

SENSITIVE HISTORY UNDER NEGOTIATION  
PUPILS' HISTORICAL IMAGINATION AND ATTRIBUTION OF SIGNIFICANCE  
WHILE ENGAGED IN HERITAGE PROJECTS

## Colophon

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Sensitive History under Negotiation  
Pupils' historical imagination and attribution of significance while engaged in  
heritage projects

Onderhandelen over gevoelige geschiedenis  
Hoe leerlingen het verleden verbeelden en betekenis geven tijdens erfgoedprojecten

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Over the last decade, interest in cultural heritage and cultural identity has grown rapidly throughout the Western world. Since the early 1990s, it has become increasingly popular to experience and relive the past. Technological developments, such as television, the internet and digitised archives, have facilitated access to the past and to history for a wider public, encouraging such phenomena as genealogy and studies of local history. These developments allow individuals to engage with the past in a more direct manner (De Groot, 2009). In the Netherlands, these interests have generated, among other things, an increasing number of heritage institutions and educational activities related to heritage. Heritage institutions have developed a wide variety of projects and activities for leisure time (Hagenaars, 2008). Encouraged by the Dutch government, these institutions have also created a network of collaborations with schools (Hageman, 2009). Heritage projects are integrated into art, geography and history classes (De Troyer & Vermeersch, 2005; Van der Kooij, 2006). With regard to history education, heritage projects are often designed to connect the past, present and future and to give pupils a vivid image of the past. This dissertation focuses on the learning of history within the context of heritage projects.

Scholars have noted that heritage implies a particular engagement with the past that is often motivated by intentions for the future (Lowenthal, 1998; M. Philips, 2004; Smith, 2006). The construction and justification of identities play an important part in this process. Claims to heritage may lead to exclusion and the loss of multiple perspectives on the meaning and significance of the heritage (Van Boxtel, 2010b; Waterton & Smith, 2010). Pupils enter a learning process with images of the past and its heritage in relation to themselves and their present life. These images and pupils' understandings of the significance of a particular history and heritage may differ, especially within diverse urban classrooms (Barton & McCully, 2005; Epstein, 1998; Grever, Pelzer, & Haydn, 2011; Lévesque, 2005a; Peck, 2010; Seixas, 1993). In particular, pupils in urban classrooms may bring with them a diverse set of images and understandings of the significance of sensitive heritages. Will this diversity lead to a negotiation of multiple perspectives on a particular history and heritage and their significance?

These issues of identity and exclusion and the ‘heritage experience’ suggest that a theory of the role of heritage in education is indispensable. Particularly when heritage is presented to pupils, one should be aware of the processes involved in the selection of heritage and the multiple uses to which heritage can be applied. However, there is a long tradition of presenting heritage in history classes in Dutch education that pre-dates the debates regarding heritage. These practices can be seen as standing apart from the questions that arise regarding the constraints of making heritage a part of education. Furthermore, there has been little empirical investigation of the learning processes used by pupils when they engage in heritage projects (Hagenaars, 2008; Van Boxtel, 2009b); thus, little is known about these processes (Hoogeveen & Oomen, 2009). It is important to study the existing practices to discover their weaknesses and strengths.

This study was performed to explore the processes of learning history that occur as pupils in secondary school work on heritage projects that include visits to museums or monuments. With this empirical exploration, this study adds depth to the debate regarding the benefits and constraints of heritage projects related to the school history curriculum and may help to improve educational practice. This study was also designed to contribute to knowledge of history education by revealing the relevance of particular theoretical constructs, such as historical imagination and historical significance, to study history learning within the context of heritage projects. In addition, this study contributes to this field of research through the instruments used to examine the processes of history learning in a learning environment outside the classroom. These instruments may be used as a starting point for further empirical research into these contexts. I focus on two elements of history learning: pupils’ imagination of a particular history and heritage and their understandings of the significance of this history and heritage. For both aspects, I consider pupils’ acknowledgement of multiple perspectives and their ability to adopt different perspectives. As I will elaborate in the next sections, I expect that pupils’ historical imagination and their understandings of significance may be addressed when heritage is included in teaching. In addition, these two elements of history learning are important issues in learning about the sensitive historical topics that are the focus of my study. To explore how pupils in Dutch urban classrooms learn about sensitive historical topics while engaging in heritage projects in secondary school, I conducted two case studies. The first case study focuses on a heritage project concerning slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. The second case study focuses on a heritage project involving the Second World War (WWII).

In the first section of this chapter, I will elaborate on the concept of heritage in relation to the learning of history, focusing on issues of continuity, identity and experience. Further, I will explain what I mean by sensitive history and present the topics of my two case studies. I will also briefly describe the practice of ‘heritage education’ in the Netherlands. In the second section of this chapter, I will introduce the main research question of this study and the primary concepts of analysis: historical imagination,

historical significance and multiperspectivity. Lastly, I will present the outline of the dissertation.

## 1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### *1.1 Learning about Heritage and History*

The term ‘heritage’ has had different meanings throughout time and in various languages (Grijzenhout, 2007). In this study, the word ‘heritage’ refers to traces of the past that are considered valuable in the present and for the future by a particular group of people. The distinction between traces and heritage emphasises the dynamic character of heritage, as will be discussed in the next section. The pupils in my case studies may not necessarily consider the particular historical traces presented in the heritage projects to be heritage. I use the term ‘traces’ in a broad sense, referring to ‘the physical survivals of the past and to the non-institutionalised and less tangible’ (Hamer, 2005, p. 159). Although I make a distinction between material and immaterial traces and heritage, this division must not be interpreted as a sharp contrast. Immaterial heritage is often passed down to future generations through a material object or in a material form, whereas material heritage is recognised as heritage when it is perceived as expressing the values of current societies or communities. It is only through immaterial meanings that material heritage can be interpreted and understood (Munjeri, 2004). Examples of material heritage are paintings, documents, clothes, jewellery, edifices and monuments. Immaterial heritage includes languages, stories, traditions, religions, music, values and ideas. In addition to this differentiation between material and immaterial heritage, a geographical distinction is made between local, regional, national and international heritage. In some cases, world heritage is also considered a category, as demonstrated by the UNESCO World Heritage List.

The collection and preservation of that which no longer reproduces itself in reality became increasingly popular in the late nineteenth century and expanded considerably from the 1950s onward. In addition to the conservation of objects in museums and archives, this ‘musealisation’ included the preservation of monuments, cityscapes, landscapes, traditions and folklore (De Jong, 2001). The creation of sites of remembrance, as extensively reviewed by Pierre Nora *et al.* (1984-1992), was also part of this trend of musealisation. In historiography, attention shifted to the everyday appearances of engagement with the past, such as the history of museums and collective sites of remembrance in the 1980s (Grever, 2001). Along with the formation of a European community and unity, a search began for a common cultural heritage, which had to be carefully protected and preserved (Grijzenhout, 2007). Through this preservation of the past, the past was recreated as well, as described by Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) with their concept of the ‘invention of tradition’. Intensified by the increasing use and reach of the mass media, history and heritage have gradually regained a place in politics, public debate and leisure time during recent decades (De Groot, 2009). In many countries, there is also a renewed interest in the ways pupils are taught

history and heritage. In the Netherlands, methods of teaching history were debated as a result of, among other things, the presentation of the canon of Dutch history in history education in primary and secondary schools in 2006 (e.g., Ribbens, 2007). The use of this canon as a basis for illustrating the chronological timeframe of ten eras (the primary subject material) was declared obligatory by the ministry in 2010 (Staatsblad 37, 2010; Van Oostrom, 2008).

This dissertation is situated in an overlap between these various fields of study, including history, heritage, history education and 'heritage education'. Although these are considered different disciplines, there is a great deal of overlap between these fields, and it is often difficult to make clear distinctions. Since the late 1990s, heritage studies has been growing rapidly as an independent field of study (Sørensen & Carman, 2009). Substantial contributions have been made to the concept of heritage and to the specific engagement with the past that is characteristic of a 'heritage approach' to the past (Smith, 2006). There are currently so many definitions of heritage that it is difficult to use the term precisely in discourse. Furthermore, researchers hold various positions regarding the extent to which heritage and history are distinct concepts (Jonker, 2008; M. Philips, 2004; Van Nieuwenhuysse & Wils, 2012). Although remarks on the differences between history and heritage in the engagement with the past are useful, they should not obscure the similarities. In both history and heritage, more or less critical stances towards the past can be adopted. Various authors stress that acknowledgement and investigation of the wide range of distances that are constructed in various historical practices are particularly valuable during a time in which historians increasingly focus on the intimate or everyday experience (Grever, 2013; M. Philips, 2004; Van Nieuwenhuysse & Wils, 2012).

The discussion of the differences and similarities between history and heritage is central to the debate regarding the constraints and benefits of heritage projects in history education. However, a direct transfer of the issues of discussion is impossible. History education and heritage education are, in many ways, very different from the historical discipline and heritage studies (Jonker, 2012). Nevertheless, tensions between historical and heritage approaches to the past may play a role when teaching history in heritage projects. This tension may be particularly evident in the Netherlands, where history education has been oriented towards the historical discipline since the late 1980s (Van Boxtel & Grever, 2011). Based on the history curriculum, the learning of history is understood as (1) building a framework of knowledge that enables pupils to orient in time and (2) appropriating certain historical thinking skills, comparable to the second-order concepts described by Lévesque (2008) or the historical thinking concepts described by Seixas (2008) and Seixas and Morton (2012). Pupils are taught to adopt a critical stance towards the past and to use skills that are characteristic of historians when studying the past. In general, teaching these skills and attitudes is not the primary objective of heritage projects in the Netherlands. In these educational practices, a heritage approach to the past often means emphasising the value of historical traces for 'our' interests in the present and the future with reference to a

particular local, regional, national or even global identity (see, for example, De Troyer & Vermeersch, 2005).<sup>1</sup>

However, the distinction between heritage education and history education is also an artificial one. Issues in heritage education are addressed in the field of history education and vice versa. As discussed by Van Nieuwenhuysse and Wils (2012) and by Wils and Verschaffel (2012), the tensions between heritage education and history education also exist within the practice of history teaching. In certain countries, there is no distinction between history education and heritage education, although there is often discussion in some form about different approaches to the past. What is called ‘heritage education’ in the Netherlands is similar to the way this teaching approach is described in Flanders. In Flanders, the position of heritage education in relation to history education has been examined by Wils (2010) and by Nieuwenhuysse and Wils (2012). These authors have also discussed heritage education in relation to the newly created field of ‘remembrance education’, which focuses on the ‘dark chapters’ of the past, such as examples of intolerance and racism, to learn from them for the benefit of the present and the future (Van Nieuwenhuysse & Wils, 2012). In the United States, Hunter (1993) described the practice of heritage education using the following criteria: (1) it focuses pupils’ attention on the evidence of history and culture around them; (2) it stimulates active exploration of this evidence; and (3) through understanding, it is intended to motivate pupils to protect this evidence (see also Patrick & National Trust for Historic Preservation in the United States, 1992). VanSledright (2008) criticised heritage education in the United States for promoting a glorious version of the history of the United States instead of teaching historical thinking and connecting to pupils’ own histories. Furthermore, he argued that in the United States, history education itself is often more like heritage consumption and collective memory. However, Lambert (1996) considered heritage education a teaching approach that may enable pupils to personally engage with the history of the United States by studying the historical traces of the past. In the United Kingdom, heritage education has been a distinct educational subject for several decades (e.g., Dyer, 1986), although its position with regard to history education is also discussed there (Hamer, 2005). In Germany, heritage education is not necessarily considered a distinct subject; rather, it is integrated with the history curriculum or the geography curriculum. For example, the use of historical traces in museums is discussed within the context of stimulating historical thinking (e.g., Popp & Schonemann, 2009).

It is problematic that in educational practice, teachers and educators may unconsciously adopt a ‘heritage approach’ to the past, simultaneously seeking to teach a ‘disciplinary history approach’. I will elaborate on issues regarding the engagement with the past in a heritage approach that are relevant to understanding the debate surrounding the

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<sup>1</sup> For a qualitative analysis of several heritage projects related to the history of slavery and the Second World War in the Netherlands, see also De Bruijn (2014).

constraints and benefits of incorporating heritage in history education. Drawing from the literature in history theory, heritage studies, museum education and history education, I discuss the ways that people use heritage to establish the continuity of identities over time and what it would mean to adopt a dynamic approach to heritage. Then, I consider the idea that heritage enables direct contact with the past. Lastly, I describe the field of heritage education in the Netherlands.

### *1.2 Continuity between Past, Present and Future*

The past, present and future are strongly related in people's engagement with the past. Historians attempt to establish continuity between 'virtually non-contiguous points in time' by mental integration or 'mnemonic pasting' (Zerubavel, 2003, p. 40). Continuity is grounded in a certain place or time (such as anniversaries) by drawing historical analogies or, in a more complex manner, by creating a timeline or biography. In 'declaring' certain traces of the past to be heritage, the present evaluation is leading. One of the primary concerns in engagement with the past from a heritage approach is the representation of identity (Lowenthal, 1995). A heritage is claimed that seems to fit a particular identity image (Frijhoff, 2007). Searching for the origin of an identity in cultural forms and artefacts helps to articulate that identity. In addition, 'deep' historical roots strengthen identity and provide legitimacy (Zerubavel, 2003). In this way, heritage, as a reservoir and as praxis, provides continuity to identities and cultures. Continuity is established through the past, present and future (M. Philips, 2004). Objects and practices that are highly valued in the present need to be safeguarded for the future and passed on from one generation to the next (Frijhoff, 2007). However, although heritage reminds us of a past that we would like to keep alive, the very fact that we need to preserve it tells us that this past is gone (Grijzenhout, 2007). To overcome this paradox and to maintain the idea of continuity, heritage is constantly reshaped to allow its integration into the present culture. Heritage upgrades history to sustain or create its significance in the present and the future (Lowenthal, 1998).

Engagement with the past in which the past is subordinate to the present and future has been called the practical past, as distinct from the historical past, by the philosopher Oakeshott (1983). The practical past serves in practical discourse and is valuable in current practical engagements, such as politics and religion. A similar distinction is made by Nora (1984), who uses the concepts of *histoire* and *mémoire*. However, for Nora, memory serves not only politics and religion but also culture and society. The practical use of this approach to the past has been further theorised by Lowenthal (1998) using the concept of fabricating heritage. He stresses that heritage is a timeless fabric of a selected and modified past. As such, this approach to the past does not do justice to the complexity of historical reality and disregards the multiple perspectives that can be adopted towards the past (Novick, 2000). Further, practical engagement with the past is often accompanied by claims to a certain heritage and its related past. To access the past, one needs to control entrance to it

(Tollebeek & Verschaffel, 1992), and heritage can serve as such an entrance. Arrogating a particular heritage implicitly means claiming the related history for one's own, drafting a link between this past and one's identity. While national borders are fading in the globalising world, battles are fought over the ownership of specific heritages by various countries (Grijzenhout, 2007; Hobsbawm, 1997). Within national borders, there are also rivalries over heritage between regions or between cultural or ethnic groups within society. For example, an intense debate accompanied the unveiling of the National Slavery Monument in Amsterdam. The local Antillean and Surinamese communities felt that the Dutch government claimed the heritage of slavery by excluding many people from the official opening ('Chaos at the Unveiling of the Slavery Monument', 2002). Interestingly, this example also demonstrates that even an unwanted past can become heritage (Ashworth, 1998). From this perspective, the National Slavery Monument represents an image of the Dutch nation that, after silencing the history of slavery for several centuries, now acknowledges this history.

The claiming of heritage implies a static and uniform notion of heritage and of identity. However, there are often multiple narratives regarding a community's identity, history and heritage. Within the context of heritage, these narratives can be 'dissonant', in the words of Tunbridge and Ashworth (1996). These authors see a dissonance between the notion of heritage held by particular individuals or groups in contemporary multicultural European societies and the official, often national, notion. Conflicts can arise from contrasting values, as reflected in a specific definition of heritage, and from the aims and uses of a particular heritage (Tunbridge, 1998). Because heritage is given significance in the present, its meaning and those who assign it meaning change frequently depending on the setting in which it is used (Ashworth, 1998). The Anne Frank House, for example, can be understood as part of the local heritage of Amsterdam as a symbol of the hiding of Jews in the city during the years of German occupation. Nationally, Anne Frank herself is one of the fifty icons of the previously mentioned canon of Dutch history; her life represents the persecution of Jews in the Netherlands. Internationally, millions of visitors from all over the world have come to see the original diary of Anne Frank and the place where she and her family hid for several years. In this context, Anne Frank can be thought of as part of a world history in which WWII is one chapter.

In this study, both heritage and identity are understood as dynamic, emphasising their changing and layered characters (Grever, De Bruijn & Van Boxtel, 2012; Van Boxtel, Savenije, & Grever, submitted). A dynamic approach to heritage focuses on the production of heritage instead of the objects of heritage (Frijhoff, 2007). The process of selecting an object as heritage and what this decision indicates regarding the choosing actor are the important elements. This meta-perspective implies an awareness of the multiple perspectives and the changing character of the process of constructing heritage (Lowenthal, 1998; Smith, 2006). The focus on processes of construction also works for the notion of identity, making it less essentialist and more inclusive (Frijhoff, 2007). Identity can be

perceived as a complex whole of various dimensions of identity that makes an individual unique but still recognisable to others. Thus, the debate over national identity and heritage may focus on the continuing process of identification with the Netherlands and the selection of the valuable aspects of heritage that are related to that process (WRR, 2007; Grever & Ribbens, 2007).

A present-oriented approach to the past in heritage projects may be at odds with a more detached and neutral attitude in history education (Grever, De Bruijn, & Van Boxtel, 2012). This approach may frustrate the development of critical minds and historical reasoning (Seixas, 2013; Van Boxtel, 2009b; VanSledright, 2013). Furthermore, knowledge of and engagement with heritage differ from pupil to pupil. In urban classrooms in particular, the significance of a particular heritage can become a point of discussion. Heritage projects that focus on the dominant culture in a society may not be engaging for the entire class. However, heritage projects may offer necessary engagement in a culturally diverse community. Pupils are often motivated by the fact that they are discussing matters that are considered valuable in the community in which they live (Hamer, 2005). In addition, explicitly denoting historical traces as heritage may enable critical reflection on what heritage is, why particular traces are preserved and by whom (Grever *et al.*, 2012; Seixas & Clark, 2004). By investigating their local environment, pupils gain an understanding of their past. According to Van der Kaaij (2000), this understanding is a precondition for finding connections to the cultural backgrounds of others. Heritage may help to stimulate conversation regarding one's own history and the history that is shared with others (Huysmans & De Haan, 2007). Many cultural institutions state that it is important to increase cultural diversity in their exhibits, collections and visiting public (Hagenaars, 2008; Stroeker, 2007). A survey of EUROCLIO in 2004 indicated that a majority of European history and heritage educators wished for a greater multicultural component in their teaching (Van Wijk, 2005). Nevertheless, around the time I started my research project in 2009, half of Dutch cultural institutions believed that establishing a multicultural context was not a specific objective of their policies, and one-third did not take any action to promote cultural diversity (Stroeker, 2007). The educational projects of Dutch cultural institutions barely concentrated on immigrants (Hagenaars, 2008). Furthermore, the heritage collections of most of these institutions did not reflect cultural diversity. A majority of the institutions had not been offered materials related to immigrant heritage to include in their collections, despite the project *Cultureel Erfgoed Minderheden* (Cultural Heritage of Minority groups) coordinated by the *Nederlandse Museumvereniging* (Dutch Museum Association) to create an inventory of immigrant heritage (Ribbens, 2006). Over the last few years, several initiatives in the larger Dutch cities have sought to present a more diverse image of each city's heritage by including the heritage of the city's immigrants (e.g., Stadsarchief Amsterdam, n.d.; Museum Rotterdam, n.d.; Haags Historisch Museum, n.d.).

### *1.3 Direct Contact with the Past*

The previous section discusses the ways in which heritage is used to form a concept of continuity between the past, present and future. This feeling of continuity is strengthened by the sense of direct contact with the past that heritage stimulates. Heritage can evoke the past so vividly that it is nearly as if the past and the present exist simultaneously, thus establishing a strong feeling of continuity through time. This experience, which is created by heritage in interaction with the spectator, is an important motivation for the incorporation of heritage in education. This experience, however, appears to be difficult to convey with words.

In several texts, Huizinga (1929; 1948) referred to a historical sensation as a highly substantial element of historical consciousness. This sensation of the past, he said, can be evoked by a specific historical object, such as a painting or an old song, and is accompanied by a strong sense of verity. This experience is not one of reliving the past but of understanding it for a brief moment; it is to enter a sphere and experience the past without being able to fully grasp it (Huizinga, 1929). In their discussion, Tollebeek and Verschaffel (1992) described Huizinga's concept as direct contact with the past that is almost tangible. Through an object, one is able to transcend the boundaries of time. Ankersmit (2007) described the notion of historical sensation as a sudden individual consciousness of the foreignness of history accompanied by the simultaneous recognition of the unknown as familiar. Ankersmit added a different form of historical sensation, which he named the sublime historical experience. This experience has a collective character and can be understood as a realisation and acceptance of the inevitable and irrevocable schism in the present leading to the existence of an inherently different present and past. This awareness of the eternal loss of a former identity and a past world unavoidably makes the sublime historical experience a traumatic one (Ankersmit, 2007). In a heritage experience, it is not the past itself that evokes the experience but the sudden recognition of the existence of the past in the present. The heritage sensation, as Holthuis (2005) has described it, is a brief and intense experience of the immediate, unbreakable connection between then and now. It is an enormous leap from these theoretical elaborations to the practices of heritage institutions. Is it possible for pupils to experience such a sensation while engaged in a heritage project? What would stimulate this sensation?

First, heritage is related to the specific time and space in which it has been used in the past and is employed in the present. These boundaries in space and time appear to be important for the creation of a heritage experience. Heritage that is part of what one perceives as one's own or a closely related lifetime and environment is most likely to evoke a sense of direct contact with the past (De Troyer & Vermeersch, 2005; Rosenzweig & Thelen, 1998). Second, prior knowledge of the objects of heritage or the related history makes one receptive to the experience (Tollebeek & Verschaffel, 1992). To connect heritage to one's own life and environment requires knowledge of its background and history (Holthuis, 2005). An old brick in the wall of your house can be easily regarded as

meaningless unless you know that it was the first brick that your grandparents, from whom you inherited your stone factory, used to build the house. Third, authenticity may play a role. Opinions regarding the importance of the authenticity of heritage vary (S. Jones, 2010; Smelt, 2009). Museums regularly make use of replicas in their exhibits. On the one hand, visitors often highly value the experience of viewing an inauthentic object and may even consider it to be more real than the original because its fabrication is more familiar to them (Lowenthal, 1995). On the other hand, people may feel misled when they discover that an object is inauthentic (Tollebeek & Verschaffel, 1992). For a majority of the respondents in a study by Rosenzweig and Thelen (1998), authenticity was important. Publications in the fields of history and heritage education also generally emphasise the importance of authenticity in evoking a sense of direct contact with the past (e.g., E. Davis, 2005; Holthuis, 2005; Leinhardt & Crowley, 2002). Authenticity, however, does not necessarily reside in the essence of the material but rather in the ways in which people experience the object within a specific social and spatial context (S. Jones, 2010). The final stimulus preceding a heritage sensation may be the actual seeing or touching of an object, the recitation of a memory or the experiencing of a tradition (E. Davis, 2005; Marcus, Stoddard, & Woodward, 2012; Von Borries, 2009). Museums, for example, often develop hands-on activities to eliminate separation from objects within glass showcases. Visiting the barracks of the Vught WWII concentration camp, even though they are a replica, is likely different from seeing pictures of it in a book. A new development in the field is the digital experience of heritage objects or sites, described as the ‘virtual turn’ (De Groot, 2009). Due to technological improvements, a 3D experience on screen can be nearly as vivid and real as a bodily encounter. One could argue that a digital reconstruction of a Roman village may be even more evocative than the remains of a few houses on an archaeological site.

Critics of the heritage experience warn of incorrect or simplified representations of historical reality. They say that people too easily see the personal experience as the key to authenticity: seeing is believing (De Groot, 2009; Lowenthal, 1998; Rosenzweig & Thelen, 1998). Such an experience would suppress questions of truth by presenting itself as the most trustworthy account. In addition, a heritage experience is often associated with consumerism and sensationalism. De Groot (2009, p. 18) described how cultural industries turned the past into a consumable product, leading to ‘fetishising history and the commodification of the past’. Furthermore, he found that museums emphasised experience over the educational impetus (De Groot, 2009). A report on Dutch museum education from 2007 described this same accentuation of experience and empathy, particularly in museums devoted to cultural history (Hagenaars, 2008). The informative aspect was secondary. To engage audiences with a museum exhibition, institutions have turned to participation and action, particularly when prior knowledge and appreciation are lacking. In a recent study, De Bruijn (2013) found that heritage projects used various strategies to render the past closer, but they often used strategies to create distance from the past as well. For example,

photographs and reconstructions in a museum exhibit made the past accessible, whereas the accompanying educational materials generated distance.

By overemphasising the experience of heritage, heritage projects may miss the opportunity to stimulate historical understanding and reasoning, such as by discussing the significance of heritage (Patrick & National Trust for Historic Preservation in the United States, 1992; Van Boxtel, 2011). One could also question the effect of ‘the experience’ of heritage on pupils. For example, certain pupils found a film on Auschwitz much more touching than a school visit to the Breendonk prison camp in Belgium (Wils, 2010). A small study of pupils’ opinions of historical sources indicated that a historical documentary and a historical film were considered more interesting than a historical site or museum (Vijfvinkel, 2006). Consideration of the effect of heritage on pupils’ emotional engagement is particularly important with regard to sensitive history and heritage.

#### *1.4 Sensitive History: Two Dutch Cases*

History and its related heritage may be sensitive due to, for example, religious differences or because it reminds us of actual or perceived unfairness to people (Historical Association, 2007). Sensitive history may also serve as a reminder of a painful historical period. In her study of difficult histories in an urban classroom, Sheppard (2010) emphasised that whether history is sensitive is socially constructed. She described three characteristics of sensitive history: (1) content centred on traumatic events, which includes a focus on the interrelated topics of suffering, finance, and oppression; (2) a sense of identification between those studying the history and those who are represented; and (3) a moral response to the events studied. It is to be expected that pupils’ understanding of the sensitivity of a particular history may be intensified by an encounter with the historical traces related to this history, particularly when these traces are considered heritage and are attributed significance by a majority, a minority or both in different ways.

Certain heritages may be completely silent to certain pupils, evoking no emotion, memory, association or knowledge at all. For pupils, most familiar parts of the collective memory are learned, whereas these events may have been experienced by their parents or grandparents (Wineburg, Porat, Mosborg, & Duncan, 2007). Van de Putten, De Groot and Kieskamp (2008), for example, described pupils’ lack of knowledge of Christian churches, which renders these churches meaningless to them. However, other heritage topics may be too emotional to discuss in a history classroom. In a study by Goldberg, Schwarz and Porat (2008), pupils’ capacity to approach an issue in a disciplinary fashion was related to the extent to which the particular issue was alive in the collective memory. At some point, a disciplinary approach may no longer be possible, either for the pupils or for their teachers. In a study by Pettigrew *et al.* (2009) of teachers’ perspectives on teaching about the Holocaust in culturally diverse classes, several teachers felt that they were too emotionally involved in the subject. They stressed they did not want to upset their pupils. Heritage projects, in contrast, are often considered an ideal context for developing and teaching

values and discussing personal engagement (Aplin, 2007). Sensitive history and heritage are seen as a way to include identity, values and diversity in the school curriculum. A topic of history or heritage that is sensitive evokes pupils' memories and feelings. Sensitive history and heritage positively affect pupils' personal engagement and are therefore often used as a starting point for dialogue on diverse understandings of meaning and significance (Historical Association, 2007). The case studies in this dissertation focus on the history and heritage of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade and on the history of WWII. I will introduce both of these topics, which will be further explained in the detailed discussions of the field studies.

My first case involves a heritage project on the topic of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. Over the last decade, the debate regarding the history of slavery and the appropriate way to address this past and its legacy in current Dutch society has become increasingly intense and visible in the public domain (Oostindie, 1999). The growing awareness in society of the history and heritage of slavery in Dutch history is reflected in the media. An example is the debate surrounding Black Pete as a racist element of the *Sinterklaas* festivity, with newspaper headlines such as 'Slavery isn't over, even for Black Pete' (Duursma, 2011), 'It's a children's party, playing dress up' (Lommerse & Smit, 2011) and 'No, Black Pete doesn't have to become blue, but it's ok to change him a bit' (n.d.).<sup>2</sup> Saint Nicholas' Eve is a Dutch tradition that occurs on the fifth of December, when *Sinterklaas*, or Saint Nicholas, and his servant, Black Pete, deliver presents to all the children in the country. The references to a time when slavery was accepted by large parts of society are clear, and increasing numbers of people want this tradition to be changed or abolished (Petition Black Pete, n.d.). Others claim that Black Pete is a harmless tradition. Most children, who are the primary target of the *Sinterklaas* festivity, do not view Black Pete as a racist figure.

However, pupils may notice the tumult in society and are confronted with the history and heritage of slavery at school in history class. Four demonstrators wearing T-shirts reading 'Black Pete is racism' to the arrival of Saint Nicholas and 'his Petes' in Dordrecht on November 12, 2011 were arrested.<sup>3</sup> This action prompted a media revival of

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<sup>2</sup> During the past ten years, every November, there has been a peak in the number of articles about Black Pete in national newspapers in combination with racism or similar terms (See Blakely, 1993). In 2011, this number was four times higher than in previous years (see [www.nieuwsmonitor.net](http://www.nieuwsmonitor.net)), partly due to the controversy following the NTR television series *De slavernij*, which was broadcast in the fall of 2011. The series raised a debate in which several observers argued that the history of slavery was contextualised the wrong way in the series by making comparisons with other examples of forced labour, such as modern-day slavery and enslaved Christians, instead of other crimes against humanity, such as the Holocaust. Others thought the discussion of this history in society was melodramatic (G. Jones, 2012) or that slavery's past received too much emphasis in the series, whereas others thought the discussion of slavery's past was too emotional.

<sup>3</sup> Saint Nicholas and Black Pete come from Spain by boat and reside in Holland for a month to collect children's wishes and distribute gifts. At their arrival (occurring simultaneously and subsequently in

the discussion of the history of slavery in Dutch society and of the correct handling of the heritage of slavery. In November 2013, the debate was again revived and received international attention. A few organising committees for the arrival of *Sinterklaas* decided to change the tradition slightly by eliminating Pete's golden earrings or painting his face various colours. However, these changes caused a great deal of resistance by certain opponents, and many other committees refused to make similar changes. These events indicate that the history of slavery is a sensitive topic in Dutch society according to the criteria of Sheppard (2010). In addition to slavery being considered a traumatic event, there is a sense of identification between people of Surinamese or Antillean descent and those who were enslaved in the past. There is also the sense that slavery was a moral atrocity and that a majority of Dutch citizens do not recognise the gravity of this issue.

My second case study involves the history and heritage of WWII. This topic has received a great deal of attention in history education almost from the time that the war ended, and the way in which this history is taught has changed over the years (Hondius, 2010). Currently, the topic is widely discussed in relation to the anti-Semitic attitudes of pupils of Turkish and Moroccan descent and of Muslim pupils in general, some of whom interpret the war within the context of the conflict in the Middle East (Jikeli & Allouche-Benayoun, 2013). For example, because pupils condemn the present state of Israel for its actions against Palestinians, they condemn all Jews in the past and the present. In the Netherlands, several disturbances of annual commemorations of WWII by groups of adolescents (some of whom were of Moroccan descent) in 2003 caused a great deal of commotion (Ensel & Stremmelaar, 2013). One of these incidents was referred to in the national media as 'wreath football'.<sup>4</sup> Among other things, these incidents stimulated debate regarding the teaching of the Holocaust to adolescents in the current multicultural Dutch society. It was feared that pupils of Turkish or Moroccan descent would be less receptive to Holocaust education than other pupils (Ensel & Stremmelaar, 2013). However, as Pettigrew *et al.* (2009) emphasised, diversity in the classroom may also be a blessing. These authors found that a number of the respondents in their study of the teaching of the Holocaust in England used this diversity to direct attention to issues of racism and tolerance. Teachers expressed concern regarding teaching WWII in culturally homogeneous classrooms, in which they feared that the perspectives and prejudices of pupils of the ethnic majority would easily prevail (Pettigrew *et al.*, 2009).

In the Netherlands, however, the topic of WWII is still regarded as very sensitive within the context of urban classrooms. In 2013, a documentary concerning a poor district in the small Dutch city of Arnhem showed the highly anti-Semitic attitudes of several adolescents of Turkish descent (Sahin, February 24, 2013). The documentary followed a

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different Dutch cities), tens of thousands of people gather to welcome them by waving and singing songs.

<sup>4</sup> At this particular incident in Amsterdam, a group of male adolescents played football with the wreaths that had been laid during a commemoration service earlier in the evening.

Turkish intellectual who attempted to improve the living conditions in his district by educating the youth about the misconceptions behind their anti-Semitic attitudes. After the broadcast, he received death threats from within the Dutch Islamic community. The documentary received international attention. Several institutes emphasised the need for research on anti-Semitism in the Netherlands (Van den Dool, 2013). Based on Sheppard's criteria described above, WWII may be considered a sensitive topic in current Dutch society. The war was a traumatic event. There are processes at work that are related to a sense of identification with the people who experienced the war, and there is a strong moral response to this chapter in history that such an event should never occur again. In addition to these factors, the dominant narrative of WWII is being challenged within current Dutch society.

In the Netherlands, the sensitive topics of slavery and WWII are part of the school history curriculum. The topics are also discussed in various heritage projects. I will now briefly describe the field of heritage education in the Netherlands.

### *1.5 The Field of Heritage Education: Policy and Practice, Aims and Purposes*

During the 1986 revision of the curriculum for secondary education (*Basisvorming*), a focus on pupils' living environment was made compulsory in all teaching. The aim was to orient children with respect to their natural and cultural environment to create an understanding of its artefacts and phenomena (Albeda, 1986). This objective was also part of the 1998 and 2006 revisions of primary and secondary education, which included explicit references to heritage (Greven & Letschert, 2006; OC&W, 1997; OC&W, 1998; National Centre of Expertise in Curriculum Development, 2007; Van der Hoeven, 2006). Beginning in 1997, several government-funded institutes, such as *Bureau Erfgoed Actueel*, *Erfgoed Nederland*, *Cultuurnetwerk Nederland* and *LKCA* (Netherlands Expertise Centre for Arts and Cultural Education), gave special attention to the integration of heritage in education. Heritage education became part of cultural education, together with arts education and media education (Cultuurnetwerk Nederland, n.d.). Cultural education was related to the Dutch government's policy *Cultuur en School* to encourage cultural participation (Plasterk, 2007). This policy was set forth in 1996 and has been an impetus for collaboration between museums and schools.<sup>5</sup> Most educational activities are initiated and designed by these cultural institutions. Schools select a set of activities from these offerings, and the government policy focuses on ensuring a free market of activities from which schools can choose (Hagenaars, 2008). At the time of the completion of this dissertation, the curriculum had just been revised, and this revision emphasised the integration of cultural education within all of the curricula of formal education. Heritage education, arts education and media

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<sup>5</sup> The policy *Cultuur en School* includes several aspects, such as funding (*Cultuurkaart*), establishing networks (*Beroepskunstenaars in de Klas* (BIK) and Brede School) and adapting curricula (developing a cohesive cultural education in school by the Interne Cultuur Coördinator (ICC) and implementing the canon of Dutch history).

education are no longer to be treated as separate forms of education. Instead, heritage and art are to be presented as a means for teaching about culture within existing content areas, such as history and art (Bussemaker, 2013).<sup>6</sup>

In 2008 and 2009, 83% of Dutch primary schools and 91% of Dutch secondary schools employed or took part in heritage education, mostly in the form of history, geography or art classes. An interdisciplinary approach was more common in primary education because of organisational difficulties in secondary schools. The majority of the heritage education consisted of museum visits or exploration of the community around the school (Hoogeveen & Oomen, 2009). Because of specific funding for the higher stages of secondary education, these classes participated in heritage education more often (Hagenaars, 2008).

Currently, there is a wide variety of heritage education practices related to the history curriculum. Heritage education is integrated in regular history lessons or embedded in special heritage projects spanning one or more days. Heritage education may be situated inside or outside the classroom. For example, guest speakers are invited to the school to talk about their profession or, in the case of eyewitnesses, to tell their stories and share their experiences. In addition, teachers bring heritage objects into the classroom and investigate them with their pupils. Outside the classroom, heritage education may consist of explorations of the local community or visits to heritage sites or institutions. Surveys of heritage education in 1999, 2003 and 2004 indicated that the logistic and financial problems associated with field trips prevented schools from engaging in these heritage projects outside the classroom (Van Wijk, 2005). Finally, heritage education can complement or substitute for the obligatory subject material (De Troyer & Vermeersch, 2005). The extent to which heritage education acts as a substitute for subject material is an important issue for teachers (Visscher-Voerman & Huizinga, 2009).

In addition to the various types of heritage education described above, projects are developed with a variety of aims in mind. First, according to Van Heusden (2009), heritage education fulfils the public's need to reflect on the significance of the past and the presence of the past in the present. In recently formulated guidelines for cultural education, heritage education has been described as an opportunity to reflect on heritage through visualisation, analysis and conceptualisation, with language playing an important role as a medium (Konings & Van Heusden, 2013). Second, in Dutch practice, heritage is often used as a source of images (Van der Kooij, 2006). It is used to make the past visible, audible and tangible (Cultuurnetwerk Nederland, n.d.). In this context, the objective of heritage education is to concretise and clarify abstract historical concepts and developments (Van der Kaaij, 2000). Making the abstract concrete facilitates the growth and improvement of historical consciousness (De Troyer & Vermeersch, 2005). Third, heritage is used to motivate and engage pupils; it enlivens history lessons with the excitement of the

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<sup>6</sup> For a discussion of this development and its implementation in practice, see also Hagenaars (2014).

experience of heritage (Cultuurnetwerk Nederland, n.d.; Hunter, 1988; Wilschut, Straaten, & Riessen, 2004). Fourth, heritage is used to evoke empathy for the world of the past and its inhabitants. Experiencing the past during engagement in a heritage project makes the past more real and stimulates feelings of affection (Ferguson & Bennett, 2007; Holthuis, 2005). Lastly, heritage education is used to integrate new approaches to learning and instruction in the school curriculum. For example, heritage is regarded as an ideal context for an interdisciplinary approach to develop competency in lifelong learning (De Troyer & Vermeersch, 2005; Van Lakerfeld & Gussen, 2011). Furthermore, heritage is used as a context for problem-based learning and related self-regulated learning approaches (Holthuis, 2004; Van Boxtel, 2009a).

In some cases, the most important aim of heritage projects is to develop consciousness and responsibility regarding a particular heritage. In this case, the objective is to make pupils aware of the significance of the heritage and the need to preserve it for future generations. Heritage education thus focuses on engaging pupils with a heritage and stimulating their enthusiasm towards it (Cultuurnetwerk Nederland, n.d.; De Troyer & Vermeersch, 2005; Holthuis, 2005; Hunter, 1988; Hunter, 1993; Van Lakerfeld & Gussen, 2011). The aim of developing responsibility regarding heritage often includes other wishes and convictions (Somers, 2014). For example, institutions, educators or teachers may want to develop pupils' identities and, through these identities, the cultural identity of a community. Heritage is used to develop pupils' awareness of their own identity and what makes it similar to or different from others' identities (Aplin, 2007; De Silva, Smith, & Tranter, 2001). In this context, the objective is often to create mutual understanding and tolerance between pupils and between cultures (De Troyer & Vermeersch, 2005; The Hague Forum, 2004). Simultaneously, and in some cases paradoxically, heritage education is used to improve social cohesion on local, regional, national and European levels (Canon van Nederland, n.d.; De Troyer & Vermeersch, 2005; EUROCLIO, n.d.; Hageman, 2009).<sup>7</sup> Another related objective is citizenship education. Copeland (2002, p. 7) said that citizenship 'identifies rights and responsibilities regarding heritage', whereas heritage 'provides a cultural dimension for citizenship'. Various other publications also emphasise the opportunity for heritage to contribute to citizenship education. For example, through heritage, one can identify the fundamental aspects of current society or can reflect on universal values or cultural diversity (De Troyer & Vermeersch, 2005; Moe, Coleman, Fink, & Krejs, 2009; Van Lakerfeld & Gussen, 2011).

To summarise the above discussion, in this study, heritage refers to both material and immaterial traces of the past that are considered valuable for the present and future by a

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<sup>7</sup> For example, local: '*Mijn buurt in mijn stad*' (My neighbourhood in my town); regional: '*Een kruiwagen vol omgeving*' (A cartload full of things of my region); national: the canon of Dutch history; European: the project *Historiana* by EUROCLIO.

particular group of people. Scholars have noted that a heritage approach to the past is motivated by intentions to establish the future continuity of group identity and to provide future perspectives on these identities. In a multicultural society, heritage projects, particularly those involving the sensitive heritages of slavery and WWII, may stimulate dialogue on the significance of heritage for various individuals and groups. However, when a heritage project is centred on a specific group, it may exclude pupils from the learning process. Inspired by the earlier studies discussed above, I depart from a dynamic approach to heritage and identity to avoid essentialism and an exclusivist engagement with the past.

In heritage education in the Netherlands, heritage is used as a tool for visualisation, as a motivator or to evoke empathy. Heritage education is also used to develop awareness and responsibility regarding heritage, to teach citizenship, to reflect on the significance of heritage or to make pupils enthusiastic about a particular heritage. The focus of this study is the use of heritage in learning history. Apart from the interdisciplinary objectives and the development of generic learning competencies, all of the aims and uses of heritage discussed above are valid within this context and are part of this study. Heritage projects may enliven history for pupils and help them to engage with the past. However, heritage projects may also potentially simplify history or emphasise the sensationalist aspects of the experience of the past. Such projects might be difficult to align with the objectives of history education, such as the enhancement of historical thinking.

## 2. RESEARCH QUESTION AND CONCEPTS OF ANALYSIS

This dissertation explores pupils' learning of sensitive history during work on heritage projects. The primary question addressed in this study is as follows: how do pupils in Dutch urban classrooms learn about sensitive histories, such as the history of slavery and WWII, while engaged in heritage projects that present historical traces as Dutch heritage? To answer this question, I examine the following three sub-questions:

1. In what ways do pupils attribute significance to history and heritage during the heritage project, and how is this related to their self-reported ethnic identity?
2. In what ways do pupils imagine the past, and in what ways is this supported during the heritage project?
3. To what extent do pupils encounter and acknowledge multiple perspectives on the (significance of) history and heritage during the heritage project?

Given the above discussion of the literature, pupils' historical imagination and their attribution of significance are two aspects of history learning that are interesting within the context of heritage projects regarding sensitive history. For both aspects, pupils' acknowledgement of multiple perspectives and their ability to adopt different perspectives are points of attention, particularly when we begin with a dynamic notion of heritage. These concepts emerged from my literature review as relevant constructs for analysing the processes of history learning during heritage projects. However, pupils' historical

imagination, their attribution of significance and their acknowledgement of multiple perspectives are interrelated with other aspects of historical thinking. For example, when arguing for the significance of a particular development, pupils need to support their argument. They depend on their ability to contextualise or to evaluate and interpret historical evidence (Van Drie, Van Boxtel, & Stam, 2014). Furthermore, pupils' historical imagination regarding a particular time or development is influenced by the way they think about continuity and change or about cause and consequence (Seixas & Morton, 2012). For example, pupils' images of a particular historical event will be richer when they are able to relate the event to larger historical developments and the causes that underlie these developments. Although this study focuses on imagination, significance and multiperspectivity, these are only three elements of pupils' historical understanding. The next sections introduce these concepts of analysis.

