

Ethnology and Folklore in the Netherlands

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Situated on the northwestern corner of the European continent, the Netherlands are bordered on the east by Germany, on the south by Belgium, and to the north and west by the North Sea . They have a land area of 34,000 square kilometers (including 41,526 kilometers of inland waters). Several European rivers, which have always been important as trade arteries and as water supplies, discharge on the coastal side. The Rhine and the Maas bisect the land, and near its southern borders the Scheldt discharges into the estuary of the islands of Zeeland. As the name suggests, The Netherlands, or Low Lands, are largely flat and partially low-lying. The northwestern part of the country, roughly one-third of the total area (about 10,000 kilometers, even lies below sea level; most of the rest is only a few meters above sea level.

At the beginning of the Christian era the west of the Netherlands was still above water, but rising sea level and human interventions fundamentally altered this situation. Deforestation and the centuries-long cultivation and drainage of the soggy peat bogs caused the coastal region to subside, and regular flooding began to occur. This subsidence necessitated a structural program of drainage, which led to large-scale impoldering and dike construction throughout the whole of the west and in a part of the northern Netherlands. This in turn led to continuing subsidence, until the land was sometimes as much as six meters below sea level. The land was protected against the sea by a natural row of sand dunes and by coastal defenses built in modern times and against internal water by polder dikes with windmills that constantly pumped the water toward the sea. A consequence of a devastating storm tide in 1953

inspired the building of massive defensive works (flood barriers and still higher dikes) which are intended to afford the whole country extra protection.

The continual confrontation with water is an important element in Dutch history, folklore, and tourism. As early as the twelfth century, the first local democratic governmental authorities in the county were the *waterschappen* and *hoogheemraadschappen*, organizations concerned with dike construction and drainage. The windmills which drained the land and the wooden shoes which were highly practical footwear for country dwellers thus became the pre-eminent symbols of Dutch identity to outsiders. The struggle against water (A God created the earth, and the Dutch created the Netherlands) is an established folkloristic and touristic image worldwide, perhaps reaching its narrative high point in the widely known book about Hans Brinker, the little boy from Haarlem who saved the Netherlands from a catastrophic flood by sticking his finger in a hole in a broken dike. This apocryphal story was invented by American writer Mary Mapes Dodge in her book *Hans Brinker or the Silver Skates* (1865), and it is thus generally most familiar in the English-speaking world, particularly among Americans. The story is known in the Netherlands only on a second-hand basis as a consequence of marketing to tourists.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the need to control the often turbulent inland waters and the search for new land for raising livestock and growing crops in the densely populated Netherlands turned farmers to the lakes in the west of the country. In the twentieth century large areas of a former arm of the sea which reached deep into the country--the Zuiderzee, now the IJsselmeer--were turned into polders and pumped dry for large-scale agriculture. The latter intervention has led to the disappearance of fishing villages along the shores of the Zuiderzee. The low-lying polders that are kept pumped dry are still characteristic of the structure of the rural

West Netherlands. In the late twentieth century the egalitarian and communal efforts which previously had been necessary to maintain the polders even became a metaphor for the socio-economic and political organization of modern Dutch society. The British press coined term Apolder model@ in 1997 to refer to a society in which the people literally and figuratively seek to keep their feet dry on the basis of mutual consultation and consensus.

In part because of its location, economic activities, and liberal politics, the composition of the Dutch population has always been subject to considerable growth and change through immigration and emigration. Dutch folklorists of the nineteenth century hypothesized that the AUr-population@ consisted of a mix of Germanic and Celtic tribes, influenced by Roman rule until the third century c.e. Archeological finds since the seventeenth century in ancient burial mounds, megalithic tombs and forts, and peat bog tracks with the bog bodies have served to confirm the importance of these Batavian forebears. After the great Western European mass migrations of the fourth and fifth centuries the population of this river delta region would have been comprised primarily of Saxons, Frisians, and Franks.

