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Migration via the Red Star Line: A Liminal Journey?

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Migration via the Red Star Line: A Liminal Journey?



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Abstract

Migration remains central to political debates in both Europe and North America. However, migration scholarship has often been limited by its predominant focus on its economic and political drivers, resulting in a lack of understanding of the cultural and emotional dimensions of the migrant experience. To provide a new perspective, this study has used comparative qualitative content analysis to examine how ten Red Star Line promotional brochures (1880-1930), of which five in Dutch and five in English, may have facilitated community-building and the preservation of cultural identity among Flemish migrants during the initial phase of liminality. In doing so, the Red Star Line, an American-Belgian shipping company, has been viewed as a 'liminal' space in which migrants are in between their old lives in Belgium and their new lives in North America. By focusing on the initial phase of liminality, known as *rites of separation*, during which migrants leave behind all they have known and are particularly vulnerable to institutional influences, this study has demonstrated how the Red Star Line's promotional materials contributed to shaping the early migrant experience, even if not explicitly fostering community-building or cultural preservation. These findings highlight the potential influence of commercial institutions in framing migration narratives and experiences, both in historical and contemporary contexts.

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Introduction

“American owned, and under conservative yet progressive management, the Red Star Line has become the greatest commercial tie between the United States and Belgium. To think of a journey between those countries is to think of the Red Star Line,” reads the 1922 English Red Star Line brochure *Comfort Cabin Service Red Star Line*.¹ Founded by an American in 1873, the shipping line reached its peak year in 1913 in which it transported around 70.000 migrants from the port of Antwerp to Philadelphia and New York.² Established during a period of European mass migration to North America, driven by economic hardships, political instability, and religious persecution, the Red Star Line played a pivotal role in facilitating the movement of people in search of a better future. While many of its passengers consisted of Eastern Europeans and Jewish migrants who saw America as the Promised Land,³ Belgians themselves also left Europe en masse during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, albeit to a lesser extent. Driven by the food crisis of the 1840s, the mechanization of the textile industry, and the decline of the cottage industry, many Flemish people left Belgium in search for a better life.⁴

While France was the most popular destination for Flemish migrants due to its opportunities for seasonal work, the advent of steamboats in the 1880s led to a significant increase in migration to North America as it made the transatlantic journey cheaper and therefore more accessible.⁵ From 1820 to 1962, a total of 191,051 Belgians emigrated to the United States, the vast majority from Flanders, while relatively few were Walloons.⁶ While

¹ *Comfort Cabin Service Red Star Line*, [brochure], 1922, Online Collection Red Star Line Museum, Antwerp, <https://dams.antwerpen.be/asset/f2IEVkfNjciUUBZpTOCNjFda/NIavpPNRBcZaOc9uFc7F2xab>.

² Maxime Poulain, “Ocean-Liner Ceramics: A Red Star Line Assemblage in Antwerp, Belgium,” *Historical Archeology* 56, no. 2 (2022): 276.

³ Tara Zahra, *The Great Departure: Mass Migration from Eastern Europe and the Making of the Free World* (Norton & Company, Inc., 2016), 26.

⁴ Andreas Stynen, *Boer Vindt Land* [Farmer Finds Land] (Davidsfonds Uitgeverij, 2014), 26.

⁵ Stynen, *Boer Vindt Land* [Farmer Finds Land], 62

⁶ Arthur M. J. Verthé, “Some Sociological Aspects of the Belgian Emigration,” *International Migration Digest* 2, no. 2 (1965): 126.

some Flemish migrants took alternative routes through ports like Rotterdam, Le Havre, or Cherbourg, many still departed on one of the Red Star Line's vessels from Antwerp due to its accessibility and availability of direct steamers to New York.⁷

While much of the existing literature on migration mainly focuses on the economic and political aspects as drivers of migration, less attention has been given to particular shipping companies, like the Red Star Line, in shaping migrants' experiences. Although scholars, such as Torsten Feys, have examined steamship companies on the North Atlantic and their role in the European exodus,⁸ most research has focused on logistical organization and motivations, leaving the Red Star Line's contribution to community-building and the preservation of transnational ties largely understudied. This gap is further reinforced by the dominant theoretical and methodological approaches in migration studies, which tend to prioritize the causes of migration over the impact of the journey itself. Therefore, this research takes a different angle by focusing on the emotional and cultural aspects of migration by answering the question: 'How did the Red Star Line's promotional brochures (1880-1930) facilitate community-building and the preservation of cultural identity among Flemish migrants during the initial phase of liminal separation?' By analyzing the Red Star Line as an institutional intermediary, this study provides a new perspective on the role of migration facilitation and commercial actors in shaping migration trajectories. In doing so, it will provide new insights into the influence of migration facilitators on migrants' decision-making processes, a topic that remains highly relevant today since modern migration continues to be shaped by commercial, digital, and institutional intermediaries.

⁷ Marc Journée, *Go West! Een Verhaal van Vlaamse Emigranten naar Canada* [Go West! A Story of Flemish Emigrants to Canada] (Snoeck Publishers, 2006), 49.

⁸ Torsten Feys, "Steamshipping Companies and Transmigration Patterns: the Use of European Cities as Hubs during the Era of Mass Migration to the US," *Journal of Migration History* 2, no. 1 (2016): 249.

To guide this research, this study will draw upon liminality theory. This theory was first introduced by Arnold van Gennep to “describe the in-between condition of human beings”.⁹ Liminality is typically understood as a three-phase process, consisting of separation (pre-liminal), transition (liminal), and (re)incorporation (post-liminal). These stages correspond to the emotional experience of leaving Belgium, the journey on the Red Star Line itself, and how immigrants see themselves afterward. This research will focus specifically on the phase of separation, as it most effectively captures the emotional and cultural dislocation one experiences at the start of the migration journey. The methodology centers around archival research, drawing on sources from the Red Star Line Museum. Through a comparative critical discourse analysis of five Dutch- and five English-language brochures, this study reveals that the Red Star Line primarily used visual marketing strategies to shape Flemish migrants’ perceptions, by subtly depicting opportunities for community-building and the preservation of cultural identity in the imagery of Dutch-language brochures, albeit to a limited extent.

Having outlined the research focus, the remainder of this paper will first outline popular debate in existing literature regarding key theories of European migration, identity formation in migration settings and integration processes, and the role of migration infrastructures. Thereafter, the conceptual lens of liminality theory will be outlined as applied to the Red Star Line. Then, the thematic analysis and its operationalization will be addressed, including what sources will be used, the criteria for data collection, and a discussion of potential limitations that have to be taken into account. Hereafter, the paper will be divided into three chapters. Chapter one will provide a brief overview of how Flemish migration and the Red Star Line are interconnected. The second chapter will discuss the findings of the

⁹ Shalini Rana and Digvijay Pandya, “Liminality: A Close Study of Historical Roots and Theoretical Structure,” *Language in India* 21, no. 10 (2021): 21.

textual comparative critical discourse analysis of the Dutch- and English-language brochures, while the third chapter will focus on the visual aspects of these promotional materials. Lastly, some concluding remarks will be made on how the Red Star Line's promotional brochures facilitated community-building and the preservation of cultural identity among Flemish migrants during the initial phase of liminal separation.

Literature Review: Migration Theories, Transportation Networks, and Identity Formation

Although migration has long been a central feature of human history and has been widely studied in terms of motivations, patterns, and experiences, certain aspects remain underexplored. The majority of academic literature on U.S. migration examines major migration flows, such as European migration, Mexican migration, or Asian migration. Few, like Raymond L. Cohn, take a more local approach. In Cohn's book *Mass Migration under Sail: European Immigration to the Antebellum United States*, he discusses the causes and journey of migrants from various European countries to the United States.¹⁰ However, the focus remains heavily on causes and outcomes, lacking insight into the role of transportation infrastructures on migrants' experiences. This underscores the need for more nuanced studies on specific migrant groups and the factors facilitating their journey. Therefore, by first reviewing key theories of European migration, then examining the role of migration infrastructures, and concluding with a discussion on migrant identity formation and integration, this section explores Flemish migration to the United States in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Theories of European and Flemish Migration

Research of Flemish migration to North America benefits from a broader analysis of the theoretical frameworks used to assess European migration as a whole, in order to uncover how non-state actors recruit and facilitate migration itself. These theories offer valuable insights into migration patterns, processes, and motivations, situating the Flemish experience within a wider social and historical context.

¹⁰ Raymond L. Cohn, *Mass Migration under Sail: European Immigration to the Antebellum United States* (Cambridge University Press, 2008).

While most scholars, such as Cohn (2008), apply a version of the classical economic theory of immigration to explain the mass transatlantic migration from Europe around 1830, others, including Zahra (2016) and Rodríguez-Pose and von Berlepsch (2020), criticize this theoretical approach as being oversimplistic. Cohn argues that “[...] immigration is a function of the economic situation in each country, the costs of migrating, family considerations, and information flows”.¹¹ In other words, Cohn highlights that both push- and pull factors in Europe and the United States, such as declining immigration costs and rising labor demand in the U.S., played a key role in mass transatlantic migration in the early 1830s.

Although Zahra agrees with Cohn’s argument that poor conditions in Europe and increased economic opportunities in the United States drove migration, she takes a broader approach, arguing that migrants’ movements also depended on states’ efforts to control their populations.¹² Zahra further challenges the assumption that true freedom lies in the ability to move, arguing instead that it is found in the ability to stay at home.¹³ While Cohn frames transatlantic migration as a luxury that, before the 1830s, was accessible only to the wealthy, Zahra states that migration was less a privilege and more a form of ‘forced’ movement.

Like Zahra and Cohn, Rodríguez-Pose and von Berlepsch argue that European migration to the United States can be explained by economic push- and pull factors in both regions. However, they add another dimension to migration theory, emphasizing that in addition to an individual’s actions and characteristics, migration decisions are also influenced by the choices of an individual’s peer group.¹⁴ By extending traditional economic migration theory, Rodríguez-Pose and von Berlepsch reveal a pattern in which past migration, even

¹¹ Cohn, *Mass Migration under Sail*, 48.

¹² Zahra, *The Great Departure*, 239.

¹³ *Ibid*, 290.

¹⁴ Andrés Rodríguez-Pose and Viola von Berlepsch, “Migration-Prone and Migration-Averse Places. Patch Dependence in Long-Term Migration to the US,” *Applied Geography* 116, no. 1 (2020):5.

across generations and ethnic groups, becomes a key pull factor for future migrants to a particular region.¹⁵

While migration research has expanded its scope in analyzing European migration to North America, scholarship on Flemish transatlantic migration remains largely rooted in traditional migration theory. For instance, Stynen (2014) and Cook (2007) argue that economic hardships in the Flemish-speaking region of Belgium, stemming from the food crisis of the 1840s and the decline of the textile and cottage industries, prompted many Flemish people to seek opportunities in neighboring countries and, for some pioneers, in North America.¹⁶ However, they also acknowledge that Flemish migration to North America often followed a pattern of ‘chain migration,’ with family and friends gradually following those who had migrated before them.

Overall, both European and Flemish migration to North America lack a theoretical framework that extends beyond the causes of migration to consider the impact of the journey itself. Existing theories primarily focus on economic and social structures as primary factors in guiding these migration flows. While they help explain the motivations and patterns of Flemish migration to North America, expanding migration theory to include the journey’s influence could provide deeper insights into the lived experiences of these migrants and the lasting effects on them as individuals and their communities as a whole.

Transportation Networks as Facilitators of Migration

Even though Flemish identity formation and integration have not been directly linked to the role of shipping companies, U.S. migration research has widely discussed transatlantic transportation networks, primarily from an economic perspective. A leading scholar in this

¹⁵ Rogdríguez-Pose and von Berlepsch, “Migration-Prone and Migration-Averse Places,” 10.

¹⁶ Stynen, *Boer Vindt Land* [Farmer finds Land], 62. ; Bernard A. Cook, *Belgians in Michigan* (Michigan State University Press, 2007), 3.

field, Torsten Feys, explores steamship companies on the North Atlantic and their impact on the European exodus. In his 2016 study, Feys examines the business interests of multinational steamship companies, using archives from the Holland America Line (HAL), to argue that as migrants settled farther from shipping companies' homeports, these companies had to improve transit routes in order to remain competitive.¹⁷ During the era of European mass migration, migrant regulation was relatively laissez-faire, allowing shipping companies, rather than the state, to enforce migration border controls.¹⁸ Feys highlights that since successful migrant experiences served as the best form of business publicity, it was in the interest of the shipping companies to ensure high quality service on-board their ships.

Unlike Feys, Strikwerda (1999) claims that migration patterns over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have been shaped by 'international systems' similar to those governing trade and diplomacy.¹⁹ Strikwerda argues that mass migration was only made possible due to government efforts, including "[...] monetary stability, financial interpenetration, virtually open borders, and legal near-equality for foreigners".²⁰ Together with a broad array of international agreements concerning tolls, global communications, railway regulations, and health and safety laws for international shipping, these government efforts contributed to the creation of an informal 'international regime' that facilitated mass migration.

Whereas Feys examines the economic motivations behind shipping companies' efforts to improve transit routes, other scholars, such as Cohn, focus on the cost-benefit analysis that influenced migrants' decisions to undertake the journey across the Atlantic. Cohn argues that during the antebellum years, the perceived benefits of life in North America must have been

¹⁷ Feys, "Steamshipping Companies and Transmigration Patterns, 249.

¹⁸ Ibid, 271.

¹⁹ Carl Strikwerda, "Tides of Migration, Currents of History: The State, Economy, and the Transatlantic Movement of Labor in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," *International Review of Social History* 44, no. 3 (1999): 373.

²⁰ Strikwerda, "Tides of Migration, Currents of History," 383.

incredibly high for Europeans to embark on such a journey voluntarily.²¹ Unlike later steamship services, voyages by sailing ships were significantly more challenging, marked by uncertainty over port embarkation times, long crossings, high ticket costs, and frequent disease outbreaks on board.

All in all, transatlantic transportation networks have received considerable attention in scholarly discussions on European migration to North America in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, highlighting economic and regulatory aspects of migration. However, there is a lack of insights into the impact of shipping companies' guidelines and marketing strategies on migrants' experiences before, during, and after the journey. Moreover, while European migration as a whole has been widely researched, the Flemish experience in particular remains largely overlooked.

Diverging Perspectives on Flemish Migration: Language, Identity, and Integration

While the reasons for Flemish migration are well established, scholars have interpreted the process of identity formation in varying ways. For example, Cook underlines that between 1840 and 1930, most migrants were Dutch-speaking Flemish, whereas after 1930, migration primarily consisted of Walloons, Belgium's French-speaking population.²² Throughout their migration process, Cook makes a clear distinction between these two groups, emphasizing their different backgrounds and experiences. For instance, when discussing Belgian integration in Michigan, Cook highlights that while both Flemish and Walloon immigrants helped settle others in rural Michigan towns, they did not form a unified Belgian community.²³

²¹ Cohn, "Mass Migration Under Sail," 154.

²² Cook, *Belgians in Michigan*, 3.

²³ *Ibid*, 30.

While Cook identifies language as a key factor in identity formation and social integration, other scholars, such as Hietpas and Vanhecke (2022), challenge the notion that Dutch/Flemish language proficiency directly correlates with cultural identification. More specifically, their study reveals that although cultural identification remains strong across multiple generations of Belgian-Americans – ranging from 1st to 5th generations – linguistic ability declines significantly over time.²⁴ Even though later generation Belgian-Americans express regret over not learning Flemish, they emphasize that maintaining culture and traditions is both easier and more important to them.²⁵ Hietpas and Vanhecke’s findings align with Vrielinck’s (1998) argument that early Flemish migrants relied more on social clubs to maintain their identity, while newspapers in their native language played a lesser role.²⁶ These social clubs not only functioned as a space for leisure and cultural activities but also served a practical function, helping Flemish migrants to overcome their legal and financial challenges.

Contrary to the view that social clubs primarily reinforced Flemish identity, Jaenen (1998) argues that while Belgian clubs were significant in the everyday lives of Belgian-Americans, they increasingly served a heterogeneous community. Rather than creating distinct ethnic sub-systems, Belgian immigrants formed residential concentrations, which facilitated their rapid integration into mainstream society.²⁷ Jaenen further emphasizes that while Flemish traditions and sports – such as archery, Belgian bowling, and pigeon racing – were preserved in North America, they were not exclusive to the Belgian community.²⁸

On the whole, defining Belgian-American identity and integration is complex, shaped by language, cultural traditions, and community networks. While Cook emphasizes the

²⁴ Rachyl Hietpas and Charlotte Vanhecke, “Dutch and Flemish Language, Culture, and Identity in North-America,” *Bergen Language and Linguistic Studies* 12, no. 2 (2022): 14.

²⁵ Hietpas and Vanhecke, “Dutch and Flemish Language,” 15.

²⁶ Jennifer Vrielinck, “The Flemish and Dutch Migrant Press in Canada: A Historical Investigation,” in *Images of Canadianness: Visions on Canada’s Politics, Culture, and Economics*, ed. Leen d’Haenens (University of Ottawa Press, 1998), 122.

²⁷ Cornelius J. Jaenen, “The Belgian Presence in Canada,” in *Images of Canadianness: Visions on Canada’s Politics, Culture, and Economics*, ed. Leen d’Haenens (University of Ottawa Press, 1998), 85-6.

²⁸ Jaenen, “The Belgian Presence in Canada,” 87.

Flemish language as a crucial link to both integration and maintaining ties to Belgium, Hietpas and Vanhecke, along with Vrielinck, argue that culture and traditions play a more significant role in shaping identity across generations. Jaenen, meanwhile, acknowledges the role of Belgian American clubs in fostering community but does not consider them as barriers to Belgian integration in American society. These diverging perspectives suggest that identity formation among Flemish migrants was a dynamic and evolving process. Although scholarship has extensively explored the relationship between Flemish-American identity formation and integration, the foundations of this identity may have been shaped not only upon arrival in North America but also during the migration journey itself, a topic that has yet to be thoroughly examined.

Conclusion

To conclude, while scholars have examined U.S. migration from Europe in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries from various perspectives, the role of shipping companies, such as the Red Star Line, in shaping migrants' experiences remains an underexplored aspect of this historical movement. As much of the existing literature focuses on economic factors, regulatory frameworks, and broader migration patterns, a research gap remains, offering an opportunity to explore how transportation networks not only facilitated migration but also influenced identity formation and community-building efforts. As a result, this research aims to move beyond economic and political factors to consider how the Red Star Line itself shaped migrants' experiences, identities, and sense of community.

Theoretical Framework

This research applies liminality theory to guide the thematic analysis of the Red Star Line as a space of transition. By examining migrants' transition from their 'old identity' to their 'new identity,' this framework underscores the symbolic and emotional dimensions of their journey. Accordingly, this section will first explore the concept of liminality in greater depth before outlining its relevance to this study and introducing the hypothesis.

The Liminal Perspective: Unsettled Identities

First introduced by Arnold van Gennep and later expanded on by Victor W. Turner, the concept of liminality describes a transitional phase in which individuals or groups move through a unique cultural realm, separate from both their previous and future states.²⁹

Liminality thus refers to so-called in-between situations, where traditional orders, hierarchies, customs, and practices are dislocated. Van Gennep identifies three stages within the liminal process, which he refers to as *rites of passage*, being 'rites of separation' (pre-liminal), 'transition rites' (liminal), and 'rites of incorporation' (post-liminal).³⁰ Van Gennep argues that the transition rites, also referred to as *marge*, can be found in all ceremonies that accompany the transition from one social situation to another.³¹ To illustrate this, he draws on examples such as marriage and adoption, where social roles are formally transformed. In doing so, he emphasizes that in order to fully grasp the nature of the threshold, it is important to consider the entire passage, comprising the rites of separation, transition, and reintegration, that structure the liminal experience.³²

²⁹ Maria Mälksoo, "The Challenge of Liminality for International Relations Theory," *Review of International Studies* 38, no. 2 (2012): 481.

³⁰ Árpád Szakolczai and Bjorn Thomassen, *From Anthropology to Social Theory: Rethinking the Social Sciences* (Cambridge University Press, 2019), 25.

³¹ Arnold van Gennep, *Les Rites de Passage* [Rites of Passage] (Mouton & Co and Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, 1969), 24.

³² Van Gennep, *Les Rites de Passage* [Rites of Passage], 33.

Building upon van Gennep's work, Turner expands the concept of liminality by emphasizing the transformative potential of rites of passage. He argues that "[r]ites enable participants to experiment with alternative social relations or to invent new ones".³³ According to Turner, human interrelation and alternation are subject of two major models: the structured social order and the unstructured realm of *communitas*.³⁴ Whereas social structures refer to the institutionalized, hierarchical organization of society in 'more' and 'less,' *communitas* represents a temporary state of equality in which individuals collectively submit to the general authority of ritual elders. Turner highlights that *communitas* emerges most clearly during the liminal phase, marked by the suspension of social structure, yet its significance becomes evident only in contrast to that very structure.³⁵

This tension between social structure and *communitas* lies at the core of migration, where individuals leave established orders and enter a liminal phase. Thus, liminality theory offers a powerful lens for examining identity formation and community-building across the migratory journey, from rites of separation to transition rites and rites of incorporation.

Liminality Theory Applied to the Red Star Line

In the context of this paper, the Red Star Line will be viewed as a liminal space, a space of ambiguity and possibilities. The first phase, the *rites of separation*, marks the departure of Flemish migrants from Belgium. In this phase, migrants make the decision to leave the country and bid farewell to their loved ones, making their way to the harbor of Antwerp. Here, it is interesting to assess the Red Star Line's efforts in promoting the image of a transatlantic migrant and U.S. migration itself.

³³ "Victor Turner and Anti-Structure," Britannica, last modified January 1, 2025, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/rite-of-passage/Victor-Turner-and-anti-structure>.

³⁴ Victor W. Turner, *The Ritual Process* (Aldine Publishing Company, 1969), 96.

³⁵ Turner, *The Ritual Process*, 126-7.

Next comes the *rites of transition*, where the Red Star Line plays a crucial role. As a shipping company, it dictates the conditions of travel and regulates the migrant's experience during the journey. While the company does have an interest in promoting life in North America and an imagined American identity, Flemish migrants perceive it primarily as a means of transportation. It is therefore useful to review the Red Star Line's on-board regulations to understand how the company managed and shaped the movement of people. These regulations reveal the subtle ways in which authority and control were exercised during the liminal phase of migration.

Finally, *rites of incorporation* mark the last phase, in which Flemish migrants begin to integrate into American society, either partially or fully. This process already starts upon arrival in Philadelphia or New York, where they must navigate a new language, adapt to American customs, and undergo initial examinations. Here, the focus lies on the Red Star Line's role in providing a sense of direction for migrants' integration.

Although each phase of liminality offers valuable insights into the migrant experience, this study will focus solely on the first phase, the *rites of separation*, as it marks a crucial break from everything familiar, a moment in which identities, expectations, and cultural perspectives could be actively reshaped. This phase represents the first time migrants began to image their new lives in North America as workers and settlers, creating an opportunity for shipping lines such as the Red Star Line to influence their perspectives through infrastructure and advertising. Upon arrival at the port of Antwerp, migrants were subjected to medical examinations and bureaucratic processes, yet during the *rites of separation*, the journey of migration could still be imagined as anything, a leap into the unknown. Therefore, this phase best reveals how the Red Star Line's promotional brochures may have contributed to a sense of imagined community and cultural continuity among Flemish migrants even before departure.

Hypothesis

Building on Van Gennep's and Turner's notion of liminality outlined above, the following hypothesis has been developed:

H: *The Red Star Line's business interests in U.S. migration shaped how Flemish migrants redefined their identities and sense of community from the start of the migratory journey.*

Methodology

To examine the *rites of separation*, this research employs a comparative critical discourse analysis (CDA) as its central methodology, enabling a critical analysis of how the Red Star Line constructed migrant identities and shaped narratives of community-building. This section begins with an outline of the comparative critical discourse analysis, before diving into its operationalization. Thereafter, the sources used in this study will be discussed. Lastly, some strengths and weaknesses of this method will be considered.

Critical Discourse Analysis

In short, discourse analysis is a qualitative research method that evaluates the use of language and other forms of symbolic communication in constructing social reality.³⁶ More specifically, critical discourse analysis is concerned with the role of discourse in reproducing and challenging power relations and ideological structures.³⁷ This method is particularly well-suited for examining strategies and other institutional discourses, such as those produced by the Red Star Line, that shape perceptions, behaviors, and identities. By comparing Dutch- and English-language brochures, this study aims to reveal how the Red Star Line tailored its messaging to specific audiences, especially to attract Flemish migrants.

In this study, critical discourse analysis is used to critically assess how such discourses contributed to migrant identity formation and community-building. As Turner highlights, the experience of *communitas*, a key feature of liminality, emerges meaningfully only in relation to these existing social structures.³⁸ Critical discourse analysis therefore forms a useful tool for examining the dynamic relationship between institutional authority and liminal transformation.

³⁶ Gillian Brown and George Yule, *Discourse Analysis* (Cambridge University Press, 1983), 1.

³⁷ Teun A. van Dijk, "Principles of Critical Discourse Analysis," *Discourse & Society* 4, no. 2 (1993): 249.

³⁸ Turner, *The Ritual Process*, 126-7.

Operationalization

To structure the analysis, this research employs Machin and May's multi-modal CDA framework. This approach is concerned with the semiotic choices made in both language and visual communication to uncover how communicative aims are constructed and achieved.³⁹ In other words, it focuses on how visual and linguistic elements work together to convey underlying meaning, ideologies, and power relations. By combining Machin and May's different levels of analysis with the research aim of examining the Red Star Line as a producer of institutional discourse, the following coding template has been developed.

