

Renée Vulto

# Politics of Feeling in Songs of the Dutch Revolutionary Period



Politics of Feeling in Songs of  
the Dutch Revolutionary Period

# Song Studies

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*Renée Vulto*

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Cover image: Detail of *By het planten van den Vryheids-boom, ter vereering van het Burgerplyn. Zang voor alle Burgers*, coloured etching on paper, 1795, Rijksmuseum Amsterdam (RP-P-OB-86.458)

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*For my parents*

Hier ist ein Lied! Wenn ihr's zuweilen singt,  
So werdet ihr besondere Wirkung spüren.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust. Eine Tragödie* (1808)



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This is a book filled with feeling. As such, it is only fitting to express here my heartfelt gratitude to the people who have helped shape this work into being. Cornelis van der Haven introduced me to this topic, saw its potential, and guided me steadily through years of research. Isabella van Elferen sent me down many unexpected rabbit holes, trusting that I would find what I needed. Both have generously shared their knowledge with me. Many others have read bits and pieces of this book in earlier versions, commenting critically to help me improve. For this I especially want to thank Ruth Vulto Gaube, Frans Grijzenhout, and Laurens Ham. James Harriman-Smith has read along (almost) from the beginning and has offered me not only his professional knowledge and friendly support but also his keen sense for the lyric by assisting me in the song translations. Bram Kortekaas put in many hours to translate my handwritten transcriptions into music fragments that are actually readable. I want to thank Oskar Cox Jensen, Morag J. Grant, and the anonymous reviewer for reading so carefully through the entire manuscript of this book, providing helpful commentary that allowed me to fill some gaps and iron out mistakes. Many thanks to my editors at Amsterdam University Press, Cécile de Morrée and Victoria Blud, for guiding me smoothly through the publishing process.

Several songs that I discuss in this book have been brought to life in recordings. This would not have been possible without the commitment of the brilliant musicians of the ensemble Camerata Trajectina. Their decades of experience in performing early modern Dutch songs have provided me with valuable insights that further contributed to shaping the conclusions presented here.

As I am a song researcher rather than a songwriter, I find it difficult to put into words how I feel about the people whom I love most. Jorrit, thank you for being by my side throughout the making of this book. Ida, you arrived in this world more or less simultaneously with this book and maybe (no pressure!) you'll enjoy reading it some day. Many thanks to my friends and my brother Lennart for being (and staying!) interested in my work. Jan and Ruth, thank you for encouraging me to always follow my own path—I dedicate this book to you.



# A Note on Language and Music

## Translations

Writing in English about eighteenth-century Dutch song can be challenging. To prevent specific messages from getting lost in translation, I have provided the Dutch source texts in the footnotes. The selected lyrics are presented in both their original language and an English translation. Unless otherwise stated, all translations in this book are my own. In all translations of eighteenth-century texts (songs, as well as reports and other texts), I have taken an interpretative approach rather than presenting literal translations so as to give modern-day readers an accurate representation of the meaning of the original texts. Capitalizations and text structures, however, have been maintained wherever possible.

## Names and Titles

Geographical locations and historical events are indicated with their English names (if applicable). For personal names, functions, institutions or organizations, and names of documents, I have chosen to use the names in the original language. All titles of songs, tunes, and songbooks are provided in their original language with English translations in the footnotes.

## Transcriptions

The transcriptions of the tunes provided in this book are my own. I have aimed to use sources that are as close as possible to the period in which the song in question was sung. It should be noted, however, that there were often many variations on a single tune, and it is impossible to know how the tune was sung exactly. But this is not necessarily relevant. What mattered was that a tune remained recognizable. Tunes were passed on orally rather than in writing, and people could easily manipulate a tune to fit a particular text or to render it singable in their register of voice. Therefore, just as these eighteenth-century singers would have done, I have at certain points slightly adjusted the source melody so that the tune would better fit the text.

## Texts

Most songs discussed in this book are not printed in their entirety. The selection of stanzas and lines has been made so that the reader can follow the presented analysis. Full texts can be consulted in the online appendix.



## Sources

The songbooks and broadsheets discussed in this book can be found in multiple archives. The Short-Title Catalogue Netherlands (STCN), a bibliographic database for books published before 1800, can be used to locate the various copies of a songbook or sheet. Most musical sources used can be located through the Nederlandse Liederbank, the catalogue of the Nederlands Muziek Instituut, and various university collections or national libraries. All primary sources are listed in the bibliography.

## Recordings by Camerata Trajectina

A selection of the songs that are discussed in this book have been recorded in collaboration with the ensemble Camerata Trajectina for the album *Revolutie! De straat op voor een nieuwe natie* (Globe Records, 2022). If a song is available as a recording, this is indicated by ©. Although these recordings are grounded in a historically informed musical practice, the performances should be considered as interpretations, rather than historical documents in themselves. The recordings, available in the online appendix, give an impression of how the songs may have sounded.



# Politics of Feeling in Songs of the Dutch Revolutionary Period

## An Introduction

### Abstract

How did songs shape communities during times of political turmoil? Revolutionary culture emerges from a diverse society with varying interests. To effectively pursue political objectives, however, collective action was crucial. Singing together provided an ideal means to foster a sense of collectivity, where individual voices blended into a unified whole. This introductory chapter presents the methodological and historiographical frameworks needed to understand the intertwined history of song and politics through the perspective of feeling. Emphasizing the performative aspect of songs and the interplay between imagination and embodied expression in singing practices, I ultimately assert that songs served not only to create communities but also to mobilize, imagine, and affirm these collectives.

**Keywords:** song culture; singing; emotional practice; mobilization; imagination; affirmation

“Anyone knows how much the heart enjoys singing,” declared the author of the songbook *Liederen voor de Nederlandsche Krijgsbenden* (1793)<sup>1</sup> in the preface to their collection. Displaying an understanding of the profound impact that songs could have, they unequivocally state that singing has the power “to chase away worries and sorrow, and to evoke both peace of mind and courage.” To further underscore the efficacy of song, this anonymous songwriter confidently asserted, “By the way, this has been proven through

1 ‘Songs for the Dutch Troops’.



daily experience.”<sup>2</sup> These words were penned during the tumultuous years at the close of the eighteenth century. During that era, singing held a central place in the daily life of the Dutch Republic. People sang in church, at work, within the confines of their homes, in local pubs, and on bustling streets. Songs were deeply woven into the fabric of social, cultural, and political practices. They served as an ideal means to articulate ideas and disseminate them swiftly and effectively.

