

Popular culture and revolution in the Netherlands: A political and cultural issue*

Willem Frijhoff

Revolution, culture and national identity

During the last decades, the history of the revolutionary era, in particular the interdependence of the national revolutionary movements, has been submitted to a substantial revision. The French Revolution still remains the central event, but is no longer the main explanatory factor of everything that happened outside France. Even after the transfer of power to the French or to their native allies, the invaded countries continued to live the revolution, *their* revolution, in rather different ways, not to speak of the profound dissimilarity of the counterrevolutionary movements. Without raking up the lingering and rather sterile quarrel of the Atlantic Revolution¹, we may still ask the question whether the opposition to such an explanatory model by representatives of virtually all currents in French historiography referring to the singularity of the French revolutionary experience does not conceal the unwillingness to realize that distinct societies need distinct solutions to their political, social and cultural problems – and that national revolutions adopt national cultural styles. Revolution has to be considered first of all as a form of collective action which, in order to be effective, has to remain close to the prevalent categories of perception, the sociocultural attitudes, the patterns of sociability, the values and action schemes, the lifestyle and mentality.

To put it plainly through an example: both the Italian Jacobins and their counterrevolutionary opponents of the Sanfedist movement appear to the present-day Dutch historian as light-years away from their own revolutionary past. Not so much because of their explicit ideology as because of their discourse, their ways of analyzing problems, their networks of social relations, their patterns of action, in brief, their political culture in the broadest, anthropological sense of the word. As for the Dutch Revolution itself, more so than the Dutch historians, it was Anglo-Saxon and American historiography that, building upon the earlier works of R.R. Palmer and I.L. Leeb, recently put forward the historical preconditions for the genesis of a particular revolutionary culture in the Northern Netherlands². The rhetoric of political language has been analyzed by J.G.A. Pocock³, the radical roots of revolutionary sociability by Margaret Jacob⁴, the metaphors by Lynn Hunt⁵. Wayne Te Brake has extensively documented the fragmented power structure of the Dutch Republic as a determinant of what from outside has often been misinterpreted as a crumbled, impotent attempt to revolt, but what in fact was an authentic revolution on the municipal level, which in the Dutch situation was the indispensable intermediate stage before any successful change on a national level⁶.

On the other hand, the Dutch historian Hetty Wertheim-Gijse Weenink traced back a Dutch tradition of municipal revolt with a repeated call for democracy (including the use of the word ‘democracy’ itself) until the *plooierijen* in the Central and Eastern provinces at the beginning of the eighteenth century⁷. In a short study on the local tradition of revolt in the Gelderland town of Zutphen, I showed how the rebels created a new historical consciousness involving political change as a prerequisite of popular democracy through the continuity of the collective memory in the town⁸. Finally, although the synthesis on the Dutch Revolution published by Simon Schama in 1977 is mainly a traditional narrative and adopts broadly the general outlines developed by Dutch historians such as P. Geyl and C.H.E. de Wit, not to forget R.R. Palmer, its immense merit was to restore for a large, international public the fundamental unity of a long-term movement encompassing two very different revolutionary phases separated by a counterrevolutionary episode⁹. The Dutch Revolution thus appears as a movement with cultural characteristics rooted much more strongly in the social and cultural practice of eighteenth-century Dutch society than in the revolutionary ideals of the French. When the latter invaded the country in the winter of 1794/95 with the help of the former Dutch Patriot refugees, they could benefit from what we may properly call a new *social culture*, embracing a general attitude towards new social values, a sociability network, a political language, a rhetoric, a symbolic imagery, and a style of action which had been forged throughout the course of the eighteenth century and had proved to be successful in an earlier stage of the Dutch Revolution.

Although Dutch historians still discuss the question whether the first, Patriot stage of the Dutch Revolution in the years 1781-1787 ought to be considered as a Revolution in the full sense of the word, it is nevertheless quite clear that the French did not simply create *ex nihilo* the Revolution in the Netherlands. They *transformed* an existing practice, temporarily interrupted through the Orangist reaction of 1787-1794 but plainly living on in the patriots’ memory and the Orangists’ fears, and the main question is to what extent they were able to transform it. Of course, this is not only true for the Northern Netherlands. One of the major achievements of recent research is the understanding of the particular nature of the revolutionary process in each distinct country. That understanding presumes a thorough insight into the local and national prerequisites of the revolutionary movements outside France. It cannot be denied that everywhere in Europe the final revolutionary touch was applied by the French invader, and that the French style of revolutionary procedure pervaded gradually all the other conquered or allied countries on the European continent. Nevertheless, most revolutions (or counterrevolutions – such as the revolt of Flanders and Brabant against the attempts of the Austrian Emperor to modernize Belgian society) had their own political, social and cultural consistency¹⁰. Therefore, one of the chief issues of future research should be to show how the French revolutionary experience gradually, and almost unconsciously, transformed in the occupied countries not so much the political *agenda* – because that is what we already know and what the

revolutionaries themselves made clear from the very beginning – but the political *culture*, by acting upon, first, the ways of decision-making, second, the attitudes and values, and finally, the categories of perception – in brief, the cultural codes of common behaviour.

