

CHAPTER 9

## Holocaust Heritage Nearby

### *How to Analyse Historical Distance in Education*

---

STEPHAN KLEIN

To what kinds of dealing with the past does 'heritage education' refer when compared to 'history teaching'? As a pair, these terms suggest institutional differences in organizing learning. History is a school subject, regulated by government curricula, using history textbooks, atlases, films and websites as key tools in the classroom. Those who give instruction and mediate between learning materials and learners are usually professionals with a qualification in history and teacher training in history education, which includes some knowledge of history curricula and assessment criteria. The term heritage education is more associated with learning activities in out-of-school contexts, for example, in museums, centres of remembrance and at historical sites. Usually, there are no curricula regulations or assessment procedures for this type of education. These institutions or sites develop their own programmes and educational materials, relating to specific collections or to the places and events they aim to commemorate. Educators and guides may have different educational backgrounds but are often not academically trained historians.

Learning about the past takes place in highly different contexts and is supported by various mediators. Both in-class and out-of-school contexts reach out to many students and thus contribute to the development of historical consciousness of new generations. What kind of historical narratives are taught in these contexts? Both history teaching and education by heritage institutions have come under scrutiny and have been criticized.<sup>1</sup> School history may result in collective memory training or in teaching critical

---

Notes for this section begin on page 194.

historical approaches without making the past significant for students today. The popular heritage industry, on the other hand, has been accused of producing history as experience-driven entertainment and, again, as collective memory. It is important to understand better what both fields do for certain topics in specific learning situations and how they interact. This begs the question of how we can analyse such approaches and interactions.

In this chapter, I will first discuss some differences between history teaching and heritage education, in particular as these manifest themselves in the Netherlands. Then I will propose a five-dimensional framework for an analysis of historical approaches in education, using the concept of historical distance as metaphor.<sup>2</sup> Finally, I will apply this framework by analysing an educational assignment developed by a Dutch heritage institution dedicated to the memory of the Holocaust. To support my analysis, I interviewed the responsible educator and four history teachers who were the prospective end users of the learning materials in a local context, and I used their insights to reflect on the relation between history as a school subject and education by heritage institutions.

### History, Heritage and Education

Historians have been forced to rethink their positions during the past decades.<sup>3</sup> Public interest in the past and the need for meaningful heritage have grown enormously in our rapidly changing world.<sup>4</sup> In the Netherlands, historians have argued that the historical discipline should become more responsive to public needs, for example, by practising a kind of 'reflexive presentism'.<sup>5</sup> If the call for 'heritage' cannot be ignored, it should at least be approached dynamically, with historians guarding against the invention of traditions and exclusivist interpretations.<sup>6</sup> What does this mean for education?

Debates in several Western countries about history curriculum standards and history teaching and learning exemplify the social and political tensions surrounding the question of what historical topics should be taught in what manner.<sup>7</sup> In the Netherlands, students are required to 'think historically', which means that learning about history involves more than memorizing facts and uncritically appropriating values embedded in a textbook narrative. Students face difficult concepts such as continuity and change, authorial subjectivity, source reliability, multiperspectivity, and historical and contemporary significance.<sup>8</sup> History in the Dutch classroom should be presented as a construction that is grounded in subjective experience and bound by place and time. At the same time, the curriculum incorporates a heritage purpose when teachers are asked to make history significant for the present.<sup>9</sup> This is a demanding aim as teaching practice shows that culturally divergent student

audiences produce highly different ways of understanding history's impact upon the present.<sup>10</sup> The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and the Second World War, for example, are topics that easily trigger conflicting student perspectives in the classroom. Teachers often experience great difficulty mediating such situations, and many of them opt for avoidance strategies, leaving the impact of the past upon the present untouched.<sup>11</sup>

In the Netherlands, the supposed lack of contemporary significance of history teaching may explain the support for a new type of history learning, called heritage education. The debate on heritage and education is not specifically Dutch and does not focus exclusively on history education. Some have defined heritage education as presentist by nature and geared towards identity issues such as responsible democratic citizenship, with a future-oriented, intercultural social agenda.<sup>12</sup> It is taken to be a participatory and cross-curricular approach rather than a passive form of learning tied to a specific subject.<sup>13</sup> In the Netherlands, the debate on heritage education surfaced after a government initiative in 2005 established a national history canon as an instrument to promote social cohesion.

In 2006 and 2007, a special committee published a Dutch history canon, consisting of fifty themes or windows on the past that every Dutch citizen should learn. An important feature of the canon website is that it systematically links the fifty themes to museums and other heritage institutions, while not prescribing a critical historical approach. This, in turn, explains the call from education specialists for applying historical concepts from school history to Dutch heritage education in the future, in line with similar trends in other countries.<sup>14</sup> Because both fields have been drawn more closely to each other, the question is now a more positive one: how can we assess different approaches to the past within and between both fields and how can these strengthen one another in such a way that students, as John Tosh wrote, can 'draw on the past for a richer sense of possibilities in the future'?<sup>15</sup>

### Historical Distance in Education: An Analytical Framework

If history teaching and heritage education both aim to teach students something about the significance of the past for their world and about the construction of historical identities (including their own), then what we need is at least a rudimentary analytical framework that can help to explain how past-present relations are composed in education. For such a framework, the concept of 'historical distance' will be helpful.

In the theory of history, 'historical distance' is used when past-present interpretations emphasize discontinuity,<sup>16</sup> meaning that the past is interpreted as being different from the present. Knowledge of the past is acquired by

evaluating past behaviour in a proper historical context. To accept historical distance presumes that we master our emotions and examine our own convictions rather than engage in reasoning based on present values and instant feelings; such reflection on historical change enables us to acknowledge the existence – perhaps even the value – of different perspectives on the past.

