

Singing the Dutch: An Extended Imagological Approach to Constructions of “Dutchness” in Late Eighteenth-Century Political Songs

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Abstract

Throughout history, songs have been considered effective instruments to strengthen the formation of collective identities. Eighteenth-century Dutch songwriters engaged with this idea in their striving for national unity. Political songs from that period employ several tropes, and the music often reinforces such images through musical imagery and intertextual references. Moreover, the imagined identities voiced in the songs might have become embodied identities through the performative act of singing. Therefore, for an investigation of the construction of collective identities in songs, the imagological approach can be expanded to musical imagery and take into account cognitive theories explaining the effects of singing.

Keywords

song culture – intertextuality – communities – national identity – politics

The agency attributed to songs¹ in many times and places throughout history builds on their affectiveness and their mobility across all layers of society. They have been seen as powerful tools in particular to achieve the formation of *collective identities*. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the use of national categories in literature was closely linked to a political

1 Defining “song” is a complex venture and a definition will always be very much dependent on the specific time and context. Song is a multimodal genre that cannot be limited to literary or musical characteristics. Defining features of Dutch political songs around 1800 are: a simple text, a singable melody, and a textual and/or musical content that can be situated within a political ideology. Furthermore, the corpus consists of “popular songs” rather than what would be termed “art songs” (such as the Lied, cantata, or aria).

striving for national unity (Corbineau-Hoffmann 2013; Jensen 2016; Rutten and Van Kalmthout 2018), and the (literary) genre of song was considered a useful instrument to strengthen the formation of (national) identities (Hambridge 2015; van der Haven 2016). Songwriters engaged with this idea in their use of national categories in their work, which was closely linked to a political pursuit of national unity. The Netherlands were a culturally fragmented region in crisis in the years around 1800, and the call for a stable and unified nation was strong. In political songs from this period, the texts employ several *clichés* and *topoi*² associated with the Dutch nation, and the music often reinforces such nationalistic *images*³ through musical imagery and intertextual⁴ references.

As the editors point out in the introduction to this volume, music, especially songs, have consistently been a popular medium “for the expression and dissemination of nationalist ideals” (Leerssen 2014, 606). In the combination of text and music found in song, *stereotypes*⁵ of the nation were emphasized to articulate a national identity. In this article, I will discuss how images of “Dutchness” can be recognized in the corpus of late eighteenth-century Dutch political songs. As the corpus consists of many songs, I will use a case study to illustrate my argument. The song “Vaderlandsliefde” (Love for the Fatherland), contains several common tropes of a “Dutch character”—freedom-loving, courageous, invincible—in concrete images such as: the fatherland soil, self-sacrificing heroes, and brave Batavians.⁶ It also uses more implicit means to

2 I follow Beller and Leerssen in the terminologies they propose in *Imagology* (2007). “Cliché” refers to the “specific attributes of a given national image” (Beller 2007d, 442), which “never describe reality but are mere forms of rhetorical argument” (Beller 2007a, 297). “Topos” is used to distinguish the “thought patterns that structure a given text” (Beller 2007d, 442).

3 The term “image” is used to refer to “the mental or discursive representation of a person, group, ethnicity or ‘nation’” (Leerssen 2007a, 342).

4 In this context, I use “intertextuality” to refer to interconnections between (song) texts but also between melodies or (song) texts and melodies.

5 “A stereotype is a generalization about a group of people in which incidental characteristics are assigned to virtually all members of the group” (Beller 2007c, 429). “Stereotypes are fiction” (ibid., 430) underlying the literary construction of national characters.