In the Dutch case this cultural transformation is particularly interesting. It accounts for the genuine strength and depth of the French Revolution inasmuch as the latter yielded real achievements, particularly in the fields of political culture and cultural politics. More than the other ‘Sister Republics’, the Batavian Republic achieved a cultural revolution in the strong sense of the word. Not only was traditional political federalism transformed into a unitary political practice and a centralizing *habitus*, even among the old social elites which had recovered political power after 1801, but both the Republic itself and its citizens proved able to create the cultural instruments that could assess this transformation: central agencies of the state, new forms of sociability, a successful school reform that was admired throughout Europe, a powerful acculturating offensive of the bourgeoisie towards the lower classes. To be sure, the Dutch Revolution remains virtually unknown among French historians, because it does not fit well into the old Jacobin interpretation schemes, still subliminally prevalent in the present-day French historiography of foreign revolutionary movements, be it the Vovellian, the Furetian or still other tendencies. Throughout the activities of the Dutch Bicentennial Committee, it was striking to discover how much resistance time and again had to be overcome in order to make French historians accept the fact that not all foreign revolutionary experience is deducible from the Parisian scene with its presumed umbilical role.

What makes the Dutch revolutionary period fundamentally different from the French, is the gradual but nearly complete transformation of its sociocultural characteristics in a period of thirty years. This transformation makes it difficult to seize its real impact in its homeland and explains the perpetual discussions of the Dutch on the basic unity of the movement as a whole. Whereas ‘revisionist’ historiography on the French Revolution tends currently to minimize effective change, Dutch ‘revisionism’ emphasizes precisely the reality of the cultural transformation of the country. In the early eighties, the Dutch Revolution started as a radical fight for civil freedom, to be founded upon and guaranteed by the active participation of the citizens in politics, which in its turn derived from and was justified by the natural, permanent and unalterable rights of the sovereign people¹¹.

The ideological background of the political theories and practices of the Dutch Patriots was more English than French, and it was rooted in a far past. More than Montesquieu, who certainly was not unknown in the Dutch Republic, John Locke played a radicalizing role of vital importance in the Dutch Enlightenment (and subsequently in the shaping of the political agenda and the idiom of the Patriot movement). This role went far beyond the explicit reference to his works, and is in urgent need of further study¹². Physico-theology, which was to develop into the main tendency of the Dutch religious Enlightenment, appeared simul-

taneously in England (William Derham, 1713) and the Netherlands (Bernard Nieuwentijt, 1715), but on the common base of the English natural philosophy of Boyle and Newton¹³. Perhaps the main motivation for the active propaganda in favor of Newton and physico-theology in the *Bibliothèque ancienne et moderne* (1714-1727) by the influential publicist Jean Leclerc, was his conviction that Newtonism could wipe out Cartesianism and the danger of atheism¹⁴. In spite of the frequent voluntary or enforced journeys of the French philosophers to Holland, the Dutch political Enlightenment borrowed much more intensively from Anglo-Saxon thinkers like Andrew Fletcher, Richard Price and Joseph Priestley (translated in the seventies into Dutch by the Patriot hero Joan Derk van der Capellen)¹⁵, English or Scottish literature and overseas styles of sociability than from the French¹⁶. A study of Rousseau's direct influence in the Netherlands has given rather disappointing results, considering the importance that the question of education would have in the future of the Netherlands. But Locke's educational ideas had already marked the scene¹⁷. Even the sale of the *Encyclopédie* was virtually neglectible: 24 Dutch subscriptions to the in quarto-edition (of which 8010 copies were sold), i.e. 0.3%, less than in the city of Mannheim alone¹⁸.

All this is in only apparent contradiction with the marked preference of the Dutch aristocracy – Belle van Zuylen being its most outstanding example – for French fashion, and its extensive use of the French language. It was precisely this French reference which divided the leading sectors of Dutch seventeenth-century society into two major groups, which fashioned for themselves two fundamentally different attitudes: a patriot attitude (that would soon evolve towards a nationalist position), in search of native values as the determining factors of the cultural practice of the nation; and a supranational attitude, which adopted as the supreme standard of culture the manners, values and lifestyle of, in fact, the French aristocracy – although the reference to France was partly casual, determined as it was by the French origin of the *courtoisie* model and court culture in the Northern Netherlands. Thus, in the eighteenth century speaking French and speaking Dutch could become two equally distinctive ways to identify an enlightened attitude: but the former referred to philosophy and the Republic of Letters, the latter to Christianity and national values.