Beginning in the late Middle Ages the flourishing economic and cultural situation and the often tolerant political climate regularly attracted groups of immigrants, whose presence changed the composition of the population. For example, after the fall of Antwerp in 1585 many Flemings moved north, followed in the seventeenth century by Sephardic Jews from Spain and Portugal. After 1685 French Huguenots sought out the tolerance of the Dutch Republic, and in the nineteenth century German tradesmen and merchants saw Holland as an attractive place to establish themselves. The modern years of prosperity from 1960 to 1970 attracted guest workers from Turkey (now 300,000) and Morocco (now 250,000) to fill

vacancies in industries and for unskilled and semi-skilled jobs. The dismantling of the Dutch colonial empire led to the migration of large groups of East Indian Dutch (now 440,000) from Indonesia after its independence in 1949, and nearly half the population of Surinam left that former colony in the period around its independence in 1975 (now 300,000). In contrast, the Dutch Antilles are still part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, but there has been a major economic flight from these six islands, particularly among the young, in the years since 1990. In combination with the arrival of relatively large numbers of refugees seeking asylum and economic refugees from all corners of the world in the years since 1980, a multicultural society has now emerged, particularly in the urban centers. Of its 16 million population in 2004, about 2.7 million were not of Dutch ancestry, including about one million from other European Union countries and America. The attitude of the Dutch government--condemned by some as too tolerant--has contributed to a situation in which the integration of non-Western immigrants, particularly Muslims, is being regarded as unsuccessful. Large numbers have not adopted the language and culture for themselves and live within their own traditionally oriented subcultures.

An interest in the peculiar cultural identity of the Netherlands arose as early as the sixteenth century. The process of forming an independent state, influenced by the struggle against Spanish domination in the sixteenth century, created a consciousness regarding the origins of the country and its population. The country was asserted to have grown from an amalgam of Germanic tribes, among whom the Batavians were regarded as the most important, not least because of the symbolic analogy with the Batavians' revolt against Roman colonization. Thus arose a Batavian myth, a literary and academic theme and genre which sought and defined the origin of the Dutch people. Its foundations rested on a text by the Roman historian Tacitus about

the Aorigin, morals, and customs of the Germans.@ This AGermans@ theme would remain an unwavering benchmark for the practice of ethnology in the Netherlands until into the twentieth century. The folklorists of the nineteenth and early twentieth century attempted to derive an important part of Dutch popular culture from customs which were practiced in pre-Christian or Apagan@ times and that ultimately remained unchanged or were only superficially altered when they were AChristianized.@ This was typical of the current approach to ethnology, which proceeded from a static concept of cultural continuity. In general, European ethnologists held onto the idea that specific population groups, particularly farmers and fishermen, were still the bearers of a Apure@ culture of the Afolk,@ preserved in an Aauthentic@ form.

Joannes Le Francq van Berkhey (1729-1813) offered an early ethnographic expression of this concept of continuity and authenticity focusing on the folk culture of the Dutch countryside. In his *Natuurlyke Historie van Holland*, this Afirst@ Dutch ethnographer sketched the nature of the Dutch people and their customs and attitudes. It was not until the end of the nineteenth century that the founding of the Flemish journal *Volkskunde* in 1888 stimulated a more scientific ethnology. It became a serious forum for the first generation of new ethnologists working in Dutch. The priest Jos Schrijnen (1869-1938) subsequently laid the scientific basis for the discipline with his manual *Nederlandsche volkskunde* (1915-1917). The National Open Air Folkmuseum, which encouraged the systematic collection of material folk culture, was established in 1912. The folklorist Dirk Jan van der Ven (1891-1973) dedicated himself to popularizing folklore, wishing to make the Dutch conscious of their own identity on the basis of their regional traditions and customs. He stimulated the practice of the Areenactment@ of these usages through historical popular celebrations and folk dances as a cultural and political strategy for moral rearmament.

In the meantime the Germanist Jan de Vries (1890-1964) emerged on the national and international stage as the most prominent Dutch ethnologist. He devoted his energy to stricter scientific practice of the discipline and took a more critical attitude toward the still prevailing continuity thinking and essentialist approaches. However, he seriously compromised himself by cooperating in the abuse of ethnology for the National Socialist ideology during World War II.

The establishment of a national center for ethnology in 1934 under the leadership of P.J. Meertens (1899-1985) meant the institutionalization of the discipline. It focused on gathering ethnographic data by means of questionnaires in various fields of ethnology, with the goal of assembling a *Volkskunde-Atlas voor Nederland en Vlaams-België* and with the hope of arriving at new insights on the basis of this ahistorical, cartographic approach. In 1965 a new phase of research was ushered in with the appointment of J.J. Voskuil as research director. He devoted himself to introducing historical and serial data into the cartographic approach. Although this historicizing method was the impetus for important renewal, he also continued to stress the study of classic ethnological themes and resisted the new forms of neo-folklore and their study that responded to modernization. For him, changes in the culture of everyday life under the influence of the modernizing world and the related need for public folklore around old traditions which in turn flowed from this were not an object for study. Under his leadership some overinvestment in the past and historical ethnology occurred.

