Utrecht and its Best Kept Secret

An analysis of the memory of the history of slavery in Utrecht

MA Gender Studies

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Date: August 6, 2020

Amount of words: 14.801

Acknowledgments

Abstract

This thesis aims to examine how the history of slavery in Utrecht is remembered and how this shapes contemporary society. In the first chapter, I demonstrate how the topic of Dutch involvement in slavery is very much debated in society today and I give some background information on the history of slavery in Utrecht. After discussing some key theories from the field of memory studies on the concepts of memory and forgetting, I engage in a critical discourse analysis on two case studies related to the memory of the history of slavery in Utrecht. I engage analytically with the 'Traces of Slavery in Utrecht' project, an initiative dedicated to the remembrance of the history of slavery in Utrecht and I will zoom in on house 'De Moriaan', one of the places that is part of the walking tour of the Traces of Slavery project. In this thesis, I argue that there is a Dutch self-perception of the Netherlands as a space free of racism and therefore, there is a certain silence and unwillingness to talk about the Dutch history of slavery and colonialism. The 'Traces of Slavery in Utrecht' project confronts this silence, by starting a process of remembering. The project makes people aware that certain traces of the history of slavery can be found throughout the city of Utrecht. Yet, as I revealed in my analysis of House 'De Moriaan', the history of slavery can be hard to remember or to be confronted with, since this history is connected to violence and pain.

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Introduction

In March 2020, King Willem Alexander of the Netherlands visited Indonesia for another state visit. On this trip, however, very unexpectedly, he apologized for specific aspects of the Dutch involvement in the colonial history of Indonesia. I say 'specific aspects' because many people hoped for an apology for the Dutch colonial history, but that is not what he apologized for. He only apologized for the 'excessive violence' by the Dutch army in the period after the second WW, between 1945-1949 during the Indonesian War of Independence.[1] This apology was nonetheless unexpected because politicians thought that this topic would be 'too sensitive' to touch at this moment and that King Willem Alexander would not have gone there to make an apology related to Dutch colonialism. This is the first time that apologies have been offered from the highest level because the former Queen Beatrix has not.[2] These last few years, I have noticed that the topic of colonial history and the history of slavery is more present in media. It is debated within municipalities and by policymakers all over the Netherlands. Examples of a greater awareness of the Dutch history of colonialism and slavery are manifold, but certainly, projects like Mapping Slavery NL or the creation of the slavery monument in Amsterdam in 2002 are central to this shift in public discourse.[3][4] While I believe that these initiatives are a start in order to remember Dutch colonial history, it is very important in the cultural context in which I write this thesis - the Netherlands - to fight what Fatima El-Tayeb calls 'amnesia' around the topic of colonialism, slavery, and race present in Europe as a whole. El-Tayeb says: "This dialectic of memory and amnesia, in the shape of an easily activated archive of racial images whose presence is steadfastly denied, is fundamentally European I argue, in part constituting dominant notions of what 'Europe' means."[5] Thus, racial images, which have their origin in colonial history, are renounced in the context of Europe and the Netherlands. This research project analyses how the history of slavery and colonialism, which is a topic left unspoken, is remembered and how that influences our contemporary society.

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[1] Wim Kopinga, 'Willem-Alexander maakte de excuses die zijn moeder in 1995 had willen maken', NOS, March 10, 2020. Accessed on June 8, 2020 https://nos.nl/artikel/2326586-willem-alexander-maakte-de-excuses-die-zijn-moeder-in-1995-had-willen-maken.html

[2] Ibid.

[3] Mapping Slavery NL. Accessed on June 8, 2020: https://mappingslavery.nl/

[4] iAmsterdam, Slavernijmonument. Accessed on June 8, 2020: https://www.iamsterdam.com/en/see-and-do/things-to-do/attractions-and-sights/places-of-interest/slavernijmonument-(slavery-monument)

[5] Fatima El-Tayeb, "Introduction: Theorizing Urban Minority Communities in Postnational Europe.", in *European Other: Queering Ethnicity in Postnational Europe*, (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), xxv.

During my internship, during my study program in Gender Studies at Utrecht University, I was working on a research project engaging with the history of slavery in the city of Utrecht. The main research questions of this project, which is supported by Municipality Utrecht and led by my supervisor Nancy Jouwe, are twofold: on the one hand 'What was the meaning of slavery for the city Utrecht and its society? And on the other hand, 'What traces of slavery can be found in the city of Utrecht and what do these traces tell us?'. In my own thesis project, I wanted to use the knowledge I gained on the topic of slavery Utrecht during this internship and research how the history of slavery in Utrecht is remembered and how it still influences and shapes contemporary society. I approach this research especially from the field of memory studies since I am interested specifically in the traces of remembrance of the history of slavery in the city of Utrecht. Memory studies is a large field of study with many directions to take, but it is of great value to use it for my research in a very context-specific sense. In my research on the memory of the history of slavery, I will analyze specific case studies from the city of Utrecht. Questions around the history of slavery and its afterlife are important and by putting this research in a very specific context, it makes it easier for people to understand and to make it more graspable.

The main research question which this thesis aims to respond to is the following:

How is the history of slavery remembered in Utrecht and how does this shape the contemporary society of Utrecht?

To answer this question, in this thesis, I am going to analyze closely two case studies: in chapter 3 I will engage analytically with the 'Traces of Slavery in Utrecht' project, an initiative dedicated to the remembrance of the history of slavery in Utrecht and in chapter 4 I will zoom in on house 'De Moriaan', one of the places that is part of the walking tour of the Traces of Slavery project.

To situate my case studies still a bit further, the 'Traces of Slavery in Utrecht' project is a project that began in 2011 as a build-up to the remembrance and celebration of 150 years of the abolition of slavery in the Netherlands that took place in 2013. This project started because the initiators noticed that there was not much attention for stories about the topic of slavery, related to stories about Utrecht, and they were interested to find out more about it. In my thesis analysis, I will focus on one part of the project, namely the walking tour and its walking guide. The 'Traces of Slavery in Utrecht' walking guide is a small bilingual paper guide that describes a route through the city center passing by different places like public

buildings, houses, facing bricks, etc. that had a role in or a reference to the history of slavery. I will analyze this walking tour since it is a way to remember the history of slavery and I want to find out what it does to remember this history.

The other case study closely analyzed in this thesis is House 'De Moriaan' and is part of the 'Traces of Slavery in Utrecht' project. The house has the name 'De Moriaan' written on the facade of the house. The word 'Moriaan' is related to the word 'moor', used in the 18th century, to describe black, African people. Something about the appearance of the house changed, which made me interested in analyzing the house: the facade of the house, which had the name 'De Moriaan' painted on it, has been painted over by the current owners of the house. Not seeing the traces of slavery anymore visibly on the house, changes something when we think of the representation of the history of slavery at this specific place. In my analysis, I engage in a close reading of this house in order to find out what these changes to the house do to the remembrance of the history of slavery.

Methodology

As I explained in the above, in this thesis, I analyze two case studies related to the memory of the history of slavery in Utrecht. I first contextualize these case studies historically and introduce them via a theoretical discussion around issues of remembrance from a memory studies and postcolonial and feminist perspective.

When it comes to chapters 3 and 4, I engage in a critical discourse analysis and a close reading of the case studies. There is not a single definition of critical discourse analysis, but according to Rosalind Gill, sociologist, and feminist cultural theorist, there are a few key features of this methodology: the researcher takes a critical stance towards taken for granted knowledge, and acknowledges that the common ways of understanding the world are contextually and historically bound. This means that from this perspective, knowledge is understood as 'socially constructed', and this is defined by Gill as the conviction "that our current ways of understanding the world are determined not by the nature of the world itself, but by social processes."[6] What a critical discourse analysis is after is to explore how knowledge/discourses are linked to practices/actions.[7]

For a researcher, this is important, because the practices or actions we aim to research are shaped by knowledge and discourses, and knowledge is shaped by social processes. The

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[6] Rosalind Gill, "Discourse Analysis" in *Qualitative Researching with Text, Image and Sound: A Practical Handbook*, Bauer, Martin, & Gaskell (eds.). (London: Sage, 2000), 173.
[7] Gill, "Discourse Analysis", 173.

term 'discourse' in a critical discourse analysis refers to all forms of talk and texts and is also seen as social practice because language is a practice on its own, and discourses are constructed to fit into a certain social context.[8] When analyzing my case studies, I approach both case studies - the project and the house - as 'texts', and therefore as discourses. To do this, the above key features will function as guidelines; I will acknowledge how knowledge is socially constructed and I will approach discourse as a social process. I won't look only at the text, or the case studies, themselves, but I also analyze their social context to find out how discourses around these case studies are constructed. In this thesis, I want to approach both my case studies as such influential texts for how the history of slavery is remembered in Utrecht. Further, I aim to analyze how the colonial, imperial discourses of that time structured these texts, but also how today's hegemonic discourses structured them as memory sites.

Therefore, I am going to do a close reading of my case studies. Jasmina Lukić and Adelina Sánchez Espinosa, in their chapter on feminist perspectives on close reading, argue that close reading relies on a "larger interpretive framework" and that every feminist critic reads a text from their own "socio-critical standpoint".[9] Therefore, close reading cannot exclude the context of the reader and the object. They say: "Their similar use of close reading as method for interpretation proves that not only can close reading help to establish the grounds for oppositional readings but it can also bridge the gap between multifarious models of reading."[10] Thus, even though every feminist scholar has their own standpoint influenced by their own context, close reading can bring multiple readings together and also provide space for an oppositional reading. In my thesis, I will do a close reading of my case studies and generate, through a critical discourse analysis, how knowledge and discourses are constructed in the social context of my case studies.

The production of knowledge is always concerned with power; knowledge itself is a form of power, but power also produces knowledge. Therefore, we cannot speak of the truth of knowledge, we cannot speak of just 'one truth'. Michel Foucault, French philosopher, historian of ideas, social theorist, and literary critic, primarily addressing the relationship between power and knowledge, argues that truth is not outside power and says:

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[8] Gill, "Discourse Analysis", 175-176.

[9] Jasmina Lukić, Adelina Sánchez Espinosa, "Feminist Perspectives on Close Reading", in *Theories and Methodologies in Postgraduate Feminist Research: Researching Differently,* edited by Rosemarie Buikema, Gabriele Griffin and Nina Lykke, (New York: Routledge, 2011), 116.

[10] Lukić, Sánchez Espinosa, "Feminist Perspectives on Close Reading", 116.