This book investigates how such songs and singing shaped political communities in the Dutch revolutionary period. It spans the last two decades of the eighteenth century, a time that was defined by fundamental changes throughout the world. In Europe and the Americas, old regimes were burned down, and new states arose from their ashes. In the Dutch Republic, which had been in existence since 1579, the quasi-monarchical authority of stadtholder Willem V faced opposition and was ultimately toppled. However, the Batavian Republic, established in 1795, soon succumbed to the tumultuous upheaval brought about by the Napoleonic whirlwind sweeping across Europe in the early years of the new century. As one of the most turbulent periods in Dutch history, the 1780s and 1790s were a time filled with a variety of sounds: the cries of revolution, the roaring of cannons, and the exciting, enraging, provoking, lamenting, or jubilant sounds of song. This sonic realm played an integral role in people’s everyday experiences, influencing their behaviours and attitudes.<sup>3</sup>

The first distant rumblings could be heard long before the 1780s. In the early modern period, the Netherlands was far from the stable nation-state that it came to be over the course of the nineteenth century. A constant factor that united the Dutch, however, was their singing. Singing did not require any wealth, education, or social standing. Therefore, song could engage all layers of society in public debates. By means of song, the Patriots, who championed democracy, were mobilized to fight for their fatherland, while the conservative Orangists rallied in defence of their stadtholder and the enduring connection between the Dutch and the House of Orange.

2 “Te meer zijn zij daar toe aangezet geworden, door de overweeging, dat het onzen Nederlandschen Krijgsman, aan soortgelijke Gezangen, geheel ontbrak. Dat dit eene wezenlijke ontbering is, zal een ieder toestemmen, die weet, hoe gaarne zich het hart met zingen verheugt—hoe gaarne hetzelve daar mede de zorgen en kommer zoekt te verdrijven, en gerustheid en moed tracht op te wekken; trouwens dit bewijst de dagelijksche ondervinding.” *Liederen voor de Nederlandsche Krijgsbenden* (Amsterdam: Johannes Albertus Sluyter, 1793), 4.

3 David Hopkin addresses several ways in which oral literature and its sonic aspects shaped people’s lives. See David Hopkin, *Voices of the People in Nineteenth-Century France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

Later, the revolutionary Batavians (the Patriots' successors) used song to commemorate their triumphs and envision a new Batavian Republic, and with songs, the Dutch people joyously embraced peace after a period of turbulence.<sup>4</sup> Social, moral, religious, and political issues were discussed in song. To know how communities dealt with such issues, we thus need only tune in to their singing.

This book aims to provide an insight into the songscape of the cacophonous decades at the close of the eighteenth century. I listen to how political communities voiced their ideas in song and how the singing of such songs could contribute to the realization of these ideas. Focusing on the collective practice of singing, I discuss how these communities expressed their togetherness in song, and I explore possible ways in which the singers experienced these performances. The six chapters are divided into three parts. In each part of the book, I attune my listening to one of the three main functions of song in the Dutch revolutionary period: *mobilization*, *imagination*, and *affirmation*.<sup>5</sup> Together these functions form the lenses through which I have approached the songs and the archival sources that tell us something about how they were performed. Ultimately, I aim to demonstrate how a study of the cultural practice of song can inform our understanding of sociopolitical processes in the late eighteenth century and provide a new perspective on communities in that time and beyond.

In this introductory chapter, I want to situate the present study in the field of historical song scholarship and discuss Dutch political song culture in both national and international contexts. I explain why and how the perspective of feeling is an effective framework for comprehending the significance of song in sociopolitical change. This is centred on the inherently performative nature of song and the centrality of the singing body during performances. Though it can be challenging for historians to uncover the effects of music on the body, research from the history of emotions underscores the significance of normative frameworks of emotion in understanding embodied experiences.<sup>6</sup> This leads me to an overview of early modern thought on the

4 I refer to the movement of the Patriots with the capitalized term to distinguish it from remarks that concern patriotism in a more general sense (as love for the fatherland). The Dutch "royals"—the stadtholders—were members of the House of Orange, descending from Willem van Oranje. I refer to their supporters as Orangists.

5 I use these three terms in their contemporary sense. "Imagination" is a term that was also widely used in the eighteenth century, when, in contrast to today's use of the term, it bore quite negative connotations.

6 Katie Barclay, "The Sound of Politics in Early Nineteenth-Century Ireland," *Journal of British Studies* 60, no. 2 (2021): 389. In ascribing significance to "normative frameworks of emotion,"

affective force of song, followed by contemporary conceptual frameworks that scholars have developed to understand cultural practices such as singing. I explain how these concepts have shaped the method applied in this study and how the texts and tunes of the songs constitute a politics of feeling that mobilized, imagined, and affirmed singing communities throughout the Dutch revolutionary period.

## The Dutch Revolutionary Period

Let me first set the scene for this exploration of the songs of the Dutch revolutionary period by briefly recalling the central events of the years 1780–1815, an era aptly characterized by historian Niek van Sas as a “crucial time in the metamorphosis of the Netherlands.”<sup>7</sup> While this book focuses on the final two decades before the turn of the century, understanding the significance of the 1780s and 1790s requires consideration of the events both leading up to and following the revolutionary period. In the seventeenth century, the Dutch held a dominant position on the global stage, but their importance gradually diminished during the eighteenth century due to the growing influence of France and Britain in both economic and political realms. Discontent with these developments resulted in a critical assessment of the Dutch Republic’s existing governance, intensifying in the 1770s and 1780s. Many contemporaries perceived a decline in the once prosperous republic, and this served as a key catalyst in reigniting the conflict between the Patriots (*staatsgezinden*, republicans) and the Orangists (*prinsgezinden*, royalists). Following the revolutionary period, the political landscape in the Netherlands underwent profound changes. While it remains debatable whether the revolutionaries achieved all their objectives, a collective desire for peace and stability led to the emergence of a political culture centred on compromise and reconciliation. And ultimately, after the Congress of Vienna, it led to the establishment of the Netherlands as a monarchy.

The timeframe 1780–1815 can be roughly divided into the following periods, more or less coinciding with regime changes. The intensification of the conflict between Patriots and Orangists in the 1770s and 1780s resulted in the first Patriot revolution in 1787. This revolt failed and instead led to a restoration of the Orangist

Barclay echoes William M. Reddy’s concept of the emotional regime, further introduced later in this introduction.

7 Niek van Sas, *De metamorfose van Nederland. Van oude orde naar moderniteit, 1750–1900* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2004), 31.

regime, which forced many prominent Patriots into exile in the southern Low Countries and France. There they bore witness to the Brabantine Revolution (1789–90) and the French Revolution (1789–99). In 1795 these Patriots—now calling themselves Batavians—returned to the Netherlands with the help of the French revolutionary armies and brought about the Batavian Revolution, forcing stadtholder Willem V to flee. After the revolution, the Batavians were faced with the task of building their new republic. The constitutional coups of 1798 show that this was not a particularly smooth process. From 1801 onwards, the French began to significantly increase the influence they had exercised in the Batavian Republic since 1795, resulting in the transformation of that republic back into a monarchy under King Louis Napoleon in 1806. Eventually in 1810, the Netherlands was incorporated into the First French Empire until Napoleon's defeat at Leipzig in 1813, which allowed the Prince of Oranje (Willem Frederik, son of Willem V) to return as the Dutch sovereign. After more than 200 years as a republic, the Netherlands had become a monarchy again.