Compared to Germany, ethnology acquired little or no status in the universities in the Netherlands. Despite the presence of several extraordinary professors of ethnology during the twentieth century, the discipline achieved no fixed place in university education and still cannot claim this. As a consequence, research

has remained almost purely limited to what after 1985 was renamed the Meertens Institute, an independent organization within the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences where researchers, trained in various academic disciplines, give shape to the discipline as ethnologists.

Religion plays a key role in Dutch culture. The religious history of the Netherlands has been one of conflict. The arrival of Anglo-Saxon missionaries in the seventh and eighth centuries meant a first confrontation with the existing population. Nevertheless, a rapid and effective process of Christianization began, and pre-Christian beliefs receded into the background. Because of the lack of historical sources, the degree to which non-Christian elements continued to exist in the culture will always remain unclear. Whatever the case, the Catholic Church developed a virtual monopoly on religion. With regard to the devotions and veneration of saints, the pattern of religion among the people was very similar to that elsewhere in Western Europe with a large number of Marian shrines and cults of the Sacrament which often developed from an apparition or miraculous event. When the critique within the Church began to take on sharper forms, changes occurred within that devotional pattern. From within the Church came the fourteenth-century movement, Modern Devotion, which focused on a more inward religious life, and the humanist Erasmus of Rotterdam. From outside Menno Simons, Luther, and Calvin were the most important figures in introducing the new, Protestant views. Calvinism was the dominant current in the Netherlands, while Lutheran and Anabaptist Protestants were minorities. For the Dutch the movement of religious reformation in part ran parallel with a process of political partition. The revolt of the Northern Netherlands against King Philip II of Spain in 1576, the separation of this region from the southern section (the later Belgium and Luxembourg) which followed in 1579, and the creation of the

Dutch Republic, the seven United Provinces of the Netherlands (roughly equivalent to the present country), resulted. Among other important consequences were an economic flight of southern Netherlanders to the north and a religious upheaval through which the Netherlands entered a long history of Protestantization. The state remained a collection of rather autonomous provinces, so that particularism continued to exist, with consequences for language, religion, morals, and customs that remained as regional identity markers.

With the creation of this Republic in 1579, Calvinism in the form of the Reformed Church acquired the status of a state church, and a Dutch Calvinist spirituality developed which focused on the Word, daily reading of the Bible, preaching, and hymn-singing. The majestic and in time archaic language of the *Statenbijbel*, the official Dutch translation introduced in 1637, has left its mark on Dutch language and culture. Visitors to the Netherlands during that time were struck by the simplicity of life and aversion to the public display of wealth as well as the openness and tolerance of the populace, qualities which they saw as connected with Calvinism. These are to a large extent superficial images, part of a tradition of descriptions of the Dutch by foreign visitors.

After the Reformation Catholicism was suppressed and its expression no longer tolerated in public. This meant that the Catholic cultural landscape was gradually destroyed as chapels were closed and images destroyed or hidden from sight. Public rituals such as processions, saints= days, ringing of bells, pilgrimages, Carnival, and other immaterial expressions of the religion were forbidden. This Protestantization was not total. The population of the southern provinces of North Brabant and Limburg remained almost entirely Catholic, and elsewhere, particularly in North and South Holland and Gelderland, large concentrations of Catholics could

also be found. In total about a third of the population continued to practice the Catholicism out of public sight.

For the rest, it took a long time for Protestants to relinquish all their old Catholic customs. Until into the eighteenth century they continued to celebrate certain saints= feasts and tolled church bells at funerals in the expectation that this was good for the salvation of the deceased=s soul. During this period there were increasing rationalist denunciations of the Asuperstitions@ associated with Catholic belief. For instance, the 1691 book *De betoverde Weereld* by the preacher Balthasar Bekker characterizes many forms of necromancy and magic as illusion and deception. Such a climate contributed to the Netherlands being the first place in Western Europe where, already in the seventeenth century, the burning of witches ceased. (The last death sentence was in 1608, the last witchcraft trial in 1659). Although widespread belief in and accusations of witchcraft declined sharply in the seventeenth century, they did occur occasionally, particularly in rural areas, even into the twentieth century. A particular focus of ethnographic research was the practice of folk magic and divination.

