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# Moved by the tears of others: emotion networking in the heritage sphere

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## ABSTRACT

There is no heritage without emotional sharing and clashing. This article explores the involvement of divergent emotions in heritage making by discussing the debate series of Imagine IC and the Reinwardt Academy and zooming in on the commemoration of slavery and imagery of 'Black Pete' in the Netherlands. We introduce 'emotion networking' as a methodology to approach present-day heritage production, aiming for a novel approach to engage with 'the collective'.

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## Introduction

This article presents the search by a group of Dutch heritage professionals and academics for the involvement of divergent interests in heritage. Challenged to more systematically explore the practical and ethical implications of working with these divergent interests, our aim is here to discuss the theoretical focus and the trajectory leading to the application of what we have started to call 'emotion networking'. This idea of emotion networking stems from the experience that the significance of heritage is too often and easily considered as being the result of a shared sense of connection with an item. But feelings of affinity alone do not provide for the valuing of things and practices in everyday life. The same item can also incite feelings of dislike or rejection, reflecting alternative histories and presents, and implying alternative visions of the future. We argue that this divergence does not necessarily disqualify practices or things as items of heritage, not even for those who feel negatively about it. The shared identification of practices as heritage does not require the sharing of the same emotions around them.

Heritage making, with 'emotion networking' in mind, then comes down to an active, continuous and multi-perspective invitation to discuss an item's meanings. Rather than only involving like-minded members of communities, heritage workers must consider everyone with an emotion about a heritage item to be(come) part of an irregular network of emotions – including ourselves as heritage workers.

By advocating such an approach, is not that we deny the relevance of collective engagements. Collectives can bring about solidarity and a sense of pride; they can empower, offer the possibility to claim rights on behalf of the group. However, at the same time they are rigid: collective identities do

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not always match personal identities, solidarity remains confined to one group, and the leaders of the collectives become the 'representatives' of the group (Mc Garry and Jasper 2015, 3). Moreover, it is our conviction that a focus on communities, does not fit metropolitan realities, which are much more fluid and more individualised.

Opting for a different approach, we argue for an active quest for alternative voices (to be confronted with each other in conversation) and the exploration and visualisation of these different voices. This comes down to addressing the different views, interests and emotions existing and arising around a heritage item. Heritage is a hallmark attributed in an interplay of forces involving a diversity of interests and emotions. Heritage is not a given. It comes about whenever it is advanced, rooting in a desire for collectivity and continuity. People turn things into heritage by labelling them as monuments, housing them in museums or putting them on inventories – looking to the future with reference to the past. This process of 'heritage production' or 'heritage work' does not take place without a struggle, and the result is in no way neutral. If only the like-minded are gathered around a heritage item, it is impossible to gain insight in any latent conflicts. Given the fact that heritage professionals are among the participating parties, they cannot operate without a profound understanding of the dynamic character of the abovementioned interplay of forces concerning interests and emotions, and the context-bound nature (time, place, group) of the result. But heritage professionals can do more than that. They can help other people to develop such an understanding. This might also lead to shifts in one's position.

This is what we, the Amsterdam South-East based organisation Imagine IC<sup>1</sup> and the Reinwardt Academy (Amsterdam University of the Arts)<sup>2</sup> have been working on in several settings. Over the course of five events, new methodologies for approaching intangible heritage were investigated in the series 'Intangible Heritage with Pop' (see also Dibbitts and Willemsen 2014).<sup>3,4</sup> Before each event preparatory workshops were offered for master students at the Reinwardt Academy. Each of the 'Pop' events presented a set of daily life practices. They would be considered 'cases' of popular culture, selected by the organisers from the topical programmes of Imagine IC and other heritage organisations in the city.

We first coined the notion of 'emotion-networks', as a term referring to the fickle, emotional constellations surrounding heritage items. We became convinced of the need to develop a method that shows how people – by getting out of their 'bubble', and exchanging thoughts about heritage items in varied company – come to a better understanding of their own role in heritage making processes, can change their positions, and, who knows, even get nearer to each other. We consciously involved people to address, discuss and stage items and practices.

