

**“De Leeuw, die uit zijn banden schiet, Gedooft den
basterd Ad’laar niet”**

Representation and Perception of Napoleon Bonaparte in Dutch
Poems published in 1814, 1815 and 1821

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Introduction

Napoleon Bonaparte and the period of his rule are amongst the most studied subjects in nineteenth century history. However, remarkably little has been written about the relation between the Netherlands and Napoleon, while he undoubtedly had an enormous influence on Dutch history. Works have been published on how Napoleon and his influence on the respective countries was perceived and represented in France and Britain. A similar study focussing on the perception and representation of Napoleon in the Netherlands is thus far lacking. This thesis aims to fill that void by examining ten poems published in 1814, 1815 and 1821, years that each had a particular significance in Napoleonic and Dutch history. The upcoming bicentennials of the return of the Prince of Orange to the Netherlands in 2013 and the Battle of Waterloo in 2015 will hopefully fuel interest in the relationship between Napoleon and the Netherlands. This study serves as a point of departure for further research into this topic.

Research Question

A study on representations would ideally take into account as many forms of media used to express popular opinion as possible. Since this thesis needs a clear focus, only early nineteenth-century poems published as pamphlets will be taken into account. This choice was made because poems tend to contain more symbolic language than essays or articles and therefore offer more insight into the manner in which Napoleon was perceived and represented. This thesis will aim to answer the following question: “How was Napoleon represented and perceived in Dutch poems published in the early nineteenth century?” This question, while focusing on a specific medium and time frame, is still rather broad.

Therefore, several sub-questions have been formulated to help answer the main question. One of the most important questions that need to be answered in order to grasp the reasons for the representation and perception of Napoleon is the following: “Which events and/or policies are implicitly or explicitly referred to in the poems and what is their significance?” It is important to see which specific events connected to or revise policies introduced by Napoleon are referred to in the poems, as they give an indication of the reasons for particular representations and perceptions of Napoleon.

The second sub question is concerned with the theoretical framework: “How can these analyses be connected to and explained by theories from imagology and media studies?” These two specific fields have been chosen because of their immediate relevance to the source material. We need to understand both the specific ‘images’ of Napoleon and the medium that ‘carried’ them: the pamphlet. Ignoring one of these fields would not lead to satisfying conclusions.

Other important questions that need to be taken into account are: “Does the manner in which Napoleon was represented and perceived in the Netherlands follow the general trend that can be distinguished in Britain and France?” Since studies on the representation and perception of Napoleon in Britain and France already exist and have led to some remarkable conclusions, it would be interesting to see how and if the results of the analyses conducted in this research on the Netherlands are similar. The final question is connected to this question: “How can the Dutch political and cultural situation help to explain differences/similarities in the representation and perception of Napoleon in the Netherlands in comparison to that in Britain and France?” By briefly looking at how the political situation in the Netherlands differed from that in Britain and France, possible differences in the outcomes of the respective studies might be explained.

Historical Context

While Napoleon’s direct rule of the Netherlands only lasted from 1810 until 1813, he can be said to have had a considerable influence since 1806. In 1806, Napoleon appointed his brother Louis as King of Holland and effectively ruled the country through him. Louis held some power and tried to win popularity with the Dutch population by refusing to implement some of the more unpopular policies Napoleon wanted to introduce. However, Louis was for the most part subject to his brother’s will.¹ Louis tried to resist his brother, especially in being uncooperative in fully implementing Napoleon’s Continental System. This policy, forbidding trade with Britain and British goods, was disastrous for the Dutch economy which was largely dependent on naval trade.²

¹ Meeuwse, Karina ed. *Lodewijk Napoleon: De Hollandse Jaren*. Uithoorn: Karakter Uitgeverij, 2008: 33-34.

² Meeuwse, K. ed. *Lodewijk Napoleon: De Hollandse Jaren*, 34.