As a matter of fact, the French reference, constructed through a wide range of very diverse long-term practices (such as commercial relations, court life, the grand tour, community building by the French-speaking refugees, motives of social distinction by the use of a foreign language in a country of growing linguistic unity, etc.) and used as a mirror, has served as the main sociocultural tool for the construction of Dutch national identity¹⁹. During the process of definition of what was considered to be the authentic features of Dutch culture, the reference to France partly rested on perceived reality, and partly was constructed for that particular purpose. So for example many eighteenth-century Walloon Reformed churches in minor towns of the Netherlands did not have the slightest

relation with Wallonia, or even with France or the French: they served primarily as a distinguished socialization institution in the French tongue for otherwise purely Dutch elites²⁰.

The revolutionary era thus meets in the Northern Netherlands with a rather complicated situation. The top of the Dutch elite, which had an international outlook, is imbued with French fashion, esthetics and idiom, but is not always really French-minded. It likes French high society because of its lifestyle, but not the French nation. On the contrary, it is England which remains the principal reference of the Orangists gathered around the Stadholder, the American fight for freedom and a Republican constitution being the main focus of the Patriots. As far as they are concerned with the construction of a truly national identity, transcending either in the person of the Stadholder or through a central body of national institutions the paralysing federalist structure of the Dutch Republic, the Orangists and the Patriots oppose themselves together to a common foreign metaphor of Evil. An Orangist writer like Elie Luzac Junior and a Patriot minister like Ysbrand van Hamelsveld both identify this more symbolic than real enemy with 'French culture' and accuse the unnecessary use of the French language in everyday Dutch life of being the principal instrument for the dissemination of the depraved lifestyle of the French: luxurious, effeminate, immoral, even uncommercial, a capital vice in the eyes of a sound Dutch citizen who knew that the Golden Age of his country had been Golden because devoted to commerce²¹.

The popular culture issue in the Patriot Revolution

The issue of popular culture must be situated against this background²². Various historians have argued that Dutch Enlightenment distinguishes itself from other national variants by its strong religious, moralist and educational mark²³. One of the principal aims of the enlightened Dutch, represented in the culturally active middle groups and sub-elites, consisted in the societal project of national regeneration through education of the poor, in order to raise them from their savage, pre-national lifestyle unto the standard of the true national values: sobriety, industry, good morals, Christian virtues. This concern for popular education was embodied by the most successful of all Dutch societies, the Society for Public Welfare (the *Maatschappij tot Nut van het Algemeen*), founded at Edam in 1784, during the years of the Patriot revolution, by a group of enlightened middle-class representatives, which included a strong proportion of dissenters²⁴. In a note to king Louis Bonaparte, fascinated by this peculiar but powerful private institution, the Society defined its scope, some twenty years later, as follows: "It [the Society] intends to work on the advancement of virtue and good morals among the less cultivated classes, in conformity with the basic principles of Christianity. (...) It tries to germinate the true principles of Christianity without touching dogma, but by conquering superstition"²⁵. Far from being revolutionary, the Society's ideology was an annexe to the social ethics of the Ancien Régime, but through its methods it instituted at the same time the proper tools for the modernization of

Dutch society in the nineteenth century. The means used by the Society were simple and effective: cheap books, periodicals, popular libraries, lectures, schools. The foundation of this Society, without equivalent on the European continent of that period²⁶, responded to widely felt needs among the middle classes: seven years later, on the eve of the Batavian Revolution of 1794/95, it numbered 25 local departments with approximately 2500 members; in 1810 there were 106 departments with 8500 members on a total population of barely two millions. Its influence was so strong that a leader of the Catholic emancipation, J.G. Le Sage ten Broek, tried in 1821 to create a Roman Catholic equivalent in the *Société Catholique*.