### *2.1 Historical Imagination*

Sensitive historical events, such as slavery and WWII, can be difficult for pupils to understand (Davies, 2000; Pettigrew *et al.*, 2009). To imagine these cruel historical realities and to understand the actions and motives of the historical actors involved is not an easy exercise. However, the literature regarding the teaching of sensitive history emphasises the importance of empathetic understanding (I. Philips, 2008). It is thought that such understanding will stimulate pupils' awareness that these historical periods are 'real'. Researchers and practitioners in the field of history education and museum education have not yet reached agreement regarding exactly what historical imagination or empathy is and how it should be employed within the context of history education (e.g., Egan & Judson, 2009). Several authors in the field of museum education describe historical imagination as imagining what it was like in the past (E. Davis, 2005; McRaine, 2010; Spock, 2010). However, exactly what do pupils do when they try to imagine the past? Egan (1997) described imagination as the forming of mental images that involve certain perspectives and that often contain an emotional dimension. Increasing attention has also been paid to the role that the human body and the senses play in this process (Fettes & Judson, 2010; Gregory & Witcomb, 2007; McRaine, 2010). An embodied learning experience, such as exploring a historic site or object or performing role-play using all of the senses, may bring about new forms of historical understanding. Within the field of history education during recent years, a point of discussion has been the balance between the cognitive and affective elements of historical imagination and empathy (Brooks, 2011; Lee & Shemilt, 2011). Cognitively, historical empathy means taking a historical perspective; using contextual thinking, pupils consider the perspectives and actions of historical actors. Affectively, historical empathy includes showing an interest in these people, caring for them, and reacting to the consequences of past events in the past and the present (Barton & Levstik, 2004). Together with Barton and Levstik (2004), Kohlmeier (2006), Endacott (2010),

Brooks (2011) and Davison (2012), I regard historical imagination and historical empathy as both a cognitive and an affective process.

Historical traces may help pupils to imagine a historical reality by bringing a past world alive and stimulating pupils' empathetic understanding (E. Davis, 2005; Davison, 2012; Marcus *et al.*, 2012; McRaine, 2010; Spock, 2010). However, to contribute to the learning of history, it is important that while imagining or empathising, pupils adopt a historical perspective and acknowledge the specific historical context of the event or actor they are considering. Particularly with sensitive history and heritage, the evoked imagery may become overwhelming and may induce negative emotions or strong moral responses (Schweber, 2004; Von Borries, 1994). Imagination may immerse pupils too deeply in the past and obscure their awareness of the distance between themselves and this past. Aside from the pedagogical concerns with this type of immersion, this activity may also be considered questionable in terms of history education in general. Imagination may generate simple images of the past, and multiple perspectives of the past and its significance may be lost (Grever, 2013; Van Boxtel, 2011). To prevent imaginative engagement from becoming too overwhelming and bringing history too close, a few authors have emphasised the importance of approaching sensitive histories from multiple perspectives (Kokkinos, 2011; Schweber, 2006).

## 2.2 Significance

One of the key questions regarding heritage is why certain historical traces are considered significant enough to preserve for the future. The question of significance enables pupils to relate the past to the present. Furthermore, it facilitates a personal approach to this topic: what is the pupil's perspective on the significance of the heritage, and how does this relate to others' perspectives? Several authors have categorised the ways in which historical significance is attributed to the past (Cercadillo, 2006; Lévesque, 2008; Seixas, 2008; Seixas & Morton, 2012). For example, events, persons or developments can be considered historically significant because they 'resulted in change' or 'reveal something in the past or present' (Seixas & Morton, 2012, p. 12). However, little is known about the ways in which pupils attribute significance to what is presented as heritage, particularly sensitive heritage. The categorisation of historical significance has not yet been used to analyse pupils' attribution of significance to heritage. These attributions of significance to heritage are a particularly rich topic of investigation because the significance of heritage is often presented as a given, although it may be at odds with the pupils' own attributions.

Educational researchers stress that becoming aware of and describing preconceptions are the first topics that teachers should address as their pupils begin the learning process (Donovan & Bransford, 2005). This step stimulates pupils to use the known to understand the unknown, and it adds meaning to both. Pupils' mastery and appropriation of new knowledge is strongly affected by their preconceptions or understandings. It is also known from studies of museum visitation that the 'internal story'

that visitors bring with them into the museum affects and contributes to their visit and to their perception and understanding of the museum exhibition (Doering & Pekarik, 1996; Falk & Dierking, 2013). As various researchers have demonstrated, pupils' understandings of the significance of a particular history and heritage are shaped by their cultural, ethnic, religious, social or political backgrounds, their individual identities, and their age and stage of development (Barton & McCully, 2005; Epstein, 1998; Grever *et al.*, 2011; Peck, 2010). Lévesque (2005b) emphasised that class, ethnicity, culture and language highly influence pupils' conceptions of the significance of history and of certain historical issues. He described how pupils' sense of self and their endorsement of the traditions and values of their cultural community form their appropriation of certain aspects of the collective past. These collective memories are mediated through, for example, family stories, school, the mass media and peers (Barton, 2008; Epstein, 2006; Goldberg *et al.*, 2008; Wertsch, 2004). Seixas (1993) discussed the profound impact of family experiences and family stories on pupils' understanding of history. Von Borries (2003) emphasised, in the context of the history of the Holocaust, that the family determines pupils' opinions long before they learn about it in school. He also mentioned the impact of the mass media and peers. These sources of knowledge highlight the inevitable sharing of knowledge, ideas and emotions by pupils in a classroom in addition to the possible differences and conflicts between the ideas held by pupils. Pupils have many sources of information and beliefs in common in their everyday lives. Philips (1998) described the profound impact of the press, television, popular music, films, museums and heritage sites on conceptions of the past. In many ways, these media cultivate public discourse and pupils' understandings of the world.

Teachers might hesitate to discuss their pupils' understandings of the significance of the past in their classrooms, particularly when they expect these understandings to vary to a great extent due to pupils' diverse backgrounds. Nevertheless, it is important to address the perspectives of all pupils in a classroom. Particularly when the topic is a sensitive heritage, which is closely related to the identity of certain groups and stimulates the process of attributing significance, it may be relevant to take pupils' understandings of significance into account. When pupils cannot integrate their own understandings, history will be less meaningful to them (Ribbens, 2007; Seixas, 1993; VanSledright, 2008). Seixas (1993) expressed the need for a methodology that enables personal meanings to emerge in a broader and more critical setting—that is, one in which pupils can close the gap between their family histories and the official history as taught in school. Allowing pupils to study historical traces independently is one way to enable them to attribute significance to these traces and the corresponding period of history in their own way (E. Davis, 2005).

### *2.3 Multiple Perspectives*

Our interpretation of the past and its significance is defined, among other things, by the available sources of information and the vantage point of its interpreter (Stradling, 2003). A vantage point is defined by the limits of time and space and by the preconceptions and

expectations of the interpreter.<sup>8</sup> In history education, pupils learn to develop historical perspective taking by studying multiple perspectives on the past and the ways in which these perspectives are affected by the vantage point of the particular interpreter (O. Davis, Yeager, & Foster, 2001; Hartmann & Hasselhorn, 2008; Seixas & Morton, 2012). The questions that pupils attempt to answer centre on the perspective of the historical actor and on various interpretations of that perspective. In the classroom, however, pupils may also encounter multiple perspectives of individuals and groups in the present. Their ability to understand how others perceive and react to a situation may be characterised using the theory of social perspective taking (Gehlbach, 2004; Rios, Trent, & Vega Castañeda, 2003). Perspective taking means recognising others' thoughts and emotions in a non-egocentric manner. When departing from a dynamic approach to heritage and identity, it is important to teach pupils to acknowledge multiple perspectives on the past and its traces and the way these are given significance (Van Boxtel *et al.*, submitted).

Many pupils, however, may reject the idea that there can be more than one view on the past, particularly for sensitive histories. As Lee (2004) noted, pupils approach history with their perception of the past's function in everyday life. In everyday life, the past is a given and can be known only to those who lived it. Because many pupils apply this idea of the past's function to the historical past, they have difficulty acknowledging more than one perspective. Only a few pupils reach a proficient level of recognition of the differing nature of historical accounts during their years in high school. In addition, when a history or heritage is sensitive, pupils may find it even more difficult to engage with other perspectives. Barton (2007) noted that as a pupil's affective filter concerning a topic becomes tighter, his or her rejection of different perspectives becomes stronger. The more that pupils engage with a topic, the more difficulty they experience in acknowledging other perspectives. Within a museum context, Doering and Pekarik (1996) concluded that most visitors prefer to have their own perspective confirmed during their visit. By way of selective perception, conflicting information is neglected, and disturbing views are interpreted to fit an existing narrative.

When strong dominant perspectives encounter strong minority perspectives in a classroom of pupils who do not acknowledge the legitimacy of multiple perspectives, conflicts are unavoidable, and pupils and teachers have difficulty finding common ground. Several authors in the field of history (education) and museum studies have discussed the ways in which museums or sites of remembrance may offer opportunities for pupils to experience both communality and diversity. Simon (2004) stressed the importance of a pedagogical and ethical practice of remembrance for what it means to live relationally with others from the past and in the present. Simon described 'being touched by the past' as a demand to 'take stories from others seriously, accepting those stories as matters of

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<sup>8</sup> In the Netherlands, these limits of time and space and the preconceptions and expectations that affect one's interpretation of the past are referred to as *standplaatsgebondenheid*.

“counsel”” (pp. 189). During this process, the stories of others may alter people’s own stories and change their views on their shared history. Another approach to this idea is offered by Rounds (2006), who analysed people’s wandering through a museum as an exploration of possibilities other than their own. Rounds described the museum as a safe place to explore otherness without the risk of immersing oneself in it as in a live encounter. One can experience differences and similarities simultaneously without fear of conflict or dominance. The importance of having a safe place to engage with other perspectives is also emphasised by Grever (2012). With regard to sensitive history, she argued that historical traces may help pupils to cope with their emotions so that they will be able to explore various perspectives of that history together. Through this process, pupils may experience this history as one belonging both to themselves and their peers. Lastly, Wineburg *et al.* (2007) described the denominating effect of sites of pilgrimage. Referring to the historian Confino (1997), these authors emphasised that common denominators are necessary if shared beliefs are to overcome rivalries and differences in memories. Sites of pilgrimage, which operate on the symbolic level, function as such denominators. When groups with opposing ideas and perspectives visit a pilgrimage site, the denominating symbolic power of the site enables them to share the experience while being aware of their different perspectives.

This study explores the ways in which sensitive history is taught and learned during pupils’ engagement in heritage projects in urban classrooms in the Netherlands. The primary concepts under analysis consist of historical imagination, historical significance and multiperspectivity. Although pupils’ historical imagination may be stimulated during work on heritage projects involving sensitive history, pupils may also have difficulty taking a historical perspective and acknowledging multiple perspectives on this history. Heritage projects appear to be ideal opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own and others’ attribution of significance to history and historical traces. However, pupils’ understandings of this significance may challenge the attributions of significance as expressed by educators in heritage projects. Pupils and educators may not always be able to discuss these various perspectives on the significance of the past and its traces in the present.

### 3. STUDY OUTLINE

The next chapter discusses in detail the methods that I used in both cases. The results of the two cases are presented in the following three chapters. The first case study, on the topic of slavery, is presented in chapters three and four. Chapter three discusses pupils’ understandings of the significance of the history and heritage of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade before their work on a heritage project and the ways in which these understandings correlated with the pupils’ self-reported ethnic identity. Chapter four explores the historical imagination of the pupil participants, their attribution of significance

and their acknowledgement of multiple perspectives during their work on a heritage project on the topic of slavery. Chapter five presents the second case, which involves WWII. In this chapter, I analyse the historical imagination, the attribution of significance and the acknowledgement of multiple perspectives of one particular triad (three students in a cooperative learning group) during their work on a heritage project. Thus, chapter three focuses on one part of the first sub-question presented above (understandings of significance before a heritage project regarding slavery). In chapters four and five, the three sub-questions are discussed with regard to a heritage project addressing slavery and WWII, respectively. The conclusions and discussions of both cases and my methods are presented in chapter six.



## CHAPTER 2 METHOD

### 1. STUDY DESIGN

This study focuses on the ways in which pupils in urban classrooms in the Netherlands learn about sensitive histories, specifically the histories of slavery and WWII, during their work on heritage projects. The educational field of heritage projects has rarely been researched, and there has been little empirical research into the learning of history in these types of educational settings (Gosselin, 2011). The aim of this study was to empirically investigate the existing practices of the use of heritage in history education to obtain insights into the constraints and benefits of this approach. An assessment of the quality of the learning projects that I investigated is not part of my study. A case study was considered the most suitable study design for this initial empirical exploration of the processes of learning history through heritage projects (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). The aim of this study was to examine these educational practices within their real contexts and to explore the learning process in all of its complexity. A case study was also considered suitable because a theoretical framework and valid measuring instruments for studying the learning of history during heritage projects have yet to be developed.

The study was constructed as a multiple embedded case study. The focal topic of the first case was slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. The second case concentrated on the topic of WWII. The heritage projects on these topics provided the primary case boundaries. A single case comprised the school, heritage institution, pupils, teachers and museum educators associated with each heritage project. In the first case, regarding the history and heritage of slavery, a total of 55 pupils participated, of whom 13 pupils were treated as a single case. The second case, regarding the history and heritage of WWII, included a total of 22 pupils, of whom 12 pupils constituted a single case. The two primary cases and the embedded cases were used to acquire insight into the variety of processes of learning history using heritage projects. The study was not designed as a comparative study. Nonetheless, a discussion of the findings of both cases together may provide insights that are relevant to further research. Table 1 provides an overview of the multiple embedded case study design.

Table 1. Design of multiple-case study

	Case 1	Case 2
Topic	History and heritage of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade	History and heritage of WWII
Heritage institution	<i>NiNsee</i> – National Institute for the Study of Dutch Slavery and its Legacy	<i>Museon</i>
Location	Amsterdam	The Hague
Level	HAVO <sup>a</sup>	VWO
Year	2	4 / 5
Pupils' ages	13 to 14 years	15 to 19 years
Data collection period	November – December 2010	March – April 2011
Participating classes / pupils	2 / 55	2 / 22
No. of embedded cases (pupils)	13	12

Note. <sup>a</sup>HAVO = higher general education; VWO = pre-university education

### 1.1 Selection of the Topics and the Heritage Projects

Both cases share a focus on a topic in the school history curriculum that may be sensitive in current Dutch classrooms, particularly in urban classrooms. These sensitive topics may involve the tensions between heritage projects and history learning, as discussed in chapter one. The two sensitive topics that are central to this study, namely, slavery and WWII, are often discussed as two typical examples in the literature regarding sensitive topics (Gillespie, 2007; Historical Association, 2007; Sheppard, 2010; Spalding, 2011). Furthermore, these topics are known and relevant to researchers in history education and to teachers and educators both nationally and internationally. Additionally, the heritage related to the topics has local, national and transnational dimensions, which strengthens the potential for discussion from multiple perspectives.

Although there are many heritage projects for use in primary education, this study focuses on secondary education. First, a pilot study conducted with pupils in primary education in Utrecht in May 2010 showed that the issues I wanted to address in this study were rather difficult for these young children to grasp. In addition, this study discusses topics that may be particularly sensitive in urban classrooms, where pupils' mastery of the Dutch language varies. Because verbalisation of the pupils' understandings is central to the study, the language issue contributed the decision to study older pupils in secondary education, where these differences are less prevalent. Second, whereas heritage projects in primary education often have a more interdisciplinary character, such projects in secondary education are usually related to a specific subject, such as history education. Because this study focuses on history learning, these projects in secondary education were preferred.

As described in the previous chapter, heritage projects exist in various forms inside and outside schools and in relation to various types of heritage institutions, such as archives, museums or local cultural institutions such as churches. This study focused on heritage projects in which pupils visited a museum and, in the first case, a monument. Such

projects constitute a reasonable sample of heritage education in the Netherlands (Hoogeveen & Oomen, 2009). Both selected heritage projects were existing programmes that were offered to schools for their participation by the heritage institutions. The second criterion used in my selection of these projects was that both field trip locations needed to be near one of the larger cities in the Netherlands because the study focused on urban classrooms.

In 2010, there were few heritage projects that concentrated on the history and heritage of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. The project at the National Institute for the Study of Dutch Slavery and its Legacy (*NiNsee*) was preferred over slavery trails in Middelburg and Amsterdam. First, Amsterdam played an important role in the transatlantic slave trade, and many people from Surinamese and Antillean backgrounds live in this area. Second, the slavery trail in Amsterdam is not designed specifically for school visits and is not accompanied by guides. A walk on the trail would thus place greater demands on the teacher than a visit to *NiNsee*. Lastly, the *NiNsee* project is an interesting case for my study because of the background of the institute. The *NiNsee* project aims to break the silence regarding the history of slavery in current Dutch society, and it emphasises the development of values through the teaching of the history of slavery.

The fact that the *NiNsee* project involved little material heritage was a criterion for selecting the *Museon* heritage project for the second case about WWII. A heritage project in which material heritage was central and preferably could be investigated by pupils independently would provide the opportunity to further examine the ‘experience’ of investigating heritage objects. Moreover, the heritage project needed to include cooperative learning because verbalisation, in particular, can elucidate the processes involved in learning with and about heritage (Leinhardt, Crowley, & Knutson, 2002). In the *NiNsee* project, it was difficult to capture interactions between pupils on video because most of the museum visit consisted of guided tours. The *Museon* heritage project, however, met these criteria. In addition, the *Museon* heritage project included perspectives that refer to the countries of origin of a few of the largest minority groups in the Netherlands. This type of information is relatively new in museum education on WWII and may be associated with sensitivities concerning this topic in current society. A heritage project that includes these new perspectives is an interesting case for my study of the ways in which pupils in Dutch urban classrooms learn about sensitive histories.

In general, each case study spanned a total of six weeks. Students’ work on the heritage project itself spanned one to two weeks (three lessons, including the museum visit). For both heritage projects, the introductory lesson and the closing lesson in school were developed by the teachers in consultation with me. The lessons included tasks to stimulate pupils’ verbalisation and interaction. For the closing lessons, a task was developed by me independently. With this task, I aimed to obtain insight into the pupils’ experiences of the museum visit and the way that these experiences emerged to the forefront in the pupils’ discussion of the particular heritage. The task fits the final

attainment level for history education for higher general education and pre-university education, in which it is stated that ‘the pupil should be able to denominate the significance of historical events, phenomena and developments for the present’ (National Centre of Expertise in Curriculum Development, 2009, p. 8). Before the project began, I was present in the back of the classroom during several lessons to allow the teacher and the pupils to become accustomed to my presence and to allow me to become familiar with the communicative norms and patterns of the pupils (Eder & Fingerson, 2002). During the data collection period, I used memos to record the data collection process. An initial pilot study of the initial questionnaire and interview and observation during a museum visit helped me to reflect on my role as a researcher during the data collection period. The pilot study revealed that thorough preparation together with the teacher and the museum educator was necessary regarding our roles during the process, such as introducing the questionnaires to the pupils or answering the pupils’ questions.

### *1.2 Participants*

After the selection of the heritage projects, for each case, a secondary school history teacher was identified who was willing to participate in the study. In the Netherlands, pupils are differentiated by level at the beginning of their secondary education. The three most common levels are pre-vocational education (VMBO – four years), higher general education (HAVO – five years) and pre-university education (VWO – six years). In the case involving slavery, the participants included second-year HAVO pupils aged 13 to 14 years. In the case involving WWII, the participants were fourth- and fifth-year VWO pupils aged 15 to 19 years (most pupils were aged 16 to 17 years). Because of the exploratory character of the study, I selected classes of different levels and age groups for each case. The selection of participants was greatly influenced by the location of the heritage projects and by the availability of teachers who wanted to participate in the study. In both cases, the pupil population reflected the wide variety of social, cultural, religious and ethnic backgrounds in the urban areas in which the school was located. Furthermore, the classes were culturally and ethnically diverse (e.g., pupils’ backgrounds included Dutch, Moroccan, Surinamese, Turkish and Antillean).

In both cases, history was a compulsory subject for the participating pupils. During the first three years of secondary education, history is a compulsory subject for HAVO and VWO pupils. In most schools, history is taught for two or three hours per week. During these three years, the pupils study history chronologically starting from prehistoric times and primarily focusing on Western Europe and the Netherlands. In upper secondary school, history is optional for all pupils but compulsory for those who choose the ‘Culture and Society’ or ‘Economy and Society’ learning profiles. For all of the pupils in the second case, history was compulsory. In upper secondary education, general history is taught for two or three hours per week, during which pupils study largely the same topics as in their first three years but on a more advanced level. In the first case, the heritage project started

when the pupils were studying the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, in which the topic of slavery is embedded in the teaching of the history of America. In the second case, the project was scheduled as an extra-curricular activity. The pupils had already studied WWII in their third year of secondary education. Before the project, the pupils were studying the Dutch Republic during the seventeenth century.

Several pupils were selected to be followed more closely during the heritage projects. In cases 1 and 2, these pupils numbered 13 and 12, respectively. For this selection, I focused on differences in the pupils' responses on the questionnaire. Furthermore, I considered variety in the pupils' gender and the birth country of the pupils' parents. With this process, I aimed to obtain insight into the variety of perspectives that pupils potentially bring to the classroom and to determine whether I could relate differences to the pupils' self-reported ethnic identities. Out of these groups, four triads (i.e., cooperative learning groups of three pupils each) were formed of pupils with diverse perspectives and backgrounds. After a discussion of the selection criteria with research peers during a data session on triangulation, it was decided that the triads should be composed based primarily on differences in the pupils' perspectives. Using the internally diverse triads, I aimed to explore the pupils' encounters with and acknowledgement of other perspectives.

## 2. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Little research has been performed on the learning of history during pupils' work on heritage projects. Although there is a vast body of empirical research on various aspects of teaching or learning history, very few studies discuss these issues as they relate to heritage within the learning environment of a museum or heritage institution (Gosselin, 2011). Researchers in the field of museum education expend increasing effort to empirically examine the learning processes in such museum contexts (e.g., Hooper-Greenhill, 2007a; Hooper-Greenhill, 2007b). For example, an approach to measuring the outcomes of cultural learning was developed by defining five generic learning outcomes (GLOs). However, few studies have focused specifically on the learning of history or historical thinking skills, and standardised research methods have not yet been developed for such studies. The very specific location and context of a heritage project makes it difficult to develop methods that can be used repeatedly in multiple projects. Furthermore, heritage projects often contain only one or two lessons, which is a very short time for observing the learning process. Generally, educational researchers collect data over a longer period to examine the learning outcomes of a specific teaching approach. The data collection of this study was designed to capture the learning experiences and processes instead of the outcomes.

Recently, two studies have addressed issues of learning history within a museum environment (Gosselin, 2011; Spalding, 2012). Gosselin (2011) examined the ways in which historical thinking frameworks were useful for understanding the historical meaning-making of visitors and exhibition creators of history museums. Within the context of the

2007 bicentenary of the abolition of the slave trade in England, Spalding (2012) studied how shifts in the historical consciousness of sensitive histories are (re)negotiated and (re)articulated through school field trips to museums. Both studies are highly relevant to this dissertation. At the time I collected my data, however, these studies had not yet been published; therefore, I did not have the benefit of these efforts in my methodological design. Aside from the studies of Gosselin (2011) and Spalding (2012), two earlier studies examined the learning of history in the context of a museum or heritage institution (E. Davis, 2005; Nakou, 2001). Nakou (2001) researched children's historical thinking while they were in a museum. She described how the museum objects triggered the pupils' interest and historical thinking when the pupils could study and interpret the objects independently. The study by Davis (2005) focused on pupils' historical understanding in relation to archaeology education. Davis noted that for such studies, data collection methods such as concept maps, interviews and observations have proven very fruitful (E. Davis, 2005). Several small-scale studies have been conducted on a more practical level (e.g., Davies, Gregory, & Lund, 2000; De Silva *et al.*, 2001; Ferguson & Bennett, 2007; Lyon, 2007; Lévesque, 2006; Marcus & Levine, 2011; Snelson, 2007). These studies have been helpful in determining which elements of history learning would be interesting to study in the context of heritage projects, such as historical imagination, historical significance and multiperspectivity. By empirically bringing together the research fields of history education and heritage or museum education, this study was intended to be methodologically and theoretically innovative. In what follows, the methods of this study will be described in detail. This study is intended to contribute methodologically to the research field of history learning in a heritage institution or museum.

The data collection and analysis were designed to empirically explore the constraints and benefits of history learning through heritage projects, as described in the earlier discussion of the underlying theory. The study focused on the learning processes instead of the learning results. Two aspects of history learning were central: (1) pupils' historical imagination of a certain past and (2) pupils' attribution of significance to certain aspects of history and heritage.

(1) To investigate the pupils' historical imagination regarding the particular history during the project, I focused on three aspects of imagination that are mentioned by Egan (1997) and several other scholars in the fields of history education and museum education (Davison, 2012; Gregory & Witcomb, 2007; Marcus *et al.*, 2012). I examined the ways in which pupils formed mental images of history, the ways they attempted to imagine the perspectives of the historical actors in these images and their interest and emotional engagement while engaged in this activity (Egan, 1997).

(2) Several authors have categorised the ways in which the past is given historical significance (Cercadillo, 2001; Lévesque, 2008; Seixas, 2008; Seixas & Morton, 2012). Most studies of historical significance address pupils' attribution of significance to historical developments, persons or events and do not consider pupils' attribution of

significance to historical traces in the present that are considered to be heritage in the society in which they live. To explore pupils' attribution of significance to a particular history and heritage as the project progressed, I examined their opinions of the importance and the reasons for preserving objects and stories associated with that particular history. In addition, I considered their ability or willingness to acknowledge multiple perspectives on this issue.

The data were collected using various instruments at various points during the heritage project. Four whole-class questionnaires were conducted in each case: at the beginning of the project, after the introductory lesson in school, after the museum visit, and after the closing lesson in school. In addition to the questionnaires, the 25 pupils selected for detailed study were interviewed individually before and after the project and were observed working in their triads on the heritage project lessons. The museum educators were also observed. In addition, I interviewed the teachers and museum educators, and I collected the pupils' work products. The interviews with the teachers and educators and the pupils' work products were used to provide contextual information for the case. After an initial analysis, these interviews were not included in the in-depth analysis. The teachers, museum educators and teaching materials were studied thoroughly in the two other research projects of the larger research programme of which this study is a part.<sup>9</sup> The initial analysis of the pupils' work products indicated that the findings did not add a great deal of information compared with the findings from the other measurement instruments. Thus, I decided to omit these findings to increase the comprehensibility of the results. Nevertheless, the pupils' work products were indirectly included in the analysis because I discussed the products with the pupils in the interviews.

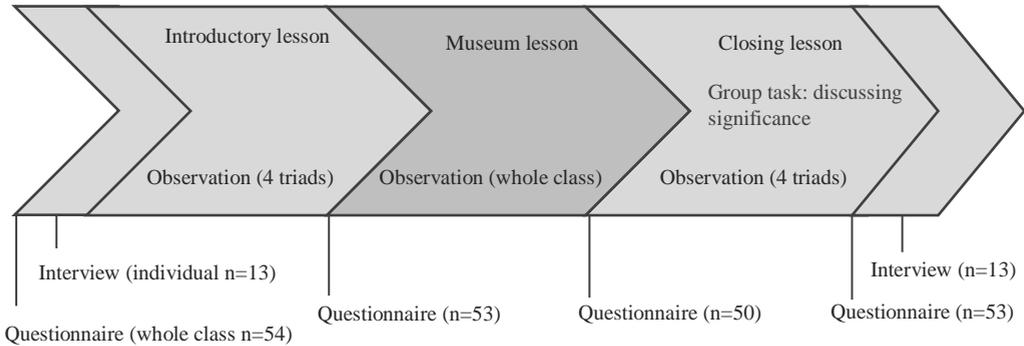
Measurement techniques were triangulated to complement the findings of each instrument with the others to gain insight into the case in its full complexity and to strengthen the qualitative approach of the study. The data were considered as a whole as a means of observing the full range of variation in the pupils' learning within the context of their perspectives prior to and after the project. It should be noted that there may have been mutual influences among the instruments. For example, the questionnaire may have affected the pupils' associations with and thinking about the topic, which, together with the interview, may have had an effect on their learning process during the heritage project. Figure 1 shows an overview of the various instruments that were used at various times before, during and after the project.

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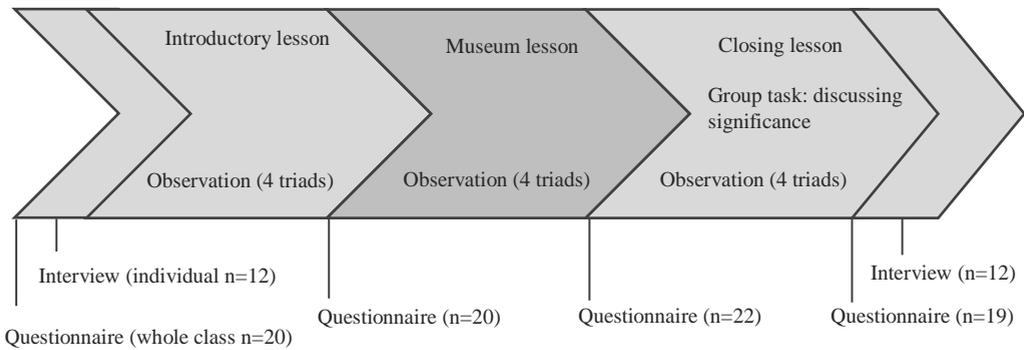
<sup>9</sup> NWO research programme 'Heritage education, plurality of narratives and shared historical knowledge'.

Figure 1. Data collection in each case

Case 1 – Slavery and the transatlantic slave trade



Case 2 – Second World War



2.1 Questionnaires

Because of the lack of similar previous research in the field of heritage education, the questionnaires were newly developed. At various stages of development, they were discussed with several members of my research team. Because of the exploratory nature of the case study, I preferred a semi-structured form and included several structured inquiries along with options for open responses. The design of the questionnaires was inspired by the concept of ‘entrance narratives’, which emphasise that pupils’ learning about a certain topic is affected not only by prior knowledge but also by their backgrounds and feelings (Doering & Pekarik, 1996; Donovan & Bransford, 2005). The concept of entrance narratives refers to the internal story that visitors bring with them into a museum, and it includes both cognitive aspects (i.e., information regarding a certain topic) and affective elements (i.e., personal experiences, memories and feelings) (Doering & Pekarik, 1996). Researchers in the field of museum studies increasingly emphasise that museums should address both the cognitive and the affective (Watson, 2013). The questionnaires at the beginning of the project and after the closing lesson in school were used to investigate the pupils’ historical imagination regarding the history of slavery and WWII, their interest in these histories and the related

historical traces and their understandings of the significance of the history and heritage prior to and after the heritage project. The short questionnaires after the introductory lesson in school and after the museum visit were used to capture the pupils' learning experiences and engagement during the lessons. For the closing lesson, these questions were included in the final questionnaire after that lesson. The questionnaires partly functioned as input for the interviews to ease the discussion of a sensitive topic and to help the pupils recall their experiences during the lessons. At the time of the first questionnaire, the pupils knew that they were going to visit the museum.

In general, the questionnaires were largely the same in both cases. However, certain questions were modified after the first case study was performed, either to improve the questionnaire or to better suit the target group. These changes will be described below. The questionnaires were administered in an initial pilot test in a preliminary form. Based on this pilot test, the questionnaires were shortened, the layout was changed (such as the way the pupils could answer the emoticon question), and several questions were changed. For example, prompts were added to the free recall portion, and the question regarding others' perspectives on the significance of a particular history was moved to the interview. For both cases, all closed questions from the questionnaires and the free recall section were piloted a second time in *NiNsee* or *Museon*, respectively. This pilot resulted in minor changes to a few items to improve the clarity of the questions. All of the questions in the questionnaires are included in Appendix A. Table 2 provides an overview of the data collection, which will be discussed in detail in the following sections.

### *Measurements and analysis of historical imagination*

**Images.** First, the questionnaire at the beginning of the project included a structured mind map with a title in the middle (Slavery from ± 1650-1850 or Second World War) and five related prompts: 'what I already know about it', 'how I've heard of it before', 'what I see before me', 'how I feel about it' and 'what I would like to know is...' (see Appendix A1). The mind map informed me about the pupils' images of the history and their knowledge sources. The structured mind map was chosen as a way of exploring the pupils' prior knowledge using a few prompts to instruct them in their approach to responding to the question. I wanted to examine not only their factual prior knowledge but also their associations with and images of the topic. Mind maps have been used previously in studies of the learning of history (e.g., Prangmsma, 2008; Van Boxtel & Van Drie, 2012). The pupils' responses on the mind map in the first case regarding slavery were analysed using a coding scheme, and a sample of the responses was coded by a second rater, a research team member. This analysis is discussed in depth in chapter 4.

Table 2. Overview of data collection

	Case study 1 - Slavery and the transatlantic slave trade			Case study 2 - Second World War		
	At the beginning of the project	During the project	After the project	At the beginning of the project	During the project	After the project
Historical imagination	<p>Questionnaire: - images and perspectives: structured mind map and world map prompt - interest in learning about the history and heritage of slavery: 8 items (4-point scale)</p>	<p>Questionnaire: - images and perspectives: 2 free recall prompts - emotional engagement and interest: 12 emoticons and 2 free recall prompts - attitude towards learning using historical traces: 10 items (4-point scale)</p>	<p>Questionnaire: - images and perspectives: structured mind map - emotional engagement: 12 emoticons - interest in learning about the history and heritage of slavery: 8 items (4-point scale)</p>	<p>Questionnaire: - images and perspectives: structured mind map - familiarity with 15 historical actors involved in WWII - interest in learning about WWII history and heritage: 7 items (4-point scale)</p>	<p>Questionnaire: - images and perspectives: 2 free recall prompts - emotional engagement and interest: 12 emoticons and 2 free recall prompts - attitude towards learning using historical traces: 10 items (4-point scale)</p>	<p>Questionnaire: - interest in learning about WWII history and heritage: 7 items (4-point scale) - emotional engagement: 12 emoticons - attitude towards learning using historical traces in <i>Museon</i>: written argumentation</p>
	<p>Individual interviews: - images and perspectives - interest - emotional engagement</p>	<p>Video recording whole class in <i>NiNsee</i>: - interest and engagement (nonverbal behaviour)</p> <p>Video recording guides: - content, perspectives and use of historical traces</p>	<p>Individual interviews: - images and perspectives - interest - emotional engagement - learning experiences during lessons</p>	<p>Individual interviews: - images and perspectives - interest - emotional engagement</p>	<p>Video recording triads in <i>Museon</i> and in school: - discussion of perspectives on WWII history and heritage - expressions of interest and motivation, methods of historical inquiry, emotional engagement</p>	<p>Individual interviews: - images and perspectives - interest - emotional engagement - learning experiences during lessons</p>

	Case study 1 - Slavery and the transatlantic slave trade			Case study 2 - Second World War		
	At the beginning of the project	During the project	After the project	At the beginning of the project	During the project	After the project
Understandings of significance	<p>Questionnaire: - understandings of the reasons for the preservation of historical traces: 11 reasons (4-point scale)</p>	<p>Video recording triads in school: - discussion of the significance of the history and heritage of slavery</p>	<p>Questionnaire: - understandings of the reasons for the preservation of historical traces: 11 reasons (4-point scale)</p>	<p>Questionnaire: - understandings of the reasons for the preservation of historical traces: 11 reasons (4-point scale)</p>	<p>Video recording triads in <i>Museon</i> and in school: - discussion of the significance of WWII history and heritage</p>	<p>Questionnaire: - understandings of the reasons for the preservation of historical traces: 11 reasons (4-point scale)</p>
	<p>Individual interviews: - understandings of significance - ideas regarding others' perspectives - self-reported ethnic identity</p>	<p>Video recording guides: - discussion of the significance of the history and heritage of slavery</p>	<p>Individual interviews: - understandings of significance</p>	<p>Individual interviews: - understandings of significance - ideas regarding others' perspectives - self-reported ethnic identity</p>	<p>Video recording educator: - discussion of the significance of WWII history and heritage</p>	<p>Individual interviews: - understandings of significance</p>

Second, the questionnaire at the beginning of the project included another question to examine the pupils' prior knowledge. In the case involving slavery, the pupils were given a world map showing the routes of the triangular slave trade. The explanation written above it stated that the arrows represented the routes that commercial boats sailed between 1650 and 1850 (see Appendix A2). The pupils were asked to write down everything that came to mind when seeing this map by marking a (or several) spot(s) and describing what it made them think of. Their responses on the world map were scored with regard to the number of statements reflecting prior knowledge, such as 'slaves were traded by Europeans' or 'slaves had to work for free'. In the case involving WWII, this map question was replaced by a closed question to examine the pupils' familiarity with fifteen historical actors or groups that were involved in the war (corresponding to the stories in the *Museon* exhibition; see Appendix A3). I included, for example, stories of people in a concentration camp, soldiers in the German army, members of the Dutch National-Socialist Party (NSB), Moroccan soldiers in the French army and the persecuted Roma. The pupils were asked to indicate whether they had never heard the story, had heard it before or knew it well. These questions were based on relevant literature regarding the various narratives of WWII (Ribbens, Schenk, & Eickhoff, 2008). Because it was expected that the pupils had prior knowledge of the war, this more specific question was considered suitable.

To examine the ways in which the pupils' images were enriched during the heritage project, the questionnaires after the introductory lesson and after the museum visit included three prompts to stimulate free recall: what first comes to mind, what I found most interesting and what I did not know before (see Appendix A4). These types of prompts were successfully used in national evaluation studies of the outcomes and impact of learning in museums in England (Hooper-Greenhill, 2007b). The pupils' responses to the prompts were analysed using the same coding scheme as for the mind map. A sample of the responses was coded by a second rater. This analysis is discussed in depth in chapter 4. Second, the questionnaire after the closing lesson in the case regarding slavery repeated the mind map question. Third, this questionnaire asked the pupils to draw their depiction of 'Slavery ± 1650-1850', accompanied by a short written explanation if desired (see Appendix A5). This prompt aimed to capture cognitive and affective elements of the pupils' historical imagination (i.e., their images, perspectives and emotional engagement). However, the results did not add significantly to those of the mind map, and the effort the pupils put into their drawings differed to a great extent due to a shortage of time. Therefore, the drawings were excluded from the analysis. In the questionnaire after the closing lesson in the second case, the mind map and the drawing that were used in the first case were replaced by a different question. In the first case, several pupils commented that the mind map in this questionnaire was a useless repetition of the first one. The responses of the pupils who described their images again also indicated that repeating the mind map within the short period of the project was not very fruitful. Based on the responses on the mind map, I concluded that the images did not change, although the interviews revealed that this

conclusion was not entirely accurate. Therefore, in the second case, I wanted to focus more on the pupils' historical imagination and their experience of learning *during* the museum visit. In addition, I expected that the new question would suit this age group better. This new question included a written argument, which is described below under the heading 'attitude towards learning using historical traces'. The question also asked the pupils what they felt they gained from the visit to *Museon*. This open question informed me about how the visit may have stimulated the pupils' historical imagination.

**Perspectives.** Using a coding scheme, I analysed the pupils' responses on the mind map and the free recall to identify the perspective the pupils adopted in their images. A sample of the responses was coded by a second rater. This analysis is discussed in detail in chapter 4. In the case involving WWII, the closed question to test the pupils' prior knowledge of various historical wartime actors or groups also provided insight into the pupils' prior knowledge regarding the various perspectives that would be addressed in the *Museon* exhibition.

**Interest.** The questionnaires at the beginning of the project and after the closing lesson measured the pupils' interest in learning about the particular history and heritage using eight items on a 4-point scale (see Appendix A6). I included items to examine whether pupils were especially interested in, for example, the topic's history, objects, universal values and in their own relationship to the topic. These items were based on the explanations in the literature regarding the ways in which sensitive history and heritage may trigger pupils' interest and earlier studies of pupils' interest in history (e.g., Angvik & Von Borries, 1997; Grever & Ribbens, 2007). As discussed in the previous chapter, concrete objects and stories may motivate pupils (E. Davis, 2005; Marcus *et al.*, 2012; Von Borries, 2009). Heritage that is considered valuable in the society in which they live, such as objects, commemorations and monuments, can motivate pupils (Hamer, 2005). Furthermore, sensitive history is often used to teach about universal values. Pupils are generally interested in themes of justice and injustice (Barton & Levstik, 2004). Lastly, sensitive history and heritage increase pupils' personal engagement, and discussing pupils' personal relationship with the topic may motivate them (Historical Association, 2007). The items included stems such as 'about objects and stories of ... I'd like to' or 'about how people commemorate ... I'd like to' followed by the response choices 'know nothing at all', 'know nothing', 'know something' and 'know a lot'. The first case study included an item about the National Slavery Monument, which was omitted in the second case. Cronbach's alpha for this interest scale was good in the first case but varied in the second case (see table 3). In addition to this questionnaire, the mind map prompt 'what I would like to know is' informed me regarding what the pupils' were interested in learning. Lastly, the free recall prompt 'what I found most interesting' in the questionnaires after the introductory lesson and after the museum visit informed me regarding what caught the pupils' interest during the lessons.

Table 3. Cronbach's alpha for the scales used in the questionnaires

	Case 1 (n=55)			Case 2 (n=22)		
	Pre	Mid	Post	Pre	Mid	Post
Interest in learning about the particular history and heritage (7/8 items)	.81		.90	.80		.58 Alpha was .65 if the item 'Interest in the exhibition of the Museon about WWII' was deleted.
Attitude towards learning using historical traces (9/10 items)		.87			.51	
- Imagination subscale (5 items)		.83			.24	
- Interest subscale (5 items)		.80			.34	
Disciplinarily motivated reasons for preservation (5)	.71		.86	.68		.43 Alpha was .75 if the item 'Because they are very old' was deleted.
Societally motivated reasons for preservation (3)	.23 Alpha was .59 if the item 'Because they belong to the Netherlands' was deleted		.72	.39		.45 Alpha was .55 if the item 'Because they belong to the Netherlands' was deleted.
Personally motivated reasons for preservation (3)	.53		.64	.52		.49 Alpha was .77 if the item 'Because I would find it a pity if they were gone' was deleted.

Note.  $\alpha \geq 0.9$  excellent;  $0.7 \leq \alpha < 0.9$  good;  $0.6 \leq \alpha < 0.7$  acceptable;  $0.5 \leq \alpha < 0.6$  poor;  $\alpha < 0.5$  unacceptable

**Emotional engagement.** In the questionnaires after each lesson, the pupils were asked to choose one or more emoticons (out of twelve) that represented how they had felt during the lesson (see Appendix A7). The emoticons denoted basic emotions, both positive (e.g., happy, interested) and negative (e.g., angry, bored) (Ainley, Hidi, & Berndorff, 2002). Because the instrument included an 'interested' emoticon, this measurement also informed me regarding pupils' interest during the lessons. Furthermore, when applicable, the first free recall prompt 'what first comes to mind' in the questionnaires after the introductory lesson and after the museum lesson was used to explore the pupils' engagement during the lessons. Lastly, the questionnaire after the museum visit included a question regarding the pupils' attitude towards learning using historical traces in the museum. This question

measured, among other things, pupils' situational interest during the lesson. I will describe this questionnaire under the next heading because it also included other items.

***Attitude towards learning using historical traces.*** In the questionnaire after the museum visit, I explored the pupils' attitudes towards learning using historical traces in the museum. I included 10 items (9 items in case 2 because the item regarding the National Slavery Monument was excluded) on a 4-point scale (see Appendix A8). A higher score indicated a more positive attitude towards learning using historical traces. The items were assigned to two subscales: the first measured imagination triggered by historical traces, and the second measured situational interest triggered by historical traces. The five items regarding imagination were based on the potential for using historical traces as a resource for imagination and empathy, as described in the literature in history learning and museum education (Falk & Dierking, 2013; Fienberg & Leinhardt, 2002; Marcus *et al.*, 2012; McRaine, 2010; Spock, 2010). The items included such stems as 'in this lesson I could empathise well with people who lived in the time of ...' and 'in this lesson I felt like ... "really happened"'. The four to five items regarding situational interest were based on literature regarding the motivating effect of historical traces. The literature explains that the experience of 'real', beautiful or intriguing traces that can be investigated up-close or even held in the hand can trigger pupils' interest (E. Davis, 2005; Marcus *et al.*, 2012; Nakou, 2001; Von Borries, 2009). Studies of sources of perceived situational interest have indicated that vividness and personal engagement are sources of situational interest (Schraw, Bruning, & Svoboda, 1995). These items included such stems as 'I liked working with real objects from the past' and 'in this lesson, I came to find ... is an important topic'. Cronbach's alpha for the entire attitude scale was good for the questionnaire used in the first case study but poor for the questionnaire used in the second case (see table 3). Cronbach's alpha for both subscales was good for the questionnaire used in the first case but unacceptable for the questionnaire used in the second case (see table 3).