## Political Song Culture

The songs composed and performed in these turbulent times tell us not only what happened but also how people experienced these events and engaged with them. But since it would be nearly another century before necessary technologies were developed, there are no audio or video recordings from the late eighteenth century. To discern remnants of the performative essence of songs from that era, we must therefore rely on clues in the textual, musical, and visual materials. In the context of this research, which merges historical literary analysis with musicology, my primary focus is directed towards the lyrics and melodies of the songs. Any leads discovered within these sources are subsequently verified and enriched, whenever feasible, by consulting additional resources, including court documents, newspapers, personal accounts, and visual depictions.

Songs have often been used as illustrations for observations drawn from other types of historical source material, and much historical research that has used songs as its sources has focused on the song texts mainly for their descriptions of ideas and events. Sound historian David Kennerly has identified two ways in which this form of scholarship “ultimately rests on a distortion of what song is.”<sup>8</sup> He argues that such an approach overlooks the

8 David Kennerly, “Music, Politics, and History: An Introduction,” *Journal of British Studies* 60, no. 2 (2021): 365.

intricate interplay between melody and lyrics, which is vital for understanding how songs connect with a broader musical culture (e.g., opera and concert music, military music, dance music) that does “significant cultural and political work of [its] own.”<sup>9</sup> It also neglects the performative aspect of songs, where acts of singing—“moments in time and space whose meanings are influenced by what comes before and after”—and the contextual nuances of these moments shape their influence on social and political life.<sup>10</sup> In this book, I therefore regard the songs as scripts for performances, searching their texts and tunes not only for descriptive information but also for clues that can tell us how they were (supposed to be) sung. Like Mark Philp, I want to stress that we should be interested in how people were affected by the experience of singing on a bodily level, and “how these less conscious influences” shaped their “commitments and conduct.”<sup>11</sup> Songs and the references and associations connected to them were deeply intertwined with the ways in which individuals perceived and reacted to their surroundings, exerting a significant influence on their social and political responses and engagements.

Within this broader context, Dutch song culture has a rich history. Until the sixteenth century, popular singing and song production were mainly oral practices.<sup>12</sup> Songs were composed by a variety of people and ranged from simple rhymes and tunes to complex texts with elaborate melodies. They were sung in merchants’ houses and farmers’ huts, in the fields and at fairs. The songs travelled through the voices of the people that heard and remembered them, people who sang them while changing words and music according to their ideas and tastes. Song was a largely fluid practice in which all participants added to text and tune.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid.

11 Mark Philp, “Music and Movement in Britain, 1793–1815,” *Journal of British Studies* 60, no. 2 (2021): 404.

12 I use the anachronistic term “popular” throughout this book to refer to what we would today regard as working class. Popular thus stands opposite to “elite,” a term that I use to refer to educated and propertied groups of society and that would today include the upper and middle classes. What is interesting about song culture is that for songs, this distinction was never as dualistic as may be implied here. As Oskar Cox Jensen has phrased it, it is impossible to make any “rigid division of the populace into two or more horizontal or vertical categories,” which leaves “open the possibility for dialogue between the two; for a multiplicity of cultures within the same class; for cross-class agency; and for the movement of songs both up and down the social scale.” Oskar Cox Jensen, *Napoleon and British Song* (London: Palgrave Macmillan: 2015), 12. Indeed, song was the cultural genre that was enjoyed across all social groups. Finally, I should note that I also employ the term “popular” in the context of its other meaning: to denote something that was particularly well known and/or well liked.

With the invention of the printing press, this oral tradition became more and more fixed in writing, and songs were often published as song sheets (broadsheets) and in songbooks. These books and sheets varied in size and quality: from relatively cheap, pocket-sized booklets that could be taken everywhere one went to more luxuriously manufactured songbooks destined for use and display in the home. Most songbooks and sheets that were designed for everyday use were printed in a handy *quarto* format so that the owner could carry it with them at all times in the pocket of their jacket or skirt. The song sheets—one or more songs printed on a single sheet of cheap paper, sometimes folded—were an inexpensive alternative to songbooks. While many songs will never have made it into print, or their printed form did not withstand years of wear and tear, the many hundreds of printed songbooks and sheets that fill our archives nevertheless give us an impression of the lively song culture that existed in the early modern period.<sup>13</sup>

During the seventeenth century, printing became faster and cheaper, and printed songs were available to most people. Songs were for sale not only in the shops of printers and booksellers. Often street singers would present songs—set to well-known melodies—to the people passing by in public spaces, inviting them to listen, buy a sheet, and sing along.<sup>14</sup> People could then assemble these sheets and bind them into a personal song collection. In addition, printers and booksellers advertised their merchandise in the papers or by hanging a sample in their shop window.<sup>15</sup> Songs were also printed in newspapers, and pubs and coffeehouses often had a few of them hanging on their walls for customers to read and sing.<sup>16</sup> There were thus

13 See Martine de Bruin and Johan Oosterman, eds., *Repertorium van het Nederlandse lied tot 1600* (Gent/Amsterdam: KANTL/Meertens Instituut/KNAW, 2001); Dieuwke van der Poel, Louis Peter Grijp, and Wim van Anrooij, eds., *Identity, Intertextuality, and Performance in Early Modern Song Culture* (Leiden: Brill, 2016). For more studies about early modern Dutch song culture, see, for example, Louis Peter Grijp and Frank Willaert, *De fiere nachtegaal. Het Nederlandse lied in de middeleeuwen* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2008); Annemieke Houben, *Vieze liedjes uit de 17e en 18e eeuw* (Nijmegen: Vantilt, 2015); Maartje de Wilde, *De lokroep van de nachtegaal. Wereldlijke liedboeken uit de Zuidelijke Nederlanden (1628–1677)* (unpublished PhD thesis, Antwerp University, 2011).

14 Two quite dated but still very accurate studies of street singing in the Netherlands are Friedrich Kossman, *De Nederlandsche straatzanger en zijn liederen in vroeger eeuwen* (Amsterdam: Van Kampen, 1941); Fred Martin, “De liedjeszanger als massamedium. Straatzangers in de achttiende en negentiende eeuw,” *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 97 (1984): 422–46. For a more recent and international perspective on street singers, see the various publications by Una McLivenna on this topic.

15 Natascha Veldhorst, *Zingend door het leven. Het Nederlandse liedboek in de Gouden Eeuw* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2009), 60.

16 *Ibid.*

1. *De Liedjes-Sangster*, etching on paper, Carel Frederik Bendorp, 1782, Rijksmuseum Amsterdam. We see a fair at which a crowd has gathered around two women standing on a platform, singing and selling songs. Behind them is a painting (*rolprent*) on which a naval battle is depicted. The text below this painting indicates that this is the Battle of Dogger Bank. Above the painting we read “Vivat Zoutman” (Long live Zoutman). It is likely that the women are singing and selling songs about Zoutman and the Battle of Dogger Bank.



ample opportunities to hear, learn, and sing songs, even for people with no means to buy a material version.