The battle against superstition and, in a more general way, against all the elements of what we are now accustomed to call ‘popular culture’, was taken very seriously by the Society. Its first publications include chapbooks with new popular songs of a particularly harmless kind (1789, 1790, 1791); a commented translation of the *Declaration des droits de l’homme et du citoyen* (1795); a modernized, i.e. expurgated version of one of the most popular almanachs, the *Enkhuizer Almanak* (1799); prize contests on education and virtue (1789-93), on popular superstition and the best way to extirpate it (1800), on fortune-telling and popular astrology (1802). There is some reason to ask why the Society met with such tremendous success exactly in the middle of the Patriot disturbances. It is true that the foundation of the Society fits perfectly into the Patriot atmosphere of ‘moral revivalism’, as Schama has put it²⁷, but perhaps there is something more. Firstly, on the local level the events of the Patriot movement revealed to the astonished middle classes that lots of elements of popular culture survived in the midst of groups among which it was thought to have disappeared. And secondly, the educated Patriots were locally obliged to lean heavily upon the masses and sometimes to resign themselves to accepting practices they would normally reject.

It is extremely difficult to give a satisfactory definition of popular culture, which after all is little more than either a strategic notion forged by its opponents or a heuristic term coined by antiquarians, historians and anthropologists. But if we agree that the term ‘popular culture’ embraces here all those beliefs and practices which were common at least to the lower classes of the nation and eventually to all of them, things become clearer. It embraces, for example forms of local organization, either not institutionalized or not fully so, such as the neighbourhood community with its customs and its moral duties, widespread in the countryside, and even in the pre-industrial towns, although we ignore most of the activities of the city district associations. But we know that the Patriot militias often were moulded into these old community structures and recruited among existing networks of informal relationships: town district associations, clientele or patronage. The Patriots gave them new names and a new ideological justification, but did not change the underlying assumptions of mutual assistance and defence nor their secondary cultural aims in everyday life. What really – but perhaps imperceptibly – changed was their function in the overall society; from inherited group struc-

tures, such networks evolved into public institutions with publicly constructed distinctive features²⁸. It may be assumed that the popularity of the militias suffered sometimes from this ambiguity: people found themselves participating in politics when they had simply sought social life.

This might be one possible explanation for the remarkable celebratory activity during the early years of the Patriot Revolution, in the first half of the eighties, with a higher level of ‘utopian quality’ than the French celebrations, as Frans Grijzenhout has put it. Since Mona Ozouf’s seminal analysis of the revolutionary festivities, the educational aim of the ceremonies organized by the French Revolution has been generally recognized. But – as Grijzenhout has convincingly shown for the Netherlands – one decade earlier, the educational goal of public celebrations through an organized symbolism is already translucent in the festivities of the Patriots and even of the Orangists: the naval battle at Doggersbank (5 August 1781) gave a splendid occasion for such festivities, just like the formal recognition of the United States of America in 1782, the French alliance in 1785, or, locally, the solemn oath upon the new Patriot municipal constitutions²⁹. Particularly interesting is the continuity between such celebrations and the old tradition of ceremonious banquets vivid in all the echelons of Ancien Régime sociability. The Doggersbank banquets, continued annually through many years, were public, politically undifferentiated manifestations of the local community and rooted as such in older popular traditions. But as annual commemorative festivities they provided a splendid occasion to sharpen the symbolic message and to convert themselves into an ideological element of the new political culture: after the collapse of Patriotism in 1787, the Dutch refugees in France continued the Doggersbank banquets as a mark of Patriotism until 1790.

The first phase of the Dutch Revolution, that of the Patriot movement, is fraught with such ambiguities: new politics were brought to fruition within old reference patterns, with the help of traditional beliefs and schemes of action, without altering the existing social structures. Attitudes towards political change were marked by the same ambivalence. This was particularly true for the Catholics of the Dutch Republic, who formed some 40% of the overall population but were a vast majority in some territories, such as the province of Brabant administered directly by the States-General. Before all the other religious minorities, the Catholics were interested in a political change which would give them back their full citizenship and religious liberty, symbolized in the restitution of the old churches now used by the Reformed communities. From the seventeenth century, prophecies circulated among the Catholics about the restitution of the churches. In every moment of tension between the religious communities we hear about them: during the French invasion of 1672, for example, and during the panic of 1734, an outburst of Protestant fears of Catholic domination³⁰. The same prophecies were heard before the French invasion of 1794. Thus in Bois-le-Duc: “A certain lady has dreamed [others say that she got a divine revelation in her dream or that it was prophesied to her] that a Bishop will soon say mass in the Main Church and that

everything pertaining to the religion will be restored just like before the year 1629 [i.e. the surrender of the city to the Protestant authorities], that all the Beggars [traditional nickname for the Protestants] will have to leave the city, and that her youngest son, now a student in theology, will be the aforesaid bishop”³¹. There is no question of considering such stories as mere old wive’s tales. Too many evidence of real circulation remains. A Catholic dean mentioned it himself in his sermon when taking possession of a former Protestant church³². But it is not difficult to imagine that the more cultivated part of the Patriot party felt embarrassed by such examples of popular superstition among its followers. It had to decide rather quickly whether it would show feelings of basic solidarity with the local population or launch an offensive directed at the eradication of such misunderstandings about the ‘real’ political issues.