6 The “mythical” Batavians were seen as virtuous, connected to nature, freedom-loving, invincible, and emancipated (cf. Haitsma Mulier 1996; Teitler 1998; van der Haven 2011). Since the sixteenth century, references to this ancient Germanic tribe—which inhabited the territory of the current Netherlands around the time of Christ—played an important role in the historical awareness and early modern historiography of the Dutch. In the Batavian myth, Batavians were presented as role models whose society values were a touchstone for contemporary society in historical, political, and moral regard (Haitsma Mulier 1996, 347). The story was often revived in situations of crisis and political turmoil, as in the eighteenth century when people searched for the moral reasons for the economic and cultural recession they were experiencing (ibid., 359). The thought was that if they could regain the virtuous and

evoke a shared national consciousness, such as allusions to the concept of time to self-referentially reactivate the historical courage of the Batavian ancestor in the eighteenth-century singer. Such tropes, images, and references are typical for Dutch political songs around 1800. Furthermore, “Vaderlandsliefde” is a *contrafact*,⁷ which establishes an interesting relationship between text and music. The melody is no exact musical representation of the texts’ content; rather—through some remarkable incongruities—the music emphasizes certain aspects in the text. Moreover, by referring to the love song “Mijn lief, zo schoon als ‘t morgenlicht” (My love, as beautiful as the morning light), the melody creates a strong parallel between personal love and patriotic love.

In my analysis of songs such as “Vaderlandsliefde,” I extend the imagological approach, which has until now mainly been focused on (literary) texts, to an approach that factors in the interplay between text and music, taking into account both musical images and intertextual references emerging through *contrafact*, and analysing them in relation to the textual images. On the basis of such an analysis, I examine how an imagined Dutch national identity voiced in song might have become an embodied identity through the act of singing. “Vaderlandsliefde” was a Patriot song published at a moment—in 1792—in which the Patriots⁸ were not welcome in a Netherlands that was ruled by a stadtholder⁹ which they opposed. Hence, it could even be read as a resistance song, bringing together the scattered *imagined community* of Patriots in the space of the song: even if they were not singing together in a physical *embodied community*, the singers knew that others were singing the same song in other places (and/or moments). After the Batavian Revolt in 1795, it was possible to sing the song in public again, which (finally) enabled the Patriots to come together as a real and embodied community in a physical space.

Through the act of singing, images of collectivity and love for the fatherland, articulated in the texts of such songs, may have evoked corresponding feelings

civic character traits of the Batavians, that would be the unifying element of the people that could remedy the decline (*ibid.*).

7 *Contrafactum* (a common practice at the time) is the method of writing a new text to an already existing melody (Grijp 1991, 23) and can be regarded as a form of intertextuality.

8 The Patriots were a democratically and republican-oriented political movement emerging in the Netherlands in the 1770s, opposing the Orangists who supported the reign of the stadtholder. To avoid confusion between “Patriot” and “patriotism” (national loyalty), I capitalize the former. The Patriots propagated their ideology as the only “true patriotism.”

9 The stadtholder was the head of state during the last decades of the Dutch Republic (1747–1795). In 1747 this function had been declared hereditary. In 1751 Willem v became the stadtholder. The Patriots blamed him for the downfall of the Republic because of his indecisive government, close relationship to England, and absolutist status.

of collectivity in the singers. Therefore, I also consider cognitive theories that offer explanations for the bodily mechanisms behind the construction of communities to be relevant in understanding the crucial role of performance in the development of communities in songs and through singing. Songs thus provide us with important sources in the study of the cultural construction of national characters, both in history and today—not only because of the images they evoke with their text and music but also because of their inherently performative character. The imagological approach can therefore be expanded to musical imagery and seek dialogue with other disciplines in its investigation of the formation of collective national identities.

1 Singing Communities

Songs were not only a prominent part of the eighteenth-century Dutch literary landscape, songs were also a means of communication, and singing was an important part of everyday life (Veldhorst 2009; van der Poel, Grijp, and van Anrooij 2016) that happened on every possible occasion: at events and festivities, in societies of all kinds, at work and in the pub. Research on European political song cultures of that period has indicated that a key aspect of songs was to evoke feelings of collectivity and unity—especially in times of instability (Jensen 2020; Rigney 2014). Therefore, social identity or group identity is a central concept in the consideration of the role of songs in the construction of collective identities, such as a Dutch national identity. Singing is primarily a social activity, performed by groups of people, and singing together can lead to feelings of belonging to a particular group and may therefore contribute to the formation and maintenance of a social identity (van der Poel, Grijp, and van Anrooij 2016, 4). Such a collective identity can be approached as an imagined community, in the sense of Benedict Anderson's definition of the nation as an "imagined political community" (1983, 5–6). Anderson argued that the nation is always imagined because the members of the group—that a nation essentially is—will never get to know all the other members. As a counterpart of the imagined community, I propose the embodied community (cf. Rigney 2014), which can be seen as the physical substantiation of the imagined community and comes into existence as people start to act on the idea of the imagined community. An imagined community can thus consist of several embodied communities that exist separately from each other in different moments and spaces (but come together in the imagined community).