Likewise, people did not need to be able to read text or music to have access to this lively song culture. The melodies and texts that were used could be passed on orally, and often existed in a multiplicity of variations. Most songs were contrafacts to already existing, often well-known, music. The tunes were selected on the basis of their popularity and musical characteristics, characteristics that accompanied, matched, or reinforced a song's text.<sup>17</sup> Through contrafacture (the composition of new texts to existing tunes),<sup>18</sup> some melodies acquired a particular thematic label as a preferred tune for love songs, mourning songs, or battle songs, for example. Tunes thus

17 Poet Hiëronymus van Alphen (1746–1803), for example, argued that lyrics could voice the feelings that were evoked by the music and music could reinforce the eloquence of a text. See Els Strategier, *De taal der hartstochten. De visie van drie achttiende-eeuwse Nederlandse schrijvers op muziek en haar relatie met de dichtkunst* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam Historische Reeks, 2001), 149–50. Similarly, James Beattie argued that “in vocal music, truly such, the words render the expression determinate, and fix the hearer's attention upon it,” ensuring that “the hearer is in no danger of being seduced from the principal air.” James Beattie, *Essays on Poetry and Music as They Affect the Mind* (Edinburgh: Edward and Charles Dilly, 1778), 136.

18 A key work on contrafacture in Dutch song culture is Louis Peter Grijp, *Het Nederlandse lied in de Gouden Eeuw: het mechanisme van de contrafactuur* (Amsterdam: P. J. Meertens Instituut, 1991). See also Una McLivenna, “The Power of Music: The Significance of Contrafactum in Execution Ballads,” *Past and Present* 229, no. 1 (2015): 47–89; Una McLivenna, *Singing the News of Death: Execution Ballads in Europe 1500–1900* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022).

built up several layers of meaning through their use in different contexts.<sup>19</sup> The names of tunes had the potential to become ingrained in individuals' memories, connecting them to a specific communal interpretation of historical events.<sup>20</sup> This underscores a broader range of experiences in which these associations were subtly and almost instinctively established. Oskar Cox Jensen has coined the notion of "fitness" for this, a term referring to a song's ability to have a substantial impact in its own time. This fitness is achieved by combining components like a compelling melody, an alignment of music and lyrics, and an engagement with prevailing audience preferences and sensitivities.<sup>21</sup> While melodies often had greater longevity than texts, text and music were still continuously shaping each other, a process that was facilitated by the performative nature of song.

Furthermore, the use of popular melodies enhanced singability and facilitated a quick learning and dissemination of a song.<sup>22</sup> New melodies were rarely composed. The songwriters of the Dutch revolutionary period used various musical genres for their songs: popular tunes, psalms, opera melodies, military marches, and even what we would today call "Lied" or "art song" (often simplified to make them singable for untrained singers). These tunes were not only Dutch tunes; a large part of the repertoire originated in the neighbouring regions of France, Germany, and Britain. This is not surprising given the internationalism of the Dutch Republic. What is more, in the eighteenth century, the Netherlands was at the centre of Europe's music publishing business.<sup>23</sup> Foreign influences therefore significantly shaped Dutch political song culture at that time. Consequently, in this book we will encounter melodies of various international origins.

I have stated that singing was a part of everyday life in the early modern Netherlands. This ubiquity of song did not, however, mean that singing was a given to which people passively succumbed. While audiences would not

19 Thomas Turino, *Music as Social Life: The Politics of Participation* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2008), 190; Laura Lohman, *Hail Columbia! American Music and Politics in the Early Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 6. See also McIlvenna, "The Power of Music."

20 Mark Philp observes a similar mechanism in British dancing culture in the same period. Philp, "Music and Movement in Britain," 406.

21 Cox Jensen, *Napoleon and British Song*, 2.

22 Following Cornelis van der Haven, I take the term "singability" from Heinrich Schwab, who coined the term as "Sangbarkeit" in his study *Sangbarkeit, Popularität und Kunstlied: Studien zu Lied und Liedästhetik der mittleren Goethezeit 1770–1814* (Regensburg: Bosse, 1965). Cornelis van der Haven, "Singing the Nation: Imagined Collectivity and the Poetics of Identification in Dutch Political Songs (1780–1800)," *Modern Language Review* 111, no. 3 (2016): 754–74.

23 Rudolf Rasch, *Muziek in de Republiek. Geschiedenis van de muziek in de Republiek der Zeven Verenigde Nederlanden 1579–1795* (Utrecht: KVNMM, 2018), 16.



always have been fully attentive listeners, participatory practices of singing did require full engagement. If song was to sound, people had to make these sounds themselves. Music was always something that people produced, and they did so deliberately. This realization is crucial for our understanding of the political functions of song, as it underlines its performative nature. Another factor that we must consider is that people rarely engaged with political music on their own, as the research of many song scholars has shown.<sup>24</sup> Political singing practices brought people together in communities and allowed the expression of political affiliations.

Song and politics have a longstanding relationship that extends before and beyond the historical and geographic scope of the Dutch revolutionary period. Especially in politically turbulent times, song seems to be a suitable medium to voice political views and feelings.<sup>25</sup> “Song afforded a cultural space in which politics all of kinds was done,” observes Cox Jensen in his study of early nineteenth-century British political songs.<sup>26</sup> In Dutch history, the Dutch Revolt (1566–1648) was another moment at which song played an important role in the political debates. The still famous *geuzenliederen* chronicled and commented on the events of the Eighty Years’ War, as Louis Peter Grijp has shown in his extensive studies of the songs of that era.<sup>27</sup>

The final decades of the eighteenth century in the Netherlands were again characterized by an exceptionally close relationship between song and politics. This can be explained by a variety of circumstances. Emancipation through education was a central idea in the eighteenth-century European Enlightenment. Simultaneously, a Patriot discourse developed which promoted the idea of a unified and solidaric fatherland. In the Netherlands,

24 See Billy Coleman, *Harnessing Harmony: Music, Power, and Politics in the United States, 1788–1865* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2020); Robert Darnton, *Poetry and the Police: Communication Networks in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010); Laurens Ham, *Op de vuist. Vijftig jaar politiek en protestliedjes in Nederland* (Amsterdam: Ambo|Anthos, 2020); Katherine Hambridge, “Staging Singing in the Theater of War (Berlin, 1805),” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 68, no. 1 (2015): 39–98; Nicholas Hammond, *The Powers of Sound and Song in Early Modern Paris* (University Park: The University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019); Lohman, *Hail Columbia!*; Laura Mason, *Singing the French Revolution: Popular Culture and Politics, 1787–1799* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996); Jan-Friedrich Missfelder, “Sound Politics: Sonic Agency and Social Order in Early Modern Zurich,” *Annali dell’Istituto storico italo-germanico in Trento* 45, no. 2 (2019): 87–106; John Street, *Music and Politics* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012).