Category:	Guiding questions:	What to look for in texts:	What to look for in images:
<i>Lexical choices</i>	What kinds of words are used? Are certain values implied? Is there a predominance of words with a certain connotation?	Word choice: e.g. 'modern,' 'civilized,' 'clean'	Slogans, embedded terms in visuals, captions
<i>Naming & categorization</i>	To what extent are individuals personalized or impersonalized? Are individuals described as individuals or as part of a collectivity? Are individuals presented as specific persons or as a generic type?	Terms like 'third-class,' 'family,' 'migrant,' 'alien'	Facial expressions, posture, individuals
<i>Visual/spatial hierarchy</i>	How are levels of authority portrayed?	Use of technical terms, claiming specialist knowledge	Composition, perspective, centrality
<i>Framing & layout</i>	What is the setting? How is the text or image framed? What is being foregrounded and what is being backgrounded?	Headlines, bolded terms, call-to-action phrases	Lightning, framing, color, positioning of people or symbols
<i>Modality & realism</i>	How does the discourse present itself? As factual, idealized, or aspirational?	Use of data, testimonials, words like 'safe,' 'guaranteed'	Illustration versus photographic realism, clarity of detail
<i>Symbolism & semiotics</i>	What symbols are used to convey deeper meaning?	E.g. national symbols, religious references, metaphors	E.g. flags, clothing, posture, uniforms, architecture
<i>Omissions & silences</i>	What expected terms are absent? What is not said or shown? Whose voices/perspectives are missing?	E.g. lack of migrant voices/experiences, erasure of the lower classes	E.g. absence of long waiting lines, illness, cultural differences, ethnic markers
<i>Function/purpose</i>	Who is the intended audience? What is the material trying to do?	Persuade, instruct, recruit, normalize, reassure	The emotional appeal/tone, who is depicted

Table 1. Adapted CDA Coding Template for Red Star Line Materials

³⁹ David Machin and Andrea Mayr, *How to Do Critical Discourse Analysis: A Multimodal Introduction* (SAGE Publications, 2012), 30.

Sources

While secondary sources such as peer reviewed books and journal articles will be used to contextualize the findings, the main focus lies on primary sources. In particular, five Dutch- and five English-language brochures will be examined. These brochures, available through the online collection of the Red Star Line Museum in Antwerp, best reflect the Red Star Line's marketing strategies, as they include both textual and visual elements unlike other promotional materials such as posters. Although only ten promotional brochures will be analyzed due to limited source availability, they already provide valuable insights into how the Red Star Line crafted its messaging to appeal to distinct audiences.

Strengths & Weaknesses

Strengths

Using critical discourse analysis, and Machin and May's multi-modal CDA framework more specifically, allows for the assessment of both textual and visual sources, providing a more comprehensive understanding of how meaning is structured in institutional discourse. By drawing on multiple disciplines, like linguistics and semiotics, this approach reveals how the Red Star Line subtly reinforced hierarchies and social norms. In doing so, CDA encourages critical reflection on institutional narratives. Its adaptability to diverse primary sources makes it particularly well-suited for this research.

Weaknesses

While the multifaceted nature of CDA ensures a comprehensive and critical examination of how the Red Star Line's transportation services shaped community-building efforts and the preservation of cultural identity among Flemish migrants, it also carries the risk of subjective interpretations of texts and visuals. Especially when socio-historical context is lacking,

primary source material might be misinterpreted. To address this, the research employs a clear coding template alongside secondary source material, embedding the Red Star Line's discourse within a broader historical framework and enhancing the objectivity of the analysis.

Chapter 1. The Interconnection of Flemish Migration and The Red Star

Line

In order to fully understand the Red Star Line's role in shaping Flemish migrant identities and community-building efforts, it is essential to first explore the broader conditions that fueled this wave of migration. Between the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, both Europe and North America underwent profound technological and economic transformations, albeit in different ways. Within this shifting historical context, the Red Star Line emerged as a key facilitator of transatlantic migration.

Therefore, this chapter addresses the subquestion: 'How did historical and infrastructural context of the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries shape the role of the Red Star Line in Flemish migration to North America?' It begins by outlining the push and pull factors behind Flemish emigration, followed by an overview of the advent of steamships and the growing importance of Antwerp within the broader migration infrastructure. The chapter then turns to the Red Star Line itself and the early Belgian migrant communities in North America. This historical context lays the groundwork for understanding the Red Star Line as a liminal space in the Flemish migration experience, to be further explored in the following chapters.

Flemish Migration: Push and Pull Factors

The primary driver of Belgian migration was the economic disparity in West and East Flanders. In these regions, nearly eighty percent of the population relied on agriculture for their livelihood, through cultivating food and industrial crops for personal use and regional sale.⁴⁰ However, many farmers were forced to supplement their income through work in the textile industry to make ends meet. This often involved spinning the cultivated flax into yarn,

⁴⁰ Stynen, *Boer Vindt Land* [Farmer Finds Land], 23.

which was then to be woven into linen. By 1840, approximately 222.000 people, excluding children, were employed as spinners, highlighting the scale of this labor force.⁴¹

Although conditions in the early nineteenth century were already precarious, the situation took a turn for the worst when, during the mid-nineteenth century, agricultural production could no longer keep up with population growth.⁴² A combination of labor-intensive farming – focused heavily on potato cultivation – a rapidly growing population, and increasing competition from the mechanized French cotton and linen industries, resulted in a deepening impoverishment of West and East Flandres.⁴³ Moreover, between 1845-1850, an until then unknown fungal disease caused widespread potato crop failures in these agriculture-dependent regions. To illustrate this, in 1845 alone, the fungal disease destroyed eighty-seven percent of the harvest in Flandres.⁴⁴ These overlapping economic pressures eventually pushed many Flemish people to seek opportunities abroad, fueling a wave of migration to neighboring countries and across the Atlantic.

While the majority of Flemish migrants went to France, mainly due to the opportunity for seasonal work, some pioneers moved to North America. In particular, the advent of steamships around 1880 made transatlantic travel more accessible, leading to an increase in Flemish migration overseas.⁴⁵ Flemish migrants mostly settled in the American Midwest, in states such as Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, Minnesota, and Iowa, but also in Canadian provinces such as Ontario and Quebec. On the one hand, American regions were especially attractive for Flemish migrants due to the abundance of labor opportunities in the industrial sector as a result of rapid urbanization in the late nineteenth century.⁴⁶ On the other hand, Canada's 'railway boom' in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries created a high

⁴¹ Dirk Musschoot, *Wij Gaan Naar Amerika [We Are Going To America]* (Uitgeverij Lannoo, 2002), 10.

⁴² Stynen, *Boer Vindt Land* [Farmer Finds Land], 25.

⁴³ Ibid, 26.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Stynen, *Boer Vindt Land* [Farmer Finds Land], 62.

⁴⁶ Ibid, 63.

demand for labor, attracting Flemish migrants to work on railway construction.⁴⁷

Furthermore, opportunities in tobacco farming in regions of southwestern Ontario⁴⁸ and the availability of cheap land,⁴⁹ further encouraged Flemish settlement in Canada.

Nevertheless, Flemish perceptions of North America were strongly shaped by how the region was portrayed. In particular, apart from structural factors, such as the local social and economic conditions in Belgium and the United States and Canada, the decision to migrate to North America was heavily influenced by the image and reputation of the country, highlighting the role that promotional materials and Flemish migrants themselves played in the migration movement.⁵⁰ Therefore, shipping companies, such as the Red Star Line, could play an active role in encouraging migration by not only facilitating transatlantic travel, but also by promoting North America as a region of opportunity through targeted advertising and marketing.

The Advent of Steamships

According to Stéphane Hoste and Lewis R. Fischer, “European migration rose from an average of just over 110,000 people per year in the period 1821-1850, to 270,000 between 1851 and 1880 and to more than 900,000 in the years 1881-1915”.⁵¹ This significant increase from 1880 onward was largely driven by the shift from sail to steam, which fundamentally reshaped how and when migration decisions were made.

⁴⁷ Ministerie van Middenstand en Landbouw, *Zij Namen hun Plaats in op het Land: Belgische Emigratie naar Canada* [They Took Their Place on the Land: Belgian Emigration to Canada] (Drukkerij van het Ministerie van Middenstand en Landbouw, 1999), 17.

⁴⁸ Joan Magee, *The Belgians in Ontario: A History* (Dundurn Press, 1987), 87.

⁴⁹ Ministerie van Middenstand en Landbouw, *Zij Namen hun Plaats in op het Land: Belgische Emigratie naar Canada* [They Took Their Place on the Land: Belgian Emigration to Canada], 37.

⁵⁰ Cornelius J. Jaenen, *Promoters, Planters, and Pioneers* (University of Calgary Press, 2011), 1.

⁵¹ Stéphane Hoste and Lewis R. Fischer, “Migration and Maritime Networks in the Atlantic Economy: An Introduction,” in *Maritime Transport and Migration: The Connections between Maritime and Migration Networks*, eds. Torsten Feys, Lewis R. Fischer, Stéphane Hoste, and Stephan Vanfraechem (Liverpool University Press, 2007), 1.

Whereas transatlantic travel by sailing ships was usually permanent and involved entire families, the advent of steamships introduced new migration patterns.⁵² Men more frequently migrated on a temporary basis, as steamships offered shorter travel times, lower economic opportunity costs, improved onboard conditions, and intrinsically reduced mortality rates.⁵³ Subsequently, migration became more accessible and was often no longer seen as strictly one-way. In nineteenth-century Flanders, it became common for men to migrate alone, either to establish a foothold for future family migration, assess the conditions abroad, or to earn money before returning home.⁵⁴

Although poverty remained the primary driver of Flemish migration, the shift from sail to steam substantially shaped not only individual decisions to migration but also the broader patterns through which migration occurred. For instance, Wegge's study reveals that improved travel conditions made possible by steamships were a significant catalyst for chain migration.⁵⁵ Wegge defines chain migration as "a process in which previous migration from a village is an influence on the migration decisions of present villagers".⁵⁶ In other words, even if migrants did not ultimately settle in the same destinations as those who had left before them, the decision to migrate was often based on, or facilitated by, existing social connections. These ties were maintained not only through letter writing, but also through the return of earlier migrants, made increasingly feasible by the introduction of steamships on the transatlantic route.⁵⁷

The founding of the Red Star Line in 1873 exemplifies the transformative impact of steamship technology on transatlantic migration. The Red Star Line was established and

⁵² Raymond L. Cohn, "The Transition from Sail to Steam in Immigration to the United States," *The Journal of Economic History* 65, no. 2: 469.

⁵³ Simone A. Wegge, "Chain Migration and Information Networks: Evidence from Nineteenth-Century Hesse-Cassel," *The Journal of Economic History* 58, no. 4: 961.

⁵⁴ Stynen, *Boer Vindt Land* [Farmer Finds Land], 64.

⁵⁵ Wegge, "Chain Migration and Information Networks," 962.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 958.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 962.

operated from the outset with steamships, unlike earlier shipping lines who had to transition from sail to steam. The dominance of steamship technology on the transatlantic route is further underscored by the fact that, according to Cohn, “[b]y 1873, 97 percent of passengers arrived at New York on a steamship with total sailing ship passengers falling to 8,000”.⁵⁸ By entering the market at this pivotal moment, the Red Star Line played a key role in facilitating the new era of mobility, offering improved on-board conditions and relatively affordable tickets. As a result, the company became a central player in shaping the transatlantic migration infrastructure from the 1880s onwards.

Antwerp’s Rise as Part of the Migration Infrastructure

During the first half of the nineteenth century, Antwerp became an important continental port and, by the mid-1870s, developed into one of the major commercial ports worldwide.⁵⁹ In part, Antwerp’s rise was driven by the expansion of the German transit trade and the development of a modern railway network, significantly boosting its commercial reach. However, prior to 1870, Belgium’s efforts to establish a strong national fleet were hindered by a lack of an effective general maritime policy, resulting in several failed initiatives to stimulate Belgian shipping.⁶⁰ Recognizing that domestic capital alone would be insufficient to develop a strong national fleet, the Belgian government adjusted its strategy by offering subsidies to foreign shipping companies willing to sail under the Belgian flag.⁶¹ As a result, the 1870s witnessed a drastic shift from sail to steam, fueling growth in both trade and passenger transport.

⁵⁸ Cohn, “The Transition from Sail to Steam in Immigration to the United States,” 493.

⁵⁹ Kristof Looockx, “Migration Trajectories of Seafarers during the Transition from Sail to Steam: Change and Continuity in Antwerp, 1850-1900,” *The International Journal of Maritime History* 32, no. 3: 618.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

The Belgian government sought to establish a shipping line between Antwerp and New York for three main reasons. First, it aimed to strengthen Belgian's international political relations.⁶² By promoting Antwerp as a commercial hub, the government hoped to attract transit trade from neighboring countries such as Germany. Second, a strong national fleet was seen as a means to boost trade with the United States by encouraging merchants to view the port of Antwerp as a viable center for transatlantic commerce.⁶³ Lastly, the government wanted to enhance the port's competitiveness.⁶⁴ This was important, as many European ports were trying to attract the same trade and migration traffic across the Atlantic. For example, like Antwerp, Liverpool sought to appeal to the poor and ambitious population who hoped to build a new life in North America.⁶⁵ Furthermore, around the same time as Antwerp, Rotterdam launched its first steamship connection to New York through the Holland America Line.⁶⁶

Antwerp's advantage, beyond its strategic location, lay in its competitive pricing strategy. Namely, it ensured that tariffs for cabin passengers and valuable goods would not exceed those of the French line, and kept rates ten percent lower than those of Cunard.⁶⁷ Moreover, while Cunard only offered first-class tickets, Antwerp introduced a second class, making the transatlantic journey more accessible to travelers from a wider range of social backgrounds. These measures made the port of Antwerp an attractive departure point for both merchants and migrants.

⁶² Torsten Feys, *The Battle for the Migrants: The Introduction of Steamshipping on the North Atlantic and Its Impact on the European Exodus* (Liverpool University, 2017), 31.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Dawn Littler, *Guide to the Records of Merseyside Maritime Museum* (Liverpool University Press, 2017), 45.

⁶⁶ Feys, *The Battle for the Migrants*, 39.

⁶⁷ Ibid, 31.

The Red Star Line: An Institutional Actor

On September 5, 1872, C.A. Griscom, then vice president of the International Navigation Company, traveled to Antwerp carrying proxy documents from American shareholders to establish a limited liability company named *Société Anonyme de Navigation Belge-Américaine* (SANBA) [Belgian-American Navigation Company].⁶⁸ While a Belgian company was legally constituted in theory, in practice the joint venture operated as a subsidiary of the International Navigation Company.⁶⁹ Namely, the American partners contributed the majority of the capital, leaving the Belgians in a position with limited leverage. Furthermore, the French name of the company quickly changed as the distinctive red star on its ships led it to be commonly known as the Red Star Line.⁷⁰

The Red Star Line's initial purpose was to offer a regular service between the ports of Antwerp and Philadelphia to bring migrants to Philadelphia and petroleum to Antwerp. However, just as the company's fleet underwent significant changes, beginning with only one ship, the *Vaderland*, and expanding steadily over the years, so did its operations and routes evolve due to changes in shifting economic demands and migration patterns. New destinations, including New York, were added as transatlantic migration grew, and in 1899 yet another ship, the *Friesland*, was ordered to be built to keep up with the rising demand for transatlantic passenger traffic.⁷¹ As shown in Figure 1, Belgian migration to the United States rose significantly between 1850 and 1860, as it offered a potential escape from economic hardship in Belgium. However, between 1860 and 1880, this growth leveled off, primarily due to the American Civil War (1861 to 1865).⁷² Since 1880, as discussed earlier, transatlantic

⁶⁸ Robert Vervoort, Frank Caestecker, and Rita Jalon, *Antwerpen = Amerika Red Star Line: Een Nieuwe Toekomst Tegemoet* [Antwerp = America Red Star Line: A New Future Ahead] (Petraco-PANDORA, 2005), 12.

⁶⁹ Vervoort, Caestecker, and Jalon, *Antwerpen = Amerika* [Antwerp = America], 14.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid, 22.

⁷² Ibid, 98.

migration has surged, driven by the advent of steamships in passenger travel, a trend clearly reflected in the sharp rise depicted in the graph.

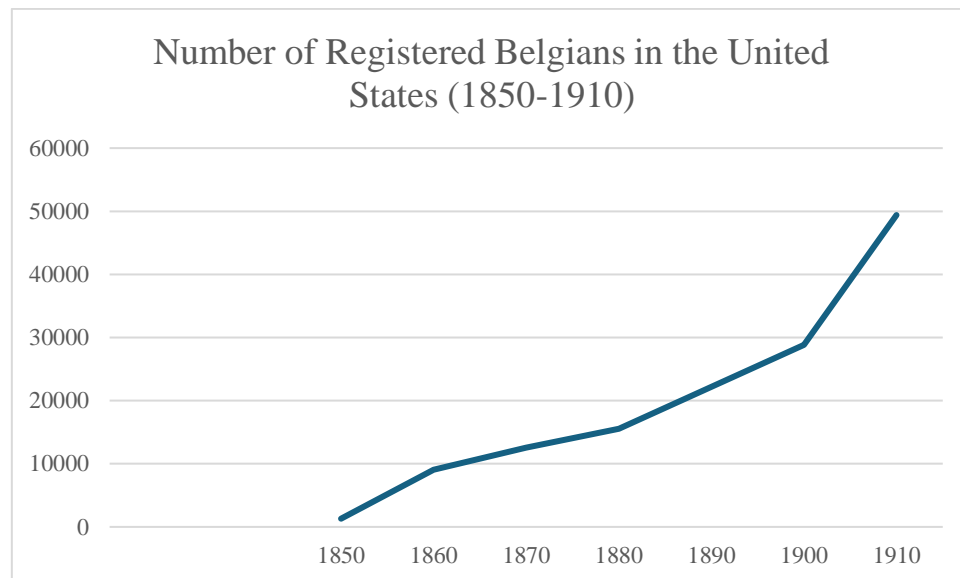


Figure 1. Number of registered Belgians in the United States (1850-1910) based on figures from the book *Antwerpen = Amerika Red Star Line: Een Nieuwe Toekomst Tegemoet* [Antwerp = America Red Star Line: A New Feature Ahead] by Robert Vervoort, Frank Caestecker, and Rita Jalon, (97-99).

Nevertheless, the Red Star Line's success took a downturn with the outbreak of the First World War. In 1914, the advancing German troops caused the company's last liner, the *Finland*, under Captain Thomas Barman, to leave the port of Antwerp.⁷³ It was not until 1919 before one of the Red Star Line's ships entered the port of Antwerp again. Poor maintenance of the company's vessels during this period and new U.S. legislation in 1921 ensured that migration via the Red Star Line slowly declined. Additionally, the Great Depression, beginning in 1929, had severe consequences for the company, resulting in more economic loss. In response to the economic crisis, American President Roosevelt introduced the New Deal, a set of federal policies focused on relief, recovery, and reform. In particular, the New Deal entailed a substantial increase in government spending and the creation of several agencies to address unemployment and stabilize industries. Ultimately, this marked the end of

⁷³ Ibid, 33.

the Red Star Line company as all ships sailing under a foreign flag had to return to the United States to be sold in order to support American companies.⁷⁴

Early Migrant Communities in North America

Before its eventual decline, the Red Star Line played a significant role in facilitating the transportation of Flemish migrants to the United States and Canada as mentioned earlier. After their arrival, closeknit communities began to form in the destination countries, preserving cultural ties and social networks. As a result of chain migration, in which family and friends gradually followed one another, clubs, centering around cultural activities such as sports and music, were established (see Image 1).



Image 1. Photograph of the facade of the Belgian Club building in Winnipeg (St. Boniface), Manitoba, Canada, photograph, s.d., ADVN, *Fonds Vlamingen in Noord-Amerika*, VFA 8327, VFB 1508.

The most popular sport played at these clubs, enjoyed by people of all nationalities, was Belgian bowling, also called ‘krulbollen’ or ‘rolle bolle’.⁷⁵ This sport originated in East and West Flandres, where it was played in villages on outdoor alleys on Sundays and holidays. Bowling clubs, such as the *Belgian American Krulbowlers Club*, would hold

⁷⁴ Ibid, 42.

⁷⁵ Magee, *The Belgians in Ontario: A History*, 124.

competitions amongst their members twice a month.⁷⁶ In this game, the contestants role a cheese-shaped wooden bowl over an alley that is slightly slanted to the middle towards the pin of their opponents, trying to land the bowl as closely to the pin as possible (see Image 2).⁷⁷



Image 2. Johan Sesselle, Raoul Rogiers, and Jean Trenson at the bowling alley in Adegem (Onderdijke), photograph, 1957, Erfgoedbank Meetjesland, *Belgian Krulbolbond Collection*, on loan from Jean Trenson,

Apart from the establishment of clubs, the Belgian community kept ties with their home country through Belgian-American newspapers such as the *Gazette van Detroit* or the *Gazette van Moline*. These newspapers were written in Dutch and focused on both local news from Belgian-American communities in North America, and international events happening in Belgium.

Overall, the formation of early Flemish migrant communities in North America reveal how migration via the Red Star Line extended beyond mere transportation to shaping enduring cultural identities. While further research is needed to establish if there is a direct link between the Red Star Line company itself and Flemish migration settlement or integration, its function as a liminal space enabled the redefinition of identity and belonging, thereby underscoring its role in the transformative experience of Flemish migration itself.

⁷⁶ Philemon D. Sabbe and Leon Buyse, *Belgians in America* (Uitgeverij Lannoo, 1960), 276.

⁷⁷ Magee, *The Belgians in Ontario: A History*, 126.

Conclusion

In sum, this chapter has demonstrated that the Red Star Line and Flemish migration were closely connected. Flemish migrants sought to escape economic disparity in Belgium's rural regions and were drawn to the United States and Canada by labor opportunities and the availability of land. However, it was the reputation of these countries that dominated Flemish migrants' decision-making, highlighting the influence of companies such as the Red Star Line and migrants themselves on the migration flow.

At a critical point, when transatlantic travel underwent a major shift from sail to steam, the Red Star Line emerged as a central actor. By offering services that were less time-consuming, more affordable, and overall more accessible to the lower classes, the company was able to attract a steady flow of Flemish migrants as the possibility of return-migration grew. In part due to the Red Star Line's success, the port of Antwerp rose in prominence and became a major node in global migration networks. The company expanded rapidly from the 1880s onward, and Flemish migration through the company reached its peak in the early twentieth century. Due to its strategic location and competitive pricing strategy, the Red Star Line became an attractive departure point for Flemish migrants, fostering a sense of familiarity and solidarity even before departure. As a result, upon arrival in North America, Flemish migrants formed close-knit communities to preserve their cultural identity and sustain the social connections that supported their migration.

Understanding this historical context is crucial to examining the Red Star Line not only as a transportation company, but also as a liminal space. The company functioned as a transitional zone where migrants moved between both geographical and cultural spaces, leaving room for the company's infrastructure to shape the experience of Flemish migration. Therefore, the following chapters will dive deeper into how institutional language and signage possibly constructed narratives around identity, belonging, and movement.

Chapter 2. Liminal Departures: Textual Promotion of the New World and the ‘Ideal Migrant’?

Having outlined the deep interconnection between Flemish migration and the Red Star Line, this chapter takes a closer look at the company’s role in facilitating community-building and the preservation of cultural identity among Belgian immigrants during the first phase of liminality, *rites of separation*. As such, the following section aims to answer the subquestion: ‘How did the textual strategies in the Red Star Line’s Dutch- and English-language brochures shape migrant perceptions of identity, belonging, and the journey to the ‘new world’?

It does so through a textual analysis of ten promotional brochures, five in Dutch and five in English, produced between 1880 and 1930. This section examines how these materials may have subtly constructed notions of the New World and the ‘ideal migrant’ to influence prospective migrants’ perceptions and self-identities in alignment with the Red Star Line’s marketing objectives.

Using comparative critical discourse analysis, the chapter explores the company’s discursive strategies across eight key dimensions: lexical choices; naming and categorization; visual and spatial hierarchy; framing and layout; modality and realism; symbolism and semiotics; omissions and silences; and overall function and purpose. In doing so, this comparative study aims to uncover how different target audiences were addressed and constructed in the Red Star Line’s promotional material, and what it reveals about broader discursive patterns regarding class, migration, and identity. After providing context on the ten promotional brochures, the chapter will first analyze the five Dutch-language brochures, followed by a comparative discussion on the English-language materials.

Red Star Line Brochures (1880-1930)

Dutch-Language Brochures



Image 3. Five Dutch-language brochures.

1. *Antwerpen-Canada met Red Star Line Schepen en Canadian National Spoorwegen* [Antwerp-Canada with Red Star Line Ships and Canadian National Railways], [brochure], 1928, Online Collection Red Star Line Museum, Antwerp.
2. *Red Star Line Naar Canada* [Red Star Line To Canada], [brochure], 1923, Online Collection Red Star Line Museum, Antwerp.
3. *Red Star Line Derde Klas* [Red Star Line Third Class], [brochure], 1928, Online Collection Red Star Line Museum, Antwerp.
4. *Red Star Line Stroombiljet* [Red Star Line Leaflet], [brochure], 1928, Online Collection Red Star Line Museum, Antwerp.
5. *Tourist Derde Kabin Red Star Line* [Tourist Third Cabin Red Star Line], [brochure], 1928, Online Collection Red Star Line Museum, Antwerp.

The five Dutch-language brochures analyzed in this chapter are presented in Image 3. Three of these, *Red Star Line Stroombiljet* [Red Star Line Leaflet], *Red Star Line Derde Klas* [Red Star Line Third Class], and *Antwerpen-Canada met Red Star Line Schepen en Canadian National Spoorwegen* [Antwerp-Canada with Red Star Line Ships and Canadian National Railways], all date from 1928. The remaining two brochures represent slightly earlier and later moments within the same general timeframe as *Red Star Line Naar Canada* [Red Star Line To Canada] was published in 1923, while *Tourist Derde Kabin Red Star Line* [Tourist

Third Cabin Red Star Line] dates from 1930. Due to the limited source availability and relatively narrow time span they cover, this study approaches the brochures as a collective body. Rather than analyzing chronological developments, the analysis focuses on uncovering common discursive strategies.