A similar idea can be recognized in the distinction between primary and secondary groups made by Ernst Klusen in his theory of singing (1989). In a

primary group all members know each other and act together (ibid., 162). This concept overlaps with the notion of the embodied community. Secondary groups consist of people who share an ideal or belief or are otherwise linked together, without necessarily being in each other's presence (ibid.), a concept similar to the imagined community. In primary groups, people sing songs together in each other's presence; in secondary groups they do sing the same songs, but not necessarily in the same moment and/or place. In the act of singing in such a secondary group, the singers are—even though they do not know or hear each other—connected through an awareness that somewhere and sometime others are singing the same songs. The *idea* of collectivity is thus crucial in the formation of groups (both primary and secondary). Political songs of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries offered a foundation for the articulation of such a collectivity in their text and music.

Early modern songwriters thus thought of songs as having identity-establishing effects that could create communities through evoking feelings of community (van der Haven 2016, 756). In the context of eighteenth-century affect discourses on sympathy and enthusiasm, and theories of the qualities and effects of music and verse of that time, just listening to a song, with for example a patriotic message, would already ignite feelings of love for the fatherland in the listener (ibid., 755). The Swiss philosopher Johann Georg Sulzer wrote about song in his *Allgemeine Theorie der Schönen Künste*: “not the amusement of the ear, the admiration of the art [...]” is of importance for songs, but their “moving effect” (Sulzer [1771/1774] 2004, 2676).¹⁰ Regarding literary song, he argues that by focusing on a specific “passionate feeling,” the song can “permeate and occupy the entire soul” with this affect (ibid., 2658–2659).¹¹ Other influential philosophers and poets of the time such as Anthony Ashley Cooper (the third Earl of Shaftesbury), Charles Batteux, and Adam Smith published about the “infectiousness” of feelings in collective practices too.¹² It can therefore be assumed that songwriters at that time were convinced that when songs were sung collectively (in a primary group), the imagined community articulated in the song might become an embodied community through the act of singing that ignited feelings of community in the singers. Through such a process, communities could be created on a local (primary and embodied)

10 “Denn hier kommt es nicht auf die Belustigung des Ohres an, nicht auf die Bewunderung der Kunst; nicht auf die Ueberraschung durch künstliche Harmonien und schwere Modulationen; sondern lediglich auf Rührung.” All translations in this article are my own.

11 “[...] es [das Lied] soll eine einzige leidenschaftliche Empfindung eine Zeitlang im Gemüt unterhalten und eben da durch dieselbe allmählich tiefer und tiefer einprägen, bis die ganze Seele völlig davon eingenommen und beherrscht wird.”

12 See Cooper (1733); Batteux (1746); Smith (1759).

level, which in turn could be part of a larger imagined community on an overarching (secondary, maybe even national) level. This attributed the songs with a valuable role in the construction of the Dutch national identity that songwriters (who often were politically engaged) were trying to propagate.

Contemporary support for these eighteenth-century ideas can be found in several present-day studies on cognitive mechanisms, which confirm the ideas about imagined and embodied collectivity as explained above. I will introduce three relevant mechanisms below and show how they reinforce the idea that through the performative act of singing an abstract imagined idea could become an embodied reality. The *mirror neuron system* (MNS) is a mechanism that makes a person's brain mirror the communicative signals sent by another person by creating a representation of that signal in the perceiver's brain (Molnar-Szakacs and Overy 2006, 235). In a musical experience, the MNS can stimulate the exchange of affect states between performers, and between performers and listeners. In the act of collective singing, singers (which are at the same time performer and listener) perceive the affect signals of the other singers and representations of them are created in their own brains, while they are simultaneously senders of such signals. Consequently, these affect signals are perceived twice as intensely when sung in a group, as opposed to singing alone (because in that situation there is no co-performer whose affect signals can be perceived and mirrored).