The questionnaire after the closing lesson used in the second case included a question that asked for written argumentation regarding whether the pupils would regret it if their school could no longer visit the *Museon* exhibition (see Appendix A9). With this question, I examined their opinions on learning history by visiting that exhibition. This type of dilemma question has been used previously in a study of pupils' ideas regarding historical traces (Seixas & Clark, 2004).

#### *Measurements and analysis of understandings of significance*

***Significance.*** To examine the pupils' understandings of the significance of the particular heritage, the questionnaires at the beginning of the project and after the closing lesson included a question that asked how important it was for them to preserve the particular historical traces. The pupils evaluated eleven reasons for preserving these traces on a 4-point scale (see Appendix A10). The eleven reasons were based on conceptualisations of historical significance by Seixas (2008) and Seixas and Morton (2012), Lévesque (2008)

and Cercadillo (2001), which were rephrased to be specific to the historical traces of slavery and WWII. The reasons represent various perspectives on the historical significance of the particular history and traces and were assigned to three sub-scales: disciplinary, societal and personal reasons. The five disciplinary reasons for significance were mostly inspired by Seixas (2008) and Seixas and Morton (2012) and include the considerations that a history or trace affects many people, has deep consequences and provides insight into the past or present. For example, I included the reason ‘because ... changed the lives of many people’. I formulated three more societally motivated reasons: those related to Dutch society as a whole, to specific groups in society or to such societal values as equality and freedom. For example, I included the reason ‘because objects and stories belong to the Netherlands’. Lastly, three personally motivated reasons included those related to the pupil’s family, identity and interests. For example, I included the reason ‘because objects and stories of ... mean a lot to my family’. Both categories of societal and personal significance were inspired by Lévesque’s memory significance (2008) and Cercadillo’s present significance (2001). Pupils may not only attribute significance by relating heritage to a particular community, such as ‘descendants of enslaved people’ or ‘the Dutch’, but they may also connect heritage to their personal life. They may establish a personal connection when they link a particular heritage to their own identity, concerns, values or interests (E. Davis, 2005; Van Boxtel, 2010a). In addition, the pupils were allowed to write their own reasons. Generally, Cronbach’s alpha for these scales was not good, which can partly be explained by the small number of items (see table 3). Further, the low alpha for the societal scale in the questionnaire at the beginning of the project in the first case study can be explained by a gap in knowledge concerning the role of the Dutch in the transatlantic slave trade, which was referred to in one item. Due to the low alpha for the societal and personal scales in this first questionnaire in the first case study, I decided to report only the results involving individual reasons. In addition, as a result of the interviews, I increasingly doubted the division into disciplinary, societal and personal reasons, as will be explained in the next chapter where I discuss pupils’ understandings of the significance of the history and heritage of slavery.

***Taking other or multiple perspectives on significance.*** The eleven reasons associated with the significance question represent various perspectives on the significance of the historical traces of the particular history. I counted the number of reasons for preservation with which the pupils agreed to examine whether the pupils approached the question regarding significance from multiple perspectives. A pupil’s agreement with a greater number of reasons was interpreted as indicating a richer understanding of the historical significance. Because the reasons reflected various perspectives on significance, it may be assumed that a pupil’s agreement with a greater number of reasons indicates an understanding that the question of significance is complex and may be approached from multiple perspectives.

As shown in table 3, the quality of most of the questionnaire scales in case 2 was questionable, perhaps due to the small number of pupils who participated in this case study. The questionnaires may also have been inadequately adjusted to the particular age group. Particularly in the attitude scale, the items may have been more coherent for younger pupils because of their way of engaging emotionally. For example, the item ‘the time of ... came to life’ is stronger in terms of emotional engagement than the item ‘the lesson made the topic much clearer’. The same applies to the item ‘I thought it was exciting to see real objects from the past up close’ versus the item ‘I liked learning history in a museum’. Perhaps these phrases are considered to be the same thing by younger pupils but not by older pupils.

For the second case study, it was decided not to extensively report the findings of the questionnaires. Instead, I present an in-depth analysis of one of the four triads and use the questionnaires to indicate the extent to which the results of the specific triad deviated from those of the entire class. By looking closely at one triad throughout the project, I was able to explore and narrate in detail the experiences of these three pupils within the context of their perspectives prior to and after the project. Thus, I intended to explain the complex nature of the learning process during pupils’ work on the heritage projects. In addition, I aimed to make the second case study complementary to the first case by choosing this different approach to the data.

## *2.2 Interviews*

Each of the interviews was approximately 20 minutes long and primarily focused on clarification of the questionnaire responses. After a pilot interview with three pupils together, it was decided that one-on-one interviews would be used. These individual interviews were used to discuss each pupil’s perspectives and experiences in depth and without active interference by others. However, there are disadvantages to individual interviews because pupils might feel uncomfortable or intimidated by being alone with a researcher asking questions about their perspectives. Pupils of this age, particularly the younger ones in the first case study, may find it difficult to discuss their ideas in an interview, especially if it concerns a sensitive topic (Garbarino, 1989). Therefore, the questionnaire was used as a reference during the interview. Furthermore, I attempted to ‘play down’ my role as a researcher and emphasised my interest in the pupils by displaying amazement and ignorance regarding what they were telling me. I used open questions and encouraged pupils to ask questions and make comments during the interview (Eder & Fingerson, 2002). Clearly, my own identity was also of importance here. In the first case study, my perceived white identity may have had an effect considering that the topic was slavery and many pupils brought up the issue of inequality between black and white people. In the second case study, certain pupils mentioned my Dutch background as being different from their own background. Although none of the pupils in either case expressed concern

regarding these different identities, they may have had the feeling of talking to one of the two 'sides'.

In the interviews, the pupils were asked to explain their responses on the questionnaires. For example, 'The next two questions concern the preservation of objects and stories of .... You indicated you find it important to preserve these. Could you explain your answer to me?' In the interview after the closing lesson, we compared the responses to the questionnaires at the beginning of the project and after the closing lesson. I asked, for example, 'In the previous interview, you explained to me that you thought this was not important. Can you describe what made you change your mind?' and 'Your response is the same in both questionnaires. Is it correct that you still feel the same about this question?' With regard to their responses regarding the significance of the particular historical traces, the pupils were asked if they thought others would agree with them and, if not, who would not and why. These questions allowed me to gain more insight into their adoption of multiple perspectives. Lastly, I asked them to describe their ethnic identity and to reflect on its effect on their responses on the questionnaire (see Peck, 2010). In the interview after the closing lesson, I also asked the pupils for their experiences and learning during the lessons. First, I used open questions to hear what came to mind first. Then, I asked them to elaborate on specific things they said or did during the lessons. With regard to the pupils' engagement with other perspectives, I mentioned specific issues from the discussions among the triads and asked what their thoughts were regarding any differences of opinion, if they understood the other pupil's opinion and whether they were satisfied with the solution they devised during the lesson. The pupils' reflections on the visit added to my impressions from the video recordings. A full interview protocol is included in Appendix B.

The recorded interviews were transcribed and analysed using ATLAS.ti qualitative analysis software. The raw data were read thoroughly and marked. The codes that resulted from this initial open coding were grouped into broader categories through constant comparison of old and new codes (Miles & Huberman, 1994). During this phase, I frequently reviewed the data to check whether the new categories still represented the pupils' ideas. By comparing these ideas and categories, several themes were identified in the data, which were again checked by returning to the initial coding and data. A sample of the interviews was analysed by a second rater using the themes that resulted from my analysis. We agreed on the assignment of the majority of the codes. Disagreements were resolved by discussion and did not result in the generation of additional codes.

The analysis of the interviews focused on the pupils' understandings of the significance of the particular history and heritage and the way these were related to their self-reported ethnic identity. The literature on pupils' understandings of historical significance in relation to their self-reported ethnic identity was used as a sensitising framework (Cercadillo, 2001; Levstik, 2008; Lévesque, 2008; Peck, 2010). This analysis is discussed in detail in chapter 3. The analysis also explored the pupils' images of the particular period of the past; which historical actors' perspectives they adopted; their

interest in the particular history and historical traces; their emotional engagement during the lessons; and their acknowledgement or articulation of other perspectives. Lastly, I searched for remarks regarding a specific role or effect of learning about the particular past using historical traces as an instructional resource.

### 2.3 *Observation and Group Interaction*

During the museum visit to *NiNsee* in case one (slavery), the entire class was videotaped. When possible, the taping focused on the pupils who were interviewed. In *Museon* in case two (WWII), the four assigned triads were specifically videotaped. In both cases, the group work of the triads during the closing lesson at school was videotaped (four triads in each case). This observation of the museum visit and the cooperative learning was chosen as a measurement instrument because group discussions may reveal both the pupils' own understandings and their acknowledgement of other perspectives encountered within a triad. The observation of the museum visit was also used to explore the pupils' historical imagination, their inquiry into the heritage and the questions they asked during the museum lesson.

Although the records of the triads' discussions were useful, there are also disadvantages to using group work as a data source. When working on a task together in groups, pupils do not explain their actions and line of thought to each other in the way that they would when asked by an outsider, and their talk is sometimes difficult to understand. I attempted to gather as much information as I could by video recording the way the pupils worked on their products. Furthermore, the tasks in the closing lesson required the pupils to write explanations of their choices. Lastly, the interviews were used to encourage the pupils to verbalise their thoughts more elaborately.

The pupils' nonverbal behaviour during the museum visit (such as movements and facial expressions) was analysed as an indicator of interest and emotional engagement. In the second case, the discussions in the triads were also used to analyse the pupils' historical imagination, guided by the literature regarding historical inquiry in school and history learning in a museum setting (Marcus *et al.*, 2012; Van Drie & Van Boxtel, 2008). The analysis of the group work focused on the sharing of understandings of the significance of heritage and the acknowledgement of other and multiple perspectives on this significance. The literature regarding the pupils' discussion of different perspectives on the past was used as a sensitising framework (Barton & McCully, 2012; Goldberg, 2013).

The museum educators were also videotaped during the museum lessons. In *NiNsee*, the educators provided a guided tour. In *Museon*, the educator held a plenary introduction and led a closing activity in which all of the pupils delivered a presentation. The analysis of the educators' talk focused on the specific historical content; the combining of multiple perspectives of historical actors; the contextualisation of historical actors, events or developments; a discussion of multiple perspectives on significance; the interactive construction of significance; and the presentation of historical traces as heritage.

The findings from all of the measurements discussed above will be presented in the next three chapters. The first case study, on the topic of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade, will be discussed in chapters three and four. The findings from the second case study, on the topic of WWII, are presented in chapter five. The methods of both case studies will be discussed in the concluding chapter six.

## CHAPTER 3

‘HE IS AFRICAN, SO HE’LL BELIEVE IT’S IMPORTANT’:

PUPILS’ UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HERITAGE OF SLAVERY<sup>10</sup>

### 1. INTRODUCTION

One of the challenges facing history teachers is teaching about sensitive history, such as the history of the transatlantic slave trade and slavery. In a history classroom, such topics can be sensitive because there is actual or perceived unfair treatment of people by another group in the past or because the history as taught in school conflicts with family or community histories (Historical Association, 2007). Scholars in the field of history education have emphasised the sensitivity of the history of slavery because of its legacies in current society, such as racism and inequality (Loewen, 2010). In the Netherlands, slavery has recently become part of the official history curriculum and can be considered a sensitive topic that is often discussed in terms of ‘black’ and ‘white’ perspectives in societal debates (Oostindie, 2009). Many descendants of enslaved people feel there is little awareness of the history of slavery in Dutch society, and they find it reprehensible that it is not plainly considered to be part of Dutch heritage.

When teaching about slavery in Dutch urban classrooms, teachers may receive different responses from their pupils or may even notice tensions among them. It is possible that certain pupils of Surinamese or Antillean descent have already heard about slavery at home or in their community or show more interest in it than others (Grever *et al.*, 2011). For many other pupils, learning about slavery at school is their first introduction to the topic. Research has shown that pupils’ attribution of significance to the past is influenced by their cultural and ethnic background and by constructions of significance that are present in society and mediated by, for example, the media, peers, family and heritage institutions (Barton & Levstik, 2008; Epstein, 1998; Levstik, 2008; Seixas, 1993). However, little is

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<sup>10</sup> This chapter is based on the following article: Savenije, G., Van Boxtel, C. & Grever, M. (2014). Sensitive ‘heritage’ of slavery in a multicultural classroom: Pupils’ ideas regarding significance. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 62(2), 127-148.

known about the ways in which pupils attribute significance to what is presented as heritage, particularly sensitive heritage.

By heritage, I mean the preservation, selection and construction of material and immaterial historical traces that are considered valuable for the present and the future by a particular community (Grever *et al.*, 2012; Smith, 2006). I use the term ‘traces’ in a broad sense, referring to ‘the physical survivals of the past (buildings, historic sites, museum artefacts) and to the non-institutionalised and less tangible (customs, folk stories, festivals, symbols and ritual)’ (Hamer, 2005, p. 159). These traces refer to a (perceived or invented) collective memory articulated by religious or ethnic groups, families and other mnemonic communities (Halbwachs, 1980; Zerubavel, 2003). Hence, the cultivation of heritage generates and justifies specific identities and is part of what has been called communicative memory: the active transmission of experienced or lived memory to the next generation of a specific community. In addition to communicative memory, traces of the past can be deliberately cultivated in museums, archives and other sites. The historical traces are integrated in the broader culture of that community and that culture can be acknowledged and appropriated by other communities as well (Assmann, 2008; Hogervorst, 2010). At a later stage, when the communicative memory is fading, this cultural memory becomes more important.

The attribution of significance in relation to particular local, regional, national or even global identities and other present interests is even more pronounced in the construction of heritage than it is in the construction of history. When teaching the history of slavery in urban classrooms, the question of whether this history and its historical traces should be considered heritage can easily enter the discussion. Neglecting these issues in history education might make academic history less meaningful to pupils and hinder their connection of this history to their family or community history and heritage (Ribbens, 2007; Seixas, 1993). Further, the idea that they are discussing things that are considered valuable in the society in which they live can motivate pupils (Hamer, 2005). In addition, explicitly denoting historical traces as heritage may enable critical reflection on what heritage is and why particular traces are preserved and by whom (Grever *et al.*, 2012; Seixas & Clark, 2004).

We know from educational research that pupils’ learning is influenced to a great extent by preconceptions (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000). In museums, it is also acknowledged that what visitors bring to a particular exhibition affects their experiences and learning (Doering & Pekarik, 1996; Falk & Dierking, 2013). A better understanding of pupils’ attribution of significance to the sensitive history and heritage of slavery in particular can inform the pedagogies of teachers and educators of museums and heritage institutions. This study contributes to existing theory regarding pupils’ attribution of historical significance by examining this theory explicitly in relation to sensitive heritage. This chapter relates to the first sub-question presented in chapter one regarding the ways in which pupils attribute significance to history and heritage during a heritage project and the

way these attributions are related to pupils' self-reported ethnic identity. As a first step to answering this sub-question, this chapter focuses on pupils' understandings of significance at the beginning of a heritage project. The research question is as follows: *How do pupils in Dutch urban classrooms attribute significance to the heritage of slavery, and how is this related to their self-reported ethnic identity?* The pupils' attribution of significance while engaged in the heritage project will be discussed in chapter four. A questionnaire and interview were administered at a secondary school where a project was planned regarding the heritage of slavery during history education, including a visit to the National Institute for the Study of Dutch Slavery and its Legacy (*NiNsee*) and the National Slavery Monument. First, I will elaborate on the sensitivity of the history of slavery and heritage in the Dutch context. Second, relevant literature on pupils' attribution of historical significance in relation to their ethnic identity will be discussed. Then, I will present the methods and results of my study.

### *1.1 History and Heritage of Slavery in the Dutch Context*

The Dutch Republic played an important role in the transatlantic slave trade. In current Dutch society, the history of slavery may be associated with discrimination and with Dutch citizens being seen as the descendants of enslaved people or their traders (G. Jones, 2012; Loewen, 2010). Much of the dynamic in the Dutch debate about slavery is determined by a transnational discourse shaped by the context of the United States (Oostindie, 2009). However, in contrast to the US, the slavery issue was not very prevalent in Dutch society after abolition in 1863. The freed slaves and their descendants lived overseas in Suriname and the Antilles. Since the arrival of postcolonial migrants beginning in the 1970s, the history of slavery has increasingly received attention and value in Dutch society. In 2002, the National Slavery Monument was erected in Amsterdam (see figure 2). *NiNsee* was founded one year later with the aim of stimulating research and education about the history of slavery. Recently in Dutch history textbooks, increased attention has been given to the role of the Dutch Republic in the transatlantic slave trade, slavery as a system in plantation colonies and the developments that led to abolition (Van Stipriaan, 2007). Nevertheless, one of the primary sensitivities surrounding this history is the extent to which it is acknowledged by a majority of Dutch citizens and is included in historical representations in schools and museums. The recent debate lacks the history of suppression and resistance as in the US. Therefore, it would be neither correct nor helpful to think in terms of 'black' subordinate versus 'white' official perspectives (Oostindie, 2009). The story that is selected as the 'official' one and the ways in which it is attributed significance are particularly urgent and apparent in the way a topic is taught at school as part of the history curriculum or the way it is presented in museums (Goldberg, Porat, & Schwarz, 2006; Grever *et al.*, 2012; Littler & Naidoo, 2005; Smith, Cubitt, Fouseki, & Wilson, 2011; Spalding, 2012; VanSledright, 2008; Wertsch, 2002). Pupils' understandings of what may be considered national history and its significance are affected by such presentations of the past.

Resistance against such official narratives may arise when they leave no room for other narratives (VanSledright, 2008).

Figure 2. The National Slavery Monument in Amsterdam (photo Geerte M. Savenije)



The narrative of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade as included in Dutch history textbooks has changed somewhat during the past decades (Van Stipriaan, 2007). In older school curricula in primary and secondary education, the topic was part of the broad topics of ‘European expansion’, ‘colonialism’ and ‘imperialism’ (OC&W, 1997; OC&W, 1998). Most textbooks of the second half of the twentieth century treated the subject within the context of commercial enterprise in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries or within the context of American history without placing much attention on the system of slavery and the role of the Dutch Republic (Greven, 2005). In 2006, *NiNsee* commissioned the National Centre of Expertise in Curriculum Development (SLO) to develop an approach to teaching the history of Dutch slavery in primary education with recommendations for incorporating the subject in the curriculum (Marshall, 2006). In 2008, when the canon of Dutch history was presented as guidance for teaching history, slavery was one of the fifty items it contained (Van Oostrom, 2008). Recent revisions of the history curriculum include discussions of the transatlantic slave trade, slavery as a system in plantation colonies and the developments that led to abolition (National Centre of Expertise in Curriculum Development, 2007; National Centre of Expertise in Curriculum Development, 2009). For example, in the most recent edition of the textbook *Sprekend Verleden*, there are five

paragraphs about slavery and the transatlantic slave trade, one of which explicitly discusses the role of the Dutch Republic in the transatlantic slave trade. Other paragraphs address European expansion, the plantation colonies, the contextualisation of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade and abolitionism. Further, slavery as a historical phenomenon is a separate subtheme in this textbook (Dalhuisen, 2012). A topic that has not received much attention in most textbooks until now is slave resistance or revolt (De la Porte, 2009).

*NiNsee* and several other institutions offer educational projects on the history of slavery that connect to the school history curriculum. In these projects, teaching the history of slavery is often combined with attempts to create greater awareness and to stimulate the attribution of significance to what is presented as the Dutch heritage of slavery. Scholars have noted that heritage implies a particular engagement with the past that is often motivated by intentions for the future (Lowenthal, 1998; M. Philips, 2004; Smith, 2006). They have criticised the ‘heritage industry’ because it primarily stimulates instrumental and mythical uses of the past for political and commercial reasons (Hewison, 1987). As I discussed earlier, the construction and justification of identities play an important role in this process, which is interwoven with issues of power and social exclusion (e.g., Littler & Naidoo, 2005). Within the context of museums, heritage institutions, tourism and education, heritage is often used in governmental strategies for social inclusion that may not necessarily lead to acknowledgement of diversity in society (Littler, 2005). When a particular heritage is claimed by a particular group, there may be a loss of multiple perspectives concerning the meaning and significance of the heritage (Van Boxtel, 2010b; Waterton & Smith, 2010). However, experts in various disciplines have researched the role of heritage from a dynamic perspective, and they depart from the view that material and immaterial traces of the past are not self-evident and do not have an eternal essence. Instead, these scholars believe that these traces address specific needs and aims of communities who use these traces as a source for developing identities (Littler & Naidoo, 2005; Smith, 2006). This meta-perspective implies an awareness of the multiple perspectives and changing character of the process of constructing heritage.

### *1.2 Understandings of Significance and Pupils’ Identity*

Pupils begin an educational project regarding the history and heritage of slavery with certain understandings of their significance. Slavery has been described as a topic in which differences in pupils’ perspectives of its history are race-related. Epstein (1998, p. 418) described the perspectives of African-American pupils as ‘marked by racial discrimination or oppression’, whereas European-American pupils’ perspectives reflected the idea of democratic rights for all. Other researchers studying the interplay between pupils’ historical understanding and their identity have emphasised the dynamic character of identity (Barton & McCully, 2005; Peck, 2010). In a study of the relationship between ethnic identity and attributions of significance to events in Canada’s past, Peck (2010) studied pupils’ reflections on the interplay between their identity and their conceptions. She found that this

reflection was an ongoing process and that pupils referred to a particular side of their identity prevailing over others at particular moments.

Several authors have categorised the ways in which the past is given historical significance (Cercadillo, 2001; Lévesque, 2008; Seixas, 2008; Seixas & Morton, 2012). For example, events, persons or developments can be considered historically significant because they ‘resulted in change’ or ‘reveal something in the past or present’ (Seixas & Morton, 2012, p. 12). The attribution of historical significance for the present and future is also described as a category. When discussing the significance of the *heritage* of slavery with pupils, this ‘present significance’ may be a relevant category. However, little is known about the ways in which pupils establish a relationship with the present when discussing significance. Most studies of historical significance address pupils’ attributions of significance to historical developments, persons or events and use ‘attributing significance for the present’ as an undifferentiated category. Present-related significance may be less obvious to pupils in those cases (Cercadillo, 2001). One of the key questions regarding heritage is why particular historical traces are considered worth preserving for the future and thus are constructed as heritage. Asking pupils to reflect on the significance of heritage can contribute to insights into their attributions of present-related significance. Further, asking them for their own opinions enables them to relate to the subject personally. I expect that in this situation, the influence of their ethnic identity will come to the fore.

For the purpose of my analysis, I singled out pupils’ understandings of the significance of the history and heritage of slavery. However, these understandings are very interrelated with other aspects of historical thinking. For example, when arguing for the significance of a particular development, pupils need to support their argument. They are dependent on their ability to contextualise or to evaluate and interpret historical evidence (Van Drie *et al.*, 2014). Additionally, pupils’ understandings of significance can affect their ability to engage with diverse perspectives of the past (Barton & McCully, 2012). Although this study focuses on pupils’ understandings of significance, these understandings are only one element of their historical thinking.

## 2. METHOD

A questionnaire and individual interviews were administered in Amsterdam in 2010. The pupils were going to participate in a project about the history and heritage of slavery within the context of their history class, including a visit to *NiNsee* and the National Slavery Monument. At the time of data collection, the pupils already knew they were going to visit *NiNsee*. In a letter from the teacher, the pupils’ parents were asked for permission for their children to participate in the study. The pupils were assured that their answers would only be used for this study and that their names would be changed in any publication of the research.

### *2.1 Participants*

The participants were 55 pupils from two classes at a secondary school in Amsterdam. The school was a mid-sized, Catholic public school for higher general education (HAVO) and pre-university education (VWO). The population of the school reflected the diverse social, cultural, religious and ethnic backgrounds in this urban area. In 2010, 11% of the inhabitants of Amsterdam were of Antillean or Surinamese descent (Central Statistical Office, n.d.). The school was located in a relatively wealthy part of the city. However, the population of the school represented Amsterdam as a whole rather than the neighbourhood where the school was located. A large number of the pupils came from other neighbourhoods or suburbs around Amsterdam. Most of the children living in the neighbourhood of the school attended other schools in the area.

The participants included second-year HAVO pupils aged 13 to 14 years. The participants were 28 pupils from class A and 27 pupils from class B. During the project, a few pupils (1 to 5) were absent at the time of some of the measurements. Thirty-three percent of the participating pupils were female. The classes were culturally and ethnically diverse (e.g., the pupils' backgrounds included Dutch, Moroccan, Surinamese, Turkish, and Antillean backgrounds). Sixteen percent of the pupils were of Antillean or Surinamese descent. Half of the pupils expressed no religious beliefs, 16% were Muslim, and 15% were Christian. The same history teacher taught both classes. History was a compulsory subject taught for two hours per week. In the first years of their secondary schooling, these pupils studied history chronologically starting from prehistoric times and primarily focusing on Western Europe and the Netherlands. At the time that my research began, the pupils were studying the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, in which the topic of slavery is included as part of the history of America.

### *2.2 Data Collection and Analysis*

#### *Questionnaire*

To examine pupils' understandings of the significance of the heritage of slavery, they were asked how important it was for them to preserve the objects and stories of slavery, and they evaluated eleven reasons for this preservation on a 4-point scale (see table 4). The eleven reasons were based on conceptualisations of historical significance by Seixas (2008) and Seixas and Morton (2012), Lévesque (2008) and Cercadillo (2001), which were rephrased to be specific to the historical traces of slavery. I included more disciplinary, societal and personally motivated reasons for attributing significance. Additionally, the pupils were allowed to write their own reason. Initially, the various reasons for the question were designed as separate subscales. As discussed in the previous chapter, I decided to report only the results for separate responses due to the low Cronbach's alpha for the 'societal' (alpha was .23) and 'personal' (alpha was .53) scales. Additionally, during the analysis of the interviews, I increasingly doubted the categorisation into disciplinary, societal and personal. As discussed in the first chapter of this dissertation, these constructs are

interrelated, and separating them into these labels might not be useful. Nevertheless, the different approaches to significance that underlie the eleven reasons in the question are relevant to obtain insight into the variety of ways in which pupils attribute significance to history and heritage.

Next, pupils' interest in learning about the history and heritage of slavery was measured using eight items on a 4-point scale (see table 5). This measurement was used as a context for the significance question. I examined whether pupils learning about the topic were particularly interested in, for example, history, monuments, objects, universal values or their own relationship to the topic. Cronbach's alpha was .81, which is considered good.

*Table 4. Reasons for the preservation of the objects and stories of slavery*

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I think it is important that the objects and stories of slavery are preserved
1. Because they remind us that freedom and equality have not always existed
2. Because they mean a lot to the people who descend from enslaved people
3. Because slavery changed the lives of many people
4. Because they will help us to understand how slaves were traded and why
5. Because I would find it a pity if they were gone
6. Because slavery has had many consequences; for example, it brought much wealth to Europe
7. Because they will help us to understand the present; for example, many African people now live in America and Europe
8. Because they are very old
9. Because they belong to the Netherlands
10. Because they mean a lot to my family
11. Because they will help me to understand who I am

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*Note.* 4-point-scale: completely disagree, disagree, agree, completely agree

*Table 5. Items in the questionnaire regarding interest in learning about the history and heritage of slavery*  
Items

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1. About freedom and equality, I want to
2. About objects and stories of slavery, I want to
3. About the history of slavery, I want to
4. About what slavery has to do with me, I want to
5. About why objects and stories of slavery are preserved, I want to
6. About the museum NiNsee about slavery, I want to
7. About how people commemorate slavery, I want to
8. About the slavery monument in Amsterdam, I want to

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*Note.* 4-point scale: know nothing at all, know nothing, know something, know a lot

*Interview*

Based on the results of the questionnaire, thirteen pupils were selected for individual interviews. I selected pupils who gave different responses to the questionnaire and were of diverse cultural backgrounds to obtain insight into the variety of understandings that pupils may bring into the classroom and to determine whether I could relate differences to the pupils' self-reported ethnic identities.

The interview was 20 minutes long. The pupils were asked to explain their responses to the questionnaire (see Appendix B). For example, 'The next two questions concern the preservation of objects and stories of slavery. You indicated you find it important to preserve these. Could you explain your answer to me?' With regard to their responses about the preservation of the objects and stories of slavery, I asked if they thought others would agree with them and, if not, who would not and why. These questions allowed me to gain more insight into their ability to adopt multiple perspectives and into their ideas regarding how opinions are formed. Finally, the pupils were asked to describe their ethnic identity and to reflect on its influence on their responses to the questionnaire (see Peck, 2010).

After a pilot interview with three pupils together, it was decided that individual interviews would be used. The individual interviews enabled me to discuss the pupils' understandings in depth and without active interference by others. However, there are also disadvantages to an individual interview as pupils might feel uncomfortable or intimidated by being alone with a researcher who is asking questions about their opinions. Pupils of this age may find it difficult to discuss their ideas in an interview, particularly if it concerns a sensitive topic (Garbarino, 1989). The questionnaire was used to give the pupils something to hold. Further, I attempted to 'play down' my role as a researcher and emphasised my interest in the pupils. I used open questions and encouraged them to ask questions and make comments during the interview. Additionally, I was present in the back of the classroom during several lessons to allow the pupils to become accustomed to my presence and to allow me to become more familiar with the pupils' communicative norms and patterns (Eder & Fingerson, 2002). Naturally, my own identity also played a role. Given that the topic was slavery and many pupils brought up the issue of inequality between black and white people, my perceived white identity may have had an influence. Although none of the pupils expressed this concern, they may have felt that they were talking to one of the two 'sides'.

The 13 recorded interviews were transcribed and analysed using ATLAS.ti qualitative analysis software. The raw data were examined thoroughly, and pupils' remarks about the significance of the heritage of slavery and their self-reported ethnic identity were marked. The analysis focused in particular on the many ways in which pupils related to the present in their attribution of significance. Literature on pupils' understandings of historical significance in relation to their self-reported ethnic identity was used as a sensitising framework (Cercadillo, 2001; Levstik, 2008; Lévesque, 2008; Peck, 2010). First, I used the

types and categories of ‘present significance’ described by Lévesque (2008) and Cercadillo (2001) (i.e., the significance for the present or the future). However, in the vague groups of quotations that were the result of this initial coding, the varieties remained concealed. To obtain a better understanding of pupils’ attributions of present significance in relation to their identity, all of their reflections regarding this topic were marked. The codes that resulted from this open coding were grouped into broader categories through constant comparison of old and new codes (Miles & Huberman, 1994). During this phase, I constantly returned to the data to check whether the new categories still represented the pupils’ ideas. By comparing the pupils’ responses, several themes were identified in the data, which were again checked by returning to the initial coding and data. For example, I found that certain pupils struggled with different ‘implications’ of their self-reported Dutch identity. They felt they attributed significance to the heritage of slavery because of this identity, but they simultaneously assigned a Dutch identity to the historical actors whom they condemned for their actions. I checked this emerging theme by rereading my initial coding of all of the pupils and the corresponding interview transcripts. Six interviews were analysed by a second rater using the themes that resulted from my analysis. We agreed on the assignment of most of the codes. Disagreements were resolved by discussion and did not result in additional codes.

### 3. RESULTS

The results of the questionnaire revealed that the pupils were interested in learning about the history and heritage of slavery (mean = 2.83, standard deviation = .74), particularly about the values of equality and freedom as they related to the topic and about objects and stories related to slavery. Further, they thought that it was important to preserve historical traces of slavery, particularly based on the values of equality and freedom and for the descendants of enslaved people (see table 6). The significance for pupils’ own families and for a better understanding of themselves received the lowest scores. Almost none of the pupils wrote their own reason. I conducted an analysis of variance to investigate the differences in understandings of significance between pupils of Surinamese(-Dutch) and Antillean(-Dutch) backgrounds (n=9) and pupils of other backgrounds (n=46). The pupils of Surinamese(-Dutch) and Antillean(-Dutch) backgrounds scored significantly higher than those of other backgrounds on item 10 regarding the significance for pupils’ own families ( $F(1,52)= 16.07, p=.000$ ).

Table 6. Pupils' understandings of the reasons for the preservation of the objects and stories of slavery

Item	Mean	Standard deviation
I think it is important that the objects and stories of slavery are preserved	2.91	.78
1. Because they remind us that freedom and equality have not always existed	3.09	.59
2. Because they mean a lot to the people who descend from enslaved people	3.04	.68
3. Because slavery changed the lives of many people	2.91	.62
4. Because they will help us to understand how slaves were traded and why	2.85	.66
5. Because I would find it a pity if they were gone	2.67	.75
6. Because slavery has had many consequences; for example, it brought much wealth to Europe	2.66	.73
7. Because they will help us to understand the present; for example, many African people now live in America and Europe	2.61	.83
8. Because they are very old	2.45	.80
9. Because they belong to the Netherlands	2.15	.77
10. Because they mean a lot to my family	1.74	.76
11. Because they will help me to understand who I am	1.70	.66

Note. 4-point-scale: completely disagree, disagree, agree, completely agree

The analysis of the interviews indicated the ways in which the pupils related to the present when talking about whether it was important to preserve the heritage of slavery and why. The pupils primarily used two arguments in attributing the present significance: (1) significant for a specific identity or group and (2) significant as a historical example of inequality (see table 7). In the next two sections, I will discuss these two themes. Table 8 provides the results of the questionnaires of the thirteen pupils who were interviewed, all of whom were born in the Netherlands.

### 3.1 Different Groups Related to Heritage of Slavery

When the pupils attributed present significance to the heritage of slavery, they often referred to a specific group of people and reasoned why the heritage of slavery was part of the identity of that group. For example, the pupils said that heritage should be preserved because it helps people to discover or remember who they are. In the described types or categories of present significance, the issue of for *whom* something is significant is not always explicitly addressed. Although researchers depart from the notion that significance is not fixed, they use phrases such as 'significance for our interests in the present and the future'. To whom does the term 'our' refer?

Table 7. Pupils' arguments for the present significance of the history and heritage of slavery in the interviews (n=13)

Argument	Subcategory	Example	Pupils
1. Significant for a specific identity or group	Pupil him/herself	'I can get a much clearer image, I think, because then I see it right before me'.	10
	Undefined/everybody	'Because I think it is unfair; I think everybody should know about it'.	7
	Dutch	'The Netherlands should be reminded of it because it is just an important time. It was not a good time, but it does belong to the Netherlands'.	3
	Descendants of enslaved people	'Those persons who have been through that always carry it with them so to say; it is like a sort of memory'.	12
2. Significant as a historical example of inequality	As a milestone in the development of equality for all	'Maybe without slavery there still would be no freedom or no equality'.	7
	To denounce inequality worldwide in the present time	'It is just bad that still not everybody is equal and people are used in fact.	5
	As a basis for moral judgment of the past projected on the present time	'The most Dutch people traded those slaves to America and so they need to know, realise that they did something bad and that they may come to regret it a little'.	3

Table 8. Interviewed pupils

Pupil <sup>a</sup>	Gender	Parents' birth country	Religion	Interest <sup>b</sup>	Significance <sup>c</sup>
Vasanta	F	Suriname – Suriname	I don't know	3.00	3
Clarence	M	Ghana – Ghana	Christian	2.25	3
Renata	F	Spain – Netherlands	Catholic and Buddhist	3.25	4
Lana	F	Netherlands – Netherlands	Not religious	2.75	4
Jerri	M	Turkey – Netherlands	Not religious	3.00	2
Noa	F	Serbia – Netherlands	Orthodox Christian	3.50	4
Bas	M	Netherlands – Netherlands	Not religious	2.63	3
Giulio	M	Suriname – Netherlands	Not religious	2.63	3
Berneen	F	Ireland – Ireland	Christian	2.88	3
Thijs	M	Netherlands – Netherlands	Christian	3.00	3
Evelyn	F	Curacao – Netherlands	Christian	3.00	3
Tara	F	Suriname – Netherlands	Not religious	3.13	3
Anouar	M	Morocco – Morocco	Muslim	3.38	3

Note. <sup>a</sup>All names are fictitious. <sup>b</sup>Mean score on interest questionnaire. <sup>c</sup>Score on preservation question

The pupils in this study attributed significance to the heritage of slavery for themselves, for the Netherlands, for the descendants of enslaved people, and for undefined groups designated as ‘we’, ‘one’, ‘people’ or ‘everybody’ (see table 7). When the pupils attributed significance to the heritage of slavery for themselves, it was mostly in terms of learning. Four pupils wondered if their ancestors had somehow been involved in the history of slavery. It should be noted that the pupils tended to use the undefined ‘one’ to refer to themselves, as is becoming more common in the Dutch language. When the pupils referred to an undefined group, it was mostly in the context of learning and knowledge. Further, they used the undefined group in the contexts of commemoration, the prevention of slavery, and equality. For example, Lana referred to the undefined group ‘people’ when asked for the most important reason to preserve the heritage of slavery:

‘Um, yes, so people will know, even when slavery is really abolished everywhere in the world, that they will still know what happened, so to say.’

The pupils mentioned two groups or identities that are more closely related to the topic: the Dutch and the descendants of enslaved people. Clarence and Lana, for example, thought it is important to preserve the heritage of slavery for both of these groups. When discussing the significance for the Netherlands, Lana said that although what had happened was very bad, the Dutch still needed to be reminded of this important time that was a part of their past. Her classmate Clarence went a step further by saying,

‘The most Dutch people traded those slaves to America, and so they need to know, realise, that they did something bad and that they, well, may come to regret it a little’.

Clarence also thought the heritage of slavery would be valuable for the descendants of the enslaved. He reasoned that perhaps some of the enslaved had brought objects with them from Africa, and their children would want to know more about these objects. Lana elaborated a similar argument:

‘If you descend from somebody who was, for example, a slave, then you think, like, I am lucky not to live in that era so to say, um, but if you hear, for example, a story or something of someone from your family or you just read it, well, then it is kind of important that you know what that person has been through’.

The significance for descendants was mentioned by all but one of the interviewed pupils. Three pupils attributed significance to the heritage of slavery for the Netherlands. These results match those of the questionnaire. The significance for the descendants of enslaved people scored very high, whereas the significance for the Netherlands received a relatively low score (see table 6). In the interviews, it became clear that seven pupils were not aware of the role of the Dutch Republic in the transatlantic slave trade, which may explain these results. This group of seven included all four of the pupils with one or two parents from Suriname or the Antilles.

### 3.2 Good or Bad? What Matters is Equality

One theme was omnipresent in the data: the importance of equality. During the interviews, all of the pupils talked about equality. Some explained their interest in the issue, and others described feelings and thoughts regarding the importance of equality. Four pupils explicitly related this theme to the heritage of slavery as a reason to preserve it. They thought that the heritage of slavery may help people to remember the importance of equality.

Regarding the extension of equality to increasing numbers of people, the pupils expressed different perspectives (see table 7). Clarence, Lana, Tara and Giulio emphasised that black people are still discriminated against and that people are not treated equally in some parts of the world. Six other pupils did just the opposite, focusing on change, as did Vasanta:

‘Because, well, everybody is equal currently, and it is just important, well, how it started, and so I just find that really interesting – yes, just the main - that everybody became equal and free’.

Berneen addressed both of these themes. She said that all people are equal now, but she also discussed social problems that are still present, such as discrimination:

‘Now everybody is equal, but of course other people have their own opinion, for example, that they do not want anything to do with blacks’.

I: ‘Uhuh, ok, what do you think of then?’

B: ‘For example, here in Amsterdam, there are a lot of foreigners, and then there are people who say, ok, it is just normal, but then you have other people who think, like, “it is the Netherlands all right, it is not another country, and they come here”, and those people maybe think they come here and then they cause trouble. Yes, because there are, of course, youngsters who do that, but those people see those young people and other young people as one’.

Although all of the pupils discussed the theme of equality, it was difficult for them to explain its relationship to the history and heritage of slavery or why equality was so important to them. Sometimes it sounded as if they were reciting a lesson hammered into them at school, but many of the pupils were articulate and sounded convinced of their statements. Three of the pupils said they did not want to know anything about slavery because it was such an unfair system. Thijs, for example, said,

‘I think it is such a weird subject really that I think, in fact, that I know enough about it. [...] I think the only thing one needs to know about slavery is that it was really, um, really unfair’.

Jerri shared this perspective regarding the preservation of the heritage of slavery:

‘It is so bad; then why would you preserve it? Yes, I do not think that you should preserve it when it is so bad’.

I: ‘No, and why not then?’

J: ‘Just I, well, a few things maybe, but only from what the ships looked like and that kind of things, but, and where and how they were loaded into them, but not those whips really or something, that kind of things or, well yes, I just think it is bad’.

Jerri distinguished more neutral historical traces from traces that were directly linked to the historical events or processes that he judged as bad. He did not want to know more about the latter. For many pupils, slavery was primarily a historical *example* of inequality, almost a symbolic metaphor, as in the remarks above. Its historical reality did not need to be understood.

In the context of this symbolic approach, it is relevant that nearly all of the pupils exclusively ascribed the heritage of slavery to the descendants of enslaved people. Only Jerri did not because he thought they would not want to preserve anything that reminded them of the horrible events their ancestors had to experience. He thought that only people who became rich because of slavery or who approved of it would want to preserve its heritage. Along the same line of reasoning, but arriving at a different conclusion, Thijs stated that although the Dutch played a role in the history of slavery, they did not have the right to claim the heritage of slavery. Although he could imagine that the descendants would rather forget about slavery and let the heritage of slavery be, he thought that they had the right to know what happened to their families; therefore, the heritage of slavery should be preserved. According to the line of reasoning of Thijs and Jerri, the question of for whom it might be significant to preserve the heritage of slavery turned into a moral judgment in which the pupils chose the side of the descendants. However, most of the pupils emphasised the importance of equality instead of passing judgment with reference to particular present communities or identities. One pupil, Anouar, stated that it could be significant to preserve the heritage of slavery for both the descendants of the enslaved *and* the descendants of slave owners. Interestingly, six pupils were unaware that some of the descendants of enslaved people were of Surinamese or Antillean descent, currently lived in the Netherlands and were, in fact, in their class. As mentioned earlier, many pupils did not know about the role of the Dutch Republic and, thus, the possibility of having classmates whose ancestors were slave traders. Yet, at least six pupils *were* aware of their own and others’ identities and the ways in which they thought these identities related to the issue of the heritage of slavery, which is my focus in the next section.

### 3.3 *Who Am I in This Play?*

I found three ways in which the pupils’ ethnic identity related to their attribution of present significance. The pupils (1) felt there was no relationship, (2) felt that they were part of a group related to the topic or (3) displayed a flexible relationship (see table 9). In cases of ‘no influence’, I specified why the pupil did not see a relationship. When I thought there *was* a relationship, I assigned two codes: one for the pupils’ perception and one for my own interpretation.