Our work involved not only practitioners of cultural phenomena, but also other stakeholders in those cultural phenomena selected to be discussed and staged at our events. We looked high and low for a range of people to come to the series so that we could compare all of the feelings that might be connected to the cases we presented.

As heritage workers, we consider ourselves also part of the production of these cases' emotion networks – socially, personally and professionally. As Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1998) convincingly argues, heritage is created through metacultural operations that extend museological values and methods, such as collection, documentation, preservation, presentation, evaluation, and interpretation to living persons and their knowledge, practices, artefacts, social worlds and life spaces. Professionals play an active role in this process. Heritage workers transform cultural phenomena into metacultural artefacts by bringing them into the heritage sphere, as is done when items for a National Inventory of Intangible Heritage are considered. Practitioners, performers and artisans of such items, experience their own rituals, traditions, performances and artefacts differently due to the listing of their assets on this inventory. The listing of ICH creates new meanings and experiences of the intangible events thus listed. We are creating new metacultural relationships in the process.

Taking this serious, we feel the need to make our theoretical assumptions explicit, and we also feel the need to explain how we came to this specific focus on emotions. We will now first elaborate on our shared vision on heritage as being the result of negotiating conflicting interests. Next, we will first confront this approach with UNESCO's community based approach to intangible heritage. Finally, we

will discuss how we think this should be translated into practice. We will present two examples from our own professional practice, surrounded by vehemently divergent emotions: the commemoration of the abolition of slavery and the tradition involving Black Pete. These examples were part of a series of experiences that challenged us to further develop this method.

## Heritage as a result of divergent interests

The significance of (intangible) heritage lies in a shared sense of connection with a practice in everyday life. It implies that a collective, or formation, more or less explicitly feels that practice should remain and be transmitted into the future. But feelings of affinity alone do not provide for the valuing of practices in everyday life. Many practices also incite feelings of dislike or rejection, implying an alternative vision of the future. We argue that this divergence does not necessarily disqualify the practice as an item of heritage, not even for those who feel negatively about it. The shared identification of practices as heritage does not require the sharing of the same emotions around them. However, in heritage work, some affective responses are privileged over others, and thus, it can feel exclusionary (Crang and Tolia-Kelly 2010). As a corrective, we believe heritage workers must consider everyone with an emotion about a cultural phenomenon, or about a heritage item, to be part of an irregular network of emotions. Heritage making, with emotion-networking in mind, then comes down to an active, continuous and multi-perspective invitation to discuss an item's meanings. This entails a participatory process (Edwards, Gosden, and Phillips 2006; Minucciani 2013) in which people actually meet and be touched.

Working with networks of divergent interests ensures that heritage making offers more than a feel good exercise between people who already share the same interests. The sort of discussion it encourages includes both emotional similarities *and* meaningful conflicts. Taken together, they should result in more socially engaged heritage practices. Thus, the concept of emotion networking should prove a distinctly useful tool for realising the aims of multi-perspectivity, productively disrupting existing accounts of heritage (Macdonald 2009a). Indeed, in our own work, we observed that involving clashing emotions toward an item of heritage can result in what we call 'emotion shifts'. Such shifts can provide insights into people's motives and meanings, which might come in handy in diverse urban landscapes.

The idea of heritage as the result of conflicting interests is not new. In 1996, Ashworth and Tunbridge wrote in their widely cited work on dissonant heritage: 'All heritage is someone's heritage and therefore logically not someone else's: [it] implies the existence of disinheritance and by extension any creation of heritage from the past disinherits someone completely or partially, actively or potentially' (1996, 21). Since that publication of *Dissonant Heritage* (1996) there has been extensive research on 'difficult heritage' (Macdonald 2009b) and those places, sites and institutions representing the legacy of painful periods (Logan and Reeves 2009). They help us to better understand the complex dynamics of culture. However, what these studies have in common is a strong focus on conflicts between groups of people, even if they agree that heritage formation is a collective process.