In the seventeenth century the pilgrimage culture at shrines in the Netherlands had almost disappeared. With the exception of several highly private saints= cults, it was displaced to adjoining regions. Large groups of Catholics traveled to neighboring countries, often on foot, in order to evade the ban on their devotions. These long journeys gave pilgrimage an element of penance and resulted in an increased internalizing of faith. Moreover, such pilgrimages and the miracles with which they were connected began to function as factors which defined Catholic identity and symbolized hope for this minority=s future.

After the Dutch or Batavian Republic of 1795, the Netherlands obtained its

first constitution, which guaranteed freedom of religion. This anticipated a thorough emancipation process for Catholics, who after two centuries of religious repression and political discrimination could again freely exercise their faith. For this they reached back to the Golden age of Catholicism, @ the late Middle Ages. Old devotions to saints were revitalized, and former shrines were reconstructed. Saints= cults and confraternities were reintroduced. The importance of comfort and healing was expressed in the reintroduction of the practice of votive gifts, in which metal objects or human or animal figures were offered.

During the eighteenth century the conflict between Calvinists and Catholics gradually weathered into peaceful co-existence, in the course of which, to a great extent because of geographic differences but also through social and religious differences, a divided society emerged. During the nineteenth century this intensified, as an almost complete separation in all realms of Dutch society arose between Protestants and Catholics. This situation, termed Apillarization, @ endured until the second half of the twentieth century. It remained the almost universal ordering factor in all segments and aspects of Dutch life from about 1850 to about 1965. From the end of the nineteenth century a social-democratic faction joined the two religious groups to become a third major pillar.

The modernization of society since World War II has sidelined the role of the churches. Church membership and attendance have fallen to under 10 percent of the population, making the Netherlands one of the most secular countries in the West. Meanwhile with more than a million Muslims, the visible presence of Islam in public space has grown steadily, with the construction of traditional mosques with minarets and the increasing practice of wearing headscarves and other traditional clothing.

Concurrent with the emptying of the churches, interest in alternative

spirituality and healing practices has increased enormously. The growth of a multicultural society has introduced new types of religious healers (winti doctors from Surinam, Islamic healers, African healers) and their practices. One of the most popular faith healers ever in the Netherlands is, however, the Dutch medium Jomanda, who is able to mobilize hundreds of thousands of often desperate people in either a medical or social respect for her healing services. A New Age® beliefs and practices enjoy intense interest. A wide cross-section of the population still has a cultural-historical connection with the religious tradition in which they were raised, but religion has been marginalized as a factor in politics and society. A large proportion of the public will admit to a religious feeling that has been characterized as *Asomething-ism®*: no faith in a personal god, but acknowledgment that there must be *Asomething.®* The ritual and religious vacuum in society in the past decades has led to the rediscovery or invention of rituals, both in the religious and ecclesiastical realm and in rites of passage. Funeral culture has especially undergone vigorous growth and innovation. One reflection of this is the spontaneous creation of memorial monuments (*Aspontaneous shrines®*) by the public at the sites of major disasters, for individual victims of senseless violence, and, in the form of roadside memorials, for traffic victims.

A country's religious culture can define its festival culture. In the Netherlands, however, the Reformation swept away almost all of the existing public celebrations of Catholic holy days and saints' days. Fairs, in the Middle Ages the annual markets that coincided with the celebrations for the patron saint of a church or city, continued to exist, but in altered form. From the seventeenth century they became more opportunities for recreation, where a variety of attractions such as plays, lotteries, gambling, puppet shows, and musicians was available. The Netherlands still

has hundreds of itinerant fun fairs and traveling carnivals. In addition, several feasts such as Epiphany (6 January) and St. Martin's Day (11 November) remain popular as occasions when children clothed as beggars go from door to door with lanterns or singing in hope of receiving small change, baked goods, or candy. The Easter cycle begins with *Palmpassen* (Palm Sunday), when palm leaves are blessed in the Catholic churches, taken home, and hung up as a means of averting external danger. The more general secular custom of painting and hiding Easter eggs (or chocolate eggs), which the children then find and eat, is connected with Easter itself.

