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*The role of narrative and metaphor*

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# **NARRATIVE AND METAPHOR IN EDUCATION**

**LOOK BOTH WAYS**

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## Multiperspectivity in the History Classroom: The Role of Narrative and Metaphors

Multiperspectivity is a key concept when teaching historical thinking and reasoning. The term *multiperspectivity* embodies a metaphor of “looking through”; it supposes that a subject performs this act “through” some kind of medium and that there is always something that is “looked” upon. Within history, perspectives are conceptual and cognitive in nature because, by definition, the past cannot be seen or experienced directly (Chapman, 2011). As a consequence, three forms of historical perspective can be discerned: (a) the perspectives of agents in the past and how they perceived and registered the world they lived in (Huijgen, van Boxtel, van der Grift, & Holthuis, 2017), (b) the perspectives of historians who think and write about the past, and (c) how the past and history are presently perceived (in our case) by students and teachers (Wansink, 2017). The narratives of agents, who articulate their experiences and their interpretations of events (first form of perspectivity), blend into the more overarching narratives constructed by historians (second form of perspectivity), who themselves are part of the time in which they live (third form of perspectivity). To use another metaphor, subjects in the past are like blinded soldiers on a battlefield, whereas historians are like generals reenacting their old battles with the benefit of hindsight. Each historian constructs his or her own historical narrative by asking particular questions, the selection of particular sources and an emphasis on particular dimensions (e.g. social or cultural) or scale (e.g. national or global). Multiperspectivity implies the admission of perspectives of different historical actors, historians or contemporaries and as a consequence the admission of possible alternative narratives – each with their own narrational voices and perspectives (Munslow, 2016).

One goal of history education is learning to identify different perspectives and to contextualize these perspectives about the past. By doing so, students learn that a historical narrative is not a “given,” but a construct about the past. Stradling (2003) stressed the necessity to relate and to compare different perspectives to each other and to enable a deeper understanding of historical relationships between nations, majorities, and minorities in and outside national boundaries. He argued that multiperspectivity can enhance historical thinking and promote democratic citizenship. Nevertheless, this specific element of history is

difficult for students to master; this may be the result of how narratives of the past are presented in history textbooks (Lee & Scammell, 2009).

In history textbooks and in other texts used in the classroom, history is presented in the form of a single narrative. To teachers and students, these texts are the main source of information (Foster, 2011). In a narrative, the subject or agents act upon a “plot” of (chrono)logically connected events (Rigney, 2012). For example, the narrative of Russia’s past may be characterized by the expulsion of foreign invaders (Wertsch, 2012). Interpretation and description are inextricably interlinked in these narratives.

In this contribution, we focus on historical narratives in Dutch history education. The Dutch history curriculum demands both the teaching of overview knowledge that enables students to situate phenomena and acts of people in the context of time, historical location, long-term developments or particular events, and, on the other hand, the teaching of historical thinking and reasoning, including multiple perspectives and critical examination of historical representations (Wansink, 2017).

It was Hayden White (1973) who first emphasized the narrative character of history. Our focus is in particular on narratives of the national past. Internationally, narratives of the national past are a main issue in history education research (Grever & Van der Vlies, 2017). This research mainly centers on the substantive elements of the narratives such as agency, the attribution of historical significance, and the inclusion and exclusion of particular perspectives. Hammack (2015) argued that collective identities are supported by shared narratives of the past. These narratives provide a sense of meaning and coherence but exclude others from these narratives. When the national past is at stake, people often overlook different perspectives and sometimes neglect to critically analyze the past (Repoussi & Tutiaux-Guillon, 2010). A different perspective or critical stance could lead to competing discourses about who should be considered a “true” citizen of the state, for example, minority groups demanding to be included in the historical discourse.