Performed music is not only perceived auditory but also visually, as movement, or "motor acts." The MNS is relevant in this regard as it also engages the motor system and thus lets the perceiver's brain mirror the motor signals that are sent by co-performers (*ibid.*, 236). This means that if singers see each other sing, they can very easily synchronize their movements and become a group moving as one—often, this even happens automatically. The model of *shared affective motion experience* (SAME) builds on this observation, and proposes that within the musical experience, which is a bodily experience, information about the physical and emotional states of the co-performer(s) is transmitted between the performers (Overy and Molnar-Szakacs 2009, 499). Thus, affect signals are connected to a bodily experience of collectivity (*ibid.*), and hence feelings of togetherness can be evoked. Interpreting collective singing as an experience in the sense of the SAME model offers another substantiation of the idea of song as an effective instrument to strengthen the formation of collective identities. A similar notion, focused on the bodily aspects of singing, can be recognized in the concept of *muscular bonding* (McNeill 1995, vi). Collective rhythmical movement, in combination with singing, creates a collective affect state of solidarity within the group (*ibid.*); that is, it constructs an

emotional community that experiences feelings of togetherness in their bodies as well as in their minds.

The third cognitive mechanism I want to refer to is *affect attunement*, which is the mutual attunement of feelings into a shared affect state (Stern 1985, 142). To understand affect attunement, it is essential to think of the musical experience as evolving in time. The persons involved attune their feelings over the course of the event and thus engage in a continuous dialogical affect-relationship with one another. Within the act of collective singing, the singers (often unconsciously) attune to each other's expressions—for example, feelings of togetherness or love for the fatherland—and that way reinforce such feelings in the course of the experience of collective singing.

The above may remind one of a theory that does not refer to these cognitive mechanisms explicitly but which is certainly based on the same ideas. *Speech act theory* ascribes certain types of words with an illocutionary force; it sees them as “speech acts” (Searle 1969) or “performatives” (Austin 1962). This means that words expressing a certain action are a way of performing that action—“doing by saying.” Applied to the case of songs, this would be “doing by singing,” implying that when singers sing about being part of a certain community, they become in fact part of that community, and are thus also embodying that community. Moreover, the community they are singing about might be larger than the community physically present. Therefore, an imagined community is created through the speech acts of singing, extending the embodied community. If, in such a group situation, we see the concept of performative utterances in relation to the mechanism of the MNS, they complement each other. And connecting all the above to collective singing, it can be assumed that when a singer sings about being part of a certain community, the singer in fact becomes part of that community and therefore embodies it. If a singing collective sings about singing collectively, that reinforces the collectivity of their group, supporting the idea of song as a powerful medium in the creation of communities.

2 Vaderlandsliefde

I will now illustrate the concepts and mechanisms explained above with a case study of the song “Vaderlandsliefde,”¹³ which provides a good example for an analysis of the construction of a national community through images

13 For the full text and English translation, see appendix.

of Dutchness in the late eighteenth century. It was published by the poet duo Petronella Moens and Bernardus Bosch in their songbook *Liederen voor het Vaderland* (Songs for the Fatherland). The central theme of this eight-stanza song about patriotic love is the soil of the fatherland.¹⁴ This soil (“grond”) reoccurs as the final word of the penultimate line of each stanza and is therefore emphasized over and over again. The final line of the stanza then thematizes something that stood on or originated from this fatherlandic soil: the cradle, Freedom (as an allegorical personification), a blooming flower. The fatherlandic soil is depicted as the ground on which the Batavian ancestors of the Dutch people lived—it is the soil where patriotic heroes died for freedom, and on which the nation that the Patriots were born in was built.

In the text, there are many parallels drawn between nature and Patriot characteristics: the fame of the Batavians blooms as opulent as the buttercup; the voice of Freedom rustles as the wind blows over the soil; the green grass sprouts from the heroes’ ashes; and flowers grow from the earth where heroes died. Nature is the igniting force behind the courage of the heroes—“natuur onstak der helden moed”—as is also shown in the cover image of the songbook (see Figure 19.1).