25 Ibid.

26 Cox Jensen, *Napoleon and British Song*, 3.

27 Louis Peter Grijp, “De hoer van Babylon: politieke liederen uit de tachtigjarige oorlog,” *Spiegel historiae* 22, no. 4 (1987): 165–71.

these ideas gained urgency because of a notion of economic, social, and moral decline in the Dutch Republic following the prosperous ‘golden age’ of the seventeenth century. This, in turn, led to an emphasis on education as the central theme dominating public and political debates in the Netherlands. Through education, people could be brought up as emancipated citizens who would be able to contribute to the welfare of the nation.<sup>28</sup>

Such ideals shaped politics, arts, and culture throughout Europe in the late eighteenth century.<sup>29</sup> Closely connected to ideas of knowledgeability and education, societies dedicated to science, art, and literature were founded across the whole of the Netherlands.<sup>30</sup> These manifestations of sociability were the effect of the Enlightenment idea that knowledge, virtue, and happiness should be obtained collectively if possible, in harmonious connection with others. The spaces provided by these societies therefore functioned as breeding grounds for the exchange of knowledge and ideas and the formation of social connections. The societies also became hubs for the exchange of political and reformative ideas, which in turn found expression in many literary and cultural products.<sup>31</sup>

Art and politics were closely intertwined at the time of the Dutch revolutionary period. Therefore, this study features not only political songwriters but also song-writing politicians, two roles that were often united in a single individual (for example, Pieter Vreede, Gerrit Paape, and Adriaan Loosjes, to name but a few).<sup>32</sup> This affirms the importance of song in popular politics, emphasizing its ability to cultivate public support through songs and singing practices. These songwriters not only wrote for themselves and their peers but also aimed to address a wider population. Therefore, songs had to be singable, using simple language and well-known melodies. This was again

28 See Margaret C. Jacob and Wijnand W. Mijnhardt, eds. *The Dutch Republic in the Eighteenth Century: Decline, Enlightenment, and Revolution* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992); Marleen de Vries, *Verlicht en vilein. De biografie van achttiende-eeuws Nederland* (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Balans, 2023).

29 European culture was not limited to the European continent: through imperialism and the practice of colonialism, it came to dominate a much larger territory.

30 Some societies were not just clubs for the elites but were aimed at involving a wider range of people, for example the departments of the *Maatschappij tot Nut van 't Algemeen* established in 1784. For a thorough outline of eighteenth-century Dutch societal culture, see Wijnand W. Mijnhardt, *Tot Heil van 't Menschdom. Culturele genootschappen in Nederland, 1750–1815* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1988).

31 Marleen de Vries, *Beschaven! Letterkundige genootschappen in Nederland 1750–1800* (Nijmegen: Vantilt, 2001).

32 While there were many female songwriters, women were not yet allowed to assume official political functions. This would only change over one hundred years later when Suze Groeneweg became the first female member of parliament in 1918.

motivated by the idea that education—through popular culture—would improve the morality of the people and thus that of society as a whole. This would then promote unity, solidarity, and love for the fatherland, and through such moral and social improvement, the economic decline could be reversed as well—so it was hoped.<sup>33</sup>

It is important to note that song was not simply an entertainment medium. Songs had a vital function in the distribution of knowledge, and singing was a practice through which the morals and values of a society were conveyed and learned.<sup>34</sup> “Songs can be about hopes, challenges, worries, fears, and joys of those who create, compose, and sing them. In doing so, they provide insights into time-specific perceptions of the present, past, and future,” argues Juliane Brauer.<sup>35</sup> Song’s mnemonic capacities played an important role in these processes. At a time in which the news was not just one click away on a smartphone, songs were a major source of information, as Una McLvenna has convincingly shown.<sup>36</sup> In that sense, early modern song culture could be considered as somewhat parallel to the function of online social media today: providing information and entertainment from a variety of (both legitimate and more questionable) sources. It is therefore not surprising that song—much like, for example, theatre and printed images—was considered an ideal tool to disseminate ideologically charged messages throughout the early modern period.

## Songs as Sources of Feeling

Song could do more than simply represent political ideas: by enabling singers to name these feelings and to express them in word and deed, singing could mobilize people to act on these ideas, regulating the bodies and feelings of singers. In this way, singers could form an affective community, participate actively in this community, and identify with it. In the early modern period, affective force was ascribed to song: it had the capacity to evoke and manipulate feelings. Consequently, song not only played a central role in people’s everyday lives; songs and their singing were also explicitly

33 Van Sas, *De metamorfose van Nederland*, 73.

34 Juliane Brauer, *Zeitgeföhle – Wie die DDR ihre Zukunft besang* (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2020), 19.

35 Ibid.

36 Una McLvenna, “When the News Was Sung: Ballads as News Media in Early Modern Europe,” *Media History* 22, no. 3–4 (2016): 1–17; McLvenna, *Singing the News of Death*.

used as tools in public political debates.<sup>37</sup> Singing allowed the expression of political affiliations, and because of its affective capacities, it could engage people and mobilize their bodies for a political cause. As a result, singing practices brought people together in communities and prepared them for collective action.

The assumption that singing could affect people's feelings is key to my argument that singing practices in the Dutch revolutionary era played an important role in the political reality. Therefore, I have analysed my sources on several levels, asking what they reveal about *what* people were singing about feelings, *how* they were singing about feelings, and *when* and *where* these performances took place. In song texts, we find ideas and images that often have emotional connotations and are conveyed through the use of images and tropes intended to express or evoke emotions in the reader. Such metaphors are helpful in assessing how the songwriter may have interpreted the feelings they were writing about and which feelings they intended to evoke through their song. Song texts provide the most obvious evidence of what feelings people were singing of, and sometimes also indicate when, where, or (to a certain extent) how people sang of these feelings. The tunes also reveal how people were voicing feeling. Analysing the musical characteristics of the melodies, such as metre, intervals, or structure, provides insights into the auditory and vocalized representation of feeling.

In addition to the close readings of texts and tunes and analyses of their relationship, an understanding of the context in which the songs were sung—through examination of sources such as court records, newspaper reports, and personal accounts—can help us assess how the feelings expressed in the songs functioned or were intended to function. As Ute Frevert has stressed, “words and concepts are interesting only to the extent that they inform, guide, and frame emotional practices,” because “it is those practices that give emotion words their historically precise meaning.”<sup>38</sup> While we can investigate feelings by looking at “emotion words” and, as Frevert has argued, “consider the expression [of emotion] as emotion *tout court*,” “emotion words [...] derive their meaning from the practices that they form part of.”<sup>39</sup> It is therefore necessary to maintain a constant dialogue between

37 See Coleman, *Harnessing Harmony*; Darnton, *Poetry and the Police*; Lohman, *Hail Columbia!*; Mason, *Singing the French Revolution*; Angela McShane, “Drink, Song and Politics in Early Modern England,” *Popular Music* 35, no. 2 (2016): 166–90.

38 Ute Frevert, “The History of Emotions,” in *Handbook of Emotions*, ed. Lisa Feldman Barrett, Michael Lewis, and Jeannette M. Haviland-Jones (New York/London: The Guildford Press, 2016), 56. I will further elaborate on the concept of emotional practices below.

39 *Ibid.*, 57.

text, tunes, and contexts to achieve insight into the singing communities and the politics of feeling in the songs of the Dutch revolutionary period.