The question grew more pressing as popular images of the French liberators circulated which could generate false expectations. One of those images went back to a widely spread pro-Catholic prophecy allegedly written in the Middle Ages by a monk called John of Leliëndaal but in fact a seventeenth-century document rewritten several times. This prophecy predicted the arrival of the army of the King of Flowers [i.e. the lilies of the King of France] that would deliver the Catholic population from the Protestant oppression and restore the Catholic religion in its full splendour³³. S. Hanewinkel, a Protestant minister traveling through the province of Brabant in 1798-99, four years after the coming of the French, observed ironically that the experience of the French domination had not altered their belief in this prophecy. “People think”, he wrote, “that the real French have not yet come, because the French present here are not Catholic, but that they will come soon. Then the Roman Catholic religion will be restored in all its splendour and all the Beggars will be expelled overseas, to England”. And in another town he noted the reaction of a Patriot citizen who told him: “They [sc. the French liberators] would be good company if they had got a religion, but they never pray nor make the sign of the Holy Cross. All of them are *Volontairen* [he meant Voltairians], because they behave more like Beggars than like Catholics”³⁴. The equivalence between ‘Volontairen’ and ‘Voltairians’ is due to Hanewinkel – but it is permitted to interpret this as a double *lapsus linguae*, because ‘Volontairen’ refers at the same time to a political practice. Henceforth, practice is the determining category. In social practice, ‘practice’ dominates ‘belief’.

Such documents reveal a lot about the popular impact of the Revolution. When Hanewinkel travels through Brabant, the Batavian Revolution is finished and two coups d’état have, in January and June 1798, definitely changed the political constitution of the old federal Republic, making it a unitary State with a central government. But the Brabant Catholics do not seem aware of this political issue and not even of the facts. The only thing that matters in their discourse is the restoration of the Catholic religion as a warrant for equal civil rights: a revolution that doesn’t lead to such a restoration is not the real revolution, and the liberators who don’t behave like the ones announced in the prophecies are not the real lib-

erators. Thus, popular perception of the revolution remains once more locked up in traditional categories of power relations and in images that have come down from centuries before.

The same conclusion applies to the forms of collective protest in that region. Recent research by Tiny Romme on the charivari (rough music) rituals has lead to the discovery of several forms of collective action in 1784-1787 which show an interpenetration of revolutionary or counterrevolutionary intentions and traditional action patterns³⁵. Upon the occasion of new political issues, local oppositions in Brabant were expressed through old rituals. The case of the village of Vierlingsbeek is particularly clear. A repressive Protestant attorney was outlawed by the village community when he prohibited a local festivity alleging the danger of epidemical disease. A session of rough music was organized in front of his house, and the attorney, fearing for his life, sought military assistance. Immediately, part of the population created a militia for its own defence, thus adopting the new forms of political culture. But at Carnival, the local association of unmarried youngsters recovered the traditional rituals and organized a series of punitive expeditions against the family and its properties, forcing them to leave the village. As the attorney returned from a short stay elsewhere, he was met by the whole Catholic community armed with sticks and gathered around the old lime-tree in the center of the village, the traditional meeting-point for collective actions. Finally the attorney fled from the village, asking the States-General in vain for a military intervention.

Three years later at Sint-Oedenrode, on Saint-Mary's Birthday, 8 September 1787, a half-drunk mob conducted by a local intellectual and leader of the Patriot movement marched against the house of the sheriff's officer, a Protestant. Again armed with sticks, they sung: "See us, Patriots, coming, Orange has to leave". However, no plundering of the house took place: the only damage consisted in the deliberate breaking of a glass carved with the symbol of the Orange faction, by the leader of the mob, who reproached the officer for having deserted from Catholicism to the Reformed Church.

In this second case, we see quite clearly the tension between old and new forms of collective action. From of old, the village community acted together according to stable rules, which involved patterns of ritual action and the mobilizing character of particular holidays. In the representative democracy that was the political ideal of the enlightened Patriots (embodied here in the leading intellectual), the desires of the common people, considered as a dangerous mob (in Dutch, "het grauw"), had to be taken seriously, but their execution was best put under the control of a political representative with authority over the local community. This new political figure did not refuse symbolic action – on the contrary. But he avoided the old collective rituals and substituted for them the single, individual rite of breaking the incriminated glass – an act executed by the representative of

the people as a whole who at the same time formulated distinctly the grievances of the local community.