In general, these brochures describe the Red Star Line's onboard services, provide contact information of its travel agents, offer detailed information on ticket pricing, and outline proposed sailings. Taken together, these elements inform the reader about the logistical aspects of a journey with the Red Star Line while simultaneously promoting its services as desirable.

English-Language Brochures



Image 4. Five English-language brochures.

1. *Red Star Line Cabin Service*, [brochure], 1930, Online Collection Red Star Line Museum, Antwerp.
2. *Red Star Line First Class Tariff*, [brochure], 1923, Online Collection Red Star Line Museum, Antwerp.
3. *Comfort Cabin Service Red Star Line*, [brochure], 1922, Online Collection Red Star Line Museum, Antwerp.
4. *Red Star Line New York and Antwerp*, [brochure], 1884, Online Collection Red Star Line Museum, Antwerp.
5. *Red Star Line: From New York and Philadelphia to Antwerp*, [brochure], 1883, Online Collection Red Star Line Museum, Antwerp.

The five English-language brochures analyzed in this chapter are presented in Image 4. While most of the Red Star Line's promotional brochures analyzed in this study date from the early twentieth century, two English-language brochures originate from the late nineteenth century. Namely, the *Red Star Line: From New York and Philadelphia to Antwerp* brochure was published in 1883 and *Red Star Line New York and Antwerp* dates to 1884. The other three brochures date, similar to the Dutch-language brochures, from the early twentieth century.

Although there is a temporal gap between the brochures from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as indicated in the previous chapter, transatlantic migration had already surged by 1880. As such, the earlier brochures are relevant to the broader historical context examined in this study. Therefore, instead of being treated as outliers, these brochures are considered part of an ongoing tradition of marketing strategies employed by the Red Star Line.

Moreover, despite the differences in publication date, the five English-language brochures reflect similar structural features and promotional aims. Like the Dutch versions, they describe the Red Star Line's onboard services, provide information about travel agents, outline ticket pricing, and present sailing schedules. Through this combination of practical details and promotional cues, the English-language brochures aim to both inform and convince the reader of the Red Star Line's services.

All in all, the Red Star Line's specific marketing strategies become apparent when analyzing the ten promotional brochures as they were all published between 1880 and 1930, a time when transatlantic migration to North America surged, and they consistently aimed to attract new passengers by constructing a vision of the transatlantic journey.

Findings: Dutch-Language Brochures

Lexical Choices

Across all five brochures, the Red Star Line and its services are constantly portrayed in a positive light. For example, the Dutch-language brochure *Red Star Line Stroombiljet* [Red Star Line Leaflet] uses terms such as “up to date,” and “ruim” [spacious] to emphasize the modernity of its ships.⁷⁸ Furthermore, the brochure *Red Star Line Derde Klas* [Red Star Line Third Class] employs the term “ongeevenaard” [unrivaled] to highlight the Red Star Line’s superiority.⁷⁹ While a positive tone is expected in promotional materials, it is noteworthy that the brochures pay attention almost exclusively to promoting the company’s own services, with little attention to the destination itself. In doing so, the Red Star Line positioned itself as a desirable mediator between the so-called old and new world. Rather than focusing on the uncertain and vague future in North America, the Red Star Line encouraged migrants to place their trust in the modern and comfortable journey it provided.

This emphasis on the journey is further reinforced through the company’s strategic use of vocabulary, which evokes a sense of dignity. For instance, the brochure *Red Star Line Derde Klas* [Red Star Line Third Class] describes the Red Star Line’s third-class accommodations as “ruime en aantrekkelijke verblijfzalen” [spacious and attractive living rooms] and “zuivere en heldere kamers” [clean and bright rooms].⁸⁰ Similarly, the brochure *Antwerpen-Canada met Red Star Line Schepen en Canadian National Spoorwegen* [Antwerp-Canada with Red Star Line Ships and Canadian National Railways] highlights the company’s “heldere en frissche kajuiten” [bright and fresh cabins], underscoring the quality of its

⁷⁸ *Red Star Line Stroombiljet* [Red Star Line Leaflet], [brochure], 1928, Online Collection Red Star Line Museum, Antwerp, <https://dams.antwerpen.be/asset/C4HUj8mSqtMVrrQPRJaF0164>.

⁷⁹ *Red Star Line Derde Klas* [Red Star Line Third Class], [brochure], 1928, Online Collection Red Star Line Museum, Antwerp, <https://dams.antwerpen.be/asset/phDsRbkRKLLdTducQSGzmani>.

⁸⁰ *Red Star Line Derde Klas* [Red Star Line Third Class].

services.⁸¹ By using vivid language such as “glansrijk”⁸² [splendid], “uitstekende kwaliteit”⁸³ [excellent quality], and “voortreffelijk”⁸⁴ [exquisite], the brochures frame the migration experience as comfortable and luxurious, effectively masking the economic austerity of the voyage and the grim realities often associated with third-class travel.

Naming & Categorization

Of the five brochures, three specifically address third-class passengers, while none mention first- or second-class travelers (see Annex 1.1). This suggests that the majority of Flemish and Dutch-speaking migrants traveled third-class, which aligns with existing literature highlighting the poverty of this migrant group.⁸⁵ Throughout the brochures, the Red Star Line employs careful categorization to foster unity among potential migrants, as passengers are not referred to as migrants but generally as “passagiers”⁸⁶ [passengers] or “reizigers”⁸⁷ [travelers], without much distinction. Moreover, the brochure *Red Star Line Naar Canada* [Red Star Line To Canada] uses the phrase “iedereen kan er van overtuigd zijn in zijn eigen taal aangesproken en begrepen te worden” [everyone can assume to be addressed and understood in their own language] to reinforce a sense of inclusivity and personal service.⁸⁸ The strategic use of language suggests a marketing strategy aimed at reducing Flemish migrants’ anxiety

⁸¹ *Antwerpen-Canada met Red Star Line Schepen en Canadian National Spoorwegen* [Antwerp-Canada with Red Star Line Ships and Canadian National Railways], [brochure], 1928, Online Collection Red Star Line Museum, Antwerp, <https://dams.antwerpen.be/asset/p1Heg4iuLVeJRL9pnKnMZ75t>.

⁸² *Red Star Line Strootbiljet* [Red Star Line Leaflet].

⁸³ *Red Star Line Naar Canada* [Red Star Line: To Canada], [brochure], 1923, Online Collection Red Star Line Museum, Antwerp, <https://dams.antwerpen.be/asset/admIZspVBNZKJRkiKA6vOgqM>.

⁸⁴ *Red Star Line Derde Klas* [Red Star Line Third Class].

⁸⁵ Stylen, *Boer Vindt Land* [Boer Finds Land], 26.

⁸⁶ *Antwerpen-Canada met Red Star Line Schepen Canadian National Spoorwegen* [Antwerp-Canada with Red Star Line Ships Canadian National Railways]. ; *Red Star Line Derde Klas* [Red Star Line Third Class]. ; *Red Star Line Naar Canada* [Red Star Line: To Canada]. ; *Red Star Line Strootbiljet* [Red Star Line Leaflet]. ; *Tourist Derde Kabien Red Star Line* [Tourist Third Cabin Red Star Line], [brochure], 1928, Online Collection Red Star Line Museum, Antwerp, <https://dams.antwerpen.be/asset/P2khTIBVUaVN3CIKkkQkjDFQ>.

⁸⁷ *Antwerpen-Canada met Red Star Line Schepen Canadian National Spoorwegen* [Antwerp-Canada with Red Star Line Ships Canadian National Railways]. ; *Red Star Line Strootbiljet* [Red Star Line Leaflet].

⁸⁸ *Red Star Line Naar Canada* [Red Star Line To Canada].

about the disorienting phase of separation by framing the journey as a linguistically familiar experience, preserving a sense of their cultural identity.

However, this general use of unifying language coexists with more subtle forms of differentiation. Further distinctions are made only when ticket prices are discussed, such as in the brochure *Tourist Derde Kabien Red Star Line* [Tourist Third Cabin Red Star Line] which differentiates between adults, children aged one to ten, and infants under one year old.⁸⁹ In addition, this brochure notes certain exceptions regarding permits for specific groups, such as Canadian citizens or citizens of Sint-Pierre and Miquelon. While the use of inclusive terms such as ‘passagiers’ and ‘reizigers’ helps construct migration as a cohesive and dignified experience, these practical distinctions demonstrate how the Red Star Line selectively reintroduced social hierarchies when necessary. In combination with the company’s exclusive focus on third-class passengers in these brochures, this approach illustrates how the Red Star Line framed Flemish migrants primarily as poor, but legitimate travelers.

Visual/Spatial Hierarchy

Across all analyzed Dutch brochures, a clear textual hierarchy appears. Phrases such as “voorzien van”⁹⁰ [provided with], “zijn bijzonder ingericht voor”⁹¹ [are especially designed for], and “dienst der Red Star Line”⁹² [service of the Red Star Line], position the company as the central authority, framing the passengers as passive recipients who must conform to the regulations and services imposed. This language constructs a hierarchical relationship in which the Red Star Line holds the dominant position, while Flemish migrants are positioned

⁸⁹ *Tourist Derde Kabien Red Star Line* [Tourist Third Cabin Red Star Line].

⁹⁰ *Red Star Line Stroombiljet* [Red Star Line Leaflet].

⁹¹ *Red Star Line Naar Canada* [Red Star Line: To Canada].

⁹² *Antwerpen-Canada met Red Star Line Schepen Canadian National Spoorwegen* [Antwerp-Canada with Red Star Line Ships Canadian National Railways].

as subordinate and dependent within the migration process. As a result, migration is portrayed as a regulated procedure managed by an institution rather than an autonomous endeavor.

Nevertheless, phrases such as “deze dekken staan ter beschikking der passagiers” [these decks are at the passengers’ disposal], included in the brochure *Red Star Line Derde Klas* [Red Star Line Third Cabin], suggest a more inclusive register.⁹³ The promotion of communal areas subtly evokes the image of shared experience onboard. In doing so, the Red Star Line hints at a sense of structure and social cohesion, which may have fostered a minimal sense of imagined community among Flemish migrants prior to departure.

Framing & Layout

In line with the previously noted spatial hierarchy across the brochures, the headlines further reinforce the Red Star Line’s central authority. Prominent headlines such as “RED STAR LINE”⁹⁴ dominate the first pages, often accompanied by either a destination, for example “Red Star Line Naar Canada”⁹⁵ [Red Star Line To Canada], or a reference to travel class, such as “Red Star Line Derde Klas”⁹⁶ [Red Star Line Third Class]. In doing so, the company links its institutional identity to the migrant journey itself. By foregrounding its name in relation to third-class and popular migrant destinations, the Red Star Line frames itself not only as a facilitator of travel, but as a defining framework in which migration to North America is to be understood.

In addition, frequently bolded terms include the names of Red Star Line ships, such as “S.S. Belgenland” and “S.S. Arabic” in the brochure *Red Star Line Derde Klas* [Red Star Line Third Class].⁹⁷ This emphasis implies a further personalization of the migration experience

⁹³ *Red Star Line Derde Klas* [Red Star Line Third Class].

⁹⁴ *Antwerpen-Canada met Red Star Line Schepen Canadian National Spoorwegen* [Antwerp-Canada with Red Star Line Ships Canadian National Railways]. ; *Red Star Line Derde Klas* [Red Star Line Third Class]. ; *Red Star Line Stroombiljet* [Red Star Line Leaflet].

⁹⁵ *Red Star Line: Naar Canada* [Red Star Line: To Canada].

⁹⁶ *Red Star Line Derde Klas* [Red Star Line Third Class].

⁹⁷ Ibid.

through specific vessels, thereby strengthening the association between migrants' experience and the Red Star Line's 'brand'. Namely, by frequently highlighting ships by name, it allows migrants to form an emotional or symbolic attachment to 'their ship'. Through headlines such as "Inlichtingen voor Passagiers" [Passenger Information] in *Tourist Derde Kabien Red Star Line* [Tourist Third Cabin Red Star Line]⁹⁸ and "Nieuwigheden in derde klas op het S.S. Belgenland" [Novelties in third class on the S.S. Belgenland] in *Red Star Line Derde Klas* [Red Star Line Third Class],⁹⁹ the Dutch-language brochures underscore the transport experience rather than the destination of the journey. By offering procedural transparency, the Red Star Line positioned itself as a reliable facilitator of travel for Flemish migrants during the *rites of separation*.

Modality & Realism

The discourse presented in the brochures constructs itself as factual and authoritative through terms like "vanzelfsprekend"¹⁰⁰ [self-evident], "ongeevenaard"¹⁰¹ [unparalleled], and "onweerlegbaar bewijs"¹⁰² [irrefutable evidence]. Furthermore, the brochures frequently reference supposed endorsements of the Red Star Line's services from previous passengers. For example, the brochure *Red Star Line Stroombiljet* [Red Star Line Leaflet] includes phrases such as "persoonlijke lofbetuigingen hunner regelmatige reizigers" [personal praise from their frequent travelers], aimed to enhance the company's trustworthiness.¹⁰³ Additionally, the brochure *Red Star Line Derde Klas* [Red Star Line Third Class] states phrases such as "[a]l wie reeds met deze schepen gereisd heeft, is het volkomen eens" [anyone who has already

⁹⁸ *Tourist Derde Kabien Red Star Line* [Tourist Third Cabin Red Star Line].

⁹⁹ *Red Star Line Derde Klas* [Red Star Line Third Class].

¹⁰⁰ *Red Star Line Stroombiljet* [Red Star Line Leaflet].

¹⁰¹ *Red Star Line Derde Klas* [Red Star Line Third Class].

¹⁰² *Red Star Line Naar Canada* [Red Star Line To Canada].

¹⁰³ *Red Star Line Stroombiljet* [Red Star Line Leaflet].

traveled on these ships would completely agree], highlighting the Red Star Line's experience.¹⁰⁴

Through these strategies, the Red Star Line creates the impression that migrants' experiences are universally positive, thereby reinforcing the company's credibility. By framing the Red Star Line as a trusted and socially validated option, the brochures suggest that Flemish migrants, by choosing this service, were embarking on a journey that was both reliable and widely accepted. This approach emphasizes how the company reinforced a collective identity that was morally sanctioned, shaping how Flemish migrants imagined their own migration experiences, even before they left the port of Antwerp.

Symbolism & Semiotics

No use of symbols and semiotic devices have been identified across any of the five brochures. As indicated earlier, the language used in these promotional materials is presented as factual, leaving little room for imagination. This indicates that the Red Star Line aimed to portray the journey from Belgium to North America as a rational and structured process rather than an abstract ideal or emotional journey.

Omissions & Silences

While the Red Star Line was at the heart of the migration movement to North America in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, surprisingly, no specific references to migration itself or detailed information about the destinations appear in the textual analysis of the brochures. This suggests that the Red Star Line was less concerned with promoting migration as such and more focused on promoting itself as a reliable facilitator of travel.

¹⁰⁴ *Red Star Line Derde Klas* [Red Star Line Third Class].

Moreover, while the Red Star Line invokes supposed endorsements from previous passengers to enhance its image as a reliable company, the brochures lack actual travelers' testimonies or personal experiences, presenting only a one-sided perspective of the migration process. By omitting potential obstacles, such as cultural adaptation and seasickness, the Red Star Line depersonalizes the migrant experience as a means to an end rather than a transformative experience. As a result, the brochures helped to create an overwhelmingly positive mythology among Flemish migrants.

Function & Purpose

In general, the analyzed brochures are directed at potential Dutch-speaking third-class passengers, reflecting the socio-economic profile of many Flemish migrants. While some brochures mention specific destinations, such as in the brochure *Red Star Line Naar Canada* [Red Star Line To Canada], this is not the case for all brochures. Notably, the material attempts to speak to the lower-class population by emphasizing the comfort and luxury available to third-class passengers on the Red Star Line's ships. Through this approach, the Red Star Line sought to frame migration through their services as a respectable and socially validated choice rather than an act of desperation.

Comparison with English-Language Brochures

Lexical Choices

Similar to the Dutch-language brochures, the English-language brochures adopt an exclusively positive tone, highlighting the Red Star Line's appeal to prospective passengers. For instance, both sets of brochures make frequent use of adjectives such as "spacious," found in the English-language *Red Star Line Cabin Service*¹⁰⁵ and the Dutch-language *Red Star Line*

¹⁰⁵ *Red Star Line Cabin Service*, [brochure], 1930, Online Collection Red Star Line Museum, Antwerp, <https://dams.antwerpen.be/asset/a2dLXFNiFWFHNLZjaDNtTiM>.

*Strooibiljet*¹⁰⁶ [Red Star Line Leaflet], as well as “delightful,” which appears in both the English-language *Comfort Cabin Service Red Star Line*¹⁰⁷ and the Dutch-language *Red Star Line Naar Canada*¹⁰⁸ [Red Star Line to Canada].

However, a subtle difference in emphasis emerges through these lexical choices. Whereas the Dutch-language brochures tend to prioritize themes of luxury and comfort through their lexical choices, the English-language materials place greater weight on the company’s technological prowess and modern infrastructure (see Image 5). For example, phrases such as “modern appliances” in *Red Star Line: First Class Tariff*,¹⁰⁹ “most up-to-date apparatus” in *Red Star Line Cabin Service*,¹¹⁰ “splendid new steamship” in *Red Star Line New York and Antwerp*,¹¹¹ and “specially constructed” in *Red Star Line: From New York and Philadelphia to Antwerp*¹¹² underscore the Red Star Line’s commitment to innovation in the English-language brochures.

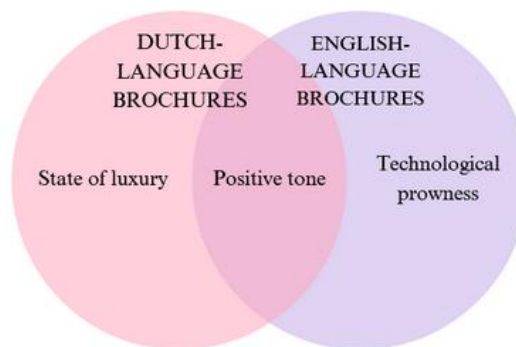


Image 5. Comparative overview lexical choices

¹⁰⁶ *Red Star Line Strooibiljet* [Red Star Line Leaflet].

¹⁰⁷ *Comfort Cabin Service Red Star Line*, [brochure], 1922, Online Collection Red Star Line Museum, Antwerp, <https://dams.antwerpen.be/asset/f2IEVkfNjciUUBZpTOCNjFda/NIavpPNRBcZaOc9uFc7F2xab>.

¹⁰⁸ *Red Star Line Naar Canada* [Red Star Line To Canada].

¹⁰⁹ *Red Star Line: First Class Tariff*, [brochure], 1923, Online Collection Red Star Line Museum, Antwerp, <https://dams.antwerpen.be/asset/N2YQthfXeHob7YVVQNcHzGb4/H2FDQcojXnIXPThTkUnVPvR>.

¹¹⁰ *Red Star Line Cabin Service*.

¹¹¹ *Red Star Line New York and Antwerp*, [brochure], 1884, Online Collection Red Star Line Museum, Antwerp, <https://dams.antwerpen.be/asset/e2PSwVCaESRPY9YNZL3RkbOs>.

¹¹² *Red Star Line: From New York and Philadelphia to Antwerp*, [brochure], 1883, Online Collection Red Star Line Museum, Antwerp, <https://dams.antwerpen.be/asset/b7oHaYQTgZbS7LCIUTvTkn1x>.

This difference in marketing strategy, emphasizing technological status in the English brochures versus luxury appeal in the Dutch ones, reflects the distinct cultural expectations and priorities of the target audiences. As indicated by Victor Turner, the first phase of liminality consists of “symbolic behavior signifying the detachment of the individual or group either from an earlier fixed point in the social structure, from a set of cultural conditions (a “state”), or from both”.¹¹³ In this case, Flemish migrants were leaving behind all they had known to enter a state of passage. This phase is often paired with great uncertainty and instability. As such, references to comfort and respectability fit well with the migrants’ concerns.

However, it is important to note that the focus of the Dutch brochures on reassurance compared to the English brochures’ emphasis on technological prowess does not suggest that Flemish migrants were necessarily more dependent on this reassurance than other migrants. Instead, it indicates the Red Star Line’s targeted marketing strategy, which addressed the specific social and practical concerns of Flemish working-class migrants. Moreover, this strategy contributed to cultural anchoring by implicitly framing the transatlantic passage not as a complete rupture with the past, but as a dignified extension of Flemish identity.

Naming & Categorization

Both the Dutch- and English-language brochures use careful categorization by not naming migrants as such, but rather referring to them as “passengers” and “travelers” (see Annex 1.1 and 1.2). In doing so, all analyzed brochures imply that migration is a neutral, voluntary movement, rather than one driven by economic or political disparity, thereby obscuring structural inequalities.

¹¹³ Turner, *The Ritual Process*, 94.

However, whereas the Dutch-language brochures overwhelmingly address third-class passengers, thereby indirectly acknowledging the socio-economic realities of migration, the English counterparts avoid such references (see Image 6). In contrast, some English brochures, such as *Red Star Line: First Class Tariff*, focus solely on potential passengers of higher social standing.¹¹⁴ In addition to explicit references to upper social classes, implicit labels such as “tourist” in *Red Star Line: From New York and Philadelphia to Antwerp*¹¹⁵ and phrases like “the experienced traveler” or “educational travelers - people of the professional classes” in *Comfort Cabin Service Red Star Line*¹¹⁶ further demonstrate a difference in target audiences between the Dutch- and English-language brochures.

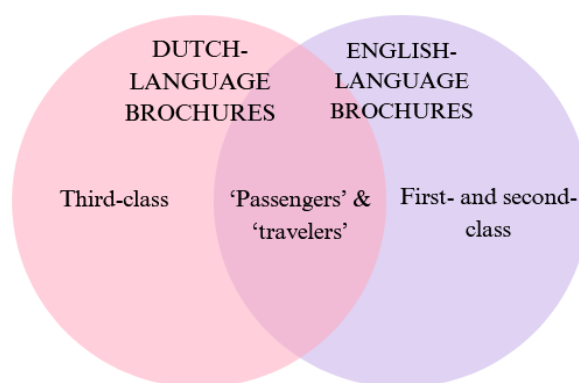


Image 6. Comparative overview naming and categorization

The difference between the Dutch- and English-language brochures in naming and categorization demonstrates how the Red Star Line used selective framing to shape migrant experiences. By referring to migrants in neutral terms rather than explicitly as ‘migrants,’ the company helped construct a narrative of movement that downplayed the hardships of migration. For Flemish migrants, in particular, framing their journey in socially elevated

¹¹⁴ *Red Star Line: First Class Tariff*.

¹¹⁵ *Red Star Line: From New York and Philadelphia to Antwerp*.

¹¹⁶ *Comfort Cabin Service Red Star Line*.

terms may have contributed to fostering a sense of belonging and collective identity during the liminal phase of separation. Despite differences in focus, third-class in the Dutch brochures versus first- and second-class in the English ones, the Red Star Line positioned Flemish migrants within a shared story of transatlantic possibility.

Visual/Spatial Hierarchy

All analyzed brochures, including those in Dutch and those in English, place central authority by the Red Star Line company (see Annex 1.1 and 1.2). For instance, similar to the Dutch-language brochures, the English ones use phrases such as “will be served,”¹¹⁷ “will be required,”¹¹⁸ and “is available”¹¹⁹ to convey a tone of institutional control and structure.

Nevertheless, the Dutch- and English-language brochures reflect subtle differences in discursive strategies. Namely, whereas the Dutch versions present information within an institutional narrative, the English brochures more strongly emphasize the Red Star Line’s technological superiority through statistical data and references to ship specifications (see Image 7). For example, on the one hand, the Dutch-language brochure *Antwerpen-Canada met Red Star Line Schepen en Canadian National Spoorwegen* [Antwerp-Canda with Red Star Line Ships and Canadian National Railways] states “[...] dat de Maatschappij er in gelukt is voldoening te geven aan de eischen van het reizend publiek” [that the Company has succeeded in meeting the demands of the traveling public], underscoring the company’s commitment to passenger satisfaction.¹²⁰ On the other hand, the English-language brochure *Red Star Line: New York and Antwerp* states of the ship ‘Noordland’ that “[s]he is 400 feet long on the main-deck, 47 feet beam, 35 feet 4 inches in depth, and her great tonnage

¹¹⁷ *Red Star Line First Class Tariff*.

¹¹⁸ *Red Star Line: From New York and Philadelphia to Antwerp*.

¹¹⁹ *Red Star Line Cabin Service*.

¹²⁰ *Antwerpen-Canada met Red Star Line Schepen en Canadian National Spoorwegen* [Antwerp-Canda with Red Star Line Ships and Canadian National Railways].