As a consequence of migration to and within Europe, society in The Netherlands is characterised by diversity. Europe is 'super-diverse'; contemporary diversity is diversifying (Vertovec 2007). This means that the category of 'migrant' (or 'ethnic minority', 'foreigner', or '*allochtone*'<sup>5</sup>) and the associated socio-cultural characteristics are not as predictable anymore as people may have assumed in the past (Blommaert and Rampton 2011). And every day we must all work at figuring out and negotiating suitable modes of interaction. In cities, the dynamics of living together are particularly intense. Indeed, as Bauman (2007, 92) states, cities may be seen as 'laboratories in which ways and means of living with difference, still to be learned by the residents of an overcrowded planet, are daily invented, put to the test, memorised and assimilated'. In the world of museums, effort has been made in the last decades to address the issue of super diversity, aiming for a more inclusive society (De Wildt 2015; Willekens and De Ruysser 2015). Taking the role of 'agents of change', museums are positioned as 'sites where groups long absent or represented in museum narratives are made visible and audible, where their viewpoints and experiences are brought to light and enter museum's collections of archives and

objects' (Gouriévidis 2014, 10). While consciously embarking on all kinds of participative projects, involving diverse audiences, gradually more and more museum professionals have also started to show a renewed interest in intangible heritage, or 'applied folklore', including ritual repertoires, traditional crafts, traditional stories and folksongs from migrants.

### From a focus on communities to a focus on networks

While there is increased attention to cultural diversity, 'new' urban habits, skills and rituals that are co-shaping our globalised, networked society have a rather marginal place in today's heritage work. The neglect of urban social practices is also a concern of the many programmes developed towards implementing the UNESCO *Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage* (2003). This Convention identifies globalisation as a threat to the world's intangible cultural heritage. It calls upon 'communities' to be curators of their traditions, identifying such traditions and protecting them from disappearing in this globalising world. That said, UNESCO itself has been criticised for its own hegemonic Western discourse. In this case that critique includes the 'thingification' of heritage (Byrne 2009), a discourse that reinforces national narratives and identities (Smith 2006; Meskell 2014; Legêne and Schulte Nordholt 2015). Therefore, the Convention has not been taken as a point of departure for the identification of much of cultural practices that are newly emerging.

The changing world can create feelings of insecurity and make people long for stable communities (Bauman 2001). This may also explain why UNESCO policies speak of 'communities' and consequently, why heritage workers often reach out to spokespeople of clear-cut entities to safeguard their culture and heritage. The identification of intangible heritage of diverse communities in Europe still mostly works with static notions of ethnic and other groups, contributing to their reification, a process also known as 'groupism' (Brubaker 2004). More diversity and inclusiveness in the work has been sought by widening the outreach effort to include ever more different communities. This strategy, however, largely remains limited within the nation state. In the Netherlands, for instance, Frisian woodcarving and professional millers have made it onto the national inventory of intangible heritage next to Afro-Surinamese Koto and Angisa clothing.<sup>6</sup> Most recently, alternative approaches have been developed that attempt to adjust to other social constellations. While writing this article, the urban practice of graffiti has been considered. However, even in this case, heritage is believed to be community-bound. This is unsurprising, since heritage and the emotional investment of people in that heritage can also be understood as a political resource for groups or communities to affirm their communal identity and establish representation and recognition (see for example Byrne et al. 2006; Smith 2006; Smith and Campbell 2016). When we look at the world from a super-diversity perspective though, we also see relations between people that appear less and less stable and clear-cut.