Truth is a thing of this world: it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power. Each society has its regime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true.[11]

As Foucault argued, truth is shaped by power and there is not just 'one truth'. The 'general politics' of truth can differ in different societies or situations. Therefore, the positionality of a society is very important when producing knowledge or producing 'a truth'. A 'truth', and therefore certain discourses and knowledges, are always 'situated'. As Donna Haraway acknowledges in her seminal text on 'Situated Knowledges' as well, knowledge is never neutral. With her affirmation of "situated knowledges" Haraway pleads for producing knowledge that is situated since the situation and location of the subject producing knowledge is shaping that knowledge.[12] In this seminal text, Haraway argues for "situated and embodied knowledges and […] against various forms of unlocatable, and so irresponsible, knowledge claims. Irresponsible means unable to be called into account."[13] She also states that situated knowledges are about communities, not about individuals, and that you can only find a larger vision by being somewhere in particular.[14] This politics of truth can differ per society and that is why it is so important to locate and situate your knowledge. In this thesis as a white, Dutch feminist researcher I analyze the dominant discourses in the Netherlands from a Dutch context.

Structure of the thesis
This thesis is organized as follows.

In chapter 1, I will elaborate on the Dutch context and Dutch history in order to place this research project in a historical context. In my discussion, I want to address the questions: 'what is there to remember in Utrecht?' And 'what was the role of Utrecht in the history of slavery and how is that still important nowadays?'

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[11] Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews & Other Writings 1972-1977*, edited by Colin Gordon, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 131.
[12] Donna Haraway, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective", *Feminist Studies*, 14 (3), (1988), 595–596.
[13] Donna Haraway, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective." *Feminist Studies* 14(3): (1988), 583.
[14] Haraway, "Situated Knowledges, 590.

In chapter 2, I explain the theoretical framework or lens that is of great importance for the thesis - both in how I do my research and in how I contextualize my discussion. I want to elaborate on the concept of 'memory' and the field of memory studies. In this chapter, I will discuss different scholarly approaches to memory, and I will expand on the binary between memory and forgetting.

In the analytical part, in chapter 3, I analyze the 'Traces of Slavery in Utrecht' project. First, I will explain what this project entails. After that, I will go into two specific topics concerning the analysis of this case. I explain the current ideology of 'racelessness' in the Dutch context and how visibility and invisibility are linked to this. And next to that, I go into the concept of 'haunting' by Avery Gordon and link that to the definition of 'multidirectional memory' by Michael Rothberg.

In chapter 4, I move to analyzing my second, and last, case House 'De Moriaan'. First, I will elaborate on this case and explain its current situation. I go into the notion of 'silence' and what that does to the remembrance of the history of slavery in Utrecht.

Lastly, in my conclusion, I will explain how the history of slavery is remembered in my different case studies and how this shapes the current society of Utrecht.

Chapter 1. Contextualization: the Netherlands and its history

As I brought up in my introduction, the Netherlands and its involvement in colonialism and slavery is a very 'hot topic' at the moment. Municipalities, like Utrecht, Amsterdam, and Rotterdam, initiate projects to investigate their role in the history of slavery and colonialism.[15] Besides that, this history is also important in ongoing debates in the Netherlands. Debates such as the 'Zwarte Pieten discussie' (Black Peet discussion) or the current worldwide protests against (institutional) racism inspired by the Black Lives Matter moment in the US take issue with the ideologies of colonialism and slavery.[16] But, this is not something that is much spoken about within Dutch society.

The Dutch have played a large role in the history of colonialism and slavery, as I will explain later in this chapter, but this is not generally known or spoken about. The Dutch involvement in colonialism and slavery is something that people do not feel comfortable engaging with. According to Joke Kardux, slavery has been "erased from public consciousness" because the role of the Dutch in slavery did not fit the Dutch sense of national identity.[17] Gloria Wekker adds to this and also argues that the Dutch all too often see themselves as being color-blind and 'free-of-racism'.[18] Wekker came up with the term 'white innocence' to describe "a dominant way in which the Dutch think of themselves, as being a small, but just, ethical nation; color-blind, thus free of racism; as being inherently on the moral and ethical high ground, thus a guiding light to other folks and nations."[19] A famous Dutch saying reinforces this argument: "Ik zie geen kleur", which means "I do not see any color". This statement is a regularly used phrase when, in Dutch, white discourse, one is talking about race or racism. Besides that, in history classes, the involvement of the Dutch in

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[15] Peter Koop, Had de Utrechtse elite vroeger slaven in huis? Een onderzoek moet het uitwijzen, AD, March 19, 2020. Accessed on June 10, 2020 via: https://www.ad.nl/utrecht/had-de-utrechtse-elite-vroeger-slaven-in-huis-een-onderzoek-moet-het-uitwijzen~a42397e8/; Michiel Couzy, Onderzoek Amsterdamse rol in slavenhandel opmaat naar excuses, het Parool, February 12, 2020. Accessed on June 10, 2020 via: https://www.parool.nl/amsterdam/onderzoek-amsterdamse-rol-in-slavenhandel-opmaat-naar-excuses~b343613f/?referer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F; Harriët Salm, Rotterdam laat uniek onderzoek uitvoeren naar eigen koloniale verleden, Trouw, August 25, 2018. Accessed on June 10, 2020 via: https://www.trouw.nl/nieuws/rotterdam-laat-uniek-onderzoek-uitvoeren-naar-eigen-koloniale-verleden~b624b616/?referer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F

[16] 'De rol van Zwarte Piet is een koloniale oprisping', AD, October 18, 13. Accessed on June 10, 2020 via: https://www.ad.nl/amsterdam/de-rol-van-zwarte-piet-is-een-koloniale-oprisping~a289892c/; Rutger van der Hoeven, Eindelijk klinkt er wereldwijd protest tegen racisme, De Groene Amsterdammer, June 10, 2020. Accessed on June 10, 2020 via: https://www.groene.nl/artikel/eindelijk-klinkt-er-wereldwijd-protest-tegen-racisme

[17] Horton, J. O. and J. C. Kardux, "Slavery and the contest for national heritage in the United States and the Netherlands", American Studies International 42: (2004), 51.

[18] Gloria Wekker, *White Innocence*, (Duke University Press, 2016), 2-3.

[19] Wekker, 2.

colonialism and slavery is not recognized either and this period in history is often still referred to as the Golden Age, which underlines the positive and wealth-gaining side of this era while neglecting slavery and other forms of violence. [20] As we can learn from all history books, however, the Dutch played a huge part in the Atlantic slave trade, they were the founders of the Dutch East India Company and the West-East India Company, and they had different colonies in which they implemented racist ideologies like the apartheid system.[21] Despite the many examples of the Dutch involvement in the history of colonialism and slavery, it is, on many occasions, still left unspoken about. Throughout history, resistance against this silence keeps reoccurring; during the Black Peet discussion, the Black Lives Matter anti-racism protests or the debate about the term 'Golden Age'.[22] At the moment, there are also many protests against street names and statues that have a colonial connotation. Many statues of 'colonial heroes' even get destroyed.[23]

History of slavery in the Netherlands
In this research, I want to follow traces of remembrance of the history of slavery in Utrecht to find out what these traces do in our current day society. Does the representation of the history of slavery follow in these footsteps of silence or is the representation of Utrecht's role in slavery different? To find out, I first want to give a general overview of the Dutch involvement in slavery from the 16th century onwards and after that, I want to dive into the known knowledge about Utrecht's history of slavery.

At the end of the 16th century, the Dutch started to expand their trade beyond the borders of Europe and the first ships reached South America and West Africa. This resulted in the establishment of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) in 1602 and of the Dutch West India Company (WIC) in 1621. The VOC got a monopoly on trade in 'the East' (Asia) and the WIC got a monopoly on trade in 'the West' (South America).[24] Slavery and slave trade

[20] Wekker, *White Innocence,* 13: Marcel J.M. Put, Ik blijf lesgeven over de Gouden Eeuw, Trouw Opinie, September 18, 2019. Accessed on June 10, 2020 via: https://www.trouw.nl/opinie/ik-blijf-lesgeven-over-de-gouden-eeuw~bddb225f/.

[21] Piet Emmer, *De Nederlandse slavenhandel 1500-1850*, (Amsterdam: Arbeiderspers, 2003); Rosemarie Buikema, *Revoltes in de Cultuurkritiek*, (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2017).

[22] Nina Siegal, A Dutch Golden Age? That's Only Half the Story, The New York Times, October 25, 2019. Accessed on June 10, 2020 via: https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/25/arts/design/dutch-golden-age-and-colonialism.html

[23] Balkenhol, Markus. "Over standbeelden, totempalen en de herinnering aan de slavernij." B en M: tijdschrift voor beleid, politiek en maatschappij 46, no. 2 (2019): 294-299; Tonny van der Mee, Beelden onder vuur: "Voor Molukse gemeenschap staat J.P. Coen voor geweld", AD, 22 June 2020. Accessed on June 25, 2020, https://www.ad.nl/binnenland/beelden-onder-vuur-voor-molukse-gemeenschap-staat-j-p-coen-voor-geweld~a4f94c1c/?referrer=https://www.google.com/

[24] Esther Captain, *Wandelgids sporen van slavernij in Utrecht / Traces of slavery in Utrecht: a walking guide*, (Utrecht: centre for the humanities, Utrecht University, 2012), 13.

already existed within West Africa, even before the Europeans arrived in this part of the world.[25] But, due to the arrival of the Europeans, this existing slave trade within the continent changed: the enslaved were bought by European slave traders and were bound to leave their country. The reason that European slave traders came to West Africa to take people to enslave was an increasing demand for employees which were needed for the plantations in North- and South America, which were founded by colonizers from Spain, France, and Portugal.[26] These plantations were founded, because they wanted to get as many products from the colonies as possible, like sugar cane, tobacco, rice, fruit, and corn.[27] This finally resulted in an advancing transatlantic slave trade.[28] Piet Emmer, Dutch historian specialized in the history of slavery and immigration, argues that Dutch traders were not too fond of getting involved in the slave trade, but that when they finally got a foothold in Brazil, there was a sudden turn in the Dutch ideology.[29] He argues that when the Dutch came to Brazil, they realized that only the use of enslaved people would ensure an ongoing supply of sugar to the Netherlands. Emmer shows that at this moment, the VOC and the WIC officially decided that they were going to take part in the slave trade. In the Dutch Republic, holding slaves was not permitted. However, in the areas colonized by the Dutch, it was. This resulted in the presence of different forms of slavery in the Dutch colonies. In Surinam, African laborers were put to work in the different wood, sugar, coffee, and cotton plantations, and in the Dutch East Indies most enslaved were house servants and served European families that moved there.[30] Traces of the latter form of slavery is found the most in the city of Utrecht. According to Esther Captain, there is a direct connection between the topic of slavery and the city Utrecht.[31] That is why, in the next section, I will dive into this connection between slavery and Utrecht.