With the disappearance of the medieval Catholic feasts, the celebration of birthdays and anniversaries involving members of the House of Orange, the Protestant royal family, emerged. They have been the preeminent sovereign power in the Netherlands, first as *stadhouders* and, from 1814, as monarchs. The struggle for independence from Spain at the end of the sixteenth century also brought the tradition of celebrating the liberation of various cities such as Leiden's *Ontzet*, Alkmaar's *Victorie*, and the rebels' capture of Den Briel, where, according to a popular ballad, the Duke of Alva lost his glasses (Den Briel = Bri[e]l[l]; his glasses = *Azijn bril*). Since 1817, the Reformed Church's privileged position has permitted it to celebrate 31 October as Reformation Day.

During the Abourgeois nineteenth century the festival culture in general grew strongly. For instance, it was then customary to celebrate Christmas both in the church and with family festivities at home. Around the middle of the nineteenth century the decorated Christmas tree entered from neighboring Germany especially among the urban middle class. It was, however, only between 1960 and 1980 that Christmas became a general family celebration involving gift-giving. At present about 75 percent of the Dutch celebrate Christmas, and about half of this group exchange

gifts. But the most important children's feast in the Netherlands, the celebration of Sinterklaas (Saint Nicholas), the aged bishop from Spain with his black helpers (*Zwarte Pieten*), comes not long before Christmas, on 5 or 6 December. On this occasion, called *pakjesavond* (package evening), people exchange gifts, accompanied by a teasing poem and/or a handmade item relating specifically to the receiver. Aspects of this celebration came under threat some years ago from ideological assertions that the Black *Pieten* were racist caricatures and politically incorrect, but such objections are seldom heard any more. Although ethnological research indicates that families not native to the Netherlands rarely adopt Dutch customs, now and then, when the Sinterklaas feast and the Muslim Sugar Feast, which marks the end of Ramadan, coincide, schools will hold collective celebrations. Because of the depth of the attachment to the Sinterklaas tradition among the population, the threat from the increasing importance of Christmas through globalization and commercialization does not appear to be serious.

In the southern, Catholic provinces the forbidden feast of Carnival was kept alive in memory, thanks to its continued celebration in neighboring Belgium and Germany. In the nineteenth century it was revived somewhat as an elite celebration in the cities of the Catholic south, but only after 1945 was there a massive celebration of Carnival which extended to areas outside the cities and for which public life would stop for several days. The great parades with floats characterize these events, providing not only amusement but also delivering satirical critiques of society, local and beyond. As a result of the breaking down of the pillarized social structures, growing mobility, commercialization, and media coverage, since the 1980s carnival has also been introduced here and there in the Protestant Netherlands, and numbers of celebrants travel from that region to participate in Carnival in the southern

cities.

In the nineteenth century the Netherlands had no true national holiday except for the annual commemoration of the battle of Waterloo in 1815 and the heroic deeds performed there by the later king Willem II. The birthdays of members of the royal family were causes for national celebration, but only after 1887 did this become concentrated in one holiday, the Queen's Birthday. It was instituted for the first female sovereign, Wilhelmina (1880-1962), and intended to emphasize the idea of national unity in a society split by religious divisions and pillarization. It was celebrated with public festivities such as parades with brass bands, performances by folklore groups, and barbecues. Along with the organization of national historic folk events, this contributed to the folklorization and historicization of Dutch folk traditions and popular culture.

Since she ascended the throne in 1980, Beatrix, the present queen, has celebrated her birthday officially on the holiday, 30 April, by visiting her subjects in two Dutch towns or cities, accompanied by several other members of the royal family. On the Queen's Birthday anyone in the country can sell things, play music, and sing or perform street theater without having to obtain the usual permits. The free market, where secondhand goods are hauled out of attics and offered for sale on the streets, draws hundreds of thousands to city centers. There is also singing, quantities of beer are consumed, and people dress up in orange clothing with orange crowns or wigs and carry orange mascots--orange being the color of the Royal House of Orange. On 4 May, Dutch Memorial Day, the victims of World War II are honored. Liberation Day (5 May) marks the end of World War II for the Netherlands, an occasion again recognized with free markets and music festivals.