In the eighteenth century, song was the genre that was “most important to the creation and maintenance of social groups.”<sup>40</sup> In the context of political unrest, song was seen to have affective powers; collective and public singing therefore often functioned as declarations of social identity.<sup>41</sup> For a considerable time, medical and neurological perspectives on the human body significantly influenced how people thought about music, its impacts, and its artistic qualities. Particularly starting in the seventeenth century, the ideas of natural philosophers and music theorists often foreshadowed many aspects of the present-day discourse concerning the connection between music and the nervous system. This transformation occurred as neurology to a certain extent supplanted cosmology as the foundational framework for conceiving the interplay between music and the human body.<sup>42</sup> Early modern perspectives on music encompassed both Neoplatonic contemplation regarding its connection to cosmic order and an increasingly explicit endorsement of the sensory aspects of music.

Until the later eighteenth century, there was a gradual and intricate transition from the idea of music affecting the air within the body to a more direct emphasis on the nervous system. European Enlightenment thinkers theorized extensively on the emotional forces of music, speech, and song. This was an interest that emerged in the Italian Renaissance and highly influenced the Reformation, the German Baroque, and seventeenth-century philosophers such as Athanasius Kircher and René Descartes. During the Enlightenment, a musical aesthetic characterized by sensibility, expression, and emotion largely disregarded abstract correlations between musical elements and specific emotions.

Katie Barclay has pointed out that this led to musical fashions following emotional trends, with the eighteenth-century culture of sensibility inducing a demand for music that expressed “delicate sentiment” and reflected the level of emotional control that social elites felt to be required for people assuming political rights.<sup>43</sup> The entire cult of sensibility in the eighteenth

40 Éva Guillorel, David Hopkin, and William G. Pooley, eds., *Rhythms of Revolt: European Traditions and Memories of Social Conflict in Oral Culture* (London/New York: Routledge, 2018), 5.

41 Ibid.

42 See Penelope Gouk and Helen Hills, *Representing Emotions: New Connections in the Histories of Art, Music and Medicine* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005); James Kennaway, *Music and the Nerves, 1700–1900* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

43 Katie Barclay, “Sounds of Sedition: Music and Emotion in Ireland, 1780–1845,” *Cultural History* 3, no. 1 (2014): 60.

century drew heavily from medical theories concerning nerves and sensation, as George S. Rousseau has convincingly laid out.<sup>44</sup> It was believed that emotion was a matter involving both the passions and physical sensations, and it was literally associated with having sensitive nerves. Hence, it was believed that the affective force of music was intertwined with its impact on the body. Music stirred emotions by eliciting a physical reaction within the body, subsequently giving rise to the corresponding emotional response.<sup>45</sup> Music thus could be used to “sway opinions, and through this, govern the passions of men.”<sup>46</sup> This was nothing less than what we would now call propaganda, a term that I will be employing for such a use of cultural expressions throughout this book. Songs in particular were seen as capable of evoking and controlling feelings, since their lyrics—following the idea that language is reason—were understood to contain and control the passion of the music.<sup>47</sup> It is therefore especially interesting to look at how feelings are voiced in these song texts and how these texts, together with the tunes, are oriented towards political action. This is one of the main aims of this study.

In the eighteenth century, feeling was thus a prominent theme in literature, poetry, and music, which were “increasingly geared toward the arousal or suppression of the passions in the reader or listener.”<sup>48</sup> It was widely acknowledged that songs had the capacity to “inflame the passions.”<sup>49</sup> Jean-Jacques Rousseau, for example, stated that singing ought to be guided by and towards the passions. Through this, it could affect the feelings of its audiences.<sup>50</sup> In his *Essai sur l'origine des Langues* (1781), he writes that music had been the earliest form of human expression, as it was best at conveying the primal emotions that he believed to have guided early humanity.<sup>51</sup> As a

44 George S. Rousseau, “Nerves, Spirits and Fibres: Toward the Origins of Sensibility (1975),” in *Nervous Acts: Essays on Literature, Culture and Sensibility*, ed. George S. Rousseau (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2004).

45 Barclay, “Sounds of Sedition,” 59.

46 Harold D. Lasswell, Daniel Lerner, and Hans Speier, eds., *Propaganda and Communication in World History: Emergence of Public Opinion in the West* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1980), 151.

47 See John Neubauer, *The Emancipation of Music from Language: Departure from Mimesis in Eighteenth-Century Aesthetics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986).

48 Isabella van Elferen, *Mystical Love in the German Baroque: Theology, Poetry, Music* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2009), 71.

49 Barclay, “Sounds of Sedition,” 55.

50 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Oeuvres Complètes*, ed. Bernard Gagnebin and Marcel Raymond, vol. 5 of 5 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1959), 5:380. See also Julia Simon, “Singing Democracy: Music and Politics in Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s Thought,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 65, no. 3 (2004): 433–54, for an elaborate discussion of singing and politics in the works of Rousseau.

51 Rousseau, *Oeuvres Complètes*, 5:1443.

means of conveying emotions, music possessed the capacity to transmit the singer's emotional expression and, subsequently, stimulate emotions in the listener.<sup>52</sup> Many philosophers voiced such an idea more or less simultaneously to Rousseau. In the German-speaking context, for example, figures like the composer and writer C. P. E. Bach and the aesthetician Johann Georg Sulzer advocated for a subjective aesthetic focused on feeling and expression.<sup>53</sup> Sulzer wrote that it was "not the amusement of the ear" that was of importance for songs but rather their "moving effect."<sup>54</sup> By focusing on a specific "passionate feeling," song could "permeate and occupy the entire soul" with this affect.<sup>55</sup> Music theorist Johann Mattheson argued at length that it was the "ultimate purpose" of composition "to excite all the affects, simply through the notes and their rhythm, defying the best orator."<sup>56</sup> Meanwhile, the Scottish poet James Beattie argued that "the end of all genuine music, is to introduce into the human mind certain affections, or susceptibilities of affection."<sup>57</sup> Whether for good or evil ends, the power of music to shape emotion, stir the passions, and inflame the mind was commonly recognized throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, states Katie Barclay.<sup>58</sup> People viewed music as a stimulant for the nerves, with various mixtures of thought linked to Locke's concept of the association of ideas. James Kennaway highlights that this eighteenth-century perspective bears remarkable similarities to twenty-first-century discussions about neurology and music, as it was based on the idea that music delivered shocks to the nerves of the body.<sup>59</sup> As such, the body and the practices it engaged in became central to early modern views on feeling.

Such concepts were introduced into Dutch music treatises through theorists like Mattheson. Jacob Wilhelm Lustig, a German-Dutch organist

52 Barclay, "Sounds of Sedition," 59.

53 Matthew Riley, *Musical Listening in the German Enlightenment: Attention, Wonder and Astonishment* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004).

54 "Denn hier kommt es nicht auf die Belustigung des Ohres an, nicht auf die Bewundrung der Kunst; nicht auf die Ueberraschung durch künstliche Harmonien und schwere Modulationen; sondern lediglich auf Rührung." Johann Georg Sulzer, *Allgemeine Theorie der Schönen Künste. Lexikon der Künste und der Ästhetik* [1771] (Berlin: Direct Media Publishing, 2004), 2676.

55 "[das Lied] soll eine einzige leidenschaftliche Empfindung eine Zeitlang im Gemüth unterhalten, und eben dadurch dieselbe allmählig tiefer und tiefer einprägen, bis die ganze Seele völlig davon eingenommen und beherrscht wird." *Ibid.*, 2658–59.