The less distant it is, however, the more the past tends to become a familiar and continuous thing. This 'shorter distancing' is also called proximity. Shorter distancing refers to two phenomena that are sometimes – though not necessarily – interconnected. First, it refers to the idea of experiencing the past. Sometimes people feel they have direct access to the past when they touch historical objects, walk in historical places, witness historical re-enactments or watch audiovisual recreations. The human need to make connections with the past through such means can be interpreted positively as new ways of creating 'authentic' cultural identities.<sup>17</sup> Whether such experiences have much to do with 'history' may be doubted, however, as replicas, redecorations, recreations and (re-)inventions often blur the time dimension.<sup>18</sup> In addition, then, and this is the second phenomenon, shorter distancing refers to certain types of historical narratives, i.e. those involving values and moral judgments that sustain the memory of communities. Such narratives appropriate objects, relics, places and other 'time travellers' as their 'heritage'. They often conflate the past with the present in order to celebrate continuity through time rather than change.<sup>19</sup>

Much scholarly reflection today focuses on the complex intertwining of longer and shorter distancing in representations of the past and on dynamic interactions in historical culture at large.<sup>20</sup> A framework of analysis, therefore, should be imagined as a continuum, where many intermediate positions and complicated combinations are possible, creating unique varieties of distance.

Such a framework could consist of five interrelated dimensions:

1. *time*: to what extent are historical phenomena constructed as time ruptures or as part of continuous historical processes (discontinuity–continuity)? This involves studying language and emplotment in historical narrative. Periodizations, for example, demarcate one period from another, suggesting that something important has changed in between. A template like 'triangular trade' also works towards ordering time as discontinuous because it configures slave trade and slavery as an essentially economic phenomenon, tied to the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries. Very different are schematic narrative templates such as the American notion of freedom and progress, suggesting a plot that has unfolded continuously over the centuries up until the present. Such effects of shorter distance are also produced by narrative bridging and pasting techniques, which connect or juxtapose different points in time,

for example, through the power of analogy, to suggest sameness or even continuity.<sup>21</sup>

2. *person*: to what extent do learning materials present historical actors as ahistorical moral examples or as contextualized human beings (identity–difference)? Historical actors are important in historical narrative as they represent the point of perspective in the historical process. Historical actors can be abstract entities, such as 'the nation', but they can also be human or both. In the case of human actors, it is important to note how they are represented: as heroes, perpetrators, rebels, victims or just as 'normal' people dealing with the regular rhythm of the day or with the totally unexpected way in which lives can be changed.
3. *imagination*: to what extent do learning materials explain the past through abstract concepts, symbols and metaphors or through concrete stories and images (theoretical–specific)? This refers to how a mediator or an educational text tells a story, commonly amounting to a complex dynamics of language and visuals. Analysis of narration will focus on the question of who does the telling and through whose eyes we look. Written educational texts often use an unknown omniscient narrator, but various ways of focalization may occur by inserting historical eyewitness accounts. Audiovisual educational texts may have different or additional narrative rules. The ways in which (written and spoken) language and images interact in education will influence learning outcomes that are specific to history teaching, such as the students' ability to recognize certain historical perspectives or their willingness to apply historical empathy / contextualization skills.<sup>22</sup>
4. *place*: to what extent are the locations of history presented as geographically distant or nearby (far away–close)? The experience of place, as it remains constant through time, can bring a sensual experience of history. Educational assignments can use the power of place in multiple ways, from using a photo, showing a video, creating a live connection to actually visiting a location and physically experiencing its environment. How place is perceived by students will also be influenced by the local, national or global geographical framework adopted by learning materials to create present meaning.
5. *engagement*: to what extent are students treated as passive receivers of historical knowledge or as active performers who produce meanings (for) themselves (passive–active)? This refers to two aspects. First, this dimension should be seen at the level of the general learning process, particularly the extent to which students are challenged to use their prior knowledge and convictions to actively create new understandings. Secondly, engagement takes place at the level of past–present relationships and refers to the way in which the construction of historical



identities is forced upon students as given or facilitated as a personal process of becoming.

These dimensions will often cross or overlap each other. Nevertheless, as a framework it will be helpful for analysing how narratives about the past are organized in education for both in-class and out-of-school contexts.<sup>23</sup> I will use the framework here to analyse an assignment from an educational Dutch heritage project on the Second World War, called *The War Nearby*.

### Imagining the Holocaust in your Own Environment: Analysing *The War Nearby*

Teaching the Holocaust has been described as one of the most important things one can do as a teacher.<sup>24</sup> There is less consensus, however, about the selection of the exact learning objectives that are to be achieved, and teachers, therefore, will favour different approaches. Today, this topic easily flows from the past into the present as a history we should learn from,<sup>25</sup> but the current emphasis on learning and remembering in the service of developing democratic citizenship is not adopted by every teacher and is also subject to historical change.<sup>26</sup> Even when learning objectives are similar, teaching materials may vary widely in their chosen teaching methodologies and particular choices made to accomplish particular objectives.