A pivotal component in many narratives is the use of metaphor. Since Lakoff and Johnson (1980), it is clear that metaphors play a central role in how we understand the world, including its history. Hanne (2014) formulated it succinctly: “metaphor draws the audience into viewing the situation through the conceptual lens proposed by the person who utters it” (p. 24). A narrative arranges elements into a story, whereas a metaphor potentially fills a gap

in knowledge or interpretation by focusing on particular attributes of an issue or event (Bougher, 2014). Burgers, Konijn, and Steen (2016) argued that figurative language such as metaphors contains both linguistic and conceptual content and operates as a framing device. Summarizing 10 years of framing research, Borah (2011) wrote that framing “highlights some aspects of reality while excluding other elements, which might lead individuals to interpret issues differently” (p. 248). Bougher (2014) clarified that the use of metaphor is also a heuristic and not just a framing device. This heuristic element in a metaphor may give meaning to bits of information by relying on existing knowledge structures in other domains, but it may also ignore or exclude meaning. As framing devices, metaphors articulate this inclusive and exclusive interpretative element (Chong & Druckman, 2007).

Multiperspectivity can stem not only from a variety of narratives, but also from a variety of metaphors. A metaphor can make a perspective more persuasive, because it evokes the familiar and often highlights certain aspects while downplaying others. For example, the “dark” Middle Ages, the USA as a “melting pot” or the “collapse” of the economy. Therefore, it may be fruitful to analyze narratives and metaphors in history texts and to show how these together frame the presented perspectives. This also holds for classroom practices. In this study, we analyzed narratives and metaphors of the Dutch national past presented in textbooks, other classroom materials and student products, to understand the narratives with which students are presented and the narratives they construct themselves. To determine the presence of either multiperspectivity or a more closed, single narrative, we focused on an important episode in the history of the Netherlands, *The Netherlands during World War II* (1940–1945), and constructed the following research questions.

1. To what extent are the narratives of the Netherlands during World War II presented in a multiperspectival way in the history classroom?
2. What are the features of metaphorical language in the perspectives of these narratives?

## **Method**

To answer our research questions, we conducted a case study wherein we analyzed the narratives that one teacher used and constructed in history lessons about the Netherlands during WWII. This topic is part of the compulsory secondary school program and is treated as ‘sensitive’ history because of issues such as the conflation with the Israel–Palestine

conflict or the “Dutch paradox”: the Netherlands enjoy a long-standing reputation of tolerance, yet a high percentage of Dutch Jews were victims of the Holocaust (Hondius, 2010).

### **Participants**

Participants in this case study were one history teacher and her class. The teacher, “Nell”, earned her master’s degree in history in 1999, the subject of which concerned the NSB (National Socialist Movement in the Netherlands). Nell has been a certified history teacher since 2000. The students (age 16–17; 12 girls, 10 boys) were in their final year of upper secondary education, 11th grade (in Dutch: Havo 5). The school is located in the middle of the Netherlands in a more than average ethnically homogeneous and prosperous socioeconomic area. Compared to other schools in the Netherlands, this school performs on an average level. Both teacher and students gave active consent to participate in this study.

### **Overview of the Lessons**

As main goal for the lessons, Nell wanted her students to learn what the Nazi occupation meant to “average Dutch citizens.” She wanted to encourage students to think about accommodation, resistance, and collaboration and the consequences thereof in a way that was meaningful to the students. She wanted students to learn that it is quite easy in hindsight to judge the choices made by people who lived during WWII and to categorize them as “right” or “wrong.” Nell assumed that students often engage in dichotomous thinking (e.g., about discrimination or racism), and she hoped that her teaching would help students to understand nuance. Nell’s preferred teaching strategy is engaging students in whole-class discussion combined with work in small groups. To start, Nell assumed that the students would know a lot about the Occupation and WWII. Before teaching about the Netherlands during WWII, Nell taught two lessons about the rise of fascism and Nazism in Europe. The European Holocaust and the war theaters were topics in two lessons that followed.