5,121,”¹²¹ while the brochure *Red Star Line: From New York and Philadelphia to Antwerp* lists the tonnage of various Red Star Line ships ranging from 3000 to 5000 tons register.¹²²

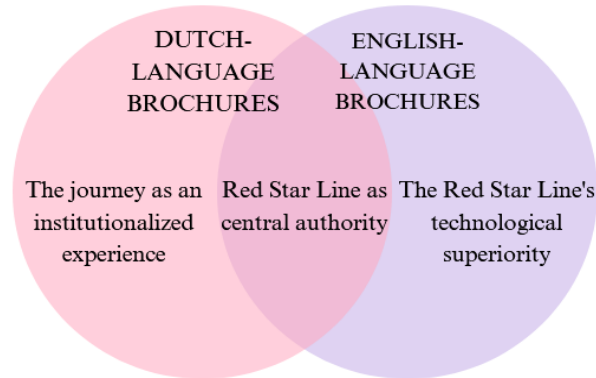


Image 7. Comparative overview visual/spatial hierarchy

Notwithstanding the slight difference in discursive strategies between the two languages, it seems unlikely to have contributed significantly to the occurrence of community-building or the preservation of cultural identity among Flemish migrants. In both cases, the Red Star Line emerges as the central authoritative figure and constructs a migration narrative grounded in control and trust in the company, whether through an institutional or technological lens. While this authoritative framing may have offered a sense of structure and stability during the liminal phase of separation, as described by Victor Turner, it left little room for the emergence of spontaneous bonds of solidarity, also called *communitas*.¹²³ Although the previous discussion on naming and categorization demonstrated the company's effort to foster horizontal ties among migrants by referring to them in neutral terms, the overarching positioning of the company as central authority reinforces vertical power

¹²¹ *Red Star Line: New York and Antwerp*.

¹²² *Red Star Line: From New York and Philadelphia to Antwerp*.

¹²³ Turner, *The Ritual Process*, 96.

structures, limiting migrant agency. It is important to note, however, that during travel, the liminal space itself, the experience may differ.

Framing & Layout

There is little difference in framing and layout through bolded terms in Dutch- and English-language brochures as all brochures tend to emphasize three common themes: the naming of ships, the mention of departure and destination ports, and the prominence of the Red Star Line company itself. For example, Dutch-language brochures such as *Red Star Line Derde Klas* [Red Star Line Third Class] highlight ship names like the “S.S. Pennland” and “S.S. Arabic,”¹²⁴ while English versions, including *Red Star Line: First Class Tariff*, underscore vessels such as the “S.S. Belgenland,”¹²⁵ and *Red Star Line: From New York and Philadelphia to Antwerp* emphasizes the “Noordland”.¹²⁶

However, the headlines of Dutch- and English-language brochures do reveal subtle distinctions in emphasis (see Image 8). On the one hand, Dutch headlines tend to be of a more practical nature. Headlines such as “Nationale Spoorwegen van Canada: Het Grootste Transport-Spoorwegnet ter wereld”¹²⁷ [National Railways of Canada: The Largest Rail Network in the World], “Overvaartsprijzen in Tourist Derde Kabien”¹²⁸ [Shipping Prices in Tourist Third Cabin], “Paspoorten”¹²⁹ [Passports], and “Kantoren en Agentschappen”¹³⁰ [Offices and Agencies], reflect a focus on logistics and accessibility. On the other hand, while English versions also provide some practical information, it places more emphasis on leisure and experience over practical concerns. Headlines such as “What Red Star Line Service

¹²⁴ *Red Star Line Derde Klas* [Red Star Line Third Class].

¹²⁵ *Red Star Line: First Class Tariff*.

¹²⁶ *Red Star Line: From New York and Philadelphia to Antwerp*.

¹²⁷ *Red Star Line Naar Canada* [Red Star Line To Canada].

¹²⁸ *Tourist Derde Kabien Red Star Line* [Tourist Third Cabin Red Star Line].

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ *Antwerpen-Canada met Red Star Line Schepen en Canadian National Spoorwegen* [Antwerp-Canada with Red Star Line Ships and Canadian National Railways].

Stands For: A Statement by P.V.G. Mitchell Manager of the Red Star Line,”¹³¹ “The Dining Saloon Service,”¹³² “Cabin Accommodations,”¹³³ and “Bright and Cheerful Quarters,”¹³⁴ underscore comfort, quality of service, and the passenger’s experience.

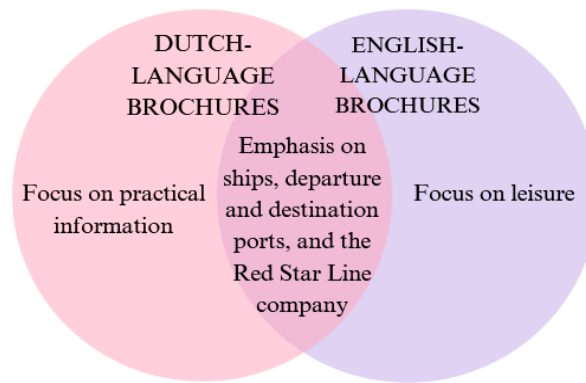


Image 8. Comparative overview framing and layout

The findings in this category align with those observed in naming and categorization. In particular, in promoting its services, the Red Star Line places slightly greater emphasis on practical concerns in the Dutch-language brochures, reflecting the needs of third-class migrant passengers, whereas the English-language brochures tend to emphasize leisure, appealing to first- and second-class travelers. However, when comparing the results from the category framing and layout with those from lexical choices, an intriguing paradox comes to light. Namely, although the headlines of the Dutch-language brochures initially appear to address the practical concerns of Flemish migrants, the findings of the category lexical choices reveals that the overall language emphasizes luxury.

This paradox implies that the Red Star Line’s marketing strategy was more complex than it first appears as the brochures seemed to focus on practical concerns, likely to appeal to

¹³¹ *Comfort Cabin Service Red Star Line.*

¹³² *Red Star Line First Class Tariff.*

¹³³ *Red Star Line: From New York and Philadelphia to Antwerp.*

¹³⁴ *Comfort Cabin Service Red Star Line.*

working-class Flemish migrants, while simultaneously elevating the migrant experience through luxurious language. In doing so, the Dutch Red Star Line promotional brochures potentially helped build a sense of collective identity, however, it was subtle and perhaps unintentional.

Modality & Realism

While the discourse in both Dutch- and English-language brochures presents itself as factual, it does so in two distinct ways (see Image 9). The Dutch brochures overwhelmingly use assertive discourse markers such as “vanzelfsprekend”¹³⁵ [self-evident], “onweerlegbaar bewijs”¹³⁶ [irrefutable evidence], and “wordt verzekerd door”¹³⁷ [is assured by] to convey a tone of unquestionable authority and institutional reliability. Furthermore, by frequently referencing supposed endorsements of its passengers (see Annex 1.1), the Red Star Line framed itself as a socially validated option of travel.

The English-language brochures, however, focused more on promoting the Red Star Line’s respectable reputation, emphasizing prestige and established service. For example, phrases such as “[t]he fact that the Red Star Line has carried since its beginning over 1,000,000 Cabin and Steerage passengers without the loss of a single life, and the unprecedented regularity with which this service has been performed, alone speaks volumes” in *Red Star Line: From New York and Philadelphia to Antwerp*¹³⁸ and “[i]t has been in existence more than fifty years, and every one of those years has witnessed a growth in its popularity” in *Comfort Cabin Service Red Star Line*,¹³⁹ construct a narrative rooted in historical legacy and service. Rather than relying on claims of superiority, these English-

¹³⁵ *Red Star Line Stroombiljet* [Red Star Line Leaflet].

¹³⁶ *Red Star Line Naar Canada* [Red Star Line To Canada].

¹³⁷ *Tourist Derde Kabien Red Star Line* [Tourist Third Cabin Red Star Line].

¹³⁸ *Red Star Line: From New York and Philadelphia to Antwerp*.

¹³⁹ *Comfort Cabin Service Red Star Line*.

language brochures build trust through statistical data and references to the Red Star Line's longevity.

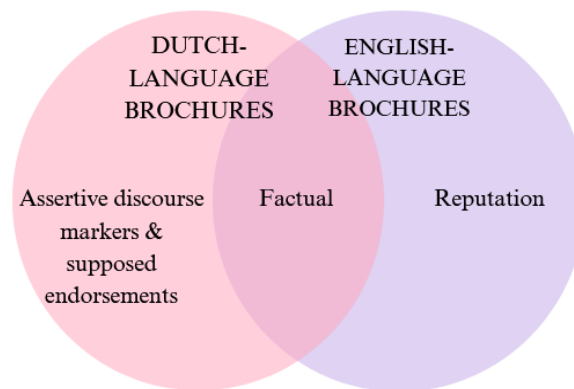


Image 9. Comparative overview modality and realism

Similar to the category of visual/spatial hierarchy, the use of assertive discourse markers and supposed endorsements fosters a vertical rather than a horizontal power relation. More specifically, although the approach taken in Dutch-language brochures might have offered Flemish migrants a sense of reassurance during *rites of separation*, it likely reinforced a relationship in which migrants felt they became dependent on the institution of the Red Star Line. In doing so, the Dutch-language brochures hindered rather than promoted the formation of *communitas*.

Symbolism & Semiotics

In both language versions, no overt use of symbolic language has been identified (see Image 10). This aligns with the findings of the previous category, where the brochures present information in a factual manner. As a result, emotions, often conveyed through symbolism, are largely absent, downplaying the emotional weight of travel and migration. By omitting such symbolic elements, the Red Star Line's promotional material offered little encouragement for the formation of a collective migrant consciousness.



Image 10. Comparative overview symbolism and semiotics

Omissions & Silences

Perhaps the omissions and silences in the Dutch- and English-language brochures are most revealing. In both versions, there are no explicit references to migration or the challenges that accompany it, effectively erasing the socio-economic realities of the migrant experience. In addition, while the English brochures focus to a limited extent on the destination, the Dutch counterparts remain almost entirely silent on the passengers' imagined future. In combination with the lack of migrant voices, the brochures present a one-sided view in which migration is reduced to a transactional journey rather than a complex experience (see Image 11).

Subsequently, by omitting any hardship and destination-oriented content, the Red Star Line's brochures promote the narrowly defined image of an 'ideal migrant,' but not to foster a cultural shift towards community or solidarity. Instead, the company's brochures promote the ideal migrant as trusting, attracted to upward mobility, and emotionally detached. This further reinforces vertical power structures in which the Red Star Line's promotional materials discouraged rather than enabled Flemish migrant community formation.



Image 11. Comparative overview omissions and silences

Function & Purpose

Overall, the intended function and audience of the Dutch- and English-language brochures differ considerably. While both aim to attract passengers for the transatlantic journey to North America, they do so by appealing to distinct social classes (see Image 12). On the one hand, the Dutch-language brochures are directed primarily at the working class, specifically Flemish families and migrants. On the other hand, the English versions are tailored to an upper- to middle-class audience, likely with tourism or business goals. Consequently, while the Dutch brochures attract through promise by expressing comfort and opportunity, the English brochures communicate by expressing prestige and superiority.

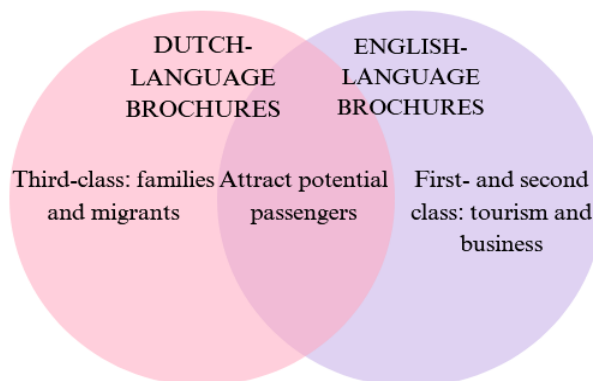


Image 12. Comparative overview function and purpose

Conclusion

To conclude, the comparative analysis of the textual critical discourse analysis of the Red Star Line's Dutch- and English-language brochures has uncovered that there is little textual evidence in these promotional materials that suggests that the Red Star Line explicitly aimed to foster community-building or the preservation of cultural identity among Flemish migrants during *rites of separation*. Namely, while the Dutch brochures showed subtle notions of cultural reference and inclusive language through lexical choices and naming and categorization that may have resonated with the Flemish migrant audience, these instances appear more incidental than intentional. Moreover, by framing the Red Star Line as the clear authoritative figure with little room for migrant agency, the Red Star Line promotional materials encouraged the formation of vertical power relationships instead of horizontal ones, leaving little room for the creation of *communitas*. Furthermore, although the Dutch brochures did to some extent construct an image of the 'ideal migrant' as hypothesized, what that ideal entails differs greatly from initial expectations. Instead of a culturally rooted figure linked to the destination of North America, the ideal migrant was imagined as individualized, trusting, and emotionally detached. In this light, the brochures fostered a depersonalized and hierarchical migration narrative rather than one that encouraged a sense of community.

Chapter 3. *Rites of Separation: Community-Building and Cultural Preservation Through Imagery?*

Although the textual analysis of the five Dutch- and five English-language brochures suggests that the Red Star Line company made little effort to foster Flemish community-building or cultural preservation, this conclusion requires further nuance. To provide a more comprehensive understanding, this chapter adds another layer to the analysis by examining the findings of the critical discourse analysis applied to the images included in the brochures introduced in the previous chapter. Images play an important role in promotional materials, as they can contribute to shaping particular representations and enhancing the appeal of a company or individual.¹⁴⁰ Therefore, it is important to explore how these images may have subtly communicated certain aspirations or cultural messages that the textual content of the brochures may not have revealed.

To this end, a similar methodological approach as the textual qualitative content analysis will be applied to address the subquestion: ‘How do the images in Dutch- and English-language Red Star Line brochures contribute to representations of migration, and how do they portray opportunities for community-building or cultural preservation?’ In doing so, first, the images in the five Dutch-language brochures will be discussed, followed by an outline of the results of the comparative analysis of the images in the Dutch- and English-language brochures, and concluded with a reflection on the broader implications of the visual aspects of the Red Star Line’s promotional material on Flemish community-building and cultural preservation.

¹⁴⁰ Flemming Hansen and Lars Bech Christensen, *Branding and Advertising* (Copenhagen Business School Press, 2003), 209.

Findings: Images in Dutch-Language Brochures

Lexical Choices

Across all five Dutch-language brochures, very few embedded terms appear within the images. Aside from the headlines on the cover pages, which blend seamlessly with the cover visuals, terms are embedded in images in only two instances. One example is found in the brochure *Tourist Derde Kabin Red Star Line* [Tourist Third Cabin Red Star Line], which features a Red Star Line steamboat with a stream of people walking toward it (see Image 13). Above the steamboat, part of a map is shown, partially displaying North America on the left and Europe on the right, with the Red Star Line's departure points, stops, and destinations clearly marked.



Image 13. Cover of *Tourist Derde Kabin Red Star Line* [Tourist Third Cabin Red Star Line], [brochure], 1930, Online Collection Red Star Line Museum, Antwerp.

A second example appears in the brochure *Antwerpen-Canada met Red Star Line Schepen en Canadian National Spoorwegen* [Antwerp-Canada with Red Star Line Ships and Canadian National Railways] (see Image 14). Its cover features a Canadian agricultural landscape stretching the horizon, with occasional houses. At the center, a train speeds past the fields, its motion indicated by the stream of steam trailing behind. On a container to the right and on the side of the train itself, the words ‘Canadian National’ are visible. This refers to the Canadian National Railway Company, a government-owned organization that was completed

by 1923.¹⁴¹ It played a significant role in expanding land accessibility and enhancing transcontinental passenger service, and remains one of Canada’s most well-known railway companies today.

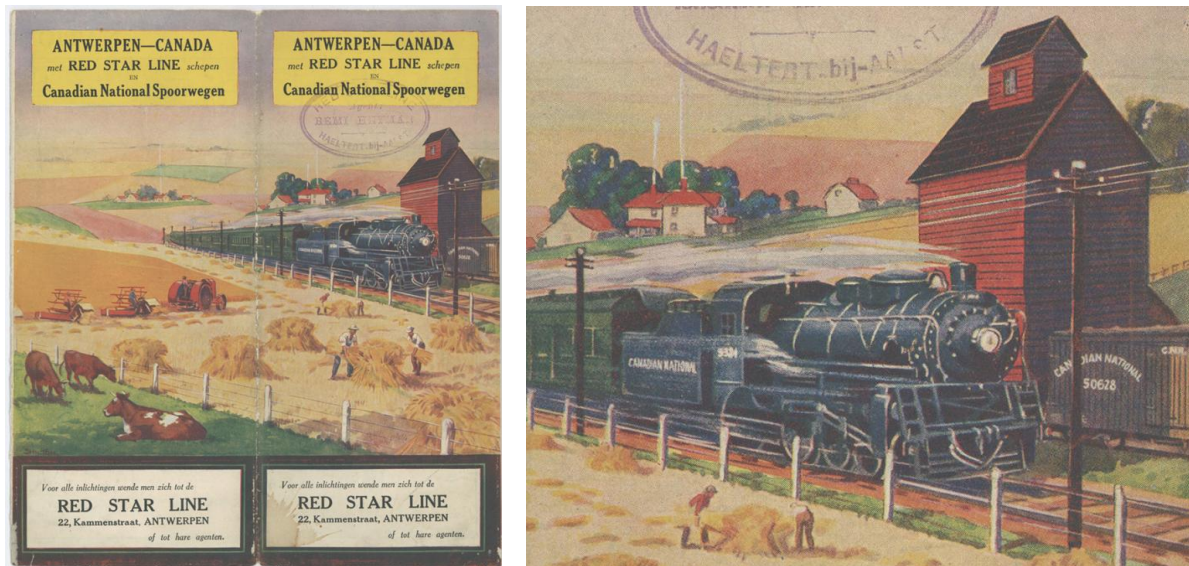


Image 14. Cover of *Antwerpen-Canada met Red Star Line Schepen en Canadian National Spoorwegen* [Antwerp-Canada with Red Star Line Ships and Canadian National Railways], [brochure], 1928, Online Collection Red Star Line Museum, Antwerp.

In both instances, the embedded words serve as geographic references. However, their purpose differs. While the map showing the Red Star Line’s departure points, stops, and destinations underscores the scope of the journey, the words “Canadian National” suggest that the Red Star Line company cooperated with other major transport providers. This reassures the Flemish migrant that they were not simply booking a boat ride, but embarking on a well-organized travel experience. In doing so, these linguistic cues highlight the logistical aspects of migration, rather than its transformative cultural or identity-related dimensions.

¹⁴¹ “Background,” Historica Canada Educational Portal: Canadian National Railway, accessed June 18, 2025, <http://education.historicacanada.ca/en/tools/129>.

Naming & Categorization

In general, the images across the five Dutch-language brochures portray individuals only to a limited extent. For instance, only two of the eleven images in the brochure *Red Star Line Derde Klas* [Red Star Line Third Class] include people, and in the brochure *Antwerpen-Canada met Red Star Line Schepen en Canadian National Spoorwegen* [Antwerp-Canada with Red Star Line Ships and Canadian National Railways], only three of the six images depict individuals (see Annex 2.1).

However, although individuals are minimally depicted across all brochures, the images that do include people reveal some noteworthy patterns. Overall, individuals are portrayed as part of a collectivity rather than as distinct personalities. For example, the cover page of the brochure *Red Star Line Stroombiljet* [Red Star Line Leaflet], the brochure *Tourist Derde Kabien Red Star Line* [Tourist Third Cabin Red Star Line], and the brochure *Red Star Line Derde Klas* [Red Star Line Third Class], all position individuals within groups (see Image 15). While some of the individuals' facial expressions and postures are visible within these groups, they are either neutral or unclear, suggesting a deliberate depersonalization. Rather than highlighting personal journeys and narratives, these brochures foster a collective migrant identity, highlighting the shared experience of migration.



Image 15. Individuals portrayed as part of a collective.

1. *Red Star Line Derde Klas* [Red Star Line Third Class], [brochure], 1928, Online Collection Red Star Line Museum, Antwerp.
2. *Red Star Line Strootbiljet* [Red Star Line Leaflet], [brochure], 1928, Online Collection Red Star Line Museum, Antwerp.
3. *Tourist Derde Kabin Red Star Line* [Tourist Third Cabin Red Star Line], [brochure], 1930, Online Collection Red Star Line Museum, Antwerp.

Nevertheless, in some Dutch-language promotional materials, such as the brochure *Red Star Line Naar Canada* [Red Star Line To Canada] and *Antwerpen-Canada met Red Star Line Schepen en Canadian National Spoorwegen* [Antwerp-Canada with Red Star Line Ships and Canadian National Railways], individuals are portrayed separately rather than as part of a group (see Image 15). In both cases, the individuals are dressed in workwear or casual clothing, consistent with the idea that Flemish migrants were predominantly third-class passengers, as also supported by the results of the textual analysis. They are situated within Canadian landscapes marked by nature and agriculture. Similar to group depictions, their facial expressions are either not visible or remain unclear. By positioning these individuals as distinct personal entities in rural settings, these brochures aim to emphasize the possibility of

individual success and integration in North America. In doing so, the Red Star Line's visual strategy highlights not only collective relocation but also the migrants' self-sufficiency.



Image 16. Individuals portrayed separately.

1. *Antwerpen-Canada met Red Star Line Schepen en Canadian National Spoorwegen* [Antwerp-Canada with Red Star Line Ships and Canadian National Railways], [brochure], 1928, Online Collection Red Star Line Museum, Antwerp.
2. *Red Star Line Naar Canada* [Red Star Line To Canada], [brochure], 1923, Online Collection Red Star Line Museum, Antwerp.

Thus, the Dutch-language brochures used a dual strategy through their imagery. By primarily portraying individuals as part of a larger group, the brochures foster a sense of collective identity and purpose among Flemish migrants. At the same time, the positioning of individuals in Canadian rural landscapes acknowledges Flemish migrants' agrarian values, evoking a feeling of familiarity. As a result, the brochures framed migration as a continuation of cultural identity rather than a rupture with the past during the initial phase of liminality.

Visual & Spatial Hierarchy

Similar to the findings from the visual and spatial hierarchy category in the textual analysis of the Dutch-language brochures, the Red Star Line company is positioned as the central authority in all brochures (see Annex 2.1). As previously mentioned, individuals are only occasionally depicted. In contrast, images of the Red Star Line's ships often take center stage. Four of the five brochures feature at least two images of Red Star Line ships, while the brochure *Red Star Line Stroombiljet* [Red Star Line Leaflet] includes only one image of a steamship.

Beyond the frequency with which Red Star Line ships are depicted, their positioning within the brochures further reinforces the company's role as an authoritative figure. Namely, these images typically occupy an entire page and are accompanied by minimal textual elements (see Image 17). Moreover, within the images themselves, either no other ships are present or only a few significantly smaller vessels appear, suggesting the Red Star Line's superiority and dominance at sea.

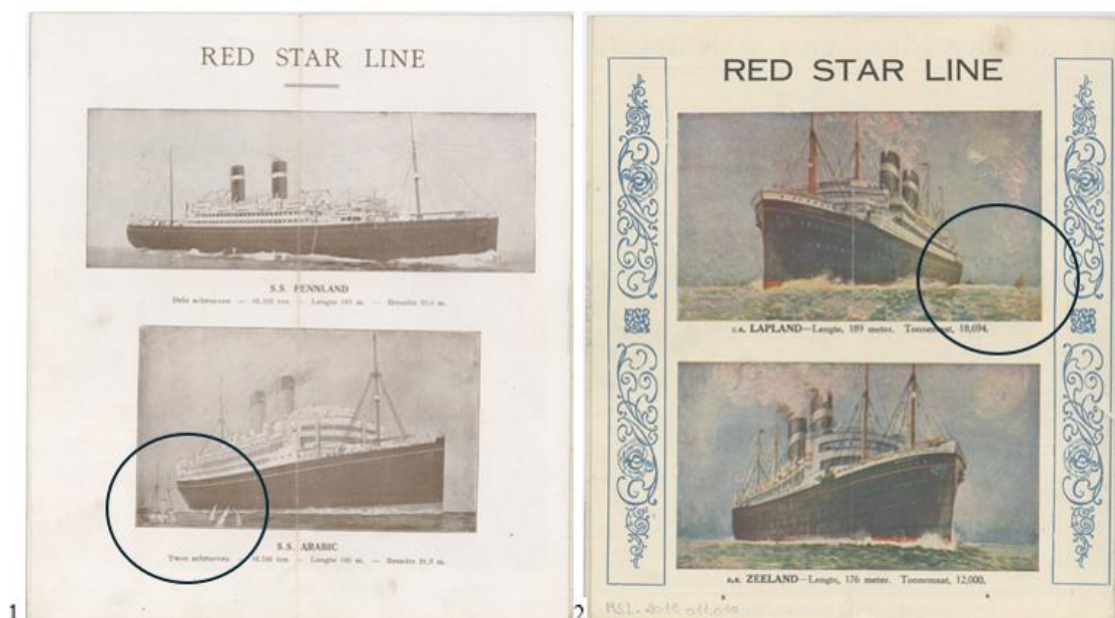


Image 17. Red Star Line ships.

1. *Red Star Line Derde Klas* [Red Star Line Third Class], [brochure], 1928, Online Collection Red Star Line Museum, Antwerp.

2. *Antwerpen-Canada met Red Star Line Schepen en Canadian National Spoorwegen* [Antwerp-Canada with Red Star Line Ships and Canadian National Railways], [brochure], 1928, Online Collection Red Star Line Museum, Antwerp.

While the visual representation of Red Star Line ships as powerful and authoritative figures aims to foster a sense of reassurance among Flemish migrants, at the same time, it depersonalizes the migration experience. By centralizing the imagery around the company rather than the individual passengers, the brochures emphasize institutional strength over personal stories or communal connections. Subsequently, they leave little room for the creation of *communitas*, obscuring the social and emotional dimensions of migration.

Framing & Layout

In general, the use of color in the brochures is mostly limited to their cover pages. Notably, four out of five covers feature a main image presented in color. For example, both the brochures *Red Star Line Derde Klas* [Red Star Line Third Class] and *Tourist Derde Kabin Red Star Line* [Tourist Third Cabin Red Star Line] are printed entirely in sepia or grey tones, except for their covers, attracting attention to the travel experience being promoted (see Image 18).



Image 18. Use of color on the brochures' cover pages.