*The War Nearby* is an educational project of the Dutch Remembrance Centre Kamp Westerbork,<sup>27</sup> located in the north-eastern part of the Netherlands. In the Second World War, it was a transition camp where Jewish people from all Dutch destinations were gathered before being transported to one of the concentration camps in Poland. This educational project was designed to connect this tragic episode in national and international history to local heritage. The project consists of a number of educational assignments developed specifically for several Dutch cities and towns, based on their local stories, places and archival records. For this chapter, I analysed an assignment for the town of Alphen aan den Rijn in the west of the Netherlands. The assignment provides materials and questions to guide students on a biking or walking tour of the town, visit at least five particular places, take photographs and finally present their impressions in the classroom. I used this material also as input for my interviews with the responsible heritage educator at Remembrance Centre Kamp Westerbork and four history teachers in Alphen aan den Rijn (henceforth: Alphen).<sup>28</sup>

#### Time

The practical assignment of *The War Nearby* uses 1940 to 1945, the standard periodization in Dutch historiography, as an enclosed time unit for reflection

but explains anti-Semitism as a phenomenon that is continuous throughout the ages. Time is dealt with in a comparative manner, so the question of why synagogues were molested during the war period, for example, is followed by the question of whether this also happens with other places of worship today. It resembles – what Eviatar Zerubavel calls – a ‘mnemonic pasting’ technique that facilitates thinking about continuities, but it is not presented without reflection.<sup>29</sup> Several questions invite students to identify differences between the past and the present, and sometimes students are asked to present their opinion on whether these differences are good or bad. Still, the learning objective focuses more on developing knowledge and values for contemporary society than on explaining the strangeness of the past. This was affirmed by the heritage educator, as she acknowledged her main goal to be to make sure that children would not doubt that the Holocaust had really happened and that they would speak respectfully about the victims.<sup>30</sup>

According to her, this type of education should always be linked to the present and contribute to a shared understanding. Despite the often supposed difference between history teaching and heritage education, the four history teachers, who were none of them Jewish, strongly approved of this approach to this topic.<sup>31</sup> In fact, they felt the link with the present was self-evident, and two of them said their preference in handling this topic was strongly influenced by their own personal experience. Teacher 1 had visited Auschwitz himself and taken his own photographs, which he used in the classroom. Teacher 2 not only recalled family stories of the Second World War, but also explained the very deep emotional experience he had had when studying Jewish war diaries for his history degree: ‘If you talk [as a teacher to students] from that experience, then it makes a real impression. Then it is something that almost becomes part of yourself, it goes that deep’. Having gone through such experiences, these teachers felt that they had come close to the emotions of the topic, and the second teacher in particular felt he taught about the Holocaust in a more ‘authentic’ way. Both the teachers and the educator felt that the Holocaust was a topic that needed short distancing as it was a narrative tool for learning about important democratic values in the present.

#### Person

The focus of attention in *The War Nearby* is on the Jewish victims from Alphen. Usually such a perspective helps students to see human suffering in a particular historical context, but the assignment only partially realizes (or aims to realize) this potential as it is mainly concerned with the material heritage of the Alphen area to which the historical people are connected. Most individuals are mentioned by name, but, except for some general biographical data, little further information is or could be provided. The educator acknowledged that this was a problem as students now get to see rather

flat characters such as a teacher and a pupil at a Jewish school; parents and their children at a place of hiding; anonymous men, women and children at a Jewish monument; no people at a synagogue; and a family at a Jewish shop. The texts mention both survival and tragic destinies without making a central issue of man's agency. For the teachers, however, this lack of biographical detail did not appear problematic as they were all attracted to this material by the fact that students would indeed be able to experience something of the Holocaust at all in their own local area.

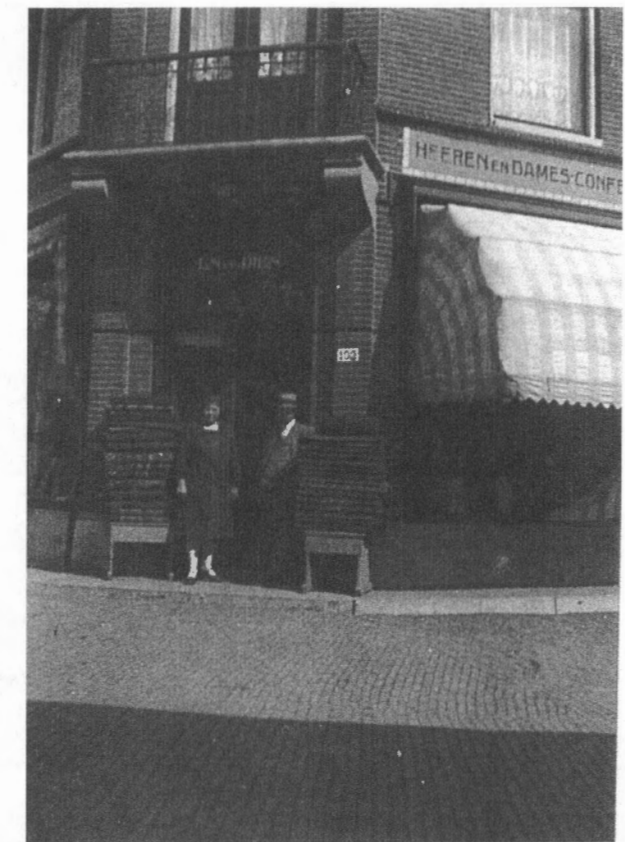
#### *Imagination and place*

The story in the written assignment accompanying the walk or bike tour in Alphen is told by an unknown omniscient narrator in a sober style, with only a few details. There are no points where focalization occurs. The images in the assignment, mostly black and white photographs showing buildings from around the 1940s, prepare students for using the environment as an imaginative tool.

The possible dynamics of the dimensions of imagination and place in the learning materials become apparent when we focus on one photo in particular. In this picture, taken around 1940, we actually see two Jewish people in front of the shop where they sold linen. Students are told that this is the shop of Nathan van Dien and his parents. Then they learn that Nathan was married to Roosje and that they had two children: Sara (4) and Isaac (2). Their fates are also mentioned: Roosje, Sara and Isaac died at Auschwitz on 5 October 1942, and Nathan died at Schoppinitz one year later. Sara and Isaac were the youngest victims from Alphen.