In the first lesson, Nell provided an overview of what to expect. She followed up with a short family anecdote and asked students to research how the war years were remembered in their families. After exploring students’ prior knowledge (i.e., history lessons taught in the 9th grade, fieldtrips to the Overloon War Museum), she briefly summarized the features and causes of fascism and Nazism. She discussed the bombardment of Rotterdam, the flight of Queen Wilhelmina to London, and why the Dutch army was ill-prepared. She explained that

the lessons focused on how “ordinary Dutch citizens” lived through the war years. She showed the video *Histoclip*, which presents an overview of the Netherlands during WWII, and ended with why Dutch citizens commemorate WWII on May 4th and 5th. This gave Nell the opportunity to ask if and why students themselves participate in the National Remembrance and whether descendants of German soldiers should be present. Some students felt that Germans were not collectively guilty – certainly not their descendants. After being introduced to the concepts of resistance, collaboration, and accommodation, students worked in pairs on the textbook assignment *Historical Thinking “Right” or “Wrong” during WWII*. The last minutes of the lesson were spent discussing what it meant to be a student during WWII.

The second lesson started with a summary of dates, names, the fate of the Dutch Jewish community, and the concepts collaboration, resistance, and accommodation. Nell recounted her own family’s story and explored the stories of the students’ families. She instructed students to discuss their findings in small groups. After these group discussions, Nell prompted students to report their family stories. This segment in the lesson was followed by a discussion on the reliability of oral testimonies. Next, Nell debriefed students on the *Historical Thinking* assignment. The overall conclusion of the assignment was that actively helping the Nazis was considered “wrong.” To contrast this conclusion, Nell read aloud an excerpt from an autobiographical novel, in which the author detailed his life as a child of Nazi collaborators in the Netherlands’ post-WWII era. Nell asked if blaming children for the deeds of their parents was justified and how many generations it takes to normalize relations. Students learned that after the war resentment against collaborators led to their children becoming outcasts. The lesson ended with students writing letters to fellow students abroad about the Netherlands during WWII. During both lessons, students actively participated in classroom conversation and group work.

## **Data**

We collected the following data: (a) lesson materials, including the textbook in use; (b) student results from a writing task; (c) videotaped recordings of the lessons; and (d) two interviews with the teacher.

The teacher used a paragraph (982 words) from the textbook *MeMo: Geschiedenis voor de bovenbouw HAVO* [History for upper levels of HAVO] (2011), which is widely used in Dutch upper-secondary education. The other teaching materials, which were chosen by the teacher, included a film clip about the Netherlands during WWII (1,408 transcribed words) (Teleac, 2012) and an excerpt (377 words) from *Potgieter Lane 7: A Recollection* (van der Zee, 1997), an autobiographical novel by a well-known Dutch journalist Sytze van der Zee. Born in 1939, he was the son of active national socialists. We videotaped the two lessons (60 min each) to see whether the teacher and/or students provided alternative perspectives. We transcribed verbatim and analyzed the teacher's instructions and whole-class discussion. At the end of the two lessons, Nell asked students to write a fictitious letter to Danish students (as part of a fictitious exchange program), in which they spent 20 min answering the question "What would you tell him or her about the Netherlands during WWII?" Twenty-two students handed in their letters, the lengths of which varied between four and 22 sentences ( $M = 10.8$ ; boys = 9.9, girls = 11.5).

A semistructured interview with the teacher, conducted the day before the start of the lessons, provided contextual information. A second interview was conducted two weeks after the lessons in order to reflect on the given lessons.

## **Analysis**

To answer our first research question, we analyzed the narratives offered in *MeMo*, in the film clip, in the excerpt from the novel, and in the student letters. All texts were first coded on sentence level. We coded all sentences on five aspects that could inform us about the presence of multiple perspectives: historical agency, such as individuals, collectives, or corporate bodies (Peck, Poyntz, & Seixas, 2011); dates; historical events; geographical scale (van Boxtel & van Drie, 2012); and historiographical dimensions, such as the military-political, socioeconomic, cultural, or religious dimensions (Grever & van Boxtel, 2014). Interrater reliability was good—varied between .61 (date) and .90 (agency; Cohen's Kappa). In addition to this sentential analysis, we searched for references to historiographical interpretations to see if the texts considered different historical interpretations of particular events, persons, or developments, for example, how students interpreted the flight of Queen Wilhelmina from the Netherlands to Great Britain at the beginning of WWII. The video



recordings of the lessons were used to investigate whether the teacher and/or students introduced perspectives that were not yet present in the lesson materials.