1. *Red Star Line Derde Klas* [Red Star Line Third Class], [brochure], 1928, Online Collection Red Star Line Museum, Antwerp.
2. *Tourist Derde Kabin Red Star Line* [Tourist Third Cabin Red Star Line], [brochure], 1930, Online Collection Red Star Line Museum, Antwerp.

In addition, the images in the Dutch-language brochures can primarily be categorized in three main themes: the interior and exterior of the Red Star Line ships, railway transportation in North America, and the agricultural landscape of Canada. Among these, the most frequently featured subjects are the ships' interiors and exteriors (see Annex 2.1). In doing so, the Dutch brochures highlight the transport experience rather than the journey's destination.

Modality & Realism

Although some Dutch-language brochures place slightly more emphasis on presenting an aspirational or factual view of the journey to North America aboard Red Star Line ships, all five brochures convey an idealized perspective. For instance, every image in the brochure *Red Star Line Stroombiljet* [Red Star Line Leaflet] presents an idealized version of reality (see Image 19). Namely, the smoking room depicted on its cover page does not show any signs of stress, worry, or emotion, suggesting a calm and untroubled voyage. Furthermore, the images of a dolphin, a Red Star Line ship, and a star are not depicted in their true color but in orange and lack realistic detail.

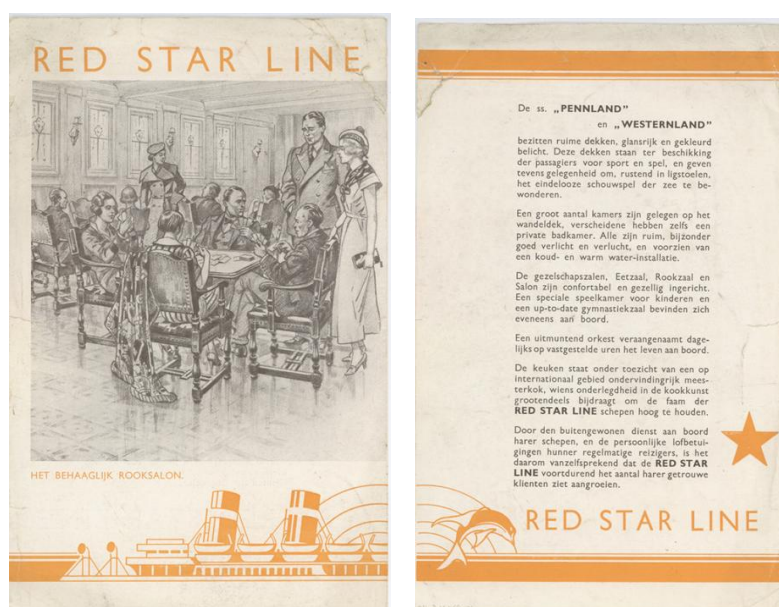


Image 19. Idealized version of reality in *Red Star Line Stroombiljet* [Red Star Line Leaflet], [brochure], 1928, Online Collection Red Star Line Museum, Antwerp.

A second, more subtle, example of an idealized version of reality can be found in the brochure *Red Star Line Derde Klas* [Red Star Line Third Class] (see Image 20). While this brochure includes several detailed images of Red Star Line ships, it is not the ships themselves but rather their surroundings that reveal the idealization. The clear skies and calm waters romanticize the transatlantic travel experience, obscuring the sometimes hard realities of seasickness and overcrowding.

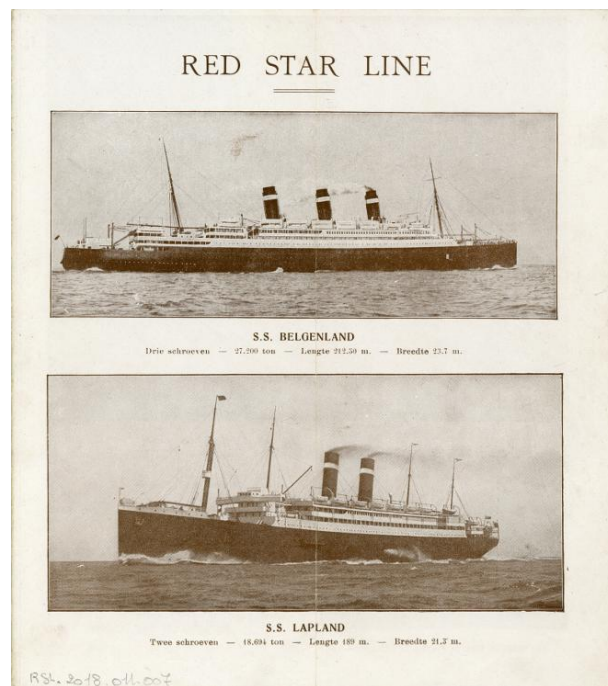


Image 20. *Red Star Line Derde Klas* [Red Star Line Third Class], [brochure], 1928, Online Collection Red Star Line Museum, Antwerp.

A third and final example of an idealized representation of reality appears in the brochures *Red Star Line Naar Canada* [Red Star Line To Canada] and *Antwerpen-Canada met Red Star Line Schepen en Canadian National Spoorwegen* [Antwerp-Canada with Red Star Line Ships and Canadian National Railways] (see Image 21). Both promotional brochures depict images of the Canadian Railway Service. Although the settings differ, they each suggest that good railway infrastructure awaited migrants upon arrival in North America. However, while this was true in some regions, the onward journey was not always as straightforward. Namely, as indicated by the Belgian Ministry of SMEs and Agriculture,

Canada experienced a ‘railway boom’ during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with many railway lines still being built.¹⁴² As a result, the brochures present an overly simplified version of the migrant experience, omitting the logistical challenges many travelers likely encountered upon arrival.



Image 21. Portrayal of Canada's Railway Service.

1. *Red Star Line Naar Canada* [Red Star Line To Canada], [brochure], 1923, Online Collection Red Star Line Museum, Antwerp.

2. *Antwerpen-Canada met Red Star Line Schepen en Canadian National Spoorwegen* [Antwerp-Canada with Red Star Line Ships and Canadian National Railways], [brochure], 1928, Online Collection Red Star Line Museum, Antwerp.

In accordance with the findings of the modality and realism category discussed in the previous chapter, the critical discourse analysis of the accompanying images suggests that the Red Star Line strategically employed images to reinforce an idealized narrative of transatlantic migration. By carefully using color, composition, and simplification, the Red Star Line shaped how Flemish migrants envisioned their own migration, even before departure.

¹⁴² Ministerie van Middenstand en Landbouw, *Zij Namen hun Plaats in op het Land*, 17.

Symbolism & Semiotics

While no use of symbolism and semiotics have been revealed by the textual analysis of the Dutch-language brochures, the images show a clear use of visual cues to convey deeper meanings (see Annex 2.1). Across all brochures, steamships are depicted, portraying modernity and speed, symbolizing transformation. Furthermore, both the brochures *Red Star Line Stroombiljet* [Red Star Line Leaflet] and *Red Star Line Naar Canada* [Red Star Line To Canada] show the image of a star, the symbol of the Red Star Line company (see Image 22).



Image 22. Star Symbol.

1. *Red Star Line Stroombiljet* [Red Star Line Leaflet], [brochure], 1928, Online Collection Red Star Line Museum, Antwerp.
2. *Red Star Line Naar Canada* [Red Star Line To Canada], [brochure], 1923, Online Collection Red Star Line Museum, Antwerp.

In addition to these symbols, clearly portraying the Red Star Line as a modern, innovative, and transformative company for transatlantic travel, the strategic use of animals in three out of five brochures adds another layer to the Red Star Line's carefully constructed brand image. For instance, in the brochure *Red Star Line Stroombiljet* [Red Star Line Leaflet], shown in Image 22, an image of a dolphin can be found. The dolphin represents peace and balance, symbolizing freedom. In relation to the Red Star Line, it reinforces the idea of the company as a gateway to a new and carefree life. Furthermore, the images in the brochures *Red Star Line Naar Canada* [Red Star Line To Canada] and *Antwerpen-Canada met Red Star Line Schepen en Canadian National Spoorwegen* [Antwerp-Canada with Red Star Line Ships

and Canadian National Railways] both depict animals in an agricultural Canadian setting (see Image 23). Although the first features sheep, symbolizing innocence and reliance, and the latter depicts cows, representing fertility and prosperity, both link the Canadian agricultural landscape to abundance and the promise of a fruitful future for migrants upon arrival.



Image 23. Symbolic use of animals.

1. *Red Star Line Naar Canada* [Red Star Line To Canada], [brochure], 1923, Online Collection Red Star Line Museum, Antwerp.

2. *Antwerpen-Canada met Red Star Line Schepen en Canadian National Spoorwegen* [Antwerp-Canada with Red Star Line Ships and Canadian National Railways], [brochure], 1928, Online Collection Red Star Line Museum, Antwerp.

Lastly, the brochures strategically use color to evoke specific emotions that align with the Red Star Line's branding. For example, the brochure *Red Star Line Strooibiljet* [Red Star Line Leaflet] features orange, a color associated with optimism and enthusiasm.¹⁴³ Additionally, the *Tourist Derde Kabien Red Star Line* [Tourist Third Cabin Red Star Line] brochure incorporates blue, symbolizing calmness and stability,¹⁴⁴ while the brochure *Red Star Line Derde Klas* [Red Star Line Third Class] uses green to evoke themes of growth and renewal.¹⁴⁵ Overall, the strategic use of colors aims to connect the Red Star Line company

¹⁴³ *Red Star Line Strooibiljet* [Red Star Line Leaflet].

¹⁴⁴ *Tourist Derde Kabien Red Star Line* [Tourist Third Cabin Red Star Line].

¹⁴⁵ *Red Star Line Derde Klas* [Red Star Line Third Class].

with feelings of hope and reassurance, reinforcing the Red Star Line's brand image of being a reliable and dependable company for transatlantic migration.

Taken together, the symbolic imagery across the Dutch-language brochures, consisting of visual cues, animals, and color, plays a central role in shaping the Flemish migrant's perception of transatlantic migration and life in North America. Although the textual analysis did not reveal any use of symbols or semiotic devices, the imagery presents the Red Star Line not merely as a transportation provider, but also as a facilitator of personal transformation.

Omissions & Silences

While expected symbols representing the Red Star Line company, such as the image of a star, are to a limited extent depicted in the Dutch-language brochures, the use of the color red is almost entirely absent. A possible explanation is that the color red often has negative connotations, such as anger or aggression, which is not in line with the company's desired image of optimism, safety, and opportunity.

Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, the brochures generally portray an idealized version of reality, omitting the hardships and cultural differences that go hand in hand with migration. However, in opposition to the findings of the textual analysis, the images in the Dutch-language brochures more clearly link the Red Star Line to migration by portraying agricultural landscapes in Canada in the brochures *Red Star Line Naar Canada* [Red Star Line To Canada]¹⁴⁶ and *Antwerpen-Canada met Red Star Line Schepen en Canadian National Spoorwegen* [Antwerp-Canada with Red Star Line Ships and Canadian National Railways],¹⁴⁷ and by showing part of a map in the brochure *Tourist Derde Kabien Red Star Line* [Tourist

¹⁴⁶ *Red Star Line Naar Canada* [Red Star Line To Canada].

¹⁴⁷ *Antwerpen-Canada met Red Star Line Schepen en Canadian National Spoorwegen* [Antwerp-Canada with Red Star Line Ships and Canadian National Railways].

Third Cabin Red Star Line].¹⁴⁸ In doing so, the Red Star Line's brochures contribute to the creation of a overwhelmingly positive migration narrative.

Function & Purpose

Overall, the images in the Dutch-language brochures suggest that they are intended for potential third-class passengers, as indicated by the clothing worn by the individuals depicted and the portrayal of rural landscapes. In particular, the brochures *Red Star Line Naar Canada* [Red Star Line To Canada] and *Antwerpen-Canada met Red Star Line Schepen en Canadian National Spoorwegen* [Antwerp-Canada with Red Star Line Ships and Canadian National Railways] include images of Canadian agricultural settings, which correspond to the lifestyle of many Flemish migrants.

Its purpose goes beyond presenting the Red Star Line as a desirable and reliable mode of transatlantic transportation, to suggest that a journey with the Red Star Line leads to freedom and opportunities in North America. By featuring images of the Canadian Railway Service, agriculture in Canada, and individuals as part of a collective, the Dutch-language brochures creates the impression that the Red Star Line itself was not merely a shipping company, but a gateway to a better future. As a result, the Red Star Line's promotional materials helped shape a shared vision of the migrant journey. By aligning the imagery in the brochures with the existing way of life of Flemish migrants, they subtly supported the preservation of cultural identity during *rites of separation*.

¹⁴⁸ *Tourist Derde Kabien Red Star Line* [Tourist Third Cabin Red Star Line].

Comparison with English-Language Brochures

Lexical Choices

Similar to the findings in the Dutch-language brochures, very few images in the English-language brochures contain embedded words. Notably, the English brochure *Red Star Line: First Class Tariff* contains no embedded text within its images at all. Among the four brochures that do include embedded words, their usage can be grouped into two distinct categories.

The first category, geographic references, includes the brochures *Comfort Cabin Service Red Star Line* and *Red Star Line: New York and Antwerp*. Both feature a map with Antwerp positioned as a central point of departure and arrival (see Image 24). However, each places slightly different emphasis since the map in *Comfort Cabin Service Red Star Line* presents Antwerp as “the gateway to Europe,” highlighting its proximity to other major European cities, while the brochure *Red Star Line: New York and Antwerp* underscores Antwerp’s extensive railway connections, emphasizing its accessibility and integration into the broader transportation network.

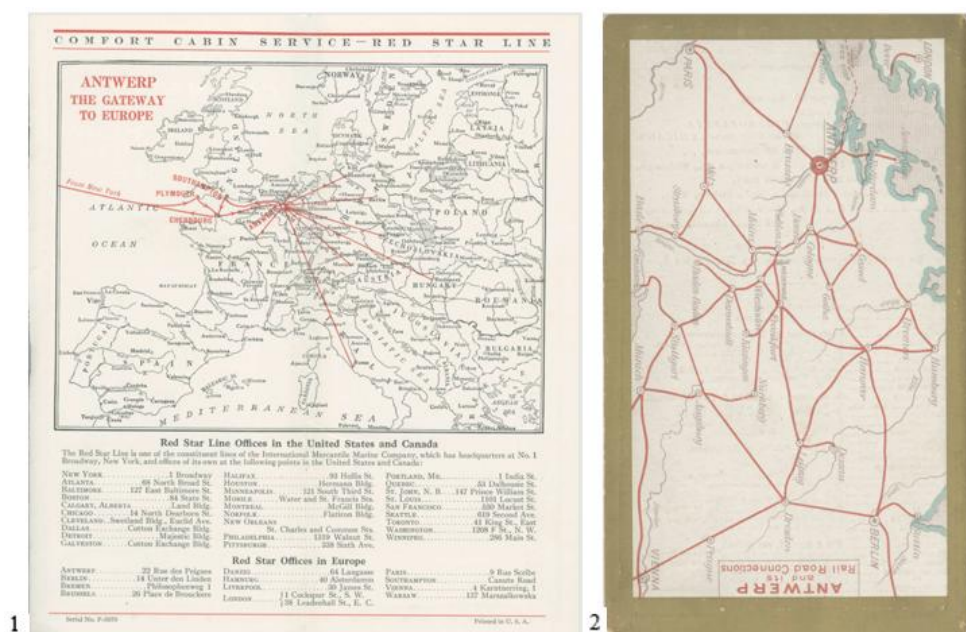


Image 24. Maps centralizing Antwerp.

1. *Comfort Cabin Service Red Star Line*, [brochure], 1922, Online Collection Red Star Line Museum, Antwerp.
2. *Red Star Line: New York and Antwerp*, [brochure], 1884, Online Collection Red Star Line Museum, Antwerp.

The second category, ship labels, includes the brochures *Red Star Line: Cabin Service* and *Red Star Line: From New York and Philadelphia to Antwerp*. Both feature images of Red Star Line vessels with the ship's name visibly printed on the hull (see Image 25). The inclusion of ship names in the imagery serves as a point of recognition for migrants, strengthening the association between transatlantic travel and the Red Star Line brand.

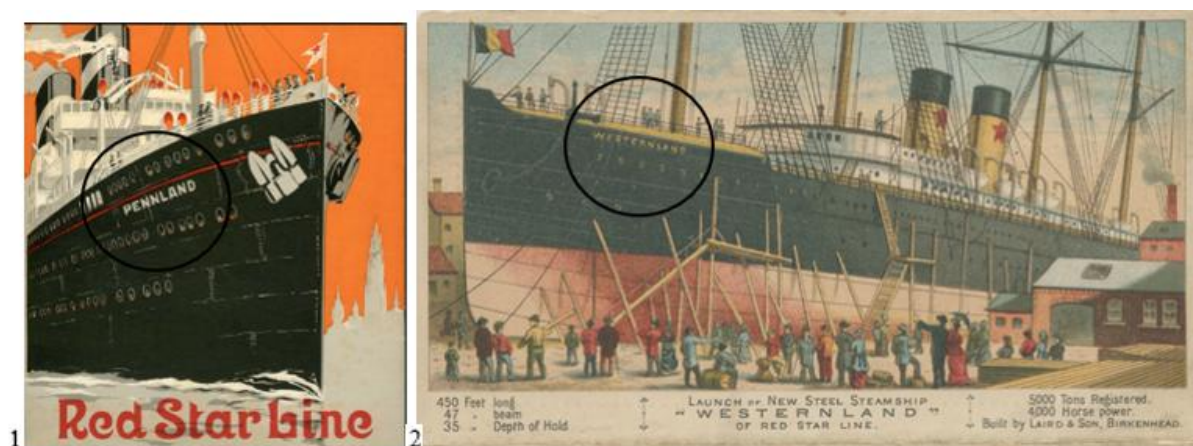


Image 25. Ship labels.

1. *Red Star Line Cabin Service*, [brochure], 1930, Online Collection Red Star Line Museum, Antwerp.
2. *Red Star Line: From New York and Philadelphia to Antwerp*, [brochure], 1883, Online Collection Red Star Line Museum, Antwerp.

Overall, while both the Dutch- and English-language brochures include only a limited number of embedded words in their imagery, and their focus only partly overlaps, with Dutch brochures solely featuring geographic references and English brochures also highlighting the ship names, their use of textual elements within images serves a common purpose (see Image 26). Namely, both Dutch- and English-language brochures emphasize the logistical aspects of migration over cultural or emotional dimensions. By drawing attention to key departure and arrival points, the names of the ships, and the broader European transportation network, the brochures work to present travel with the Red Star Line, and the migration experience more broadly, as a straightforward and organized process.

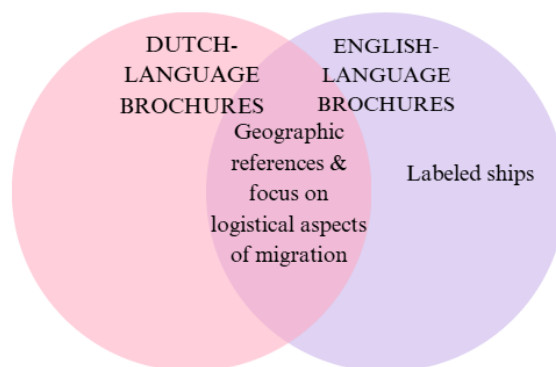


Image 26. Comparative overview lexical choices

Naming & Categorization

A major difference between Dutch- and English-language brochures can be found in the way their imagery portrays individuals. Whereas Dutch brochures portray individuals only to a limited extent, all five English brochures depict individuals in their imagery. Moreover, when Dutch brochures do include people, it is mostly in group form, while English brochures present individuals not as part of a larger collective but as distinct personalities (see Image 27).

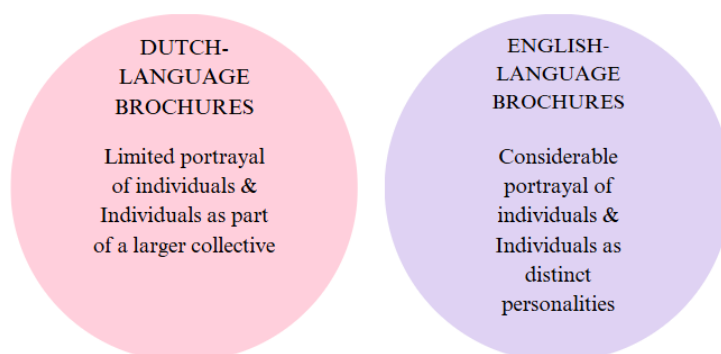


Image 27. Comparative overview naming & categorization

A clear example of individuals portrayed as distinct personas appears in *Red Star Line: Cabin Service* (see Image 28). At first glance, the brochure seems to simply depict passengers enjoying their leisure time aboard the ship. However, the brochure goes beyond this surface depiction by presenting a variety of personas one might embody during the

voyage, such as a spirited boxer, a playful child, or a stylish gentleman. In doing so, the brochure encourages the formation of individual identities rather than a collective one.

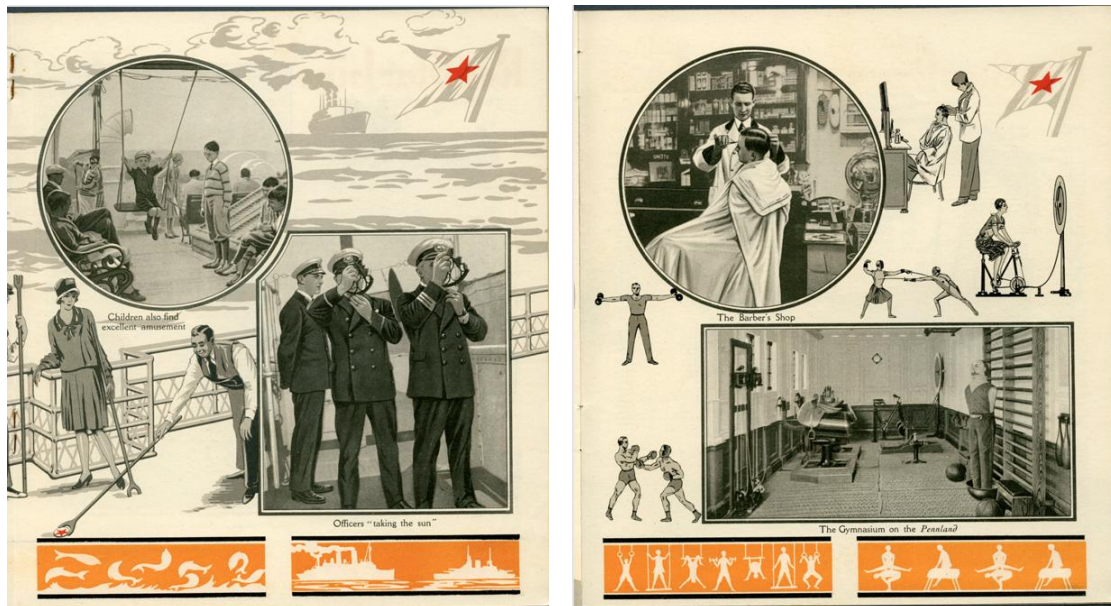


Image 28. Portrayal of individuals in *Red Star Line Cabin Service*, [brochure], 1930, Online Collection Red Star Line Museum, Antwerp.

Another example of individuals portrayed as distinct figures can be found in the English brochures *Red Star Line: First Class Tariff* and *Red Star Line: New York and Antwerp* (see Image 29). Both of their covers feature sailors, identifiable by their pipes, hats, beards, and distinctive clothing, underscoring their unique identities. By highlighting sailors, figures closely associated with mobility and cultural navigation, as distinct individuals positioned not as part of the onboard crew but as outsiders looking towards the ship, the brochures depict them as symbolic observers rather than functional members of the onboard community.



Image 29. Sailors.

1. *Red Star Line: First Class Tariff*, [brochure], 1923, Online Collection Red Star Line Museum, Antwerp.
2. *Red Star Line New York and Antwerp*, [brochure], 1884, Online Collection Red Star Line Museum, Antwerp.

Although the Dutch-language brochures do portray individuals as distinct personas to a very limited extent, the way identity is framed in the English-language brochures differs significantly. In the Dutch materials, individuals are placed within Canadian agricultural settings, reflecting the labor-oriented lives of third-class passengers and resonating with the agrarian values of Flemish migrants. In contrast, the English brochures make no such reference to work or settlement in North America. Instead, they focus on luxury, leisure, and the aspirational aspects of travel. Taken together, the comparative analysis of the category naming and categorization suggests that the Dutch-language brochures were tailored for third-class passengers, while English-language brochures targeted a middle- to upper-class audience.

Visual & Spatial Hierarchy

Despite the prominent portrayal of individuals in the analyzed English-language brochures, the Red Star Line company remains the central authoritative figure, as is also the case in the Dutch-language brochures. Both sets of brochures devote significant attention to the presentation of the interior and exterior of the company's ships, reinforcing the brand's presence. However, a notable difference emerges in how they promote the Red Star Line's services (see Image 30).

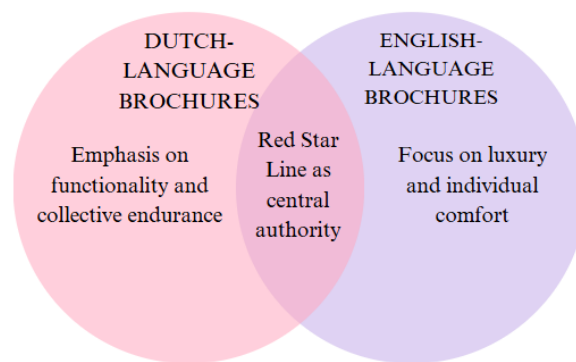


Image 30. Comparative overview visual/spatial hierarchy

The Dutch brochures highlight functional and communal spaces such as third-class dining and common rooms, smoking salons, the ship's populated deck, and modest third-class cabins, underscoring a shared travel experience. In opposition, the English brochures portray more luxurious and individualized settings, including a library, spacious lounge, promenade deck, professional kitchen, grand hall, personalized service, reading room, and gymnasium. For example, a clear difference in focus can be found when comparing the Dutch-language brochure *Red Star Line Derde Klas* [Red Star Line Third Class] and the English-language brochure *Comfort Cabin Service Red Star Line*. Whereas the images in the Dutch brochure portray a third-class common room and an overcrowded deck, the images in the English brochure depict a spacious lounge and empty promenade deck (see Image 31).