Another particularly unpopular measure Louis was supposed to employ on Napoleon's orders was the introduction of conscription. The Netherlands had not known an army based on conscription before and this measure was seen as going against both tradition and the general public. Louis agreed that conscription simply did not fit the Dutch and so ignored his brother's orders to fully implement this measure.³

Louis' failure to comply with his brother's will eventually led Napoleon to take control over the Netherlands himself by annexing it to the French Empire. Louis' services as King of Holland were no longer needed. Napoleon implemented conscription and made sure the Continental System was adhered to.⁴ These measures resulted in Napoleon becoming increasingly unpopular with the Dutch population. Where Louis-Napoleon's rule up until now had been met with very little resistance, this started to change. Although Napoleon's secret police was highly effective in preventing the printing and dissemination of pamphlets with anti-Napoleonic content, some pamphlets were published.⁵ However, the real change came when Napoleon was forced to abandon the Netherlands after losing the Battle of Leipzig and the Prince of Orange returned in 1813. The landing on the beach at Scheveningen of William Frederick on 30 November 1813 and his subsequent adoption of the title 'sovereign prince' truly ended Napoleon's rule in the Netherlands.⁶

It seems that this event finally led to an outpour of anti-Napoleonic sentiments in the Netherlands. This can partially be attributed to the removal of Napoleon's secret police and the subsequent increase of freedom of the press. Some pamphlets were published in 1813, though the majority of anti-Napoleonic pamphlets were published in 1814. Many are concerned with Napoleon's cruelty, and the much hated conscription and Continental System are frequently mentioned. The first year in which a substantial amount of pamphlets concerned with Napoleon were published in the Netherlands is thus 1814. While some of these pamphlets were merely publications of letters or articles recounting the events of 1813 and 1814, many pamphlets contained poems or other literary content about these events. These poems contain a wealth of information about how Napoleon was perceived and represented in the Netherlands just after his rule over the Netherlands had ended. This is why four poems from 1814 have been chosen for an analysis. The following year, 1815, once

³ Amsenga, Judith and Geertje Dekkers. *"Wat Nu?", zei Pichegru: De Franse Tijd in Nederland 1795-1813* Hilversum: Uitgeverij Verloren, 2004: 51.

⁴ Amsenga, J. and G. Dekkers. *"Wat Nu?", zei Pichegru: De Franse Tijd in Nederland 1795-1813*, 80.

⁵ Amsenga, Dekkers, 60.

⁶ Kikkert, J.G. *Lodewijk Napoleon: Koning van Holland* Soesterberg: Uitgeverij Aspekt, 2006: 218-219.

again saw some important historical events. Napoleon's return from exile on Elba and his final defeat at Waterloo led to new sentiments regarding his person. The selected poems from 1815 express these changed feelings and offer more insight into the manner in which Napoleon was represented and perceived in the Netherlands. After his defeat at Waterloo, Napoleon was taken prisoner by the British and eventually sent to exile on the island of Saint Helena. This led to a period of relative peace in Europe and not much attention was being paid to Napoleon during his years in exile. His death on the island in 1821 led to a renewed interest in his person. That year saw the publication of two poems related to Napoleon's death which once again serve as indicators of the manner in which Napoleon was represented and perceived in the Netherlands. Together, the analysis of the selected poems published in the years 1814, 1815 and 1821 should provide an indication of the changes in this perception and representation and show how these differ from the manner Napoleon was perceived and represented in France and Britain.

Relevance

As explained above, no research has been conducted on how Napoleon was perceived and represented in the Dutch media in the early nineteenth century. Analysing the image of Napoleon which was spread by Dutch poems leads to a better understanding of the political and cultural situation in the Netherlands in the early nineteenth century. Moreover, previous studies of this process as it occurred in France and Britain has led to some remarkable conclusions. It will be interesting to see if the same conclusions can be drawn in the case of the Dutch poems. If not, this would show that the situation in the Netherlands is somehow quite different from that in France and Britain, which would make it an even more fascinating topic for further investigation.

Furthermore, while some research has been conducted on Dutch pamphlets, this tends to focus on seventeenth- and eighteenth century pamphlets. Pamphlets from the early nineteenth century have thus far largely been ignored, while they do contain a wealth of information on a turbulent period in Dutch history. Therefore, an in-depth analysis of several Dutch pamphlets from this period would be a valuable addition to the existing academic work on this particular medium.