To answer our second research question, we analyzed the metaphors in all materials using the Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIPVU; Steen, Dorst, Herrmann, Kaal, & Krennmayr, 2010), but we only used it to identify metaphor-related verbs and substantives. Both word classes are frequently used in academic and informative texts (Pasma, 2011). We left out function words such as particles and prepositions, which are often used metaphorically, because they elucidate the metaphoricity of our language system rather than the specific metaphorical representation of historical topics. To identify potential metaphoricity, we compared the meaning of the verbs and substantives in context with the basic meaning in Dutch – found using the online Van Dale dictionary (Pasma, 2011). For example, in Dutch, the first meaning of the verb *onderduiken*, or to go underground (unfortunately, the allusion to water, an important aspect of Dutch culture, is lost in translation), is “to dive under water”; it also has a second figurative meaning: “to go into hiding to avoid certain measures” or “to disappear out of public life.” Therefore, we consider *onderduiken* as a metaphor-related verb. Interrater reliability Cohen’s Kappa on 15% of all 494 sentences was .81 (almost perfect). After we decided upon the possible metaphoricity, we analyzed how these words contributed to the narrative. In addition to identifying metaphor-related verbs and substantives, we looked for direct metaphors (signaled by a simile flag such as “as/like”) as defined by Krennmayr (2011) (as cited in Deignan, Littlemore, & Semino, 2013, p. 21). Comparisons announced by the term *like* may be more easily detected since, in a way, readers are told to expect a metaphor. The use of a simile may have consequences for how open an author is in a text regarding the underlying framing provided by such metaphors (Burgers et al., 2016; Pasma, 2011).

## Findings

First, we present the results with regard to the narratives and metaphors presented to the students. Second, we discuss to what extent multiperspectivity is present in these narratives. Finally, we present the outcomes in the texts written by the students after the lessons.

### **Narratives: Actors, Dates, Events, Scale, and Dimensions**

What are the building blocks of the narratives presented to the students? With respect to individual persons, the textbook *MeMo* mentions only a few historical actors. Mussert, the leader of the Dutch national socialist party, and Seyss-Inquart, the highest Nazi official in the Netherlands, were mentioned alongside Hitler. A special section highlighted Cleveringa, a Dutch professor who publicly protested the Nazis' anti-Jewish measures in the early months of the occupation. In the assignment *Historical Thinking*, only Queen Wilhelmina was mentioned as historical actor. In the excerpt from the novel, the children of Nazi collaborators and their antagonists were the main actors.

In contrast to the limited references to historical persons in *MeMo*, a wide array of collectives was presented as historical actors such as Dutch males, Dutch Jews and Germans in *MeMo*. Not the Nazis but the Germans were mentioned as the occupiers. The first as collective were only mentioned twice in *MeMo*. The *Histoclip* added the groups who went on strike in February 1941 in Amsterdam against the deportation of the Jewish community, and specified the Allied forces who helped liberate the Netherlands. Both resistance groups and collaborators were seen as the exception. In all texts (excluding the excerpt from the novel), special attention is paid to Dutch Jews. *MeMo* and the *Histoclip* both describe the Jewish community as homogeneous and as living for the most part in Amsterdam. The two sources also detail the fate of Dutch Jews; they were persecuted by Nazis with the help of a small minority of collaborators, who were hindered by an even smaller group of resistance fighters.

*MeMo* provides few dates and events and restricts the time frame from the start of the Nazi invasion in May 1940 to the liberation of Europe by the Allied forces in May 1945. *MeMo* also gives the date of Cleveringa's speech, the date of the February strike in 1941, and the year when Jews were forced to identify themselves by wearing a yellow badge in public (1943). The *Histoclip* referenced the start of WWII in 1939, the February strike in 1941, the year 1943 when all able-bodied men submitted to labor duty in Germany, the start of the Allied liberation of the southern part of the Netherlands in 1944, and the air lifts to relieve the famine-stricken population in the western parts of the Netherlands in April 1945.

Causes and consequences played a minor role in the texts and were depicted as having been generated by the occupiers. For example, *MeMo* mentions explicitly the political, economic, and cultural consequences of the Nazi regime—with an emphasis on the consequences of the persecution of the Jews.