Concluding remarks

Through the judicial report of this case, we feel as if we were attending a session of popular education. And that feeling accounts exactly for the dilemma of the Dutch revolutionaries. When mobilizing the local masses in the villages and the towns for new political ideals, they had to cope with existing patterns of collective action according to mostly informal structures of community organization and traditional rituals. By refusing those old, but very effective mobilization patterns and action schemes, they would have alienated the masses from their political goals; in adopting them, they had to admit at the same time a fundamental ambivalence generated by the tension between the new values and the old categories of perception moulded in the traditional forms of collective expression. It may be assumed that the conjunction between a certain consciousness of this tension, on the one side, and the educational concern of the Dutch enlightened elites, on the other side, guided the Dutch Patriots towards an early systematic effort of popular education, as expressed in the foundation of the Society for Public Welfare and in numerous other initiatives. Popular culture, as the culture *of* the people, had to be transformed into a culture *for* the people.

The second stage of research on this topic should consist of a thorough study of the threefold way in which this barely structured desire for popular education was transformed into an organized project of popular enlightenment with the explicit aim of a national education, i.e. the education to a conscious national lifestyle transcending the traditional forms of popular culture³⁶. Three forms of experience have to be taken into account: the experience of the French Revolution during the years 1787-1794 by the Dutch refugees in France³⁷; the perception of the French revolution by the Dutch revolutionaries and counterrevolutionaries who continued to stay in their native country³⁸; and the interaction between Dutch revolutionary designs and French interventionist attitudes after 1794. At any rate, the most clairvoyant revolutionaries were perfectly aware of the need for such a systematic educational design in a country imbued with particularist attitudes, where municipal and provincial patriotism had a long history, where national feelings were still very scarce outside the educated elites and where even among the leading elites provincial interests were often taken for national values. In order to make the new national institutions workable, the whole people had to be educated to the appreciation of values and representation on a national scale. Therefore, the main purpose of the educational work of the Society for Public Welfare and its fellow institutions for popular enlightenment was not so much to contribute to the advancement of literacy or to achieve other cognitive goals, as to create a new national solidarity, an attitude of true national feelings through a new conformity of all individuals with the national standard.

The political periodical *De Democraten* (The Democrats), directed by the revolutionary leaders Isaac Gogel, the future minister of Finance and reformer of the fiscal system, and Antonie Willem Ockerse, made it quite clear in an article entitled ‘Discourse on the popular enlightenment through national institutions’ published in its issue of 16 March 1797: it is not enough, they said, to write a national constitution; the people itself will have to assume a ‘national form’. Never again should a Batavian be able to convert himself into an Englishman, a German or a Spaniard (note the absence of the French reference ...). The formation of the new State has to be accompanied by “a unique and general national education” in order to ensure that it develops into a nation rather than just a group of individuals. National feeling should induce absolute self-renunciation: “It is an irresistible drive that forces us to embrace our particular enemy in the very moment that our fatherland suggests it, and to stab our personal friend; a supernatural feeling that dominates all our tendencies, desires and reflections, procures us the sweetest pleasure in the greatest abstinence, the most vivid amusement in the fiercest disasters, and delight in death itself”³⁹.