General State of Research

There have been several studies on the Netherlands in the early nineteenth century. However, most of these tend to focus mainly on the political situation and leave out cultural issues. Around the bicentennial of Louis Napoleon becoming King of Holland, several works on his life appeared. While these give a good overview of the political, social, economic and cultural situation in the Netherlands at the time, they ignore the manner in which Louis and his brother were viewed by the Dutch public. Another recent work on the years of French rule in the Netherlands, *De Adelaar en het Lam* by Johan Joor gives an extensive overview of civil unrest in this period. Joor's study only looks at expressions of anti-Napoleonic sentiment and ignores displays of support for Napoleon's rule. Moreover, Joor only looks at group protests and riots and ignores written forms of protest.

Studies that do take different forms of expressing opinion about Napoleon into account have been published for the situation as it was outside the Netherlands. Stuart Semmel gives a thorough overview of the changes that occurred in the perception and reception of Napoleon in Britain in the first half of the nineteenth century in his work *Napoleon and the British*. He analysed personal letters, newspaper articles, pamphlets and many others sources. One of his most interesting conclusions is that the image of Napoleon changed considerably after he was exiled to Saint Helena. Where the British public had a very negative opinion on Napoleon before his exile, it seemed to completely alter its views once he had been secured at a safe distance and no longer formed a direct threat to Britain. The British suddenly started expressing positive sentiments and opinions, which only increased after Napoleon's death in exile in 1821. Now, an increasingly large group of Britons started questioning whether their government had been right in their treatment of Napoleon.⁷

A similar change is discerned by Sudhir Hazareesingh in *The Legend of Napoleon*. In this work he focuses mainly on the perception and representation of Napoleon in France after his fall from power in 1813. The rather disastrous return of the Bourbons led many Frenchmen to believe that they would be better off with Napoleon back in power. Active and passive forms of subtle shows of support for Napoleon evolved, even if this was strictly forbidden by the new regime. Hazareesingh shows how different perceptions of Napoleon evolved and how his legacy slowly transformed into legend.⁸

⁷ Semmel, Stuart. *Napoleon and the British*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004: 213-218.

⁸ Hazareesingh, Sudhir. *The Legend of Napoleon*. London: Granta Books, 2005: 170-173.

Motivation

First, there are no pre-existing studies focussing specifically on the manner in which Napoleon was represented and perceived in any Dutch medium. A study on the manners in which Napoleon was perceived and represented in Dutch poems from 1814, 1815 and 1821 will thus serve as a welcome addition to the existing literature on the topic. Not only might it be possible to track changes similar to those described in the works mentioned above, it will also shed more light on the political and cultural situation in the Netherlands. Moreover, the upcoming bicentennial of the return of William Frederick to the Netherlands in 2013 will probably lead to publications focusing on this topic. This study, although not concerned with the Prince of Orange, might serve as an interesting alternative perspective on that period in Dutch history.

Theoretical Framework

Throughout the analyses, several terms and theories derived from cultural history, media studies and imagology will be used. Therefore it is important to examine these theories and explain why they are important for this research before moving on to the actual analyses.

Since this study is concerned with a specific medium, the pamphlet, that was highly influential in the early nineteenth century, it is important to incorporate some theories from the field of media studies. Although this might seem strange since most of these theories are aimed at more modern and visual media, several theories can be applied to the pamphlets analysed in this thesis. One particularly important aspect of these poems published as pamphlets is that they try to convey and construct a specific image of Napoleon which does not necessarily have to be based on facts. Roland Barthes was a French intellectual and developed many important theories in the fields of literary and cultural studies.⁹ While primarily interested in semiotics, Barthes also formulated an interesting theory on the formation of myths, a process in which the media plays a particularly important role. Barthes showed that, by taking into account pre-existing ideas and connotations, known as myths, a specific sign can come to signify many different things and ideas. These myths are often difficult to identify without a thorough analysis, because they often appear natural and are virtually embedded in (Western) culture.¹⁰ While this theory is not very specific, the poems

⁹ Allen, Graham. *Routledge Critical Thinkers: Roland Barthes*. London: Routledge, 2003: 1.