These details help to make this horrible past concrete in the dimension of *person* and *place*, but from the dimension of *imagination* the material is confusing. The people we actually see in the photograph are Nathan's parents or little Sara and little Isaac's grandparents: Louis and Sarah van Dien. They are not mentioned. Both of them also died at Auschwitz and were probably on the same train. In fact, grandmother Sarah died on the same day as her daughter and her two grandchildren. If students know the whole family story, the image will be more powerful for them when they go outside the classroom and stand before the very same building in exactly the same spot as the photographer did around 1940.

The learning materials – both on paper and in the local environment – would then work towards both bridging and separating past and present at the same instant. The old black and white picture with Louis and Sarah contrasts sharply with the modern building (which is to let), with graffiti on its walls and an expressive advert in the window. Visiting this place more than seventy years later may create effects of both shorter and longer historical distance, but only if learning materials provide tailor-made information.



**Figure 9.1** A linen shop in Alphen aan den Rijn, with Sarah and Louis van Dien (around 1940).

The dimension of place is the actual target of this assignment. Students will actively discover heritage and the topography of memory in their own local area. Some of the places in Alphen have changed completely, while others are still recognizable as 'time travellers'. It is in the dimension of place that larger historical developments are made concrete and part of learning through experience. As the heritage educator explains: 'What all those children with all those different backgrounds have in common is that they live there right now and that they pass places that still remind us of what happened'. All four history teachers fully agreed on this point. What students need, according to one, is not just the facts, the dates and the concepts but 'very specific examples'. Teacher 4 observed that local heritage provides something of a 'historical sensation' and that specific stories are a valuable addition to the more textual way of learning history in the classroom.





Figure 9.2 The same building, February 2012.

#### Engagement

With regard to the dimension of engagement, it is important to know something about the origin of this project. Remembrance Centre Kamp Westerbork had been asked to develop educational materials by Alphen's Foundation for the Remembrance of Jewish Victims of Persecution. Some of the Foundation's members were also on the municipal council and felt

morally outraged by the actions of their predecessors in the 1940s, who had collaborated in the transportation of Jewish citizens from Alphen.

The Foundation's initiative to set up a special educational project was born out of a row over Remembrance Day (4 May). The Alphen remembrance ceremony is habitually held at the resistance monument, which was established in 1949 and has grown into a memorial symbol for the whole community, the commemoration of the Second World War having widened to include other victims, such as Jewish citizens. In 2008, however, the mayor was invited also to appear at the separate Jewish monument, which had been established in 1990, on the same day, but declined the invitation on the grounds that this was a private matter. The Foundation's concern was then translated into educational material by the educator at Remembrance Centre Kamp Westerbork, aiming to improve children's understanding of why there was a separate Jewish monument in Alphen.

In *The War Nearby*, children are asked to read what a local newspaper from 2008 reported about the issue. There is, however, room for reflection and no prescribed significance. In fact, the heritage educator (a historian herself) said she explicitly abstained from taking a moral perspective on the issue and making Alphen's town council of the 1940s into a unique example of collaboration. She refused to take a morally judging approach, she said, because every town in the Netherlands reacted in the same way. Nor did she take the approach suggested by members of the Foundation, i.e. to ask students what they would have done: 'We found that question a very difficult one because you don't know what you would have done; you can't step into the shoes of people living seventy years ago and say: "I would have done it completely differently"'. Instead, through her influence, the educational material took a heritage angle, paying attention to the local remains of the past. One of the issues now raised in the assignments is whether students agree with the mayor or not. It also asks students to find other war monuments in Alphen and identify for whom they are there. The educational material thus sets the agenda for researching Alphen's memorial landscape and for trying to understand some underlying tensions but leaves it up to the students and their teachers how to engage with them.

This approach of combining past-present connections with critical reflection fitted well with the four history teachers' expectations of good practice. They wanted history teaching to be critical and emotional, with stories full of details, but they made a distinction between what was suitable within and without the classroom environment. Teacher 3 criticized the critical assignment on the 2008 incident, which, he thought, was a rather textual exercise which required even more background information to make it work. This teacher recognized the cognitive demand of thinking about 'heritage', where he expected less textual demands from heritage education.

For him, the 2008 issue was not an easily digestible story and, therefore, more of a textbook assignment.

The assignment involving the 2008 incident was composed to take a more distant approach and to stimulate students to think about personal identity and different perspectives on commemoration. Sadly, at the time some of the interviews took place, the teachers' presentist commemoration concerns had grown unexpectedly. On Saturday 9 April 2011, the Alphen community had been shocked by a shooting incident in which six people were killed in 'De Ridderhof' shopping centre. After the killings, the lone gunman took his own life. Two schools had close connections with the incident: some students and parents had witnessed it or knew victims, and one school was located next to the shopping centre. The memorial service for the incident the day after (10 April) took place less than a month before the ceremony to commemorate the victims of the Second World War. This coincidence provided a strong incentive to merge past and present and engage with general issues such as 'vulnerability' and 'freedom'. The incident seemed to foster understanding of historical positions more strongly than an educational assignment. As teacher 2 explained:

It's the personal aspect, being touched by the fact that people are suddenly very vulnerable and that your life can suddenly end, by such an odd, bizarre event. You think you've got everything under control when you're young and strong, in the strength of your life. And then suddenly, this 'Ridderhof' story comes along and suddenly you're very vulnerable. Our students were also involved, or their parents, people they knew. Yes, you can suddenly be hit. You can be Jewish during World War II and think 'I'll go underground, or I'll go somewhere, or I'll run away from them'. Because of this 'Ridderhof' story, all this becomes very concrete and clear and it's not that simple.