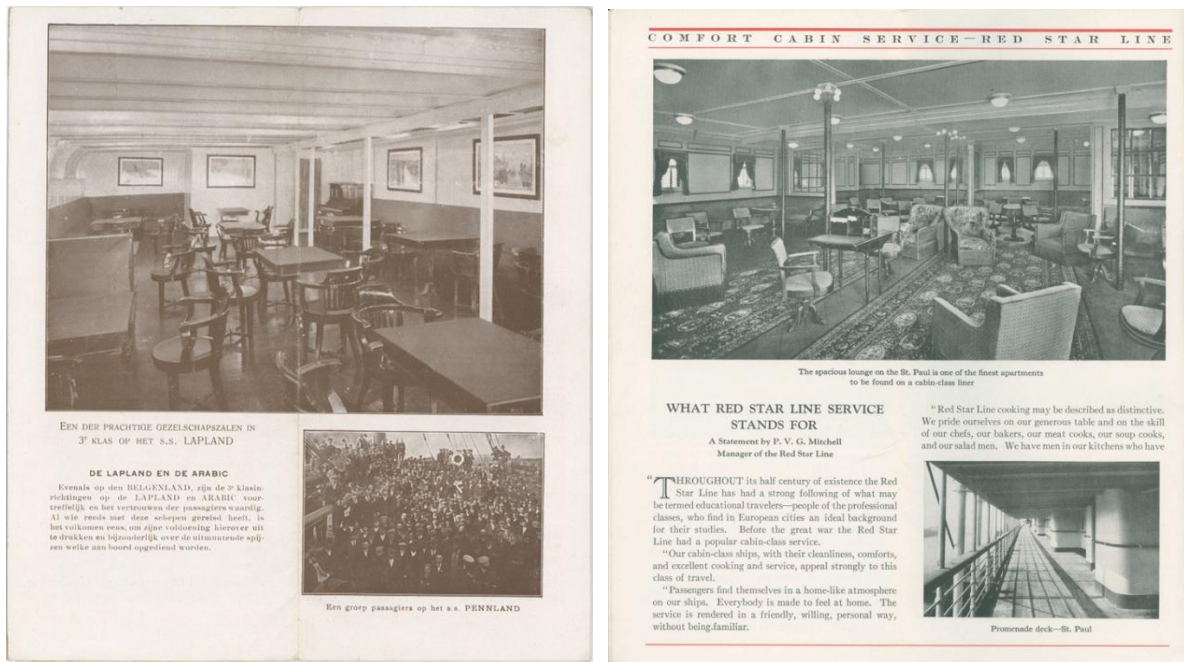


Image 31. Functionality and community versus luxury and individual comfort.

1. *Red Star Line Derde Klas* [Red Star Line Third Class], [brochure], 1928, Online Collection Red Star Line Museum, Antwerp.
2. *Comfort Cabin Service Red Star Line*, [brochure], 1922, Online Collection Red Star Line Museum, Antwerp.

This contrast corresponds to the different target groups ranging from third-class passengers in Dutch-language brochures to middle- and upper-class passengers in English-language brochures, emphasizing different visions of the migration experience rooted in collective endurance versus individual comfort. In this way, the Red Star Line strategically adapted its promotional messaging to align with the expectations and aspirations of each group.

Framing & Layout

Similar to the findings from the analysis of the Dutch-language brochures, images take center stage in the English-language versions, and the use of color remains generally limited to its cover pages. However, whereas the former uses the color red only to a very limited extent, three English language brochures, *Comfort Cabin Service Red Star Line*, *Red Star Line: New York and Antwerp*, and *Red Star Line: From New York and Philadelphia to Antwerp*, use red more prominently to highlight the Red Star Line brand (see Image 32). This deliberate use of

red suggests a stronger emphasis on brand recognition in these brochures, reflecting marketing strategies more focused on a commercially-minded audience.



Image 32. Use of the color red in English-language brochures.

1. *Comfort Cabin Service Red Star Line*, [brochure], 1922, Online Collection Red Star Line Museum, Antwerp.
2. *Red Star Line New York and Antwerp*, [brochure], 1884, Online Collection Red Star Line Museum, Antwerp.
3. *Red Star Line: From New York and Philadelphia to Antwerp*, [brochure], 1883, Online Collection Red Star Line Museum, Antwerp.

Furthermore, while both English- and Dutch-language brochures primarily feature images of the ship's interior or exterior, the English brochures portray the brand's star emblem more frequently and with greater prominence. As shown in Image 30, the Red Star Line's star often occupies a central position in the visuals, further reinforcing the impression that promoting the company's brand identity was a key objective in the English-language brochures. Thus, although both sets of brochures use color on their covers, center images in their layouts, and focus on the ship's interiors and exteriors, the heightened visibility of the Red Star Line's visual identity in the English-language brochures highlights a stronger emphasis on corporate appeal, likely targeting middle- to upper-class audiences (see Image 33).

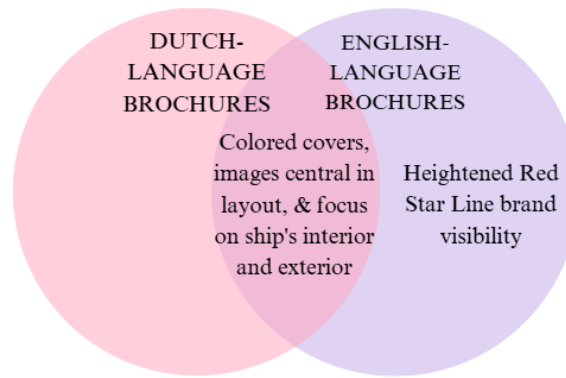


Image 33. Comparative overview framing & layout

Modality & Realism

While both the Dutch- and English-language brochures portray idealized versions of reality through their imagery, the English brochures not only idealize but also project a more aspirational tone. For example, this aspirational tone is clearly reflected on the cover pages of the English brochures *Red Star Line New York and Antwerp*, *Red Star Line: From New York and Philadelphia to Antwerp*, and *Red Star Line First Class Tariff* (see Image 34).

The cover of *Red Star Line New York and Antwerp* features two sailing ships in the distance, above which a bright red star shines against a light yellow background, suggesting a guiding or radiating presence. In the foreground, a sailor wearing clothing marked with the inscription ‘Red Star Line’ gazes thoughtfully into the distance. His body is turned partly towards the ships and partly towards the viewer, creating a sense of forward movement and personal connection. Together, the sailor’s contemplative gaze, the distant ships, and the glowing red star collectively indicate that the Red Star Line company represents an ideal to aspire to.



Image 34. Idealized and aspirational tone.

1. *Red Star Line New York and Antwerp*, [brochure], 1884, Online Collection Red Star Line Museum, Antwerp.
2. *Red Star Line: From New York and Philadelphia to Antwerp*, [brochure], 1883, Online Collection Red Star Line Museum, Antwerp.
3. *Red Star Line: First Class Tariff*, [brochure], 1923, Online Collection Red Star Line Museum, Antwerp.

Similarly, the cover of *Red Star Line: From New York and Philadelphia to Antwerp* features a red star shining against a lighter background. Underneath the star, an American and a Belgian flag are depicted. These flags refer to both the departure and destination countries of the Red Star Line as well as the origin of the company as a joint venture between American and Belgian parties. As a result, the imagery positions the Red Star Line as a prestigious bridge between the two nations, further strengthening the company's aspirational character.

Lastly, the cover of the brochure *Red Star Line First Class Tariff* portrays two sailors, recognizable by their distinctive features such as beards, hats, and pipes, observing a Red Star Line ship as it approaches. Although their facial expressions are not visible, their body language suggests a sense of welcome, as if receiving the ship into the harbor. In combination with a light yellow and orange background, the image evokes a sense of anticipation, reinforcing the brochure's aspirational tone.

In addition to their aspirational tone, the imagery in the English-language brochures presents idealized versions of reality by lacking detail, concealing passengers' emotions, and

glossing over the hardships and difficulties of transatlantic travel, just as the Dutch-language brochures do. However, the difference between the two, being a stronger emphasis on creating an aspirational image in English brochures compared to the Dutch ones, suggests that, beyond shaping how migrants envisioned their journey with the Red Star Line, the imagery of the English brochures aimed to frame the Red Star Line as a prestigious company (see Image 35).

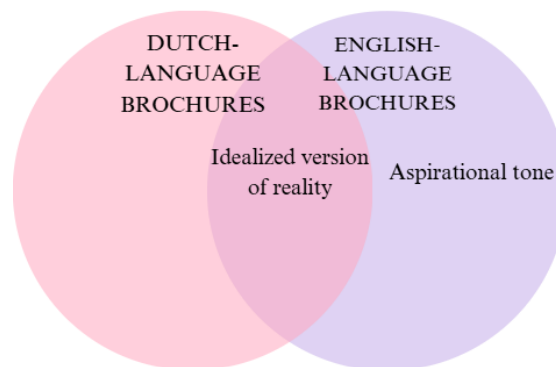


Image 35. Comparative overview modality and realism

Symbolism & Semiotics

As in the Dutch-language brochures, the English ones make extensive use of symbolism in their imagery. For instance, both language versions frequently depict steamships, symbolizing speed and modernity, as well as stars, referring to the Red Star Line company itself (see Annex 2.1 and 2.2). Moreover, they both strategically use animals to carefully construct the Red Star Line's brand image. For example, whereas the Dutch-language brochure *Red Star Line Stroombiljet* [Red Star Line Leaflet] features a dolphin, representing freedom, the English-language brochure *Comfort Cabin Service Red Star Line* depicts two seahorses, associated with good luck, persistence, and protection (see Image 36). A second example of the symbolic use of animals in English brochures can be found in *Red Star Line Cabin*

Service, which depicts birds soaring through the sky, symbolizing hope, freedom, and new beginnings.¹⁴⁹

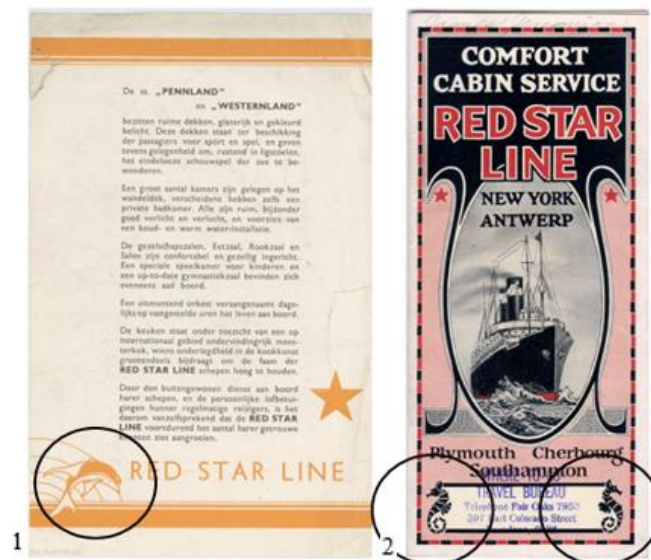


Image 36. Comparative example symbolic use of animals.

1. *Red Star Line Stroombiljet* [Red Star Line Leaflet], [brochure], 1928, Online Collection Red Star Line Museum, Antwerp.
2. *Comfort Cabin Service Red Star Line*, [brochure], 1922, Online Collection Red Star Line Museum, Antwerp.

Nevertheless, the English-language brochures also incorporate a number of additional symbolic elements (see Image 37). For example, the penultimate page of *Red Star Line Cabin Service* portrays an image of the Statue of Liberty in the background, a symbol closely associated with American ideals of freedom and democracy. In addition, the cover page of the brochure *Red Star Line: From New York and Philadelphia to Antwerp* features four anchors, arranged in two cross formations, with a white shield bearing a red star in the middle. The anchor is traditionally a symbol of hope, visually linking the Red Star Line company to a sense of optimism. Furthermore, the inclusion of the American and Belgian flags presented on the brochure's cover reinforces a symbolic bond between the two nations.

¹⁴⁹ *Red Star Line Cabin Service*.



Image 37. Additional symbolism in English-language brochures.

1. *Red Star Line Cabin Service*, [brochure], 1930, Online Collection Red Star Line Museum, Antwerp.
2. *Red Star Line: From New York and Philadelphia to Antwerp*, [brochure], 1883, Online Collection Red Star Line Museum, Antwerp.

Finally, three out of five Dutch-language brochures, including *Red Star Line Derde Klas* [Red Star Line Third Class], *Red Star Line Stroombiljet* [Red Star Line Leaflet], and *Tourist Derde Kabin Red Star Line* [Tourist Third Cabin Red Star Line], predominantly use either green, blue, or orange in their layouts, evoking feelings of hope and reassurance. In contrast, as mentioned earlier, the English-language brochures make more frequent and deliberate use of red, a color associated with the Red Star Line company itself, and strong emotions such as passion, but also danger or sacrifice. This symbolic divergence in color use suggests that the Dutch brochures focused more on comforting and reassuring prospective migrants, while English brochures aimed to captivate and persuade through brand promotion (see Image 38).

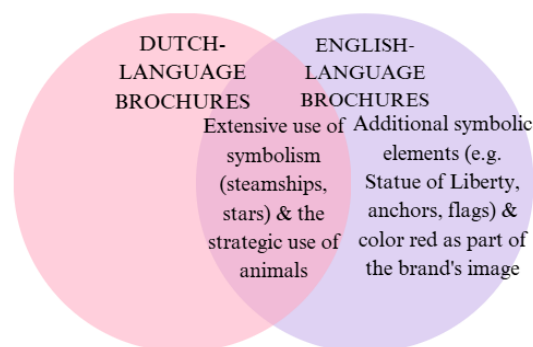


Image 38. Comparative overview symbolism and semiotics

Omissions & Silences

Overall, the analyses of both the Dutch- and English-language brochures reveal similar findings (see Image 39). Notably, neither language version includes visual references to cultural differences or the physical or emotional obstacles associated with transatlantic migration. Instead, the journey with the Red Star Line is portrayed as smooth and effortless, while in reality, this was not always the case. However, subtle differences emerge in the use of color. Namely, while the color red is expected across both language versions due to its strong association with the Red Star Line brand, only the English-language brochures make extensive use of it throughout their layouts. Nonetheless, the shared absence of cultural differences and physical hardships reveal how the promotional materials highlight the Red Star Line's authority in creating a predominantly positive migration narrative.

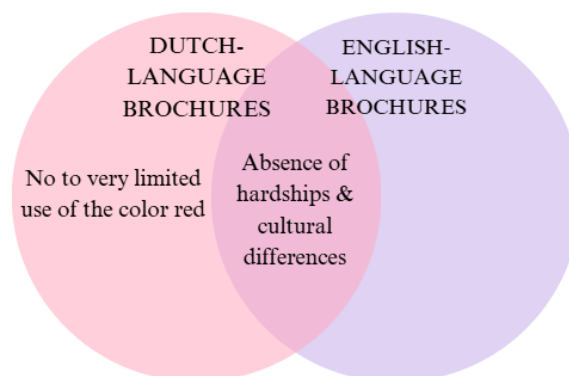


Image 39. Comparative overview omissions and silences

Function & Purpose

Compared to the Dutch-language brochures, the English versions are more clearly tailored to middle- to upper-class passengers rather than third-class travelers. For instance, while Dutch brochures often depict passengers in casual or modest clothing, the English brochures predominantly portray individuals dressed in formal attire, such as suits and long dresses. Furthermore, Dutch brochures like *Red Star Line Naar Canada* [Red Star Line to Canada] and *Antwerpen-Canada met Red Star Line Schepen en Canadian National Spoorwegen* [Antwerp-

Canada with Red Star Line Ships and Canadian National Railways] depict Canadian agricultural landscapes, highlighting work and settlement. In contrast, the English versions do not entail such images.

Another key difference lies in the brochures' general messaging and purpose (see Image 40). Namely, whereas the Dutch-language brochures present the Red Star Line as a desirable and trustworthy travel option, suggesting it as a gateway to new opportunities in North America, the English brochures focus on projecting an image of luxury, superiority, and status. Greater emphasis is placed on brand management and the presentation of its onboard services. In this way, Dutch-language brochures seem designed to reassure and inspire hope among third-class passengers, aligning with their needs and desires for a better future. Meanwhile, English-language brochures aim to cater to the aspirations of a wealthier audience, emphasizing luxury, refinement, and status.

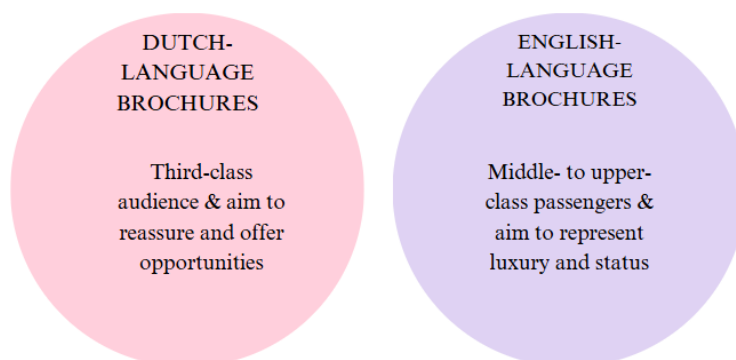


Image 40. Comparative overview function and purpose

Conclusion

All in all, the comparative visual critical discourse analysis of Dutch- and English-language brochures reveals both notable similarities and significant differences in how they present the migration journey. While both depict travel with the Red Star Line in broadly similar ways, their portrayals of community-building and cultural preservation diverges in key areas.

Both Dutch- and English-language brochures share visual strategies as they include minimal embedded text within their images, position the Red Star Line as central authoritative figure, limit the use of colors mainly to their cover pages, and place images central in their layouts. Furthermore, they commonly highlight the ship's interiors and exteriors, present idealized versions of reality, and make extensive use of symbolism, including strategic representations of animals, while avoiding depictions of any hardships and cultural differences.

However, one of the most striking differences lies in the portrayal of individuals. Namely, Dutch-language brochures feature individuals far less frequently in their imagery compared to the English versions, and when they do portray individuals they are typically shown in group settings rather than as distinct personas, as seen in English-language brochures. This suggests a tailored approach since Dutch brochures appear to address Flemish migrants by acknowledging the need for reassurance and collective experience during the liminal phase of separation, while English brochures focus more on individual opportunities, often limited to the middle- to upper-class audience. Moreover, although the Red Star Line is placed as the central authoritative figure in both language versions, Dutch brochures highlight this through visuals that emphasize functionality and collective endurance, while English brochures focus on luxury and comfort. Additionally, the imagery in English-language brochures show greater brand visibility, making strategic use of the color red and symbolic elements such as the American and Belgian flags. As a result, these elements indicate a marketing approach likely to reach a more affluent audience attuned to commercial branding, unlike third-class Flemish migrants, who were more concerned with trust, affordability, and shared experience.

Thus, while at first glance a significant number of similarities can be identified between the two language versions, there is also considerable evidence that shows how they

differ in audience and purpose. Whereas the imagery in Dutch-language brochures aim to convince third-class passengers through reassuring them, the imagery in English-language brochures aim to attract middle-to upper-class passengers by representing luxury and status. As a result, the visual analysis adds nuance to the findings of the textual analysis, which previously highlighted the brochures' role in promoting a depersonalized, hierarchical migration narrative.

Conclusion

To conclude, this paper has addressed the research question: ‘How did the Red Star Line’s promotional brochures (1880-1930) facilitate community-building and the preservation of cultural identity among Flemish migrants during the initial phase of liminal separation?’ The comparative critical discourse analysis, guided by liminality theory, has led to several key findings.

While it was initially hypothesized that the Red Star Line’s business interests in U.S. migration shaped how Flemish migrants redefined their identities and sense of community from the start of the migratory journey, the analysis reveals a more nuanced picture. The Dutch-language brochures, though not explicitly promoting community-building or cultural preservation, indirectly acknowledged the emotional and cultural needs of third-class migrants, particularly through their visual elements. Textually, cultural references were subtle and likely incidental, primarily conveyed through lexical choices that emphasized a sense of dignity and a positive association with the migratory journey.

The Dutch-language brochures, targeting third-class Flemish migrants, emphasize modest luxury, frame the journey as an institutionalized experience, and focus on providing practical information. Their use of assertive discourse and supposed endorsements underscored the reliability of the Red Star Line. In contrast, the English-language brochures, directed at first- and second-class passengers, emphasized individual leisure, technological prowess, and personal advancement. These differences in textual focus between the Dutch- and English-language brochures confirm a tailor-made marketing strategy aimed at distinct socio-economic audiences.

Nevertheless, it does not suggest that the Red Star Line intentionally aimed to foster a sense of community or preserve cultural identity among Flemish migrants. By positioning the

Red Star Line as the central authoritative figure, presenting its information as objective fact, and emphasizing the reliability of its services, both sets of brochures leave little room for the formation of *communitas* as conceptualized by Victor Turner.

However, the visual analysis of the Dutch- and English-language brochures more clearly highlights a distinction in how each version portrays community-building and cultural preservation. Although both versions position the Red Star Line as central authoritative figure, consistent with the findings of the textual analysis, the Dutch-language brochures emphasize collective endurance and foster a sense of security through their imagery. In contrast, the English-language brochures depict the Red Star Line through visuals of luxury and comfort, appealing to a more affluent audience.

Moreover, the portrayal of individuals differs significantly between the two language versions. The Dutch-language brochures rarely depict individuals, and when they do, it is typically in group settings, reinforcing a collective identity. Meanwhile, the English-language brochures frequently feature individuals as distinct personas, emphasizing personal opportunity and status. As a result, the visuals in the Dutch-language brochures suggest an opportunity for fostering a shared migrant experience during the liminal phase of separation, even if not completely aligning with Turner's conceptualization of *communitas*.

All in all, this study has shown that the Red Star Line's promotional brochures (1880-1930) did not overtly facilitate community-building or the preservation of cultural identity among Flemish migrants during the initial phase of liminal separation. However, they did contribute, primarily through their visuals, to shaping how the migration experience was emotionally and culturally framed in its initial stages. These findings underscore the subtle yet influential role institutions can play in shaping migration narratives and experiences.

Taken together, while it is important to acknowledge the limitations of this research, specifically that only ten promotional brochures have been analyzed, these materials still provide valuable insights into the Red Star Line's narrative constructions and marketing strategies. Even though the limited sample size restricts broad generalizations, the detailed comparative analysis of both textual and visual elements across both language versions uncovers how the company tailored its messaging to distinct audiences.

Future research could further enrich the understanding of the institutional role of the Red Star Line in shaping migrant identity and community by incorporating a broader range of source materials, such as personal letters, diaries, or oral histories. Additionally, this study serves as a foundation for future explorations of the second and third phases of liminality theory (*rites of transition* and *rites of incorporation*) as applied to migration. This is especially relevant today, in a time where ongoing global resettlement continues to reshape communities and challenge existing ideas about identity, belonging, and cultural integration.