Figure 19.1 depicts a pastoral image, emphasizing the close connection to nature: a young woman rests under a tree, a shepherd’s crook in hand, reading (maybe even singing) a song from a broadsheet. The scene can be interpreted as depicting a *locus amoenus* (an idealized place): it presents a peaceful image alluding to the peace that is to be restored and evoking nostalgia for a past in which things were better. Such evocations of a close connection to nature have been employed consistently throughout Western culture to remind one of the lost “good old days” (Leerssen 2007b, 407), and it is therefore not surprising that they can be encountered in the Patriot discourse.

What is more, the prominence of the concept of “nature” also makes sense in the light of the eighteenth-century educational discourse that strived to restore the values and morale of the good old days. Nature was seen as a source of moral guidance, opposed to “unnatural” human social arrangements, institutions, and practices, and unspoiled nature was often used as an example of common sense. The circularity of life and death is also in “Vaderlandsliefde” depicted as a natural phenomenon. The correct upbringing of children, for which nature set the example, to form them into good Patriots was an

14 It is important to understand the concept “fatherland” in its specific historical and Dutch context. From the mid-eighteenth century onward, the notion of fatherland became more and more connected to an inclusively Dutch nation. In the Patriot discourse it was connected to the idea of sovereignty and became the highest political value (van Sas 2004, 150).

Liederen voor het Vaderland,

door

Petronella Moens en Bernardus Rosch.



*De Donsucht by de Leetw en Kruyf.
De Bergen op Zoom by van Niemsdyck en van Bronkhorst.
1762.*

FIGURE 19.1 Cover image of *Liederen voor het Vaderland*, 1792.

important theme in Patriot discourse: children would grow up either the right or the wrong way, dependent on the quality of their education (ibid.). The underlying idea of “innocence of human nature” was central to the writings of influential philosophers such as Shaftesbury and Locke. In “Vaderlandsliefde” heroes may die in their fight for freedom, but new children—“Bato’s heldenkrout”—are born and nurtured with “free milk” and love for freedom from their mother’s breast. They are brought up to be true Patriots, willing to sacrifice

themselves for the fatherland, as their ancestors did. This image of mother and child can furthermore be interpreted as representing a generative and circular concept of love for the fatherland in the enlightened Patriot ideal of good education (van der Haven 2011, 258). The message here is that, even if people die for their fatherland, the true Patriot's honour is immortal—"onsterflijke eer gaf troost." Involving the family in the narrative also connected this small embodied community, to which people could relate, to the larger and more abstract imagined community of Dutch Patriots.

Throughout the entire song, references to the Batavians are dominantly present, emphasizing a shared national history. Moens and Bosch thus not only clearly portray themselves as Patriots—who had adopted this origin myth in service of their discourse constructing a historicized Dutch identity—they also create a transhistoric imagined community comprising the Patriots and their Batavian ancestors. Such an invention or adoption of a myth can be seen as founding act of a community's self-image (Beller 2007b, 373). The Patriot movement thus appropriated the Batavian character as a quality of the true Patriot. For example, in "Vaderlandsliefde," Batavian qualities are not only summed up but also personified in the (imagined) character of Bato, the progenitor of the Batavian people, emphasizing once again the historical perspective of the ideals of the Patriots. Another allegorical personification that is present in the song is Freedom. She is spoken of and called upon, as well as spoken to directly. Her presence is not surprising, as we know that freedom and independence were the supposed core ideals of the Batavians and therefore prominently present in the cultural expressions of the Patriots.¹⁵

But "Vaderlandsliefde" does not only evoke concrete images—such as the soil, freedom, heroes, mother, and child, Batavians—that are connected to an idea of Dutchness; it also plays with the concept of time (van der Haven 2016, 767–768). This is typical for the historical focus in the eighteenth-century search for a national identity. The narrative of the song is constantly shifting between past and present tense, creating a relationship between the time of the Batavians and the eighteenth-century present day. By equating the eighteenth-century Patriots to their Batavian ancestors, not only explicitly but also in this more implicit way, the song self-referentially reactivates the courage that was present in the Batavian ancestors of the Patriot singers (*ibid.*). This courage was believed to be historically and naturally present in the inhabitants of the Low Countries and singing about it bridged the gap in time, emphasizing

15 See Grijzenhout (1989) for a study of how the Patriots incorporated their political ideology in their cultural expressions.

the transhistoric imagined community and turning bravery from a historical image into a real practice.