In all texts, the geographical scale is restricted to the territory of the Netherlands. How the Netherlands was affected by broad European military operations is only hinted at by an allusion to the liberation of the southern part of the Netherlands in *MeMo* and in the *Histoclip*.

The military–political dimension dominated the texts with the exception of the excerpt from the novel. The socioeconomic and cultural dimensions in *MeMo* are always subordinated to the military–political dimension. Examples of the first two dimensions are the forced labor in Germany and the consequences of warfare during the last winter. In *MeMo*, the cultural dimension was only reported via Cleveringa’s speech at the University of Leiden, at which time students sang the national anthem in support of him. *MeMo* distinctly notes the national socialists’ policy on cultural affairs, such as restricting the freedom of the press. The *Histoclip* also references the socioeconomic dimension by recounting the forced labor, the February strike, and the effects of the railway strike and the Hunger Winter.

Cleveringa’s speech (*MeMo*), the flight of Queen Wilhelmina (*Histoclip*), the February strike (*MeMo & Histoclip*), or the Hunger Winter (*Histoclip*) can each be seen as a “mini narrative.” These mini narratives concentrate on the loss of freedom and the persecution of Dutch Jews and are woven into the encompassing narrative of the Netherlands during WWII. Two stories opposed this narrative: (a) the classroom conversation about Remembrance Day and the presence of descendants of German soldiers and (b) the excerpt from the novel read aloud about the children of supporters of the national socialist movement.

In both *MeMo* and the *Histoclip*, the concepts of accommodation and collaboration explicitly draw the audience’s attention to societal processes during the war. The introduction of the concept of accommodation in *MeMo* can be seen as the result of a historiographical debate in the Netherlands. In the classroom debate, the long standing moral–judicial dichotomy of “right” [goed] and “wrong” [fout] as a guideline to describe the history of the Netherlands during WWII was supplemented by the concepts of accommodation, collaboration, and resistance (Blom, 2007). All three are metaphorical terms for abstract concepts. Each is derived from a different domain. “Accommodation” suggests “giving space to” another as if to give room for the other and is congruent with the “occupation” metaphor. Both “collaboration” and “resistance” were already in use during the war years. “Collaboration”

referred to the older meaning of “working alongside another” but is now used in the context of active cooperation with the enemy, whereas “resistance” is a term derived from physics. It seems that these concepts are central to the narrative told in *MeMo*. Still, the right–wrong dichotomy is emphasized in the introductory text: Cleveringa’s stance against the *Ariërverklaring* [Aryan Declaration] represents the “right” moral guideline. Both Mussert and Cleveringa stood as opposing figures of moral behavior compared to the passive population that went along with situation. Although the two men did not figure in the other texts, the right–wrong dichotomy was still present in both the *Histoclip* and the assignment *Historical Thinking*, whereas the excerpt from the novel could be seen as a counterpoint to this dichotomy.

To summarize, the representation of events and developments can be seen as chronological mini narratives confined to the territory of the Netherlands, but they all contribute to the overarching narrative of the Occupation. This overarching narrative presents the war years as the outcome of the military–political deeds of Germans, their collaborators, and members of the resistance (all active historical agents). Conversely, the narrative presents Jews, the whole non-Jewish Dutch population, and (to a lesser extent) the adult Dutch males specifically as passive victims of Nazi aggression.

## Metaphors

All texts, except the excerpt from the novel, contain a comparable number of sentences that feature metaphor-related verbs or substantives ( $\pm 60\%$ ). In the excerpt from the novel, 37% of sentences contain metaphor-related verbs or nouns. About 69% of the metaphor-related verbs and nouns in *MeMo* and 75% in the *Histoclip* are directly linked to warfare, occupation, and persecution. We identified the most frequently used metaphor-related verbs and substantives in *MeMo*; the substantive *bezetting* [occupation] is used in nine sentences, followed by *staking/staken* [strike] in four sentences, *verzet* [resistance] in three sentences, and *slachtoffer* [victim] in two sentences. An example of such a sentence is “Er was geen massaal *verzet* tegen de Duitse *bezetting*” [There was no large-scale resistance against the German occupation]. In the *Histoclip*, the metaphor-related verb *onderduiken* [to go into hiding] occurs often (in seven sentences), as does the closely related substantive *onderduiker* [person gone into hiding]. The terms *occupation* and *resistance* were used in the *Historical Thinking* assignment. In the novel excerpt, none of these metaphor-related words were found, and other

metaphor-related words occurred only once. Overall, the metaphors in use were conventional in nature because of how historians and teachers are taught to write and to talk about war.

