Nederlanders als de Indonesiërs en hebben een soort volksaard ontwikkeld om daarmee om te gaan. Ik herken gedragingen en gedachten van de personages uit het boek in mijn familieleden.

Ik denk dat mijn achtergrond bepalend is voor de manier waarop ik het boek gelezen heb en de verhalen interpreteer. Een belanda kan er nooit zo naar kijken, ook al heeft hij banden met Nederlands Indië, de invalshoek zal altijd een ander zijn.

Indische mensen hebben een rare positie. Zij zijn een mengelmoes uit de overheersers en de onderdrukten, werden door beide groepen niet geaccepteerd en hebben een cultuur gecreëerd die van beide wat heeft en ook een manier gevonden om in beide culturen enigszins een weg te vinden. Mijn kijk op het boek, is vanuit dat perspectief.

Ja, het boek werkt mee aan de instandhouding van de Indische cultuur. Ik heb het boek dan ook aan mijn beide kinderen aanbevolen en zal dat ook doen aan al mijn bekenden die in de Indisch cultuur geïnteresseerd zijn.

Veel Nederlanders hebben banden met het vroegere Nederlands Indië of connecties met Indische mensen, maar mijn ervaring is dat er maar weinigen zijn die aan kunnen voelen wat Indisch zijn betekent. Ik hoor nogal eens dat deze afkomst toch nu geen rol meer mag spelen. Hoezo dan westerse allochtoon?

Voor pake wil ik erkenning, voor mezelf wil ik zo Indisch kunnen zijn als ik me voel en als zodanig geaccepteerd worden en toch Nederlander zijn en geen westerse allochtoon.

Dat neemt niet weg dat het "Indische ras" langzaam zal uitsterven en dat ik dat op zich oké vind. Maar zolang mijn en jullie generatie nog leeft, leeft het Indisch verleden ook nog en het zal altijd onderdeel van de Nederlandse geschiedenis blijven.

Greet Kerkhof Mogot – de Vos (my grandmother)

Waarom ik Asta's ogen ben gaan lezen

Het werd me van verschillende kanten aangeraden. Het speelt in Nederlands Indië, in een periode waarin mijn man ook daar van alles heeft meegemaakt. Vele verhalen heb ik van hem gehoord en daardoor voelde ik me erg betrokken met dit verhaal. Ik herkende situaties zoals beschreven en vond daarmee erkenning van de verhalen van mijn man.

Volgens mijn gevoel, gestoeld op de verhalen van mijn man, is de beleving van het indisch zijn goed beschreven. Ook hier in Nederland speelde dat Indisch zijn nog een grote rol. Mijn man was steeds op zijn hoede dat hij op de goede "plaats" stond. Een ras echte Hollander had altijd meer rechten, zo dacht hij soms. Aan de andere kant voelde hij zich ook vaak tekort gedaan en dacht dan dat het door zijn Indisch zijn kwam. Ik heb dat altijd geprobeerd te weerleggen, voelde dat niet zo. Later heb ik wel begrepen dat niet alle Hollanders daar zo over dachten, in het westen, in de grote steden was de mentaliteit anders dan in het noorden. Hoewel, mijn ouders hadden ook geen idee met wat voor vriend ik thuis zou komen, of hij wel een middelbare school had gehad bijv.

De kinderen Kerkhof⁵⁰, en waarschijnlijk vele anderen, werd heel duidelijk te verstaan gegeven dat ze moesten leren en daar alles uithalen wat mogelijk was. Deed je dat niet, dan was er grote kans dat je in de dessa bleef hangen en in de ogen van de indo aan lager wal terecht kwam.

⁵⁰ The family name Kerkhof Mogot has a long history, one of the famous stories my grandfather always told. Here in mentioning 'De kinderen Kerkhof' my grandmother is not referring to her own family with my grandfather, but to the family my grandfather was born in. This family name was indeed just Kerkhof.

Het boek houdt de herinnering aan het verleden volgens mij goed vast. Door de oorlogsjaren zullen die herinneringen per persoon wel veel verschillen. Ik zou het door willen geven, veel Hollanders hebben volgens mij geen idee wat zich daar afspeelde.

Waar ik de eerste jaren van ons huwelijk moeite mee had was het verschil te leren zien tussen situaties voortkomend uit zijn karakter en situaties voorkomend uit tradities in de Indische gemeenschap. Hoe meer familieleden er later naar Nederland kwamen hoe duidelijker het voor mij werd.

Ik kon toen ook beter mijn eigen plaats bepalen en opkomen voor mijn standpunten.