History of slavery in Utrecht
In the 17th and 18th century, Utrecht was not a main port city like Amsterdam or Rotterdam and therefore not as much involved in the VOC and WIC. In Rotterdam and Amsterdam, VOC ships were built, both cities had VOC offices, the so-called 'Kamers', and a lot of warehouses that were needed for the storage of products from the plantations were situated in

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[25] Mark Ferro, *Colonization: A Global History*, (Routledge, 1997), 221
[26] Piet Emmer, *De Nederlandse slavenhandel 1500-1850*, (Amsterdam: Arbeiderspers, 2003), 35.
[27] Teresa A. Meade, History of Modern Latin America: 1800 to the Present. (Wiley Blackwell, 2016).
[28] Captain, Sporen van Slavernij, 13-14.
[29] Emmer, Nederlandse slavenhandel, 39-40.
[30] Captain, Sporen van Slavernij, 15-16.
[31] Esther Captain, "Driehonderd gulden per vrijgelaten slaaf: Slaveneigenaren in Utrecht en de afschaffing van slavernij in 1863", in: Oud Utrecht: Tijdschrift voor geschiedenis van stad en provincie Utrecht, jaargang 86, nr. 2, (april 2013), 38.

these cities.[32] Even though Utrecht did not have these places mentioned above, most likely because the city did not have a harbor, traces of the history of slavery can still be found in the city. These traces can be encountered in different forms throughout the city. First, after doing historic research Esther Captain and Hans Visser found that there were enslaved people living in Utrecht. An example of this is Sara Sibillia Verdion, daughter of sub-merchant at the VOC, who lived in Utrecht at the Minrebroederstraat 20 in the 18th century. She was born in Batavia and came to Utrecht with her husband Willem Lons, a merchant for the VOC, in 1736 and she brought her 'black maid' Sibilla van Batavia. Sara Sibilla and her maid were living in Utrecht for multiple years.[33] Another example of an enslaved person living in Utrecht is Sitie, who worked for Joan Gideon Loten, governor of Celebes and Ceylon. They both lived on Drift 27, which is the current address of the library of Utrecht University.[34] Yet, there was not only a presence of enslaved people in the city, there are also signs of 'black presence' in Utrecht. By black presence, what is meant is the presence of people from African or Asian descent in the city.[35] Throughout the city, there are many depictions of 'moor's heads' on plaques, for example on facing bricks on houses or lamp posts.[36] In the Utrecht Archive, I also found two burial certificates from people with the last name 'Moor'; Cervina Moors and she was "a slave of Mr. van Meijdrecht"[37] and Maria Moorin from Angola.[38] Even though there is not much information about these people, de word 'Moor' was used to describe black people or people from Africa from the 18th century onwards. So, even though Utrecht was not a very important city in the development of the VOC and WIC, references to slavery and enslaved people were still a 'normal presence' in the 17th and 18th century. The traces of this presence can still be found nowadays - as I will expand on this in the next chapter- and therefore, there is a history to remember and to be spoken about.

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[32] Henk J. den Heijer, De geoctrooieerde compagnie de VOC en de WIC als voorlopers van de naamloze vennootschap,(Stichting tot Bevordering der Notariële Wetenschap, 2005), 60

[33] Captain, Sporen van Slavernij, 27-28; Het Utrechts Archief, Doopinschrijving Sibilla van Batavia, 02-01-1746. Accessed on June 10,2020 via: https://hetutrechtsarchief.nl/onderzoek/resultaten/archieven?mivast=39&mizig=34&miadt=39&miaet=54&micode=711.13&minr=32926889&miview=ldt

[34] Alexander J. P. Raat, The Life of Governor Joan Gideon Loten (1710-1789): A Personal History of a Dutch Virtuoso, (Uitgeverij Verloren, 2010), 176-177; Captain, Sporen van Slavernij, 19-24.

[35] Dieke Hondius, Nancy Jouwe, Dineke Stam, Jennifer Tosch, Annemarie de Wildt, *Gids Slavernijverleden Amsterdam/Slavery Heritage Guide*, Second edition, (Volendam, LM Publishers, 2018), 3-7.

[36] Captain, Sporen van Slavernij, 32-33, 36-37, 48-49.

[37] Het Utrechts Archief, Begraafinschrijving Cervina N.N., 14-10-1695. Accessed on June 10, 2020 via: https://hetutrechtsarchief.nl/onderzoek/resultaten/archieven?mivast=39&mizig=34&miadt=39&milang=nl&mizk_alle=cervina&miview=ldt

[38] Het Utrechts Archief, Begraafinschrijving Maria Moorin van Angola, 17-9-1655. Accessed on June 10, 2020 via: https://hetutrechtsarchief.nl/onderzoek/resultaten/archieven?mivast=39&miadt=39&mizig=34&miview=ldt&milang=nl&micols=1&mizk_alle=maria%20moorin

Chapter 2. Theoretical Framework

As I explained before, traces of the history of slavery can be found in Utrecht today. These traces can be perceived as memories of this history. In this research project, I want to find out how the history of slavery is remembered in the city of Utrecht. First, I want to explore what remembrance is. What is it to remember something and what is memory? In this chapter, I dive into the field of memory studies and introduce different approaches to 'memory'. Furthermore, I will explain how memory is more than the dialectic between memory and forgetting.

Memory and memory studies

First, I would like to examine, starting this research project, is: what is memory? There is a lot of literature on the concept of memory, for example by Susanne Knittel, Paul Bijl, Andreas Huysen, and Michael Rothberg.[39] They all discuss memory in different ways, but they all write from the academic field of memory studies. Michael Rothberg follows Richard Terdiman's definition of memory. According to Terdiman, memory is "the past made present".[40] I want to follow this definition of memory too because it is connected to two conclusions that I think are important to the research pursued here: memory is a contemporary phenomenon even though it is concerned with the past. And besides that, memory is also a form of work that works through action or labor.[41] These two things are important to take into account when analyzing memory, because, in this thesis, I research in detail how memory influences our present experience of the city of Utrecht, so I ask what does memory do, and how does it act. According to Michael Rothberg, whose research is mostly related to the memory of the Holocaust, there is a relation between the field of memory studies and the field of postcolonial studies. Yet, the relation between the two fields he describes as a paradoxical relation. He says:

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[39] Susanne Knittel, "Memory and Repetition - Reenactment as an Affirmative Critical Practice", *New German Critique*, 46 (2) (2019), (pp. 171-195).; Andreas Huyssen, "Present Pasts: Media, Politics, Amnesia", *Public Culture* 12(1), 21-38.; Paul Bijl, *Emerging Memory: Photographs of Colonial Atrocity in Dutch Cultural Remembrance,* (Amsterdam University Press, 2015).; Michael Rothberg, "Introduction", in: *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization,* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009).
[40] Michael Rothberg, "Introduction", in: *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization,* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 3.
[41] Rothberg, "Introduction", 3-4.

The field of postcolonial studies has had a paradoxical relation to cultural memory. On the one hand, the most influential monographs, anthologies, companions, and guidebooks to postcolonial studies have largely left the category of memory out of their theory and practice of field. […] Conversely, memory studies has largely avoided the issues of colonialism and its legacies.[42]

Thus, in many important postcolonial theories, the concept of memory is left unspoken/not used and on the other hand, many important theories in the field of memory studies lack an entry point for postcolonial studies and lack references to colonialism, although it is an important topic in the politics of memory.[43] In his research, Rothberg argues that one of the important sources of the field of memory studies is the work of Maurice Halbwachs, a French philosopher and sociologist known for developing the concept of collective memory.[44] Halbwachs argues that what he calls "collective memory" is shaped by certain social frameworks and that even individual memories are shaped by social forces because these forces provide a language through which people can recall their pasts. Halbwachs further argues that these social forces rely on the existence of groups, of interlocking communities, in which individuals do not exist in segregation.[45] So, according to Halbwachs, memory is shaped by the social forces of a collective or group and not by individuals. Yet, Rothberg argues that it is exactly this focus on groups that limits the usefulness of Halbwachs' theory for studies concerning colonialism or globalization since in these conditions the groups that Halbwachs discusses are completely dislocated. In his essay 'Remembering Back', Rothberg argues "Such a conceptualization [of groups as homogenous and closed entities] ultimately limits (without by any means foreclosing) Halbwachs's usefulness for a memory studies interested in questions of colonialism and globalization, since these are conditions that dislocate the organically defined groups that interested Halbwachs and that continue to interest many students of memory today."[46] Rothberg argues that using Halbwachs´ definition of collective memory to analyze the memory of colonialism is not fully effective since the groups that create the social forces to shape collective memory are hard to define and dislocated under that condition.

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[42] Michael Rothberg, "Remembering Back: Cultural Memory, Colonial Legacies and Postcolonial Studies", in: *The Oxford Handbook of Postcolonial Studies*, ed. Graham Huggan, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 359.

[43] Rothberg, "Remembering Back", 359.

[44] Lewis Coser, *Maurice Halbwachs On Collective Memory*, (The University of Chicago Press, 1992).

[45] Rothberg, "Remembering Back", 362.

[46] Rothberg, "Remembering Back", 362.

To make the field of memory studies more useful for analyzing questions of colonialism and slavery, Rothberg coins his own approach to define what memory is. According to him, collective memory is often understood as "competitive memory" in which different collective memories are caught in a zero-sum struggle to fight for dominance in a scarce place being the public sphere.[47] Thus, Rothberg argues that the current perception of collective memory is as being competitive, as different memories in one space fighting for dominance or attention. He wants to overthrow this perception and suggests considering memory as "multidirectional". By calling memory multidirectional Rothberg means memory "as subject to ongoing negotiation, cross-referencing, and borrowing; as productive and not privative.".[48] So, instead of different memories fighting with each other for space and marginalizing each other, they can work productively, negotiating, and adopting things form one and another. Rothberg's definition of memory is concerned with both the individual, embodied relation to the past, and the collective and social side of this relation.[49] With his definition of memory as multidirectional, Rothberg also tries to overcome the perception of the public sphere as a "limited space in which already-established groups engage in a life-and-death struggle.".[50] He wants to advocate for thinking of the public sphere as a flexible discursive space in which people find their position and come into being through dialogic interactions. In this sphere, there is space for constant reconstruction.[51] So, instead of thinking of memory as social forces that shape already-established groups living in a fixed space, Rothberg argues for thinking about memory as multidirectional, as negotiative and productive in a space always open for reorganization. In this thesis, I want to work with Rothberg's definition of memory as multidirectional, because I believe that different memories can exist at the same time in the same space, and in this thesis, I want to find out how the history of slavery co-exists with other memories within the context of Utrecht.