¹⁰ Lacey, Nick. *Image and Representation: Key Concepts in Media Studies*. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009: 76.

analysed have shown that the same ideas and names were used over and over again. This suggests that the authors referred to pre-existing ideas, yet used them in such way that eventually, these came to signify Napoleon specifically. The frequent use of “dwingeland” (tyrant) to describe Napoleon is a good example of this. While “dwingeland” could be used to signify any tyrant, in the pamphlets it is used to specify Napoleon specifically. This becomes so frequent that “dwingeland” signifies Napoleon alone. The same can be said for the frequent references to Napoleon’s bloodthirstiness. While these are obviously based on the many wars Napoleon fought, the pamphlets usually describe Napoleon as if he personally killed thousands of people. Many readers would probably have been aware that this was not the case, yet the idea that Napoleon was responsible for the deaths of countless people certainly became part of the myth surrounding his person.

Jürgen Habermas’ ideas on public opinion are also important. According to Habermas, public opinion as we know it today originated in the eighteenth century, when what he calls the public sphere first came into existence. The public sphere is “a realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed”.¹¹ Of course, merely forming a public opinion is not enough; it has to truly become part of the public sphere. This is done by use of the media, which in the early nineteenth century would have included pamphlets. Habermas argues that it is no surprise that public opinion, like the public sphere, arose in the eighteenth century: “public opinion can by definition only come into existence when a reasoning public is presupposed”.¹² Habermas also explains the increasingly important role of the press in the spread of public opinion: “The press remained an institution of the public itself, effective in the manner of a mediator and intensifier of public discussion”.¹³ Indeed, the pamphlets analysed seem to have served as both a manner of spreading a particular opinion while at the same time enabling further discussion on specific topics.

¹¹ Habermas, Jürgen. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1991: 102.

¹² Habermas, J. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, 103.

¹³ Habermas, 106.

This seems to be confirmed by several other studies on pamphlets as sources of information, such as the dissertation by Roeland Harms on pamphlets in the seventeenth century. Although focusing on another time period, Harms shows that pamphlets were often used to spread propaganda, yet also served to express a more general opinion.¹⁴ Furthermore, he stresses the importance of looking at pamphlets from a literary-historical perspective. A literary analysis, can, according to Harms, show what the author's intentions were, and do so more accurately than a purely historical or political analysis.¹⁵ The analyses of the pamphlets published in 1814, 1815 and 1821 will show that by taking into account the literary aspect of the pamphlets the underlying messages and intentions become far clearer.

A different, yet perhaps even more important, field of studies in relation to these pamphlets is that of image studies. In short, the field of image studies, or imagology, is concerned with cultural representations of national character. The present study is for a large part based on imagology, as it is mainly concerned with finding out how Napoleon was perceived and represented in poems published in the form of pamphlets. While the poems analysed were in most cases focused on Napoleon specifically and in relation to national character and not so much on France or the French in general, many of the ideas put forward by imagology apply to the representation of Napoleon in these poems. For instance, the continuous references made to Napoleon's place of birth, Corsica, show that one's nationality was of great importance and could potentially influence one's character. The fact that Corsica had only just transferred from Italian to French rule at the time of Napoleon's birth adds to the idea that Napoleon was a usurper to the French throne, not just because he was not of royal decent, but also because he was not even properly French. Also interesting is the manner in which Napoleon and the French are often juxtaposed to the Dutch, or a leading Dutch figure such as the Prince of Orange. Especially in the poems about Waterloo, the French are represented as weak, as they once again fell for Napoleon's tricks, while the Dutch are seen as particularly brave. The wound sustained by the Prince of Orange during one of the battles is perceived as a token of this braveness.

¹⁴ Harms, Roeland. *De uitvinding van de publieke opinie : pamfletten als massamedia in de zeventiende eeuw* Utrecht, 2010: 16-17.

¹⁵ Harms, R. *De uitvinding van de publieke opinie : pamfletten als massamedia in de zeventiende eeuw*, 17.