Ik heb respect voor Asta hoe ze zich stand wist te houden in moeilijke situaties. Ik heb ook respect voor mijn man, hoe hij met een oorlogsverleden en een afgebroken middelbare school opleiding, een nieuwe start wist te maken in zo'n andere omgeving. Hij was hier alleen, nog geen andere familie leden. Zich concentreren op een studie was moeilijk voor hem, in de oorlog waren andere dingen belangrijk. Pas toen Heidi op komst was werd hij goed gemotiveerd. Stopte het verleden in een doofpot en studeerde goed. Hij werd wetenschappelijk assistent.

Toen hij met pensioen ging heb ik hem gelukkig gezegd dat hij goed voor ons gezorgd heeft.

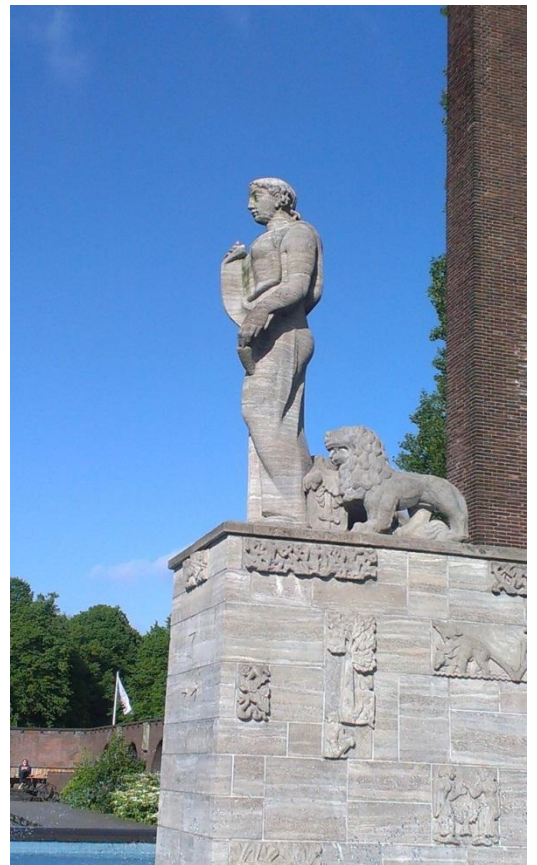
Door onze verschillende achtergronden hebben wij het ons niet gemakkelijk gemaakt, er waren wel eens conflicten, waar we telkens weer uitkwamen. Het oorlogsverleden kwam soms boven, soms wilde hij hulp zoeken. Het kwam er niet van. Iemand vroeg hem eens waarom hij niet naar een psycholoog was gegaan. Zijn antwoord was: Greet was mijn psycholoog. Na zijn overlijden kwam mij dit ter ore. Hier ben ik natuurlijk heel blij mee.

Ieke Noordam

Op aanraden van familieleden ben ik het boek gaan lezen. Ik was in deze periode erg bezig met Indisch-zijn en vond dit een mooie aanvulling om meer over het Indische verleden van mijn grootvader te weten te komen. Met name toen familieleden aangaven dat de gelijkenis in het boek met de familiegeschiedenis van mijn grootvader erg groot was, ben ik het gaan lezen. Ik ben tijdens het lezen grotendeels ervan uit gegaan dat de gebeurtenissen lijken op die van mijn grootvader. Voor mij zat er weinig herkenning in. Omdat ik weinig over mijn grootvaders voorgeschiedenis weet, heb ik de informatie niet kunnen verifiëren. Ik heb het als waar aangenomen en vooral informatief gelezen. Om voor mij het beeld duidelijker te krijgen en er een leerzame component aan toe te voegen, heb ik uit historische bronnen een tijdlijn uitgeschreven en tijdens het lezen erbij gehouden. Voor mij persoonlijk heb ik geen gevoel van erkenning, maar ik weet dat mijn familieleden een en twee generaties voor mij dit wel zo zouden kunnen ervaren. Het houdt wel de herinnering van het Indische verleden vast. Ik heb dit boek aan mijn zusje aangeraden om te lezen en ik zou het aan andere Indische vrienden, die een soortgelijke familiegeschiedenis kennen, aanraden. Ik weet niet of ik het ook aan andere vrienden zou aanraden. Mijn motivatie om te lezen was vooral de affiniteit met het thema en informatieverrijking. Ik vond dat het 'wij-gevoel' er sterk in naar voren komt en dat maakt het voor buitenstaanders minder aantrekkelijk om te lezen. Als je minder thuis bent in de historie, dan is het ook lastiger om te lezen. Over de schrijfstijl was ik minder enthousiast.

Appendix III: The Van Heutsz Monument

Pictures by Gwen Kerkhof Mogot (June 2013)





Appendix IV: Indië Monument Amstelveen

Pictures by Gwen Kerkhof Mogot (October 2014)