Memory and forgetting
In the section above, I have given a partial overview over the field of memory studies and I have especially elaborated on a definition of memory that fits this research project. As I showed in chapter 1, the Netherlands has played a great part in the history of colonialism and slavery, but that is something that is left unspoken about. In this section, I want to go into the

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[47] Michael Rothberg, "Introduction", in: *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization,* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 3.
[48] Rothberg, "Introduction", 3.
[49] Rothberg, "Introduction", 4.
[50] Rothberg, "Introduction", 5 .
[51] Rothberg, "Introduction", 5.

question of forgetting. Are memories of colonialism and slavery really forgotten or are there other reasons that these topics are not discussed generally in society? According to Paul Bijl, memories are not always as definite as either being there, clearly discernible, and with a specific intention, or as being forgotten. He argues that memories can have a more inconclusive presence in society and that there is not always a specific actor that is behind cultural memory the way it is. Besides that, he wants to do away with the binary opposition that is represented between memory and forgetting and he argues that some colonial images are not absent or forgotten, but that they appeared to be absent because they were not meaningful in the dominant frameworks.[52] Bijl argues that memories do not have to be either there or forgotten, they can be there, but be absent. Through Bijl's argument, I want to show that dominant powers and frameworks influence what memories are present and what memories are not. Therefore, the Dutch colonial history is not by definition forgotten, it just does not have a place in the dominant frameworks (yet). To explain the latter, Bijl uses a concept introduced by postcolonial scholar Laura Stoler: "cultural aphasia".[53] In her article 'Colonial Aphasia', she defines this concept as the inability of a community to find appropriate words to name an event happening in the world.[54] Using this concept by Stoler, Bijl introduces his concept of "emerging memory", which is precisely produced in a situation of cultural aphasia:

> Emerging memories are those representations of the past that are periodically rediscovered while retaining their shady presence. They keep on irritating a culture's self-conception because they prove hard to integrate into the existing narratives that a mnemonic community tells about itself and its past. That they nevertheless regularly re-emerge proves their durable relevance for the community in question.[55]

Thus, emerging memories are representations of the past that are hard to word and hard to integrate. Yet, they do have a certain significance and relevance for the community that they keep on coming back to the surface because it is important to some in that community and therefore people start to resist. An example of this is the project 'Traces of Slavery in Utrecht', which I will discuss in chapter 3. Even though the history of slavery in Utrecht may be a topic that irritates the Dutch self-conception and is, therefore, hard to integrate, this topic

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[52] Bijl, "Introduction", 12-13.
[53] Ann Laura Stoler, "Colonial aphasia: Race and disabled histories in France." *Public Culture* 23.1 (2011), 125.
[54] Stoler, "Colonial aphasia", 125.
[55] Bijl, "Introduction", 13.

does have a durable relevance for the community and therefore projects to research traces of this history are initiated. So, rather than some representations of the past being remembered, and some being forgotten, Bijl argues that some representations of the past integrate better and easier than other representations. A representation of the past, or a memory, is not always forgotten when there is not talked about that memory. So, the history of slavery and colonialism is not forgotten as such, the Dutch community might not have the words or the vocabulary to address or talk about it. The traces of this history are there, as I will show in my next chapter, but it cannot be addressed.

As Bijl argues, there is not a simple dialectic between memory and forgetting, and the representation of colonial history is a memory that is hard to integrate. In her work 'European Others', Fatima El-Tayeb discusses the concept of amnesia. Using El-Tayeb's text, I want to explain how amnesia around the history of slavery and colonialism works and why this memory is hard to integrate. In the introduction of her book 'European Others', El-Tayeb says:

> This dialectic of memory and amnesia, in the shape of an easily activated archive of racial images whose presence is steadfastly denied, is fundamentally European I argue, in part constituting dominant notions of what "Europe" means: though rarely mentioned, race is present whenever Europe is thought.[56]

El-Tayeb argues that the presence of racial images and race is persistently denied in a European context and this reinforces what El-Tayeb calls amnesia. According to El-Tayeb, Europe is a space of "political racelessness", by which she means "a process by which racial thinking and its effects are made invisible.".[57] Thus, Europe works as a space in which racial thinking and racism are left unspoken and unseen. Therefore, the memory of colonialism and slavery are hard to integrate, because these racist systems are not something that is being acknowledged. In her work on White Innocence, Gloria Wekker also demonstrates the existence of political racelessness in the Dutch context. She argues that the Dutch think of themselves as being color-blind and therefore free of racism.[58] Wekker says: "It [White

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[56] Fatima El-Tayeb, "Introduction: Theorizing Urban Minority Communities in Postnational Europe.", in *European Other: Queering Ethnicity in Postnational Europe*, (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), xvii.

[57] Fatima El-Tayeb, "Introduction: Theorizing Urban Minority Communities in Postnational Europe.", in *European Other: Queering Ethnicity in Postnational Europe*, (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), xvii.

[58] Gloria Wekker, *White Innocence*, (Duke University Press, 2016), 1-2.

Innocence] encapsulates a dominant way in which the Dutch think of themselves, as being a small, but just, ethical nation; color-blind, thus free of racism; as being inherently on the moral and ethical high ground, thus a guiding light to other folks and nations."[59] Therefore, when racial thinking and its effects are made invisible and the self-perception of the Netherlands is a race-free space, it is hard to talk about memories that are linked to or have originated in racial thinking within a Dutch context. When the Dutch think of themselves as being an ethical nation and as a guiding light to other folks and nations, there is not much space within the dominant frameworks and discourses to discuss subjects like colonialism and slavery, because they contradict and irritate this Dutch self-perception.

Both Bijl and El-Tayeb recognize, through their theories on emerging memories and amnesia, that some representations of the past integrate and fit in better than others into the dominant way of thinking and the dominant discourses. In this chapter, I explored what remembrance is and how memory works. I demonstrated that memories on colonialism and slavery are not just remembered or forgotten, but that dominant powers and discourses influence how representations of the history of slavery and colonialism are remembered and that some memories are still there but are not able to be talked about.

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[59] Wekker, "White Innocence", 2-3.

Chapter 3. Case I 'Traces of Slavery' Project

In this chapter, I am going to analyze the 'Traces of Slavery in Utrecht' project and see how, in this case, the history of slavery in Utrecht can be actively remembered. This project is about the memory of slavery, but it is also about starting a process of remembrance for different cities within the Netherlands. I want to see how, in this initiative, the history of slavery is represented and how it is remembered. In this chapter, I will first elaborate on the 'Traces of Slavery in Utrecht' project. After that, I am going to do a close reading of the walking tour and walking guide of the program to find out what it does to remember the history of slavery in Utrecht.

The 'Traces of Slavery in Utrecht' project
The 'Traces of Slavery in Utrecht' project is an initiative that was at first introduced by Kosmopolis Utrecht, a multimedia platform for art and culture in order to develop and strengthen intercultural connections in different neighborhoods and cities in the Netherlands.[60] It started in 2011 as a build-up to the remembrance and celebration of 150 years of abolition that took place in 2013. This project started because the initiators noticed that, in Utrecht, there was not much attention for the stories about slavery in connection to Utrecht and they were interested to find out more. The program is also part of a larger project called 'Mapping Slavery NL', which is a national, public history project that engages in mapping historical places of the history of slavery in the Dutch Kingdom.[61] When the initiators started this project, they realized how many historical traces there actually were to be found which indicated that the city of Utrecht was indeed implicated in the history of slavery and colonialism. The program includes different activities: Keti Koti tables (a day of celebration for the abolition of slavery), public nights with professors, artists and anthropologists at which knowledge about the history of slavery is exchanged with the audience, some exhibitions and a school project in Galerie Sanaa in Utrecht by visual artist Marcel Pinas, and the establishing of a walking route which includes also a guide and an app about the Traces of Slavery in Utrecht.[62] Although the different activities all contribute to starting a process of remembrance, in my analysis that follows here I only focus on the last part: the walking route and the guide.

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[60] 'Over Ons: Doelstellingen', Kosmopolis Utrecht, accessed on June 12, 2020, via: https://kosmopolisutrecht.nl/blog/over-ons/
[61] 'Over Ons', Mapping Slavery NL, accessed on April 23, 2020, via: https://mappingslavery.nl/over-ons/
[62] WELKOM BIJ SPOREN VAN SLAVERNIJ UTRECHT, Sporen van Slavernij in Utrecht, accessed on April 23, 2020 via: https://sporenvanslavernijutrecht.nl/activiteiten/lezingen/

I chose to focus on the walking tour and including guide because this tour shows the literal traces of memory of the history of slavery in the city. The walking tours are (often) guided by Nancy Jouwe, a cultural historian, who has a longstanding career in raising awareness on the history of slavery in the Netherlands and a lot of knowledge on the subject. In what follows, I want to do a close reading now of the tour in which I attend to the physical places in the city which played a part in the history of slavery. I am interested to find out how the tour contributes to the remembrance of the history of slavery in this city. Most of the places, buildings, or facing bricks are still there are still present in the contemporary society of the city of Utrecht. For that reason, it is interesting to look at this tour and to investigate how the tour actively engages in the remembering of the history of slavery in Utrecht.

Figure 1: Bottom of the lamppost situated at Oudegracht 20, Utrecht.[63]

The 'Traces of Slavery in Utrecht' walking guide is a small, bilingual paper guide that describes a route through the city center passing by different places like public buildings, houses, facing bricks, etc. that had a role in the history of slavery. The tour is also presented online, on the website of the project.[64] The walking tour guides us to different places and buildings that have a connection to and are traces of the history of slavery. When taking the tour, the guide leads us also to a lamppost, situated at Oudegracht 20, which has a sculpture of four shackled men depicted on it. Figure 1 shows the bottom of the lamp post. When looking closely, we see that the men in chains there are carrying another man smoking a pipe and in the background of the sculpture, we can also see palm trees. Thus, here we can clearly discern that this sculpture depicts the oppression and exploitation of the enslaved. The fact that they are carrying another man, shows that they work for that man and the chains show that they do

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[63] Bottom of the lamppost situated at Oudegracht 20, Utrecht, Accessed through 'Sporen van Slavernij in Utrecht, on June 13, 2020, via: https://sporenvanslavernijutrecht.nl/activiteiten/landing/de-verrijking-van-utrecht/oudegracht/oudegracht-20/

[64] Website Sporen van Slavernij Utrecht https://sporenvanslavernijutrecht.nl/

not do this voluntarily or out of free will.[65] This is an example of how the tour starts a process of remembrance of the history of slavery; traces of this history are located throughout the entire city and the tour informs people about their existence and their connection to an entire history that needs to be remembered. Another trace of this history that the guide of the tour takes you is the 'Utrecht City Hall'. Even though people may not think of the Utrecht City Hall as a place that is connected to the history of slavery, it does play a role in this history. In the building, 'de Vrede van Utrecht' (the Peace of Utrecht) was signed in 1713. This pact put an end to two religious wars, and this instigated an enormous boost for the world trade and colonialism.[66] One of the agreements of the Peace of Utrecht was that Spain would give their 'Asiento de Negros' to Great Britain. This 'Asiento' was a monopoly on the trade of humans and therefore black Africans (Negros) were seen as trading goods.[67] Next to this, the guide takes you to Drift 27, the place where the library of Utrecht University is currently situated. In the house at Drift 27 Joan Gideon Loten, governor of Celebes and Ceylon, former colonies of the Netherlands, used to live.[68] Among the domestic staff was an enslaved woman from Celebes called Sitie, who worked for Loten. Loten 'ordered' Sitie as a maid for his daughter in Batavia, but after his daughter passed away, he brought Sitie with him to Utrecht.[69] As shown here, there are different examples of how places in Utrecht are connected to the history of slavery. The walking tour and guide give an overview of the traces of the history of slavery and therefore a process of remembrance has been started. The tour takes the reader to many more places that are in some way connected to this history, but like the examples mentioned above, they all show that there is a history to remember and that traces of this history are all over Utrecht. As I showed in the previous chapter, the history of colonialism and slavery is a memory that contradicts the Dutch self-perception and is therefore a memory that does not fit within dominant discourses. This tour helps to reshape the Dutch cultural archive and demonstrates that there is definitely a history to remember; one that needs to be discussed.