Although one cannot deny the value of such a comparison on a general level, the idea of 'vulnerability' during the 1940s and 2011 was without doubt very different. However, the impact of the present, or the proximity of violence, easily erased such historical nuances and made the present into a tool to engage with the past on one's own terms, both for the teachers and the students.

### Conclusion and Final Remarks

In this chapter, I proposed a framework for analysing historical distance in education from five dimensions: time, person, imagination, place and engagement. I applied the framework to an educational assignment developed for a specific Dutch town by national Remembrance Centre Kamp Westerbork, a former transition camp used by the German occupiers to organize the Holocaust from the Netherlands. Students from schools in

Alphen aan den Rijn were invited to take a walking or biking tour and visit locations connected with Jewish life in this town, aided by an assignment consisting of explanatory texts, images and questions.

If we interpret the assignment from the dimension of time, it appears that it is meant mainly as a tool for developing knowledge and values for the present. It uses a mnemonic pasting technique to bring the war period close to the present. From the dimension of person, the approach is less clear. Historical actors are introduced in the materials, but, due to a lack of contextual information, they remain flat characters. From the dimensions of imagination and place, it is important to look at the dynamics between the visual information in the assignment and the actual places to be visited. Students can see both change and continuity in historical places by comparing photographs of the 1940s with the same locations in the present. Experiencing shorter and longer distance may occur simultaneously here and create an experience that is more historical than presentist. This only works, however, if students are provided with the correct contextual information about the historical actors in the old photographs, which was absent from the assignment. In the engagement dimension, I looked at how some mediators would distance historically when teaching with these materials. The educator responsible for *The War Nearby* explained that she had resisted the project initiators' call for a straightforward moral perspective. Bringing the past closer to the present, according to her, was useful for educational purposes only as an encounter with material remains, but not as a closed narrative with a particular moral stance. The teachers valued this approach positively. They said that they saw this material as a valuable addition to their teaching practice and thought they could add enough contextual information, if necessary, to balance longer and shorter distancing.

These interviews show why we cannot evaluate the construction of historical distance solely by interpreting a written assignment. Mediators add their own materials and insights, as do the students themselves. Therefore, we need to understand historical distance within the overall learning process on a certain curriculum topic. There are classroom activities, and there is learning in and around heritage institutions, but there are also collaborative projects which may have a unique impact on how past and present are connected.

The assignment involving active learning in the school environment about the heritage of the Jewish victims was barely used in the Alphen schools. This was very much due to practical concerns. The assignment was part of the much larger project *The War Nearby*, and it was difficult to incorporate this whole package into the daily routines of the school programmes and, hence, the smaller assignment was overlooked. This is a well-known problem showing that both epistemological and practical concerns need to



be considered before teaching in heritage institutions and classroom practice can be mutually beneficial.

In the educational context of the Netherlands, heritage institutions can contribute to the need to humanize and emotionalize the past in history education, if they do not present the past uncritically or as static in meaning. If such teaching is developed for classroom use, it also needs to be flexible enough to accommodate timetables, student diversity and teacher needs. This is easier said than done. One of the major dilemmas, which also surfaced in the teacher interviews, is that critical historical thinking about heritage should be supported by providing students with enough contextual information. Teachers, however, do not always seem to expect a contextualized and analytical approach to be part of a heritage project. They themselves are not consistent in their approaches either and may accommodate emotional needs when everyday life enters the classroom. This became evident from the interviews, which took place in Alphen shortly after dramatic events had shocked the community. Therefore, the most promising results will appear where schools, heritage institutions and educational specialists find ways to cooperate on a more permanent basis and to analyse goals and practices, both in terms of historical distance and in terms of their use in different learning contexts.

## Notes

1. J. Hamer, 'History Teaching and Heritage Education: Two Sides of the Same Coin, or Different Currencies?', in *The Politics of Heritage: The Legacies of Race*, eds J. Littler and R. Naidoo, New York, 2005, 159–169.
2. The framework of analysis in this article has also been described for a Dutch audience in S. Klein, M. Grever and C. van Boxtel, "'Zie, Denk, Voel, Vraag, Spreek, Hoor en Verwonder". Afstand en Nabijheid in Geschiedisonderwijs en Erfgoededucatie in Nederland', *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 124, 3 (2011): 381–395.
3. A. Rigney, 'Introduction: Values, Responsibilities, History', in *Historians and Social Values*, eds A. Rigney and J. Leerssen, Amsterdam, 2000, 8; J. Black, *Using History*, London, 2005, 175–178.
4. J. de Groot, *Consuming History: Historians and Heritage in Contemporary Popular Culture*, London and New York, 2009; K. Ribbens, *Strijdtoneel: De Tweede Wereldoorlog in de Populaire Historische Cultuur*, inaugural lecture Erasmus University Rotterdam, 25 October 2013.
5. The term used in E. Jonker, 'Reflection on History Education: Easy and Difficult Histories', *Journal of Educational Media, Memory, and Society* 4, 1 (2012): 107. See also C. Lorenz, 'Unstuck in Time: Or, The Sudden Presence of the Past', in *Performing the Past: Memory, History, and Identity in Modern Europe*, eds K. Tilmans, F. van Vree and J. Winter, Amsterdam, 2010, 67–102; H. Jansen, *Triptiek van de Tijd: Geschiedenis in Drievoud*, Nijmegen, 2010, 50–55; R. Aerts, 'De Lege Kathedraal: Over Geschiedwetenschap, Vaderlandse Geschiedenis en het Publiek', in *Het Vaderlandse Verleden: Robert Fruin en de Nederlandse Geschiedenis*, eds H. Paul and H. te Velde, Amsterdam, 2010, 195–220.
6. W. Frijhoff, *Dynamisch Erfgoed*, Amsterdam, 2007, 13–40.