56 Johann Mattheson, *Der vollkommene Capellmeister* [1739], ed. Margarete Reimann (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1995), quoted in Van Elferen, *Mystical Love in the German Baroque*, 74.

57 Beattie, *Essays on Poetry and Music*, 132.

58 Barclay, "Sounds of Sedition," 59.

59 Kennaway, *Music and the Nerves*, 17.

and music theorist who had studied under Mattheson, contended that the authentic goal of music should be the expression and evocation of feeling.<sup>60</sup> Consequently, music was perceived as a means to complement and reinforce the sentiments conveyed by songwriters in their texts. Singing, as an embodiment of these expressions, was believed to have significant impacts on both singers and audiences. These impacts could be skilfully manipulated through the songs chosen and the manner in which they were performed.

Certain elements of these early modern ideas are echoed in recent theories on the affective effects of music and sound perception. Singing is the bodily action that produces sounds by way of the voice. It allows us to express ourselves with the instrument that is closest to us: the body itself. Singing is facilitated by the body: it comes *from* the body but also comes back *to* the body, triggering feelings which we experience with this body. Cultural critic Sara Ahmed has written about such a process as an “enveloping of the body,” positing that an emotion “both envelops the bodies that feel it, as well as constructs those bodies as enveloped, as contained by it, as if it comes from outside and moves inward.”<sup>61</sup> In this way, Ahmed argues, feeling creates “surfaces” (objects, subjects, bodies, images, ideas, etc.) to which emotions can “stick.”<sup>62</sup> The adherence of feeling to a body changes this body.<sup>63</sup> The body and its feelings, furthermore, are socially, culturally, and thus historically determined. They are, in William Reddy’s words, at the same time constitutive of and subject to an *emotional regime*—“a normative order for emotions.”<sup>64</sup> The body and its feelings are intertwined with the outside world, tied to social contexts, and therefore subject to change. Feelings, as Juliane Brauer points out, are a “mediator between body/mind and society”; they are “a central dimension of experience and knowledge.”<sup>65</sup>

Singing is one of the social and cultural practices that involves feeling. As such, we can approach singing as an *emotional practice*, a concept put on the map by Monique Scheer.<sup>66</sup> Scheer recognizes emotions as something we

60 Jacob Wilhelm Lustig, *Twaalf Redeneeringen over nuttige Muzikaale Onderwerpen* (Amsterdam: A. Olofsen, 1756), 471.

61 Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 63.

62 *Ibid.*, 10–11.

63 Sara Ahmed, “Affective Economies,” *Social Text* 79, no. 22 (2004): 130.

64 William M. Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling. A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 124.

65 Brauer, *Zeitgeföhle*, 22.

66 See Pascal Eitler and Monique Scheer, “Emotionengeschichte als Körpergeschichte. Eine heuristische Perspektive auf religiöse Konversionen im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert,” *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 35, no. 2 (2009): 282–313; Monique Scheer, “Are Emotions a Kind of Practice (and Is



not only passively have but also actively do, stating that “practices not only generate emotions, but emotions themselves can be viewed as a practical engagement with the world.”<sup>67</sup> Such a proposition acknowledges the centrality of the body in experiences of feeling, sees feeling as inextricably intertwined with the body, and declares the feeling body as culturally determined. When the feeling body is viewed as part of, and subject to, a specific historical context, an emotional regime that determines a politics of feeling can be distinguished within this context, one which constituted what could and should be felt and how these feelings could and should be experienced. To understand songs—or any form of (popular) culture—as political tools, we must situate them in this politics of feeling.

We could interpret politics of feeling as the “emotionalization” of politics, where feelings become central to political practices. Or we could read it as referring to political feelings, emotions that are directly connected to politics, like patriotism or xenophobia. While these certainly are feelings that play a role in political culture, I instead adhere to an understanding of a politics of feeling as the practice of intentionally manipulating feelings. Regimes, whether official political entities or other organized groups, movements, or authorities, can utilize such manipulating tactics to realize the objectives of their political ideology. During the many regime changes that occurred in the turbulent years of the Dutch revolutionary period, having a politics of feeling was essential to maintain and control the collective.

As Brauer emphasizes, songs do not possess an intrinsic, pre-determined emotional impact, regardless of whether the composers intended such an effect.<sup>68</sup> Instead, their influence stems from the “utilization of songs,” the roles they play within specific practices, and how they are “presented and perceived” in those contexts.<sup>69</sup> Thinking about a regime’s politics of feeling not only raises the question of which feelings were evoked and encouraged; it is equally important to ask which feelings were discouraged or even suppressed. Questions about who was singing what and where—or who was made to sing what, by whom—can give us insight into the structures and practices of power.<sup>70</sup> In the Dutch revolutionary period, suppression manifested in various ways. In police records and notarial archives, for

That What Makes Them Have a History)? A Bourdieuan Approach to Understanding Emotion,” *History and Theory* 51, no. 2 (2012): 193–220; Monique Scheer, *Enthusiasm: Emotional Practices of Conviction in Modern Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020).

67 Scheer, “Are Emotions a Kind of Practice,” 193–94.

68 Brauer, *Zeitgeföhle*, 23.

69 Ibid.

70 Ibid., 20.

example, we find numerous cases of punishment for the singing or selling of songs with a particular political affiliation. Revolutionary festivals were not only an opportunity to raise celebratory voices. Their overpowering soundscapes, I will argue, also facilitated the suppression of unwanted voices. And when looking at the semantic level of the songs, their words and concepts, we need to ask not only who was included in the singing collective but also who was excluded. Furthermore, by acknowledging not only the power of song to dominate but also its potential to resist domination, to undermine the emotional regime, I want to offer a polyphonic analysis of Dutch political song culture that allows us to recognize both melody and counterpoint.

Looking at song and singing as an emotional practice in the Dutch revolutionary period has thus revealed three ways in which they could shape political experiences: mobilization, imagination, and affirmation. These three ways, or functions, stand in a complex relationship to each other. Mobilization, the activation of bodies, is hard to achieve without imagination: the capacity of the mind to imagine desired, other realities (realities for which it might be worth mobilizing). These imaginations draw on earlier experiences of mobilization and/or affirmation. Affirmation is the reinforcement of that which has been achieved through imagination and mobilization. Furthermore, affirmations can contribute to new mobilizations and/or imaginations. In many ways, imagination forms a link between mobilization and affirmation, and consequently, it will serve as a unifying element throughout this book. The focus on mobilization, imagination, and affirmation not only forms the core of my exploration of how singing shaped communities in the past; it has also prompted me to rethink how we can approach these communities, looking not only at the manifestations of these communities but also acknowledging the felt experiences of the people who engaged with their practices.