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[65] Esther Captain, *Wandelgids sporen van slavernij in Utrecht / Traces of slavery in Utrecht: a walking guide*, (Utrecht: centre for the humanities, Utrecht University, 2012), 32.
[66] Captain, *Sporen van Slavernij,* 25-26.
[67] Captain, *Sporen van Slavernij,* 17.
[68] Captain, *Sporen van Slavernij,* 19-21.
[69] Captain, *Sporen van Slavernij,* 23.

'Racelessness' in the Dutch context and visibility/invisibility

As I explained in the previous chapter, Fatima El-Tayeb argues that, in Europe, an archive of racial images that is present in Europe, and even the presence of race itself, is persistently denied.[70] This is also the case in the Netherlands, as Gloria Wekker argues; the Dutch perceive the Netherlands as a space free of racism. She argues: "I am operating on the assumption that race has been sorely missing from dominant accounts of the Netherlands and that this racial reign began with the Dutch expansion into the world in the sixteenth century."[71] Ignorance also plays a big part in this racelessness in the Netherlands. Shannon Sullivan and Nancy Tuana argue, in their contribution to the epistemology of ignorance:

> the epistemology of ignorance is part of a white supremacist state in which the human race is racially divided into full persons and subpersons. Even though— or, more accurately, precisely because— they tend not to understand the racist world in which they live, white people are able to fully benefit from its racial hierarchies, ontologies, and economies.[72]

Thus, because of this ignorance, this incomprehension, race, and racism are not discussed, but white people are able to benefit from racial hierarchies and their privilege in that.

Wekker argues that the Dutch cultural archive, which is shaped by an imperial racial economy, is still shaping the dominant ways of knowing and doing. Yet, even though the current dominant ways of doing, knowing and feeling are still shaped by imperialist, and therefore even racist, ideas and the concept of 'race' originates in the European imperialist history, the common perception of Europe and the Netherlands is often as a space free of race and racism.[73] Therefore, it is also difficult to bring up subjects such as colonialism and slavery since these histories are interwoven with and based upon racist ideologies. The walking tour of the project guides people to traces of the history of slavery; it shows that this history took place in Utrecht. The lamp post which I described above has always been there. But the walking tour points out its presence, it makes people aware that the lamp post is a trace of and is connected to slavery. One would pass it without even noticing if the tour was not there. Even though the memory of colonialism and slavery is still hard to integrate due to the

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[70] Fatima El-Tayeb, "Introduction: Theorizing Urban Minority Communities in Postnational Europe.", in *European Other: Queering Ethnicity in Postnational Europe*, (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), xxv.

[71] Wekker, "White Innocence", 21.

[72] Shannon Sullivan, Nancy Tuana, "Introduction", in *Race and Epistemologies of Ignorance*, (State University of New York Press, 2007), 2.

[73] Wekker, *White Innocence*, 2-3.

(self)perception of the Netherlands as being free-of-racism, by pointing to this lamp post the tour confronts its attendees with this perception and keeps pointing at the memory of these histories. A depiction of slavery is presented on the lamp post and it thereby shows that traces of slavery can be found throughout the city. It shows how dominant discourses worked in the 16th until the 18th century and how slavery was perceived as normal by the majority of the people. The lamp post and the other traces of slavery the walking tour presents collide with the Dutch self-perception as a color-blind, raceless space. I would, therefore, argue that the memory of colonialism and slavery, which is relived through the walking tour, is an emerging memory. As I explained in the previous chapter, emerging memories keep on aggravating a culture's self-conception and are therefore hard to integrate into the existing narratives that a community tells about itself and its past.[74] The lamp post and other traces within the tour keep confronting and irritating the Dutch self-conception as being free of racism since these traces are 'proof' of a history of racist ideologies.

The walking tour takes its attendees to different places in Utrecht that have a connection to the history of slavery. The Peace of Utrecht, which was signed in the Utrecht City Hall in 1713, is a subject of discussion in history classes in the Dutch educational curriculum. But, the Peace of Utrecht is discussed as the solution to wars between many European countries and its connection to the history of colonialism and slavery is most of the time left unspoken.[75][76] This tour shows you that the Utrecht City Hall and the Peace of Utrecht do have a connection to slavery, since, in this agreement, Spain gave their monopoly on slave trade to Great Britain. The tour shows a different side of history, which is hard to integrate and left unspoken about. In *White Innocence*, in which the central paradox of Dutch culture - a denial of racial discrimination and colonial violence existing side-by-side aggressive racism and xenophobia[77] - is explicitly addressed, Wekker argues also that there is an absence of a discussion of the Dutch imperial presence in the Dutch educational curriculum, in self-representations, such as monuments, as well as in debates about the Dutch identity. Wekker refers here to the discussion of the Netherlands as an imperial nation as "the

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[74] Paul Bijl, "Introduction: Icons of Memory and Forgetting", in: Emerging Memory: Photographs of Colonial Atrocity in Dutch Cultural Remembrance. (Amsterdam University Press, 2015), 13.

[75] SchoolTV, "De Vrede van Utrecht: Het eerste vredesverdrag in de Europese geschiedenis", SchoolTV, August 12, 2013. Accessed on June 18, 2020 via: https://schooltv.nl/video/de-vrede-van-utrecht-het-eerste-vredesverdrag-in-de-europese-geschiedenis/

[76] En Toen, 1712-1715 - Vrede van Utrecht: Een wereldvrede in de Domstad gesloten, entoen.nu: Canon van Nederland. Accessed on June 18, 2020 via: https://www.entoen.nu/nl/utrecht/stad/vrede-van-utrecht

[77] Duke University Press, *White Innocence: Paradoxes of Colonialism and Race,* dukeupress.edu. Accessed on June 18, 2020 via: https://www.dukeupress.edu/white-innocence

best-kept secret" in various educational levels. Students are often surprised to hear about the role of the Dutch in slave trade and colonialism.[78] The different places in the walking tour and the information provided by the guide confront the one-sided history that is represented, this 'best-kept secret'. It explains that there are different sides to our history that we do not talk about yet.

The tour traces the physical places in Utrecht that are connected to the Dutch history of slavery and colonialism, and it makes this history more concrete and understandable for the person taking the tour. Yet, the tour does not only inform people about the history of slavery and its (current day) presence in the context of Utrecht thus making simply 'the invisible visible'. What I want to argue here is that the Traces of Slavery project and especially the tour which engages with the material presence of the history of slavery from the past into the present generates a correspondence between visibility and invisibility; the buildings and places, shown in the walking tour and walking guide, are visible to everyone every day because these are often public buildings and houses that everyone is able to see. But, as explained before, its connection to a history of slavery is invisible, due to a lack of knowledge about the topic and unwillingness to engage with. In order to exemplify this, let me again return to the lamp post at Oudegracht 20. The lamp post itself has been visible from the moment that it was there, but its connection to the history of slavery is only visible when one knows about it. One may see the shackled men depicted on the lamp post, but the connection to slavery stays invisible because discussions of race, colonialism, and slavery do not fit within dominant discourses in Dutch society. As Monica Casper and Lisa Jean Moore argue in their book 'Missing Bodies: The Politics of Visibility', visibility and invisibility are not "monolithic quantities", they are relative to various factors in their context.[79] Visibility and invisibility are not indivisible, they are not unified, these quantities can mean or do different things in different situations or contexts. Casper and Moore use an article by Susan Leigh Star and Anselm Strauss on silence and (in)visibility to explain how the sake of visibility is not only to create clarity. Star and Strauss argue that "the relation between invisible and visible work is a complex matrix, with an ecology of its own. It is relational, that is, there is no absolute visibility, and illuminating one corner, may throw another into absolute darkness."[80]

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[78] Wekker, *White Innocence,* 13.

[79] Monica J. Casper, Lisa Jean Moore, *Missing Bodies: The Politics of Visibility,* (New York: New York University Press, 2009), 12.

[80] Susan Leigh Star, Anselm Strauss. "Layers of Silence, Arenas of Voice: The Ecology of Visible and Invisible Work." *Computer Supported Cooperative Work (CSCW)* 8 (2004), 24.

So, invisibility and visibility are relational, they work with and against each other. Therefore, there will never be complete visibility. I want to argue now that the walking tour and walking guide show precisely this relationality between visibility and invisibility and thereby 'do' something to how we remember the history of slavery. While the walking tour guides people to buildings that have always been there and have always been visible - the tour takes people to the lamp post, which they might have passed multiple times - they are guided now to see that the lamp post is connected to a history that is often left unspoken.

Or we are guided to the Utrecht City Hall, which we might have visited a couple of times before as well. The tour makes visible how these places, which have always been detectable, are connected to a history that has not been that visible in the first place. The tour highlights that (traces of) the history of slavery and colonialism is very much present in our society today; a lot of places we see every day are connected to this history. It informs people of what happened in the past and that things are the way they are today because of this history. The tour shines its light on a history that, in the Dutch context, has not been counted as true or not been acknowledged. It represents stories of people that have always been perceived as invisible. In his novel 'Invisible Man', Ralph Ellison addresses the social issues that black people had to face in 20th century U.S. One of the first sentences of his book is: "I am invisible, you must know because people do not *want* to see me."[81] In his book, Ellison discusses how, as a black person, he is seen as invisible and how this makes him doubt his actual existence. He says: "I love light. Perhaps you'll think it is strange that an invisible man should need light, desire light, love light. But maybe it is exactly because I am invisible. Light confirms my reality, gives birth to my form."[82] Ellison has a great way of describing this correspondence between visibility and invisibility. The walking tour shines its light on the history of slavery and thereby it confirms its existence, as Ellison also describes. It also makes visible the stories of people that have been perceived as invisible. By shining light on these stories, their reality is confirmed.