7. P. Seixas, ed., *Theorizing Historical Consciousness*, Toronto, ON, 2004; M. Grever and S. Stuurman, eds, *Beyond the Canon: History for the Twenty-First Century*, Basingstoke, UK, 2007; K. Barton and L. Levstik, *Teaching History for the Common Good*, Mahwah, NJ and London, 2004; L. Symcox and A. Wilschut, eds, *National History Standards: The Problem of the Canon and the Future of Teaching History*, Charlotte, NC, 2009; M. Carretero, M. Asensio and M. Rodríguez-Moneo, eds, *History Education and the Construction of National Identities*, Charlotte, NC, 2012.
8. See, for example, J. van Drie and C. van Boxtel, 'Historical Reasoning: Towards a Framework for Analyzing Students' Reasoning about the Past', *Educational Psychology Review* 20 (2008): 87–110; S. Lévesque, *Thinking Historically: Educating Students for the Twenty-First Century*, Toronto, Buffalo and London, 2008. Although the Dutch history curriculum was revised substantially in 2007, with more emphasis on chronology, the combination of critically examining historical representations and thinking about their present value is still a key characteristic.
9. The concept of historical significance is the subject of much debate in the theory of history didactics. For example, L. Cercadillo, "'Maybe They Haven't Decided Yet What is Right': English and Spanish Perspectives on Teaching Historical Significance", *Teaching History* 125 (2006): 6–9; Lévesque, *Thinking Historically*, 39–61; L.C. Peck, "'It's Not Like [I'm] Chinese and Canadian. I am In Between": Ethnicity and Students' Conceptions of Historical Significance', *Theory and Research in Social Education* 38, 4 (2010): 574–617.
10. M. Grever and K. Ribbens, *Nationale Identiteit en Meervoudig Verleden*, Amsterdam, 2007.
11. Barton and Levstik, *Teaching History for the Common Good*, 253; S. Klein, 'Teaching History in The Netherlands: Teachers' Experiences of a Plurality of Perspectives', *Curriculum Inquiry* 40, 5 (2010): 614–634.
12. J.J. Patrick, 'Heritage Education in the School Curriculum: Defining and Avoiding the Pitfalls', *Heritage Education Monograph Series*, Washington, 1992, 6–14; T. Copeland, 'Citizenship Education and Heritage', *Internet Archeology* 10 (2002); G. Aplin, 'Heritage as Exemplar: A Pedagogical Role for Heritage Studies in Values Education', *Environmentalism* 27 (2007): 375–383.
13. T. Copeland, *European Democratic Citizenship, Heritage Education and Identity*, Council of Europe, 2005, 20.
14. C. van Boxtel, *Geschiedenis, Erfgoed en Didactiek*, inaugural lecture Erasmus University Rotterdam, 20 February 2009; C. van Boxtel, S. Klein and E. Snoep, eds, *Heritage Education: Challenges in Dealing with the Past*, Amsterdam, 2011. See also P. Seixas and T. Morton, *The Big Six Historical Thinking Concepts*, Toronto, 2012; M. Stoddard and W. Woodward, *Teaching History with Museums: Strategies for K-12 Social Studies*, New York and London, 2012, 20–29.
15. J. Tosh, *Why History Matters*, Houndmills, Basingstoke and New York, 2008, 127.
16. J. den Hollander, H. Paul and R. Peters, 'Introduction: The Metaphor of Historical Distance', *History and Theory* 50 (December 2011): 1–10.
17. S. Jones, 'Negotiating Authentic Objects and Authentic Selves: Beyond the Deconstruction of Authenticity', *Journal of Material Culture* 15 (2010): 181–203.
18. D. Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country*, Cambridge, 1985, 248.
19. D. Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History*, Cambridge, 1998, 127–147; D. Lowenthal, 'Fabricating Heritage', *History and Memory* 10 (1998): 5–24.
20. M. Phillips, 'Distance and Historical Representation', *History Workshop Journal* 57 (2004): 123–141; M. Phillips, 'Rethinking Historical Distance: From Doctrine to Heuristic', *History and Theory* 50 (2011): 11–23; F. Hartog, 'Time and Heritage', *Museum International* 227, 3 (2005): 7–18; A. Erll and A. Rigney, *Mediation, Remediation and the Dynamics of Cultural Memory*, Berlin, 2009.
21. C. Husbands, *What is History Teaching? Language, Ideas and Meaning in Learning about the Past*, Buckingham and Philadelphia, 1996, 30–53; J. Wertsch, 'Specific Narratives and Schematic Narrative Templates', in *Theorizing Historical Consciousness*, ed. P. Seixas, Toronto,