Intangible heritage work deserves a more open approach that can be sensitive to the dynamic, relational character of culture and that reflects the realities of the contemporary city. It needs a conceptual framework that acknowledges this character, focusses on the embodied, sensational dimensions of human relationships and allows for a more dynamic understanding. But above all, it needs an approach that does not favour the relationships between likeminded, or like-feeling, people. If we had invited members of a 'community' to participate in our heritage productions, the undertaking would have remained a feel-good story. Instead, we envisaged that by cross-cutting various formations, networks would be identified. They would consist of individuals from different communities, but they would all be linked to the same practice of daily life, and thus, to an item of heritage. Heritage making is, in our super diverse world, a dynamic process in which various stakeholders are involved, with divergent interests and emotions. The notion of the network helps us to explore and strengthen eventual connections and interdependencies. A focus on networks, in our opinion, can better acknowledge the fact that culture is shaped and reshaped in complex constellations (Dibbitts 2015).

The idea of the network can be helpful not only for acknowledging different and shifting positions towards an item, but also for foregrounding connectivity and interdependency. Networks consist of nodes and links and can expand or implode like constellations. Inspired by Bruno Latour's

actor-network theory (1996) and by Manuel Castells' trilogy *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture* (1996), in recent decades the field of network studies has developed, characterising individual actors, groups, and things as nodes, and their relationships or interactions as links or ties. These ideas should be fruitful for heritage work. Envisaging heritage as a networking exercise invites participants to better recognise different positions and kinds of relationships (including our own, as 'professionals'). It encourages heritage workers to involve, or get involved in, ever new nodes and to discover and produce multiple ties. As Perla Innocenti has shown in her recent research on cultural networks in transnational heritage collaborations, networks can be shaped, weakened and strengthened (Innocenti 2015, 5). By acknowledging these potentialities, we can aim for a better understanding of our own roles and possible impact on heritage making.

### From a focus on divergent interests to a focus on divergent emotions

Heritage not only encompasses sites, objects, and practices, but also the feelings we might have about them. Together they form the situational affective context of heritage. It is this situational affective context of heritage that we expect emotion networking to help us explore, make practical, and further develop. Massumi (2002) differentiates between the emotional and the affective and sees the affective as a non-conscious and *pre-personal* dimension of feeling that is experienced as a bodily sensation that is difficult to put into words. For him, the emotional refers to the projection or display of feelings, and the social dimension of feeling. Scholars such as Ahmed (2004) and Wetherell (2012) however, argue that the interplay between affect and emotions is more complex: 'An affective practice is a figuration where body possibilities and routines become recruited and or entangled together with meaning-making and with other social and material figurations' (Wetherell 2012, 19). Thus, culture, representation or meaning making is not only involved when affect becomes emotion, but the moment of being affected is equally the moment of the social and the cultural.

Within heritage and museum studies, a large body of literature engaged with the emotional responses and interactions with heritage – mainly at heritage sites and in museums (see for example Bagnall 2003; Smith 2006, 2011; Gregory and Witcomb 2007; Crang and Tolia-Kelly 2010; Bennett 2012; Witcomb 2013; Schorch 2014, 2015; Knudsen and Stage 2015; Waterton, Watson, and Schorch 2017). In these subjective responses emotion, cognition and the construction of meaning is inseparably expressed. Smith's research demonstrates that empathy is a recurring emotion in visitor's responses (Smith and Campbell 2016). And although there has been a sustained critique that history, power and violence shape the meanings and effects of empathy within neo-liberal discourse (Pedwell 2013), as heritage workers we are interested in the conscious, cognitive processes involved in heritage production since the capacity to empathise is generally at the forefront of social and political change (Krznicaric 2014). In search of a truly inclusive method, we build on Smith and Campbell's argument that it is key to understand empathy in relation to imagination, because 'emotions can be used to destabilise received narratives and understandings of history, so that great engagement with hidden or marginalised histories and contemporary group sympathy may occur' (Smith and Campbell 2016, 454).<sup>7</sup>