Methodology

The main method used throughout this research is close reading. This method is most prominent in literary studies but can also be useful when using literary sources in historical research. In short, close reading of a text, particularly a literary text, entails that the reader pays close attention to every word and takes into account all possible different meanings and connotations this word may have.¹⁶ When using the method of close reading in historical research this means the historical context and meaning of words is particularly important. Throughout the analyses the method of close reading has been applied to the poems to ensure that as much information as possible is accessed about the perception and representation of Napoleon is gathered.

The poems will be analysed and placed in a broader historical context, which might explain some of the specifics of the publications. Since an exact date of publication is not given for any of the pamphlets, the order of analysis is completely random. The aim of the analysis is twofold; on the one hand, these poems offer an insight into the general attitude towards Napoleon as a person, while on the other hand they are a valuable source for assessing how the Dutch thought about his policies and politics. By distilling these two kinds of opinions put forward in the poems, the general way of thinking about Napoleon, both as a person and a political figure, in the Netherlands can be evaluated.

Overview Relevant Primary Sources

The National Library of the Netherlands collection contains a collection of pamphlets consisting of over 30,000 titles. This database is available online. From this online collection several pamphlets have been selected. First, a search revealed that very few pamphlets concerning or dealing with Napoleon prior 1813 were published or preserved. This limited the research but also led to a clearer focus. Moreover, many of the pamphlets that do concern Napoleon are translations, mostly from German or English. While these translated pamphlets contain a wealth of information about different perceptions and representations of Napoleon, they do not reflect the specifically Dutch feelings towards Napoleon. It can be assumed that the translated works at least partially shared some of the ideas the Dutch had, yet they are not likely to contain specific Dutch reasons for being either for or against Napoleon. Moreover, specific imagery and symbolism might be lost in translation, while these are amongst the most

¹⁶ Makaryk, Irene Rima. *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Literary Theory: Approaches, Scholars, Terms*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993: 122.

important elements in an analysis of the manner in which Napoleon was perceived and represented in the Netherlands. This is why only poems originally written in Dutch have been analysed in this study. Several pamphlets also merely contain factual information rather than opinionated writings. Therefore, the pamphlets included in this research are all originally written in Dutch and contain mostly literary texts, predominantly in the form of poems, plays and songs. As explained by De Graaf in his dissertation on newspapers and pamphlets in the nineteenth century, three main genres of pamphlets can be distinguished in the Netherlands in this period. Of the pamphlets published between 1813 and 1829 that were studied by De Graaf, 43% belonged to “het verstrooiende genre”, which can perhaps best be translated as “the entertaining genre”.¹⁷ Pamphlets containing songs, poems, dialogues and plays all belong to this genre. Since these types of pamphlets are most likely to contain more symbolic references and allusions, it can be expected that these pamphlets also contain the most interesting representations of Napoleon. Therefore, the pamphlets selected for this study all belong to “the entertaining genre”.

For the analysis of poems published in 1814, four pamphlets were selected: *Begin, Midden, Val en Einde van Napoleon Buonaparte, of de Omwenteling te Parijs*, *De braakende Napoleon*, *De rarekiekkas van Napoleon en zijn aanhang* and *Hulde aan Napoleon Toegewijd door een Hollandsch Meisje*. Although many more pamphlets were published in 1814, only several could be included in this study. In 1815, significantly fewer pamphlets concerned with Napoleon were published. Again, four poems were selected: *Bij het intrekken van Napoleon Buonaparte in Parijs* by Petronella Moens, *Vaderlandse Uitboezeming bij de Roemvolle Zege op Napoleon* by Jan van 's-Gravenweert en M. Westerman, *De Zegenpraal der Menschelijkheid, bij den Val van Napoleon* and *Alleenspraak van Napoleon Buonaparte in zijne Engelsche Gevangenschap*. In 1821, the year Napoleon died, only two Dutch pamphlets about Napoleon were published. Therefore, only these two pamphlets have been analysed: *Op het Afsterven der Gewezen Keizer, Napoleon Buonaparte, overleden op St. Helena, den 5 Mei 1821* and *Bonapartes Reize na de Elizeesche Velden*.