This inquiry inevitably prompts us to consider how we might gain insight into the feelings experienced in the past, the central question in the history of emotions and experiences. How can we apprehend the fleeting character of both song and feeling and decipher their significance? As stated, for the eighteenth century, such an endeavour hinges on the availability of sources. Nevertheless, as many studies in the history of emotions have proven, when we scrutinize these sources with an eye attuned to the nuanced traces of feelings, we can uncover a wealth of revelations.<sup>71</sup> Through the adoption of

71 See Katie Barclay, "Performance and Performativity," in *Early Modern Emotions: An Introduction*, ed. Susan Broomhall (London/New York: Routledge, 2017), 15.

a perspective that encompasses textual and musical depictions of feeling, I have embarked on studying the song culture of the Dutch revolutionary era with the objective of discerning how the act of singing influenced and shaped the feelings, thoughts, and actions of political communities during that period.<sup>72</sup>

### Mobilizing, Imagining, and Affirming Communities

Songs are essential sources if we want to investigate political processes of the past. In the late eighteenth century, many products of poetical creativity were called “song” (*lied, zang, gezang, lierzang, cantate*), even if they were not necessarily written to be sung.<sup>73</sup> As I am focusing on singing practices, for this research I have selected only those songs for which it can be established that they were actually *intended* to be sung (whether this actually happened remains another question). As a majority of the songbooks and sheets are without musical notation, the most obvious indication of such an intention is the presence of a tune reference, indicating that a text was to be sung to “the tune of ...” (in Dutch: *wijs, stem, vois*, etc.). When there is an absence of tune reference, the intended melody may become apparent through the song’s functional context or be inferred from the textual structure, including its metre, rhyme, and the arrangement of phrases and stanzas. In a handful of instances, a melody was specifically composed for a particular text, eliminating the need for tune references or other indicators.

The Liederbank has been an indispensable tool in tracing the melodies that are cited by the tune references, although it is far from comprehensive for the period around 1800. The work put into this database by researchers from the Meertens Institute has allowed me to draw upon a large number of songs, from songbooks by well-known poets to anonymous song sheets,

72 Writing about feelings, I always refer to representations of feelings, as any expression of feeling—whether voiced, written, depicted, or otherwise expressed—can never be the feeling itself.

73 Sometimes songwriters stated that those who did not know the tune to which they had set their text might “just” read the text or sing it to another fitting melody. See Van der Poel, Grijp, and Van Anrooij, *Identity, Intertextuality, and Performance*, 21. If read out loud, such a reading can very well be paralleled to a sung performance “as it came to life through the voices of the physically present readers and seeped into the imaginations of the physically present listeners by appealing to their various senses.” Erika Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative Power of Performance: A New Aesthetics* (London/New York: Routledge, 2008), 20.

or songs printed in papers or on prints.<sup>74</sup> I have studied a corpus of about 600 political songs from the period 1780–1802 to be able to distinguish general techniques, themes, and trends. I do not discuss all these songs in this book. Instead, I have selected from the repertoire those songs which illustrate significant observations. At the end of the book, readers will find lists of all songs, tunes, songbooks, and song sheets that I have discussed here. The online appendix provides the full texts (in Dutch) of the songs discussed in the book, as well as recordings of a selection of songs. I would like to encourage the reader to engage directly with the songs on both textual and musical levels. Actually singing the songs we study opens up an entirely new perspective on songs that were once treated as static texts.



Singing allowed the expression of political affiliations and due to its affective capacities could engage people and mobilize their bodies for a political cause. So how did singing shape political communities? The key to answering this question lies in processes of participation and identification. Throughout this book, I will call attention to how singing practices offered people the opportunity to participate in a collective and to identify with that collective—how they allowed people to imagine themselves as part of a community in song and embody this community through singing, seeing themselves as a physical part of the community.

This study aims to contribute to our understanding of political song and singing communities in a number of ways. Although scholars of the politics and culture of the Dutch revolutionary period have recognized the importance of popular culture in political processes, they have done so mainly based on analyses and histories of texts and concepts. I want to point out that looking at the performances of these texts and concepts can reveal a new perspective on how the ideologies they represented were actually embodied: how they could influence people's feelings and, consequently, their (political) actions. I therefore argue for the incorporation of a performative perspective in the political history of the Dutch revolutionary period. Acknowledging both the material products of cultural expressions of politics in the early modern period and paying attention to the performances of culture can help us to assess how people engaged, through their bodies, in political developments. As I will show throughout

74 I encourage readers who want to know more about the songs' origins and intertextual connections to explore the Liederbank themselves as an additional resource to the analyses presented in this book.

this book, such bodily engagement was essential for the construction of communities of feeling.

The book is divided into three parts, each centring on one of the three main functions of song and singing practices in the Dutch revolutionary period. Part I, *Activating Political Bodies*, begins in the early days of the Dutch revolutionary period. In Chapter 1, after a discussion of the opposition between Patriots and Orangists, I turn to the rise of the Patriot movement in the 1780s, focusing on its organization in civic militias. The chapter discusses how these societies used song to disseminate their ideologies and how singing practices prepared the civilian soldiers' bodies for a fight for the fatherland. In Chapter 2, I show how, likewise, the Orangists used song to defend their prince as the central figure of the Dutch community.

Part II, *Constructing Emotional Bonds*, focuses on groups that relied on imaginations of this community. Beginning Chapter 3 with a discussion of Patriot life in exile between 1787 and 1795, I show how traditions of song and singing practices allowed them to form an imagined community and argue that this imagined community was built on embodied experiences of togetherness which had been acquired in the years before. Both the imagined and embodied forms of the Patriot community played a role in achieving the revolution of 1794–95 and in the process of shaping a new nation in the aftermath of this shift, as discussed in Chapter 4. Focusing on the revolutionary celebrations in the first months of 1795, I investigate how these revolutionary festivals and their songs offered people the opportunity to participate in the new community and how they functioned as spaces for imagination in which the new nation could take shape. Part II connects the themes of mobilization and affirmation, not only on the chronological timeline but also on a more fundamental level by emphasizing that idea and reality, theory and practice, imagination and action are not opposing entities; they continuously feed into each other.

In Part III, *Legitimizing the New Order*, I continue my focus on the celebratory culture of the Batavian Republic, discussing how celebrations were aimed at affirming the new state in an unstable period of national reforms and international conflicts. In Chapter 5, I investigate how, as the revolutionary energy faded, the Batavians had to find ways to keep people engaged in building the Republic, to enable identification with the new national community, and to anchor new political practices in this community. Song also played a role in international relations, and in Chapter 6 I show how the Batavians used song to respond to political developments in a continuously turbulent time and to position themselves on the European stage.

In conclusion, I draw together the observations made in the core chapters and point out developments, shifts, and continuities in the song culture of the Dutch revolutionary period. Following these uncertain times, a strong need for affirmation and stability arose in the years 1813–15 as the Netherlands re-emerged from the Napoleonic era as a monarchy. By way of an epilogue, I narrate how songs were employed to reinforce a narrative of reconciliation that had to erase all disputes of the foregoing revolutionary period. Charting the repertoire of feelings that was used throughout the Dutch revolutionary period to mobilize, imagine, and affirm communities within various different emotional regimes, I argue that listening to singing communities in the past allows us to understand the complex dynamics between politics and popular culture, especially if we focus on the bodies and feelings of the people who were singing the songs.