Wekker (2016) makes the point that people have to become more conscious of the fact that, below the level of consciousness, they are subject to 'automatic' identification patterns (that she also calls 'lazy identifications patterns', after Morrison [1992]). She continues by pointing out that 'we cannot afford to leave those identifications' to just happen there. She urges us to become conscious of the fact that they tend to do just that, in order for us to 'become able to choose whom we want to identify with' and 'start occupying different positionings than we usually occupy' (Wekker 2016, 170). Wekker here also refers to Nussbaum (2010), who suggests that we benefit from the enlarged and varied imagination that literature, films and other products offer. We would like to take this further and suggest that heritage productions can afford this enlarged imagination. We feel that it is only by this imagination, by the consciousness of a variety of identification options, that people can foster active debates and critique existing sensory relations between practices, objects and individuals (see also Edwards, Gosden, and Phillips 2006). Spaces of heritage can provide a setting for these interactions. Emma Waterton's lecture



at the final episode of the debate series proposed to understand spaces of heritage as *cosmopolitan canopies* (see also Anderson 2011; Waterton, Watson, and Schorch 2017), in which people whose reference point often remains their own social class or ethnic group, a chance to encounter others. To demonstrate this point, the next section of this article will elaborate on two cases: the commemoration of the abolition of slavery and the imagery practices of Black Pete.

### Emotion networking in practice: two postcolonial cases

The 'Intangible Heritage with Pop' series was designed in 2012, when the Netherlands ratified the UNESCO Convention on intangible heritage. Imagine IC was its initiator and approached the Reinwardt Academy to come on board. Imagine IC is based in the diverse Amsterdam Southeast area. Neither the everyday cultural dynamics nor the reality of heritage work in this part of the metropole reflect the ideas and suggested methods of the Convention. As the organisers, we therefore chose to follow Alivizatou (2012), and explicitly study and put into practice the notion that globalisation can be considered a stimulus for cross-cultural innovation and fertilisation. We thought the diverse character of the city required a new methodological approach to overcome certain essentialised perceptions of cultural practice and communities. Dibbitts and Willemsen (2014) have envisaged that communal daily life should determine the concept of intangible cultural heritage rather than the reverse.

The first 'Pop' event staged a commemoration of the 150 anniversary of the abolition of the nation's involvement in slavery. The Amsterdam South-East based heritage organisation Imagine IC, together with the Reinwardt Academy, dedicated the first event in their joint 'Intangible Heritage with Pop' series to analyse a number of commemorative practices. At that first event the well-known jazz singer Denise Jannah was invited. Her fame kick-started the series; being of Surinamese descent, she was well-versed in the commemoration of the history of slavery. The invitation extended to her – an artist, but basically participating as a commemorator – entailed the request to sing a set of songs that she felt appropriate for the occasion. Balancing between her own choices and the public profile of the event, she rendered Maya Angelou's poem *Still I Rise* and Abel Meeropol's *Strange Fruit*. The praise Jannah received from the audience was overwhelming. The chair of the event, Joseph Jordan, thanked her by admitting: 'I was moved to tears'. He was not the only one, but not everyone was as moved. The songs affected individual members of the audience in different ways and to various extents. Audience members' pasts, personal histories, environments and beliefs shaped how they had heard the songs. However, even the ones who were not moved as far as to tears were touched by those who were. Emotions towards the songs, and what they referred to, seemed to circulate among the audience members almost as if they were something a person could tap into. For the organisers of the event, who are also the authors of this article, this was exactly what the event was all about: it was to find out about heritage production by the sharing of emotions, the encounter of different emotions and the subsequent occurrence or bringing about of emotional shifts.

The tremendous release of emotion did not only happen in response to Denise Jannah's singing. At that same event, Professor Saidiya Hartman from Columbia University, specialising in African American literature and history, was invited to speak about stories, emotions and the meaning of commemorative performances of slavery (Dibbitts and Willemsen 2014). She read excerpts from her book *Lose Your Mother* (2008). In it, she tried to fill in the blanks of history and archives in fiction by presenting personal histories of the enslaved. Her voice and diction were experienced as mesmerising. As she finished, someone in the audience asked if the reading was an act of commemoration. Saidiya Hartman's emotional involvement became explicit when she shouted 'No!' Hartman was not ready for a commemoration as long as the struggle in its aftermath was still not over. Then there was another reaction from the audience. A gentleman agreed that the stories of the enslaved must have been unspeakably horrible, but he wanted to know, 'where in Saidiya's account was the story of the master'. The shock could be felt across the room. Professor Gloria Wekker, who was there, reported (2016, 169): 'Several people in the room gasp, looking at each other, rolling their eyes. Jennifer Tosch, a Surinamese African-American ex-student and founder of Black Heritage Tours in Amsterdam,

who is sitting close to me, whispers, “This is not good”. I am livid and start explaining to Saidiya why I find the question highly inappropriate and that she now gets a first-hand exposure to what we are up against here.