Dutch festival culture is being affected by outside influences from North

America and general globalization. An example from the 1930s is the observance of Mother=s Day. Since the end of the 1980s, Halloween has also been celebrated on 31 October as a children=s feast. Television coverage of this holiday in America and the production of Halloween-themed films introduced this event to Europe, at least in its outward forms, both as something for children and as a theme for parties in the flourishing disco and club culture. Actively promoted by florists, greeting card companies, and the postal service, Valentine=s Day also arrived in The Netherlands at about the same time,

The massive increase in the number of feasts and festivals in the Western world since the 1980s and the equally massive increase in attendance at them have been termed Afestivalization.@ This development is connected with the expansion of free time, greater prosperity, and the increasing need for mass expressions that people do not observe passively by means of television, but in which they can actually participate. Festivals and feasts can be an attractive means of gaining publicity and developing public image. This is true for cities, for which festivals are often developed for commercial purposes (Amsterdam=s Queen=s Birthday and Rotterdam=s Antillean Carnival, for example) as well as for minority groups (the Surinamese Kwakoe Festival: Gay Pride in the canals of the AGay Capital,@ Amsterdam; and the Indonesian Pasar Malam market festival in The Hague).

As a collective form of recreation and sport, ice skating and sledding have always been important social events in the Netherlands. One sees this in the seventeenth-century paintings of Hendrick Avercamp. The nineteenth century saw a blossoming in special associations founded to establish winter ice rinks where there was too little natural water. Since the end of the nineteenth century, the national skating event, the Elfstedentocht (Eleven Cities Tour), has been held over a distance

of about 200 kilometers through eleven cities in the province of Friesland sometimes under severe conditions. This Atour of tours@ can occur only after a deep frost, because the ice must be thick enough to support the 16,000 skaters who participate. Mild winters lately have forestalled the event. So that the Atradition@ will not be lost, each year an alternative skating marathon is held on frozen lakes in Canada or Scandinavia.

Dutch oral narrative culture is part of the European stock of stories, rooted in or shaped by Indo-European, classic, medieval, and Arabic sagas, legends, fairy tales, and other folk stories. Research into this tradition was inspired by the pioneering work of the Grimms in the early nineteenth century, when the importance of each language=s characteristic oral culture and its centrality to national identity became recognized. Pioneers in collecting oral narratives included Henri Welters for Limburg, Cornelis Bakker for Waterland, Dam Jaarsma for Friesland, and Gerrit Jan Boekenoogen for all the Netherlands. Through the efforts of volunteers, over 30,000 Dutch folktales have been written down for the Meertens Institute. Likewise, its use of questionnaires enabled the Institute to record oral traditions regarding such figures as werewolves, gnomes, will-o=-the-wisps, and supernatural animals. Now the questionnaires deal more with modern themes such as urban legends, UFO accounts and crop circles, jokes, and tearjerker songs.

The Dutch language has had an extensive song culture. Thousands of folksongs have been preserved. Through the centuries many new song texts have been set to existing melodies. Efforts to collect this material began in the nineteenth century, and many songs were written down by Ate Doornbosch in the first half of the twentieth century. Characteristic genres were seamen=s chanteys and street songs. Although the Netherlands originally had no regional folk music styles, toward the end

of the twentieth century music in specific regional dialects developed as a part of the dialect renaissance.

Foreigners generally know the Netherlands as AHolland.@ This comes from the centuries-long dominance of the province of Holland within the seven United Provinces. It was in the important cities of Holland that the seventeenth-century Golden Age took form: the expansion of the canal cities, the economic prosperity through trade, and painting. With regard to architecture and urban design, the Netherlands has long had a special claim to notability. Because of the lack of hard stone and the ample supply of river clay, already in the Middle Ages a transition was being made from wooden construction to brick. By the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries brick had become the characteristic look of the Dutch city of the Golden Age. The economic significance of the many waterways and trade was further reflected in their refined canal structure. These were an urban feature absent from the Eastern Netherlands, where the influence of the Hanseatic League is much more visible. Depending on the wealth of the region and the use of the land, the countryside also had varying types of farmsteads. Such regional identities also can be discovered in research into the probate inventories from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. While in the east of the country the utility value of the domestic material culture is more central, the prosperous fishing towns of the west were attached to their local costumes and lifestyle, and the use of objects was more related to their significance for the local community. Delft blue pottery, which was then found not only everywhere in the Netherlands but around the world, had a special place among the household goods. It was made and decorated in two genres: with imitation Chinese motifs, which had become familiar through imports by the Dutch East India Company, and with typical Dutch decorations based upon local folk culture. Delft

blue, in all its neo-styles, is still a best-selling souvenir for tourists.