*Table 9. Pupils' self-reported ethnic identity and its influence on their understandings of significance*

Pupil	Short indication of self-reported ethnic identity	Influence of identity
Vasanta	Pupil did not know: maybe Dutch	No influence: does not want to name it / Part of a group: descendants of enslaved people
Clarence	Dutch-Ghanaian	No influence: family not involved / Flexible: various identities emerge – changing perspectives
Renata	Spanish-Dutch	No influence: no explicit idea about it
Lana	Surinamese	Part of a group: descendants of enslaved people
Jerri	Turkish-Dutch	No influence: does not want to name it
Noa	Dutch	Part of a group: Dutch
Bas	Dutch	Part of a group: Dutch
Giulio	Surinamese-Polish-Dutch	Part of a group: descendants of enslaved people
Berneen	Dutch-Irish	No influence: family not involved
Thijs	Dutch	Part of a group: Dutch
Evelyn	Dutch-Antillean	Part of a group: descendants of enslaved people
Tara	Spanish-Surinamese-Dutch	No influence: family not involved
Anouar	Moroccan	No influence: family not involved

Seven pupils felt that they were part of a group related to the topic. For example, Vasanta said that her ancestors had been taken to Suriname to work as slaves, and she explained how this affected her life as a descendant. She talked about the ways slavery changed the lives of many people and referred to herself as an example because she would not have lived in the Netherlands if it were not for slavery. In this way, she drew a line from the lives of her ancestors of centuries ago to her own life. The same type of reasoning occurred in the pupils who regarded themselves as part of the Dutch, although in an uncertain and uncomfortable way. Bas, for example, said that it was shameful to think that the Dutch had many slaves and that because he was Dutch, he had also abused people. He corrected himself and said ‘my ancestors’, but then he used ‘we’ again. Later in the interview, he wondered whether perhaps his ancestors had been slave traders, and he wanted to know whether ‘he had anything to do with it’. Interestingly, he did not consider slavery to be a part of the history of the Netherlands because he thought one could not speak of an intense, long-term relationship between Africa and the Netherlands. In terms of history, the Dutch involvement in the slavery era was too insignificant to be seen as part of Dutch history. However, when thinking of Dutch identity in a more symbolic way, slavery was an issue that affected Bas as a Dutch youth and made him feel ashamed. Noa struggled with a feeling of shame because of her Dutch identity as well:

‘I think, well, I am Dutch too, so I should be ashamed about it as well, but on the other side I think, well, in fact I have nothing to do with it. At least, I have not done it, and if I... if I had lived back then I would have done something about it. I would have said, “You should stop; we are all just equal”. But I was not there, so I cannot do anything about it.’

On the one hand, Noa feels that she shares a responsibility with all Dutch over time; on the other hand, she thinks she cannot be held responsible for something she has not done and could not have prevented. She emphasises her incomprehension of those who are to blame and sets herself apart from them. This type of reasoning can be seen as a distancing technique, as described by Goldberg *et al.* (2006). By explicitly appointing the guilty party within the group and distancing themselves from the villains, pupils cope with the fact that they subscribe to a collective memory narrative in which their own group is accused and played a negative role. Based on Vygotsky, the authors interpret this as a creative use of the cultural tool ‘the collective memory narrative’, which ‘affords the individual the chance to reposition him or herself and to establish moral footing in the present’ (pp. 343).

Giulio, who also experienced the heritage of slavery in a personal way, did not create distance but identified with a particular group. His father told him that Giulio’s great-great-grandfather had been taken as a slave. Giulio thought that the most important reason to preserve the heritage of slavery was its value to the descendants of the enslaved people; because he was a descendant himself, this was also important for him. He had several questions about what happened to his family during the slavery period, and he thought that by learning more about those events, he would learn more about himself. Giulio described a direct relationship between the descendants of enslaved people in general, his family, and himself:

‘In the past, people were just very racist, and I am now black, too, and, yes, I just cannot understand that people did that, that they were so racist, and, well, I think it is important to remember that because they were racist to my family as well’.

Through his answers, we read some of Giulio’s characteristics of the group ‘descendants of enslaved people’, such as having a dark skin colour. Further, he explained that the Surinamese part of his identity influenced his way of thinking about the issue. He thought that, in contrast to him, Dutch, Moroccan, and Muslim pupils would find other things more important than the heritage of slavery.

Despite the examples of Noa and Giulio, I did not find that the pupils’ self-reported ethnic identity consistently had the same influence. Four pupils who described themselves as partly Surinamese or Antillean thought that they were descendants of enslaved people based on their ancestry, but they did not always see this as affecting their perspectives. For example, Lana said that perhaps a long time ago her ancestors had been enslaved, but she thought that was far too long ago to still care about it. She said it was very possible that her friend Noa, who was ‘100% Dutch’, had given exactly the same response. This emphasis on being just like any other pupil with regard to perspectives on slavery can also be seen as a distancing technique. These pupils did not want to identify with a particular stereotype of the descendants of enslaved people.

Some pupils had difficulties in describing their own ethnic identity or its influence on their understandings of the significance of the heritage of slavery. Vasanta, for example,

said she thought that perhaps she was ‘just Dutch’, but in fact she did not really know yet. For the question regarding the influence of ethnic identity on her ideas, she responded negatively. However, earlier in the interview, she said,

‘I am like a Surinamese Hindu, and just how could it be actually that there are so many different people there, really a lot of different people and cultures, but that is really because of, it is because of slavery as well. [...] If there had not been slavery, then I would not be here maybe, so then my ancestors would, great ancestors would be in Suriname neither, maybe still in Iran or something’.

It seemed that Vasanta felt uncertain or uneasy answering the question regarding the influence of her ethnic identity. Three other pupils said there was no influence because their family had not been involved. This narrowing of the influence of identity to a question of ancestry may be a reaction to the difficulty of the question or an uneasy feeling about it because when asked about others’ perspectives, the pupils related particular identities to particular perspectives. The emphasis on ancestry could also have been adopted from public debates in which certain descendants of enslaved persons stress this bloodline.

One pupil displayed a flexible identity by describing various parts of his identity that were evident at different times. For Clarence, slavery was interesting because most enslaved persons were taken from his fatherland. He said slavery was good because the enslaved were Christianised and he was a Christian himself, and it was bad because the enslaved were treated like cattle and black people were still discriminated against in America. Clarence said he did not feel a personal connection to the subject because he had no family in America. However, his answers suggest that the subject of slavery is personal to him in certain ways due to his Ghanaian and Christian identities. Finally, Clarence’s strong remark that the Dutch need to realise that they did something bad and that they need to regret it shows an influence of his identity as a Dutch citizen who sets himself apart from ‘the Dutch’ in the past and the present.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, I have analysed pupils’ attribution of significance to the heritage of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade at a secondary school in Amsterdam. In particular, I examined their understandings of the present significance and its relationship to their self-reported ethnic identity. The pupils generally expressed interest in learning about the history and heritage of slavery, particularly its relationship to the values of equality and freedom and the objects and stories associated with it. This outcome is consistent with observations by Barton and Levstik (2004) about pupils’ general interest in the themes of justice and injustice and with assumptions regarding the motivating and engaging quality of heritage as ‘real’ traces from the past (Marcus *et al.*, 2012). Almost all of the pupils attributed significance to the heritage of slavery. My analysis of the interview data resulted

in a meaningful description of the variety of ways in which pupils attributed present significance to this heritage. Scholars in the field of history education have described present significance as an important way of attributing significance to the past, but it was not clear how pupils used this category, particularly in relation to heritage. My study of the heritage of slavery identified two main arguments. It is important to recognise that the questionnaire that was administered before the interview undoubtedly affected the pupils' answers in the interviews. The two primary arguments that were evident in my analysis relate to items in the questionnaire. However, other items included in the questionnaire were not prominent in the interview. The way that the pupils talked about the two arguments I identified indicated that these thoughts were also their own.

In the first argument for attributing significance to the heritage of slavery for the present, the pupils referred to particular identities. By doing so, they shaped historical identities and created continuity for these identities between the past, present and future (Rüsen, 2004). They often turned to identity types, and a few of the pupils talked about these types in a symbolic way. The pupils mostly viewed the heritage of slavery as important to the descendants of enslaved people. This view may be due to the fact that these descendants, as postcolonial immigrants, have stressed the importance of preserving the heritage of slavery in Dutch society. Similarly, it is striking to observe the knowledge gap regarding the role of the Dutch Republic in slavery and the low number of pupils who attributed significance to the heritage of slavery for the Netherlands. This result may reflect an effect of Dutch history textbooks. Interestingly, I found that none of the interviewed pupils with one or two parents from Suriname or the Antilles knew about the role of the Dutch. This may be surprising considering that it was mostly Surinamese and Antillean immigrants (the generation of these pupils' parents) who urged recognition by the Dutch government of the past related to slavery. Possibly due to their lack of knowledge, I did not encounter many problems among pupils with the 'official Dutch narrative' of slavery, in which Dutch involvement does not receive much attention. Only Clarence seemed to reject this version and pointed to the need for increased consciousness in Dutch society of the role of the Dutch in slavery. Several pupils were also aware that heritage can be claimed by particular groups of people and that this can be problematic for others who attribute significance to this heritage in a different way.

A second argument for the present significance of the heritage of slavery involved equality. Slavery became a historical example of inequality and was used to argue for equality. The historical context lost its relevance because the purpose was not to understand or explain the historical phenomenon itself but to use its symbolic meaning, the horror of it, to demonstrate the importance of equality. This way of thinking reflects the post-racial perspective that Smeulders (2012) described in her study of the representation and consumption of the heritage of slavery in Suriname, Ghana, South Africa and Curacao. From this perspective, slavery is used as an example of the repression of groups and the misuse of power to create universal awareness of a shared responsibility to fight such

repression and exclusion in the present and the future. I found a difference between those pupils who thought everyone was currently equal in contrast to the era of slavery and those who used the topic of slavery to stress that inequality still exists. In this last perspective, the presence of the general theme of equality is stronger than the historical reality. The emphasis on continuity between the time of slavery and the present lacks a historical perspective in which the past and the present are inevitably distinct. Research by Lee, Dickinson and Ashby (1997) indicated that it can be difficult for pupils aged 13 to 14 years old to contextualise the actions of people in the past and to understand them in terms of people's specific concerns and situations. Most pupils begin to do so only at the age of 14. Additionally, the pupils' thinking in terms of good and evil and their moralising approach to the topic resonates with earlier research by Von Borries (1994) and Egan (1997). There are examples in my study of the ways in which moral judgments can obstruct historical explanation and reconstruction. Along with Seixas and Clark (2004), I believe it is important that pupils understand the moral dimension of history and that they learn to make informed judgments about the actions of people in the past and about heritage. As is evident in my study, pupils may have rather strong moral judgments. Educators should be aware of this, and they should use these judgments as a starting point to stimulate historical reasoning in which the historical context is recognised.

The interviews revealed that seven pupils considered themselves part of a group that they related to the heritage of slavery. One of them identified with that group, and the others distanced themselves from perspectives specifically associated with 'their' group. These six pupils felt that their knowledge and interests (rather than being part of this group) determined their understandings of the heritage of slavery. Several pupils reported that they did not notice any influence of their self-reported ethnic identity, but sometimes it seemed that the pupils could not or did not want to describe their identity and the ways in which it affected their ideas. These examples broaden our insight into pupils' use of distancing techniques (Goldberg *et al.*, 2006). Contrary to the findings of Epstein (1998), the perspectives of the pupils in my study could not always be interpreted meaningfully along the lines of a self-reported 'black' or 'white' ethnic identity. Earlier research noted that Dutch pupils of Caribbean background were significantly more proud of and felt more connected to their family history than pupils of Dutch background (Grever *et al.*, 2011). The results of my questionnaire also revealed that the pupils of Surinamese(-Dutch) and Antillean(-Dutch) backgrounds scored significantly higher on the item regarding the importance of the heritage of slavery for their family than the pupils of other backgrounds. However, the interview data revealed a more diverse and ambiguous image of the relationship between the pupils' self-reported identities and their understandings of the significance of the history and heritage of slavery. This finding is in line with that of Hawkey and Prior (2011), who also draw a complex picture of the influence of pupils' ethnic identity on their positioning with respect to the national narrative.

My study of 55 pupils is small, especially given that the participants were divided into subgroups of various backgrounds. It is also limited because my sample of pupils is from one school; pupils' learning experiences and their sense of self are partly structured by the specific school context, with its traditions, value systems and political mandates (Perret-Clermont, 2009). This study is an initial exploration of the interplay between pupils' identity and their attribution of significance to the heritage of slavery. Further, the pupils in my study were relatively young and were not always able to reflect on their own ethnic identity and the ways in which it affected their ideas. Often, the pupils discussed these issues only implicitly. However, in many cases, their expressions made it clear that their identity played a role. It is important to keep in mind the complexity of the processes that emerged during my interviews with respect to further research. Educators should be aware of this complexity and should acknowledge the variety of backgrounds and perspectives that pupils bring to the classroom. By addressing this diversity, pupils' personal engagement can be stimulated to enhance meaningful learning. Educators can discuss the ways in which identity may play a role in a variety of ways without reinforcing stereotypes. Reflection on the ways in which our own viewpoint determines how we see the past is an important goal of teaching history. Educators can use pupils' understandings of a specific heritage and incorporate current debates about this heritage in society to achieve this objective.

Apart from certain examples of emotional responses and moral judgments, the heritage of slavery did not seem to be a very sensitive topic for the majority of pupils. It is important to note that during the years that the study was conducted, public awareness of Dutch involvement in the history of slavery increased. The debate surrounding *Black Pete* received international attention and may have also reached classrooms. In this context, pupils may now be more aware of the sensitivity of the history of slavery in current Dutch society. However, the two most common themes that emerged in my study, the emphasis on equality and the descendants of enslaved people, may also be seen as a 'safe' way of dealing with the topic by keeping it at a distance. A valuable teaching and learning approach for these pupils would be to discuss perspectives on the heritage of slavery other than the perspective of the descendants of enslaved people and to put the issue of equality into context. The findings presented in this chapter raise the question of how pupils will react to the heritage of slavery if they are taught about it in a heritage project. Will they be stimulated to express their own perspectives, and to what extent will these be challenged by the exhibition and educators? The next chapter discusses the emergence of pupils' understandings in an educational setting in which the historical traces of slavery are presented as Dutch heritage when teaching the history of slavery.



## CHAPTER 4

### IMAGINE THE TIME OF SLAVERY AND PASS THE STORY ON:

### LEARNING ABOUT HISTORY IN A HERITAGE PROJECT ADDRESSING SLAVERY<sup>11</sup>

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

Amidst the wooden walls of the exhibit ‘Break the silence’, which evokes the inside of a slave ship, an educator from the National Institute for the Study of Dutch Slavery and its Legacy (*NiNsee*) tells pupils about the conditions on these ships. The pupils can hardly believe what they hear as she tells them about three months of lying in chains with people defecating and sometimes dying directly above and beside one another.

*NiNsee* and several other museums and institutions offer educational projects about the history of slavery that connect with the school history curriculum. In these projects, teaching the history of slavery is often combined with creating greater awareness and stimulating the attribution of significance to what is presented as the Dutch heritage of slavery. The educational project of *NiNsee* was studied by De Bruijn (2014) as a case study in his dissertation concerning educational resources used in heritage projects in England and the Netherlands. He described how the heritage project emphasised the perspectives of the enslaved persons and how the project stressed the importance of commemorating the legacies of this past. Over the years, scholars have criticised the ‘heritage industry’ because it primarily stimulates instrumental and mythical uses of the past for political and commercial purposes (Hewison, 1987; Lowenthal, 1998; Smith, 2006). Within the context of museums, heritage institutions, tourism and education, heritage is often used in governmental strategies for social inclusion that may not necessarily lead to the acknowledgement of diversity (Littler, 2005). When a particular heritage is claimed by a particular group, there may be a loss of multiple perspectives concerning the meaning and significance of the heritage (Smith *et al.*, 2011; Van Boxtel, 2010b). Recently, experts in

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<sup>11</sup> This chapter is based on the following article: Savenije, G.M., Van Boxtel, C. & Grever, M. (2014). Learning about sensitive history: ‘heritage’ of slavery as a resource. *Theory and Research in Social Education*, 42(4), 516-547.

various disciplines have researched the role of heritage from a dynamic perspective: the study of material and immaterial traces of the past that are considered valuable for the present and the future by a particular group of people (Littler & Naidoo, 2005; Smith, 2006). This meta-perspective implies an awareness of the multi-perspective and changing character of the process of constructing heritage. In existing educational practices, however, heritage is not always approached dynamically. Teaching the history of slavery may be at odds with educational practices in which historical traces are used as an instructional resource and presented as Dutch heritage at the same time (Grever *et al.*, 2012; Hamer, 2005). In the Netherlands, historical thinking and reasoning are important objectives of the history curriculum. How are educational practices in which historical traces are presented as heritage positioned within this context?

There are various reasons for embarking on field trips and teaching history using historical traces, by which I mean ‘the use of the physical survivals of the past (buildings, historic sites, museum artefacts), as well as the non-institutionalized and less tangible (customs, folk stories, festivals, symbols and ritual)’ (Hamer, 2005, p. 159). For example, historical traces can stimulate historical empathy or imagination (Marcus *et al.*, 2012; McRaine, 2010; Spock, 2010). This imaginative engagement is particularly valuable for teaching about historical realities, such as slavery, that pupils find difficult to understand because these realities are unjust, cruel or horrible in their eyes (Davies, 2000; Pettigrew *et al.*, 2009). However, the ways in which the often multi-layered or disputed ‘heritage status’ of particular traces of the past affect the learning of history remain insufficiently studied. The history of slavery can be sensitive in an urban classroom because of its traumatic content and because pupils may identify with historical actors or respond morally to the history (Sheppard, 2010). It is to be expected that these reactions may be intensified by an encounter with the historical traces related to this history, particularly when these traces are considered to be heritage and are attributed significance by a majority, a minority or both, but in different ways. Pupils of various backgrounds may connect to the history of slavery in different ways, and these connections can emerge in the forefront when historical traces are presented as Dutch heritage. With this type of topic, which is particularly sensitive in contemporary multicultural societies, these relationships can create tension among pupils or between pupils and their teacher. However, the idea that they are studying historical traces that are considered valuable in the society in which they live can motivate pupils (Hamer, 2005). Studying heritage may also stimulate pupils’ awareness that history is built on stories that are significant to particular groups of people. This awareness can help them reflect on their own criteria for deciding what is historically significant. Currently, one of the aims of history education is to understand the ways in which history is constructed and subject to the changing viewpoints of its present creators (Seixas & Morton, 2012). However, there has been little empirical research on the practices of learning sensitive history using historical traces from a heritage approach.

A case study was conducted to explore pupils' learning of the history of slavery in an educational setting in which historical traces are presented as Dutch heritage. The previous chapter discussed the pupils' understandings of the historical significance of the heritage of slavery. In this chapter, I focus on the pupils' attribution of historical significance and their historical imagination while engaged in a heritage project addressing slavery. As I will discuss in the next section, historical imagination and historical significance are important issues in learning sensitive history. I expect that, particularly for these aspects of the learning of history, the 'effect' of using a heritage approach to the past may become evident. The research question of this chapter is as follows: *How do pupils in Dutch urban classrooms learn about the history of slavery while engaged in a heritage project that presents historical traces of slavery as Dutch heritage?* I gathered data using a combination of methods during a heritage project on the topic of slavery, which included a visit to *NiNsee* and the National Slavery Monument. The data were derived from whole-class questionnaires, individual interviews, transcribed pupil discussions and observations of three lessons.

In what follows, I will discuss the concepts central to my analysis. First, I elaborate on pupils' historical imagination and their understandings of historical significance in relation to learning sensitive history. Second, I consider the practice of using historical traces from a heritage approach and discuss the constraints and benefits of this practice when teaching the sensitive topic of the history of slavery. Then, I present the methods and results of the case study.

## 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.1 Pupils' Historical Imagination

In the literature addressing sensitive history, the impossibility of imagining particular past events is an important issue. Certain historical events are too horrific to envision or understand (Davies, 2000; Pettigrew *et al.*, 2009). Yet, when educators present dry facts, history may become meaningless, and people may be reduced to statistics (I. Philips, 2008). Although imagining the past is important for pupils' understanding of history, it is difficult to define what they do when performing this mental task (Egan & Judson, 2009). When learning about the past, pupils form mental images in which they try to imagine the perspectives of the historical actors figuring in the events. Generally, these mental images also have an emotional dimension (Egan, 1997). It is also argued that 'physical being-in-the-environment' is an important element of imagination (Fettes & Judson, 2010). These aspects of learning are often central to educational practices using historical traces. The pupils described in the first paragraph of this chapter were stimulated to form mental images of a slave ship and to adopt the perspective of an enslaved person in it, including a 'simulation' of the bodily experience of being in such a ship and the emotions that it would evoke.

Pupils' capacities to imagine the past and the extent to which that is desirable for learning history has been part of the debate regarding historical empathy (Lee & Shemilt, 2011). Historical empathy is seen as a complex undertaking for pupils (Lee & Ashby, 2001). One of the issues is the extent to which historical empathy is, or should be, cognitive or affective (Brooks, 2011). Together with Barton and Levstik (2004), Kohlmeier (2006), Endacott (2010), Brooks (2011) and Davison (2012), I regard historical imagination and historical empathy as both cognitive and affective processes. Cognitively, pupils consider the perspectives of historical actors in the past. Affectively, they show interest in these people, they care for them, and they react to the consequences of past events in the past and the present (Barton & Levstik, 2004). Although the affective component has been associated with sympathy or unrestrained imagination, which indeed sometimes occurs in classrooms, I believe it is neither possible nor desirable to neglect this component. This affective element of historical empathy can motivate historical inquiry (Kohlmeier, 2006). Furthermore, as argued by Gregory and Witcomb (2007) and McRaney (2010), a more embodied learning experience using all of the senses, such as exploring a historic site or object or performing role-play, may bring about new forms of historical understanding. However, pupils' affect may also impede their learning. Particularly when sensitive history is involved, there is a risk of generating strong moral responses or negative emotions, as explained in the previous chapter (Savenije, Van Boxtel & Grever, 2014; Schweber, 2004; Von Borries, 1994). Pupils may thus have difficulty contextualising particular events and the actions of historical actors or approaching historical developments from the perspectives of various historical actors. To prevent imaginative engagement from becoming too overwhelming and bringing history too close, certain authors emphasise the importance of approaching sensitive histories from multiple perspectives (Kokkinos, 2011; Schweber, 2006).

### *2.2 Pupils' Identity and their Understandings of Significance*

Another issue in teaching sensitive history is the composition of the class of pupils and their understandings of the significance of that history. Several authors have categorised the ways in which the past is attributed historical significance (Cercadillo, 2006; Lévesque, 2008; Seixas, 2008; Seixas & Morton, 2012). For example, events, persons or developments can be considered to be historically significant when they 'resulted in change' or 'reveal something in the past or present' (Seixas & Morton, 2012, p. 12). Researchers emphasise that pupils in urban classrooms tell a wide variety of stories about the past and have various understandings of its historical significance (Barton & McCully, 2005; Epstein, 2000; Peck, 2010; Seixas, 1993). In a study of the relationship between ethnic identity and attributions of significance to events in Canada's past, Peck studied pupils' reflections on the interplay between their identity and their conceptions. She found that this interaction was an on-going process and that pupils referred to a particular side of their identity prevailing over others at particular moments. Because pupils' identities and

their understandings of historical significance may affect their learning and impede their engagement with alternative perspectives, it is important to address these identities and understandings (Barton & McCully, 2012; Historical Association, 2007; McCully, Pilgrim, Sutherland, & McMinn, 2002; Sheppard, 2010).

When discussing the significance of sensitive histories, pupils may relate to present conflicts in society or identify with certain historical actors because of their own background and historical representations (Barton & Levstik, 2008; Goldberg *et al.*, 2006; King, 2009). I expect that when discussing the significance of sensitive *heritage*, this situation is even more prevalent because identity and present interests are central to the construction of heritage. Barton (2007) suggested that as a pupil's affective filter concerning a topic grows tighter, his or her rejection of different perspectives becomes stronger. However, neglecting pupils' emotional responses and their understandings of the significance of the past may lead to superficial learning and missed opportunities to help pupils come to grips with sensitive histories that are relevant in their society (Knutson, 2012; McCully *et al.*, 2002). Barton and McCully (2012) found that although pupils in Northern Ireland were willing to learn about national history from multiple perspectives, they had difficulty fully engaging with perspectives other than their own. The authors advocate placing more attention on emotional engagement that leads pupils to develop the genuine curiosity necessary for a real understanding of the other. In a study by Goldberg (2013), pupils were motivated by the discussion of sensitive histories. Furthermore, when pupils' historical interpretations were challenged by peers, their emotional reaction motivated by identification led to a more advanced use of historical practices, such as source evaluation, and a higher level of historical empathy.

### *2.3 Historical Traces and Heritage as Resources for Teaching Sensitive History*

As I have explained in the first chapter, material and immaterial traces of the past can be used in history education in a variety of ways. Inside the classroom, teachers can bring historical objects or invite eyewitnesses into the classroom or allow pupils to interview an elder family member and tell his or her story to the class. Outside the classroom, pupils can visit archives, historical sites, museums and monuments. In the Netherlands, all of these practices are labelled 'heritage education' because the government is stimulating the use of heritage in education. I argue that there is a difference between presenting traces of the past as historical traces or as heritage. I think of a 'heritage approach' as placing an emphasis on the value of the traces for 'our' interests in the present and the future with references to a particular local, regional, national or even global identity. Although particular traces are presented as heritage in a particular heritage project, pupils may not necessarily consider these traces to be heritage. This distinction, however, is not clear-cut. For example, voices emphasising identity formation are also heard in debates regarding the teaching of history (Symcox, 2009). Still, there is a difference in emphasis, and it is problematic that, in practice, teachers and educators often unconsciously adopt a heritage approach to the past,

simultaneously seeking to use the traces as historical sources to stimulate and motivate history learning. To study these ambiguous practices, I focus on pupils' historical imagination and their attribution of significance during a visit to *NiNsee* and the National Slavery Monument.

What might the use of historical traces in such a setting contribute to pupils' imagination of the history of slavery and their attribution of significance to it? Educational experts indicate that museums, historical monuments and sites provide ample opportunities to support imaginative engagement (Marcus *et al.*, 2012). This engagement may be a starting point for historical empathy and increasing pupils' understanding of a certain time in the past. The sensory experience of historical traces may stimulate imaginative engagement, historical empathy and historical inquiry (Davison, 2012; Gregory & Witcomb, 2007; Marcus *et al.*, 2012). Several authors emphasise the beneficial effect of a micro-historical approach using eyewitness accounts or diaries to help pupils understand complex and abstract developments and larger contexts, particularly with regard to sensitive history (Burtonwood, 2002; Davies *et al.*, 2000). There are also constraints, however. Heritage institutions often offer pupils the opportunity to experience the past through, for example, re-enactment. Such heritage experiences have been associated with consumerism and sensationalism and have been criticised for their incorrect or simplified representation of historical reality (De Groot, 2009; Lowenthal, 1998). A heritage approach may thus complicate finding a balance between the cognitive and affective aspects of historical imagination.

With respect to historical significance, presenting historical traces as heritage can evoke interest and motivation because heritage is related to the present and considered to be significant. In addition, explicitly denoting these traces as heritage may enable critical reflection on what heritage is and why particular traces are preserved and by whom (Grever *et al.*, 2012; Seixas & Clark, 2004). For example, sharing the decision-making process behind creating a museum exhibit with pupils may further their understanding of it (Gosselin, 2011). To reflect on the constructed nature of history and heritage and to recognise multiple perspectives are considered important components of thinking and reasoning historically (Van Boxtel *et al.*, submitted). These skills will help pupils make sense of the narratives presented in museums, not only when visiting museums during a school field trip but also when visiting them later in life (Marcus & Levine, 2011). However, a present-orientated heritage approach, as opposed to a more detached and 'neutral' attitude, could also frustrate the learning of history. For example, in his study of history education in the United States, VanSledright (2008) articulated a concern that a dominant official narrative based on a 'shared national heritage' leaves no room for other perspectives and may increase resistance and alienation among groups of pupils that do not share that heritage.

### 3. METHOD

To explore pupils' learning about sensitive history and the historical traces of slavery (which are presented, but not necessarily widely accepted, as heritage), I conducted a case study in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, in 2010. Amsterdam played an important role in the transatlantic slave trade. In my case study, I followed pupils who participated in a project concerning the history and heritage of slavery that was embedded in their history lessons. The heritage project included an introductory lesson at school, a visit to *NiNsee* and the National Slavery Monument and a closing lesson at school. The heritage project provided the primary case boundaries. The school, pupils, teacher and museum guides associated with the project constituted the case. Within this primary case, thirteen pupils who were followed more closely each constituted a single case.

In the introductory lesson, pupils read short quotations from an enslaved person, a doctor and a ship's captain regarding the conditions on a slave ship and observed four images of the interior and the construction of a slave ship. In triads, they responded to a few questions regarding these sources, such as why the sources held different perspectives. The pupils also wrote down what they expected to find during their visit to *NiNsee*. This task was designed to collect data regarding the pupils' expectations. The pupils also read sections of the diary of Linda Brent (the pseudonym of Harriet Ann Jacobs, who escaped slavery and became an abolitionist) and a reward notice by her former master Dr. James Norcom issued for Jacobs' return.

In the museum lesson, four groups attended a guided tour of the '*Break the silence*' exhibition at *NiNsee* and a tour of the National Slavery Monument. They viewed several paintings by modern Surinamese artists and a short introductory animated video clip. Each activity was led by a different guide. The *NiNsee* tour was an existing educational program developed by *NiNsee*.<sup>12</sup> The last two activities, involving the paintings and video, were excluded from the analysis because not all pupils attended them.

In the closing lesson, the pupils in triads discussed which subtopics of or perspectives on the history and heritage of slavery they found relevant to an exhibition on the subject. First, the pupils had to decide independently and then together which topics they thought were the most important. Then, they were asked to make a collage and prepare a written explanation. This task to discuss the design of a museum exhibition was developed to collect data on the pupils' understandings of the significance of the history and heritage of slavery and how they discussed these understandings with their peers.

#### 3.1 Participants

The group of pupils who participated in the project was the same group that I described in the previous chapter. The group consisted of 55 pupils from two classes at a secondary

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<sup>12</sup> Due to budget cuts, *NiNsee* terminated these on-site museum lessons in 2012 (*NiNsee*, n.d.).

school in Amsterdam. The school was a mid-sized, Catholic public school for higher general education (HAVO) and pre-university education (VWO). The population of the school reflected the diverse social, cultural, religious and ethnic backgrounds of the surrounding urban area. In 2010, 11% of the inhabitants of Amsterdam were of Antillean or Surinamese descent (Central Statistical Office, n.d.). The school was located in a relatively wealthy part of the city. However, the population of the school represented Amsterdam as a whole rather than the wealthy neighbourhood where the school was located. A large number of the pupils came from other neighbourhoods or suburbs around Amsterdam. Most of the children living in the neighbourhood where the school is located attended other schools in the area.

The participants were second-year HAVO pupils aged 13 to 14. The participants were 28 pupils from class A and 27 pupils from class B. Thirty-three percent of the participating pupils were female. The classes were culturally and ethnically diverse; the pupils' backgrounds included Dutch, Moroccan, Surinamese, Turkish and Antillean backgrounds. Sixteen percent of the pupils were of Antillean or Surinamese descent. Half of the pupils expressed no religious beliefs, 16% were Muslim, and 15% were Christian. The same history teacher taught both classes. History was a compulsory subject taught for two hours per week. In the first years of their secondary schooling, these pupils studied history chronologically starting from prehistoric times and primarily focusing on Western Europe and the Netherlands. At the time that my research began, the pupils were studying the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, in which the topic of slavery is included as part of the history of America.

### *3.2 Data Collection and Analysis*

By triangulating the measurement techniques, I attempted to gain insight into the learning processes in an out-of-school learning environment. The data were considered as a whole as a means of observing the full range of variation in pupils' learning. I conducted four whole-class questionnaires: at the beginning of the project, after the introductory lesson, after the museum visit and after the closing lesson. At the time of the first questionnaire, the pupils knew they were going to visit *NiNsee*. In addition to the questionnaires, thirteen pupils were interviewed individually before and after the project and were observed in triads during the lessons. In addition, I observed the museum guides.

#### *Measurements and analysis of historical imagination*

**Images.** In the questionnaires at the beginning of the project and after the closing lesson, the pupils filled in a structured mind map with the title 'Slavery ± 1650-1850' in the middle and five prompts: 'what I already know about it', 'how I've heard of it before', 'what I see before me', 'how I feel about it' and 'what I would like to know is' (see Appendix A1). I coded the propositions that pupils presented in the mind maps. A proposition was defined as a statement regarding the topic of slavery. I developed eleven codes based upon the

pupils' responses in describing their images of slavery (see table 10). A second rater coded a sample of 73 propositions. Interrater reliability (Cohen's kappa) was .91, which is considered to be very good. After the introductory lesson and after the museum visit, the pupils responded to three prompts for free recall: 'what first comes to mind', 'what I found most interesting' and 'what I did not know before'. Such prompts were successfully used in national evaluation studies of the outcomes and impact of learning in museums in England (Hooper-Greenhill, 2007b). The pupils' responses were coded using the same coding scheme that was applied to the mind maps. A second rater coded a sample of 62 propositions. Interrater reliability (Cohen's kappa) was again very good, at .81.

**Perspectives.** In a second round, I coded the mind map propositions and the free recall responses in terms of which historical actor's perspective the pupils adopted (for example, the perspective of the enslaved person or that of the slave owner) (see table 10). For each pupil, I also coded whether they combined two or more perspectives in their responses. A second rater coded a sample of 65 propositions in the mind maps. Interrater reliability (Cohen's kappa) was .93, which is considered to be very good. For the free recall, a second rater coded a sample of 179 propositions; in this case, interrater reliability (Cohen's kappa) was .92, which is considered to be very good.

**Interest.** In the questionnaires at the beginning of the project and after the closing lesson, I measured pupils' interest in learning about slavery's history and heritage using eight items on a 4-point scale (see table 11). I included items to examine whether pupils learning about the topic were particularly interested in, for example, history, monuments, objects, universal values or their own relationship to the topic. In the first questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha was .81, which is considered good. In the last questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha was .90, which is considered excellent. Both questionnaires were analysed for differences using paired samples t-tests.

**Emotional engagement.** In the questionnaires after each lesson, I asked pupils to choose one or more emoticons (out of twelve) that represented how they had felt during the lesson (see Appendix A7). The emoticons denoted basic emotions, both positive (e.g., happy, interested) and negative (e.g., angry, bored) (Ainley *et al.*, 2002). Because the measurement instrument included an 'interested' emoticon, this measurement also informed me regarding pupils' interest during the lessons.

Table 10. Codes for images and perspectives in the mind map and free recall responses

Code	Sub code	Example
Image	Enslaved persons working on plantations in America	‘Slaves working really hard on tobacco plantations’.
	Maltreatment or punishment of enslaved persons	‘People being treated as animals. Today a dog is treated better than a slave then’.
	Africa / Middle Passage	‘Black people who are taken away from their homes’.
	Inequality / not being free	‘Slaves that were not treated equally’.
	Modern slavery	‘What I did not know before was that there is still slavery in our time’.
	Testimonies / stories of enslaved persons	‘What I found most interesting was story written by a former woman slave’.
	Museum or museum objects	‘What I found most interesting was the monument’.
	Opinion regarding slavery	‘What comes to mind first is that I find slave trade a real bad thing’.
	Remarks regarding learning activity	‘That the group work went quite well’.
Perspective	Enslaved	‘How slaves arrived in America, that all those whites stood around them’.
	Slave owner	‘Whites with whips hitting blacks when they have to keep on working’.
	Pupils’ own perspective	‘What first comes to mind is that it was much worse than I thought’.
	Present perspective	‘I did not know that there’s still a modern form of slavery’.
	Perspective unclear	‘Nothing good’.
	Two or more perspectives	‘Learned much about life of a slave and how hard it was. Some people thought slavery was a good thing, had no idea about situation on ship’.

Table 11. Items in the questionnaire regarding interest in learning about the history and heritage of slavery

Items
1. About freedom and equality, I want to
2. About objects and stories of slavery, I want to
3. About the history of slavery, I want to
4. About what slavery has to do with me, I want to
5. About why objects and stories of slavery are preserved, I want to
6. About the museum NiNsee about slavery, I want to
7. About how people commemorate slavery, I want to
8. About the slavery monument in Amsterdam, I want to

Note. 4-point scale: know nothing at all, know nothing, know something, know a lot

**Attitude towards learning using historical traces.** After the museum visit, I explored pupils’ attitudes towards learning using historical traces in the museum. I included 10 items with a 4-point scale (see table 12). A higher score indicated a more positive attitude towards learning using historical traces. The items were based on claims regarding the potential of using historical traces as a resource for learning as described in the literature addressing museum learning (Falk & Dierking, 2013; Fienberg & Leinhardt,

2002; Marcus *et al.*, 2012). The items focused on the amount of pleasure experienced during the museum lesson and the perceived contribution of the lesson, particularly the use of historical traces in the museum, to learning about the history of slavery. Cronbach's alpha was .87, which is considered good.

*Table 12. Items on the questionnaire for measuring attitudes towards learning using historical traces during the museum visit*

Items

- 
1. In this lesson, I could imagine the time of slavery well
  2. In this lesson, I felt that slavery really happened
  3. The objects and stories in the museum made slavery much clearer for me
  4. I liked learning history in a museum
  5. In this lesson, I could empathise well with people living in the time of slavery
  6. I liked working with real objects from the past
  7. In this lesson, I came to find slavery is an important topic
  8. I liked visiting a monument where a remembrance is held every year
  9. I thought it was exciting to see real objects from the past up close
  10. In this lesson, I felt the time of slavery came to life
- 

*Note.* 4-point scale: completely disagree, disagree, agree, completely agree

#### *Measurements and analysis of understandings of significance*

**Significance.** In the questionnaires at the beginning of the project and after the closing lesson, the pupils were asked how important it was for them to preserve the objects and stories of slavery, and they evaluated eleven reasons for preserving these traces on a 4-point scale (see table 13). The eleven reasons were based on conceptualisations of historical significance by Seixas (2008) and Seixas and Morton (2012), Lévesque (2008) and Cercadillo (2001), which were rephrased to be specific to the historical traces of slavery. In addition, the pupils were allowed to write in their own reasons. The questionnaires were analysed for differences using paired samples t-tests.

**Taking other or multiple perspectives on significance.** The eleven reasons associated with the significance question represent various perspectives on the significance of the historical traces of slavery. I counted the number of reasons for preservation with which the pupils agreed in order to examine whether the pupils approached the question regarding significance from multiple perspectives. A pupil's agreement with a greater number of reasons was interpreted as that pupil's richer understanding of the historical significance.

*Table 13. Reasons for the preservation of the objects and stories of slavery*

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I think it is important that the objects and stories of slavery are preserved
1. Because they remind us that freedom and equality have not always existed
2. Because they mean a lot to the people who descend from enslaved people
3. Because slavery changed the lives of many people
4. Because they will help us to understand how slaves were traded and why
5. Because I would find it a pity if they were gone
6. Because slavery has had many consequences; for example, it brought much wealth to Europe
7. Because they will help to understand the present; for example, many African people now live in America and Europe
8. Because they are very old
9. Because they belong to the Netherlands
10. Because they mean a lot to my family
11. Because they will help me to understand who I am

---

*Note.* 4-point-scale: completely disagree, disagree, agree, completely agree

### *Interview*

Based on the results of the first questionnaire, I selected thirteen pupils with diverse preconceptions to interview individually. Using this process, I intended to gather insights into the variety of perspectives that pupils potentially bring to the classroom and to determine whether I could relate these differences to the pupils' self-reported ethnic identity. For my selection, I focused on differences in the pupils' responses presented on the mind map and on differences in opinion regarding the preservation of the objects and stories of slavery. I also considered variety in pupil gender and the birth country of the pupils' parents in making my selections.

Each of the interviews was 20 minutes long and primarily focused on clarification of the questionnaires (see Appendix B). I asked pupils to explain their responses. For example, 'The next two questions concern the preservation of objects and stories of slavery. You indicated you find it important to preserve these. Could you explain your answer to me?' In the interview after the closing lesson, we compared the responses to the questionnaires at the beginning of the project and after the closing lesson. I asked, for example, 'In the previous interview, you explained to me that you thought this was not important. Can you describe what made you change your mind?' and 'Your response is the same in both questionnaires. Is it correct that you still feel the same about this question?' With regard to their responses regarding the preservation of the objects and stories of slavery, I asked if they thought others would agree with them and, if not, who would not and why. These questions allowed me to gain more insight into their adoption of multiple perspectives. Lastly, I asked them to describe their ethnic identity and to reflect on its effect on their responses on the questionnaire (see Peck, 2010). In the interview after the closing lesson, I also asked pupils to describe their experiences and learning during the lessons.

The individual interviews enabled me to discuss each pupil's conceptions and experiences in detail and without active interference by others. There are also, however, disadvantages to a one-on-one interview, as pupils may feel uncomfortable or intimidated

by being alone with a researcher asking questions regarding their opinions. Clearly, my own identity is also important here. Considering that the topic was slavery and many pupils mentioned the issue of inequality between black and white people, my perceived white identity may have had an effect. Although none of the pupils expressed this concern, they may have had the feeling of talking to one of the two ‘sides’.

The 26 interviews were transcribed and used to check and complement my impressions from the questionnaires and observations. I analysed the pupils’ images of the history of slavery; which historical actors’ perspectives they adopted; their interest in the history and heritage of slavery; their emotional engagement during the lessons; their understandings of the significance of the history and heritage of slavery; how these understandings were related to pupils’ self-reported ethnic identity; and their acknowledgement or articulation of other perspectives. I also analysed remarks regarding a specific role or effect of learning about the history of slavery using historical traces as an instructional resource.

#### *Observation and group interaction*

During the museum visit, I videotaped the entire class and, when possible, focused on the pupils who had been interviewed. I analysed the pupils’ nonverbal behaviour (such as movements and facial expressions) as an indicator of interest and engagement. I also videotaped the group work by the four triads during the closing lesson at school (two in each class). My analysis of the group work focused on the sharing of understandings of the significance of the heritage of slavery and the acknowledgement of other and multiple perspectives on its significance.

I also videotaped the museum educators as they conducted their guided tours. I then analysed the videotapes for the inclusion of specific historical content (such as the Middle Passage, plantation work, slave resistance); (the combining of multiple) perspectives of historical actors; the contextualisation of historical actors, events or developments; (a discussion of multiple) perspectives on significance; the interactive construction of significance; and the use of historical traces from a heritage approach.

Table 14 provides an overview of the various instruments that I used at different points during the project.

Table 14. Overview of data collection

At the beginning of the project	After the introductory lesson	During/after the museum visit	During/after the closing lesson
Questionnaire (n=54)	Short questionnaire (n=53)	Short questionnaire (n=50)	Questionnaire (n=53)
- images and perspectives: mind map - interest in learning about the history and heritage of slavery: 8 items (4-point scale) - understandings of the reasons for the preservation of the historical traces: 11 reasons (4-point scale)	- images and perspectives: free recall - emotional engagement and interest: 12 emoticons	- images and perspectives: free recall - emotional engagement and interest: 12 emoticons - attitude towards learning using historical traces: 10 items (4-point scale)	- images and perspectives: mind map - emotional engagement: 12 emoticons - interest in learning about the history and heritage of slavery: 8 items (4-point scale) - understandings of the reasons for the preservation of the historical traces: 11 reasons (4-point scale)
Individual interviews (n=13)			Individual interviews (n=13)
- images and perspectives - interest - emotional engagement - understandings of significance - ideas regarding others' perspectives - self-reported ethnic identity			- images and perspectives - interest - emotional engagement - understandings of significance - learning experiences during lessons
		Video recording of whole class (n=50) - interest and engagement (nonverbal behaviour) Video recording of guides (n=2) - content, perspectives and use of historical traces	Video recording of triads (n=4) - discussion of the significance of the history and heritage of slavery

## 4. RESULTS

### 4.1 Historical Imagination

In the discussion that follows, I first describe the pupils' images, perspectives, interest and emotional involvement before the museum visit. After providing an impression of the guided tour, I discuss these same aspects during the visit and afterward. Lastly, I turn to (the pupils' ideas regarding) the use of historical traces in relation to imaginative engagement.

*At the beginning of the project: maltreated enslaved persons on plantations*

Before the museum visit, pupils' mental images of slavery primarily involved enslaved persons working on plantations in America and the maltreatment or punishment of the enslaved (see table 15).