‘Zwarte Piet’ (Black Pete) was another post-colonial case covered in the ‘Pop’ series that evoked many strong emotions. A white St. Nicholas and Black Pete are the main characters in the Dutch annual present-giving Sinterklaas festival (see also Wheeler and Rosenthal 2005, 213–229; Rodenberg and Wagenaar 2016). Since 2015, the Sinterklaas ritual has been on the national inventory of intangible cultural heritage in The Netherlands. The companion of Sinterklaas (St. Nicholas), Zwarte Piet, makes the festival highly contested since his character involves the practice of blackface. Different formations have been organised on the street and in social media. For example, on Facebook opponents can gather on a page called ‘Zwarte Piet is Racisme’ (Black Pete is racism) or ‘Zwarte Piet Niet’ (No Black Pete) while proponents tend to organise on a page named ‘Zwarte Piet Moet Blijven’ (Black Pete has to stay) and ‘Pietitie’ (‘Pete-ition’, a petition to save Piet). Although people are often grouped as ‘pro’ or ‘contra’ Black Pete, Rodenberg and Wagenaar (2016) argue that there are as many as eight heritage narratives concerning the tradition. In November and December, when Sinterklaas is said to visit the country with his companion, there are various rallies and demonstrations organised for and against Zwarte Piet. Zwarte Piet is an emotionally charged item for both formations. The opponents argue that the Sinterklaas festival is an insult to black heritage in The Netherlands, undercutting a history of pain and suffering. Meanwhile proponents consider Zwarte Piet ‘just’ an aspect of the joyful heritage of the Sinterklaas festival; they don’t see any wrongdoing in the practice of blackface and deny its relation to the history of slavery. The practice of Zwarte Piet evokes loud and clearly differing emotions, but they are nevertheless hardly ever brought together in concert.

Imagine IC hosts ‘participatory collecting’ events in which project staffers engage both proponents and opponents of historical and contemporary issues particularly topical to Amsterdam Southeast. Zwarte Piet is just such a cultural phenomenon, and so items associated with it are presented in the Imagine IC neighbourhood archive ‘Bijlmer Meer’.<sup>8</sup> Included in the archival collection is a set of seasonal advertisement posters of De Bijenkorf, a luxury department store chain. The set was brought into the collection by the Imagine IC landlord, an Amsterdam public housing company. This company had bought a building from De Bijenkorf, which had previously held its headquarters there. These posters, which had been found in the attic of this building, showed many strongly stereotypical images of Zwarte Piet, with golden earrings and thick red lips. As part of an assignment for a ‘participatory collecting’ class led by Arjen Kok of the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands, Reinwardt Academy masters students were to select an artefact that would best invite the widest range of stakes and emotions, in this case, towards Black Pete. Interestingly, this international group of students decided to select the poster that seemed the least stereotypical to their eyes: A Pete who looks like a real person, and who – is he a man or a woman? – is cooking with Bijenkorf utensils instead of doing the silly roof-climbing Petes often seem to do. The students felt that this character would better allow for the negotiating of meaning and getting affected than a poster that makes it easy on people to stay in their emotional trenches. Now that poster is accessible to the public, as part of the neighbourhood archive presented in the venue of the Amsterdam Public Library that they share with Imagine IC as their house.