We found only one direct metaphor (signaled by the simile flag “like” [*als*]), where *MeMo* cites the words of Cleveringa. Here, Cleveringa expresses his feelings about the dismissal of Meijers, his Jewish colleague (not mentioned by name): “like boiling lava [threatening] to burst through all the crevices that could open in my head and heart” [*als kokende lava (dreigen) te barsten door alle spleten die zich in mijn hoofd en hart zouden kunnen openen*]. By citing this metaphor, the authors in *MeMo* emphasize the moral standard for correct behavior during the German occupation, but his action was exceptional. This narrative is metaphorically entitled *de Bezetting* (the Occupation). The main metaphor-related words – *bezetting, verzet, staken, slachtoffer* [occupation, resistance, strike, and victim] – in combination with the simile to characterize the feelings of Cleveringa framed the narrative as representative of the fate of a passive Dutch nation victimized by the Germans, but included a clear standard of moral behavior.

### **Multiperspectivity**

To what extent is multiperspectivity part of the narrative – the Netherlands during WWII – as presented to students in a history lesson? This question implies that different forms of historical agency, geographical scale, narrative plots, and types of historiography are highlighted. In *MeMo*, the agency of individuals is restricted to a few people, of whom Cleveringa is the most important in setting the moral standard. Furthermore, agency belongs to collectives such as Germans, Dutch Jews, Dutch men (no women), members of the NSB, and the Dutch population as a whole. Certain perspectives related to class, ability, sexual orientation, gender, age, and ethnicity are not presented due to the absence of actors related to these perspectives. However, Nell introduced a diverse array of actors in her lessons, such as the German occupiers, Dutch collaborators, victims of the Holocaust, citizens on strike, and ordinary people who accommodated to the situation.

Nell made an effort to introduce students to a more nuanced perception of the fate of children of NSB members by reading aloud an excerpt from the novel. Nell also discussed the descendants of German occupiers attending the Remembrance Day memorial.

In historiography a key issue is the question of the scale of the narratives chosen. However, the notion that the Kingdom of the Netherlands in 1940 also consisted of colonies in the West and East Indies is absent from the texts and lessons. Furthermore, the impact of European military operations in the final year of the war on the situation in the Netherlands is only implicitly examined.

Historiographical issues are not discussed; at most, the authors refer to them indirectly, for example, by introducing the concept of accommodation. In *MeMo*, the terms *Nazis* and *Germans* are used interchangeably and the principal distinction between them is not discussed.

Taken together, these findings suggest that *MeMo* and the *Histoclip* provide a more closed narrative that is not open to multiple perspectives, whereas the teacher supplied other perspectives using particular materials and assignments.

### **Students' Texts**

In this section we summarize the findings of our analysis of student narratives in the final assignment.

With respect to historical persons, the students mentioned Hitler (10x), Seyss-Inquart (4x), and Queen Wilhelmina (6x). However, they mostly wrote about collectives, such as Germans, Jews, and adult Dutch men (no women). In a few instances, the English were mentioned as liberators. Common dates mentioned were May 1940 (18x) and 1945 (9x) – the start and end of the Nazi occupation, respectively. Events mentioned were the Hunger Winter (2x) and the liberation of the southern part of the Netherlands (3x). The students' letters were without exception restricted to the military–political dimension, but some students mentioned the socioeconomic aspects relating to forced labor (2x) and food scarcity (5x). With respect to metaphors, the metaphor-related words used most often were *bezetting/bezetten* [occupation/to occupy] (15 sentences), *verzet/verzetten* [resistance/to resist] (10 sentences), and *onderduiken* [go into hiding] (six sentences). About 85% of the metaphor-related words were directly associated with the language of warfare, occupation, and persecution.