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Annex

1.1 Textual Analysis Dutch-Language Brochures

TEXTS (BROCHURES) NL	RSL Stroombiljet	RSL Naar Canada	Tourist Derde Kabien RSL	Folder RSL Derde Klas	Folder Antwerpen - Canada met RSL schepen en Canadian National Spoorwegen
<i>Lexical choices</i>	“ruim,” “glansrijk,” “groot,” “bijzonder goed verlicht,” “private badkamer,” “zee bewonderen,” “rustend in ligstoelen,” “comfortabel,” “gezellig,” “up-to-date,” “uitmuntend orkest,” “ondervindingrijk meesterkok,” “buitengewoon,” “vanzelfsprekend.”	“schitterende,” “bijzonder ingericht,” “uiterst modern,” “rechtstreeksche dienst,” “overall bekende,” “ideale inrichtingen,” “frissche kajuiten,” “ruime dekken,” “hoffelijke en voortreffelijke wijze,” “uitstekende kwaliteit,” “ruime en gezellige eetzaal,” “onweerlegbaar bewijs.”	“regelmatige dienst,” “pracht,” “op aangename wijze,” “alle mogelijke geriefelijkheid,” “uitmuntende kabien alsook de maaltijden,” “oplettend volmaakt ingerichte dienst.”	“ongeveerwaard,” “groot gemak,” “zeer aantrekkelijk,” “ruim en wel verlucht,” “grote rookzaal,” “bijzondere zitkamer,” “ruime wandeldekken,” “aangename nieuwigheid,” “ideale inrichtingen,” “ruime en aantrekkelijke verblijfszalen,” “zuivere en heldere kamers,” “uitgebreide dekken,” “bijzonder bijdraagt,” “ruime en goed verlichte eetzaal,” “uitmuntend en afwisselend,” “voortreffelijk,” “uitmuntende spijzen.”	“ideale inrichtingen,” “wyde en wel gestoffeerde zalen,” “heldere en frissche kajuiten,” “ruime dekken,” “hoffelijke en voortreffelijke wijze,” “uitskende kwaliteit,” “breed, licht en wel verlucht,” “onweerlegbaar bewys.”
<i>Naming & categorization</i>	“passagiers,” “speciale speelkamer voor kinderen,” “regelmatige reizigers,” “getrouwe klanten.”	“passagiers in <<kabien>> en derde klas,” “derde klas passagiers,” “iedereen,” “kan er van overtuigd zijn in zijn eigen taal aangesproken en begrepen te worden,” “reizend publiek,” “men.”	“tourist derde kabien,” “kinderen van 1 tot 10 jaar,” “onder 1 jaar,” “de passagiers,” “per volwassen persoon,” “uitzondering wordt gemaakt voor Amerikaansche Burgers en personen die in bezit zijn van een <<re-enter permit>>,” “per persoon,” “uitzondering wordt gemaakt voor burgers van Sint-Pierre en Miquelon en de in dit land verblijvende Franschen, kanadeesche burgers, burgers van New Foundland, Bermuda, de Bahamas en de in deze	“de passagiers,” “waar 750 passagiers te samen kunnen plaats nemen,” “3e klas passagiers.”	“derde klas passagiers,” “de reizigers,” “iedereen,” “[...]” kan er van overtuigd zyn in zyn eigen taal aangesproken en begrepen te worden,” “passagiers,” “reizend publiek,” “men.”

			landen verblijvende Engelschen, burgers van Panama, Mexico, Cuba, Haiti en de Dominikaansche Republiek,” “den passagiers,” “alle passagiers, met uitzondering van Amerikaansche burgers die hunnen nationaliteit door officiële documenten bewijzen kunnen, en kinderen onder de 16 jaar vergezeld van vader en, of moeder, [...],” “toeristen,” “men,” “lokale zowel als de regelmatige passagiers.”		
<i>Visual/spatial hierarchy</i>	“Deze dekken staan ter beschikking der passagiers [...], en geven tevens gelegenheid om, [...]” “voorzien van,” “de vastgestelde uren,” “De keuken staat onder toezicht van [...],” “de faam der RED STAR LINE schepen,” “buitengewoon dienst aan boord harer schepen.”	“zijn bijzonder ingericht voor,” “voldoen aan de eischen,” “deze schepen beschikken over,” “de Red Star Line heeft eene 50 jarige ervaring,” “dat de Maatschappij er in gelukt is voldoening te geven aan de eischen van het reizend publiek.”	“Deze prijzen kunnen zonder voorafgaandelijk bericht veranderd worden,” “moet in bezit zijn,” “Passagiers die niet aan dezen eisch voldoen worden in de Vereendigde Staten niet toegelaten,” “Een voorschot van \$20 per persoon wordt vereischt,” “Indien de passagiers niet vertrekken wordt het voorschot niet terugbetaald,” “Dit reisgoed moet voorzien zijn van etiketten gemerkt <<Wanted>>,” “Elk stuk reisgoed dient voorzien te zijn van de etiketten der Lijn,” “In geval van verlies of beschadiging der reisgoederen of voorwerpen van waarde, neemt de Red Star Line geene verantwoordelijkheid voor eene som hooger dan aangeduid in het	“ter beschikking der passagiers,” “de schepen der RED STAR LINE bezitten [...],” “De dienst wordt verzekerd door bedieners [...],” “het vertrouwen der passagiers waardig.”	“dienst der Red Star Line,” “Deze schepen beschikken over [...],” “De Red Star Line heeft eene 50 jarige ervaring,” “bediend,” “[...]” dat de Maatschappij er in gelukt is voldoende to geven aan de eischen van het reizend publiek.”

			<p>scheepskontrakt,"</p> <p>"Gevaarlijke voorwerpen zoals vuurwerkmateriaal, lucifers, schietpoeder, gasoline, kogels, cinematografische filmen, enz., mogen niet als reisgoed aangenomen worden,"</p> <p>"Bedienden in uniform zijn aanwezig bij elke aankomst in de Middenstatie van Antwerpen," "moeten."</p>		
<i>Framing & layout</i>	<p>Bolded phrases:</p> <p>PENNLAND, WESTERLAND, RED STAR LINE</p> <p>Headlines: RED STAR LINE</p>	<p>Bolded phrases:</p> <p>"ANTWERPEN - CANADA," "Southampton," "Cherbourg,"</p> <p>"PENNLAND," "ARABIC," "RED STAR LINE," "22, Kammenstraat :: Antwerpen."</p> <p>Headlines: "Red Star Line: Naar Canada," "Red Star Line," "Nationale Spoorwegen van Canada: Het Grootste Transport-Spoorwegnet der Wereld," "De << Continental Limited>>," "De <<International Limited>>," "De <<Montrealer>>," "De <<Ocean Limited>>," "De <<Maritime Express>>," "De <<Queen City>>," "De <<Capital City>>," "De <<Citadel>>," "De <<Quebec>>," "De <<Montreal>>," "De <<Mount Royal>>," "Kantoren en Agentschappen."</p>	<p>Bolded terms: "Reisgoed," "Gevaarlijke zaken," "vuurwerkmateriaal, lucifers, schietpoeder, gasoline, kogels, cinematografische filmen, enz.," "Bedienden in uniform," "Wanted," "Tourist Derde Kabien passagiers," "Koopwaren, huishoudingsvoorwerpen, pianos, enz.," "Rijwiel," "katten," "honden," "duiven," "Ligstoelen, reisdekens en stoelkussens."</p> <p>Headlines: "RED STAR LINE," "Overvaartsprijzen in Tourist Derde Kabien," "Inlichtingen voor de passagiers," "Paspporten," "Passagiers in transit," "Inschrijving der passagiers," "Reisgoed," "Amerikaansch hoofdgeld," "Automobielen," "Uitstappen in zee," "Prijzen in toerist derde kabien," "Inschepings- en ontschepingstaks te</p>	<p>Bolded phrases: "S.S. Belgenland," "S.S. Lapland," "Antwerpen - Southampton - Cherbourg - New York," "Antwerpen - Southampton - Cherbourg - Canada," "Antwerpen, Red Star Line, 22, Kammenstraat," "New York, Red Star Line, N 1, Broadway," "S.S. Pennland," "S.S. Arabic."</p> <p>Headlines: "RED STAR LINE," "Nieuwigheden in derde klas op het S.S. Belgenland," "De Lapland en de Arabic," "Kantoren en agentschappen," "Vloot der Red Star Line," "Landingsplaats."</p>	<p>Bolded terms: "Nationale Spoorwegen van Canada," "De Continental limited," "De International limited," "De Montrealer," "De Ocean limited," "De Maritime Express," "De Queen City," "De Capital City," "De Citadel De Quebec," "De Montreal De Mount Royal," "RED STAR LINE."</p> <p>Headlines: "RED STAR LINE," "Nationale Spoorwegen van Canada," "Het Grootste Transport Spoorwegnet der Wereld," "Kantoren en agentschappen."</p>

			Cherbourg," "Vloot der Red Star Line," "Verterplaats," "Kantoren en agentschappen."		
<i>Modality & realism</i>	<p>Factual → "vanzelfsprekend," "persoonlijke lofbetuigingen hunner regelmatige reizigers," "[...] bijdraagt om de faam der RED STAR LINE schepen hoog te houden."</p>	<p>Factual → "voldoen aan de eisen der hedendaagsche geriefelijkheid," "De Red Star Line heeft eene 50 jarige ervaring in den dienst der derde klas passagiers," "Het immer stijgende aantal passagiers," "onweerlegbaar bewijs."</p>	<p>Factual → use of (fixed) prices and providing a list of agencies.</p>	<p>Factual → "De dienst wordt verzekerd door bedienden [...]" "het vertrouwen der passagiers waardig," "Al wie reeds met deze schepen gereisd heeft, is het volkomen eens," "ongeveer naard."</p>	<p>Factual → "De Red Star Line heeft eene 50 jarige ervaring [...]" "kan er van overtuigd zijn," "het onweerlegbaar bewijs," "[...] de Maarschappij er in gelukt is voldoende te geven aan de eisen van het reizend publiek."</p>
<i>Symbolism & semiotics</i>	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Omissions & silences</i>	<p>Terms like "migrants," or "New York/Philadelphia" (something about the destination)</p> <p>→ the voices/perspective of the passengers are missing.</p>	<p>"migrants," "first class passengers,"</p> <p>→ lack of migrants' voices/perspectives.</p>	<p>"migrants," "Dutch/Flemish,"</p> <p>→ the voices/perspectives/experiences of passengers are left out.</p>	<p>Lack of migrant voices/perspectives and references to migration.</p>	<p>Omission of first- and second class passengers, migrants, pricelist, and migrants' voices/perspectives/experiences.</p>
<i>Function/purpose</i>	<p>Audience: (Dutch-speaking) potential passengers of the Red Star Line.</p> <p>Purpose: the material is trying to lure new passengers for the Red Star Line ships.</p>	<p>Audience: (Dutch-speaking) potential third-class passengers who want to travel to Canada.</p> <p>Purpose: the material is trying to lure new passengers (of lower classes) for the Red Star Line ships to Canada.</p>	<p>Audience: (Dutch-speaking) potential passengers of the Red Star Line's ships not only to New York and Canada, but also tourists who want to visit the Red Star Line's stops in Southampton and Cherbourg.</p> <p>Purpose: lure new third-class passengers of the Red Star Line by highlighting its possibilities for tourists as well.</p>	<p>Audience: Potential (Dutch-speaking) third class passengers.</p> <p>Purpose: the material is trying to speak to the lower classes by offering luxury on-board their ships.</p>	<p>Audience: (Dutch-speaking) potential third-class passengers who want to travel to Canada.</p> <p>Purpose: the material is trying to lure new passengers (of lower classes) for the Red Star Line ships to Canada.</p>

1.2 Textual Analysis English-Language Brochures

TEXTS (BROCHURES) EN	Red Star Line: Cabin Service (1930)	Red Star Line: First Class Tariff (1923)	Comfort Cabin Service: Red Star Line	Red Star Line: New York and Antwerp	Red Star Line: From New York and Philadelphia to Antwerp
<i>Lexical choices</i>	<p>“growing importance,” “many minimum and moderately priced,” “handsome private suites,” “greater degree of comfort,” “no superior class,” “delightful voyages,” “most approved type,” “most up-to-date apparatus,” “delightful children’s playroom,” “particularly suitable for family travel,” “popular,” “high order,” “attractive,” “especially designed for ease and comfort,” “spacious,” “excellent,” “famous,” “modern,” “connected,” “most convenient gateway.”</p>	<p>“strictly,” “exclusive use,” “special floor,” “experienced attendant,” “fully supplied,” “modern appliances,” “experienced.”</p>	<p>“modern comforts,” “moderate rates,” “well qualified,” “highest level of quality,” “satisfied travelers,” “greatest commercial tie,” “chief avenues,” “among the best known transatlantic liners,” “fine,” “famous,” “well built,” “spacious,” “most fashionable,” “notably comfortable,” “among the most comfortable,” “conspicuous air of brightness and cheery comfort,” “homelike snugness,” “delightful,” “atmosphere of quiet and privacy,” “modestly elegant,” “lightness and refinement,” “brightness,” “very carefully maintained,” “willing spirit,” “skilled musicians,” “one of the most interesting,” “joyous good nature,” “bright,” “excellent cooking and service,” “home-like atmosphere,” “friendly, willing, personal way,” “distinctive,” “most central.”</p>	<p>“Full-powered,” “elegantly appointed,” “specially constructed,” “latest inventions,” “comfort,” “safety,” “unprecedented regularity,” “advantageous geographical location,” “admirable Railroad connections,” “splendid new steamship,” “new,” “fine addition,” “handsome dome skylight,” “Handsome stairway,” “most satisfactory results,” “beautiful new,” “latest improvements,” “large,” “thoroughly lighted and ventilated.”</p>	<p>“magnificent,” “Full Powered Steamships,” “Specially constructed,” “latest improvements,” “comfort,” “thoroughly lighted and ventilated,” “admirable starting point.”</p>
<i>Naming & categorization</i>	<p>“those,” “Cabin ships have no superior class and do not carry second class passengers,” “children’s playroom,” “[...] the mother</p>	<p>“persons,” “passengers,” “friends,” “Ladies, Gentlemen and Children.” “First Class Passengers”</p>	<p>“cabin passengers,” “satisfied travelers,” “430 cabin passengers and 950 third class,” “450 passengers in cabin, and 330 third</p>	<p>“passengers,” “1st class, mixed, 2nd class,” “owners,” “adult cabin passenger,” “families and the public,” “persons holding [...]”</p>	<p>“traveling public,” “Tourist,” “Passengers,” “Persons.”</p>

	<p>who travels with her family,” “Cabin ships are particularly suitable for family travel,” “all passengers,” “assistance of unaccompanied ladies and children.”</p>		<p>class,” “a couple, a family, or a group,” “the experienced traveler,” “The American [...],” “the Continental traveler,” “passengers,” “the tourist,” “the traveler,” “educational travelers - people of the professional classes,” “Thousands of Americans.”</p>	<p>“Children between the ages of 2 and 1 years.”</p>	
<i>Visual/spatial hierarchy</i>	<p>“[...] the RED STAR LINE has for some time maintained a regular Cabin service [...],” “has an established reputation,” “equipped with,” “is available,” “is accorded to all passengers,” “is distributed daily,” “Connected as it is with all main rail routes radiating to the principal centres of Europe [...],” “to meet all.”</p>	<p>“providing private service,” “will be served,” “open for exercise,” “is carried,” “his services are at the disposal of passengers,” “must,” “no access,” “can be rented,” should,” “[...] the Company cannot accept responsibility for loss or damage however caused.”</p>	<p>“American owned, and under conservative yet progressive management [...],” “[...] are arranged with care,” “Service in the rooms is carefully maintained,” “Everybody is made to feel at home.”</p>	<p>“fitted with all the latest inventions,” “The electric lighting of the saloons, cabins, and engine-rooms has been arranged by Messrs. Siemens Brothers & co. and the general fittings include everything necessary for the convenience and comfort of the passengers,” “The passenger is landed [...],” “must be,” “An excellent table, as well as all requisites for the voyage, are provided,” “No deposits will be refunded,” “will be required.”</p> <p>Use of statistical data: “She is 400 feet long on the main-deck, 47 feet beam, 35 feet 4 inches in depth, and her gross tonnage 5.121 .,” “Her indicated horse-power is 2.500. She has accommodation for 80 first-class, 60 second-class, and 1.200 steerage passengers,” “The engines have two cylinders - the diameter of the high pressure</p>	<p>“They are fitted with [...],” “[...] are provided,” “Passengers are requested to [...],” “must be,” “The balance of passage money to be paid not later than ten days previous to sailing of Steamer.”</p> <p>Statistical data → table of distances.</p>

				48 inches and the low pressure 85 inches, with a stroke of piston 60 inches.” “The engines were worked up to 60 revolutions per minute, with a speed of upwards of 13 knots an hour.”	
<i>Framing & layout</i>	<p>Bolded phrases: “CABIN CLASS,” “RED STAR LINE,” “RED STAR,” “ANTWERP.”</p> <p>Headlines: “Red Star Line CABIN SERVICE,” “ANTWERP TO NEW-YORK, CANADA VIA SOUTHAMPTON CHERBOURG,” “Red Star Line,” “PRINCIPAL OFFICES AND AGENTS,” “THE STEAMER SAIL,” “FLEET OF THE COMPANY.”</p>	<p>Bolded phrases: “S.S. Belgenland,” “\$10,” “\$15,” “\$250,” “Dancing,” “Antwerp-Southampton,” “Antwerp-Cherbourg,” “Southampton-Cherbourg,” “Plymouth-Cherbourg,” “Plymouth-Antwerp,” “Passengers must be in possession of passports properly viséd before passage can be booked (see special circulars issued thereon) and indicate us their nationality when sending deposits,” “The difference existing in the rates of passage,” “Servants,” “Steamer Chairs,” “Steamer Rugs,” “Seats at table,” “Securing berths,” “Transferring berths,” “FIRST CLASS PASSENGERS ... 8 and 11 p.m.,” “Packages of merchandise, household articles, pianos, etc.,” “Automobiles,” “Bicycles,” “Dogs, cats and monkeys,” “Baggage,” “must,” “wanted,” “forenoon,” “Dangerous articles,” “Fireworks, Matches,</p>	<p>Bolded phrases: -</p> <p>Headlines: “Comfort Cabin Service: Red Star Line,” “An Old And Popular Line,” “Comfort Cabin Service - Red Star Line,” “Bright and Cheerful Quarters,” “To Ports of Three Countries,” “Antwerp, Continental Gateway,” “What Red Star Line Service Stands For: A Statement by P.V.G. Mitchell Manager of the Red Star Line,” “In the Zeeland’s Smoking-Room,” “Fifty Years of Service,” “Largest Ship to Antwerp,” “Red Star Line Offices in the United States and Canada,” “Red Star Offices in Europe.”</p>	<p>Bolded phrases: “comfort,” “safety,” “without the loss of a single life,” “Noordland,” “From Antwerp To,” “Prior to embarking,” “FIRST CABIN,” “amidships,” “latest improvements,” “thoroughly lighted and ventilated,” “SECOND CABIN,” “all outside rooms,” “equally well lighted and ventilated,” “wines,” “Berths,” “New York Office,” “scale of accommodation desired,” “When asking for berths, state names in full and whether male or female, with age of children,” “DEPOSITS,” “\$25,” “\$15,” “ten,” “exchanged,” “prior to embarking,” “ON NOORDLAND,” “The Vaderland, Nederland, Switzerland & Zeeland do not carry second cabin passengers. Special Rates Allowed to the Clergy,” “NEW YORK SAILINGS from Red Star Dochs, foot of Grand Street, Jersey City,” “PHILADELPHIA SAILINGS from Red Star</p>	<p>Bolded phrases: “FIRST CABIN,” “amidships,” “latest improvements,” “comfort,” “Cuisine,” “all outside rooms, thoroughly lighted and ventilated,” “SECOND CABIN,” “equally well lighted and ventilated,” “Wines,” “Landing,” “RED STAR LINE,” “Westernland,” “Berths,” “New York Office,” “scale of accommodation desired,” “When asking for berths, state names in full, and whether male or female, with ages of children.” “On Westernland, Noordland, Belgenland, Waesland, Rhyndland and Pennland,” “\$75,” “\$90,” “\$60,” “On Switzerland, Nederland, Vaderland & Zeeland,” “Round Trip Tickets, \$110, \$125, & \$160,” “The Vaderland and Zeeland do not carry Second Cabin Passengers,” “DEPOSITS,” “\$25,” “\$15,” “50 Cents.”</p> <p>Headlines: “Red Star Line:</p>
		<p>Gunpowder, Gasoline, Cartridges, Moving Picture Films, etc.,” “Uniformed representatives,” “Letters and Telegrams,” “Baltimore.”</p> <p>Headlines: “RED STAR LINE: First class Tariff N 15,” “Fleet of the Company,” “The Steamers sail,” “RED STAR LINE,” “The Dining Saloon Service,” “Two Private Dining Rooms,” “Reception Room,” “Turkish & Swimming Baths,” “Gymnasium,” “Stenographer,” “Hot and Cold Water,” “Channel Service,” “Rates of Fare,” “First Class Ocean Rates: Antwerp-Southampton-Cherbourg to New York,” “To The Orient,” “Information for First Class Passengers,” “Principal Offices and Agents.”</p>		<p>Dochs, foot of Christian Street.”</p> <p>Headlines: “Red Star Line: Steamships Sailing Every Saturday between New York and Antwerp,” “Red Star Line: Belgian Royal and United States Mail Steamers Sailing Every Saturday Between New York and Antwerp and Every Third Week Between Philadelphia and Antwerp,” “Antwerp,” “Paris,” “Red Star Line: For Information Apply to Peter Wright & Sons,” “Foreign Offices,” “Extract from “Liverpool Mercury,” March 17th ‘84: The “NOORDLAND,” “Railroad Rates, Time And Distances,” “The Docks of the Red Star Line,” “At Antwerp,” “At Jersey City,” “From New York,” “Red Star Line Baggage,” “Cabin Accommodations,” “Notice,” “Proposed Sailings,” “From New York to Antwerp,” “From Antwerp to New York,” “From Philadelphia to Antwerp,” “From Antwerp to Philadelphia,” “Red Star Line Cabin Rates.”</p>	<p>Belgian ROyal & United States Mail Steamers Sailing Every Saturday from New York and Philadelphia to Antwerp,” “The Red Star Line,” “The Docks of the Red Star Line,” “At Jersey City,” “NOTICE,” “Proposed Sailings October 25, 1883,” “From New York yo Antwerp,” “From Antwerp to New York,” “From Philadelphia,” “From Antwerp to Philadelphia,” “Red Star Line. Fall and Winter Cabin Rates, To take effect Nov. 1, 1883.” “FIRST CABIN,” “Outside Rooms,” “Inside Rooms,” “All Outside Rooms,” “SECOND CABIN,” “Foreign Offices,” “Table of Distances.”</p>
<i>Modality & realism</i>	Factual → “[...] the Lapland, a wellknown, trans-Atlantic and Cruise liner [...],” “do not carry,” “steamer of 16.322 tons,” “equally	Factual → use of numbers and factual information (e.g. ticket prices, information for first class passengers, etc.).	Factual → “growing demand,” “The Red Star Line is well qualified [...],” “It has transported millions of satisfied travelers between	Factual → “The fact that the Red Star Line has carried since its beginning over 1,000,000 Cabin and Steerage passengers without	Factual → use of statistical data e.g. proposed sailings, ticket prices, and table of distances.

	popular," "where accommodation of a high order is available," "The cuisine is excellent, [...]"		America and Europe." "It has been in existence more than fifty years, and every one of those years has witnessed a growth in its popularity." "[...] the Red Star Line has become the greatest commercial tie between the United States and Belgium." "To think of a journey between those countries is to think of the Red Star Line." "The Red Star Line is also one of the chief avenues of European ocean travel in general [...]" "The ships that sustain the Red Star Line's cabin-class service, the Zeeland and the St. Paul, are among the best known transatlantic liners." "The St. Paul is the famous transatlantic flyer, and is too well known to need special introduction to the traveling public." "Before the great war the Red Star Line had a popular cabin-class service."	the loss of a single life, and the unprecedented regularity with which this service has been performed, alone speaks volumes." "The "NOORDLAND" is very similar in style and arrangement to the "WESTERNLAND," also constructed by the Messrs. Laird, and which has already made three or four satisfactory voyages between Antwerp and New York."	
<i>Symbolism & semiotics</i>	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Omissions & silences</i>	Obstacles, long waiting lines, description of the destination, imagined future for passengers. → the voices of passengers/migrants are missing.	Information on how to get to Antwerp, difficulties they may embark on their journey. The brochure does not show any personal experiences/voices from former passengers.	While it provides information about Antwerp and Belgium as a destination, it does not provide information on New York. Furthermore, even though quotes of the Red Star Line's manager are used in the brochure, unbiased, honest reviews are missing.	Terms linked to migration, possible obstacles, personal experiences.	Terms linked to migration, possible obstacles, personal experiences.

			No ticket prices or need-to-know logistical information is portrayed in the brochure.		
<i>Function/purpose</i>	Intended audience: all classes, English-speaking passengers. Purpose: convince future passengers that a journey with the Red Star Line is one of luxury and modernity.	Intended audience: first class passengers from Europe. Purpose: the material is trying to inform potential future first class passengers of need-to-know information.	Intended audience: middle- and upper class potential passengers from America and Europe. Purpose: to enhance the status of the Red Star Line and spread awareness of the company's luxuries and services.	Intended audience: potential first and second class travelers. Purpose: the material is trying to convince, mainly Americans, to book a trip with the Red Star Line to explore Europe.	Intended audience: potential first and second class travelers. Purpose: the material is trying to convince, mainly Americans, to book a trip with the Red Star Line to explore Europe.