- ON, 2004, 49–62; E. Zerubavel, *Time Maps: Collective Memory and the Social Shape of the Past*, Chicago and London, 2003.
22. M. Bal, *Narratology: Introduction in the Theory of Narrative*, 3rd edn, Toronto, 2009.
23. M. Grever, P. de Bruijn and C. van Boxtel, 'Negotiating Historical Distance: Or, How to Deal with the Past as a Foreign Country in Heritage Education', *Paedagogica Historica* 48, 4 (2011): 1–15; P. de Bruijn, 'The Holocaust and Historical Distance: An Analysis of Heritage Educational Resources', in *Forschungswerkstatt Geschichtsdidaktik 12: Beiträge zur Tagung 'Geschichtsdidaktik Empirisch 12'*, eds J. Hodel, M. Waldis and B. Ziegler, Bern, 2013, 204–213.
24. I. Davies, *Teaching the Holocaust: Educational Dimensions, Principles and Practice*, London, 2000.
25. See for example the cross-national comparative results in P. Bromley and S. Russell, 'The Holocaust as History and Human Rights: A Cross-national Analysis of Holocaust Education in Social Science Textbooks, 1970–2008', *Prospects* 40 (2010): 153–173. See also the guidelines at <http://www.holocaustremembrance.com/educate/teaching-guidelines> (accessed 16 December 2015).
26. For the Netherlands, see D. Hondius, *Oorlogslessen: Onderwijs over de Oorlog Sinds 1945*, Amsterdam, 2010.
27. *De Oorlog Dichtbij Huis: Alphen aan den Rijn*, geproduceerd door Herinneringscentrum Kamp Westerbork (2009), op initiatief van de Stichting Herdenking Joodse Vervolgings-slachtoffers (*The War Nearby: Alphen aan den Rijn*, produced by the Remembrance Centre Kamp Westerbork, on the initiative of the Foundation for the Remembrance of Jewish Victims of Persecution).
28. The four history teachers (all male) worked at four different secondary schools in Alphen aan den Rijn. Two of them had an academic history degree at master's level, the other two a history degree at bachelor level. All four had at least ten years of teaching experience. The heritage educator (female) had an academic master degree in history and had worked for more than ten years as an educator, combined over two heritage institutions.
29. Zerubavel, *Time Maps*, 40–41.
30. Interview with heritage educator (11 July 2011).
31. Interviews with teacher 1 (9 June 2011), teacher 2 (17 June 2011), teacher 3 (23 September 2011) and teacher 4 (27 September 2011).

## References

- Aerts, R. 'De Lege Kathedraal: Over Geschiedwetenschap, Vaderlandse Geschiedenis en het Publiek' [The Empty Cathedral: About History, National History and the Public], in *Het Vaderlandse Verleden: Robert Fruin en de Nederlandse Geschiedenis*, eds H. Paul and H. te Velde, Amsterdam, 2010, 195–220.
- Aplin, G. 'Heritage as Exemplar: A Pedagogical Role for Heritage Studies in Values Education', *Environmentalist* 27 (2007): 375–383.
- Bal, M. *Narratology: Introduction in the Theory of Narrative*, 3rd edn, Toronto, 2009.
- Barton, K. and L. Levstik. *Teaching History for the Common Good*, Mahwah, NJ and London, 2004.
- Black, J. *Using History*, London, 2005.
- Bromley, P. and S. Russell. 'The Holocaust as History and Human Rights: A Cross-national Analysis of Holocaust Education in Social Science Textbooks, 1970–2008', *Prospects* 40 (2010): 153–173.
- Carretero, M., M. Asensio and M. Rodríguez-Moneo, eds. *History Education and the Construction of National Identities*, Charlotte, NC, 2012.
- Cercadillo, L. "'Maybe They Haven't Decided Yet What is Right': English and Spanish Perspectives on Teaching Historical Significance", *Teaching History* 125 (2006): 6–9.
- Copeland, T. 'Citizenship Education and Heritage', *Internet Archaeology* 10 (2002).
- . *European Democratic Citizenship, Heritage Education and Identity*, Council of Europe, 2005.
- Davies, I. *Teaching the Holocaust: Educational Dimensions, Principles and Practice*, London, 2000.
- de Bruijn, P. 'The Holocaust and Historical Distance: An Analysis of Heritage Educational Resources', in *Forschungswerkstatt Geschichtsdidaktik 12: Beiträge zur Tagung 'Geschichtsdidaktik Empirisch 12'*, eds J. Hodel, M. Waldis and B. Ziegler, Bern, 2013, 204–213.
- de Groot, J. *Consuming History: Historians and Heritage in Contemporary Popular Culture*, London and New York, 2009.
- den Hollander, J., H. Paul and R. Peters. 'Introduction: The Metaphor of Historical Distance', *History and Theory* 50 (December 2011): 1–10.
- Ertl, A. and A. Rigney. *Mediation, Remediation and the Dynamics of Cultural Memory*, Berlin, 2009.
- Frijhoff, W. *Dynamisch Erfgoed*, Amsterdam, 2007.
- Grever, M., P. de Bruijn and C. van Boxtel. 'Negotiating Historical Distance: Or, How to Deal with the Past as a Foreign Country in Heritage Education', *Paedagogica Historica* 48, 4 (2011): 1–15.
- Grever, M. and K. Ribbens. *Nationale Identiteit en Meervoudig Verleden* [National Identity and Plural Pasts], Amsterdam, 2007.
- Grever, M. and S. Stuurman, eds. *Beyond the Canon: History for the Twenty-First Century*, Basingstoke, UK, 2007.
- Hamer, J. 'History Teaching and Heritage Education. Two Sides of the Same Coin, or Different Currencies?', in *The Politics of Heritage: The Legacies of Race*, eds J. Littler and R. Naidoo, New York, 2005, 159–169.
- Hartog, F. 'Time and Heritage', *Museum International* 227, 3 (2005): 7–18.
- Hondius, D. *Oorlogslessen: Onderwijs over de Oorlog Sinds 1945* [Lessons of War: Education about the War since 1945], Amsterdam, 2010.
- Husbands, C. *What is History Teaching? Language, Ideas and Meaning in Learning about the Past*, Buckingham and Philadelphia, 1996.
- Jansen, H. *Triptiek van de Tijd: Geschiedenis in Drievoud* [Triptych of Time: History in Triplicate], Nijmegen, 2010.
- Jones, S. 'Negotiating Authentic Objects and Authentic Selves. Beyond the Deconstruction of Authenticity', *Journal of Material Culture* 15 (2010): 181–203.
- Jonker, E. 'Reflection on History Education: Easy and Difficult Histories', *Journal of Educational Media, Memory, and Society* 4, 1 (2012): 95–110.
- Klein, S. 'Teaching History in The Netherlands: Teachers' Experiences of a Plurality of Perspectives', *Curriculum Inquiry* 40, 5 (2010): 614–634.
- , M. Grever and C. van Boxtel. "'Zie, Denk, Voel, Vraag, Spreek, Hoor en Verwonder": Afstand en Nabijheid in Geschiedenisonderwijs en Erfgoededucatie in Nederland' [See, Think, Feel, Question, Speak, Hear and Wonder: Distance and Proximity in History and Heritage Education in the Netherlands], *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 124, 3 (2011): 381–395.
- Lévesque, S. *Thinking Historically: Educating Students for the Twenty-First Century*, Toronto, Buffalo and London, 2008.
- Lorenz, C. 'Unstuck in Time: Or, the Sudden Presence of the Past', in *Performing the Past: Memory, History, and Identity in Modern Europe*, eds K. Tilman, F. van Vree and J. Winter, Amsterdam, 2010, 67–102.
- Lowenthal, D. *The Past is a Foreign Country*, Cambridge, 1985.
- . *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History*, Cambridge, 1998.