¹⁷ Graaf, Rutger Hendrik de. *Journalistiek in Beweging: Veranderende berichtgeving in kranten en pamfletten (Groningen en 's-Hertogenbosch 1813-1899)* Utrecht, 2009: 98.

The fact that relatively few pamphlets were concerned with Napoleon can be explained by looking at De Graaf's study. He showed that only 9% percent of pamphlets were concerned with international affairs. Even national affairs accounted for only 19% of all pamphlets published between 1813 and 1829. So when assuming that Napoleon can be seen as both a national and international subject, only 28% of all pamphlets would have potentially been concerned with these matters.¹⁸ Pamphlets were primarily concerned with local affairs, explaining why Napoleon was not such an important topic for the authors of Dutch pamphlets.

Hypothesis

Based on the studies by Hazareesingh and Semmel, it can be expected that a change in thinking and expressing opinion about Napoleon similar to France and Great Britain can be distinguished in the Netherlands. I expect that the Dutch attitude towards Napoleon was very negative in 1814 and again after his return from Elba in 1815. The sense of regained freedom in 1814 would suggest an outpour of anti-Napoleonic sentiments that had been subdued and restricted during the years that Napoleon was in (in)direct power. The image I expect to come forward in poems from 1814 is thus a negative one. As Napoleon spent most of his time in 1814 exiled on Elba, he no longer posed a direct threat to the Netherlands. This may have caused people to represent and discuss him without the restrictions they might have felt in the past. Moreover, the return of the Prince of Orange may have also led to an increase of Orangist sentiments which had also been oppressed during the years of French rule.

The situation becomes more complicated in 1815, when Napoleon escaped from Elba and once again took control of France. The period between his return to France and his defeat at the Battle of Waterloo is known as the Hundred Days. Poems published during the Hundred Days can on the one hand be expected to be even more hostile towards Napoleon, as he again posed a direct threat. On the other hand, this same fact might lead writers to be more cautious about how they represent Napoleon, as he might once again be in power soon. The poems published in this period can thus be expected to either be extremely hostile in light of the renewed threat, while they can also be expected to be more toned down expressions of opinion about Napoleon. Another possibility is the appearance of poems in favour of Napoleon, perhaps opportunistically published in case Napoleon would once again seize power.

¹⁸ Graaf, R.H. de. *Journalistiek in Beweging: Veranderende berichtgeving in kranten en pamfletten (Groningen en 's-Hertogenbosch 1813-1899)*, 84.

It is even more uncertain what to expect from the poems published after Napoleon's death in 1821. If the Dutch follow the French and British examples, these poems will likely be in favour of Napoleon, reflecting on his life and how, in the end, he might not have been the monster he was often made out to be. However, as the still young Dutch monarchy might be afraid of these pro-Napoleonic sentiments, censorship might have prevented the publication of these kinds of pamphlets. Napoleon's reign was notorious for its secret police and heavy censorship. When the French Empire's size increased, so did its censorship policies. In 1810, a new law was implemented that entailed that throughout the Empire, every piece of printed matter had to be approved by a special governmental body before publication.¹⁹ This meant that until the return of the Prince of Orange, publishing and spreading anti-Napoleonic pamphlets would have been very difficult and could have only been done illegally. Another possible outcome is that pamphlets rejoice in the final and definite demise of Napoleon. If this is the case, the Netherlands would prove to be different from France and Britain.

It remains difficult to predict what the outcome of this research will be. Both the study of Dutch pamphlets and the study of the representation and perception of Napoleon will hopefully benefit from this research. The poems analysed in this study can be found in the appendix, starting at page 61.

¹⁹ Forrest, Alan. "Propaganda and the Legitimation of Power in Napoleonic France" *French History* 18, no. 4 (2004) : 426-445. 427-428.