3 Singing of (Patriotic) Love

In addition to the images discussed above, it is likely that the authors of “Vaderlandsliefde” were convinced of the effective affective agency of song and singing. They were in any case part of the discourse that cultivated this idea. It is known that both authors were very much engaged with the ideal of a patriotic restoration through the education of the people (Jensen 2001, 76). The act of singing was an important practice in this, and several references to singing are made throughout the song. A collective “we” sings a song of praise that proclaims the loyalty and the courage of the heroes that “make the Netherlands great again.” The voice of Freedom accompanies these heroes. And even if the “glory song of the bard” is silent and the song of the “chorus of maidens” drowns in the sounds of war,¹⁶ the soil is guarded and the soul remains free. Such references clearly build on the unique nature of the genre of song. Song is ungraspable, it cannot be taken away, it cannot be silenced—and is therefore an ideal medium for the articulation of resistance and protest ideas.

Also, as van der Haven (2016) has pointed out, the use of the lyrical “we” is important in this context. It emphasizes the idea of collectivity, the presence of a group, and through singing this “we,” the singer can identify with a national community that is connected through their ancestors and patriotic love for the native soil. I have argued earlier on the basis of mechanisms such as the MNS, SAME, muscular bonding, and affect attunement that when songs were sung in a group, such identification would become amplified by the bodily presence of other Patriots, all giving voice to the same message. By singing the words, and simultaneously hearing them being sung by others, feelings of collectivity will have become mirrored and attuned. This way, the patriotic love voiced in the song could have inspired a real embodied feeling of love for the fatherland in the singers.

That the song is a contrafact also supports the assumption that the authors of the song considered their work a means of propagation of the Patriot ideology. The text is intended to be sung to the melody of the love song “Mijn lief.” As its title indicates, “Vaderlandsliefde” can be regarded as a love song too. However, I have shown that it is not so much about personal love but rather

16 “Al zwijgt der Barden gloriezang” / “De stem der maagdenrei, Verdween in krijgsgeschrei.”

about patriotic love. Yet, through the connotations it has to the love song “Mijn lief,” a strong parallel is drawn between these two kinds of love. Interestingly, “Mijn lief,” is actually a contrafact as well: to a melody mostly referred to as “Komt Orpheus, komt Amphion” (Come Orpheus, come Amphion), which was better known than “Mijn lief.”¹⁷ It is therefore remarkable that even though the melody that Moens and Bosch selected for their “Vaderlandsliefde” was most commonly known as “Komt Orpheus,” they explicitly chose to refer to “Mijn lief” in the melodic indication. That this must have been a conscious and meaningful choice is implied by the existence of another song in *Liederen voor het Vaderland* that does signify “Komt Orpheus” as melody. This means that the songwriters knew this melody also under its more well-known indication but chose in the case of “Vaderlandsliefde” to explicitly refer to the song “Mijn lief.” A possible explanation for this could be that when we look at the original texts of these two songs (“Mijn lief” and “Komt Orpheus”), it could be concluded that “Mijn lief” expresses stronger affection which could have been a reason for Moens and Bosch to choose this song to underline the affectionate message of “Vaderlandsliefde.” Still, one should also be aware that while “Vaderlandsliefde” may seem and sound “lovely,” its message glorifying the self-sacrifice of men fighting for their fatherland is quite militaristic. Political patriotism was strongly related to the bellicist discourse of the eighteenth century in which civic self-defence depended on the readiness of all citizens to fight (and die) as good Patriots (van der Haven 2011, 257).