Haunting, traces and multidirectional memory
Besides the walking tour and guide educating people about the history of slavery and shining light on something that has been in the dark for a long time, the tour and guide are also doing a form of, what Avery Gordon in her book 'Ghostly Matters' calls, 'haunting'. Gordon coined the term 'haunting' to describe how abusive systems of power make themselves visible and

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[81] Own translation of the Dutch version. Ralph Ellison, *Onzichtbare Man*, (New York: Random House, Inc., 1952), Translation published by: (Amsterdam: De Arbeiderspers, 1988), 7.
[82] Ellison, "Invisible Man", 10.

known and their impact on everyday life as well. This is especially the case when these abusive systems of power are over and done with (like slavery, for example).[83] As a researcher, I find this important, because the tour shows how traces of an abusive system of power, that people consider to be completely over, are still there. To me, that is important because abusive systems of power still influence today's society; racism is still very much present in our society today. By making these abusive systems of power visible, people become aware of this. Gordon says that she uses the term haunting in order "to describe those singular yet repetitive instances when home becomes unfamiliar when your bearings on the world lose direction, when the over-and-done-with comes alive, when what's been in your blind spot comes into view."[84] Haunting describes instances in which abusive systems of power, which are thought to be over with, make themselves noticeable, which causes people to feel overwhelmed and look different at 'the familiar'. The Traces of Slavery in Utrecht walking tour and guide can be approached, I here want to argue, as a form of haunting that Gordon describes for different reasons. First, the tour shines light on a topic that has been in a blind spot for a long time. Discussions about slavery and colonialism, both abusive systems of power, were not on the foreground or even missing in the Dutch context. This project shows that these discussions should be held because slavery and colonialism are a big part of Dutch history. The tour also shows that literal traces of this part of history can be found, even nowadays in a world that we think is totally different from the 17th and 18th century. Slavery is often considered to be over-and-done with, to be something that belongs to a past that is not ours, not part of the Dutch identity. But this walking tour makes this past, that is ought to be over, come alive. It shows that this past is still there. By walking through the city of Utrecht, we can see literal, physical places that have played a role in the history of slavery.

The name of the project, 'Traces of Slavery in Utrecht', shows the emphasis on the word 'traces'. Gordon also works with the notion of traces in her book 'Ghostly Matters'. The word 'trace' means "a mark or a sign that shows that somebody or something existed".[85] Haunting is about taking these traces and linking them to stories, to stories that were not heard before. Gordon argues that haunting:

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[83] Avery F. Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination,* (University of Minnesota Press, 2008), xvi.

[84] Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*, xvi.

[85] Oxford University Press, *Oxford Student's Dictionary*, edited by Alison Waters, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 733.

Is about putting life back in where only a vague memory or bare trace was visible to those who bothered to look. It is sometimes about writing ghost stories, stories that not only repair representational mistakes, but also strive to understand the conditions under which a memory was produced in the first place, toward a counter memory for the future.[86]

Haunting is about taking these traces and resurrecting them, giving these traces a name and a story. The project shows, through a walking route and walking guide, certain marks or signs of the history of slavery. It reveals traces of the history of slavery; houses, facing bricks, public buildings, lamp posts, and tells the story behind those traces. It shows us how the building of the University Library has a connection to slavery, since Sitie, an enslaved woman used to live and work there. It exposes how a lamp post depicts enslaved people. And it explains how in the Utrecht City Hall a very important agreement on slave trade has been made. By telling these stories, the stories of people that have not been represented in the canon of the general Dutch history are finally being told. The knowledge produced via the project can be said to show that slavery still has an impact on today's everyday life; the buildings that people might use every day have a history that is still saturated with abusive systems of power. Walking around a city that people know, that is home to many people, and seeing how this history of slavery is making itself visible through this tour, may lead people to feel like their 'home' or their city becomes unfamiliar and they might feel confronted by what has always been their blind spot. For all these reasons, I argue that this project functions as a form of haunting that reshapes the national cultural archive and shows how slavery is not over and done with. It is not only making visible what has been invisible for all this time, but it also tells stories that have been in the dark for so long, of people that have not been represented. Since the history of slavery is left unspoken, stories of enslaved people and people involved in the history of slavery have not been represented. This project can make people feel overwhelmed and also look different at the places that have been familiar to them.[87] This, I think, is what works so effectively when the purpose is to make people

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[86] Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*, 22.

[87] Looking differently at something is one of the central epistemological claims of feminist scholarship. Feminist scholars always try ot see it from another excludes perspective and aks "the other question". Therefore, feminist scholarship always tries their readers to look differently at situations ans see it from another point of view. Mari J. Matsuda, "Beside My Sister, Facing the Enemy: Legal Theory out of Coalition", *Stanford Law Review* 43(6): (1991), 1189; Andrea Doucet, Natasha Mauthner, "Feminist Methodologies and Epistemology", in *21st Century Sociology: A Reference Handbook*, (SAGE Publications, 2008), 948.

remember something even though this memory is hard to conform to what they already know. When seeing a history literally 'coming alive', people cannot look away.

The way the walking tour exposes different traces of the history of slavery is a good example of how memory can become multidirectional. As I explained in the previous chapter, in his book 'Multidirectional Memory', Rothberg uses the term multidirectional memory because he approaches memories as "subject to ongoing negotiation, cross-referencing, and borrowing".[88] Rothberg wants to think of the public space as a discursive space in which people come into being through dialogic interaction and this space can then be constantly reconstructed. He argues that different historical memories can interact and be productive[89] Rothberg states: "This interaction of different historical memories illustrates the productive, intercultural dynamic that I call multidirectional memory."[90] Thus, instead of seeing memories as competing for space, one memory can be productive with another memory. Rothberg gives an example of this interaction by showing how Holocaust consciousness could work as a platform to articulate a vision of American racism past and present, instead of blocking the memory of slavery and colonialism from the view.[91] I want to argue now that the process of haunting, in the walking tour and its guide, produces an insight into how different memories may operate at the very same time; two persons doing the tour may look at the same thing in public space, for example, a building, but having different memories when looking at it. One person may see the building at Drift 27 still as the University Library while the other person may think of it as the house of Joan Loten and his maid Sitie and this may change over time. Also, next to the 'official' memory of the Golden Age there is one of colonialism. Rothberg argues that in order to create new memories, people do not have to let go of old memories; they can function at the same time and borders of memories and identity are uneven.[92] Therefore, the 'Traces of Slavery' project demonstrates how the public space is always open for reconstruction and the walking tour even contributes to reconstructing this space.

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[88] Michael Rothberg, "Introduction", in: *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization,* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 3.
[89] Rothberg, "Introduction", 3-4.
[90] Rothberg, "Introduction", 5.
[91] Rothberg, "Introduction", 5.
[92] Rothberg, "Introduction", 5.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I did a close reading of the 'Traces of Slavery in Utrecht' project to find out what this project does to the remembrance of the history of slavery. I analyzed the 'Traces of Slavery in Utrecht' walking guide, a small bilingual paper guide that describes a route through the city center passing by different places like public buildings, houses, facing bricks, etc. that had a role in the history of slavery. I explained how, in the Dutch context, the existence of race and racism is denied, and therefore it is difficult to bring up subjects such as colonialism and slavery since these histories are interwoven with and based upon racist ideologies. The 'traces' in the project confront the Dutch self-perception as it shows that traces of the colonial history are right under people's nose, as I showed with the example of the lamp post. The tour is starting a process of remembering the history of slavery and it educates people about a history that is not discussed. In the process of remembering, the walking tour and walking guide show a relationality between visibility and invisibility and thereby 'do' something to how we remember the history of slavery. While the walking tour guides people to buildings that have always been there and have always been visible - the tour takes people to the lamp post, which they might have passed multiple times - they are guided now to see that the lamp post and other traces are connected to a history that is often left unspoken.

The walking tour shines its lights on a history that, in the Dutch context, has been not counted as true or not been acknowledged and that has been left in the dark, and thereby it confirms its existence. It also makes visible the stories of people that have been perceived as invisible. By shining light on these stories, their reality is confirmed. The tour also educates people on how, in the context of the Netherlands, there is a history of slavery and colonialism and how actual, physical traces can still be found nowadays. In this way, the project functions as a form of haunting. This project can make people feel overwhelmed and look different at the places that have been familiar to them. Thus, the Traces of Slavery project is the start of a process of remembering. It confronts the attendees with certain traces that prove the importance of the history of slavery it demonstrates that this history still has a certain significance today. It represents the stories of a history and of people that have always been invisible in dominant discourses and structures within Dutch society.

Chapter 4. Case II House 'De Moriaan'

In the previous chapter, I showed how the 'Traces of Slavery in Utrecht' project is starting a process of remembrance. Besides, in this chapter, I will zoom in on one specific building that is part of the walking route of this project. The specific building I have chosen for my analysis is called 'De Moriaan'. Something to the appearance of the building has changed and I want to uncover how the building represents the history of slavery in Utrecht what this representation does to the remembrance of this history. My goal is to find out how the representation of the connection between House 'De Moriaan' and the history of slavery and colonialism affects the remembrance of this history. Thus, what I will show in this chapter is: what does House 'De Moriaan', which is part of the 'Traces of Slavery in Utrecht' project, do to the remembrance of this history and how this differs from the entirety of the project. I do not want to represent the one case as a 'good' representation of the memory of slavery and the other case as a 'bad' one. Instead, as a postcolonial researcher, I want to look into the question of how to read these recent changes on the house. I am going to do a close reading of the house and by doing a discourse analysis, I want to identify what this representation of the history of slavery does, concerning the remembrance of the history of slavery and how that influences its context.
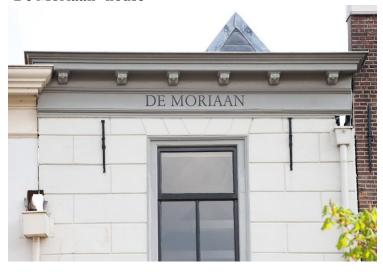
'De Moriaan' house

Figure 2: House 'De Moriaan'[93]

Figure 3: A 'gaper'[94]

'De Moriaan' is the name of a white, monumental house at the oldest canal in Utrecht, at Oudegracht 18. The name Moriaan is painted and displayed on the front of the building, on the cornice just below the roof, in large letters - visible to everyone. The house has not always been called 'De Moriaan'. As historical records show, in 1589 the house had a sign with a name that resembled this one: 'Moriaenshooft' ('Moriaan's head). The building then has been called 'De Moriaan' since 1676 and it is very likely that it also carried a symbol of a 'black gaper' at the front for many years, since this building used to be a pharmacy and the place on the building where the gaper used to be is still there.[95] A *gaper* (a literal translation would be 'yawner') is a stone or wooden figure of a head, displayed with an open mouth, sometimes with a pill laying on his tongue. Figure 3 shows an example of such a 'gaper'. In the 16th and 17th century it was used as a sign tied to different shops in the Netherlands, like bakeries or breweries, but from the end of the 18th century, gapers were specifically used to indicate pharmacies and drugstores. The oriental gaper was used as a sign to indicate that medicines, or even bread or other types of foods, were sold in that place. The origin of gapers is still unknown, but there are different theories; some scholars say it was used to drive away evil spirits, and other scholars argue that the figure represents medicine men in the colonies.[96] But,

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[93] Source: 'Sporen van Slavernij Utrecht', https://sporenvanslavernijutrecht.nl/activiteiten/landing/de-verrijking-van-utrecht/oudegracht/oudegracht-18/, accessed on May 24, 2020.

