



## SPECIAL SERIES CALL FOR PAPERS

# *Decolonisation and Heritage in History Education*

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**Expressions of interest due:** 30 June 2026

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In recent decades, heritage has become a field of political and pedagogical dispute. Far from being a neutral object, heritage is produced through processes of selection, legitimization, museumization, conservation, global heritage preservation and transnational circulation of narratives, objects and practices. These processes often reinforce colonial, nationalist, religious, class and gender hierarchies and silence acts of past and present violence (Sera Shriar, 2023; Sarkar, 2024). A decolonial agenda for history and heritage education therefore requires revisiting how interpretations of heritage are constructed, which memories are activated or erased, who defines “heritage communities”, and which pedagogies can reopen the meanings of the past to produce historical justice in historical understanding, interpretation and access to knowledge and more equitable forms of knowledge production (Sera-Shriar, 2023; Bloembergen and Eickhoff, 2019; Chakrabarty, 2008; Smith, 2006; Sarkar, 2024).

In this special issue, decolonisation is understood as a critical historiographical and educational process that questions inherited epistemologies, narrative frameworks and institutional practices, particularly in relation to the ways heritage is interpreted, taught and discussed in schools, museums and other educational settings, and as an ongoing, relational and context-dependent process rather than a fixed model or single methodological approach (Walsh & Mignolo, 2018; Tuck & Yang, 2012).

The close relationship between heritage and museums or other educational and heritage settings is a central point, as Maranda (2021) points out, museum collections, classificatory regimes and modes of display in many institutions embody some of the most visible institutional legacies of the era of “active” colonialism. One of the central themes is how diversity related to colonised people, and the representation of violence against them, is reflected. In this context, museum education and heritage education increasingly intersect where exhibitions, collections and archives are used as sites for critical historical inquiry, interpretation and discussion.

This special issue proposes a dialogue between history and heritage education from a decolonial perspective and draws on recent contributions to heritage studies that have highlighted its nature as a global and local process, marked by exchange, exclusion and struggles for legitimacy (Bloembergen and Eickhoff, 2019; Chakrabarty, 2008). The fundamental objective of this special issue is to propose frameworks and methodologies for critical heritage education that include reflections such as re-readings of archives, criticism of tradition, risks of partisan state appropriation and exclusionary pasts (Smith, 2006; Sarkar, 2024; Sera Shriar, 2023).

The decolonial approach to history and heritage education on which this special issue is based

does not merely involve adding voices or expanding narratives; it also entails **(i)** reconfiguring power relations in the production of historical heritage knowledge: who interprets, who narrates, what is preserved, what objects, memories and languages are restored, and how erasures are repaired (Bloembergen and Eickhoff, 2019); **(ii)** recognising debates about challenging policies of erasure (Sarkar, 2024); and, **(iii)** displacing Eurocentric narratives and the need to recontextualise, open archives, democratise access and move towards shared authority over heritage resources (Sera Shriar, 2023; Bloembergen and Eickhoff, 2019; Chakrabaty, 2008; Smith, 2006).

Heritage education, from the perspective of this special issue, is oriented towards a critical, creative and non-passive interpretation of tradition, capable of recognising plurality, complexity and historical paradoxes (Sarkar, 2024).

Taken together, the contributions to this special issue seek to advance current debates on decolonisation and heritage education by examining how historical knowledge is produced, interpreted and taught across different educational and institutional contexts. By focusing on educational practices in schools, museums and other heritage settings, the issue aims to explore how critical, reflexive and dialogic approaches to heritage can contribute to more plural understandings of the past and to more equitable ways of engaging with memory in the present.

Articles in this series will:

- Explore how educational practices can challenge dominant narratives, reopen archives and support more plural and reflective engagements with the past.
- Strengthen the engagement with informal and non-formal learning while keeping student learning at the centre.
- Examine how decolonial commitments are translated into sustainable educational practices and institutional change within schools, museums and heritage organisations
- Encourage debates on the social role of history education, civic identity and justice.
- To make visible perspectives and strategies for research and teaching in the field of social science didactics.
- Propose debates and open reflections on the hegemony of topics and debates in the teaching of school history.

## References

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