In any case, the melody (see appendix and Figure 19.2) supports the text in many ways. The general character of the music is pompous. It is set in quadruple time, but each phrase starts with an upbeat that places the emphasis on the second beat of each measure. This affirms the stately aspects of the song but also gives the melody a narrative quality that fits the tone of the text. The song’s central theme of nature and its striking textual feature of the repetition of the rhyming words “soil” and “stood” (“grond” and “stond”) is strongly emphasized by the musical setting. The last syllable of the penultimate line (on the word “soil”) is stretched out over almost two bars, a striking contrast to the setting of the rest of the music in which the syllables generally correspond with the beats. Even more intensity is given to this moment by the end of the musical phrase which, after a climactic climb, reaches a long-stretched high tonic (G). As van der Haven has already noticed in his study of the song, the

17 The Dutch Song Database (DSDb) indicates twelve contrafacts to “Kom Orpheus,” compared to four contrafacts to “Mijn lief,” in the timeframe 1780–1800. (See www.liederenbank.nl. A website maintained by the Meertens Institute for research and documentation of Dutch language and culture.)

upward movement of the melody in these bars creates an interesting contrariety to the textual representation of the soil (van der Haven 2016, 765). This contrast is even more emphasized by the coinciding of the word “soil” with the long-stretched high note. Despite this substantive contradiction, the intended effect of the moment is clear: the melodic embellishment serves to emphasize the subject that “Vaderlandsliefde” wants its singer to love: the native soil. Stability returns in the last melodic line, going back to the pattern of the other lines and ending the song neatly with a tonic on “stood.” The steadfastness of the true Dutch Patriot who is loyal to his native soil is once again emphasized.

4 Intermedial Imagology: Music and Verse

The subject of this article takes us back to a time in which national philologies emerged and cultural expressions were closely linked to national categories and political demands for national unity. My approach—studying images of national character, of Dutchness, as “discursive objects: narrative tropes and rhetorical formulae” (Leerssen 2016, 16)—fits the heightened interest in the field of imagology in contexts of “(re)emerging nationalism, populism, and xenophobia” as the editors of this volume point out in their introduction (Edtstadler, Folie, and Zocco 2022, 6). Furthermore, with its incorporation of cognitive theories, this research is an example of the “growing imagological interest in the integration of knowledge from other disciplines” (ibid., 9). My approach was encouraged by proposals like Leerssen’s in which he suggests that looking at “cognitive-psychological models of ‘frames’ and ‘triggers’” can “deepen our understanding of ethnotyping and stereotyping” (2016, 24). And I am convinced that cognitive research can provide us with possible explanations for the bodily and community forming effects of a genre that was employed to create a national identity through tropes and images: song.

The case study has shown how certain imagery—the fatherlandic soil, nature, the Batavians, freedom, courage—was connected to an idea of “Dutchness,” and how these images negotiated questions of identity through both verse and melody of political songs with the aim to construct a collective Dutch national identity in the Netherlands around 1800. The example of “Vaderlandsliefde” is but one case in an extensive corpus of political songs in which we can discover several key tropes that contribute to the construction of national stereotypes. I have argued that songs can provide us with interesting sources in the study of the cultural construction and representation of national characters—not only because of the images they evoke with their text

and music but also especially because of their interwoven presence in society and its practices, and their prominent role during key moments in the manifestation of national sentiments. Looking at cognitive mechanisms that are at play during group singing provides an understanding of the agency that has been attributed to song, and supports the idea that songs functioned as significant actors in the development of a national consciousness in the Netherlands of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Appendix

Text of *Vaderlandsliefde* in *Liederen voor het Vaderland* (1792) by Petronella Moens and Bernardus Bosch, Dutch original and my English translation.