*Table 15. Images and perspectives in the mind maps and free recall responses (% of propositions)*

Code	Sub code	Mind map <sup>a</sup> (n=80)	Free recall 1 <sup>b</sup> (n=171)	Free recall 2 <sup>c</sup> (n=171)	Mind map <sup>d</sup> (n=68)
Image	Enslaved persons working on plantations in America	41%	22%	1%	27%
	Maltreatment or punishment of enslaved persons	25%	22%	11%	29%
	Africa / Middle Passage	13%	6%	7%	13%
	Inequality / not being free	9%	-	1%	6%
	Modern slavery	-	-	2%	-
	Testimonies / stories of enslaved persons	-	11%	-	-
	Museum or museum objects	-	1%	32%	-
	Opinion regarding slavery	-	4%	8%	-
	Remarks regarding learning activity	-	17%	5%	-
	No response	3%	-	19%	3%
Other	10%	16%	13%	22%	
Perspective	Enslaved person	78%	35% <sup>e</sup>	19% <sup>e</sup>	67%
	Slave owner	6%	5%	3%	4%
	Pupil's own perspective	2%	16%	14%	9%
	Present perspective	-	-	4%	-
	Perspective unclear	9%	35%	49%	7%
	No response	6%	6%	13%	14%
	Other	-	3%	-	-

*Note.* <sup>a</sup>At the beginning of the project. <sup>b</sup>After the introductory lesson at school. <sup>c</sup>After the museum visit. <sup>d</sup>After the closing lesson. <sup>e</sup>Sum is more than 100 because pupils adopted multiple perspectives

In the interviews at the beginning of the project, one pupil said, 'I think there were rich people there with their big houses and, well, a nice living, and they had slaves who did all their work'. Although the maltreatment of enslaved persons was a dominant image in the mind map, the free recall prompt 'did not know about' after the introductory lesson elicited responses concerning the maltreatment of enslaved persons in 41% of the propositions. In the interview after the closing lesson, several pupils explained they had known of this maltreatment but were surprised by its cruelty.

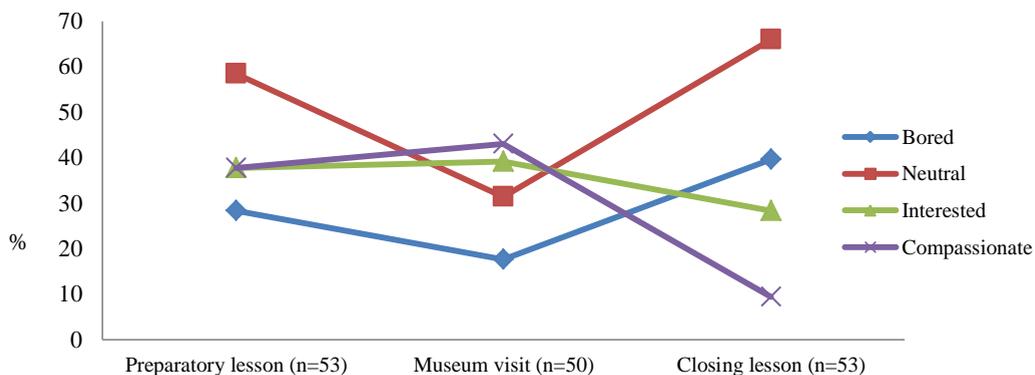
At the beginning of the project, the majority of pupils adopted the perspective of the enslaved (see table 15). After the introductory lesson, I observed certain other perspectives that were presented in the free recall, such as that of the Netherlands: 'what I found most interesting was that the Netherlands traded most of the slaves'. Seven pupils presented two different perspectives in their responses. For example, one pupil wrote,

‘Learned much about life of a slave and how hard it was. Some people thought slavery was a good thing, had no idea about situation on ships’. Three of the pupils said that the most interesting aspect was learning about the different perspectives of different people.

My measurements of pupils’ interest in learning about slavery’s history and heritage indicated that the pupils were interested at the beginning of the project (mean = 2.83, standard deviation = .74). During the introductory lesson, the pupils also felt interested (see figure 3). Based on the free recall, I know that many of the pupils were interested in the ‘true’ stories of enslaved persons, such as Jacobs’ story. Several of the pupils also felt neutral and/or compassionate. In the interview after the closing lesson, four pupils explained that during the introductory lesson, they felt compassion for the enslaved lying in the ships for months and being sold to white people. One pupil also felt ashamed because white people did this for money and his ancestors might have been involved. He felt angry at the slave owners.

At the beginning of the project, the pupils did not differ significantly in their ways and levels of historical imagination. They imagined slavery as consisting of enslaved persons working or being maltreated, they adopted the enslaved perspective, and they felt compassion for the enslaved and were interested in learning more. During the introductory lesson, individual differences became evident, which consisted of differences in the intensity of emotional engagement and in the acknowledgement of different perspectives.

Figure 3. Emoticons chosen (more than 1 allowed) by pupils after each lesson (% of pupils)



Note. The emoticons sad, proud, ashamed, angry, surprised, happy, afraid and disgusted were excluded from the figure because they were rarely selected.

*The NiNsee tour: concrete and engaging stories*

During the guided tour through the *NiNsee* exhibition, pupils were offered opportunities to imagine the history of slavery via detailed stories presented by the guide and via role-play, paintings and drawings of historical texts and images. In a few cases, the guide used objects, for example a whip, to help tell a story, but a great deal of the authentic material and immaterial historical traces that are available in the institute were excluded from the tour. The role-play included, for example, the pupils re-enacting an auction, re-naming enslaved persons at a slave market and demonstrating slave punishments. Topics that were addressed consisted of the slave raids and slave trading in Africa, the Middle Passage (see figure 4), slave markets and plantations in America and the punishment of the enslaved. The dominant perspective in the guide's stories was that of the enslaved. On occasion, the guide explained the actions of the slave traders and owners, but she focused on the pain and suffering that these actions brought upon the enslaved. The exhibition presented other perspectives, but these were not discussed by the guide, nor were the perspectives or interpretations that the pictures or objects represented. The guide used the pictures and objects as visualisation tools to support her story. At the beginning of the tour, the guide presented the transatlantic slave trade in a wider context by explaining the global relationships and the system of trading and using people from one continent as a workforce on another. During the rest of the tour, however, the actions of the historical actors were infrequently placed in context.

*Figure 4. NiNsee exhibition 'Break the silence' depicting the Middle Passage (photo Pieter de Bruijn)*



At the National Slavery Monument in the park, the pupils' experiences were guided by allowing them to walk around the monument, touch it and discuss its meaning. The monument consists of three parts with several life-size figures (see figure 2 in the previous chapter). At the rear of the monument stands a group of men, women and children roped together; in the centre, a human figure passes through a winged arch. At the front, there is a large human figure with outstretched arms. Some pupils quickly came to the conclusion that the monument narrated the path from slavery to freedom. Others described such details as 'wings' and the 'hurt backs' and noticed 'some people being held back' and 'being belittled'. The guide then explained the three parts of the monument as symbolising the path from slavery to freedom, making gestures while walking from one side to the other.

### *Pupils' learning: compassion, empathy and unanswered questions*

The museum tour raised many questions among the pupils, such as 'were they really our age when they were sold?' or 'why is the man that delivers the punishments black himself?' These questions indicated that the tour had successfully added to the pupils' pre-existing images of slavery. Nevertheless, after the closing lesson, most pupils described images similar to those described beforehand, i.e., images of the maltreatment of enslaved persons and images of the plantations in America (see table 15). The free recall after the museum visit and in the interviews after the closing lesson, however, revealed the development of new images. The museum itself formed a new image, as the free recall prompt 'did not know' elicited mentions of the museum or the monument from 13 pupils. A few pupils also wrote about modern-day slavery. This topic also arose in the interviews, although one pupil did not fully agree with the comparison between the transatlantic slave trade and the human trafficking in sex workers that was presented in the museum. Furthermore, seven pupils said that they now knew that the Netherlands was also involved in the slave trade.

During the visit, the pupils' input occasionally incorporated another perspective. The guide described wounded enslaved persons who were rinsed with seawater and asked what that might have done; one pupil responded that 'it disinfected'. The guide answered that this was true, of course, but that she meant for the pupils to infer that it had stung badly. Notwithstanding such instances, after the project, most pupils adopted the perspective of the enslaved and did not combine multiple perspectives, just as they had at the beginning of the project (see table 15). However, the free recall after the museum visit revealed the development of new perspectives. Eleven percent of the pupils adopted an explicitly present perspective. For example, one pupil wrote 'What comes to mind first is that it was really bad, and I am glad I do not live in that time'. Another new perspective was that white people also could be enslaved, as two pupils wrote. The pupils' responses on the mind map (27 in total) provided insight into the perspectives about which the pupils were still curious. Eight questions asked for an explanation or contextualisation of the perspectives of the slave traders and owners. For example, certain pupils asked how people

had developed the idea of slave trading and why only black people were enslaved. Others wanted to understand the thoughts and feelings of the slave owners or of those who opposed slavery but did not act against it. Of the five pupils who wanted to know more about the enslaved people, three asked why the enslaved did not fight back or try to escape, which presents yet another perspective.

The video recordings of the museum visit showed that the pupils listened to the guides and interacted with them. The pupils rarely interacted with each other. They observed the paintings, drawings and objects that the guides noted but did not examine these closely or explore the museum independently. The stories told by the guides appeared to engage the pupils. In particular, when the guide described in great detail the shipping of the enslaved and when she demonstrated the slave market and the punishment via role-play, the pupils were very attentive and expressed abhorrence and disgust by way of facial expression or exclamations. The pupils expressed interest (see figure 3). Fewer pupils felt neutral or bored than during the first lesson. The emoticon that the pupils chose most often was 'compassionate'. In the interviews after the closing lesson, five pupils reported that they felt compassion for the enslaved persons when seeing how they were transported or punished. Even stronger emotions were also mentioned. One pupil said that she felt the humiliation that the enslaved must have felt, and another felt disgust upon learning about the punishments. She said that she might be able to forget what the slave owners had done, but she would not forgive. Two pupils felt angry at the slave owners and at America, which was supposedly the land of freedom. After the museum visit, the pupils' levels of interest and emotional involvement decreased (see figure 3). The interest level as measured using the last questionnaire indicates that the pupils were still interested in learning about slavery's history and heritage (mean = 2.66, standard deviation = .48) but were significantly less interested than before they participated in the project, as measured using the initial questionnaire ( $t(1.43) = 2.85, p = .007$ ). In the interviews after the closing lesson, several pupils explained that they remained interested but that they knew enough about the topic and thought it was time to begin learning about a new one.

In general, the museum visit confirmed the pupils' images of slavery and enriched their understanding by way of concrete stories. The visit emphasised the enslaved perspective and did not fulfil the pupils' needs to understand other perspectives. The visit aroused interest and evoked questions, which could have served as a starting point for historical inquiry. The pupils' increased emotional engagement indicated that the visit particularly stimulated the affective elements of their historical imagination.

*Historical traces: seeing 'genuine past reality'*

Although the pupils generally scored high on all of the items of the interest scale, they were particularly interested in the objects and stories associated with slavery (mean = 3.09, standard deviation = .71 at the beginning of the project; mean = 2.88, standard deviation =

.70 after the closing lesson). These findings are congruent with their interest in Jacobs' story presented in the introductory lesson and their interest during the museum visit. Overall, the pupils expressed positive feelings regarding learning using historical traces during a museum visit (mean = 2.77, standard deviation = .49). Nearly all of the pupils reported that the museum visit helped them to imagine the time of slavery (see table 12; item 1) and that it made them aware that slavery actually did occur (item 2). During the interviews, many pupils said that the historical traces in the museum were evidence that slavery actually occurred. For example, one pupil explained how the visit had made her aware that slavery is a historical fact: 'yes, because these, um, objects just prove that it, yes, they are from the past, so it is just evidence then'. In addition, in the free recall responses, the monument and museum objects were mentioned frequently. For example, one pupil wrote, 'what I found most interesting was the stuff in *NiNsee*; then it is "true" reality'. However, five pupils wrote they would have liked to view more objects and hear more stories about enslaved persons.

Less than half of the pupils agreed that the museum visit made the era of slavery come alive (see table 12; item 10). In the interview, however, almost all of the pupils said that the historical traces in the museum caused them to empathise with the enslaved. They thought of how miserable the lives of the enslaved were and how they were punished and had to work extremely hard without pay. One of the female pupils participated in a role-play of the sale of enslaved women. The guide told the pupils that girls of her age were sold to provide the owner with many slave children. In the interview, this pupil said that the role-play caused her to think immediately of conditions during that time and that she thought 'no, not so early, children'. Another pupil tried to empathise with the enslaved during the visit of the monument. He reported that he had wanted to stand near the middle part of the monument 'to know what it is like to be a slave first and then to be free', making a circling gesture with his arms when pronouncing the word 'free'. A few of the pupils reflected on the limitations of their empathy:

'Well, I can imagine something, but I just cannot empathise with it because it did not happen to me personally. I often feel that way with history topics, like with the Second World War or something; I really think it is very bad what happened, but it did not happen to me personally, so I do not really know how bad it was.'

Another pupil reported that he had empathised with the enslaved but that this empathy had not made things clearer for him because he did not yet know the entire story.

Overall, the pupils valued the historical traces as part of their learning about slavery because it brought slavery's past closer. Most of the examples of the pupils' empathy indicated a lack of contextualisation and historical perspective, but a few pupils expressed doubts regarding their ability to empathise or regarding the role that empathy plays in understanding history.

#### 4.2 Attribution of Significance

In this section, I first describe the pupils' understandings of significance, its relationship with their identity and their acknowledgement of other perspectives before the museum visit. After presenting an impression of the guided tour, I discuss these same aspects observed during the visit and afterward. Lastly, I turn to (the pupils' ideas regarding) the use of a heritage approach towards historical traces.

##### *At the beginning of the project: descendants and equality*

As discussed extensively in the previous chapter, at the beginning of the project, the pupils found it important to preserve the historical traces of slavery, particularly in relation to the values of equality and freedom and for the descendants of enslaved people (see table 16). The significance for the pupils' own families and for developing a better understanding of themselves scored the lowest. Very few of the pupils provided their own reasons.

*Table 16. Pupils' understandings of the reasons for the preservation of the historical traces of slavery at the beginning of the project and after the closing lesson*

Reason	Mean <sup>a</sup>	Standard deviation	Mean <sup>b</sup>	Standard deviation
I think it is important that the objects and stories of slavery are preserved	2.91	.78	3.08	.74
1. Because they remind us that freedom and equality have not always existed	3.09	.59	2.96	.96
2. Because they mean a lot to the people who descend from enslaved people	3.04	.68	3.02	.82
3. Because slavery changed the lives of many people	2.91	.62	2.85	.72
4. Because they will help us to understand how slaves were traded and why	2.85	.66	2.81	.81
5. Because I would find it a pity if they were gone	2.67	.75	2.58	.82
6. Because slavery has had many consequences; for example, it brought much wealth to Europe	2.66	.73	2.54	.96
7. Because they will help to understand the present; for example, many African people now live in America and Europe	2.61	.83	2.62	.79
8. Because they are very old	2.45	.80	2.53	.91
9. Because they belong to the Netherlands	2.15	.77	2.43	.80
10. Because they mean a lot to my family	1.74	.76	1.74	.74
11. Because they will help me to understand who I am	1.70	.66	1.74	.63

*Note.* <sup>a</sup>At the beginning of the project. <sup>b</sup>After the closing lesson. 4-point-scale: completely disagree, disagree, agree, completely agree

In the interviews, the two main arguments that the pupils used for attributing significance to the heritage of slavery were discussed in detail. First, when pupils related the significance of the heritage of slavery to the issue of equality, slavery became a historical example of inequality that could be used to argue for equality. In terms of the significance for the descendants of enslaved people, the second main argument, one pupil said,

‘Because there is much emotion..., many, many families have been affected by this, and it is important that these objects and stories are preserved because they are of value for those people.’

On average, pupils agreed or strongly agreed with six reasons for preserving the historical traces of slavery in the questionnaire, and therefore, they valued multiple perspectives in their understandings of significance. In the interviews, the pupils’ capacities to consider other perspectives varied. Some pupils were thoughtful when trying to adopt another perspective. For example, a pupil of self-reported Dutch identity said that he could imagine that the descendants would rather forget about slavery and ignore the historical traces, but at the same time, he thought that they had the right to know what happened to their ancestors and the traces therefore should be preserved.

I conducted an analysis of variance to investigate the differences in attributions of significance between pupils of Surinamese(-Dutch) and Antillean(-Dutch) backgrounds (n=9) and those of other backgrounds (n=46). The pupils of Surinamese(-Dutch) and Antillean(-Dutch) backgrounds scored significantly higher than other pupils on item 10, which concerns significance to their own family ( $F(1,52) = 16.07, p=.000$ ). I observed a relationship between pupils’ understandings of significance and their self-reported ethnic identity in the interviews, although this relationship was often ambiguous. Four pupils with a self-reported Surinamese or Antillean identity established a personal connection because of enslaved ancestors, but three of them simultaneously tried to create a distance between themselves and this history. For example, one said that perhaps her family had been enslaved a long time ago, but she thought that that was far too long ago to still care about. Three pupils with a self-reported Dutch identity struggled with the question regarding whether they should feel responsible for slavery or the transatlantic slave trade. In contrast with the results of the questionnaire, the interviews indicated that pupils did relate personally to the subject.

At the beginning of the project, the pupils nearly unanimously attributed significance to the heritage of slavery for various reasons, but they did so particularly in relation to the concepts of equality and freedom and for the descendants of the enslaved. In several cases, the pupils’ understandings of significance were clearly related to their self-reported ethnic identity. A few of the pupils did not want to emphasise this relationship or wanted to distance themselves from it.

#### *The NiNsee tour: affirming pupils’ understandings*

The exhibition tour began with a brief, non-interactive reflection on the necessity of breaking the silence regarding the history of slavery in Dutch society. This reflection also discussed the existence of modern-day slavery in the form of child labour, child soldiers and human trafficking in sex workers. In another connection between history and contemporary life, the tour guide noted that many of Amsterdam’s beautiful mansions were built by people involved in the slave trade, thereby providing a visible reminder of the

Dutch Republic's role in the slave trade. With these connections between the past and the present, the guide attributed significance to the history of slavery. There was no further discussion regarding the attribution of significance to specific traces of slavery by various groups in society during the tour through the exhibition.

The guide emphasised the significance of the National Slavery Monument by providing historical context, noting that the monument's construction aligned with a global trend to acknowledge the legacies of the transatlantic slave trade and the institution of slavery. Her presentation explained the perspective of enslaved people and of those who advocated for the erection of a monument to acknowledge the history of slavery. Launching an interactive discussion on the meaning of the monument and its three elements, the tour guide asked the pupils to provide their first impressions. The guide allowed the pupils to discover what the monument meant to them by examining the monument and choosing a particular position to stand near the monument. This process prompted a discussion about freedom, concluding with the tour guide's remark that slavery still exists in the modern day. In addition, the guide explained her personal relationship to the monument, noting that she was a descendant of a slave owner and a female slave. The guide added that instead of carrying the weight of past slavery on her shoulders, she preferred to focus on the future. She also explained that a commemoration service was held at the monument each year and that individuals who visited the monument often left roses or found peace through reflection.

*Pupils' learning: personal and societal understandings of significance*

Although the pupils focused on the historical traces of slavery during their *NiNsee* visit, they did not ask questions regarding why these traces were preserved and exhibited there. At the monument, the pupils interpreted the symbolic elements and discussed whether they liked the monument. Some pupils were clearly impressed by the monument and the atmosphere permeating the site, whereas others were less attentive. After the project, pupils still valued the preservation of the historical traces of slavery (see table 16). Notably, I did not find significant differences between the first and the last questionnaire.

The data showed that the pupils learned about and discussed perspectives on the significance of slavery that were different from their own. During the visit to the monument, for example, when the guide said that slavery was not a pleasant story to be told, one pupil agreed with the statement but added that slavery had also brought significant wealth to Europe. The guide encouraged caution on this matter and awaited research to form an opinion. Notably, the perspective mentioned by the pupil is an important issue in contemporary debates on the Dutch role in the transatlantic slave trade (Emmer, 2012). In the questionnaire after the closing lesson, a significantly higher number of pupils (27), compared with 16 in the first questionnaire, noted the importance of preserving the historical traces of slavery because this history is part of the Netherlands. In the interview,

some pupils explained that before the lessons, they had not known that the Netherlands had participated in the transatlantic slave trade. Further, in the free-recall prompt termed ‘did not know’, eleven pupils had not known about the monument, and two pupils had not known about the museum. These responses suggest that the pupils learned that significance is attributed to history and the heritage of slavery in Dutch society and that the pupils found this insight to be worthy of mention. Additionally, in the ‘did not know’ prompt, one pupil had not known ‘that it [slavery] was such a taboo’, referring to a different perspective in Dutch society. The interviews also revealed that although several pupils had previously believed that former slaves and their descendants sought to forget about slavery, the pupils now believed otherwise. After viewing the preserved objects and the monument, the pupils realised that at least some of the descendants sought to remember the history of slavery.

The closing lesson and the interview that followed it provided several examples of how pupils related (their own) identities or present societal conflicts to the topic of slavery. In one triad, for example, two pupils (pupils 2 and 3) indicated that their ancestors had been enslaved; however, the pupils noted that they did not relate more closely to the topic because of this factor. Image 8 (see figure 5) prompted the following discussion among these three pupils\*:

1: ‘We choose this topic because...’

2: ‘It is important that descendants can narrate this.’

3: ‘That descendants...’

2: ‘But that would mean that it is important that I and my children can narrate it... well!’

3: ‘Yeah’ [pupil giggles]

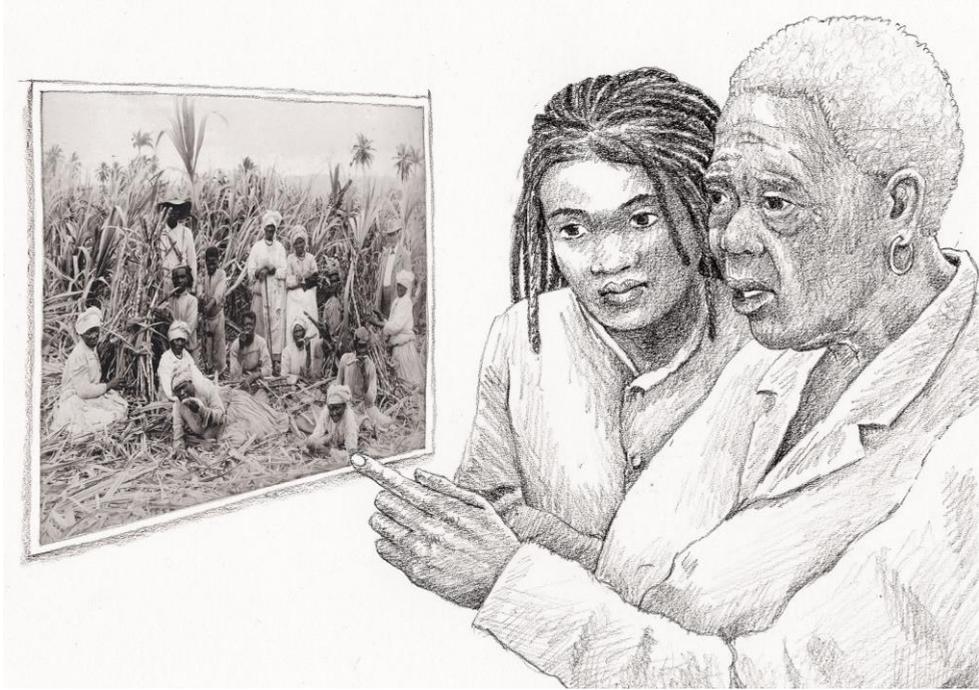
1: ‘Yes! We choose this topic because it shows that people can narrate it without having been involved in it themselves’.

2: ‘No, because the image was, um, that people, that relatives can narrate it’.

1: ‘For that very reason. So we choose this topic because it shows people can talk about it without having been able to have been involved in it themselves’.

\*Self-reported identity: 1 Moroccan; 2 Spanish-Surinamese-Dutch; 3 Dutch-Antillean.

Figure 5. Image 8 'Stories of Dutch families about slavery' from the task in the closing lesson (drawing by Wim Euverman)



Pupils 2 and 3 did not agree with pupil 1. In the end, the pupils indicated that it was important that descendants could narrate the stories of slavery. Although the pupils believed that past and present events were related through family memory, when they applied this concept to themselves, the pupils did not experience the general continuity that had been discussed. However, the pupils also did not accept or understand pupil 1's solution that people can share their knowledge of history without having been personally involved in historical events. The response of pupil 2 indicates the belief that relatives possess a special status in relating stories because they were personally involved in the history. Pupils from Antillean(-Dutch) and Surinamese(-Dutch) backgrounds scored significantly higher on item 10 (see table 16) regarding family in the post-questionnaire ( $F(1.51) = 17.68, p = .000$ ). Some pupils expressed explicit ideas regarding how descendants were personally related to the subject and projected these ideas to their classmates; however, these ideas did not always match others' experiences. For example, one pupil believed that an African pupil would feel personally related to the subject because he was African; however, the African pupil in question said he knew that his family was not traded to America (because they still lived in Africa) and that he personally had nothing to do with slavery. Another pupil believed that descendants of enslaved people would seek to learn more about freedom,

whereas his group member, who was a descendant, suggested that studying freedom meant less to him than learning about the lives and situations of the enslaved persons.

To summarise, the pupils' existing understandings of the significance of the heritage of slavery were reinforced by the museum visit. Further, these understandings were enriched with perspectives on the significance in society and how these perspectives may be related to people's identity. The triad discussions and the individual interviews revealed that some pupils had simplified notions of this interplay between perspectives and identities or struggled with it in terms of their own identity.

### *Heritage: reading between the lines*

Some interview remarks after the closing lesson indicated that adopting a heritage approach towards historical traces stimulated pupils' reflections and understandings of the significance of the heritage of slavery. For example, when describing the visit to the monument, one pupil noted the following:

'I saw it, and I saw those roses on it, and then I thought, well, if a rose, well many people do think about it, and it is really important for them. Because of the roses, it looked really sad.'

Although the guide had explicitly drawn the pupils' attention to the roses, pupils also read between the lines of the guide's words and discerned messages about the heritage of slavery. One pupil found meaning amidst personal comments that the guide had made but not emphasised, strengthening the monument's significance:

'Yes, that woman had then, I think, um, she descended from slavery too, and I think to her it was very important, that statue, and if it would break down or if they would say "no we do not want that statue there anymore" then it would really hurt her, I think; a thing like this seems very important to me, that it will be preserved, these sort of things'.

The pupil's use of words related to descent ('from slavery') is interesting because the guide had indicated that she was the descendant of a slave owner and his female slave. Although the pupils had drawn clear-cut lines between the descendants of the enslaved and those of their owners, an encounter with an actual descendant challenged this idea.

Examining slavery from a heritage perspective encouraged pupils to reflect on their personal relationship or engagement with the history and heritage of slavery. One pupil described an intense experience during the museum visit, appropriating the historical traces as the heritage of his ancestors:

'Like with the canoe, just how they sat in it, and you could see ship decks as well, and well, I could see where my ancestors sat in, and yes, what they have been through'. (see also figure 6)

Several other pupils noted an interest in how they might be related to the history of slavery and reported that they had discussed the matter with other family members at home after the visit to *NiNsee*.

Overall, adopting a heritage approach stimulated not only the pupils' reflection on the ways in which people attribute significance to historical traces but also the pupils' personal engagement with the traces and their attribution of significance to them. The pupils' remarks showed that the heritage approach conveyed a powerful message that was easily understood.

*Figure 6. NiNsee exhibition, 'Break the silence' – the 'canoe' (photo Pieter de Bruijn)*



## 5. CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, I explored how Dutch pupils in two urban classrooms imagined the history of slavery and attributed significance to slavery when confronted with historical traces that were presented as Dutch heritage.

The pupils' historical imagination was primarily stimulated in affective ways during the project, evoking interest, emotional engagement and moral responses. Although the pupils' images of maltreated enslaved persons on plantations and their enslaved perspectives were enriched by detailed stories, objects and role play, these images and perspectives did not change profoundly throughout the lessons. Some pupils added new images and perspectives to their existing knowledge, most notably regarding the Dutch involvement in the slave trade. I observed very few cases in which the pupils combined multiple perspectives regarding various historical actors. However, the pupils reported that the museum visit enabled them to clearly imagine the time of slavery and to believe that

slavery actually occurred. Additionally, the pupils' emotional engagement increased, and many pupils empathised with the enslaved. The history was sensitive for some of these pupils, who were emotionally affected by the horror of slavery or who identified with the enslaved. Notably, the majority of the pupils empathised without significant contextualisation or an awareness of the distinction between the past and the present. Therefore, these findings show that a heritage approach can overemphasise the affective elements of historical imagination engagement, thus impeding a historical perspective, as the existing literature warns (Grever *et al.*, 2012). However, pupils' questions and reflections after the project showed that their affective engagement aroused interest and motivation for further learning. In school, this finding can be used as a starting point to add context and other perspectives to pupils' images.

My case study demonstrates the processes that may occur when historical traces are presented as heritage and when issues of significance and identity become central. At the beginning of the project, pupils believed it was important to preserve the historical traces of slavery, primarily to remember that freedom and equality have not always existed and because these traces are important to the descendants of enslaved people. These ideas, which resembled those expressed by the tour guides and the exhibition, were reinforced during the project. During the museum visit, pupils gained insight into the sensitivities that surround the topic of slavery in Dutch society and considered how these sensitivities are sometimes related to a person's identity or background. At the monument, the pupils were invited to reflect on the significance of slavery in society and to verbalise their own position. However, the main sensitivity regarding slavery in society, the lack of awareness, was not discussed extensively. Although one pupil learned that the Dutch history of slavery was considered a taboo topic, the majority of the pupils did not appear to be aware of this issue. However, some pupils did struggle with this history and their own position towards it; they related personally to the topic, sometimes based on their self-reported Surinamese, Antillean or Dutch identity. Some pupils projected their understandings of significance onto other pupils based on their specific ethnic backgrounds or identity; however, these presumptions did not always match with the other person's experience. For example, some pupils who were the descendants of enslaved people did not appear to care about this history because slavery had occurred many generations before the pupils were born. These issues were not emphasised in the discussion at the monument. Despite the nuanced personal story of the guide, pupils were not guided into deeper reflection on the interplay between perspectives and identity. The closing lesson and the interviews showed that many pupils exclusively ascribed the heritage of slavery to the descendants of enslaved people and linked this heritage directly to a black ethnic identity. These findings demonstrate the danger of reinforced stereotypes and exclusion when teaching pupils about sensitive history and heritage (I. Philips, 2008; Smith *et al.*, 2011). The study also shows the importance of reflecting with pupils on the interplay between identity and people's conceptions as well as on the dynamics of this interplay.

Finally, this case study illustrates some methodological and practical difficulties in researching in-depth learning processes in out-of-school learning environments. For example, at the end of the museum visit, it was difficult to create a space for pupils to quietly fill in the questionnaire. In addition, it was challenging to capture pupil interaction and emotional engagement on tape. Further, because of the lack of similar previous research in the field of heritage education, I designed my own questionnaires. Although the scales that I used appeared to offer consistent measurements, they require testing on a wider scale to test their validity and reliability. For example, I operationalised pupils' understandings of the significance of heritage as their opinion about the importance of preserving objects and stories. I used the interviews to determine when pupils approached objects and stories as historical sources and when they used a 'heritage approach', valuing the traces with regard to society or to themselves personally. The triangulation of measuring techniques was very helpful for developing a deep understanding of this specific case. This procedure provided me with data from various standpoints to examine the case in its complexities.

This study is limited in that it investigated only one educational project related to the heritage of slavery (a visit to *NiNsee* and the National Slavery Monument) among a variety of potential educational projects and activities organised by schools and heritage organisations. The aim was not to assess the quality of the project that I investigated. Instead, I intended to describe how pupils can engage in historical imagination and attribute significance during history lessons in which historical traces are presented as heritage in the context of a museum. Several classes in the Netherlands participate in such lessons. My small, exploratory case study is only an initial step towards improved insight into the processes at work during such history lessons. Nevertheless, my findings suggest that it is important to reflect with pupils on the multiple perspectives of different historical actors and different groups in society as well as their own and to contextualise these perspectives to enable critical reflection on the sensitive history and heritage of slavery that supports historical understanding. The next chapter elaborates on this issue of adopting multiple perspectives on sensitive history and heritage by examining pupils' learning while engaged in a heritage project that explicitly included multiple perspectives on WWII history.



## CHAPTER 5

### AN INTRIGUING HISTORICAL TRACE OR HERITAGE?

#### LEARNING ABOUT ANOTHER PERSON'S HERITAGE IN A PROJECT ADDRESSING WWII<sup>13</sup>

##### 1. INTRODUCTION

Many pupils visit historical museums, archives or sites during their secondary history education. Often, pupils remember these types of visit years later. Because of expanding research and improved evaluation techniques, this area of extracurricular learning has increasingly gained recognition as a complement to history education (Falk & Dierking, 2013; Gosselin, 2011). There are various reasons for visiting such out-of-school learning environments and teaching with historical traces. I use the term 'traces' in a broad sense, referring to 'the physical survivals of the past (buildings, historic sites, museum artefacts), as well as the non-institutionalised and less tangible (customs, folk stories, festivals, symbols and ritual)' (Hamer, 2005, p. 159). The use of historical traces during an educational visit to a museum, archive or site can be motivational. The experience of 'real', beautiful or intriguing traces from the past in museums extends beyond the possibilities in school and can motivate further learning (Von Borries, 2009). The use of traces can thus stimulate historical inquiry (Marcus *et al.*, 2012; Nakou, 2001). Historical objects evoke questions and provide pupils with an opportunity to investigate the past on their own. Because objects do not present a closed narrative and often can be related to more ordinary historical actors, these objects can be used to provide pupils with a more pluralistic and public interpretation of the past (Nakou, 2001). Historical traces can also stimulate historical imagination or historical empathy (McRaine, 2010; Spock, 2010). Particularly with regard to sensitive topics such as WWII, the topic of the case study presented in this chapter, pupils may encounter difficulty understanding a historical reality that is unjust, cruel or horrible in their eyes (Davies, 2000; Pettigrew *et al.*, 2009). Historical traces may

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<sup>13</sup> This chapter is based on G.M. Savenije (2013). *When a historical source turns out to be 'heritage': Second generation immigrant pupils' learning in an exhibition about WWII*. Manuscript submitted for publication.

help pupils adopt a historical perspective to understand how people in the past thought and how their values and feelings differed from the pupils' ideas. As in numerous other European countries, the Netherlands provides various opportunities to include historical traces in history education about WWII. Pupils can visit historical sites, such as the former concentration camps in Vught, Westerbork and Amersfoort, meet concentration camp survivors in the classroom or visit the various war museums and war memorials throughout the country.

However, what is often overlooked in teaching with historical traces is that in many cases, these traces are also considered to be heritage. As discussed in chapter one, scholars have criticised the 'heritage industry' for stimulating the instrumental and mythical uses of the past for political and commercial reasons (Hewison, 1987; Lowenthal, 1998; Smith, 2006). Heritage tourism can enable a distorted view of history, making the past excessively close and sensational (De Groot, 2009). The construction and justification of identities play an important role in this process, which is interwoven with issues of power and social exclusion (e.g., Littler & Naidoo, 2005). Within the context of museums, heritage institutions, tourism and education, heritage is often used as a governmental strategy for social inclusion that may not necessarily lead to the acknowledgement of diversity (Littler, 2005). When particular heritage is claimed by a particular group, this claim may lead to the loss of multiple perspectives concerning the meaning and significance of heritage (Van Boxtel, 2010b; Waterton & Smith, 2010). However, as I have argued in the previous chapters, considered from a dynamic approach to heritage, material and immaterial traces of the past are not self-evident and do not have an eternal essence but instead answer to the specific needs and aims of communities that use these traces as a source for creating identities (Littler & Naidoo, 2005; Smith, 2006). From a dynamic perspective, heritage includes the traces of the past that are considered valuable for the present and the future by a particular group of people (Grever *et al.*, 2012; Smith, 2006). This meta-perspective implies an awareness of the multi-perspective and changing character of the process of constructing heritage. Notably, although particular historical traces are presented as Dutch heritage in heritage projects in the Netherlands, pupils may not necessarily consider these traces to be their heritage.

Which story is selected as the 'official' one is particularly urgent and apparent in the way in which a topic is taught at school as part of the history curriculum or presented in museums (Goldberg *et al.*, 2006; Grever *et al.*, 2012; Littler & Naidoo, 2005; Spalding, 2012; Van Vree & Van der Laarse, 2009a; VanSledright, 2008; Wertsch, 2002). Although there are diversity and dynamics in WWII narratives in museums and schools, the WWII narrative that is currently presented in many Dutch schools and European museums and heritage institutions focuses on the various victim groups of the war, often stimulating empathy and identification through personal stories and emotional experiences (Hondius, 2010; Ribbens & Captain, 2011; Somers, 2014). Education about WWII is usually accompanied by a strong moral message that people should seek to prevent a war of such

catastrophic, horrifying and global dimensions in the future. However, this narrative has been called into question in recent years. For example, some pupils consider the Holocaust to be Jewish history and equate ‘Jews’ with ‘Israel’ (Van Driel & Van Dijk, 2010). Theories regarding the instrumental use of the Holocaust by Israel, the denial of the Holocaust and the equation between the Holocaust and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict have circulated in the countries of origin of many European immigrants, reaching Europe through the media and presenting a challenge in European urban classrooms (Allouche-Benayoun & Jikeli, 2013).

The challenges described above to the dominant narrative about WWII may lead to difficulties in teaching about the war, particularly in urban classrooms. Such tensions may be intensified by an encounter with the historical traces related to this history, particularly when these traces are considered heritage and are assigned significance by a majority, a minority or both, but in different ways. Pupils’ historical understanding is influenced by their cultural and ethnic background (Barton & Levstik, 2008; Epstein, 1998; Seixas, 1993). Pupils from various backgrounds may connect with WWII history in different ways, and these connections can emerge in the forefront when pupils are confronted with the ‘heritage’ of the war. This situation may create tension among pupils or between pupils and their teacher (Ensel & Stremmelaar, 2013). However, the idea that pupils are studying things that are considered valuable in the society in which they live can motivate pupils (Hamer, 2005). Further, studying heritage may stimulate pupils’ awareness that history is built on stories that are significant to particular groups of people. This awareness can help pupils reflect on their own criteria for historical significance (Grever *et al.*, 2012; Lyon, 2007; Seixas & Clark, 2004; Van Drie *et al.*, 2014). One of the aims of history education is to understand the ways in which history is constructed and is subject to the changing viewpoints of its present creators (Seixas & Morton, 2012). However, the ways in which the often multi-layered or disputed ‘heritage status’ of particular traces of the past influences the learning of history remain understudied.

Concerns regarding teaching the Holocaust to pupils of Arabic backgrounds because of references to the Middle East conflict, as described above, and their assumed anti-Semitic attitude have produced numerous initiatives in schools, museums and historical sites related to the topic (Ensel & Stremmelaar, 2013; Gryglewski, 2010). This case study explores the learning of history by Dutch pupils of immigrant descent engaged in a heritage project that presents WWII historical traces as Dutch heritage. Pupils were queried using questionnaires and interviews and were videotaped during three lessons, including a museum visit. In the following sections, I describe the context of the case study: recent developments and current practices in teaching the history of WWII in secondary education at school and in contexts outside the classroom in the Netherlands. I then present the methods and the results of my case study.

### *1.1 A Changing Narrative of WWII*

In recent decades, the remembrance of WWII has become increasingly similar in European countries; for example, in the way that the Holocaust is regarded as a central element (Kroh, 2008; Van Vree & Van der Laarse, 2009b). The discourse that has emerged around the remembrance of the Holocaust (with much attention focused on Holocaust victims and the moral lessons to be learned) has influenced the way that pupils are taught about WWII and the Holocaust in history education. In the Netherlands, as in other Western countries, WWII is considered an important topic in history education and is taught to pupils multiple times during their primary and secondary education. WWII and the Holocaust are two subjects that are mentioned explicitly in the curriculum requirements for secondary history education (Van der Hoeven, 2006). In recent years, there have been changes in the ways in which the narrative of WWII is taught. I will discuss these developments with regard to increased personification, identification and moralisation, the inclusion of new perspectives and the increased sensitivities based on references to the Middle East conflict.

The focus of the story of WWII has shifted from national pride, guilt and responsibility to the victimisation of various groups, such as Jews, homosexuals and Sinti (Hondius, 2010; Van Vree & Van der Laarse, 2009b). Partially because of this shift, a micro-historical, personal approach towards the war has been increasingly represented in history education, museums and sites. Visitors and pupils are invited to imagine or empathise with the stories told and ‘experience the war’ through the eyes of a particular historical actor (Hondius, 2010; Van der Laarse, 2010). Historical objects, sites and witnesses’ stories play an important role in this experience (Van der Laarse, 2010). A recent study of Dutch war museums by Somers (2014) described how the 1970s marked a change in the memory culture of the war that increasingly focused on the war’s victims and personal stories and the moral lessons to be learned from it. In her study of the memory cultures of Ravensbrück in Europe between 1945 and 2010, Hogervorst (2010) found that in concentration camp visits since 1989, instead of historicising and creating distance from the past, educators have bridged the distance between the past and the present to enable youngsters to experience the past and to allow the memories of survivors to live on in the present. Camp survivors have also increasingly related their history to universal ethical lessons to be taught to younger generations. The focus is to ‘learn *from* Ravensbrück, not to learn *about* it’ (Hogervorst, 2010). This moral element is considered very important in education about WWII, although experts also agree that preaching is ineffective and that pupils should be offered evidence so they can form their own moral judgements (Hondius, 2010; Van Driel & Van Dijk, 2010).

Another recent development in education is the addition of new perspectives regarding WWII, such as the perspectives of perpetrators and bystanders. Newly added perspectives also include people who became involved in the war because they lived in the colonies of the countries involved in the war and were, for example, forced to join the army (Hondius, 2010; Van Vree & Van der Laarse, 2009b). The latter resulted from a

consideration of ways in which pupils of immigrant descent can be taught about the war in a meaningful way in an increasingly multicultural society. One approach interfaces the histories of the countries of origin of pupils' parents and includes these histories in the narrative of WWII (Ribbens *et al.*, 2008). Based on the study of Ribbens *et al.* (2008), teaching materials have been developed to discuss the history of WWII in Suriname and the Dutch Antilles, Turkey, Morocco, China, the Dutch-East Indies, Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union. Additionally, a training programme has been developed for teachers who discuss sensitive histories and topics in the classroom (Forum, n.d.; Instituut voor Geschiedenisdidactiek, n.d.). In another example, the *Haus der Wannsee-Konferenz* (the memorial house of the Wannsee Conference) now includes in its collection historical documents that refer to the countries of origin of immigrant pupils or their parents. In four-month projects, educators at the memorial house and pupils from Palestinian and Turkish backgrounds have studied the pupils' family biographies, the related history of the Palestinian or Turkish people and the history of the Holocaust (Gryglewski, 2010).

Nevertheless, teachers and educators have increasingly indicated that contemporary urban classrooms pose challenges for teaching about WWII. Several studies have examined pupils' attitudes towards the history of WWII. In the Netherlands, research on pupils' attitudes towards history has shown that pupils often regard WWII as the most interesting topic in history education (Grever & Ribbens, 2007). A study of 890 pupils in 2011 showed that for the majority, WWII was the first war that came to mind when they considered war in general (NJR, 2011). Many pupils were interested in personal war stories and knew these types of stories. Pupils of non-Dutch descent knew relatively less about these stories. In addition, the commemoration of WWII was considered important. Although pupils of non-Dutch descent tended to pay little attention to the annual national commemoration of WWII, the study results did not suggest a negative attitude towards the war within this group. A study examining the trial of an educational project in urban classrooms (6 lessons) about WWII and the Middle East conflict using peer educators of Muslim and Jewish backgrounds showed that a majority of pupils believed that the annual national commemoration of WWII was important (Diversio, 2009). Further, the results did not show the expected oversimplified views of Jews and the Middle East conflict, although pupils of Moroccan, Middle-Eastern and Turkish backgrounds tended to agree that 'all Jews are against Palestinians' (pp. 32). However, researchers Ensel and Stremmelaar (2013), who observed six of these projects in Amsterdam and studied the pupils' overt verbal behaviour, found that different narratives about WWII circulated among the pupils, for example, regarding Hitler's Jewish ancestry or the 'Illuminati' who control the world. Further, numerous anti-Jewish remarks were made, which suggested a negative attitude towards Jews and 'an alternative "narrative" about the role of the Jews in history and their position in present-day society, and about the genesis and development of the Middle East conflict' (Ensel & Stremmelaar, 2013, p. 170). The pupils also compared the exclusion of

Jews in the past with the position of minority groups in contemporary society. These findings are in agreement with a study among Muslim adolescents in Berlin, Paris and London by Jikeli (2013) that, among other findings, showed that many of these adolescents doubted or even denied the narrative about the Holocaust in public discourse. For example, they doubted the number of European Jews killed during the Holocaust, they believed Jews were burned in the extermination camps because there was typhoid in the camps, or they doubted Hitler's death. Further, the Holocaust was equated with the sufferings of Palestinians (Jikeli, 2013).