Dutch painting of the seventeenth century is world-famous and valued for its genre pieces of daily life, portraits, depictions of urban culture, and landscapes. Later, the influence of nineteenth-century nationalism and romanticism effected a revival of interest in local and regional folk culture through painting. Once again painters were attracted to the picturesque quality of Dutch fishing and farming towns. Towns such as Volendam, Marken, Domburg, Scheveningen, Hindelopen, and Laren became idealized icons of Dutch society. As an ultimate development, paintings and small souvenirs became export products. In both Japan and China precise copies of complete old Dutch villages such as the 1992 Holland Village near Nagasaki--have been constructed for tourists.

While in the Far East historic Dutch buildings are still highly esteemed, in the West the new Dutch architecture and urban design of the early twentieth century is highly admired. This period once again found a characteristic architectural style in brick. The buildings of the Amsterdam School and H. P. Berlage are the best-known examples. After World War II both the population and the need for dwellings grew explosively, leading to modernization, standardization in architecture, and large-scale, socially financed residential neighborhoods in which pre-fabricated concrete construction methods were employed. Ultimately this architecture proved to be insufficiently strong esthetically, qualitatively, and in terms of social structure. Since the 1990s the tendency has been to reach back to historic, regional, and traditional architectural forms.

Along with an inclination toward innovation and ready acceptance for new trends and developments, The Netherlands= role as a trading nation, which in principle welcomed immigrants and divergent opinions, has contributed to the

globalization of Dutch culture. This passion for innovation has sometimes been so rapid and radical that it provokes nostalgic reactions. For instance, by the mid-1980s the thorough abandonment of various ecclesiastical rituals in the 1960s and 1970s created a need to fill the ritual vacuum which had arisen, though this was often more about form and sentiment than content.

Globalization has also led to increased interest in what is specifically Dutch about Dutch culture, a situation not unique for the Netherlands. In reaction to the threat of losing their own identity, over the past three decades a deeper interest has grown up among the Dutch in their own history and national and cultural traditions. Not only on the national level but also at the local and regional levels, old customs, rituals, and language variants are again being positively valued and cultivated. As a form of leisure activity, these usages are being artificially brought to life as neo-folklore, as dialect renaissance, and in the form of historical reenactments.

This also plays a role in commerce and tourism, where new images of the Netherlands are being created. The Miss Windmill contest, for example, promotes this one icon of Dutch culture, while A Frau Antje, a “milkmaid” with blond hair and blue eyes and clothed in Volendam’s local costume, specifically targets the German dairy market. It is a stereotypic symbol intended to emphasize the traditional processes and authenticity of Dutch dairy products as a counter to industrialization and globalization. On the other side, there is also a modern black folklore variant. Many foreign visitors to Amsterdam are attracted by the flip side of the liberal and tolerant Dutch society in the world of legal window prostitution on the Wallen and the Coffeeshop circuit, with its tolerated sale and use of soft drugs.

Historiography of twentieth-century Dutch ethnology and ethnologists is available in Dekker (2002) and (in English) in Vermeulen and Kommers (2002). The

only existing bibliography in English is very much outdated *Folklore* (1932). The best overview of modern research in Dutch ethnology and folklore studies is Dekker, Roodenburg, and Rooijackers (2000). The results of modern Dutch folklore studies were published in *Volkskundig Bulletin. Tijdschrift voor Nederlandse cultuurwetenschap* (1975-2000). The successor to this journal is *Kleine c. Etnologisch tijdschrift* and will begin publication in 2005. The Belgian journal *Volkskunde* is also important to Dutch ethnological studies.

The only national scientific institution working in ethnology and folklore in the Netherlands is the Ethnology Department of the Meertens Instituut in Amsterdam. Its website gives information on the specific research programs and gives direct access to some major ethnological databases on such topics as folksongs, folktales, pilgrimages, and festivals (www.meertens.nl). The National Open Air Folkmuseum (Nederlands Openluchtmuseum) has a website that provides a good impression of its important material culture collections and regional housing styles as well as the museum's temporary exhibitions (www.openluchtmuseum.nl). Another open air museum is located at Enkhuizen and offers a good impression of the village and fisherman culture around the former Zuiderzee. See its website at www.zuiderzeemuseum.nl. The Public Folklore Center (Nederlands Centrum voor Volkscultuur) in Utrecht deals mainly with public folklore and the dissemination of ethnological knowledge for educational purposes and for a broader public. It publishes three periodicals: *Traditie*, *Levend Erfgoed. Vakblad voor Public Folklore & Public History*, and *Alledaagse Dingen*). Its website is www.volkscultuur.nl.

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