These findings suggest that students reproduced a “closed narrative,” wherein they presented a perspective that accentuated Germans as the occupiers and Dutch Jews and adult Dutch men as victims. The metaphor-related words used by students framed the narrative into a narrative between perpetrators and victims. It was notable that none of the students referred to the perspective of a child of NSB parents shared in the excerpt from the novel or to the classroom conversation (descendants of Germans attending Remembrance Day).

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

In this study, we analyzed the narratives of the Netherlands during WWII that are commonly used and constructed in the history classroom. We can characterize the employment of the narratives in the texts provided as representing the fate of passive Dutch citizens victimized by the occupying Germans. An apt metaphor to characterize these narratives is the Occupation [*de Bezetting*]. This narrative is framed by metaphor-related words associated with the language of war, occupation, or persecution. As such, these words function as a heuristic and as an inclusive and exclusive interpretative element. The narrative of the Occupation leaves little room for alternative or critical narratives, although historians acknowledge that accounts of this episode in national history are open to narrative change (Hondius, 2010). The narrative also encompasses a clear moral standard of behavior. This moral standard makes a distinction between supporters of the NSB and Nazi occupiers or between Germans and Nazis problematic as discussed by Hondius (2010). All evil seems to stem from the Nazis. This makes it difficult to discuss (dis)continuity in antisemitism before, during, and after the war, for example the antisemitic sentiment of civil servants that the returning survivors of the Holocaust came across when they reclaimed their possessions. The narrative also defines the geographical scale and setting, such as the internal affairs in the Netherlands, which makes an international comparison and contextualization problematic. We found that this narrative and accompanying metaphors were replicated in the students’ letters.

With respect to our question, to what extent is multiperspectivity part of the narrative of the Netherlands during WWII, we must conclude that the narratives in the offered texts and in the letters of students are not open to multiple perspectives although Nell tried to introduce a range of other perspectives. Dutch Jews were presented as faceless and passive victims without any agency in their own right. Mentioning Jewish figures such as Anne Frank or

Eduard Meijers—the fired colleague of Cleveringa—could have rehumanized Jewish victims, but their vital and compelling perspective was completely absent (cf. Hondius, 2010).

This study shows how narratives and metaphors are interlinked and how metaphors frame the narrative of the Occupation and exclude other perspectives, which indicates that framing also occurs in history textbooks (Chong & Druckman, 2007). Research on textbook narratives thus far has focused on the substantive elements of narratives (Repoussi & Tutiaux-Guillon, 2010), but broadening this research by focusing on metaphors can help clarify how narratives are framed and constructed. Furthermore, textbook authors should be aware of these narratives and of the role of metaphors. Teachers could make their students more aware of the metaphors used and even explore how counter-metaphors may present the past in an alternative perspective. Awareness of how texts are framed might make it easier for students to identify other perspectives and narratives. Discussing this aspect could stimulate historical thinking and reasoning on multiperspectivity and on historical representation so that students understand that history is not a “given” but a construct about the past.

Nell sought to introduce students to a more nuanced form of historical thinking; therefore, she highlighted the perspectives of German descendants (as expressed in the whole-classroom discussion about the attendance of descendants of German soldiers at Remembrance Day) and the perspective of children of NSB parents (as expressed in the excerpt from the novel). Although Nell introduced other perspectives, students did not reference these perspectives in their letters. One explanation might be that the task was not strong enough to elicit multiple perspectives. Additional interviews with students might have elicited more perspectives in the students’ own narratives. Another explanation might be that although the teacher introduced different perspectives, these were not explicitly connected to the main narrative. Furthermore, a textbook that attempts to present a clear overview, combined with the strong moral dimension connected to this topic, does not help to foster learning and the teaching of multiperspectivity. Though Nell provided other perspectives, she did not discuss the possible consequences of humanizing the perpetrators (Binnenkade, 2016). The lack of multiperspectivity might also be due to the Dutch curriculum, which encourages overview knowledge that results in a main narrative. Future research should investigate whether explicitly connecting different perspectives to the main perspective presented in the textbook results in students articulating multiple perspectives.



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