In the showcase above the archival drawer containing the Black Pete poster hangs a hoodie. It was donated to the collection by poet and activist Kno’ledge Cesare, who lives in Southeast. Cesare wore that hoodie during a protest against Zwarte Piet. The chest of the hoodie says: ‘Zwarte Piet is racism’. The Imagine IC exhibition host at the library has reported that this hoodie and its message have evoked strong reactions. Perhaps because it is immediately visible from the library counter, it stirs more reactions than the poster. In any case, people show interest and support, but also anger. Upon the host’s invitation, visitors sometimes share their feelings with the host and with others around them. Some have even asked for the article of clothing to be removed. All have suggested they are concerned about the representation of their local history. Those who are pro-Zwarte Piet and those



who are anti-Zwarte Piet are both heavily involved in the production of heritage in the Netherlands, because they care deeply about perceptions of Dutch traditions and rituals.

Depicting the Zwarte Piet debate in terms of pro- and anti- may be an oversimplification. There is large grey area consisting of people who support a slow transformation of Zwarte Piet; for instance, normalising a Zwarte Piet with only chimney smears on his face or even a Rainbow-coloured Pete. This simplification might also neglect people who are concerned less about the item, because they feel there are other, more urgent matters to address. Heritage curators must consider this larger range of emotional engagements, because people not only engage differently with heritage but also themselves engender varying levels of engagement (Smith and Campbell 2016). During a participatory heritage collection meeting at Imagine IC, a discussion emerged among the opponents of Black Pete. First, second and third generation migrants were discussing the practice of blackface when the youngest generation began expressing their anger towards their elders. They asked, 'Why didn't you do something, say something? Why didn't you stand up for yourselves, and against this racist tradition?' The older generation reacted by explaining that they felt proper housing, job security and health care were the problems they had to tackle first. Moreover, they still felt they were guests in a new country. Today's migrant youth were born and raised in this country. Thus, their emotional involvement with the cultural heritage of the Netherlands can differ from and be stronger than that of their parents and grandparents. Ashworth, Graham and Tunbridge noted that 'the inevitable outcome is that conflicts of interest are an inseparable accompaniment to heritage as practice and process (...) open to constant revision and change' (2007, 2–3). This emotional encounter illustrates that conflicts of interests are not only between different 'communities', but are part of internal negotiations as well. The fact that the youngest generation feels different than their parents and grandparents exemplifies that their imagination of Dutch society differs.

### Working towards emotion shifts

We are all products of our pasts and have learned from them how to feel about the world and the things in it. Balkenhol (2015, 2016), who researched the commemoration of the abolition of slavery in the Netherlands, argued at one of the 'Pop' events that perhaps emotions themselves should be recognised as a form of cultural heritage. That recognition may help people admit that not only heritage items, but also their feelings around them are inherited. They are transmitted from the past, and they are something we continue to 'do' in the present and project into the future. If emotions can be considered part of a heritage, then perhaps we can also think about how they endure and change like the other elements of the various cultural repertoires we inherit, foster and transmit.

Should heritage workers limit themselves to organising and facilitating emotional events, or should they take a more activist approach? Over the course of the 'Pop' programme this question was addressed time and again in relation to the history of slavery of The Netherlands. According to Historian van Stipriaan (2015a), we have to aim at changing the 'mental' heritage of The Netherlands (see also van Stipriaan 2015b). In his view, it is the responsibility of museum professionals to raise awareness for the both conscious and unconscious collective memory. As long as the atrocities of Dutch colonialism continue to go unacknowledged in the general public, much like the emotions of Afro-Dutch citizens, a shared future and national heritage in which all are recognised and represented remains far away. But how do we realise these aims in heritage work?