Chapter 1

1814: “Die Vuige Kors”

After the return of William Frederick to the Netherlands and him becoming ‘sovereign king’ in late 1813, there was a dramatic increase in the number of pamphlets denouncing Napoleon and the French occupation. A search in the on-line database of the National Library shows that the database contains just nine pamphlets concerned with Napoleon published before 1814, while in 1814 alone 31 pamphlets concerning Napoleon in some way were published. Of course, this database does not contain every pamphlet ever published in the early nineteenth century, although it does give a good idea of the dramatic increase of pamphlets concerning Napoleon published after the return of the Prince of Orange. Where previously publications about Napoleon had been scarce and largely in favour of the Emperor, the newfound freedom, the return of the Prince of Orange and the removal of strict censorship endorsed by the French are all possible explanations for this increase of anti-Napoleonic sentiments put forward in numerous pamphlets. The year 1814 thus serves as a good point of departure, as it is a year in which the recent political changes led to more freedom of expression, including the expression of opinions about Napoleon Bonaparte. This is what makes 1814 such a particularly interesting year to study; the belief that Napoleon was gone for good and the return of the Prince of Orange were two factors that might explain this sudden peak in publications about Napoleon.

Begin, Midden, Val en Einde van Napoleon Buonaparte, of de Omwenteling te Parijs –
Amsterdam, J. Radink, 1814²⁰

The first pamphlet was published by J. Radink in 1814 in Amsterdam and consists of several translated letters recounting the downfall of Napoleon after the huge losses he suffered at the battle of Leipzig and, more interesting, a Dutch poem briefly recounting Napoleon’s life thus far. The analysis will be concerned with this poem, as it is not a translated but an originally Dutch source.

²⁰ *Begin, Midden, Val en Einde van Napoleon Buonaparte, of de Omwenteling te Parijs*. Amsterdam: J. Radink, 1814: Appendix 1-6.

Simply titled “Begin, Midden en Einde van Napoleon” (Beginning, Middle and End of Napoleon); the poem consists of ten stanzas of six lines each. The poem is subdivided into a “Begin” (Beginning), “Midden” (Middle), “Val” (Fall) and “Einde” (End), thus relating Napoleon’s life in its different stages.

It starts out with stating that “De Duivel heeft een man geteeld, Die zoo lang Keizer heeft gespeeld” (The Devil bred a man, who played Emperor for so long).²¹ The allusion to the Devil is interesting, as it immediately brings in a religious aspect. Later on in the poem, this religious aspect will again be important. The poem goes on to state that Napoleon was a “Monsterdier” (beast), who spilled much innocent blood and destroyed Europe.²² So from the start, the author leaves no doubt about his stance regarding Napoleon, as he is clearly against the Emperor and his actions. Another connection to religion is made when the author states that Napoleon did not care for the Ten Commandments. More interesting is the last line of this stanza which states “De Dwingelandij en loos geweld, die werden op den troon gesteld, door ’t Hoofd der vagabonden” (The oppression and senseless violence, were put on the throne, by the head of the Vagabonds).²³ Seeing as Napoleon’s coronation was blessed by the Pope, the “Head of the Vagabonds” could be an allusion to the Pope, which would make this poem implicitly anti-Catholic as well as anti-Napoleon. It is important to note that vagabond in Dutch was used as a word to describe anyone deemed to be a rogue or scoundrel and not necessarily a homeless person roaming the country.²⁴ The author thus seems to have deemed Roman-Catholics to be scoundrels therefore referring to the Pope as the head of the scoundrels. Another religious comment is the statement “De echtbreuk wierd ook door hem bemind. Waarom? Het was een Duivels Kind, uit de afgrond voortgesproten” (Adultery was another thing he loved. Why? It was a Devil’s Child, which sprung from the abyss).²⁵ The idea that Napoleon’s adultery and divorce somehow had to do with him being the Devil’s offspring should probably not be taken literally, but it is a clear indication that these actions could only be committed by a godless person.

²¹ *Begin, Midden, Val en Einde van Napoleon Buonaparte, of de Omwenteling te Parijs*: Appendix 4, stanza 1.

²² *Begin, Midden, Val en Einde*, Appendix 4, stanzas 1, 2.

²³ *Begin, Midden, Val en Einde*, Appendix 4, stanza 4.

²⁴ Vries, M. de, Winkel, L.A. te, e.o., *Woordenboek der Nederlandsche Taal*. ’s-Gravenhage and Leiden etc.: M. Nijhoff/A.W. Sijthoff etc., 1882-1998.