[94] Source: 'Sporen van Slavernij Utrecht', https://sporenvanslavernijutrecht.nl/activiteiten/landing/de-verrijking-van-utrecht/oudegracht/oudegracht-18/, accessed on June 22, 2020.

[95] Esther Captain, *Wandelgids sporen van slavernij in Utrecht / Traces of slavery in Utrecht: a walking guide*, (Utrecht: centre for the humanities, Utrecht University, 2012), 48.

[96] Allison Blakely, *Blacks in the Dutch World: The Evolution of Racial Imagery in a Modern Society*, (Indiana University Press, 2001), 54-57.

most likely, gaper heads were used and depicted in this way, because people and customers connected their appearance to the places where medicines or the products used and sold in the stores came from.[97] This demonstrates the mentality of that colonial time; people perceived oriental characters as coming from the place where they accumulated their products, as only being useful because of the products their lands had to offer. The appearance of the gaper head could differ, but the most known gaper is the one with an 'Eastern', Oriental appearance. The 'Oriental gaper' knew two categories: the 'Muzelman' (old word for Muslim), which were depicted through an olive-skin and a turban and the 'Moor' (old word to indicate a person from West-Africa), which was recognizable through the black skin of the gaper. They were presented in these ways, due to the origin of the medicines that were made available in these pharmacies or drugstores. In that time, a lot of medicines came from trade with the Ottoman empire, which included North Africa and Asia. So, the appearance of the gapers represented the origin of the medicines.[98] Aleth Lorne a restorer, and preserver of polychromed statues has done research on the gapers in the 'Zuiderzeemuseum'. She found that through the layers of paint of the 'Moor' gapers, that their skin tone was lighter at first, but that it has been painted darker over time.[99] This, again, shows the dominant ways of thinking and ideologies, with its origin in colonialism, present in the 18th and 19th centuries. Gapers are unique to the area in and around the Netherlands, they cannot be found anywhere else in the world.[100] The gaper on 'De Moriaan' is not there anymore, but the place on the building where it used to be can still be found.

As I already mentioned before, the house 'De Moriaan' is part of the walking route of the 'Traces of Slavery in Utrecht' project which I discussed in my last chapter. One of these references to the history of slavery was the gaper that used to be on the building, and the other reference is the word that is written on the facade of the house: 'De Moriaan', as shown in the picture above. The word 'Moriaan' is related to the word 'moor'. In the 16th century, the words 'moriaan' and 'moor' were used to talk about people of color or people from 'the East' in general. After that, the meaning of the words was a bit vague; it could be used to refer to a person with a certain skin color or with a certain religion. But, in the 18th century, the word

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[97] Blakely, "Blacks in the Dutch World", 58.

[98] Het Nationaal Farmaceutisch Museum, Het achterste van de tong, Het Nationaal Farmaceutisch Museum, accessed via: https://www.nationaalfarmaceutischmuseum.nl/artikelen/het-achterste-van-de-tong on May 24, 2020.

[99] Aleth Lorne, 'Gerestaureerd met open mond. De gapers in het Zuiderzeemuseum', Het Peperhuis 8 (2004), 16-17.

[100] Captain, *Sporen van Slavernij*, 48.

'moor' started to replace the word 'neger', which derived from the Spanish word for black, 'negros', to describe black, African people.[101] Therefore, the use of the word 'Moor' or 'Moriaan' demonstrates how ideologies connected to colonialism were interwoven within the Dutch language.

As I explained above, House 'De Moriaan' is connected to the history of slavery and colonialism for different reasons. However, something about the appearance of the house changed over the last few years. The facade of the house, which had the name 'De Moriaan' painted on it, has been painted over. As can be seen below in Figure 4, the facade is now totally grey and does not have the word 'De Moriaan' written on it anymore.

Figure 4: House 'De Moriaan' - May 2020[102]

This change to the facade of the house changes something to the representation of the history of slavery. The Traces of Slavery project did not get any information on why the facade of the house is overpainted. It is precisely the lack of information that makes me interested in analyzing this house and connect it to the question of how traces of slavery in Utrecht are remembered.

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[101] Captain, *Sporen van Slavernij,* 52.
[102] Picture taken by Anne Vereijken, May 16, 2020.

Silence

As I discussed above, the facade of House 'De Moriaan' has been recently overpainted. I am interested in this because this act of overpainting changes something to the representation of the house and its connection to the history of slavery. The word 'Moriaan' is covered up and is no longer readable. I want to argue that by overpainting the word 'Moriaan', the silence that is created around the Dutch colonial history and the history of slavery, which I explained in chapter 2, is reinforced because it makes it more difficult to find the vocabulary to talk about this history. By covering up the name of the house, the connection between the house and the history of colonialism and slavery gets lost, which makes it even more difficult for this history to be discussed. The conditions to talk about the connection to this history do no longer exist because the 'trace' of this connection is gone. The memory is being dismembered and dissociated. Therefore, a moment of aphasia occurs, since, due to the absence of the word on the facade, a difficulty in finding the right words and concepts emerges. When the conditions to talk about this memory are no longer there, a moment of, what Ann Laura Stoler calls, 'colonial aphasia' follows. According to Stoler, Professor of Anthropology and Historical Studies, "aphasia is a dismembering, a difficulty speaking, a difficulty generating a vocabulary that associates appropriate words and concepts with appropriate things. Aphasia in its many forms describes a difficulty retrieving both conceptual and lexical vocabularies and, most important, a difficulty comprehending what is spoken."[103] A moment of colonial aphasia appears when the memory of colonial history is being dismembered and is not able to be discussed due to a lack of vocabulary and therefore a lack of understanding. The concealment of the word 'Moriaan' therefore creates a lack of vocabulary to talk about this word and its connection to the history of slavery and colonialism. For that reason, the topic of slavery and colonialism is harder to discuss, because the conditions for its expression no longer exist. According to Luisa Passerini, writer, and professor of history, "we cannot look for something we have lost unless we remember it at least in part"[104] Passerini demonstrates that silences can exist due to oblivion, it being mentally repressed, or because "the conditions for its expression no longer/do not yet exist.".[105] The overpainting of the word 'De Moriaan' creates a kind of silence that is described by Passerini. The word 'Moriaan' is not there anymore, so the conditions to talk about the word and its connection to a history of racism and colonialism do

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[103] Ann Laura Stoler, "Colonial aphasia: Race and disabled histories in France." *Public Culture* 23.1 (2011), 125.

[104] Luisa Passerini, *Memory and Utopia: The Primacy of Intersubjectivity,* (Oxon: Routledge, 2007), 16.

[105] Passerini, *Memory and Utopia*, 15-16.

no longer exist and for that reason the act of overpainting reinforces the silence around colonialism and slavery that already exists in the Dutch context.

As I have discussed earlier in the chapter, we cannot say for certain what the reasons are for overpainting. Since the history of slavery and colonialism is entangled with a lot of violence, (daily) confrontation with this violence can be very hard for certain people in society. Therefore, the reason for overpainting the word 'Moriaan' could be an act to finally stop having this representation of violence visible. It could be an act of taking away the pain of people that get confronted with the representation of this history. We do not know if this is the reason behind the act of overpainting, but I still argue that it is important to highlight this act because such invisiblizing of traces as it happens reinforces the silence around the topic of colonialism and slavery and the creation of a certain silence cannot be just seen as a passive and innocent act. Diana Gittins, a social historian, argues in an important yet disconnected intervention on the question of 'silence' that silences are, in the widest sense, political and silence and power work hand in hand.[106] As she explains: "Silence is not only a noun, it is also a verb. To silence, to censor: not just individuals, but whole groups over time have been left largely unacknowledged, unseen, unheard because a dominant group, or the discourse of a dominant group, defines individuals or groups as 'irrelevant' or unworthy of being remembered."[107] I am using this quote by Gittins to show that even though the reason behind the act of overpainting is ambivalent and unknown, it reinforces a certain silence that is created by a dominant group and it can, therefore, allocate other individuals or groups as unheard and undeserving of being remembered. As Gittins argues, silence is a verb; it is active and doing something and therefore it is not innocent. Thus, in an analysis that engages with the question of how are traces of slavery in Utrecht remembered, the act of overpainting of 'De Moriaan' is an act of creating an ambivalence about what it does. On the one hand, it finally stops the confrontation with the violence that is connected to the history of slavery and colonialism, and on the other hand, it reinforces the silence around the topic of slavery and colonialism that is already there in the Dutch context.

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[106] Diana Gittins, "Silences: The Case of a Psychiatric Hospital", in: *Narrative and Genre: Contexts and Types of Communication,* ed. by Mary Chamberlain and Paul Thompson, (Oxon, Routledge, 2017), 1-2.
[107] Gittins, "Silences", 2.