We believe emotion-networking in heritage spaces can be a tool in imagining and producing a more inclusive future society. It will generate opportunities for physical encounters among people who do not converse regularly or perhaps at all, otherwise. We believe the physicality of being among 'others' has a deeper impact than for example virtual encounters, because emotions are embodied, sensorial and social practices. Smith's study of visitor's responses to heritage sites and museums likewise argued that emotions, and in particular empathy, was 'triggered not only in response to the content of the tours, exhibitions or interpretive material, but from a sense of physically being in place' (Smith and Campbell 2016, 446). These physical encounters among differently minded people offer important

moments. Each encounter among people with different backgrounds, opinions and emotions can be a step towards emotion shifts. These networks may not converge on their own. To make sure that they have every opportunity to do so, we suggest that heritage workers keep open an arena for discussion and coordinate an active agenda. They should not only engage those who already appear interested, but also aim to interest a widening circle of people with their own diverging emotions. Heritage workers must continue to unearth ways to keep the discussion, documentation and presentation of practices of everyday life evolving. And they must commit to generating understanding across networks and encourage shifts in emotions, shift that make people see and feel the everyday in the way others do (too), in order to not only make heritage meaningful, but also the connections between those who produce its meaning.

## Conclusion

In this article we have advocated 'emotion networking' as a methodology of present-day heritage production. We see it as the best way to show how people can connect not only to a heritage item, but also to each other. We believe it provides an alternative to the concept and methodology of 'community' in the heritage field. That is, we realised heritage workers needed to take care to accommodate irregular and unpredictable groups of people and the conflicting emotions they could bring to a cultural artefact or practice.

Over the course of the 'Intangible Heritage with Pop' series, we shifted our methodological orientation from communities to 'networks'. This concept is better suited to the collection, presentation and meaning-making of the intangible cultural heritage of a super-diverse European metropole, because networks are not solidly 'of' items of intangible heritage, like (affective) communities or formations are often thought to be. Rather networks link items to a variety of stakes that are expressed by various emotions. They are sometimes stirred by the items themselves, but other times they are stirred by other people's emotions. Emotion-networking shifts the focus of heritage work from like-minded and like-feeling groups to differently-feeling individuals. It creates a space of conscious reflection on emotions themselves and their effects on meaning-making. We have tried to ensure that the process of meaning-making of heritage is more than a celebration of mutual recognition so that it might transcend and connect various groups. By networking emotions, we aspire to provide a multi-perspective heritage production strategy.

As part of the 'Pop' series we staged performances from everyday life before an audience from different walks of life; it was mixed both culturally and professionally. Out of that series, in this chapter we chose to present the imagery of Black Pete and the commemoration of the abolition of slavery in The Netherlands. We used them to demonstrate how we consider divergent emotions to be key factors in networks. People share heritage when they share emotions surrounding a cultural item or practice. Physical encounters in museums, libraries and other such spaces create a sense of closeness that can result in the sharing, understanding or even adopting of other's emotions and opinions. A focus on emotion networking can make these moments of exposure to emotional similarities and differences fruitful, enabling real social engagement in the heritage sphere.

## Notes

1. Imagine IC pioneers the heritage of our present lives together. The organisation embarks on urban voyages of discovery to document everyday life in today's constantly changing metropole. It does so, in and from Amsterdam Southeast, an area where large groups of Surinamese were housed from the 1980s and ever new people arrive even today. For more information, see [www.imagineic.nl](http://www.imagineic.nl).
2. The Reinwardt Academy, part of the Amsterdam University of the Arts, offers a BA-programme in cultural heritage, a MA-programme in museology and has a professorship on cultural heritage. For more information, see [www.ahk.nl/en/reinwardt/](http://www.ahk.nl/en/reinwardt/).
3. Filmic and written reports of the events of the 'Pop' series, can be found via [www.imagineic.nl/verkenningen/](http://www.imagineic.nl/verkenningen/).
4. 'Intangible Heritage with Pop' was co-funded by the Mondriaan Fund.

5. *Allochtone* is the term most often used to describe first- or second-generation Dutch citizens with immigrant backgrounds. For an elaborate explanation of the *allochtone/autochtone* conceptualisation, see Geschiere (2009).
6. <https://immaterieelerfgoed.nl/tradities>.
7. For a more on the importance of 'imagination' in relation to heritage and emotions see Landsberg (2004) and Keightley and Pickering (2012).
8. <https://www.imagineic.nl/pagina/bijlmer-meer>.

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No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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