- . 'Fabricating Heritage', *History and Memory* 10 (1998): 5–24.
- Patrick, J.J. 'Heritage Education in the School Curriculum: Defining and Avoiding the Pitfalls', *Heritage Education Monograph Series*, Washington, 1992, 6–14.
- Peck, L.C. "'It's Not Like [I'm] Chinese and Canadian. I am In Between': Ethnicity and Students' Conceptions of Historical Significance", *Theory and Research in Social Education* 38, 4 (2010): 574–617.
- Phillips, M. 'Distance and Historical Representation', *History Workshop Journal* 57 (2004): 123–141.
- . 'Rethinking Historical Distance: From Doctrine to Heuristic', *History and Theory* 50 (2011): 11–23.
- Ribbens, K. *Strijdtonelen: De Tweede Wereldoorlog in de Populaire Historische Cultuur* [Battlegrounds: The Second World War in Popular Historical Culture], inaugural lecture Erasmus University Rotterdam, 25 October 2013.
- Rigney, A. 'Introduction: Values, Responsibilities, History', in *Historians and Social Values*, eds A. Rigney and J. Leerssen, Amsterdam, 2000, 7–15.
- Seixas, P. ed. *Theorizing Historical Consciousness*, Toronto, ON, 2004.
- and T. Morton. *The Big Six Historical Thinking Concepts*, Toronto, 2012.
- Stoddard, M. and W. Woodward. *Teaching History with Museums: Strategies for K-12 Social Studies*, New York and London, 2012.
- Symcox, L. and A. Wilschut, eds. *National History Standards: The Problem of the Canon and the Future of Teaching History*, Charlotte, NC, 2009.
- Tosh, J. *Why History Matters*, Houndmills, Basingstoke and New York, 2008.
- van Boxtel, C. *Geschiedenis, Erfgoed en Didactiek* [History, Heritage and Pedagogy], inaugural lecture Erasmus University Rotterdam, 20 February 2009.
- , S. Klein and E. Snoep, eds. *Heritage Education: Challenges in Dealing with the Past*, Amsterdam, 2011.
- van Drie, J. and C. van Boxtel. 'Historical Reasoning: Towards a Framework for Analyzing Students' Reasoning about the Past', *Educational Psychology Review* 20 (2008): 87–110.
- Wertsch, J. 'Specific Narratives and Schematic Narrative Templates', in *Theorizing Historical Consciousness*, ed. P. Seixas, Toronto, ON, 2004, 49–62.
- Zerubavel, E. *Time Maps: Collective Memory and the Social Shape of the Past*, Chicago and London, 2003.

**Stephan Klein** is a lecturer of history teaching and historical culture at ICLON – Leiden University Graduate School of Teaching (the Netherlands). He was a postdoctoral researcher in the programme *Heritage Education, Plurality of Narratives and Shared Historical Knowledge* (2009–14) at Erasmus University Rotterdam and project leader of the valorisation project *Slave Trade in the Atlantic world* ([www.atlanticsslavetrade.eu](http://www.atlanticsslavetrade.eu)). He is advisor and editor of history textbooks for upper secondary education and has published on history teaching, historical thinking, and early modern Dutch republicanism in a.o. *Curriculum Inquiry*, *Teaching History* and the (Dutch) *Journal of History*. His current research interests include colonialism, slavery and maritime travelling.

## CHAPTER 10

## Engaging Experiences of the Second World War

### *Historical Distance in Exhibitions and Educational Resources*

PIETER DE BRUIJN

In 1990 the Imperial War Museum in London opened an interactive exhibition called the 'Blitz experience' about the bombing of Britain's capital city by the German Air Force in the Second World War. The exhibition was one of the first of its kind and consisted of a reconstructed air raid shelter and a bombed London street brought to life with audio-visual effects and a character actor, all in order to recreate what it must have been like to live through this historical event.<sup>1</sup>

This type of museum display, that aims to bring the past nearby and stimulate emotional engagement through an immersive experience, is an important feature of today's museums: a trend that relates to the growing presence of digital media in today's society, which calls for the authentic aura of original artefacts to be supplemented by reconstructed and simulated environments.<sup>2</sup> These strategies are also often used in the educational activities and resources of museums in which they are thought to render the past more tangible and comprehensible to school students.<sup>3</sup>

Cultural heritage may very well help students in achieving a better historical understanding. The embodied learning experiences that cultural heritage practices provide would trigger affective responses and help people to 'enter another world'.<sup>4</sup> Some studies have indicated that immersive types of display stimulate visitors' imagination and can leave them with in-depth knowledge of the history presented.<sup>5</sup> Although some influential works in heritage studies literature have framed the terrain of emotion as a

Notes for this section begin on page 213.