- * Noot van de redactie: het gebeurt slechts zelden dat het onderzoek naar de Nederlandse revolutie aan het einde van de achttiende eeuw en het onderzoek naar de toenmalige volkscultuur met elkaar in verband worden gebracht. Toch zou een nadere vereniging van deze twee gebieden, zoals de hier opgenomen tekst laat zien, wel eens buitengewoon vruchtbaar kunnen zijn, ook in het buitenlandse onderzoek. Het betreft hier de tekst van een lezing, gehouden voor The International Congress on the History of the French Revolution, dat plaats vond op 4 mei 1989 in Washington. De lezing was in de eerste plaats bedoeld als discussiestuk. Het onderzoek werd afgesloten op 1 april van dat jaar. De Engelse tekst hier werd gecorrigeerd door Julie Berger Hochstrasser.
1. See the state of the art by R.R. Palmer, 'La "Révolution atlantique", vingt ans après', in: E. Schmitt & R. Reichardt (ed.), *Die Französische Revolution – zufälliges oder notwendiges Ereignis?* (Munich/Vienna 1983) I, 89-104.
 2. For a historiographical reassessment, with extensive bibliographical references, see W. Frijhoff and J. Rosendaal, 'La Révolution régénérée: nouvelles approches et nouvelles images de la Révolution néerlandaise', in: M. Vovelle (ed.), *L'image de la Révolution française. Communications présentées lors du Congrès Mondial pour le Bicentenaire de la Révolution, Paris, 6-12 juillet 1989* (Paris 1989) I, 543-561.
 3. In particular: J.G.A. Pocock, 'The problem of political thought in the 18th century: patriotism and politeness', *Theoretische geschiedenis* 9 (1982) 3-24.
 4. For example in: M.C. Jacob, *The Radical Enlightenment: Pantheists, Freemasons and Republicans* (London 1981).
 5. L. Hunt, 'The language of politics and political culture in France, England, the USA, and the Dutch Republic', *Bijdragen en mededelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 104 (1989) 610-621.
 6. In particular: W.Ph. Te Brake, 'Popular politics and the Dutch Patriot Revolution', *Theory and Society* 14 (1985) 199-222; 'Violence in the Dutch Patriot Revolution', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 30 (1988) 143-163; *Regents and Rebels: the revolutionary world of an eighteenth-century Dutch city* (Cambridge, Mass./Oxford 1989).
 7. A short account in: A.H. Wertheim-Gijse Weenink, 'Early 18th century uprisings in the Low Countries: prelude to the Democratic Revolution', *History workshop* 15 (1983) 95-115.
 8. W. Frijhoff, 'Geschiedenis als strijdbijl: burgerij, gemeenslieden en magistraat in Zutphen (vijftien- tot achttiende eeuw)', in: B. Looper and J.C. Riemens (ed.), *Geschiedenis van Zutphen* (Zutphen 1988) 40-55.
 9. S. Schama, *Patriots and Liberators: revolution in the Netherlands 1780-1813* (New York 1977).
 10. See, for example: Luc Dhondt, 'De conservatieve Brabantse omwenteling van 1789 en het proces van revolutie en contrarevolutie in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden tussen 1780 en 1830', *Tijdschrift voor geschiedenis* 102 (1989) 422-450.
 11. Cf. W.R.E. Velema, 'Revolutie, contrarevolutie en het stadhouderschap, 1780-1795', *Tijdschrift voor geschiedenis* 102 (1989) 517-533.
 12. See M.C. Jacob, 'In the aftermath of Revolution: Rousset de Missy, Freemasonry, and Locke's "Two Treatises of Government"', in: *L'Età dei Lumi: studi storici sul Settecento Europeo in onore di Franco Venturi*, I (Naples 1985). In this respect, Simon Schama's essay, 'The Enlightenment in the Netherlands', in: R. Porter and M. Teich (ed.), *The Enlightenment in National Context* (Cambridge 1981) 54-71, is out of date. A much richer synthesis is: W.W. Mijnhardt, 'The Dutch Enlightenment: humanism, nationalism, and decline', in: *Decline, Enlightenment and Revolution: the Dutch Republic in the Eighteenth Century* (Washington, D.C., 12-14 March 1987), forthcoming.
 13. Cf. R.H. Vermij, 'Bernard Nieuwentijt en de physico-theologie', *Documentatieblad Werkgroep Achttiende Eeuw* 20 (1988) 215-229. The principal work of Nieuwentijt was soon translated into English (*The Religious Philosopher or the Right Use of Contemplating the Works of the Creator*, London 1718), and hence into French.