'Moriaan'/'moor and historical amnesia

The name, 'De Moriaan', is concealed with a layer of paint on the facade of the house. As I explained at the beginning of this chapter, the word 'Moriaan' is related to the word 'moor', which was used in the 18th century to describe black, African people. Jan Neverdeen Pieterse, argues in his book 'Wit over Zwart', which is about the representations of black (African) people in Western popular culture, that already in the 17th century de word 'Moor' was already associated with black servants and in paintings or other visual images, the 'Moor' servants were often depicted as little and their black skin contrasted with that of their white owners.[108] The word is not common anymore and it is not used anymore to describe black people. People got more aware of the racist connotations of the word 'moor' and it created discussions among Dutch society. An example of this is the word 'moorkop', which was used to describe a chocolate pastry. In 2011 Quinsy Gario wore a shirt with the text 'Black Peet is Racism' written on it and, together with other activists, Gario got arrested and this received (international) media coverage.[109] From that moment onwards, the Black Peet debate got more and more attention and people started to become more aware of the racist connotations of the word 'moor' and started to ask bakers and supermarkets to change the name of the pastry.[110] This example shows that it is important for people to be reminded of the word and its connection to a history of colonialism and slavery and, therefore, to racist ideologies. The overpainting of the word 'Moriaan' makes it more difficult to remind people that the word and its racist connotations are still there. It is harder to explain to people that the word has a history that is connected to racist systems like slavery and colonialism. People have always known what the word 'moor' means, but they did not mind it, because as Gloria Wekker argues, in the Dutch context, whiteness is seen as so normal.[111] She says: "Forgetting, glossing over, supposed color blindness, an inherent and natural superiority vis-à-vis people of color, assimilating: those are, broadly speaking, the main Dutch models that are in operation where interaction with racialized/ethnicized others is concerned."[112] So, even though people may know about the racist connotations the word 'moor' has, whiteness is seen

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[108] Jan Nederveen Pieterse, *Wit over zwart: Beelden van Afrika en zwarten in de westerse populaire cultuur*, (KIT Publishers, 1990), 126. Accessed on June 22, 2020 via: https://www.dbnl.org/tekst/nede008wito01_01/nede008wito01_01_0009.php

[109] "Anti-Zwarte Piet activists arrest prompts new debate", DutchNews, 17 november 2011. Accessed 31 oktober 2019, via https://www.dutchnews.nl/features/2011/11/anti-zwarte_piet_activists_arr/

[110] Till Behne, "Is het woord 'moorkop' nu echt racistisch?", AD, February 8, 2020. Accessed on June 22, 2020 via: https://www.ad.nl/den-haag/is-het-woord-moorkop-nu-echt-racistisch~a0b0ccbb/

[111] Wekker, "White Innocence", 2.

[112] Wekker, "White Innocence", 15.

as so ordinary, that people may forget about it, or downgrade it, or they do not mind, because they might feel superior over people of color anyways. By overpainting the house, the word gets concealed and people cannot be made aware of the fact that the word is still present in our current day society. This can create historic amnesia; when people start to forget about the word and its connotations, they might also forget that these histories and ideologies still influence society today.

Even though it is important to remember the racist ideologies connected to the word 'Moriaan' and the act of overpainting makes it harder to do this, this act of overpainting can also take away the pain that is connected to the history of slavery and to the ones living in in the afterlife of slavery'. Saidiya Hartman coins the term 'afterlife of slavery' in her book 'Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route' in order to explicate how slavery is not over yet and how it still has its impact on the lives of black people living in America. Slavery still has an impact on its victims and descendants of its victims today. Besides that, racist ideologies still influence today's society, which is demonstrated by the word 'moorkop', describing a black chocolate pastry, but also by traditions like 'Zwarte Piet'. Hartman says:

> Slavery had established a measure of man and a ranking of life and worth that has yet to be undone. If slavery persists as an issue in the political life of black America, it is not because of an antiquarian obsession with bygone days or the burden of a too-long memory, but because black lives are still imperiled and devalued by a racial calculus and a political arithmetic that were entrenched centuries ago. This is the afterlife of slavery […].[113]

Even though this research is not situated in and is not about the context of America, the situation that Hartman describes can also be applied to the Dutch context. As Wekker argues, the superiority of whiteness is still very much embedded within Dutch society and slavery and its history still have an impact on (descendants of) its victims and even society in general, today.

Also, Christina Sharpe in her significant intervention into the field of Radical Black studies, came up with a term to describe the influence of slavery on the current day society. In her book *In the wake,* she describes that what she means by 'the wake', or what Hartman

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[113] Saidiya Hartman, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route,* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux Inc.), 6.

would call living the afterlife of slavery, is inheriting the non/status of Black being, it means "living the history and present of terror, from slavery to the present.".[114] She uses this term to understand how "slavery's violences emerge within the contemporary conditions of spatial, legal, psychic, material, and other dimensions of Black non/being as well as in Black modes of resistance."[115] So, both Hartman and Sharpe describe how the afterlife of slavery is still going on in the present; even though it may be something that happened in the past, its effects are still there.

By covering up the word 'Moriaan', the confrontation with the "history and present of terror", as Sharpe describes, it has been taken away. Even though the act of overpainting might contribute to the erasure of the history of slavery from public consciousness more because people will not be able to talk about this house in relation to the history of slavery, it can also be more comfortable for people living in the wake. By erasing the word 'Moriaan', people living in the wake and affected by the afterlife of slavery do not have to be confronted with the pain and violence connected to this history and the afterlife of this history.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I analyzed House 'De Moriaan'. It is part of the 'Traces of Slavery in Utrecht' project and it has references to the history of slavery due to the word 'De Moriaan' written on the façade of the house. The word 'Moriaan' is related to the word 'moor', used in the 18th century, to describe black, African people. Something about the appearance of the house changed, which made me interested in analyzing the house: the facade of the house has been painted over. This changed something to the representation of the history of slavery.

In this chapter, I argued that the overpainting of the word Moriaan contributes to, and even reinforces, the silence that is created around the Dutch colonial history and the history of slavery. By overpainting the name of the house, the connection between the house and the history of colonialism and slavery gets lost, which makes it even more difficult for this history to be discussed. The conditions to talk about this connection and this history do no longer exist because the 'trace' of this connection is gone. The connection between House 'De Moriaan' and its reference to the colonial past and the history of slavery is no longer there,

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[114] Sharpe, *In the Wake,* 15.
[115] Sharpe, *In the Wake,* 14.

therefore it creates silence. Overpainting the house creates silence, and creating silence is not an innocent act.

In my analysis of the house, that engages with the question of how are traces of slavery in Utrecht remembered and how this affects Utrecht's current day society, the act of overpainting of 'De Moriaan' is an act of creating an ambivalence about what it does. On the one hand, it finally stops the confrontation with the violence that is connected to the history of slavery and colonialism, and on the other hand, it reinforces the silence around the topic of slavery and colonialism that is already there in the Dutch context. By erasing the word Moriaan', people living in the wake and affected by the afterlife of slavery do not have to be confronted with the pain and violence connected to this history and to the afterlife of this history. Yet, it is still important for people to be reminded of the word and its connection to a history of colonialism and slavery and, therefore, to racist ideologies. The overpainting of the word 'Moriaan' makes it more difficult to remember people that the word and its racist connotations are still there. Thus, on the one hand, the overpainting of the house reinforces a certain silence around the topic of slavery and colonialism that is still present in the current Dutch society, and on the other hand, this act makes it easier for people living with the effects of slavery today.

Conclusion

In this thesis, I analyzed two case studies to find out how the history of slavery is remembered in Utrecht and how that shapes contemporary society. To answer my research question, *How is the history of slavery remembered in Utrecht and how does this shape the contemporary society of Utrecht?,* I analyzed the 'Traces of Slavery in Utrecht' project and House 'De Moriaan'. In chapter 1, I showed that the topic around the Dutch involvement in slavery and colonialism has been and is very relevant at the moment. In chapter 2, I demonstrated that there are different approaches to 'memory'. Following Rothberg's definition of multidirectional memory, I explained how memories can be negotiative and productive in public space together. Besides that, I followed Wekker and El-Tayeb to demonstrate that, in the Dutch context, there is a self-conception of the Netherlands as a space free of race and racism, which makes it harder for certain memories to integrate than others, because these memories keep irritating this self-conception. I also tried to project that memories are not just there or not there and that representations of the past are not just remembered or forgotten, but that powers and discourses influence how representations of the past are remembered.

In chapter 3, I did a close reading of the 'Traces of Slavery in Utrecht' project to find out what this project does to the remembrance of the history of slavery. I analyzed the 'Traces of Slavery in Utrecht' walking guide and explained how, in the Dutch context, the existence of race and racism is denied, and therefore it is difficult to bring up subjects such as colonialism and slavery since these histories are interwoven with and based upon racist ideologies. Therefore, the memory of colonialism and slavery is an emerging memory, a memory that is hard to integrate because it keeps on irritating a society's self-perception. The 'traces' in the project confront the Dutch self-perception, as it shows that traces of the colonial history are right under people's noses, which I demonstrated with the example of the lamp post. The tour reveals a different side of history. It shines its lights on a history that, in the Dutch context, has not been acknowledged and that has been left in the dark. The tour educates people how, in the context of the Netherlands, there is a history of slavery and colonialism and how actual, physical traces can still be found nowadays. In this way, the project functions as a form of haunting. It is not only revealing a history of abusive systems of power and making visible what has been invisible for all this time, but it also tells stories that have been in the dark for so long for people that have not been represented. The Traces of Slavery project is starting a process of remembrance and it can make people feel

overwhelmed and also look different at the places that have been familiar to them. It shows how literal traces of the history of slavery can still be found nowadays and therefore it indicates how this history still has an impact on our contemporary society

In the fourth chapter, I analyzed House 'De Moriaan', which is part of the 'Traces of Slavery in Utrecht' project. It is connected to the history of slavery due to the word 'De Moriaan' written on the façade of the house. The word 'Moriaan' is related to the word 'moor', used in the 18th century, to describe black, African people. However, the facade of the house has been painted over. This changed something to the representation of the memory of the history of slavery. In this chapter, I argued that the overpainting of the word Moriaan contributes to, and even reinforces, the silence that is created around the Dutch colonial history and the history of slavery. By overpainting the name of the house, the connection between the house and the history of colonialism and slavery gets lost, which makes it even more difficult for this history to be discussed. As Hartman and Sharpe argue, this history still shapes today's society. Therefore, on the one hand, the overpainting of the house reinforces a certain silence around the topic of slavery and colonialism that is still present in the current Dutch society, and on the other hand, this act makes it easier for people living with the effects of slavery today.

To conclude, how is the history of slavery remembered in Utrecht, and how does this shape contemporary society? Due to dominant discourses in the Netherlands and to the Dutch self-perception, this history is hard to remember. There is a certain silence around this topic. The 'Traces of Slavery project' that is initiated in Utrecht is starting a process of remembering; it explains through traces that there is an important history to remember and that this history still matters today. By analyzing House 'De Moriaan', I realized that remembering a history that is connected to violence can be very hard; by taking away traces of slavery it reinforces a certain silence that is already existing within the Dutch society, but it also makes it easier for the ones that are always confronted with the pain of this violent history. My research does not try to give an answer to the question of what a correct representation or remembrance of this history should be like, but I do hope that my analysis shows that this representation is always contingent and open to change. Besides that, I hope that this thesis can give insights on how representations of history are never neutral and how they still influence contemporary society.

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