It is important to make certain differentiations with regard to the assumed anti-Semitism of European Muslim pupils. First, the change in discourse after September 11, 2001 from 'pupils from Turkish, Moroccan or Palestinian backgrounds' to 'Muslim pupils' may be problematic (Gryglewski, 2010). In the case of the *Haus der Wannsee-Konferenz*, pupils from Turkish backgrounds generally made fewer remarks about the Middle East conflict than their Palestinian peers, although this finding might also have been due to the higher educational level of the Turkish group. Second, the anti-Semitic attitudes among pupils of immigrant descent may be related to the socio-economic position in society of many of these pupils and to the way that they form and adhere to a social identity (Ensel & Stremmelaar, 2013; Gryglewski, 2010; Jikeli, 2013; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Pupils adopt attitudes that they believe are common in their group. They are very aware of the sensitivity that surrounds the history of WWII and the Holocaust in European countries and may use that awareness in a provocative way in the classroom. Third, anti-Semitic attitudes are also found among pupils of Dutch descent and among non-Muslim pupils. Nevertheless, pupils of non-Dutch descent generally can be expected to be less familiar with memories of WWII in their family or their community than pupils of Dutch descent. Some pupils of immigrant descent may consider the war part of the history of the country in which they live but unrelated to the history of their own or their parents' country of origin. Consequently, there may be differences between these pupils and pupils of Dutch descent in the attribution of significance to WWII history. These differences may be particularly apparent when pupils encounter historical traces of WWII that clearly are considered heritage by a majority of Dutch citizens. How will pupils of immigrant descent react to such an encounter? Will they be aware of the 'heritage status' of what they are studying, and in what ways will that awareness play a role in their learning? I explored these questions with a group of pupils who visited *Museon*.

## 2. METHOD

This case study was conducted in 2011 in The Hague. I followed secondary education pupils who participated in a project addressing the history and heritage of WWII within the context of history education. The project included an introductory lesson at school, a visit to *Museon* and a closing lesson at school. The heritage project provided the primary case

boundaries. The case included the school, the pupils, the teacher and the museum educator related to the project.

### 2.1 *Museon Exhibition 'Child in War'*

*Museon* in The Hague was founded as a school museum to provide teachers with an opportunity to bring their classes for a visit and allow their pupils to 'test in practice what they had learned in theory, using objects that appeal to the imagination' (*Museon*, n.d.). *Museon* hosts educational exhibitions for both school and informal visits, covering topics in the areas of nature, culture and applied science. The majority of the exhibitions are situated in rooms that can be closed off for workshops in small groups. One permanent exhibition about WWII is 'Child in War', which was visited by the pupils in my case study (see figure 7). The previously mentioned developments regarding personification, experiencing through objects and stories, moral lessons, the inclusion of multiple perspectives and modern sensitivities in society are reflected in this exhibition at *Museon*.

Figure 7. Logo exhibition 'Child in War' ([www.museon.nl](http://www.museon.nl))



The *Museon* exhibition includes the personal belongings and stories of 35 persons with different backgrounds and experiences, all of whom were children when WWII began. These different narratives include Jews in a concentration camp, soldiers in the German army, Dutch collaborators, Moroccan soldiers in the French army, persecuted Roma, people who lived in Suriname during the war, Jews in Curacao and residents of the Dutch East Indies who were imprisoned by Japan. The stories from Morocco, Suriname and Curacao are relatively new in museum education about WWII (Ribbens & Captain, 2011). Together with the story of the Dutch East Indies, these stories refer to the countries of origin of some of the largest minority groups in the Netherlands.

The exhibition's donated objects (documents, objects, and audio, video and film fragments) are stored in a 'filing cabinet' in the back of the exhibition room, simulating the idea of stepping into an archive (see figure 8). In addition to the personal drawers, the cabinet also contains drawers with background information about key concepts, developments and figures in WWII. Some of the personal stories are exhibited in large

crooked pillars with show cases in the remaining space of the exhibition room (see figure 8). Each pillar highlights the stories of two persons (one on each side) established around a theme, namely, friendship, courage, religion, liberation, school, transport, adventure, freedom and secret. When pupils push a button, spotlights switch on one by one to show the various personal belongings. At the entrance of the room, one pillar shows videotaped interviews with refugee children who recently moved to the Netherlands to escape war situations in their home countries. The short introductory text of the exhibition explains its theme: to discover the ways in which war radically changes children's lives. The video segments of refugees in the Netherlands are meant to emphasise that some children still grow up in wartime. This theme alludes to a moral message about the devastating effects of war, although the message is formulated in a rather open manner and does not send an 'action message' about what pupils should do (e.g., prevent future wars or fight discrimination). In addition to this connection to the present, significance is attributed to WWII in a personal and intimate sense through the stories and belongings. The exhibition concept also indicates the revelatory significance of these historical traces in examining daily life during WWII: these traces may be considered significant because they reveal something about the past (Seixas & Morton, 2012). The exhibition does not include references to the sensitivities that surround the topic in relation to present-day anti-Semitism and challenges to the existing dominant narrative of WWII. However, the inclusion of the stories of persons from the countries of origin of Dutch immigrants appears to be an effort to discuss different narratives about WWII and to engage pupils of immigrant descent in the topic.

The exhibition's concept of featuring 35 real people who donated their own real objects provides an interesting case for my research question addressing teaching with historical traces that are presented as Dutch heritage. These objects are considered to be heritage not only by a majority of Dutch citizens as part of WWII history and by *Museon* as part of its collection but also by the 35 persons themselves. The knowledge that these persons provided their personal belongings to *Museon* for preservation and exhibition adds depth to the abstract concept of heritage and makes the concept more penetrable. Further, the presentation of different experiences of the war relates to the idea of multiperspectivity in history and heritage.

Figure 8. The 'filing cabinet' and the theme pillars (photo Ebbert Olierook / Museon)



## 2.2 Project Procedure

In the introductory lesson at school, the teacher briefly introduced the heritage project by showing the pupils some recent examples of societal debate about the history of WWII. The pupils were then presented with the following three statements formulated by the teacher: (1) top-down history is insufficient to understand the past; (2) the current attention to WWII is exaggerated because the war was 70 years ago; and (3) a new Hitler in Europe is impossible thanks to the European Union and European cooperation. The teacher also asked the question, ‘What are your expectations for the lesson in *Museon*?’ I formulated this question to collect data regarding the pupils’ expectations. The pupils discussed the statements and the question in triads.

At *Museon*, the pupils participated in a workshop titled ‘War Children in Dialogue’, which was designed to align with the exhibition ‘Child in War’. The pupils gathered information about the lives of the 35 persons by investigating the donated objects and stories. Each triad investigated two different persons. The groups then wrote an imaginary dialogue (hereinafter referred to as the empathy task) between these two persons that could have occurred at the exhibition’s opening in 2004 when the exhibition donors met for the first time and exchanged stories about their war experiences. The pupils presented their dialogues to the group at the end of the workshop.

In the closing lesson at school, the triads of pupils created scripts for a documentary about WWII. The pupils were required to address the following five topics in their film: (1) stories told by Dutch families about WWII, (2) ways in which WWII is part of your life, (3) traces of WWII in your own environment, (4) the commemoration of WWII and (5) freedom. For each topic, the groups could choose from three different perspectives or approaches (e.g., different historical actors; a local, national or global perspective; different present-day representations). They had to choose, first for themselves and then as a group, which approach was the most important for their film. The product included a collage of pictures of the chosen approaches, the pupils’ argumentation for their choices and the title of their documentary.

## 2.3 Participants

The project participants included 22 pupils from two classes at a secondary school in The Hague. The school was a mid-sized, public school for pre-vocational education (VMBO), higher general education (HAVO) and pre-university education (VWO). The population of the school reflected the large variety of social, cultural, religious and ethnic backgrounds in this urban area. According to the most recent estimations (in 2010), 5% of the Dutch population is Muslim. The majority of Dutch Muslims have a Turkish or Moroccan background and live in one of the four largest cities in the country, one of which is The Hague (Central Statistical Office, 2009).

The participants were fourth- and fifth-year VWO pupils aged 15 to 19 years (the majority of pupils were 16 to 17 years old). Because of the small groups, the two classes

were merged for their history course. During the project, a few pupils (1 to 3) were absent at the time of some of the measurements. The classes were culturally and ethnically diverse (e.g., the pupils' backgrounds included Moroccan, 35%; Surinamese, 30%; and Turkish, 15%). Although 80% of the pupils were born in the Netherlands, none of their parents were. A total of 60% of the participating pupils were female, and 74% were Muslim (the remaining pupils were Christian or Hindu). History was a compulsory subject consisting of three hours per week for the participating pupils because they had chosen the 'Culture and Society' or 'Economy and Society' learning profiles. In the first three years of their secondary schooling, these pupils studied history chronologically from prehistoric times, primarily focusing on Western Europe and the Netherlands. Thus, the class had already studied WWII when I began my research. The project was scheduled as an extra-curricular activity for which the teacher accompanied the classes. Before the project, the pupils were studying the Dutch Republic during the seventeenth century.

Of the 22 participants in the study, 12 pupils were selected to be interviewed individually and videotaped in triads during the lessons. Based on the results of the first questionnaire, I selected pupils with diverse perspectives on WWII history and heritage and their significance. The aim of this process was to obtain insight into the variety of perspectives that pupils might bring to the classroom and to determine whether I could relate any differences to the pupils' self-reported ethnic identity. For my selection, I focused on differences in the pupils' responses on the mind map and on differences in opinion regarding the preservation of WWII objects and stories. I also considered variety in gender, religion and the birth country of the pupils' parents. The four triads were composed of pupils with diverse perspectives and backgrounds.

Of the four triads, one triad was selected to be discussed in depth in this chapter. The triad included three fourth-year pupils, denoted as Ravi, Sofia and Salima (see table 17). In two triads, one of the pupils was absent during one of the lessons. Of the remaining two triads, one triad had more verbal interactions among the pupils during the lessons, particularly during the museum lesson. Because verbalisation is essential to my understanding and analysis of the pupils' perspectives and of the interaction in the triad, the triad with more verbal interactions was selected to be presented in this chapter. The results of this triad are not meant to be representative of the other pupils of my study; rather, the results provide insight into the variety of perspectives that pupils of immigrant descent may possess about WWII and into the possible results of pupils' encounters with WWII heritage during a museum visit.

During the museum visit, the selected triad studied the objects and stories of Connie Suverkropp and Helga Ruebsamen. Connie Suverkropp lived in the Dutch East Indies when WWII began and was imprisoned by the Japanese in 1944. Helga Ruebsamen was a Jewish girl who lived in The Hague when WWII began. She had to go into hiding from 1943 to 1945.

Table 17. Pupils in the triad

Pupil	Gender	Age	Birth country	Parents' birth country (F – M)	Religion
Ravi	M	17	Netherlands	Suriname – Suriname	Muslim
Sofia	F	16	Netherlands	Morocco - Morocco	Muslim
Salima	F	15	Netherlands	Morocco - Morocco	Muslim

#### 2.4 Data Collection and Analysis

To investigate my research question regarding how pupils in Dutch urban classrooms learn about WWII history while engaged in a heritage project that presents historical traces as Dutch heritage, I used the sub-questions presented in chapter one:

1. In what ways do pupils attribute significance to the history and heritage of WWII during the heritage project, and how is this related to their self-reported ethnic identity?
2. In what ways do pupils imagine the past, and in what ways is this supported during the heritage project?
3. To what extent do pupils encounter and acknowledge multiple perspectives on WWII history and heritage and their significance?

I conducted four questionnaires with the entire class as follows: at the beginning of the project; after the introductory lesson; after the museum visit; and after the closing lesson. When answering the first questionnaire, the pupils were aware that they would be visiting *Museon*. In addition to answering the questionnaires, twelve pupils were interviewed individually before and after the project and observed in triads during the lessons. I also observed the museum educator. In the next section, I will discuss these instruments for each sub-question. These instruments have also been thoroughly described in chapter two.

(1) To investigate the pupils' understandings of the significance of WWII history and heritage at the beginning of the project, I examined their opinions regarding the preservation of WWII objects and stories (see Appendix A10). In the interview at the beginning of the project, I asked the pupils to explain their responses. For example, I said, 'The next two questions concern the preservation of objects and stories of WWII. You indicated you find it important to preserve these. Could you explain your answer to me?' I also asked whether they thought others would agree with them, and if not, who would not and why. These questions allowed me to gain additional insight into their adoption of multiple perspectives and their ideas regarding what determines one's opinion. Lastly, I asked them to describe their ethnic identity and to reflect on its influence on their responses to the questionnaire and in the interview (see Appendix B). These questions were based on literature concerning pupils' understandings of historical significance in relation to their self-reported ethnic identity (Levstik, 2008; Peck, 2010). The transcribed interviews were examined thoroughly, analysing the pupils' understandings of the significance of the

history and heritage of WWII and the interrelationships between their understandings and their self-reported ethnic identity.

To discover the ways in which the pupils attributed significance to the history and heritage of WWII while engaged in the heritage project, the questionnaire after the closing lesson repeated the question about the importance of the preservation of WWII objects and stories in the first questionnaire. In the interview after the closing lesson, we compared the responses to both questionnaires. I asked, for example, ‘In the previous interview, you explained to me that you thought this was not important. Can you describe what made you change your mind?’ and ‘Your response is the same in both questionnaires. Is it correct that you still feel the same about this question?’ (see Appendix B). I analysed the interviews and the video recordings of the group work for the pupils’ attribution of significance during the heritage project and their reflections on the ‘heritage status’ of the historical traces.

(2) To investigate the pupils’ historical imagination of WWII at the beginning of the project, the first questionnaire included a mind map (see Appendix A1) and a closed question regarding the pupils’ familiarity with various historical actors or groups that were involved in WWII (comparable with the stories in the *Museon* exhibition – see Appendix A3). These questions were based on literature concerning pupils’ understandings of WWII history and on different narratives of WWII (Edwards & O’Dowd, 2010; Gray, 2011; Ribbens *et al.*, 2008). The questionnaire also included a closed question regarding the pupils’ interest in learning about WWII history and heritage (see Appendix A6). As described above, the interview at the beginning of the project was used for clarification of the pupils’ responses to this questionnaire. The raw data of the mind map in the questionnaire and the transcribed interviews were examined thoroughly, analysing the pupils’ prior knowledge of (multiple perspectives on) WWII, the pupils’ images of WWII and the perspectives the pupils adopted in these images, and their interest in WWII history and heritage.

The ways in which the investigation of historical traces supported historical imagination during the heritage project were examined with video recordings of four triads during the lessons, the questionnaires after each lesson and the interview after the closing lesson. First, the pupils’ emotional engagement and interest during the lessons was measured using a closed question with emoticons (see Appendix A7). Second, free recall informed me about the pupils’ initial thoughts about the lessons (see Appendix A4). Third, after the visit to *Museon*, a closed questionnaire examined the pupils’ attitudes towards learning history with historical traces during the museum visit (see Appendix A8). This questionnaire examined the pupils’ historical imagination and their situational interest as triggered by the historical traces. Fourth, the questionnaire after the closing lesson asked for written argumentation addressing whether the pupils would regret it if their school could not visit the *Museon* exhibition as a way to examine their opinions regarding learning history in that exhibition (see Appendix A9). These questions were based on existing

literature that examined historical inquiry in school and history learning in a museum setting (Marcus *et al.*, 2012; Van Drie & Van Boxtel, 2008). Fifth, the video recordings were analysed to discern the pupils' emotional engagement, their expressions of motivation, the ways in which the pupils historically investigated the historical traces and the ways in which they imagined WWII. Lastly, the interview after the closing lesson was used to add the pupils' reflections on the visit to my impressions from the video recordings.

(3) The extent to which the pupils acknowledged different perspectives on WWII history and heritage and their significance (encountered within the triad or in the exhibition) was discussed with them in the interview after the closing lesson (see Appendix B). For example, I raised specific issues in their discussion and sought their opinions on the differences in perspective. I also asked whether they understood others' opinions and whether they were satisfied with the solution that was reached during the lesson. I analysed the video recordings and the interviews to study the pupils' remarks about new or different perspectives in the exhibition and the triad and to examine how the pupils discussed these issues. Previous literature on pupils' discussion of different perspectives provided a sensitising framework (Barton & McCully, 2012; Goldberg, 2013). I also evaluated the free recall responses for remarks about different or new perspectives.

Table 18 provides an overview of the various instruments that I used before, during and after the project. The data were examined as a whole to observe the full range of variation in the pupils' learning within the context of their perspectives at the beginning of the project and after the project. Therefore, I present my results in detail by closely examining one triad throughout the project to explore and describe the experiences of these three pupils in depth. For the closed questions in the questionnaires, I also provide the results of the entire class to show the extent to which these three pupils were extraordinary within their own class.

First, I discuss the perspectives of the three pupils prior to the project, focusing particularly on the pupils' understandings of the significance of WWII history and heritage and on the interrelationship between these understandings and the pupils' self-reported ethnic identities. Then, I elaborate on the pupils' learning while engaged in the heritage project, including their historical imagination when investigating historical traces, their encounter with multiple perspectives on WWII in the exhibition and in the lessons at school, and their attribution of significance to WWII history and heritage.

Table 18. Overview of data collection

At the beginning of the project	During / after the introductory lesson	During / after the museum visit	During / after the closing lesson
Questionnaire (n=20)	Short questionnaire (n=20)	Short questionnaire (n=22)	Questionnaire (n=19)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- images and perspectives: mind map</li> <li>- familiarity with 15 historical actors involved in WWII</li> <li>- interest in learning about WWII history and heritage: 7 items (4-point scale)</li> <li>- understandings of the reasons for the preservation of WWII objects and stories: 11 reasons (4-point scale)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- images and perspectives: free recall</li> <li>- emotional engagement and interest: 12 emoticons</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- images and perspectives: free recall</li> <li>- emotional engagement and interest: 12 emoticons</li> <li>- attitude towards learning history with historical traces during the museum visit: 9 items (4-point scale)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- emotional engagement: 12 emoticons</li> <li>- interest in learning about WWII history and heritage: 7 items (4-point scale)</li> <li>- understandings of the reasons for the preservation of WWII objects and stories: 11 reasons (4-point scale)</li> <li>- attitude towards learning history with historical traces in <i>Museon</i>: written argumentation</li> </ul>
Individual interviews (n=12)			Individual interviews (n=12)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- images and perspectives</li> <li>- interest</li> <li>- emotional engagement</li> <li>- understandings of the significance of WWII history and heritage</li> <li>- ideas regarding others' perspectives</li> <li>- self-reported ethnic identity</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- images and perspectives</li> <li>- interest</li> <li>- emotional engagement</li> <li>- understandings of the significance of WWII history and heritage</li> <li>- ideas regarding others' perspectives</li> <li>- experiences during lessons</li> </ul>
	Video recording triads (n=4)	Video recording triads (n=4)	Video recording triads (n=4)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- discussion of different perspectives on WWII history and heritage and their significance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- discussion of different perspectives on WWII history and heritage and their significance</li> <li>- expressions of interest and motivation, methods of historical inquiry, emotional engagement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- discussion of different perspectives on WWII history and heritage and their significance</li> </ul>

### 3. RESULTS

#### 3.1 WWII: Interesting and Important, but not Their Heritage

Compared to the entire class, Ravi, a 16-year-old male, had considerable prior knowledge about the history of WWII, in particular about the persecution of Jews and about the concentration camps (see table 19). His knowledge sources were primary education and film. In primary school, he had spoken with concentration camp survivors and listened to certain wartime radio fragments, which left an impression on him and prompted him to empathise with the Jews.

Table 19. Results of the triad and the entire class (%) regarding the knowledge question in the questionnaire at the beginning of the project

Historical actors involved in WWII	Never heard of it	Heard of it	Know it well
1. People who were imprisoned in a concentration camp	-	-	100%, whole triad
2. People who were persecuted because they were Jewish	-	-	100%, whole triad
3. People who were in hiding	-	5%, Sofia	95%, Ravi, Salima
4. People who were starving during the Hunger Winter	10%, Sofia	10%, Salima	80%, Ravi
5. People who were in the Resistance	-	25%, Ravi, Sofia	75%, Salima
6. German people who did not agree with Hitler	10%, Sofia	25%, Ravi	65%, Salima
7. People who were with the National Socialist Bund (NSB)	-	40%, whole triad	60%
8. People who fought as soldiers when the Netherlands was attacked	-	45%, Salima, Sofia	55%, Ravi
9. People who were persecuted because they were communist	21%	53%, whole triad	26%
10. People who were persecuted because they were Jehovah's witnesses	60%, Salima	20%, Sofia	20%, Ravi
11. People who fought in the Royal Dutch East Indian Army (KNIL)	25%	60%, whole triad	15%
12. People imprisoned in a Japanese camp in the Dutch East Indies	40%, Salima	45%, Sofia	15%, Ravi
13. People who were persecuted because they were Roma or Sinti (gypsy)	40%, Ravi, Sofia	50%, Salima	10%
14. Moroccan people who fought in the French army against the Germans	35%, Ravi	60%, Sofia	5%, Salima
15. People who lived in Curacao, where the Germans bombed oil refineries	95%, whole triad	5%	-

Ravi was very interested in the history of WWII compared to the entire class (see table 20). He found personal stories and objects to be particularly interesting and wanted to hear and see more of these. He believed that it was more emotional to learn about WWII that way; the war was simultaneously tragic and special because few of the witnesses were still alive.

He believed it was important to respect and commemorate what people did for this country and how some gave their lives to fight for freedom and against racism and discrimination. He expressed gratitude for the life that he could live now because of that sacrifice. The personal stories also interested him because he could learn how to survive during wartime in case there was ever a third world war. Further, Ravi was interested in the concept of world war, the involvement of and alliances between all superpowers, and how racism could lead to such massive killings. Ravi was less interested in *Museon* because he had been there previously in primary school, albeit for different exhibitions.

Table 20. Results of the triad and the entire class regarding the interest and preservation questions in the questionnaire at the beginning of the project

Pupil	Interest in learning about WWII history and heritage <sup>a</sup>	Opinion about the preservation of WWII objects and stories <sup>b</sup>
Ravi	3.57	4
Sofia	3.57	4
Salima	2.71	2
Mean whole class	2.91 (standard deviation = .52)	3.45 (standard deviation = .69)

Note. <sup>a</sup>Mean interest scale (8 items; 4-point scale: I want to: know nothing at all, know nothing, know something, know a lot). <sup>b</sup>Score single question regarding preservation (4-point scale: completely disagree, disagree, agree, completely agree).

In the questionnaire, Ravi had written that WWII objects and stories must be preserved (see table 20), most importantly because they cannot be reproduced. He explained,

‘If it was reproduced you could say, “This is what it looked like”, so you think “ok, interesting”. But if you put that against an object that was really used and, um, really touched by those persons or maybe even an object that was touched by Hitler or something with a fingerprint on it, then you would think, “Wow I touched it, that is real, I just saw something or touched something that is really from that time.” This gets you much more than something that is reproduced. [...] Especially for those persons who think back to it, for example, who lost their father to it and who think like, “my father gave me this the last time before he went to the concentration camp” or “this was the last thing he touched before he died” or something. Then these things are just of much emotional value, and so I think it is very important that they are preserved’.

Here, Ravi attributes significance to the objects of WWII not only for the descendants of people who died in the war but also for himself in the sense that these objects can provide a ‘real’ experience of the past. He later explained that because numerous objects tell many different stories, the objects do not really tell a larger story, for example, about the importance of freedom. He indicated that people could always find objects that do not fit with that particular story, noting that given all of these objects and stories together, it would be difficult to understand the larger picture.

Ravi explained the interrelationship between his identity and his understandings of significance as follows. First, his interest in history and major historical events determined his understandings of significance. Second, his Muslim identity played a role. When I asked Ravi about his ethnic identity, he explained that his parents were Surinamese and that he was born in the Netherlands. Although Dutch was his native language, being part of the Muslim community was more important to him than being Surinamese or Dutch. He said that the majority of Surinamese people were Hindu and that those who were Muslim did not take their religious identity too seriously. Therefore, he felt more at home in a Muslim community defined by religious identity. He said that while answering my questions, a thought occurred to him: although this example in WWII history concerned Judaism, it also could have concerned the Muslims because any religion can be accused of anything, and the Islamic culture is currently scrutinised. Ravi also explained that neither he nor his family is related personally to this topic. He added, in more general terms:

‘You are now at a school with many pupils of immigrant descent [*allochtone*<sup>14</sup>], but if you would ask at a real Dutch school with many Dutch persons, they would have, in general Dutch families. Many of them just live in their own country of course, and so they have a larger family tree, and stories are more easily passed on, and objects. That is really special, and I know for them WWII plays a larger role than for people here. Surinamese, Moroccans and Turks do not really have a connection with WWII, and that is why it is considered to be less significant by people of immigrant descent I think’.

The second pupil, Sofia, was a 16-year-old female. For Sofia, the persecution of Jews and the concentration camps were the parts of WWII history that she knew best (see table 19). She saw a documentary on this subject and researched it on the internet. Further, she knew about the involvement of Japan, China, Poland and Russia and associated the history of WWII with a ‘war between capitalism and communism’. A topic that she did not know about but considered to be an important part of WWII history was the occupation of Morocco by the Spanish and French and the fact that Moroccans were forced to fight abroad. Her father told her about his friends who fought in the French army, noting that it was not easy living in Morocco during WWII. In addition, WWII made Sofia consider the current situation between Israel and Palestine. Overall, Sofia was very interested in WWII compared to the entire class (see table 20), particularly in what she called its psychological side: how one can hate a specific people and how it is possible that one person had such an impact and power to cause WWII. Further, she was interested in learning about freedom and equality related to the history of WWII because these values are still important, and she

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<sup>14</sup> The adverb *allochtone* is difficult to translate. Originally, it referred to first- and second-generation immigrants. Currently, it is often used to refer to Dutch citizens from non-Western backgrounds, such as Surinamese, Antillean, Moroccan and Turkish backgrounds.

found it interesting to learn about how these values have been conceived through time. She was less interested in the commemoration of the war because she ‘did not feel it’. In addition, *Museon* did not interest her much because museums in general bored her. Nevertheless, she expected that the objects and stories would provide her with a better image of WWII and thus help her to understand its history. Additionally, she considered it very important to preserve the objects and stories of WWII (see table 20). Stories would prevent people from forgetting that this war had such a significant impact on the world. Objects would help pupils like her to form an image of the war and were emotionally valuable for certain people.

Regarding her personal relationship with the topic, Sofia believed WWII had a sad history but said she felt distanced towards it because it did not happen to her. She explained that the war occurred a long time ago and that her family had not been involved:

‘I assume I have nothing to do with it. I was born in 1994, which is a very long time after WWII, but maybe somehow something happened to my grandfather that was related to it. I think if I would discover something like that, I would be much more interested, and then I would be emotional about it.’

Sofia believed that many adolescents would feel this way and that it was very important to teach them about the war because the war had a significant impact and was still very important, particularly for elderly people. Sofia emphasised her education’s influence on her perspectives. For example, although she was more interested in learning about the history of her own country of origin, her education at a Dutch school made her aware of the importance of knowing the tragic history of WWII. She added:

‘My little brothers are in a lower level of education, and if I talk about history and they do not know anything about it, then I think that certain things just need to be repeated. [...] I am growing up in a neighbourhood where many adolescents are unskilled or do not go to school, and they do not care about WWII.’

Sofia said that her religion did not influence her perspectives. Although she knew that war is forbidden in Islam, which shaped her perspective, she reasoned that any ‘social person’ would agree with this view.

The third pupil in this triad was Salima, a 16-year-old female. Salima explained that she learned about WWII in primary school when a concentration camp survivor visited the school. WWII made her think of Jews who were arrested and transported to the concentration camps (see table 19). She found it ‘bad and sad’ that people who had not done anything wrong were taken away like that. For Salima, the most important narrative of WWII history was the Resistance, about which she had seen a film. Further, she knew much about Moroccan history during WWII. Salima was interested in WWII (see table 20)

and sought to learn more about why the objects and stories of WWII are preserved; she herself believed it would be better not to preserve them (see table 20):

‘Well, it just only evokes, um, sad memories I think for people, and so I think it is not necessary to preserve it because, um, those people then think about that bad time and all.’

When we discussed whether other people would agree with her later in the interview, she said that people who had been involved in WWII might think otherwise and would want to preserve the objects and stories because of the precious memories connected to them.

When asked about any relationship between her perspectives on the topic and her identity, Salima explained that she did not feel personally related to the history of WWII. First, she said that she was too young; WWII occurred too long ago to affect her life and her being. She believed that all people in her age group would feel this way. Second, she said WWII history and heritage mattered less to her because of her Moroccan identity and because her family had not been involved in the war. She believed that Jews would consider the war to be more important than Moroccans or Turks, for example. Third, when asked about the influence of her religion, she said,

‘I think if you are Jewish, for example, then you would find it more important than if you are Islamic because it has more to do with the Jewish religion than with the Islamic [religion].’

Salima noted that, apart from the understandings of the significance of WWII for her personally and her knowledge of Moroccan history, she had answered the majority of the questions ‘as a normal Dutch girl’. With that remark, she referred to her responses to the questionnaire indicating that she believed WWII history to be interesting and important.

The analysis of the pupils’ understandings of WWII history and heritage and their significance at the beginning of the project showed both the variety and the similarities in the understandings with which these pupils entered the learning process about this topic. All three pupils already possessed some knowledge about the history of WWII, particularly regarding the persecution of Jews and the concentration camps. These narratives were also known by the rest of the class (see table 19). Both girls of Moroccan background knew about the history of Morocco during WWII. Salima was the only pupil in the class who said she knew this narrative well. Ravi, of Surinamese background, did not know about the history of Suriname during WWII. Although all of the pupils were interested in learning more about WWII, Ravi and Sofia were more interested than Salima. Ravi and Sofia found it very important to preserve the objects and stories of WWII, whereas Salima did not. However, all three attributed significance to these objects and stories for persons involved in the war or their children; Sofia and Ravi also attributed significance for themselves: for Sofia, to obtain a better image and understanding of the past, and for Ravi, to connect his learning on an emotion level. Conversely, it was the emotions that objects and stories of WWII could evoke that made Salima believe that it was better not to preserve them.

Regarding the relationship between identity and understandings, all three pupils displayed a flexible way of thinking. Table 21 shows the different codes attributed to these pupils to explain the influence of their identity on their understandings of significance. These codes have been described in detail in chapter three. For all three pupils, the fact that their non-native Dutch family had not been involved in WWII determined their emotionally distanced stance towards the war. Further, both Sofia and Salima felt that they were too young to really care about the war and believed that this way of thinking was typical of adolescents. However, they said that they found WWII to be an important topic in history education, a perspective that they related to their Dutch identity and their education at a Dutch school. For Ravi, his interest in history was the most important determinant regarding his understandings. All three pupils were Muslim, but they felt differently regarding the interrelationship between their religious identity and their understandings. For Ravi, this relationship was certain because he empathised with Jews during WWII because of his Muslim identity. He seemed to conceive of Jews and Muslims as victims of religious discrimination and regarded himself as part of this group because of his religious beliefs. For Salima, it was quite the opposite; she felt that the war concerned people from a different religious group and therefore did not affect her. Sofia believed that her religion played a role on a meta-level of general values and norms. The pupils thus differed in which sides of their identity they emphasised and in the roles they believed these factors played.

### 3.2 *Searching the Museon Cabinet for Traces from the Past*

One of the objects that these pupils discovered in the *Museon* cabinet was a chamber pot. Their reaction to this object in particular showed how traces of the past can trigger pupils' interest. The object belonged to Connie Suverkropp, a Dutch girl in the Dutch East-Indies who was arrested when she put her little sister on the pot. She took the object with her to prison and during their transport, where it enabled them to retain some of their dignity and possibly protected them against diseases. The chamber pot aroused the pupils' interest and evoked numerous questions. The pupils wondered what the pot was at first; when they learned its purpose, they were puzzled by why it was exhibited in the museum. The object fascinated them because it was such an ordinary object. Although the pupils found it somewhat filthy to closely examine a chamber pot, they investigated it for a while (see figure 9). Because they did not understand the function of the chamber pot in the exhibition, they examined the other objects and documents in the drawer to discover more about the person they investigated, to determine the link between the various traces and to reconstruct the story. The pupils devised several plots. Finally, with the assistance of their teacher and the *Museon* educator, they understood the story behind the chamber pot.

Table 21. Pupils' self-reported ethnic identity and its influence on their understandings of significance

Pupil	Short indication of self-reported ethnic identity	Influence of identity
Ravi	Muslim	Flexible: changing identities to the fore – changing perspectives Distanced: family not involved Part of a group: victims of religious discrimination
Sofia	Dutch with Moroccan background	Flexible: changing identities to the fore – changing perspectives No influence: family not involved Part of a group: Dutch pupils Part of a group: adolescents
Salima	Dutch-Moroccan	Flexible: changing identities to the fore – changing perspectives Distanced: family not involved Part of a group: adolescents Part of a group: Dutch pupils Part of a group: Muslims (as non-Jews)

Note. The code 'no influence: family not involved' was attributed to all three pupils. Sofia's line of reasoning was similar to the pupils in case 1, who said that their understandings were not influenced by their identity because their families were not involved. However, Ravi and Salima clearly thought that the fact that their family was not involved strongly influenced their understandings. The code was changed into 'distanced: no family involved'.

In the questionnaire after the museum visit and in the interview, the pupils indicated that they enjoyed seeing the historical traces and investigating them by themselves (see also table 22). Sofia, for example, said she found it exciting to see an object and then try to figure out what it meant. In the written argument in the last questionnaire, she reasoned that it was important to visit the exhibition with her school because this trip enabled the pupils to investigate for themselves and decide for themselves what they found to be interesting. Beforehand, she had not expected that the pupils would experience such things during the visit, and she liked that very much. Overall, the entire class generally had a positive attitude towards learning in the museum (see table 22). However, in the written argument, half of the pupils stated that it would be 'not so bad' if the school could not visit the *Museon* exhibition in the future, primarily because they believed they had good teachers and teaching materials available in school (see table 22). Apparently, the museum visit did not offer much added value for those pupils.

Table 22. Pupils' attitudes towards learning the history of WWII in a museum, the triad and the entire class

Pupil	Attitude towards learning history with historical traces during the visit <sup>a</sup>	It would be a pity/not so bad if the school could not visit the <i>Museon</i> exhibition
Ravi	2.89	Both a pity and not so bad
Sofia	2.33	A pity
Salima	2.56	A pity
Whole class	Mean = 2.69 (standard deviation = .27)	A pity: 47%; not so bad: 53%

Note. <sup>a</sup>Mean of 10 items; a higher score was explained as a more positive attitude; 4-point scale: completely disagree, disagree, agree, completely agree

Figure 9. The drawer of Connie Suverkropp with the chamber pot (photo Pieter de Bruijn)



The empathy task, to write a conversation between two children investigated in the exhibition, explicitly addressed the pupils' ability to imagine a past reality. In different ways, all three pupils attempted to empathise with the persons they investigated and 're-enacted' in their presentation. Ravi thought about the war as a persecution of Jews based on their religion and imagined how he would feel if the same persecution occurred for Muslims. Despite this sign of emotional engagement, Ravi said that overall he was disappointed with the visit:

'We were working so concentrated; it almost seemed as if we were working in our books, while in the museum you expect more moving things, more practical. I missed that.'

Ravi felt neutral and bored during the visit (see table 23), which did not meet his expectations of 'real' experiences that he had described in the interview at the beginning of the project, despite the encounter with the traces. In his written argument, Ravi stated that, on the one hand, a virtual experience in the classroom would engage pupils with the topic as much as a museum visit would. On the other hand, he believed that a visit was important to allow pupils to experience past reality to form a better image of it (see also table 22). He explained, for example, that the chamber pot helped him to imagine what these people would be like. He also thought that a museum would represent the past more realistically than a fictional movie. These remarks indicate that Ravi felt ambivalent about the museum visit, perhaps because he had expected it to be more engaging.

Table 23. Results of the triad and the entire class (%) for the emotion question of the questionnaires after the introductory lesson, the museum visit and the closing lesson

Emoticon	Introductory lesson	Museum visit	Closing lesson
Neutral	80%, Ravi, Salima, Sofia	73%, Ravi, Sofia	95%, Ravi, Salima, Sofia
Interested	40%, Ravi	36%, Sofia	32%
Happy	40%, Ravi	-	-
Bored	15%	23%, Ravi	-
Compassionate	5%, Salima	23%, Salima	5%, Salima
Proud	5%	9%	11%, Ravi, Sofia
Surprised	5%, Sofia	18%, Salima	-
Angry	-	-	5%
Disgusted	-	-	5%

Note. Pupils could choose more than one emoticon. Sad, ashamed and scared were not chosen by any of the pupils.

Sofia had difficulty with the empathy task, partially because of her Muslim identity. She said she could not empathise with Jews wearing a Star of David and exposing themselves as Jews because without the star, people could not tell whether they were Jewish. The task made her wonder whether she would take off her kerchief and dye her hair if Muslims were ever banned. Notably, in the first minutes of the triad's investigation, Sofia discovered a picture and said, 'Oh look, this girl with her mom, so sweet. Oh, she is Jewish; that is not so sweet.' In the interview, she explained that she had accidentally mixed up her images of Jews during the war and of Jews in Israel currently. Further, Sofia said she had not expected to see this type of personal belonging, adding that this experience provided her with an opposite image of the war than she had obtained at school when learning about the war's causes and consequences. Although these remarks showed that the visit contributed to Sofia's historical imagination, she said the visit did not help her form images of WWII as she had expected beforehand. Because the pupils saw personal belongings instead of 'general objects', she felt it did not contribute to her image of the war. Still, she valued the visit even more, which I will explain in further detail in section 3.4 of this chapter.

Describing the empathy task, Salima said she had difficulty pretending to be someone else. When the triad prepared the interview, she played Connie. In her answers to the interviewer Ravi, she said 'I was born... why do I say "I"?' When I asked her about this statement in the interview, she explained:

'Yes, I found that quite strange to tell that as if I had been through it myself.'

I: 'And did it feel a bit like you had been through it yourself?'

S: 'Yes, when I told it, it did.'

I: 'Do you think that is a good thing or not?'

S: 'Yes, rather good, because then you know, um, how these people have felt maybe, if you tell that.'

These remarks reveal Salima's ambivalence regarding emotional engagement and empathy. In the first interview, she said that traces bring back bad feelings and therefore should not be preserved, and during the visit, she appeared to be more emotionally engaged than

others. She was one of the few pupils in the class who did not feel neutral (see table 23). Instead, she felt compassion for the children, and when asked to empathise with the historical actors, she felt strange. However, she now also found value in imagining these feelings. She said the visit made her better understand people from WWII and empathise with them, thus helping her to form an image of the history of WWII. She was surprised by what had happened to the children because she had not previously known the details of their experiences. In her written argument, she wrote that it would be a pity if the school could not visit the exhibition anymore because ‘the subject matter is less clear then and you cannot really form an image of it’ at school (see also table 22).

For Salma and Sofia, the museum visit and the learning with historical traces clearly motivated and stimulated historical inquiry. The traces triggered interest and evoked questions that the pupils answered by searching for information in the cabinet. They used the sources and their teachers to review the narratives that they constructed. Ravi felt less emotionally engaged during the visit. The extent to which and in what sense the traces stimulated historical imagination are less obvious. For Ravi and Salima, the visit apparently helped them to form an image of the history of WWII. The traces and the empathy task stimulated the pupils’ efforts to empathise, although the pupils did not contextualise much and had difficulty adopting a historical perspective when they discussed the actions and motives of the persons whom they investigated. The empathy task clarified the pupils’ conceptions of Jews and the interplay with their Muslim identity as well as their misconceptions about the rationale behind the persecution of Jews during WWII.

### *3.3 Encountering Multiple Perspectives on the History and Heritage of WWII*

During the introductory lesson, Ravi, Sofia and Salima discussed the following statement: ‘top-down history is insufficient to understand the past’. They all agreed with this statement, noting that if one only studies leaders, he will not truly understand ordinary citizens. In the interview after the closing lesson, both Ravi and Sofia said they found it interesting to learn that although history is often viewed from a particular perspective, one can also examine other perspectives. During their discussion of the statements, the triad also discovered different perspectives within the group. For example, Salima agreed with the statement ‘the current attention to WWII is exaggerated because it was 70 years ago’. Ravi and Sofia tried to convince her that the war should never be forgotten because of its impact on people and to prevent such a war from occurring again. In the interview afterwards, they all said that they enjoyed listening to each other and weighing the others’ opinions. Ravi said that although he found Salima’s opinion to be strange, he could understand her line of reasoning that the war did not affect her family and therefore does not affect her now.

During the museum visit, the pupils noticed the multiperspectivity of the exhibition. Sofia, for example, was interested in how the exhibition was designed to bring

many different stories from around the globe into one small room and found this approach to be effective. As an example, she mentioned the story of the Moroccan soldiers in the French army. She found that story to be impressive because these men set aside their own interests to fight for people they did not even know. She found the stories that her triad had investigated to be less interesting than other stories she had heard because the two girls 'just ran away from danger and had not really faced it'. She would have preferred to investigate all the stories by herself to determine which stories were interesting. When describing the museum, Ravi found it interesting to learn how the different experiences from around the world were all related somehow. He believed that the stories were equally tragic, noting that it was interesting to learn how people differed in what they considered to be tragic; it was tragic for one person to wear a Star of David because that was the worst she experienced during the war, whereas another person tragically lost her entire family.

In the closing lesson, the issue of multiperspectivity arose in the pupils' discussion as they worked on their documentary script. Within the first theme of 'stories told by Dutch families about WWII', Salima chose the drawing of a Moroccan-Dutch grandmother telling her grandson about Moroccan forced labourers in Zeeland (picture 3 - see figure 10). The others chose the drawing of a Dutch grandmother telling her granddaughter about the persons hiding in her home (picture 2 - see figure 11).

*Figure 10. Picture 3 within the theme 'Stories told by Dutch families about WWII' (drawing by Wim Euverman)*



In 1943, several hundred Moroccan war prisoners worked as forced labourers for the Germans in Zeeland (Dutch province). Some of them made friends among the people of Zeeland.

Figure 11. Picture 2 within the theme 'Stories told by Dutch families about WWII' (drawing by Wim Euverman)



Various people in the Netherlands allowed persons to hide in their homes during WWII.

The pupils discussed these differences as follows:

- Salima: 'Ok, for the first theme, we take this one, yes?' [points to picture 3]
- Sofia: 'No, why? I have got picture 2. Ravi, what do you have?'
- Ravi: 'I have got picture 2'
- Sofia: 'Yes, I have got picture 2 as well.'
- Salima: 'I have got picture 3; why do you have picture 2?'
- Ravi: 'I have not finished yet [the assignment]. You go on discussing already.'
- Sofia: 'Ok, why do you have it?'
- Salima: 'It appeals to me.'
- Sofia: 'Why does it appeal to you? Because she is wearing a kerchief?'
- Salima: 'No, because Moroccan, she is Moroccan [talks in Moroccan, Sofia laughs], she is just Moroccan, [talks in Moroccan] little grandma.'
- Sofia: 'No, you need to take picture 2; you know why?'
- Salima: 'No, I just want to do this.'
- Sofia: 'Look, because different people.'
- Salima: 'Why does that appeal to you?'
- Sofia: 'Because this, what did I write down? Um, this is how different

people encountered different stories because of those people in hiding they took in their homes, is just much better than, um, is just, this is diverse [points to picture 2] and this is not'. [points to picture 3]

Salima: 'If you think so.'

[Sofia and Salima wait for Ravi to finish.]

Ravi: 'I am done. Ok, so you have 3, just because there is a Moroccan in it.'

Salima: 'Yes, I feel related to that.'

Ravi: 'I have 2 as well.'

Salima: 'Because?'

Ravi: 'Because there you can see that different cultures are involved, like you said already in fact [to Sofia], that is more important.'

Salima: 'Ok then we will do picture 2.'