14. M. Evers, 'Pro Newton et religione: de receptie van Newton en de Engelse fysicotheologen in de *Bibliothèque ancienne et moderne* (1714-1727)', *Documentatieblad Werkgroep Achttiende Eeuw* 20 (1988) 247-267.
15. Cf. E.A. van Dijk, and others (ed.), *De wekker van de Nederlandse natie: Joan Derk van der Capellen 1741-1784* (Zwolle s.a. [1984]).
16. See W.J.B. Pienaar, *English Influences in Dutch Literature and Justus van Effen as Intermediary* (Cambridge 1929); C. van Boheemen-Saaf, 'The reception of English literature in Dutch magazines 1735-1785', in: *The Role of Periodicals in the Eighteenth Century* (Leiden 1984) 7-17.
17. Cf. W. Gobbers, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau in Holland: een onderzoek naar de invloed van de mens en het werk, ca. 1760-ca. 1810* (Ghent 1963).
18. R. Darnton, *L'aventure de l'Encyclopédie, 1775-1800: un bestseller au siècle des Lumières* (Paris 1982) 417-418.
19. W. Frijhoff, 'Le français et son usage dans les Pays-Bas septentrionaux', *Documents pour l'histoire du français langue étrangère ou seconde* (Paris), Nr. 3 (June 1989) 1-8; 'Verfransing? Franse taal en Nederlandse cultuur tot in de Revolutietijd', *Bijdragen en mededelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 104 (1989) 592-609.
20. Cf. W. Frijhoff, 'Modèles éducatifs et circulation des hommes: les ambiguïtés du Second Refuge', in: *La Révocation de l'Edit de Nantes et les Provinces-Unies. Colloque international du Tricentenaire, Leyde, 1er-3 avril 1985* (Amsterdam/Maarssen 1986) 51-75.
21. Cf. E. Luzac, *Hollands rijkdom* (Leiden 1783) IV, 272-273; Y. van Hamelsveld, *De zedelijke toestand der Nederlandsche natie op het einde der achttiende eeuw* (Amsterdam 1791).
22. I do not discuss here the term 'popular culture' itself. See my earlier reflexions and a model for analysis in: W. Frijhoff, 'Popular culture; a useful notion?' in: E. Meijer (ed.), *Alledaags leven: vrije tijd en cultuur* (Tilburg 1987) II, 581-587. For this particular period, cf. P. Geyl, 'Het "volk" in de Bataafse Revolutie', in: the same, *Verzamelde opstellen* (Utrecht/Antwerp 1978) 128-147; F.L. Holthoorn, 'Wie waren "het Volk van Nederland"?' in: Th.S.M. van der Zee, J.G.M.M. Rosendaal & P.G.B. Thissen (ed.), *1787 – De Nederlandse revolutie?* (Amsterdam 1988) 185-192.
23. Cf. W. Frijhoff, 'Dutch Enlightenment in front of popular belief and practice: an interpretation', in: *Decline* (see footnote 13), forthcoming.
24. See W.W. Mijnhardt and A.J. Wickers, *Om het Algemeen Volksgeluk. Twee eeuwen particulier initiatief 1784-1984: gedenkboek ter gelegenheid van het tweehonderdjarig bestaan van de Maatschappij tot Nut van 't Algemeen* (Edam 1984). Schama, *Patriots*, 532-534, rather curiously translates the name of the society by 'Society for the General Good'. Cf. also: Tessa Los, 'Opvoeding en onderwijs "in het algemeen belang". Veranderingen in de publieke opinie bij het ontstaan van een nationale staat', *Sociologisch Tijdschrift* 13 (1987) 726-751.
25. Paris, Archives Nationales, AF IV 1816, pièce 12 (undated).
26. But it may be compared to the educational movement of the English radicals in the same period, particularly the Sunday School movement. See Harold Silver, *English education and the Radicals 1780-1850* (s.l. 1975); Harold Smith, *The Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, 1826-1846: a social and bibliographical evaluation* (London 1974).
27. Schama, *Patriots*, 532.
28. On this process, see also Roger Chartier, *The Cultural Origins of the French Revolution* (Duke University Press, 1991), chapter II.
29. See F. Grijzenhout, "Altoos gedenkwaardig was voor den waaren vaderlander, de vyfde van Oogstmaand", in: H. Bots and W.W. Mijnhardt (ed.), *De droom van de Revolutie: nieuwe benaderingen van het Patriottisme* (Amsterdam 1988) 98-115; the same, *Feesten voor het vaderland: patriotse en Bataafse feesten 1780-1806* (Zwolle 1989).
30. See W. Frijhoff, 'Katholieke toekomstverwachting ten tijde van de Republiek: structuur, en grondlijnen tot een interpretatie', *Bijdragen en mededelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 98 (1983) 430-459.
31. (S. Hanewinkel), *Reize door de Majorij van 's Hertogenbosch, in den jaare 1798-1799* (Amsterdam 1800) II, 228.

32. *Kerkelijk Leesblad*, vol. 2 (1801/02) nr. 3, p. 44-45.
33. Frijhoff, 'Katholieke toekomstverwachting', 430-433.
34. Hanewinkel, *Reize*, I, 15; II, 228.
35. M.M. Romme, 'Charivari en patriotisme: een nieuw perspectief', in: G. Rooijakkers, A. van der Veen and H. de Wit (ed.), *Voor 'Brabants Vryheyd'. Patriotten in Staats-Brabant* (Bois-le-Duc, s.a. [1988]) 105-121.
36. For the notion of popular enlightenment, see: J. Lenders, *De burger en de volksschool: culturele en mentale achtergronden van een onderwijservorming. Nederland 1780-1850* (Nijmegen 1988).
37. This will be the subject of the Ph.D. of Joost Rosendaal, in preparation.
38. See E.O.G. Haitsma Mulier, 'De receptie van de Franse Revolutie in Nederland: contemporaine reactie en geschiedschrijving', *Tijdschrift voor geschiedenis* 102 (1989) 451-470.
39. Quoted from N.C.F. van Sas, 'Vaderlandslijfde, nationalisme en vaderlands gevoel in Nederland, 1770-1813', *Tijdschrift voor geschiedenis* 102 (1989) 471-495, quotation 483-484.