Elk dankbaar, elk gevoelig hart Klopt voor zijn Vaderland, Terwijl het dood en rampen tart, Als heldenwraak ontbrandt. Het moedig kroost der deugd Neemt deel in leed en vreugd, Het eert, het mint dien grond, Waar 't wanklend wiegje eerst stond.	Every grateful, every sensitive heart Beats for its fatherland As it defies death and disasters, When the heroes' revenge bursts out. The brave children of virtue Participate in sorrow and joy, They honour, they love the soil, Where the modest cradle first stood.
Nog zingen wij de trouw—den moed Van Bato's heldenkroost; Dat Neêrlands glorie schitteren doet, Terwijl de naneef bloost. Wij heffen 't loflied aan; De grootsche lauerblaân Vereeren nog dien grond, Waar de oude krijgsvaan stond.	We still sing of the loyalty—the courage Of Bato's heroic offspring; That makes the Dutch glory shine, As the offspring blushes. We strike up the glory song; The grand laurel wreath Still honours that soil, On which the old banner of war stood.
Al zwijgt der Barden gloriezang, Dit groenend lentegras Voedt wis den dood voor slaafschen dwang, Het kiemt in heldenasch. Ja, Helden! door wier vuist De ketens zijn vergruist;	Even if the glory song of the bard is mute, The greening grass of spring Feeds on death before slavery, It grows on the heroes' ashes. Yes, Heroes! whose fists Shattered the chains;

Wij zeegnen nog dien grond,
Waar Vrijheids zetel stond.

We still bless that soil,
Where the Freedom's throne stood.

Als hier de wind met stofjens speelt,
Dan ruischt een zachte stem;
Een stem, die Vrijheids boezem streeft,
Erkenntnis geeft haar klem;
Dit stof—dat God beviel,
Omkleedt een vrije ziel;
Een held stierf op deez' grond,
Dáár—wáár dit bloemtjen stond.

When the wind plays with the dust,
A soft voice rustles;
A voice, caressing the bosom of Freedom,
Wisdom strengthens her;
This soil—liked by God,
Dresses a free soul;
A hero died on this soil,
There—where this flower stood

Zo weeldig als de boterbloem
Haar malsche blaân ontvouwt;
Zo bloeide eens der Bataven roem—
Nooit snood verkocht voor goud;
Nooit foor gevloekt belang
Gewijd aan vreemden dwang;
Neen—heilig was die grond,
Waar 't stulpjen veilig stond.

As lushly as the buttercup
Unfolds her tender petals;
Did once bloom the Batavian fame—
Never miserably sold for gold;
Never through wrongful interests
Dedicated to foreign coercion;
No—holy was that soil,
Where the home stood safely.

O Vrijheid! vrijheid!—dierbre schat!
Gij woont in 't eikenwoud,
Aan geen bemuurde burg of stad—
Maar aan 's volks arm vertrouwd.
De stem der maagdenrei
Verdween in krijgsgeschrei;
Elk waakte voor dien grond,
Waar 't zoodenáltaar stond.

O Freedom! freedom!—precious treasure!
You live in the oak forest,
Not in a fortress or fortified city—
But entrusted to the people.
The voice of the maiden chorus
Disappeared in the noises of war;
Each guarded the soil,
Where the sod altar stood.

Natuur ontstak der helden moed,
Elk streed voor Gade en kroost;
En stroomde eens 't vrij heldenbloed,
Onsterflijke eer gaf troost:
List bood geen zwijmelkelk;
Gezoogd met vrije melk,
Zwoer elk, wie 't recht verstond,
Zijn trouw aan Bato's grond.

Nature ignited the heroes' courage,
Each fought for Wife and children;
And if the heroes blood was shed,
Immortal honour brought comfort:
Ruse offered no inebriation;
Brought up on free milk,
Everyone who knew right,
Pledged loyalty to Bato's soil.

Het wichtjen lachte op moeder schoot	The child laughed on its mothers lap
Den koenen vader aan,	toward the brave father,
Terwijl het poeslige armtjens bood,	as it stretched out its chubby arms,
En 't heldenhart deed slaan—	and made the heroes' hart beat faster—
Ja—'t zoog reeds vrijheidsmin	Yes—it already suckled love for freedom
Aan moeders boezem in;—	From the mothers breast;—
O Moed! bescherm dien grond,	O Courage! protect the soil,
Wáár eens uw heirvaan stond.	Where once your banner stood.



FIGURE 19.2 Melody of *Mijn lief, zo schoon als 't morgenlicht / Komt Orpheus, komt Amphion.*

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