Ravi: 'Not just the Moroccans!'

Salima: 'Ok then we will do picture 2.'

This example reveals the way in which Salima's self-reported Moroccan identity influenced her opinion regarding which WWII story was important to tell. Interestingly, she spoke in Moroccan during this specific instance, which she did not do at any other moment during the project. Whether she intended to use a language unknown to Ravi or me or to emphasise her shared identity with Sofia or whether this language was evoked by the picture remains unclear. The pupils had a similar conversation regarding the theme 'commemoration of WWII', for which they could choose from the Liberation monument in The Hague, the National Monument in Amsterdam and the Holocaust monument in Berlin (see figure 12; each picture was accompanied by a short description regarding what it was and what it represented). Ravi and Sofia chose the National Monument, whereas Salima chose the one in The Hague. She explained that it appealed to her because she lived in The Hague herself. Again, Ravi and Sofia argued she should think more broadly and select the National Monument, which is in the news every year when the war is commemorated with a moment of silence. In the interviews after the closing lesson, Ravi and Sofia again stressed the importance of including multiple perspectives by including persons and stories from different cultures and focusing on their encounters. They seemed to equate multiperspectivity with multiculturalism. Conversely, Salima sought to focus on the history of her parents' country of origin and the city in which she lived. Salima's preferences aligned with an earlier study on the perspectives on history of Dutch pupils of immigrant descent (Grever, Haydn, & Ribbens, 2008). Compared with the results of that study, Ravi's and Sofia's emphasis on national history was atypical. Salima explained that she found Moroccan history to be more interesting and the monument in The Hague to be more important. However, when asked if she related more closely to the monument in The Hague

than the other monuments, she said she did not feel related to any of them, but that if she had to choose, she would select The Hague because she found it to be the prettiest.

Figure 12. Monuments in The Hague, Amsterdam and Berlin



The pupils' discussions during the lessons at school revealed differences in their understandings of WWII history and heritage and their significance. The lessons enabled the pupils to explore and compare their perspectives, for example, regarding their criteria for attributing historical significance to WWII and the ways in which one's identity shapes these understandings. The multiperspectivity of the *Museon* exhibition was noticed and appreciated by Ravi and Sofia. Sofia also explicitly mentioned the story of the Moroccan soldiers about whom she had learned. Although Salima did not express her opinion in this area, in the closing lesson, she made a case for the inclusion of specific perspectives on WWII history that particularly appealed to her in the documentary about WWII.

### 3.4 From Historical Traces to Heritage?

When I discussed the chamber pot with the pupils in the interview after the closing lesson, it was apparent that this object had stimulated their thinking about its significance and about the historical traces of WWII in general. Intrigued by the chamber pot, Ravi found it to be special that such a simple object was considered to be a luxury by people at that time. To him, the chamber pot showed that one should be happy with the smallest things and that one does not need luxury. He also realised how much significance something like a chamber pot could have for people because in the end it helped to save them. When I asked Ravi what he thought of a chamber pot being exhibited in a museum showcase, he asked whether the objects had belonged to real people. When I confirmed this fact, he said that he found it strange that these persons had given the things away that meant so much to them, explaining that he could not have done the same. He then explained what he learned from this realisation:

‘That they give it away to pass on knowledge to others shows how important these objects are to them, and that means a lot. That is what I learned. So that gave me the picture of, um, it shows how important objects and stories are, also how important it is that just, that it is passed on from generation to

generation so they will all become aware. That is what I realised that it is really important.’

Although Ravi had already stressed the significance of the history of WWII and the importance of the preservation of historical traces of WWII in the first interview, he learned more about these topics through the encounter with the heritage objects. His remark shows his awareness that traces can be heritage.

For Sofia, the chamber pot helped her to realise that value exists in even the smallest things and that people differ in how they attribute significance to things. For one person, the chamber pot might be of great value, whereas another person might value one small American cigarette. Sofia reflected that significance is not about the object itself but about the story behind it. Further, she said that she realised that these traces were foremost of emotional value for their owners. To her, the traces showed the personal side of the war. For example, she thought that for the persons whom they studied in *Museon*, the founding of NATO was not really the point; for them, it was about their grief over the loss of their mother and the retelling of this type of story that eventually became ‘history’. These insights persuaded Sofia to change her perspective on the significance of historical traces of WWII. She no longer believed that the traces could help to better understand the war because they did not tell the broad, summarising story that she learned at school. Instead, the traces showed the small details and the way that people had experienced the war. Therefore, she said, they would remain in her memory forever; compared with her feelings before the visit, she felt more personally that it would be a shame if the traces were not preserved. With these remarks, Sofia contrasts history and heritage, with the first viewed being as distanced and summarising. The latter was viewed as more personal and detailed; although it serves as the basis of history, it is somehow also separated from it. Another change in Sofia’s perspectives concerned the significance for the Netherlands. After the project, she regarded the significance of the traces for the Netherlands to be less important. She explained that historical traces of WWII not only belong to the Netherlands but also are significant for the world. These changes suggest an awareness that heritage is inherently related to individual persons or groups, possibly transcending national borders, and therefore can never tell ‘the’ (hi)story.

Conversely, Salima believed that *Museon* had displayed the chamber pot in the cabinet because the museum did not have anything better or more valuable available, such as letters, photographs or a Star of David. However, she did change her mind regarding the importance of preserving the objects and stories of WWII and became more interested in WWII history and heritage; in this manner, she contrasted with her entire class, although the difference was very small (see table 20 and table 24). In her written argument about the usefulness of a visit to the *Museon* exhibition, she wrote that because of the visit, she better understood the people of WWII. In the interview, she said that she now thought the traces would help people like her and her classmates to understand the war. Contrary to her

expectations, she also enjoyed learning about the commemoration of WWII. She explained as follows:

‘Because at first I maybe did not know much about it and stuff, and, um, at the museum we saw those documents and, um, just the things people had preserved and stuff, and so, um, it is quite important how people commemorate the war.’

Before the museum visit, Salima already knew that people consider it important to commemorate the war and preserve the related objects and stories, but for her, it seemed too long ago to share this idea. The encounter with historical traces that had been preserved by real people somehow gave her the feeling that commemorating WWII is important. Although she did not say commemoration was important for her personally, she appeared to be more engaged in thinking about it. This engagement related to her encounter with the heritage of WWII aligns with the change in her understandings of significance. She appeared to have experienced that historical traces can bring the history of WWII closer and make it more understandable for people like her, who do not initially feel engaged with this past.

*Table 24. Results of the triad and the entire class regarding the interest and preservation questions in the questionnaire after the closing lesson*

Pupil	Interest in learning about WWII history and heritage <sup>a</sup>	Opinion about the preservation of WWII objects and stories <sup>b</sup>
Ravi	3.14	4
Sofia	2.86	4
Salima	3.14	3
Mean whole class	2.78 (standard deviation = .30)	3.15 (standard deviation = .67)

*Note.* <sup>a</sup>Mean interest scale (8 items; 4-point scale: I want to: know nothing at all, know nothing, know something, know a lot). <sup>b</sup>Score single question regarding preservation (4-point scale: completely disagree, disagree, agree, completely agree).

The pupils in this triad did not consider the history and historical traces of WWII their heritage at the beginning of the project, but they knew that a majority of Dutch citizens did. During the encounter with the traces, their ‘heritage status’ did not seem to be sensitive or create tension among these pupils. Instead, they found heritage intriguing and appeared to realise more concretely what heritage entails. This realisation sparked their thinking processes about what it means to consider this particular history and traces to be heritage. The encounter with heritage and the reflections evoked by it enabled these pupils to value the historical traces themselves.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

Using three sub questions, I investigated my research question regarding how pupils in Dutch urban classrooms learn about WWII history while engaged in a heritage project that presents historical traces as Dutch heritage.

First, I examined the pupils' understandings of the history and heritage of WWII and their significance and the ways in which these perspectives were related to the pupils' self-reported ethnic identity. The pupils in the triad had prior knowledge about the history of WWII and considered the war's history interesting and important. Ravi and Sofia also found the preservation of historical traces of WWII important, whereas Salima did not. However, none of the pupils regarded the history and historical traces of WWII as their heritage because of their immigrant backgrounds and lack of family memories of the war. The pupils were aware of the significance that is attributed to WWII history and heritage by a majority of Dutch citizens. My analysis showed that the pupils' self-reported Muslim identity played a role in their perspectives, as also described in the study by Jikeli (2013), but in very different ways. Ravi's Muslim identity stimulated engagement with the history of WWII, whereas for Salima, it created distance because she primarily regarded WWII as Jewish history. During the first interview, Ravi and Salima spoke about Jews in both religious and cultural terms, as Ravi also did with Muslims. These remarks, and particularly Ravi's comparison between the current Muslim community and the persecuted Jews, show that the pupils had misconceptions about the rationale behind the persecution of Jews by the Nazis. However, they did not explicitly equate Jews with Israel. During the museum visit, Sofia did 'mix up' her conception of Jews in the history of WWII and Jews living in present-day Israel, although in the interview after the closing lesson, she showed awareness of this inaccuracy. All pupils, particularly Ravi and Sofia, spoke in a rather sophisticated way about how one's identity – formed by cultural background, education, upbringing, religious beliefs and personal interests – influences one's understandings of history and heritage, and they applied these reflections to themselves. Although the analysis clearly showed the interplay between the pupils' Surinamese and Moroccan backgrounds and their somewhat distanced stance towards WWII heritage, there were no signs of real challenges to the dominant narrative of WWII, as found in other studies (Ensel & Stremmelaar, 2013; Jikeli, 2013).

The encounter with WWII heritage during the project did not seem to create tension or discomfort. On the contrary, the exploration of the heritage objects and stories, of which the significance that was attributed to them was made explicit and personal in the exhibition, was motivational. It stimulated reflection on the nature of heritage, and it enriched and sometimes even changed the pupils' understandings of its significance. My analysis showed that although the heritage objects were presented in an archive, suggesting a disciplinary sphere of investigating the past, the pupils discerned the message of the significance of the personal belongings of persons who were involved in the war. These

objects and stories were preserved for a reason. Keeping in mind Sofia's and Ravi's remarks about the difference between school history and historical traces (that traces are of emotional value but cannot tell the larger story), my study also showed the overly simple distinction between history and heritage that an encounter with heritage may elicit. The pupils noticed the pluralistic and daily life perspectives that traces can add, as described by Nakou (2001). However, they had difficulty including this perspective in their existing narrative about WWII. Thus, teachers and educators must be aware that an engagement with heritage may spur such processes, and they must ensure that, as teachers, they can add nuance to pupils' thinking. Educators may seek to stimulate critical reflection on the construction of both history and heritage, and on the unquestioned 'heritage status' of the traces at hand, to enable pupils to express alternative perspectives. Based on existing literature, one would expect this task to be difficult with regard to WWII traces and pupils of immigrant descent. My case study, however, suggests that this expectation may not necessarily be the case. One could even argue that to discuss multiple perspectives on WWII heritage may sometimes be more challenging in a classroom of pupils who do not question the 'heritage status' ascribed to it in society.

Second, I explored the ways in which the pupils' historical imagination was stimulated during the heritage project. I described the way a historical object such as a chamber pot motivated the pupils in this triad and stimulated their interest. The independent study of the object also motivated the pupils, particularly Sofia. The personal and concretising museum exhibits also stimulated imagination. However, my analysis also showed the limitations of the pupils' historical imagination or historical empathy. Ravi expected strong emotional engagement and a 'wow effect' when viewing the traces. His comparison of the tragedy of different stories showed the lens through which he approached the traces during the visit. When he did not feel the expected strong emotions, he was disappointed, even though the visit enriched his images of WWII. This emphasis on emotions and tragedy illustrates the difficulty of balancing the cognitive and affective aspects of historical imagination discussed in several other studies on history education about the Holocaust (Andrews, 2010; Riley, 2001; Schweber, 2004). For example, Sofia's perspectives on the Middle East conflict impeded her from engaging with alternative perspectives of historical actors in the past to understand them within their historical context. Although a historical empathy task may be motivational, one could question whether pupils with such prior perspectives can demonstrate historical empathy, particularly when they explore the museum by themselves without a scaffold for how to 'understand' a historical actor. Keeping in mind Salima's perspective that historical traces of WWII evoke sad memories, I stress caution when conducting this type of task. Without the necessary guidance, the tasks may not lead to the learning of history.

Third, I discussed the extent to which the pupils acknowledged different perspectives on WWII when encountered within the triad or in the exhibition. The pupils'

discussions showed that differences in perspectives can emerge when pupils discuss the significance of the history and heritage of WWII. The pupils discovered that they differed in their attribution of significance to the history of WWII and in the extent to which they considered it their history or even heritage. Ravi related Salima's perspectives to her Moroccan background, and although all the pupils were of immigrant descent, this discussion demonstrated some of the tension between 'native' and 'immigrant' perspectives. It also showed how pupils can experience this tension internally. All three said that their immigrant descent made them feel somewhat distanced from the history of WWII; notably, however, they explained that the Dutch side of their identity 'made' them attribute significance to that history. Ravi and Sofia felt much more strongly about this phenomenon than Salima did, at least at the beginning of the project. Thus, both 'native' and 'immigrant' perspectives were present in the individual pupils, who differed in the weight that they gave to each perspective. The pupils' discussions brought these differences to the surface. Instead of obstructing learning, these differences provided an opportunity to reflect on which criteria can be used for the attribution of significance and whether and in what ways these criteria are related to ethnic background. For example, these discussions made the pupils consider whether choosing a Moroccan image because one identifies as a Moroccan is simple and narrow-minded or is a legitimate argument. However, the sometimes blunt and otherwise subtle differences in the pupils' understandings of significance and the complexity of the interplay with different parts of their identity demand a nuanced approach by teachers and museum educators when discussing these issues.

The idea of multiperspectivity clearly appealed to the pupils in this triad. Salima and Sofia seemed to appreciate the inclusion of a Moroccan perspective on WWII in the *Museon* exhibition. Further, Ravi and Sofia explicitly stressed the importance of including people from different cultures in the narrative of WWII and found the various perspectives gathered in the exhibition room interesting. Gryglewski (2010) also found that pupils of immigrant descent emphasised the inclusion of different cultures and related this finding to the pupils' socio-economic position in society. The pupils in my study showed awareness of this position, which became clear, for example, in Ravi's and Sofia's remarks in the first interview about the specific population of their school and neighbourhood. Interestingly, Ravi and Sofia outvoted an explicitly different perspective on WWII from their documentary because the perspective was not diverse enough. From this perspective, one could also argue that it was Salima who attempted to include multiple perspectives in their product by selecting stories and pictures that normally were not included in the Dutch national narrative about WWII. The question here is whether a gathering of perspectives as in the *Museon* exhibition encourages pupils to combine multiple perspectives or whether pupils will merely choose what they like. The empathy task in *Museon*, including the dialogue between different perspectives and the plenary presentation of all perspectives, together with the making of a documentary in the closing lesson in school, played an

important role in bringing the different threads together and stimulating the pupils to comprehend how all the perspectives together formed history.

My in-depth analysis of one triad provides a rich understanding of the pupils' historical imagination, attribution of significance and acknowledgement of multiple perspectives during the heritage project and shows the complexities and nuances of these learning processes. However, the study is also limited by the selection of this particular triad. In some respects, the triad may be representative of the entire class, such as regarding their cultural background and their immigrant descent. With regard to religious conviction, it may have been interesting to present a triad that included a non-Muslim pupil. Perhaps a non-Muslim pupil would have challenged a Muslim pupil's comparison between Jews in the history of WWII and Jews living in present-day Israel. However, the findings presented in this chapter show the variety of ways in which the pupils' Muslim identity influenced their understandings of WWII. Within the context of the existing literature about Muslim pupils' attitudes towards WWII, this nuanced picture of the interplay between pupils' Muslim identity and their understandings of the significance of WWII history and heritage is an important contribution. In addition to the religious convictions of this particular triad, the results presented above are specifically related to the identity and perspectives of the pupils in this triad and the specific dynamic of their group work. For example, two of the three pupils were much more interested in WWII than the rest of the class at the beginning of the project. However, differences in prior knowledge, interest, emotional engagement and understandings of significance were also present within this particular triad. Despite the limitations, the results provide insight into the variety of perspectives that pupils of immigrant descent may possess about WWII history and heritage and into their learning processes during a heritage project about this topic. Further research is needed to consider the generalisability of the findings presented in this chapter.

This case adds to our comprehension of the learning processes in educational settings in which historical traces that are presented as heritage are used to teach history, illustrating both the benefits and constraints of such an approach. The learning environment offered the pupils an opportunity to investigate traces of the past to construct a rich, vivid image of what life was like during WWII and to explore different stories. The historical traces fascinated pupils, aroused their interest and evoked questions. Further, the pupils gained an understanding of the various ways in which people attribute significance to these traces and learned that they can be a shared heritage for different countries. Viewing the traces that people had donated to *Museon* to educate youngsters also had an impact on the pupils in this triad and added to their understandings of their significance. However, the study also showed the danger of shallow emotional engagement evoked by traces and the lack of historical perspective and contextualisation in pupils' empathy with historical actors. Additionally, the study revealed the importance of critical reflection on the ways in which significance is attributed to history and heritage and the need to discuss their

constructed nature and interrelatedness. Further research is needed to examine these issues in settings with different historical topics and with other types of historical traces and heritage such as monuments, archives or sites.

## CHAPTER 6

### GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

In this dissertation, I examined pupils' learning about sensitive history, specifically the history of slavery and WWII, while engaged in heritage projects. I focused on pupils' historical imagination of these past realities and on their attribution of significance to the histories and heritage. For both of these aspects of history learning, I examined the pupils' acknowledgement of multiple perspectives. Through my empirical study, I aimed to contribute to theories regarding these aspects of history learning. Further, I sought to create an empirical basis for a discussion about the constraints and benefits of learning history through heritage projects. My aim was not to assess the quality of the heritage projects that I investigated. Instead, I intended to describe how pupils engage in historical imagination and how they attribute significance during history lessons in which historical traces are presented as heritage in the context of a museum environment. Although discussed widely within the fields of history education, heritage education and museum education, little empirical research has examined the processes of learning history during such projects. Additional insight into these processes may improve these educational projects from the point of view of history education.

In this chapter, the main findings of my study will be summarised and discussed. First, I will answer the three sub questions that guided my research. Second, I will discuss these findings in light of the methodology of the study. I will identify the difficulties and limitations of the study methods and the design of the two case studies. I will elaborate on the specifics of the two different heritage projects and the two different groups of participants. Third, I will consider the implications for practice and offer suggestions for further research.

My main question for this study was as follows: How do pupils in Dutch urban classrooms learn about sensitive histories, such as the history of slavery and WWII, while engaged in heritage projects that present historical traces as Dutch heritage? To answer this question, I examined the following sub questions:

1. In what ways do pupils attribute significance to history and heritage during the heritage project, and how is this related to their self-reported ethnic identity?
2. In what ways do pupils imagine the past, and in what ways is this supported during the heritage project?
3. To what extent do pupils encounter and acknowledge multiple perspectives on the (significance of) history and heritage during the heritage project?

## 1. MAIN FINDINGS

### *1.1 Pupils' Attribution of Significance to Sensitive History and Heritage*

I investigated pupils' attribution of significance to sensitive history and heritage before, during and after the heritage projects. In the first case study, it was apparent that pupils' attribution of present significance is a particularly interesting category to examine in relation to heritage. The first study resulted in additional insight into the ways in which pupils use this category. At the beginning of the project, the 13- to 14-year-old pupils in this case attributed present significance to the history and heritage of slavery. One main argument that they used was that it was significant for a particular group of people, such as the descendants of enslaved people, the Dutch, the undefined group 'people' and the pupil himself. The first group, 'descendants of enslaved people', was mentioned more frequently, whereas the second group, 'the Dutch', was mentioned remarkably less frequently. Pupils sometimes discussed such a group or identity in a symbolic manner, as a continuum through time. In the second main argument, the pupils used slavery as an example of inequality. Slavery became a phenomenon that did not need to be understood but rather had to be rejected or judged. Many of the pupils lacked perspective regarding the historical context of the phenomenon, particularly those pupils who believed that slavery or inequality still existed in modern times. These understandings of the significance of the history and heritage of slavery were reinforced during the heritage project. The presentation of the history and historical traces of slavery as Dutch heritage stimulated the pupils' personal engagement and (reflection on) their attribution of significance. The heritage project sent a strong message regarding the significance of the history and heritage of slavery that was easily adopted by the pupils. Furthermore, the pupils' understanding of the ways in which the history of slavery is attributed significance in current Dutch society increased. However, the main sensitivity in contemporary society, the lack of awareness regarding the history of slavery, was not discussed extensively, and few pupils seemed to be aware of this issue.

In the first case study, I identified three ways in which the pupils' ethnic identity related to their attribution of present significance. The pupils (1) felt there was no relationship (sub- categories: no family involved, no explicit idea about it, does not want to name it), (2) felt part of a group related to the topic or (3) displayed a flexible relationship. Some of the pupils identified with 'the Dutch' or 'the descendants of enslaved people',

often setting themselves apart from these identities at the same time. These distancing techniques demonstrated the ways in which the history and heritage of slavery may be sensitive in Dutch classrooms. The interplay between the pupils' understandings of significance and their identity differed within groups defined by outer characteristics such as the pupils' parents' birth countries or their skin colour. Nevertheless, some of the pupils used these categories when discussing their own and other people's understandings of significance and the relationship to their identity. These assumptions did not surface and were not discussed during the visit to the National Slavery Monument during the heritage project. The nuanced view expressed by the guide on the interplay between her ideas and her identity was not reflected in the pupils' remarks in the interviews after the closing lesson.

In the attribution of present significance by the triad that was investigated in depth in the second study, I again found the two main arguments of the first study. These 15- to 17-year-old pupils used the same four groups as in the first study. In this case, the group 'the descendants' referred to people who had been involved in the war and their children. Compared with the first study, these pupils were more pronounced and united in their identification of groups that would not attribute significance, or would attribute less significance, to the history and heritage of WWII, namely, persons of immigrant descent and adolescents. Although less omnipresent than in the first study, these pupils also used the second argument about inequality. At the beginning of the project, these pupils did not regard the history and historical traces of WWII as their heritage but realised that a majority of Dutch citizens did. During the project, the awareness of the 'heritage status' of the traces that they were studying did not seem to be sensitive; rather, it motivated learning. The pupils' insight increased regarding why these particular traces were considered to be heritage and what that meant. The pupils discerned the message of the importance of this heritage; as a result, they seemed to increasingly regard the heritage as significant for themselves as well. For two pupils in the triad, their personal engagement with the historical traces in the heritage project changed their views on what heritage is. After the project, these pupils contrasted the history that they learned in school, as a way of understanding the past, with the heritage that they encountered in *Museon*, as a way of feeling the past.

The interplay between the pupils' understandings of significance and their identity surfaced notably in the second case study because the pupils were capable of nuanced reflection on this issue. All three pupils displayed a flexible relationship. They felt part of several groups that they related to the topic, although in different ways. For example, one pupil felt like part of 'the Muslims', which he grouped in a larger category of religious victims together with the Jews persecuted in WWII. Another pupil viewed her Muslim association as a reason for not feeling involved in the history of WWII because she believed the war was about Jews. All three pupils said that there was no relationship between their

family and the topic of WWII. In contrast to the first study, two of the pupils regarded this distance as a way in which their identity influenced their ideas. During the project, these differences in the ways in which the pupils' identity played a role in their attribution of significance surfaced in their discussions. The exchange of ideas stimulated reflection on this interplay and on the question of what constitutes good criteria for the attribution of significance to a particular heritage.

### *1.2 Pupils' Historical Imagination during the Heritage Projects*

At the beginning of the heritage project, the pupils in the first case study imagined slavery rather unanimously as enslaved persons working hard on plantations in America and as enslaved people being maltreated. The perspective of the enslaved dominated their images. The heritage project confirmed these images and enriched them with concrete stories, primarily from the enslaved perspective. Many of the pupils' images of slavery were changed when they learned about the role of the Dutch Republic in the slave trade. However, their need to understand the perspectives of historical actors other than the enslaved was not fulfilled during the project. Instead of enriching the pupils' adoption of a historical perspective that included attention to the historical context and multiple perspectives, the heritage project stimulated affective elements of historical imagination such as their emotional engagement. At the beginning of the project, the pupils were interested in learning about the history and heritage of slavery and felt compassion for the enslaved. During the museum visit, the pupils' emotional engagement and interest increased. They felt that they had formed a clearer image of past slavery and were more aware that slavery had really occurred. Many of the pupils empathised with the enslaved during the project, mostly without paying attention to the historical context. Some of the pupils expressed doubts regarding the need or the possibility to empathise with historical actors. Although the heritage project primarily stimulated affective historical imagination, my findings showed that this affective engagement could form a starting point for further learning. Further, this affective engagement enriched the more cognitive elements of the pupils' imagination, such as their images and perspectives, making the images 'lived' by adding an emotional dimension.

In the second case study, the pupils' imagination regarding WWII at the beginning of the heritage project also showed the dominance of particular images, namely, the persecution of Jews and the concentration camps. In the heritage project, the pupils encountered numerous other images and perspectives of the war, some of which were new to them. Overall, the stories and the personal belongings in *Museon* revealed a daily-life perspective of the war. However, the pupils in the triad did not appear to incorporate this new perspective into their image of the history of WWII. Instead, they set the perspective apart from the war's history as a more detailed and personal version. At the beginning of the project, the pupils were interested in the history and heritage of WWII in a somewhat distant or neutral way. However, they expected that seeing the objects and hearing the

stories in *Museon* would affect them. For two of the three pupils, the visit did not evoke those strong emotions, although it did trigger their interest and evoke questions. Two of the pupils felt that the visit helped them to form an image of WWII history and stimulated their empathy with historical actors. As in the first case study, the pupils had difficulties adopting a historical perspective and contextualising historical actors, despite the multiperspective approach of the *Museon* exhibition.

The pupils in the first case study valued the visit to *NiNsee* because it engaged them emotionally and made them more aware that slavery really occurred. The pupils expected such experiences at the beginning of the project and reported them after the visit. However, they had not seen or touched many authentic objects, and most of the pupils did not perceive the heritage as part of their own or as closely related to their lifetime and their environment. Although *NiNsee* and the National Slavery Monument were situated in the city in which they live, many pupils had never been to *NiNsee* or seen the monument before. Further, the pupils did not have much prior knowledge about the topic. Although many of the stimuli of a heritage experience that were discussed in chapter one were not present in this case about slavery, the pupils reported experiences of a past world coming alive. Although the pupils' expectations of the visit to *Museon* in the second case study were similar to the expectations of the pupils in the first case, these pupils did not report strong emotional engagement or the feeling that the past world came alive. However, these pupils encountered many authentic historical traces and investigated them closely. They also had considerable prior knowledge about the topic. As discussed above, the pupils did not perceive the heritage as part of their own or as closely related to their lifetime or their environment. However, the pupils had a strong experience of the value of the heritage they encountered. Further research is needed to fully grasp what entails a 'heritage experience'. Because I primarily measured the pupils' experiences through language, my study is an initial step towards understanding a heritage experience and the ways in which it may be stimulated.

### *1.3 Pupils' Encounters with and Acknowledgements of Multiple Perspectives during the Heritage Projects*

In the first case study, the pupils did not encounter many different perspectives on the history of slavery, either from each other or in the museum. At the beginning of the project, many of the pupils had similar images of and perspectives on the history of slavery and shared their attributions of significance to the history. However, the museum visit raised questions about other perspectives. During the guided tour, several of the pupils' questions and remarks addressed different perspectives that were not discussed by the guides. The questionnaire and interviews after the closing lesson revealed the pupils' curiosity about the perspectives of slave owners, slave traders and 'bystanders'. Only a few pupils combined different perspectives in their images of slavery. With regard to the significance of the

history and heritage of slavery, the pupils adopted and combined different perspectives during the heritage project. They regularly related a particular perspective to a particular group or identity, often in a static and sometimes even essentialist way. However, some of the pupils emphasised individuals' interest and choice with regard to their perspectives and seemed to be aware that perspectives are context bound and can change. In a few cases, the pupils discussed different perspectives, either those of others or their own, in the triads in the closing lesson. However, they did not challenge each other to fully explain their ideas or negotiate the meaning and significance of the particular history and heritage.

In the second case study, the pupils were very aware of and comfortable with the idea of multiple perspectives on the history of WWII. The pupils explored various perspectives that they had encountered in the museum. They recognised the daily life perspective of the stories of WWII that were presented in *Museum*. I did not obtain full insight regarding the extent to which the pupils combined multiple perspectives or incorporated new perspectives into their prior understanding of WWII history. In their discussions, the pupils in the triad also encountered and discussed different perspectives on the significance of the war's history and heritage. The pupils explored and compared their criteria for attributing significance to this history. In the closing lesson, the argument of two of the pupils to include as many perspectives as possible into the WWII narrative was opposed by the other pupil, who primarily wanted to include perspectives that mattered to her based on her cultural background. The pupils negotiated these differences in their understandings of the significance of WWII history and heritage and gained insight into each other's arguments.

## 2. DISCUSSION

### 2.1 Discussion of the Method

As discussed in chapter two, few studies have examined history learning during heritage projects, and standardised research methods have yet to be developed. I will now discuss the limitations of the methods used in my research. The limitations of the study design with regard to the selection of the participants and the heritage projects will be discussed in the next two sections. In this section, I focus on the difficulties that I encountered during the data collection period and on the quality of the instruments that I used.

During the data collection periods in the museums, it proved very difficult to capture the pupils' learning experiences in such out-of-school environments. First, the pupils' interactions in the museum, particularly in *NiNsee*, were difficult to understand on the video recordings. In *NiNsee*, the majority of interactions consisted of whispering while the educator guided the pupils through the exhibition. Therefore, I attempted to examine the pupils' interest and emotional engagement during the tour by observing their non-verbal behaviour. I also analysed the questions that pupils asked the guides during the tour. The questionnaire directly after the visit complemented my impressions with the emoticon

question and the free recall. However, it was difficult to create a space for pupils to quietly fill in the questionnaire. Further, the questionnaire was conducted at the end of the visit. Before I started the data collection, I considered various other measuring techniques to measure pupils' interest, emotional engagement and experiences 'online'. Pupils could have worn cameras or microphones, or they could have carried a small device that prompted them to record their experiences several times during the museum visit. However, these techniques would have been very expensive. In addition, allowing pupils to record their experiences would not have been possible during the guided tour in *NiNsee* because they would have missed parts of the guide's story and could have disturbed other pupils.

My self-developed questionnaires were very useful as a starting point for the interviews. The pupils had something to consult when talking about their understandings of the particular history and heritage. In the interview after the closing lesson, the questionnaires also helped the pupils to recall their experiences from the lessons of the heritage project. However, the quality of the scales that I developed needs to be improved. Although the scales measured rather consistently in the case study about slavery, they did not measure consistently in the case study about WWII, as discussed in chapter two. Although using the same questionnaires for both case studies enabled me to discover similarities and differences between the cases, the divergence in the quality of the measurements raises the question of whether this transfer of instruments was possible. Of course, the quality of the measurements was influenced by the small group of participants and the low number of items used. In addition, the findings of the case studies suggested several other explanations for the poor quality of certain scales. For example, the scale 'societal reasons for the preservation of historical traces' showed the influence of the amount of prior knowledge on the pupils' opinion. On the first questionnaire for the case study about slavery, Cronbach's alpha for this scale was .23. The item about the significance of historical traces of slavery for the Netherlands did not fit this scale, most likely because many of the pupils did not know about the role of the Dutch Republic in the transatlantic slave trade. After the pupils learned about this aspect during the heritage project, the alpha for this societal scale was .72. For the item regarding the significance for the Netherlands, it was also problematic that pupils may have attributed different meanings to it because of the way in which they positioned themselves towards the Netherlands. In the pupils' responses to the questionnaires, such ideas remained implicit. However, the interviews enabled me to discuss this issue with the pupils. Particularly in the second case study, the pupils' positioning within Dutch society proved to influence their understandings of significance. The triangulation of measuring techniques prevented this issue from remaining undiscussed.

## 2.2 *Specifics of the Two Heritage Projects*

Although the heritage projects in the two cases are both examples of heritage education in the Netherlands, there are many differences between the two projects. Although it is not possible to compare the two cases directly, these differences between the heritage projects may deepen our insight into the learning processes that occur during heritage education. I will discuss the topics and the learning objectives of the two heritage projects.

Both topics of my case studies, slavery and WWII, may be sensitive in contemporary Dutch classrooms. However, the two topics are also very different. I will discuss the differences in the ways in which these histories are remembered and discussed in present Dutch society. Of course, one difference between both histories is that slavery was abolished in the Netherlands in 1863 and WWII ended in 1945. Pupils may have grandparents who were involved in the war. However, both slavery and the war had an aftermath. The consequences of slavery and the war for individuals, groups and societies extend these events far beyond 1863 or 1945. Through family memory, first-, second-, third- or fourth-generation descendants may believe that this particular past remains alive. In the first case study, Giulio's remark that he could learn about himself by learning about his enslaved ancestors who had been discriminated against because of the same colour of skin as his provided an example of how a pupil may experience this feeling. However, in both case studies, the majority of pupils felt the events had occurred too long ago to really care about the issue personally. Of course, as the pupils said themselves in the second case study, I was more likely to find family memories among pupils of Dutch descent. The triad found WWII history to be relevant because of its scale and its consequences; however, the pupils did not experience this past in proximity to their present.

A second difference between the two topics is the way in which these pasts are attributed significance in Dutch society and by whom. Much more attention is given to WWII than to slavery in Dutch society. In addition, attention to slavery is a more recent development. Further, in Dutch society, the history of slavery is attributed particular significance by a minority of Dutch citizens, particularly people of Surinamese or Antillean descent. Conversely, the history of WWII is considered significant by a majority of Dutch citizens, particularly people of Dutch descent. This history and this heritage are not only attributed significance by a larger group of people in Dutch society but also more visible in the Dutch landscape. WWII left traces on Dutch land and can be found in every Dutch province in almost every city. Slavery and the transatlantic slave trade are mostly indirectly visible in the Netherlands, such as in former traders' houses. *NiNsee*, the only Dutch institute focused on slavery, lost its government funding in 2012 and had to close the exhibition room. Although several other Dutch museums note the history of slavery, this focus occurs on an irregular basis. With the closure of *NiNsee*'s exhibition, the history and heritage of slavery have become even less accessible, whereas the history and heritage of WWII can be found and accessed in nearly every Dutch village. However, in both of my cases, I did not find groups of pupils from particular cultural backgrounds with particular

understandings of significance that I could relate to differences that surface in the public debate, for example, in the Dutch media. The pupils of immigrant descent in the second case study did indeed feel distanced from WWII history and heritage. However, they also attributed significance to the war. In the first case study, nearly all the pupils, whether they were of Surinamese, Dutch or Moroccan descent, considered the history and heritage of slavery to be very important. With regard to the way the history of slavery and WWII are remembered in Dutch society, it is important to note the recent debate about the mutual influence between these ‘memory cultures’ (e.g., Rothberg, 2009). For example, the pupils’ focus on the general life theme of equality in the case study about slavery could be related to a common approach towards WWII, a different – but in some ways very similarly treated – historical topic. To a certain extent, the discourse that has emerged around the remembrance of the Holocaust (with attention to its victims and the moral lessons to be learned) may have influenced the way the pupils in the first case study formed their thoughts about the remembrance of slavery’s history and the preservation of the heritage of slavery (Spalding, 2012).

The differences in how the history of slavery and WWII history are remembered in Dutch society appear to have affected the learning objectives of the two heritage projects. The heritage project in *NiNsee* aimed to break the silence regarding the history of slavery in Dutch society. This emancipatory project’s objective was to create awareness of this history among the pupils and to stimulate their attribution of significance to this history and its historical traces in the present. Further, the project aimed to teach pupils that slavery still exists in the present-day world. Perhaps the project also sought to stimulate pupils into action to abolish the modern forms of slavery that exist throughout the world. The heritage project of *Museon* made a similar reference to the present. The project discussed fugitive children in contemporary Dutch society, thereby emphasising that wars still impose disorder on children’s lives. However, the *Museon* project’s starting point was very different from that of the *NiNsee* project. *Museon* did not need to break the silence regarding the history of WWII or create awareness about its significance. However, in a certain way, it did attempt these tasks with regard to other perspectives on this history. The *Museon* project aimed to teach pupils different perspectives on the war, including perspectives that had not been widely discussed in Dutch history education or museum education. By doing so, the project aimed to also engage pupils who did not attribute significance to the war. However, the *Museon* project did not emphasise the significance of the particular history and historical traces as the *NiNsee* project did. Nevertheless, the findings of both case studies showed that in both heritage projects, the pupils clearly understood the message regarding the importance of preserving history and its historical traces as well as the references to present-day problems in the world that must be solved.

### *2.3 Specifics of the Two Groups of Participants*

First, I discuss the age difference between the two groups of participants in the case studies. The pupils in the first case were 13 to 14 years old, an age group in which pupils tend to think along straight lines in terms of right and wrong. In contrast, older pupils are often capable of more nuanced thinking (Egan, 1997; Von Borries 1994). My findings correspond to these theories. It should be noted that the approaches of both heritage projects discussed above may also have influenced the findings. Related to the pupils' ages are differences in the pupils' ability and their willingness to discuss their ethnic identity as well as the ways in which these identities related to their ideas. Pupils who are 13 to 14 years old, as in the first case study, are in their early adolescence and the early stages of their identity development, whereas the pupils in the second case study were 15 to 19 years old and had passed the early adolescent stage (Erikson, 1968). The findings of this study reflected these differences because many of the pupils in the second case were much more accustomed to considering and discussing their own identity and the way in which their thoughts and actions reveal who they were.

Second, my cases differed in the identity characteristics of the participants that, based on the literature, would affect their understandings of the significance of a particular history and heritage. In the first case study, this identity concerned the cultural background of the pupils, and in the second case study, it concerned their religious beliefs. This difference may have influenced the extent to which the pupils felt free to describe their identity in the way that they perceived it. Notably, one can choose his religion but not his cultural background. The distancing techniques of some of the pupils in the first case study, who knew that their ancestors had been enslaved, may be examples of this tension. These pupils did not feel that they were part of the group into which others classified them, although they also did not leave their ancestry undiscussed. They discussed their ancestry and then employed distancing techniques to set themselves apart.

Third, what distinguishes the groups of participants is that the pupils in the second case study felt themselves positioned as outsiders in contemporary Dutch society regarding the attribution of significance to the history of WWII. Muslims and people of immigrant descent, who are considered minority groups in Dutch society, are sometimes portrayed in a negative manner in the media. In general, these groups have a lower possibility of developing their talents in Dutch society than pupils of Dutch background (Leeman, 2007). The particular pupils in the triad, however, were highly educated and most likely will have more opportunities to succeed in society than typical minorities. The pupils were aware of the discrimination against people of immigrant descent and wanted to affirm that they were different from the perceptions that people might have of them, based on their cultural background. This attitude seemed to influence the ways in which the pupils in this case positioned themselves towards Dutch history and WWII history and heritage. Although the pupils did not consider this history and heritage to be their own, they emphasised the importance of learning about the history of their country of residence. In the first case

study, I found little evidence of this type of outsider positioning. However, the pupils who perceived themselves as (partly) Dutch struggled with their position towards this particular part of the history and heritage of the Netherlands. Through distancing techniques, they attempted to set themselves apart from this history and positioned themselves as outsiders regarding that particular Dutch group of people in the past.

My study of two small samples of participants is limited, especially given that the participants were divided into subgroups of various backgrounds. For this reason, I considered the pupils of Surinamese and Antillean descent to be one group in the first case about slavery. However, this grouping limited my understanding of possible differences in thinking about the history of slavery between these distinct cultural backgrounds. In addition, both case studies were conducted in urban classrooms. Although Dutch classrooms across the country are increasingly socially and culturally diverse, the diversity of the specific classes that I studied may only be representative of Dutch urban classrooms. However, the diversity of pupils' ideas and identities is not restricted to urban classrooms. The study is also limited because the sample of pupils came from only two schools; pupils' learning experiences and their sense of self are partially structured by the specific school context, with its traditions, value systems and political mandates (Perret-Clermont, 2009). In addition, this study is limited by the selection of participants in the higher levels of secondary education. For example, with regard to the anti-Semitic attitudes of Dutch adolescents, it may be that these attitudes are more prevalent in the lower levels of secondary education. Finally, the pupils in the first case study about slavery were relatively young, and they were not always able to reflect on their own ethnic identity and the ways in which this identity affected their ideas. Often, the pupils discussed these issues only implicitly. Several researchers have emphasised the importance of examining the processes by which pupils relate their identities to the way they attribute significance to history (and vice versa) by explicitly asking them about this relationship (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Peck, 2010). Although researchers have emphasised the importance of reflecting with pupils on this mutual influence and although creating awareness of the influence of one's vantage point on one's interpretations of history is an aim of history education, my findings show that this process can be difficult for pupils. My study revealed that although heritage brings the influences of pupils' identities to the surface, pupils react to this influence in different ways. Indeed, some pupils seemed to resist this type of reflection. Particularly when working with young pupils, as in the first case study, one could question whether this approach is effective in teaching sensitive issues such as the heritage of slavery or WWII.

#### *2.4 Implications for Practice*

I discuss the following three themes: (1) history education and heritage projects, (2) cognitive versus affective learning and (3) the interplay between identity and understandings of significance.

First, my study shows the importance and the possibility of including critical reflection on heritage in the history curriculum. Such reflection may deepen history learning during or after the heritage projects. It is a metacognitive way of thinking about what history and heritage are and how they are formed by people's attribution of significance to the past and its traces in the present. Such reflections may increase pupils' awareness of the relevance of learning history. Further, such reflection is necessary to present alternatives to the way that particular history and historical traces are presented as heritage within a particular community. My findings also suggest that pupils are capable of such reflection and that this approach may motivate further learning. In these reflection activities, it is important for educators to avoid presenting an overly simplistic distinction between heritage and history. Critical reflection on heritage may also create insight into the construction of history (Gosselin, 2011). Educators can discuss with pupils concepts such as significance, personal or emotional value and multiperspectivity as dimensions in both history and heritage.

Although somewhat contradictory, my study also suggests the value of adopting a heritage approach to the past, aiming towards identity formation and the transmission of values or a strong moral message. Although these moral goals can sometimes be at odds with the objectives of teaching historical thinking, such goals are part of history education through the overarching aims of citizenship education. My study showed that the history classroom, and particularly a trip to a safe museum environment, may be a place where pupils can explore these issues for themselves. Stimulating such explorations by presenting a rather firm version of a particular moral message, as in the heritage project in *NiNsee*, is one way to achieve this goal. My first case study showed that pupils may feel encouraged to question this version. Particularly in combination with thorough reflection and closing lessons in school, in which pupils are presented with other perspectives and encouraged to verbalise their own perspectives, such an activity may prove to be very effective.

I would like to stress the importance of creating space during heritage projects for pupils to consider and express that the heritage in question is not significant to them. In the second case study, the teacher created such a possibility in the introductory lesson, and the pupils enjoyed this discussion. Particularly with sensitive history and heritage, as in my case studies, it may be difficult for teachers and educators to really engage with pupils' alternative perspectives. However, history teachers who wish to convince pupils of the necessity of weighing multiple perspectives towards history and its significance should be open to critically reflecting on their own perspectives and vantage point. For example, it may be rewarding to discuss perspectives and vantage points regarding a particular topic among colleagues at the beginning of a teaching period about that topic. Teachers may also use a learning activity to discuss pupils' perspectives and vantage points as an introduction to a particular topic in the classroom and may include their own perspectives and vantage points in the activity.

Second, my study sheds light on the constraints and benefits of stimulating affective elements of historical imagination in heritage education. The pupils in my study expected to be engaged affectively during the heritage projects. Some of the pupils were a bit frightened of that engagement, whereas others sought such an experience. After the project, the majority of the pupils felt that the museum fulfilled their expectations on this particular point. However, my findings showed that their historical imagination and their efforts to empathise with historical actors lacked profundity. The pupils had difficulty contextualising and adopting a historical perspective. Although these activities are difficult, it sometimes seemed as if the emphasis on the affective experience in the museum hampered their efforts. At other times, the pupils' preconceptions complicated their attempts at historical empathy. From this perspective, one could question the focus on affective engagement in heritage projects that address sensitive histories that are both horrifying and in which contemporary issues in society or pupils' identity may play a role. Of course, one may want to stimulate affective engagement and perform an empathy task precisely because of these sensitivities. However, I would like to stress that in such cases, educators should formulate specific learning objectives and prepare thorough scaffolding of the activity. Evoking emotion is not an aim in itself and must be pursued with care.