2.1 Visual Analysis Dutch-Language Brochures

IMAGES (BROCHURES) NL	RSL Stroombiljet	RSL Naar Canada	Tourist Derde Kabien RSL	Folder RSL Derde Klas	Folder Antwerpen - Canada met RSL schepen en Canadian National Spoorwegen
<i>Lexical choices</i>	“RED STAR LINE” → name of the shipping company, no further connotation.	“RED STAR LINE: Naar Canada” → No specific hidden meaning. The slogan portrays the destination of the Red Star Line.	“Halifax, New York, Southampton, Antwerpen, Cherbourg” → No indirect connotation, depicts the departure- and destination points of the Red Star Line's ships.	“Derde Klas” → No connotation.	“Canadian National” → name of the railway company, depicted on a Canadian train. No further connotations.
<i>Naming & categorization</i>	The images in this brochure depict 11 figures. While some of these figures are pointed with their backs towards the viewer, their faces only partly visible, others are turned more towards the viewer. However, no one is looking directly at the viewer. Their facial expressions look serious. The men are dressed in suits and the women wear long dresses with high heels. However, almost none of them are wearing hats, a sign of prestige.	The brochure counts 8 images. Of these 8 images, 4 depict individuals. In the first image, 2 figures are visible working the land. - One is standing in the field and one is plowing the land. Both are dressed in work clothes and are depicted very small compared to the rest of the image. While they are both facing the viewer, their facial expressions are unclear. - The second image depicts a man in a canoe, rowing. He does not face the viewer and his facial expression is neutral. He is wearing casual clothes. - The third image	Only the image on the cover of the brochure depicts individuals. The image shows a Red Star Line (steam)ship in the background with individuals walking towards the ship en masse. The characteristics of the people become more clear moving towards the forefront. However, their facial expressions are often left out of the drawing, depersonalizing the individuals. Therefore, they are depicted as a collectivity rather than individuals. While the individuals that are more in the forefront are wearing casual clothing consistent with third class passengers, it is impossible to make a general statement about the clothing of all individuals as this is not visible.	Only 2 out of the 11 images in this brochure show individuals. On page 3, the deck of the ship S.S. Belgenland is depicted. The image shows a group consisting of around fifty passengers. These individuals are all facing the viewer and their facial expressions seem happy. Most of them are wearing berets and casual clothing. The second image depicting individuals is on page 5. This image shows a big group of passengers on the S.S. Pennland. They are also facing the viewer, but their expressions look more serious. While the first image clearly showed a part of the ship's deck, the deck is not visible in the second image. Overall, the individuals are depicted as a part of a collectivity as they all appear to belong to the	Only 3 out of the 6 images in the brochure depict individuals. - The first image is the cover of the brochure. This image depicts 7 individuals of which three are plowing the land and four are gathering hay. Their facial expressions are not visible. - The second image is depicted on page 3, which shows passengers of a Red Star Line ship who are offboarding the ship in Halifax. Around 20 individuals are depicted in the image, all of them wearing hats. Their

		shows passengers of a Red Star Line ship who are offboarding the ship in Halifax. Around 20 individuals are depicted in the image, all of them wearing hats. Their facial expressions are unclear but their postures seem relaxed. - Finally, the last image depicts a station in Winnipeg. The individuals in this image are depicted very small in relation to the station, and neither their facial expressions nor their postures are visible.		same group. Nevertheless, their facial expressions slightly personalize the groups of people.	facial expressions are unclear but their postures seem relaxed. - Finally, the last image (also on page 3) depicts a station in Winnipeg. The individuals in this image are depicted very small in relation to the station, and neither their facial expressions nor their postures are visible.
<i>Visual/spatial hierarchy</i>	The figures all seem to be having equal authoritative power.	- The first page depicts three images of which all of them show life/nature in Canada. The background of these images portray Canada's mountains, rivers, and open fields. By foregrounding nature and agriculture with	In all images in the brochure, the Red Star Line is portrayed as the central authority. The image on the cover depicts a (large) steam ship of the Red Star Line with in front of it much smaller individuals in line to board the ship. The two images on the second page both show the sea with a ship of the Red Star Line prominently featured. Similarly, on page 7, an	The Red Star Line is portrayed as the dominant, and perhaps sole, authority at sea. The main focus is entirely on the company's steamships. Namely, out of the 11 images in the brochure, 5 show the exterior and 7 show the interior of various Red Star Line's ships. Only two images depict individuals. However, these individuals are always portrayed in a group,	The cover of the brochure depicts the farmers as the center authoritative figures. They are working the land and no one else is in sight except a Canadian train passing by. However, the two images on the second page suggest that the Red Star Line company is the central authoritative figure as both images prominently depict a ship of the Red Star Line. The third page depicts

		<p>only a few individuals, these images portray a sense of harmony between the people and the land.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The second page includes two images, of which the first depicts the ship S.S. Pennland and the second the S.S. Arabic. In both images, the Red Star Line ship is positioned as the central authoritative figure. The large scale of the ship compared to the smaller boats on the forefront, highlight the Red Star Line's prominence and power. - The third page depicts three different images. The first shows a part of a Red Star Line ship where passengers are offboarding in Halifax, the second is an image of a train in Canada, and the third image shows a train station in Winnipeg, 	<p>image of the S.S. Westernland on sea and the interior of the S.S. Pennland is depicted. This page also includes a decorative ornament, implying that the Red Star Line's services were respectable. Lastly, on page 8, another picture of the interior (dining room) of one of the Red Star Line's ships, the S.S. Westernland, is shown. The image suggests that the Red Star Line's services were luxurious and fitted for a large audience. All in all, every image centralizes the Red Star Line as the central authoritative figure.</p>	<p>underscoring their collective role as passengers, reinforcing the idea that the Red Star Line, rather than the individual, is the central authoritative figure.</p>	<p>three different images. The first shows a part of a Red Star Line ship where passengers are offboarding in Halifax, the second is an image of a train in Canada, and the third image shows a train station in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Since every image has a different focus, each image implies a distinct central authority. Namely, the first image depicts the Red Star Line as the central authority, the second image the Canadian Railway, and the third image the Canadian Railway infrastructure. Thus, overall, the Red Star Line is depicted as the central authority at sea, the Canadian Railways as the central transportation method on land, and the farmer (previous Red Star Line passenger) as central authority after reaching the destination.</p>
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		<p>Manitoba. Since every image has a different focus, each image implies a distinct central authority. Namely, the first image depicts the Red Star Line as the central authority, the second image the Canadian Railway, and the third image the Canadian Railway infrastructure.</p>			
<i>Framing & layout</i>	<p>The main image of the brochure is a drawing of people in a smoking room depicted in grey. The rest of the brochure depicts a steam ship, a dolphin, and a star in orange. Because most of the accents are in bright orange, they both pop out. However, because the orange accents are positioned at the bottom of every page, they tend to move more to the background.</p>	<p>Only in the images on the first page are colors used. The colors in these images are light and correspond to the colors of these depictions in real life. All other images are depicted in grey tones. As a result, the images in color attract the most attention. On the second page the two images of the ships take up half the space on the page, demanding attention from the viewer. The images on the third page, consisting of the offboarding from a Red Star Line ship, a Canadian train, and a Canadian Railway station are positioned at the heading, relatively small compared to the rest of the page. Therefore, these images stand out the least.</p>	<p>The discourse presents itself as aspirational and factual. Namely, especially the cover page indicates that travel by Red Star Line ships is something that many people want (implied by the individuals who are walking towards the Red Star Line's ship en masse. The other images are represented as factual. While the cover image was sketched, the other images are photographs. They show the Red Star Line's exterior and interior as they are.</p>	<p>Only for the cover of the brochure is color used. The ship, in grey/brown tones, is depicted at the center of the image, surrounded by green sea. All other images in the brochure are in tones of grey/brown. Overall, the images make up the main part of the brochure as only little to no text is written at these pages. Therefore they attract central attention. Furthermore, the two images that depict individuals take up less space in both cases than images of the ship's interior.</p>	<p>3 out of the 6 images in the brochure are made in color. The brightest colors are used on the cover of the brochure, attracting the most attention. Then, the two depictions of the Red Star Line's ships on page two use a combination of mainly black and white for the ships, as compared to green/blue for the sky and sea, indicating the Red Star Line's dominance. The images on the third page, consisting of the offboarding from a Red Star Line ship, a Canadian train, and a Canadian Railway station are positioned at the heading, relatively small compared to the rest of the page, using tones of grey. Therefore, these images stand out the least.</p>

<i>Modality & realism</i>	<p>The discourse presents itself as idealized. Both the image that depicts the figures in the smoking room and the depictions of the boat, dolphin, and star, are idealized versions of reality. The smoking room does not show any sign of stress, worry, seasickness, or even a variety of emotions. Furthermore, the boat, dolphin, and star are simpler depictions of a real steamship, dolphin, and star.</p>	<p>The discourse presents itself as aspirational and idealized → The images on the first page of Canada's countryside depict clear blue skies and generally calm nature, while in reality Canada's nature can be really rough and cold. Furthermore, these images show Canada as a peaceful destination where you can relax and easily earn money, while in reality life in Canada was hard and migrants had to work long days to make ends meet. Similarly, the images of the Red Star Line's ships on the second page are depicted as a central authority at sea, offering a smooth transition to North America. However, in reality the sea is not always that calm and the journey knew many obstacles. Lastly, the images on the last page indicate that the journey to North America was straightforward and that good railway infrastructure would wait for them to transport them further inland. While this was true in some cases, many railway connections were still being built at the time and travel was not always that straightforward.</p>	<p>Only the cover of the brochure uses color, consisting of different shades of blue. While the Red Star Line's ship and the map of departure- and destination points in the background mostly consists of dark blue, the line of passengers in the forefront are generally depicted in light blue and white. All other images in the brochure are depicted in tones of grey, black, and white. However, they are all positioned on pages with little to no text, attracting the viewer's attention.</p>	<p>The discourse presents itself as factual and idealized. Namely, in every image, the sea and the sky appear to be calm, while in reality this is not generally the case. Furthermore, the sea and sky on the cover page are green, something that does not appear in reality. In addition, the images of the ships' interior do not show any people.</p>	<p>The discourse presents itself as aspirational and idealized. In particular, the cover of the brochure shows a serene Canadian landscape in the middle of nowhere but still with really good railway connections. This is the dream for many migrants to have fruitful land to live an easy life. However, this was almost never the case in real life. Furthermore, the blue skies and calm seas depicted in the images on the second page suggest that travel with the Red Star Line was smooth, but this was also almost never the complete reality. Lastly, the images on the last page indicate that the journey to North America was straightforward and that good railway infrastructure would wait for them to transport them further inland. While this was true in some cases, many railway connections were still being built at the time and travel was not always that straightforward.</p>
<i>Symbolism & semiotics</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The steamship portrays modernity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The steamship portrays modernity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The blue color used on the cover 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The color green symbolizes growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The steamship portrays modernity

	<p>and speed, a vehicle of transformation to a better future.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The dolphin stands for peace and balance, symbolizing freedom. - The star represents the Red Star Line company. - The color orange stands for optimism and enthusiasm. 	<p>and speed, a vehicle of transformation to a better future.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The red star represents the Red Star Line company. - The train represents progress and interconnectedness - The sheep represent innocence and reliance. - The canoe stands for tradition and community. 	<p>pages represents calmness and stability.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The steamship portrays modernity and speed, a vehicle of transformation to a better future. - The typography ornament represents respectability to convey reliability. 	<p>and renewal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The steamship portrays modernity and speed, a vehicle of transformation to a better future. 	<p>and speed, a vehicle of transformation to a better future.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The train represents progress and interconnectedness - The cows represent fertility and prosperity.
<i>Omissions & silences</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The images do not indicate the destination of the Red Star Line ships. - It does not show any cultural differences. - No general hardships are depicted. - Color red. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No general hardships are depicted. - While a lot of transportation possibilities are depicted, no map is shown. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It does not show any cultural differences. - No general hardships are depicted. - Color red. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It does not show any cultural differences. - No general hardships are depicted. - It does not show anything of the departure or destination - Color red. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It does not show any cultural differences. - No general hardships are depicted.
<i>Function/purpose</i>	<p>Intended audience: potential 3rd-class passengers of the Red Star Line.</p> <p>Purpose: demonstrate that a journey with the Red Star Line offers freedom, leisure time, and a smooth transition.</p>	<p>Intended audience: potential 3rd-class passengers/migrants of the Red Star Line who want to settle in Canada. Migrants who want to work in Canada's agriculture.</p> <p>Purpose: demonstrate that a</p>	<p>Intended audience: potential 3rd-class passengers/tourists of the Red Star Line.</p> <p>Purpose: demonstrate that the Red Star Line's services are desirable.</p>	<p>Intended audience: potential 3rd-class passengers of the Red Star Line.</p> <p>Purpose: demonstrate the Red Star Line's prominence and services.</p>	<p>Intended audience: potential 3rd-class passengers/migrants of the Red Star Line who want to settle in Canada. Migrants who want to work in Canada's agriculture.</p> <p>Purpose: demonstrate that a</p>

		smooth journey with the Red Star Line leads to a peaceful life in Canada.			smooth journey with the Red Star Line leads to a peaceful life in Canada.
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2.2 Visual Analysis English-Language Brochures

IMAGES (BROCHURES) EN	Red Star Line: Cabin Service (1930)	Red Star Line: First Class Tariff (1923)	Comfort Cabin Service: Red Star Line	Red Star Line: New York and Antwerp	Red Star Line: From New York and Philadelphia to Antwerp
<i>Lexical choices</i>	“Red Star Line,” “LAPLAND,” “ARABIC,” “Pennland” → no specific connotations, all words used in the images refer to either the Red Star Line itself or the names of the Red Star Line ships.	None of the images include slogans or text.	“New York, Antwerp,” “Red Star Line,” “Antwerp the Gateway to Europe” → the slogan “Antwerp the Gateway to Europe” suggests that Antwerp is the main port of Europe, serving as a central point of departure to explore Europe.	“Antwerp and its Rail Road Connections,” “New York and Antwerp” → No connotation.	“Westernland” → No connotation, the name of a Red Star Line ship.
<i>Naming & categorization</i>	The brochures show many figures. - The first image (on the cover page) depicts three individuals, a man and a woman who are boarding a Red Star Line ship and one of the crew members who is waiting to welcome them onboard. The man and woman are not facing the viewer and their facial expressions are not readable. While the crew member is facing the viewer, his facial expression is also unreadable. The woman is wearing a long coat with fur, the man is	Only the cover pages depict individuals. In this image, two men are depicted facing away from the viewer looking towards a Red Star Line ship. Their appearance suggests that they are two seamen as they are both smoking a pipe and have a beard. Their facial expressions are unreadable, but one of the men is lifting his arm as if he is welcoming the Red Star Line ship.	Only eight out of twentyseven images include individuals. - Page seven entails three images that depict individuals. However, in all of these images, the individuals are depicted very small and their facial expressions and postures are unreadable. - Page nine depicts two images which portray individuals. The image in the top left corner depicts two men, both wearing suits, sitting on a couch. Their postures are relaxed and they appear to be talking or	Only one out of the two images in the brochure depicts individuals. The image on the cover of the brochure depicts a man dressed in sailor clothes. On his shirt, a red star and the text Red Star are depicted. He has a beard and his facial expression suggests that he is looking into the distance, thinking.	Only one out of the two images in the brochure depict individuals. The image shows forty-eight individuals, of which twelve are standing on a Red Star Line ship and the rest are standing at the side of the ship. None of their facial expressions are visible as they are all depicted very small. They are wearing colorful clothing and are a mix of upper/middle-class and lower class. The people at the side of the ship are looking at the ship and some are pointing to it. The ship is on dry land and the scaffoldings suggest that it is still under construction.

	wearing blue trousers and jacket, and the crew member is wearing a seaman's uniform. - The image on the third page depicts four individuals. A man and two women sitting on chairs on the deck, and one man who is covering the women with a blanket. The postures of the man and women on the deck seem relaxed and their facial expressions are neutral. The man is wearing a suit and the two women are wearing fur coats and one of them is wearing gloves. The man who is covering them is wearing a suit and he is faced towards the two women so his facial expression is only partly visible, but he seems to be smiling. - One of the images on page five shows two women sitting on chairs in what		laughing. While the man on the left's facial expression looks neutral, the man on the right seems to be happy. The second image, positioned in the top right corner, portrays two individuals. Their clothing, white clothes with a white hat, and surroundings suggest that they are both part of the ship's kitchen crew. One is stirring, while the other one is grilling. Their facial expressions seem neutral. - Page ten includes three images that portray individuals. The first image in the top left corner depicts a man. His clothes and surroundings suggest that he is part of the ship's kitchen crew as he is wearing white clothes with a chef's hat and he is making a pizza. He is not facing the		
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	<p>seems to be one of the ship's cabins. They are both wearing long dresses and heels. Their postures seem relaxed, but their facial expressions are not readable as they are not facing the viewer directly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One of the images on page 6 depicts three individuals. They seem to be part of the ship's kitchen crew as they are all wearing white hats and chef's clothing, and they are stirring food. They are not facing the viewer directly, but their facial expressions seem neutral. - Page eight shows four separate images, each depicting individuals. The first image in the left corner shows the ship's deck with around 16 individuals, none of their facial expressions are readable but their postures seem 		<p>viewer and his facial expression is only partly visible, but seems to be neutral. The second image, in the top right corner depicts a man and woman sitting at a dining table. The man is wearing a suit and the woman appears to be wearing a jacket. They are not facing the viewer and their facial expression seems to be neutral. Lastly, the image in the bottom right corner depicts three women and a man. The man is wearing a suit and is serving the women tea. His facial expression is only partly visible, but seems to be neutral. The women are wearing casual clothing. Their postures are relaxed and their facial expressions either neutral or happy.</p>		
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	<p>relaxed. Some men are wearing suits. The second image, in the right corner, depicts two women playing a game on deck. They are facing each other, and only one facial expression is visible (neutral). Their postures seem relaxed and their clothing is casual, consisting of a knee-high skirt and T-shirt. The third image forms the page's background. Two individuals are depicted in this image separately, a woman and a man. The woman is holding a stick as if she is playing a game on deck, she is partly facing the viewer, and her facial expression is neutral. The man is holding the same sort of stick, but he is only partly visible and his facial expression seems happy. Lastly, in the bottom right corner, the fourth</p>				
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	<p>image depicts three individuals. No facial expressions are visible as only their figures are visible. Their posture suggests that they are playing a game on deck.</p> <p>- Page nine depicts three images with individuals. The image in the top right corner depicts ten individuals. The facial expressions of only three of them are visible (neutral). Six individuals are sitting on benches on deck. All individuals are men, but five of them seem to be children. One of the children is swinging on the swing. Their clothing seems casual. The image on the bottom left corner depicts three individuals, all men. They all seem to be part of the ship's crew as they are wearing seaman's clothes</p>				
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	<p>and two of them are using a measuring instrument. Only one of the individuals' facial expressions is visible (neutral). Lastly, the background portrays three individuals on deck playing a game as they are all holding sticks. Only two of them are completely visible and their facial expressions seem happy.</p> <p>- Page ten depicts 5 images with individuals. The first image, in the top right corner, depicts ten individuals. Three, consisting of a man and two women, are sitting on chairs on deck. Their facial expressions are neutral, the women are wearing hats and long coats and the man is wearing a suit. The other individuals are playing instruments, suggesting that</p>				
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	<p>they are part of the ship's musical crew. Their facial expressions seem neutral. The second image, in the middle of the page, shows five individuals, two men and three women, sitting in the ship's reading room. Only three of their facial expressions are visible (neutral), but all their postures seem relaxed. The men are wearing suits and the women are wearing long dresses. The background image of page ten depicts seven individuals, of which five men and two women. One man is playing an instrument, two men are having a conversation (one sitting in a chair and one standing across from him), a man and woman are having a conversation, facing each other, and the last man and woman seem</p>				
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	<p>to be dancing. All their postures seem relaxed and their facial expressions neutral. The men are wearing suits and one of the women is wearing a long fur coat and the other is wearing a knee-length dress. Lastly, at the bottom of the page sixteen individuals are depicted, all dancing. Their facial expressions are not visible as only their figures are visible.</p> <p>- Page eleven depicts four individuals, consisting of one man and three women. A man and women are getting ready, indicated by the man fixing his tie and the women putting on makeup. The other two women are dressed in maid's clothes, facing the man and woman.</p> <p>- Finally, page eleven shows four images with individuals. The</p>				
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	<p>first image in the top left corner depicts two men in a barber shop, one being the barber and one being the customer. Only the facial expression of the barber is visible, looking concentrated. The background image depicts eight individuals, of which four are women and four are men. Six of them are exercising, practicing a sport: two men are boxing, one man is weightlifting, a man and woman are fencing, and a woman is indoor cycling. None of their facial expressions are visible. The other two women are behind a make-up table, one sitting directly behind it and the other working on the woman's hair. Lastly, the two images at the bottom of the page depict thirteen individuals, all</p>				
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	<p>exercising what seems to be gymnastics. Their facial expressions are not visible as only their figures are visible.</p>				
<i>Visual/spatial hierarchy</i>	<p>In all images, the Red Star Line seems to be the central authority, providing service to its passengers. The ships of the Red Star Line, either their interior or exterior, take central stage in all images. However, the passengers do seem to have a lot of freedom and possibilities onboard the Red Star Line ships, as they are often positioned in the foreground, practicing different kinds of leisure activities.</p>	<p>In all images in the brochure is the Red Star Line clearly the central authoritative figure. Namely, both images in the brochure centralize a Red Star Line ship. In both images, smaller ships are depicted next to the Red Star Line ship, highlighting the superiority of the Red Star Line.</p>	<p>Overall, the Red Star Line is depicted as the central authoritative figure in the images included in the brochure. Almost all images depict either the interior or exterior of the Red Star Line ships. Furthermore, when individuals are depicted in the images, the service of the Red Star Line is centralized.</p>	<p>The Red Star Line appears as the authoritative figure in this brochure as the red star, symbolizing the Red Star Line company, appears five times in the brochure. Furthermore, the image on the cover of the brochure centralizes the Red Star Line ships and the red star. The image that depicts the map highlights Antwerp as the main focuspoint.</p>	<p>The Red Star Line company is clearly portrayed as the central authoritative figure. Namely, all images depict/centralize a red star, symbolizing the Red Star Line company. Furthermore, the people depicted in the back-cover image are looking and pointing at the Red Star Line ship that makes up most of the image.</p>
<i>Framing & layout</i>	<p>Throughout the whole brochure, mostly the color orange is used to accentuate. The images themselves are mostly depicted in grey tones, except the cover page and the ending page. Furthermore, a recurrent color is red, used in nine out of sixteen pages, to depict a red star within a white flag, referring to the Red Star Line company. Additionally, the Red Star Line ships are being foregrounded as every image depicts either the interior or exterior of the Red Star Line ships.</p>	<p>Only for the cover of the brochure is color used. The overarching color used in the image is purple. Furthermore, the colors black, red, orange, and yellow are depicted. The second image of the brochure is depicted in tones of grey. It is positioned directly under the page's headline, surrounded by text.</p>	<p>All images in the brochure are depicted in tones of grey except for the cover image which has accents of red. Throughout the entire brochure, the color red is used to accentuate. The images in the brochures take up most of the space, foregrounding the interior and exterior of the Red Star Line ships, its service, and Belgian cities.</p>	<p>A mix of colors are used in this brochure, however, the color red attracts most attention and is most common as it is also used throughout the brochure to accentuate. The red star and the sailor are being foregrounded while the Red Star Line's ships are, while centralized, slightly moved to the background. Furthermore, Antwerp is centralized.</p>	<p>The color red is used to accentuate throughout the entire brochure. The image on the cover page centralizes a red star, with underneath an American flag and a Belgian flag, highlighting that the Red Star Line is a joint venture and highlighting the two destination/departure points of the Red Star Line. The image on the back-cover foregrounds the Red Star Line ship, the Belgian flag, and the public. A mixture of colors are used in this image.</p>

<i>Modality & realism</i>	The discourse presents itself as idealized and aspirational. The individuals depicted in the brochure are simplified versions of reality, never looking frustrated or unhappy. Additionally, the background images are simplified versions of reality, lacking detail. Also, the sky on the cover page is depicted in orange, not true to reality. Because of the relaxed and serene landscapes in the images, the brochures' images portray an aspirational atmosphere.	The discourse presents itself as idealized and aspirational. Namely, on the cover page, two men seem to welcome the Red Star Line ship. Furthermore, the images are idealized as the Red Star Line ships are positioned in calm waters and clear skies. However, in reality, the transatlantic journey was not always as smooth.	The discourse presents itself as idealized and aspirational. The images portray an idealized version of reality as images that portray Red Star Line ships are depicted in calm waters and clear skies, and the interior of the ships look serene and calm while in reality they were often completely filled with people. The luxury and services depicted in the images suggest that traveling with the Red Star Line is something to aspire to. Furthermore, the images of Belgian cities like Antwerp and Brussels, indicated that it is/should be one's aspiration to visit Europe.	The discourse presents itself as aspirational and idealized. The red star, symbolizing the Red Star Line company, seems to be 'shining' as it is surrounded by light yellow. In addition, the sailor looks like he is dreaming, aspiring to travel by Red Star Line ships. The setting is idealized as it shows a clear blue sky and sea, while this was not always the case. Furthermore, the map that depicts Antwerp's railway connections is a simplified version of reality.	The discourse presents itself as aspirational. The image on the cover page suggests that the red star depicted in the image is radiating. Furthermore, the image on the back-cover in which a group of people is looking at the ship and pointing, suggests that they are in awe of the ship and want to go onboard.
<i>Symbolism & semiotics</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - White flag with red star → referring to the Red Star Line company. - Statue of Liberty → referring to freedom, democracy, and American ideals. - Steamship → symbolizing modernity and speed, a vehicle of transformation to a better future. - Sailing ship → symbolizing exploration and adventure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Steamship → portrays modernity and speed, a vehicle of transformation to a better future. - Red star → symbolizes the Red Star Line company. - Purple → symbolizes luxury, royalty, and power. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Steamship → portrays modernity and speed, a vehicle of transformation to a better future. - The color red → might refer to the Red Star Line company, but also symbolizes strong emotions such as passion but also danger or sacrifice. - Seahorse → associated with good luck, persistence, and protection. 	Red star → referring to the Red Star Line company. Seahorse → refers to the ocean, often representing love and fertility. Sailing ships → symbolizing exploration and adventure. The color red → might refer to the Red Star Line company, but also symbolizes strong emotions such as passion but also danger or sacrifice.	Steamship → portrays modernity and speed, a vehicle of transformation to a better future. Red star → referring to the Red Star Line company. Anchors → symbolizes hope. Belgian flag → stands for Belgium, symbolizing national unity. American flag → stands for the United States of America, symbol of freedom.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Birds → freedom, hope, and new beginnings. - Train → represents progress and interconnectedness - Color orange → stands for optimism and enthusiasm. 				
<i>Omissions & silences</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The images do not indicate the destinations of the Red Star Line ships. - No cultural differences are depicted. - No general hardships are depicted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No indication of the destination of the Red Star Line. - No cultural differences. - No passengers are depicted. - No general hardships or obstacles. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No indication of any hardships or obstacles. - No cultural differences are depicted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No indication of any hardships or obstacles. - No cultural differences are depicted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No indication of any hardships or obstacles.
<i>Function/purpose</i>	<p>Intended audience: potential middle- to upper-class passengers.</p> <p>Purpose: showcase different kinds of leisure activities onboard the Red Star Line ships and portray the Red Star Line as a luxurious means of travel.</p>	<p>Intended audience: potential Red Star Line passengers.</p> <p>Purpose: to indicate the Red Star Line's superiority at sea.</p>	<p>Intended audience: potential middle- to first-class passengers who want to explore Europe.</p> <p>Purpose: demonstrate the Red Star Line's services and portray the Red Star Line as 'the way' to explore Europe.</p>	<p>Intended audience: potential Red Star Line passengers.</p> <p>Purpose: present the Red Star Line as a desirable mode of travel.</p>	<p>Intended audience: potential Red Star Line passengers.</p> <p>Purpose: highlight the Red Star Line's superiority.</p>