One way to balance the cognitive and affective elements of historical imagination is by combining many different personal stories about a certain topic, as we have seen in the heritage project of the second case in *Museon*. My findings showed, however, that combining different perspectives in an exhibition does not necessarily prompt pupils to combine these perspectives. If multiperspectivity is an aim in an educational activity, teachers and educators should not only present multiple perspectives but also stimulate pupils to adopt an actual multiperspective approach. Pupils would then have to combine multiple perspectives of various historical actors and understand that perspectives on the past are dynamic and change over time. I believe that the combination of the empathy task to write a dialogue between two children in the war, the plenary presentations of these dialogues in *Museon* and the creation of a documentary in the closing lesson in school provides an example of effective practice.

Third, my empirical study provides numerous arguments for discussing pupils' preconceptions and the interplay with their self-reported ethnic identity during heritage projects and in history class. The variety that pupils bring to the classroom can be a source of learning, and addressing pupils' ideas can stimulate personal engagement. Pupils can increase their ability to reflect on the interplay between their identity and ideas. Insight into such processes is also a learning objective of history education in the Netherlands. However, educators should be wary of using stereotypes or reinforcing stereotypes with the pupils. Some pupils in my study used stereotypes for others, and some also used them with regard to themselves. At the same time, the pupils emphasised the many layers of their identity, and some also showed the dynamic of their identity, particularly in relation to their

understandings of the significance of history and heritage. The simultaneous occurrence of using stereotypes and displaying awareness of dynamic and multi-layered identities underscores the complexity of discussing identity in history class. However, my second case study suggests that older pupils in secondary education are particularly capable of such reflections. I would like to encourage teachers and educators to explore these possibilities with various groups of pupils and in various settings.

### *2.5 Suggestions for Further Research*

This study on pupils' learning about history explored two heritage projects that addressed sensitive histories. From the wide variety of heritage projects in the Netherlands, I researched two examples, both addressing topics that are sensitive in contemporary Dutch society. My empirical study provides insight into the learning processes that may occur during such projects and the sensitivities and challenges that surround them. These sensitivities may be less present in heritage projects that focus on topics that are less directly related to pupils' identity conceptions and conflicts in society. However, these sensitivities may also play a role in unexpected areas. My findings showed that the interplay between the pupils' identity and their understandings of the significance of history and heritage did not always correspond with my assumptions about that interplay based on literature or public debates in the media. This study may increase researchers' awareness regarding the complex and nuanced ways in which sensitivities surrounding a particular history play a role in learning about that history during heritage projects. Further research should explore the ways in which pupils learn history in heritage projects about topics that are less sensitive than slavery or WWII.

In this study, I focused on the learning *processes* during heritage projects. Using various measurement instruments, I gained understanding of the aspects of history learning that are relevant in these learning contexts. Further research is needed to improve these instruments to more closely examine the learning *outcomes* and the ways in which pupils benefit from these heritage projects. Validated questionnaires to measure pupils' historical imagination, attribution of significance and acknowledgement of multiple perspectives would represent a major step forward in researching history learning in heritage projects and museum environments. A different study design may also help to increase insight into these issues. A larger experimental study would enable comparisons of pupils' learning of history while engaged in heritage projects or during 'regular' history lessons in school. For example, such a design could test the effect of increased affective engagement during a museum visit on pupils' motivation and ability to reason historically. Will pupils' level of argumentation regarding the significance of a particular history increase in a heritage project? Are pupils aware that representations of the past may be simplifications, or will the encounter with authentic historical traces obscure this idea?

Although I interviewed the teachers and museum educators in both case studies and included observations of the museum educators in my analysis, this study primarily

focused on the pupils. Further research may increase insight into the role of teachers and museum educators in the learning process. For example, an intervention study on an empathy task, as in the second case study in *Museon*, could examine ways to scaffold such a learning activity to increase pupils' contextual thinking and adoption of a historical perspective. Such questions could also be explored by using design research and including the teachers and museum educators in the research process. For example, a joint research initiative could investigate how to design educational material that stimulates pupils to combine multiple perspectives into one narrative or to consider the ways in which their own perspectives are coloured by who they are. Through this process, teachers and museum educators can be stimulated to exchange their expertise and share responsibility for the quality of heritage projects. Because a strong connection between what happens in a museum and what happens in school creates learning opportunities, such approaches may prove to be very fruitful.



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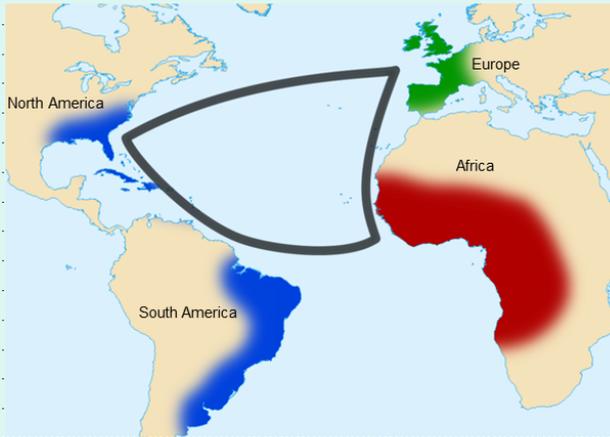
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## APPENDIX A2 – QUESTIONNAIRES - WORLD MAP

3. Study the picture below. The black lines show the route of the trade ships between  $\pm$  1650 and 1850. What does this map make you think of? Put marks on the map, and write down what you are thinking about with regard to those specific places.

2



## APPENDIX A3 – QUESTIONNAIRES - FAMILIARITY WITH HISTORICAL ACTORS OF WWII

### *Historical actors of WWII*

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1. Moroccans who fought against the Germans in the French army
  2. People who were in hiding
  3. Residents of the Dutch East Indies who were imprisoned by Japan
  4. People who fought as soldiers when the Netherlands was attacked
  5. Germans who did not agree with Hitler
  6. People who joined the Dutch National-Socialist Party (NSB)
  7. People who lived in Curacao, where the Germans bombed oil refineries
  8. People who were persecuted because they were Jehovah's Witnesses
  9. People who joined the Resistance
  10. People who were persecuted because they were Roma or Sinti (gypsy)
  11. People who were persecuted because they were communist
  12. People who fought in the Royal Army of the Dutch-East Indies (KNIL)
  13. People who were imprisoned in a concentration camp
  14. People who starved during the Hunger Winter
  15. People who were persecuted because they were Jewish
- 

*Note.* Pupils could answer as follows: never heard of the story, heard of the story before, know the story well

## APPENDIX A4 – QUESTIONNAIRES - FREE RECALL

### 3. Think about the lesson you just had. Complete the sentences below:

What first comes to mind is:.....  
.....  
.....

What I found most interesting is:.....  
.....  
.....

What I did not know before:.....  
.....  
.....

## APPENDIX A5 – QUESTIONNAIRES - DRAWING SLAVERY

2

4. Make a drawing of 'slavery from ± 1650 to 1850'. You can choose whatever you want to draw. It does not have to be drawn very well; do not put too much effort in that. If you want, you can add some writing as well.

## APPENDIX A6 – QUESTIONNAIRES - INTEREST IN LEARNING ABOUT THE PARTICULAR HISTORY AND HERITAGE

*Items on the questionnaire for measuring pupils' interest in learning about topics*

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1. About freedom and equality, I want to
  2. About objects and stories of ..., I want to
  3. About the history of ..., I want to
  4. About what ... has to do with me, I want to
  5. About why objects and stories of ... are preserved, I want to
  6. About the museum ... about ..., I want to
  7. About how people commemorate ..., I want to
  8. About the slavery monument in Amsterdam, I want to [only used in case 1]
- 

*Note.* 4-point scale: know nothing at all, know nothing, know something, know a lot

## APPENDIX A7 – QUESTIONNAIRES – EMOTICONS

*Emoticons used in the questionnaires after the introductory lesson, the museum lesson and the closing lesson.*

### 1. Pick those faces that show how you felt during this lesson:



Sad



Proud



Ashamed



Compassionate



Neutral



Angry



Surprised



Happy



Interested



Afraid



Bored



Disgusted

## APPENDIX A8 – QUESTIONNAIRES – ATTITUDES TOWARDS LEARNING WITH HISTORICAL TRACES

*Items on the questionnaire for measuring the pupils' attitudes towards learning with historical traces during the museum visit*

1. In this lesson, I could imagine the time of ... well.	Imagination
2. In this lesson, I felt the time of ... came to life.	Imagination
3. In this lesson, I could empathise well with people living in the time of ...	Imagination
4. In this lesson, I felt that ... really happened.	Imagination
5. The objects and stories in the museum made ... much clearer for me.	Imagination
6. I liked learning history in a museum.	Interest
7. I liked working with real objects from the past.	Interest
8. In this lesson, I came to find that ... is an important topic.	Interest
9. I liked visiting a monument where a remembrance is held every year. [only used in case 1]	Interest
10. I thought it was exciting to see real objects from the past up close.	Interest

*Note.* 4-point scale: completely disagree, disagree, agree, completely agree

## APPENDIX A9 – QUESTIONNAIRES – WRITTEN ARGUMENT

6. Suppose your school does not have enough money to visit a museum or monument within the context of the history lessons about the Second World War. Write a paragraph of a letter to your school to give your opinion on this matter.

I would **regret it / not mind** if my school would not visit a museum or monument anymore in history class because: .....

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

And also because .....

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Further, I think that .....

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

What I gained from the visit to the Museon myself is .....

.....  
.....  
.....

## APPENDIX A10 – QUESTIONNAIRES - REASONS FOR THE PRESERVATION OF HISTORICAL TRACES

### *Reasons for the preservation of objects and stories of ...*

---

I think it is important that the objects and stories of ... are preserved

1. Because they remind us that freedom and equality have not always existed
  2. Because they mean a lot to the people who descend from ...
  3. Because ... changed the lives of many people
  4. [case 1] Because they will help us to understand how slaves were traded and why; [case 2] Because they will help us to understand what happened during WWII
  5. Because I would find it a pity if they were gone
  6. [case 1] Because slavery has had many consequences; for example, it brought much wealth to Europe; [case 2] Because WWII had many consequences; for example, currently many countries cooperate to prevent future wars
  7. [case 1] Because they will help us to understand the present; for example, many African people now live in America and Europe; [case 2] Because they will help us to understand the present; for example, many Jewish people now live in Israel
  8. Because they are very old
  9. Because they belong to the Netherlands
  10. Because they mean a lot to my family
  11. Because they will help me to understand who I am
- 

*Note.* 4-point-scale: completely disagree, disagree, agree, completely agree

## APPENDIX B – INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

The protocol was meant as a guideline and was used in a flexible way to follow the participant and to collect as much data as possible.

### *Pre-interview*

Last ... you completed a questionnaire regarding the history of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. You have written down your thoughts and feelings about this topic, what it makes you think of and what you know about it. What I would like to do today is look at your responses on the questionnaire and let you explain them to me or tell me more about what you wrote down. You can also add anything that comes to your mind during our conversation that you would like to tell me. Do you have any questions at this moment?

1. Let's look at what you wrote down on the mind map. On the prompt 'what I already know about it', you wrote .... Can you tell me a bit more about your answer?

[Repeat this question for the other four prompts on the mind map.]

2. Let's look at what you find interesting to learn more about and what you do not find interesting. You indicated that you (do not) want to learn more about what ... has to do with you. Can you explain to me why you (do not) find this subject interesting?

[Repeat this question for the other 7 items in the interest questionnaire.]

3. The next two questions are concerned with the preservation of objects and stories of .... You indicated that you (do not) find it important to preserve these items. Could you explain your answer to me?

These are eleven possible reasons to preserve objects and stories of ....

a. [optional]: you also filled in a reason of your own. Could you elaborate on that?

b. Here it says you find this reason 'Because ... changed the lives of many people' (not) a (very) good one. Could you explain to me why?

[Repeat this question for the other 10 items in the significance questionnaire.]

c. [with regard to the reason 'because it means a lot to my family']: sometimes stories from the past are passed on within families. Are there any stories from the past in your family that were passed on to you? Why do you think you were told these stories?

4.

a. Do you think others would agree with you that it is (not) important to preserve objects and stories of ...? If not, who would not and why?

b. Do you think others would agree with you about the reasons to preserve objects and stories of ...? If not, for which specific reasons would they not agree; who would not agree,

and why? [if nothing comes up, ask more specifically: boys/girls, elderly people, people of different descent, pupils who just immigrated to the Netherlands].

c. Do you think that, among these eleven reasons, there is one that no one would find important?

5. At the beginning of the questionnaire, you filled in the birth country or countries of your parents.

a. Would you like to describe your ethnic identity to me?

b. Do you think that your identity as you just described it has influenced the way you answered the questionnaire and my questions during this interview?

[Thank the pupil for participating and provide information about the second interview.]

#### *Post-interview*

What I would like to do today is look at your responses on the last three questionnaires and let you explain them to me or tell me more about what you wrote down. I am also interested in your experiences in the last three lessons. You can tell anything that comes to your mind during our conversation that you would like to tell me. Do you have any questions at this moment?

1. Let's think back to the first lesson of the project when you worked in groups on ...

a. What are your thoughts about that lesson?

b. What did you think of the group work?

c. In the questionnaire you indicated that you felt ... Can you explain to me why you felt that way? Was this at a particular moment?

d. In the questionnaire, you wrote that the first thing that came to your mind after the lesson was ... Can you tell me more about that?

[Repeat this question for the other free recall prompts.]

e. I heard that you discussed ... with your peers during the lesson. Can you tell me more about what you talked about?

[Repeat similar questions for the specific actions of the pupils that I wanted to discuss.]

2. Now think back to the museum lesson of the project.

a. What are your thoughts about that lesson?

b. [only for case 2]: What did you think of the group work?

c. In the questionnaire you indicated that you felt ... Can you explain to me why you felt that way? Was this at a particular moment?

d. In the questionnaire you wrote that the first thing that came to your mind after the lesson was ... Can you tell me more about that?

[Repeat this question for the other free recall prompts.]

e. I heard that you discussed ... with your peers during the lesson. Can you tell me more about what you talked about?

[Repeat similar questions for the specific action of the pupils that I wanted to discuss.]

3. Let's look at this question about the museum lesson. You indicated that the museum lesson made you empathise with the people in the time of ... Can you explain that to me? When or why did you have this feeling? Who did you empathise with?

[Repeat similar question for the other items on the scale for measuring the attitudes towards learning history in a museum.]

3. In the third lesson of the project when you worked in groups on ...

a. What are your thoughts about that lesson?

b. What did you think of the group work?

c. In the questionnaire you indicated that you felt ... Can you explain to me why you felt that way? Was this at a particular moment?

d. I heard that you discussed ... with your peers during the lesson. Can you tell me more about what you talked about?

[Repeat similar questions for the specific action of the pupils that I wanted to discuss.]

4. Now let's look at this question about your interest in learning about ... after the project.

When we compare the questionnaire before the project and after the project, we see that you changed your mind about ... Can you explain this to me?

[or]

When we compare the questionnaire before the project and after the project, we see that you still feel the same way about this. Is that correct? Can you explain this to me?

5. Now let's look at this question about your reasons for the preservation of the objects and stories of ...

When we compare the questionnaire before the project and after the project, we see that you changed your mind about ... Can you explain this to me? Do you know what changed your mind?

[or]

When we compare the questionnaire before the project and after the project, we see that you still feel the same way about this. Is that correct? Can you explain this to me?

[Thank the pupil for participating.]



## SUMMARY IN DUTCH

In deze studie is onderzocht hoe leerlingen geschiedenis leren tijdens erfgoedprojecten waarbij ze een bezoek brengen aan een museum of een monument. Deze empirische verkenning is bedoeld als inhoudelijke bijdrage aan het debat over de voor- en nadelen van erfgoedprojecten binnen het geschiedeniscurriculum om zo deze educatieve praktijk te kunnen verbeteren. Daarnaast draagt deze studie bij aan kennis over geschiedenisonderwijs door de relevantie te tonen van bepaalde theoretische constructen, zoals historische verbeelding, betekenisgeving en multiperspectiviteit, in het onderzoek naar geschiedenis leren binnen de context van erfgoedprojecten. Ook levert deze studie een bijdrage aan dit onderzoeksgebied met de ontwikkeling van meetinstrumenten om processen van geschiedenis leren in een buitenschoolse leeromgeving te bestuderen. Deze meetinstrumenten kunnen fungeren als een startpunt voor verder empirisch onderzoek in deze leercontexten.

*Hoofdstuk 1* bespreekt de concepten erfgoed en gevoelige geschiedenis, presenteert de onderwerpen van mijn case studies en beschrijft de praktijk van erfgoededucatie in Nederland. Vervolgens introduceer ik de hoofdvraag van dit onderzoek en de voornaamste analyseconcepten, namelijk historische verbeelding, betekenisgeving en multiperspectiviteit.

In deze studie verwijst het woord erfgoed naar materiële en immateriële sporen van het verleden die als waardevol worden beschouwd voor het heden en de toekomst door een bepaalde groep mensen. Verschillende onderzoekers hebben aangegeven dat een erfgoedbenadering van het verleden erop gericht is om continuïteit en toekomstperspectief te creëren voor een groepsidentiteit. In een multiculturele samenleving kunnen erfgoedprojecten, vooral wanneer ze zich richten op gevoelig erfgoed van de slavernij en de Tweede Wereldoorlog, een dialoog stimuleren over de betekenis van dit erfgoed voor verschillende individuen en groepen. Wanneer een erfgoedproject echter te veel gericht is op een bepaalde groep, zou dit leerlingen kunnen uitsluiten van het leerproces. Geïnspireerd door eerdere studies over dit thema (Frijhoff, 2007; Grever & Ribbens, 2007; Smith, 2006),

hanteer ik een dynamische benadering van erfgoed en identiteit om essentialisme en uitsluiting te voorkomen.

In erfgoededucatie in Nederland wordt erfgoed vaak gebruikt als een middel om het verleden te visualiseren, om te motiveren of om leerlingen zich te laten inleven in historische figuren. Erfgoededucatie wordt ook gebruikt om bewustzijn en verantwoordelijkheid ten opzichte van het erfgoed te ontwikkelen, voor burgerschapsvorming en om te reflecteren op de betekenis van erfgoed. Deze studie richt zich op het gebruik van erfgoed voor het leren van geschiedenis. Erfgoedprojecten kunnen geschiedenis verlevendigen voor leerlingen en hen stimuleren zich in het verleden te verdiepen. Aan de andere kant zouden erfgoedprojecten geschiedenis ook kunnen simplificeren of de sensationele aspecten van een ervaring van het verleden benadrukken. Zulke projecten zijn mogelijk moeilijk in overeenstemming te brengen met de leerdoelen van geschiedenisonderwijs, zoals het bevorderen van historisch denken.

Deze studie onderzoekt de wijze waarop leerlingen in diverse ‘urban classrooms’ in Nederland over gevoelige geschiedenis leren tijdens erfgoedprojecten. De voornaamste analyseconcepten zijn historische verbeelding, betekenisgeving en multiperspectiviteit. Hoewel de historische verbeelding van leerlingen gestimuleerd zou kunnen worden tijdens erfgoedprojecten over gevoelige geschiedenis, kunnen leerlingen ook moeite hebben om een historisch perspectief in te nemen en meerdere perspectieven op deze geschiedenis te erkennen. Erfgoedprojecten lijken veel mogelijkheden te bieden voor leerlingen om te reflecteren op hun eigen betekenisgeving en die van anderen aan bepaalde geschiedenis en sporen uit het verleden. De wijze waarop leerlingen betekenis geven kan echter afwijken van die van museumeducatoren in erfgoedprojecten. In een dergelijke situatie kan het voor leerlingen en educatoren moeilijk zijn om deze verschillende perspectieven op de betekenis van het verleden en de sporen ervan in het heden te bespreken.

De hoofdvraag van het onderzoek is als volgt: hoe leren leerlingen in Nederlandse ‘urban classrooms’ over gevoelige geschiedenis, zoals de geschiedenis van de slavernij en de Tweede Wereldoorlog, tijdens erfgoedprojecten waarin deze sporen uit het verleden als Nederlands erfgoed worden gepresenteerd? Om deze vraag te beantwoorden heb ik de volgende drie deelvragen geformuleerd:

1. Op welke wijze geven de leerlingen betekenis aan geschiedenis en erfgoed tijdens het erfgoedproject en hoe is dit gerelateerd aan hun zelfgerapporteerde etnische identiteit?
2. Op welke wijze verbeelden de leerlingen het verleden en hoe wordt dit gestimuleerd door het erfgoedproject?
3. In hoeverre verkennen en erkennen leerlingen meerdere perspectieven op de (betekenis van) geschiedenis en erfgoed tijdens het erfgoedproject?

In hoofdstuk twee bespreek ik de methode die ik voor beide case studies gebruikt heb. In hoofdstuk drie, vier en vijf presenteer ik de empirische case studies. De conclusies

van de case studies en de discussie van de cases en mijn methode presenter ik in hoofdstuk zes.

*Hoofdstuk 2* beschrijft het ontwerp en de methode van de studie. Het educatieve veld van erfgoedprojecten is nog weinig onderzocht en er is nauwelijks empirisch onderzoek naar het leren van geschiedenis in dit type educatieve context (Gosselin, 2011). Ik heb deze educatieve praktijken in hun natuurlijke omgeving onderzocht en de leerprocessen in al hun complexiteit verkend. Het onderzoek is daartoe ontworpen als een meervoudige case studie. De eerste case betreft een erfgoedproject over de geschiedenis en het erfgoed van de slavernij en de trans-Atlantische slavenhandel. De tweede case bespreekt een erfgoedproject over de geschiedenis en het erfgoed van de Tweede Wereldoorlog.

Dit onderzoek richt zich meer op de leerprocessen dan op de leeruitkomsten. De historische verbeelding van en de betekenisgeving aan het verleden staan hierbij centraal. Voor deze beide aspecten heb ik bekeken in hoeverre de leerlingen meerdere perspectieven erkennen en in staat zijn om verschillende perspectieven in te nemen. De historische verbeelding van de leerlingen heb ik onderzocht aan de hand van drie aspecten van verbeelding zoals beschreven door Egan (1997) en verschillende andere onderzoekers in het veld van geschiedenisonderwijs en museumeducatie (Davison, 2012; Gregory & Witcomd, 2007; Marcus, op Stoddard & Woodward, 2012). Ik heb onderzocht op welke wijze leerlingen mentale beelden vormden van het verleden, op welke wijze ze perspectieven van de historische figuren in deze beelden probeerden voor te stellen en in welke mate ze geïnteresseerd en emotioneel betrokken waren tijdens deze activiteit (Egan, 1997). Met betrekking tot betekenisgeving richten de meeste studies zich op de wijze waarop leerlingen betekenis geven aan historische ontwikkelingen, personen of gebeurtenissen (Cercadillo, 2001; Lévesque, 2008; Seixas, 2008). Deze studies laten de betekenisgeving aan sporen uit het verleden die als erfgoed worden gezien in de eigen samenleving van de leerlingen buiten beschouwing. Om de betekenisgeving van leerlingen aan geschiedenis en erfgoed tijdens de erfgoedprojecten in kaart te brengen, is onderzocht hoe leerlingen dachten over het belang van en de redenen voor het bewaren van de aan de geschiedenis gerelateerde objecten en verhalen. Daarnaast is bekeken in hoeverre de leerlingen bereid en in staat waren verschillende perspectieven in te nemen op deze betekenisgeving.

Er zijn verschillende meetinstrumenten gebruikt voor de gegevensverzameling op verschillende momenten tijdens de erfgoedprojecten. Er zijn per case vier vragenlijsten afgenomen bij alle leerlingen: aan het begin van het project, na de voorbereidende les, na de museumles en na de afsluitende les. Daarnaast zijn er leerlingen individueel geïnterviewd voor en na het project en geobserveerd bij hun groepswork tijdens de lessen. Ook de museumeducatoren zijn geobserveerd.

*Hoofdstuk 3* rapporteert een deel van de resultaten van de eerste empirische case studie over de geschiedenis en het erfgoed van de slavernij en richt zich op de wijze waarop leerlingen hier betekenis aan gaven voorafgaand aan het erfgoedproject. Door middel van een vragenlijst en een individueel interview zijn deze betekenisgeving door de leerlingen en de relatie met hun identiteit onderzocht op een middelbare school in Nederland. De 55 deelnemende leerlingen uit twee klassen waren 13 tot 14 jaar oud. Uit deze groep zijn 13 leerlingen met uiteenlopende antwoorden op de vragenlijst en van diverse culturele achtergrond geselecteerd voor de interviews. De case studie is uitgevoerd in 2010 in Amsterdam.

Wetenschappers in het veld van geschiedenisonderwijs hebben betekenisgeving aan het verleden voor het heden als een belangrijk onderdeel van betekenisgeving beschreven, maar tot nu toe was onduidelijk hoe leerlingen deze relatie met het heden leggen, zeker met betrekking tot erfgoed. In mijn studie naar erfgoed van de slavernij werden twee hoofdargumenten gevonden voor betekenisgeving voor het heden, namelijk (1) betekenis voor een bepaalde identiteit of groep en (2) slavernij als een historisch voorbeeld van ongelijkheid.

(1) In het eerste argument voor het toekennen van betekenis aan erfgoed van de slavernij voor het heden refereerden de leerlingen aan bepaalde identiteiten. Op deze wijze gaven zij vorm aan deze identiteiten en creëerden continuïteit vanuit het verleden naar het heden en de toekomst (Rüsen, 2004). Vaak hanteerden de leerlingen hierbij identiteitstypen en sommige leerlingen spraken hier op een symbolische manier over. De leerlingen vonden erfgoed van de slavernij vooral belangrijk voor afstammelingen van slaafgemaakten. Veel leerlingen waren zich niet bewust van de rol die de Republiek der Verenigde Nederlanden in de slavernij gespeeld heeft en weinig leerlingen kenden betekenis toe aan erfgoed van de slavernij in relatie tot Nederland. Mogelijk vanwege dit gebrek aan kennis hadden weinig leerlingen problemen met het ‘officiële Nederlandse narratief’ van de slavernij waarin de Nederlandse inmenging weinig aandacht krijgt. Wel waren verschillende leerlingen zich er bewust van dat erfgoed door een bepaalde groep mensen kan worden geclaimd en dat dit problematisch kan zijn voor mensen die op een andere wijze betekenis toekennen aan het erfgoed.

(2) Het tweede argument voor betekenis van erfgoed van de slavernij voor het heden was verbonden met het thema gelijkheid. Slavernij werd hierbij een historisch voorbeeld van ongelijkheid. De historische context verdween uit het zicht, omdat de leerlingen niet tot doel hadden dit historische verschijnsel te begrijpen of te verklaren, maar in plaats daarvan de symbolische betekenis en de gruwel ervan gebruikten om het belang van gelijkheid te benadrukken. Er werd een verschil gevonden tussen leerlingen die vonden dat in het heden iedereen gelijk is en leerlingen die beklemtoonden dat slavernij nog altijd bestaat. In dit laatste perspectief is het generieke thema van gelijkheid sterker dan de historische werkelijkheid. In de nadruk op continuïteit tussen de tijd van de slavernij en het heden ontbreekt een historisch perspectief en het besef dat het verleden en het heden

onvermijdelijk verschillen. De case studie toonde de manieren waarop morele oordelen historische verklaringen en reconstructies kunnen bemoeilijken.

Wat betreft de relatie tussen de betekenisgeving door de leerlingen en hun zelfgerapporteerde identiteit, toonden de resultaten van de vragenlijst aan dat leerlingen van Surinaams(-Nederlandse) en Antilliaans(-Nederlandse) achtergrond hoger scoorden met betrekking tot het belang van erfgoed van de slavernij voor hun familie dan leerlingen van andere achtergronden. De analyse van de interviews toonde echter een divers en ambigu beeld van de relatie tussen de zelfgerapporteerde identiteit van leerlingen en hun betekenisgeving aan de geschiedenis en het erfgoed van de slavernij. Zeven leerlingen beschouwden zichzelf als onderdeel van een groep die ze relateerden aan erfgoed van de slavernij, namelijk afstammelingen van slaafgemaakten en Nederlanders. Één leerling identificeerde zich met 'zijn' groep, terwijl de anderen zich distancieerden van perspectieven die specifiek met 'hun' groep werden geassocieerd. Verschillende leerlingen gaven aan dat zij geen enkele invloed zagen van hun zelfgerapporteerde identiteit op hun betekenisgeving, maar soms leek het alsof de leerlingen deze invloed niet wilden of konden beschrijven. Deze voorbeelden vergroten ons inzicht in hoe leerlingen dit soort technieken om afstand te creëren gebruiken (Goldberg, Schwarz & Porat, 2006).

*Hoofdstuk 4* rapporteert het tweede deel van de resultaten van de eerste empirische case studie over de geschiedenis en het erfgoed van de slavernij. Dit hoofdstuk richt zich op de historische verbeelding, betekenisgeving en erkenning van meerdere perspectieven door de leerlingen tijdens het erfgoedproject. Het erfgoedproject omvatte een voorbereidende les op school, een bezoek aan het Nationaal instituut voor het Nederlands slavernijverleden en erfenis (*NiNsee*) en het Nationaal Slavernijmonument en een afsluitende les op school. De gegevens werden verzameld met vragenlijsten, individuele interviews, observaties van groepswerk tijdens de drie lessen en observaties van de museumeducatoren.

De historische verbeelding van de leerlingen werd tijdens het project vooral gestimuleerd in affectieve zin door interesse, emotionele betrokkenheid en morele reacties op te roepen. Hoewel de beelden van de leerlingen van mishandelde slaafgemaakten op plantages in Amerika vanuit het perspectief van de slaafgemaakten werden verrijkt met gedetailleerde verhalen, objecten en rollenspellen, veranderden deze beelden en perspectieven van de leerlingen niet diepgaand tijdens het erfgoedproject. Sommige leerlingen voegden nieuwe beelden en perspectieven toe aan hun kennis, vooral wat betreft de Nederlandse inmenging in de slavenhandel. Er deden zich slechts zeer beperkt gevallen voor waarin leerlingen perspectieven van verschillende historische figuren combineerden. De leerlingen gaven echter aan dat het museumbezoek hen had geholpen om een beeld te vormen van de tijd van de slavernij en hen meer bewust had gemaakt dat de slavernij echt gebeurd is. Daarnaast nam de emotionele betrokkenheid van de leerlingen tijdens het museumbezoek toe en leefden veel leerlingen met de slaafgemaakten mee. Voor sommige

leerlingen was de slavernij een gevoelig onderwerp. Zij waren emotioneel aangedaan door de gruwel ervan of identificeerden zich met de slaafgemaakten. Een meerderheid van de leerlingen verloor de historische context en de verschillen tussen het verleden en het heden uit het oog wanneer zij zich inleefde in de slaafgemaakten. Deze bevindingen tonen aan dat een erfgoedbenadering van het verleden, waarin de nadruk ligt op inleving en morele reacties, de affectieve kant van historische verbeelding zodanig kan benadrukken dat leerlingen moeite hebben om een historisch perspectief in te nemen, zoals in de literatuur wordt verondersteld (Grever, De Bruijn & Van Boxtel, 2012). De vragen die de leerlingen tijdens het erfgoedproject stelden gaven echter aan dat emotionele betrokkenheid ook een motivatie kan vormen om verder te leren.

De wijze waarop de leerlingen betekenis gaven aan de geschiedenis en het erfgoed van de slavernij voorafgaand aan het erfgoedproject, zoals beschreven in hoofdstuk drie, kwam voor een groot deel overeen met de betekenisgeving door de museumeducatoren en de tentoonstelling in *NiNsee* en werd versterkt tijdens het project. Tijdens het museumbezoek kregen de leerlingen inzicht in de gevoeligheden rond het onderwerp slavernij in de Nederlandse samenleving en hoe deze soms verbonden zijn met iemands identiteit of achtergrond. Bij het monument werden de leerlingen uitgenodigd om te reflecteren op de betekenis van de slavernij in de samenleving en om hun eigen positie ten opzichte van dit onderwerp te verwoorden. De belangrijkste gevoeligheid rond dit onderwerp, het gebrek aan bewustzijn van deze geschiedenis in de Nederlandse samenleving, werd echter niet uitgebreid besproken. Hoewel één leerling leerde dat de Nederlandse geschiedenis van de slavernij als taboe wordt beschouwd, leek een meerderheid van de leerlingen zich hier niet bewust van. Leerlingen worstelden echter wel met deze geschiedenis en hun eigen positie ten opzichte ervan; ze voelde zich persoonlijk betrokken bij het onderwerp, soms gebaseerd op hun zelfgerapporteerde Surinaamse, Antilliaanse of Nederlandse identiteit. Sommige leerlingen projecteerden bepaalde ideeën over betekenisgeving op een andere leerling op basis van diens etnische achtergrond of identiteit; deze aannames kwamen echter niet altijd overeen met hoe de ander dit zelf ervoer. In tegenstelling tot wat sommige leerlingen verwachtten, gaven verschillende leerlingen die afstamden van slaafgemaakten bijvoorbeeld aan dat deze geschiedenis hen niet bijzonder raakte omdat het te lang geleden was. De afsluitende les en interviews lieten zien dat veel leerlingen erfgoed van de slavernij exclusief toeschreven aan afstammelingen van slaafgemaakten en direct verbonden met een zwarte etnische identiteit. Deze bevindingen tonen het gevaar van uitsluiting en het versterken van stereotypen wanneer leerlingen leren over gevoelige geschiedenis en erfgoed (I. Philips, 2008; Smith *et al.*, 2011). De case geeft daarmee het belang aan om met leerlingen te reflecteren op hoe identiteit en opvattingen verbonden zijn en hoe dynamisch deze relatie is.

*Hoofdstuk 5* rapporteert de tweede empirische case studie met betrekking tot de geschiedenis en het erfgoed van de Tweede Wereldoorlog. Bezorgdheid over het doceren

van de Holocaust aan leerlingen van Arabische of Islamitische achtergrond vanwege hun referenties aan het conflict tussen Israël en Palestina en hun veronderstelde antisemitische houding, hebben geleid tot verschillende initiatieven in scholen, musea en historische sites over dit onderwerp (Ensel & Stremmelaar, 2013; Gryglewski, 2010). Deze case studie richtte zich op het leren van geschiedenis door Nederlandse leerlingen van immigrantenafkomst tijdens een erfgoedproject waarin sporen uit het verleden van de Tweede Wereldoorlog worden gepresenteerd als Nederlands erfgoed. Het project omvatte een voorbereidende les op school, een bezoek aan *Museon* en een afsluitende les op school. De gegevens werden verzameld met vragenlijsten, individuele interviews, observaties van groepswork tijdens de drie lessen en observaties van de museumeducator. De 22 deelnemende leerlingen uit twee klassen waren 15 tot 19 jaar oud. Uit deze groep zijn 12 leerlingen met uiteenlopende antwoorden op de eerste vragenlijst en van diverse culturele achtergrond geselecteerd voor de interviews en observaties. De case studie is uitgevoerd in 2011 in Den Haag. Dit hoofdstuk volgt een groepje van drie leerlingen gedurende het erfgoedproject om de ervaringen van deze leerlingen in detail te bespreken. Daarnaast worden voor de gesloten vragen uit de vragenlijsten de resultaten van de gehele klas gegeven om een beeld te geven van de resultaten van deze drie leerlingen ten opzichte van hun klas.

Hoewel geen van deze drie leerlingen de geschiedenis en het erfgoed van de Tweede Wereldoorlog beschouwde als zijn of haar eigen erfgoed vanwege hun immigrantenafkomst en het ontbreken van familieherinneringen aan de oorlog, vonden twee van hen het wel zeer belangrijk dat dit erfgoed bewaard bleef. De derde leerling vond het niet nodig dat sporen die herinneren aan deze verdrietige tijd bewaard bleven. De analyse van het drietal toonde de verscheidenheid aan manieren waarop de zelfgerapporteerde Islamitische identiteit van deze leerlingen een rol speelde in hun opvattingen over de Tweede Wereldoorlog. Alle leerlingen waren ontwikkeld in hun denken over hoe iemands identiteit, gevormd door culturele achtergrond, onderwijs, opvoeding, religieuze overtuiging en persoonlijke interesses, iemands opvattingen beïnvloedt. Zij waren in staat hun reflecties hierop met betrekking tot henzelf te verwoorden. De verkenning van erfgoed van de Tweede Wereldoorlog tijdens het project stimuleerde reflectie op wat erfgoed is en verrijkte de ideeën van de leerlingen over de betekenis van het erfgoed.

De objecten en verhalen in *Museon* en de zelfstandige bestudering daarvan stimuleerden de historische verbeelding van de leerlingen. De analyse toonde echter ook de beperkingen van deze verbeelding en de pogingen van de leerlingen tot inleving. De leerlingen hadden moeite om historische figuren in de context plaatsen, bijvoorbeeld vanwege hun verwachting om heftige emoties te ervaren in *Museon* of vanwege hun hedendaagse normen en waarden. De voorbeelden tonen hoe ingewikkeld het is om cognitieve en affectieve aspecten van historische verbeelding in evenwicht te houden, zoals ook besproken in eerdere studies naar het leren over de Holocaust (Andrews, 2010; Riley,

2001; Schweber, 2004). In deze case studie werden geen voorbeelden gevonden van twijfels aan het dominante narratief over de Tweede Wereldoorlog zoals eerdere studies besproken hebben (Ensel & Stremmelaar, 2013; Jikeli, 2013).

Tijdens het erfgoedproject ontdekten de leerlingen van dit drietal de verschillen in de wijze waarop zij betekenis gaven aan de geschiedenis en het erfgoed van de Tweede Wereldoorlog en de mate waarin zij deze geschiedenis en dit erfgoed als 'eigen' beschouwden. Deze verschillen boden de leerlingen de mogelijkheid om te reflecteren op de criteria die men kan hanteren voor betekenisgeving en in hoeverre en op welke wijze deze criteria verbonden zijn met etnische achtergrond. Zo bespraken de leerlingen in hoeverre de voorkeur voor een Marokkaans verhaal vanwege je eigen ervaren Marokkaanse identiteit simpel en bekrompen is of juist een legitieme keuze. De verscheidenheid aan perspectieven die de *Museon* tentoonstelling bood paste bij het belang dat deze leerlingen hechtten aan het opnemen van verhalen van mensen van verschillende culturen in het narratief van de Tweede Wereldoorlog. Het is echter de vraag of een verzameling van perspectieven, zoals aangeboden in de *Museon* tentoonstelling, leerlingen daadwerkelijk dwingt om meerdere perspectieven te combineren of dat leerlingen enkel kiezen wat hen bevalt. De opdracht in *Museon* om een dialoog te schrijven tussen verschillende perspectieven en deze vervolgens aan de klas te presenteren bracht samen met de afsluitende activiteit op school de verschillende draden samen en stimuleerde de leerlingen om te begrijpen hoe alle perspectieven samen geschiedenis vormen.

*Hoofdstuk 6* vat de belangrijkste bevindingen van de twee case studies samen, zoals hierboven beschreven. Daarnaast bespreekt het de methode van dit onderzoek. De moeilijkheden in het bestuderen van leerervaringen in buitenschoolse leeromgevingen worden beschreven. Ook wordt de kwaliteit van de vragenlijsten besproken. Hiernaast gaat het hoofdstuk in op de beperkingen van de opzet van de studie wat betreft de selectie van de erfgoedprojecten en de participanten. Er wordt kort gereflecteerd op de verschillen en overeenkomsten tussen de beide cases.

In dit hoofdstuk worden verder verschillende aanbevelingen voor de praktijk gedaan. In de eerste plaats adviseer ik docenten en museummedicatoren om tijdens erfgoedprojecten ruimte te creëren voor leerlingen om te overwegen of het erfgoed in kwestie voor hen persoonlijk betekenis heeft. Ook docenten zelf zouden open moeten staan voor kritische reflectie op hun eigen wijze van betekenisgeving en hun standplaatsgebondenheid hierbij. Ten tweede zou ik willen benadrukken dat het bij erfgoedprojecten over gevoelige geschiedenis, waarin zowel de gruwelijkheid van de geschiedenis als hedendaagse problemen in de samenleving of de identiteit van de leerlingen een rol kunnen spelen, van belang is dat docenten met betrekking tot inleefopdrachten specifieke leerdoelen formuleren en de begeleiding hiervan grondig voorbereiden. Het oproepen van emotie is geen doel op zich en zou met zorg moeten worden ingebed in een leerproces. Ten derde, wanneer begrip van multiperspectiviteit een

leerdoel is bij een educatieve activiteit, dan is het belangrijk om niet alleen meerdere perspectieven te presenteren, maar leerlingen ook te stimuleren om deze perspectieven te combineren en te begrijpen dat perspectieven op het verleden dynamisch zijn en door de tijd heen veranderen. Ten vierde geeft mijn empirisch onderzoek tal van redenen voor het bespreken van opvattingen van leerlingen over geschiedenis en erfgoed en het samenspel met hun zelfgerapporteerde etnische identiteit. Het is echter van belang dat docenten op hun hoede zijn voor het versterken van stereotypen bij de leerlingen en juist de vele lagen van identiteit en hun dynamiek onderkennen en bespreekbaar maken.

Het hoofdstuk wordt afgesloten met enkele suggesties voor verder onderzoek, zoals een studie naar erfgoedprojecten over minder gevoelige onderwerpen of een experimenteel onderzoek waarin het leren van geschiedenis tijdens erfgoedprojecten en tijdens ‘gewone’ geschiedenislessen op school kan worden vergeleken. Daarnaast zou het interessant zijn om verder empirisch onderzoek te verrichten naar de rol van de docent in het leerproces. Een interventiestudie rond een inleefopdracht zoals in de tweede case in *Museon*, zou bijvoorbeeld de mogelijkheden kunnen onderzoeken om door middel van begeleiding de mate waarin leerlingen contextualiseren te vergroten. Dergelijke vragen zouden ook kunnen worden onderzocht met behulp van ontwerponderzoek, waarbij docenten en museumeducatoren deelgenoot worden gemaakt van het onderzoeksproces.



## SHORT BIOGRAPHY OF THE AUTHOR

Geerte M. Savenije studied history from 2002 to 2008 at the Radboud University in Nijmegen, the Netherlands, and French modern history at the University Francois-Rabelais in Tours, France. At the Radboud University, she participated in the extracurricular Honours Programme. Savenije graduated cum laude in Cultural History with a thesis on ideas of community and cohesion within the International School for Philosophy (ISVW) in the interwar period in the Netherlands. In 2009, she completed her Master's degree in teaching history at the Graduate School of Education at the Radboud University with a thesis on methods to improve pupils' responses to evaluative historical questions.

From 2009 to 2014, Savenije worked as a PhD student at the Erasmus University in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, within the research programme *Heritage education, plurality of narratives and shared historical knowledge*. During this period, she presented her research through paper, poster and round table presentations at various international conferences, such as AERA 2013, the annual conference of the Centre for Learner Identity Studies of 2012, EARLI 2011, JURE 2011 and ICOM-CECA 2011. She also presented a paper at the international conference *Tangible Pasts? Questioning Heritage Education*, which she helped organise within the context of the research programme in Rotterdam in 2013. She completed the educational programme of the Huizinga Research Institute and Graduate School for Cultural History in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. She also received her qualification for teaching at the university level (BKO), taught several classes at the Erasmus University and conducted workshops at various national conferences on heritage education and the teaching of sensitive history. Between 2011 and 2012, Savenije was the PhD representative at the Erasmus School for History Culture and Communication (ESHCC) of the Erasmus University in Rotterdam. During her PhD research, she participated in several research groups on the learning of history, the cultural memory of the WWII and the study of historical culture. In 2014, Savenije worked as a history teacher educator at the University of Applied Sciences in Amsterdam. Recently, she has started to work as a postdoctoral researcher at the Research Institute of Child Development and Education at the University of Amsterdam.



## PUBLICATIONS AND PAPERS RELATED TO THIS RESEARCH

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