²⁵ *Begin, Midden, Val en Einde*, Appendix 4, stanza 5.

The author goes on to define Napoleon as “de grootste Moordenaar” (the biggest murderer) and “een vuig bandiet en plunderaar” (a vile bandit and a plunderer).²⁶ This last accusation most likely refers to Napoleon’s tendency to loot art treasures from the countries he conquered and bring them to France, which remains one of the main reasons for the Louvre’s outstanding and extensive collection today. The poem also accuses Napoleon of making slaves out of “het Vrije Volk” (the free people) by “’t doen van valsche eeden”²⁷ (making false promises), in this context most likely referring to the Dutch. Napoleon had promised not to make them part of the French Empire but to preserve their independence. At first this was compromised by placing his brother Louis on the throne of the Netherlands, and later by actually removing his brother for being too pro-Dutch and not taking French interests at heart and annexing the former Kingdom of Holland to the French Empire.

The part of the poem concerned with Napoleon’s fall only consists of one stanza, relating how he met his match in Russia and how his fate has turned from being the oppressor to becoming the oppressed. The last part of the poem about Napoleon’s end is more interesting. It starts with telling how the Devil is laughing as he awaits Napoleon’s arrival in hell, who has been cursed by everyone for his cruelties. Again, the poem harks back to religious imagery to make its point. The last stanza is particularly interesting: “En als het monster nederdaald; wordt het op helsche soep onthaald; met al zijn vloekgenooten, Zoo is dan het Einde en de Val, van deez’ ontmenschten Kannibal, uit de afgrond voortgesproten” (And when the monster descends, it is welcomed by hellish soup; with all his fellow cursed men, this then is the end and the fall, of this inhuman Cannibal, sprung from the abyss).²⁸ This stanza implies that not only will Napoleon himself be punished, but also those who helped him carry out his “cruelties”. Moreover, the last lines state that Napoleon can no longer be seen as something human, he has lost his humanity and has become an “inhuman cannibal”.

This poem thus mainly denounces Napoleon, referring to his cruelty and oppression and his godlessness. It will be interesting to see whether these themes recur or whether this poem is unique in invoking these particular images of Napoleon.

²⁶ *Begin, Midden, Val en Einde*, Appendix 4, stanza 6.

²⁷ *Begin, Midden, Val en Einde*, Appendix 4, stanza 7.

²⁸ *Begin, Midden, Val en Einde*, Appendix 5, stanza 10.

De Rarekiekkas van Napoleon en zijn Aanhang – Amsterdam, J. Radink, 1814²⁹

Like the previous pamphlet, *De Rarekiekkas* was also published by J. Radink in Amsterdam. The “Rarekiekkas” in the title refers to a travelling puppet theatre, which plays an important role in the story told in the pamphlet. This pamphlet is an interesting one, as it is set up as a play within a play, or rather an allegorical puppet theatre performance within a play. The play contains an introduction in which the most important characters are presented: “Het stuk wordt vertoond in een der vertrekken van een Prefekt, van zijn door list en bedrog verkregen rijk. De Prefekt zit mijmerend op een jichtstoel, de secretaris Nijd zit achter hem, de Navolger van zijne Slegte Oogmerken staat naast hem en dokter Franse Wind bij hem. Veele kinderen, allen in masqueraden klederen, bevinden zich in de zaal.” (The play is being performed in one of the chambers of a Prefect, of his Empire acquired through tricks and deceit. The pensive prefect is seated on a “gout chair”, the secretary Envy is seated behind him, the Disciple of his Bad Intentions is standing next to him and doctor French “Influence” with him. Many children, all in fancy dress, are present in the chamber).³⁰ The Prefect is an obvious caricature of Napoleon, the other figures are probably more allegorical and do not refer to one person in specific, but rather to a group or mentality.

The children in the play may well be an allusion to the innocence and naivety of those inhabitants whose countries had been conquered by Napoleon. They seem to be relatively unaware of the consequences of Napoleon's occupation for their countries and only understand when someone points it out to them by using a puppet show, which in itself might refer to the poem's role as an eye-opener. One of the children asks whether it is true that the prefect has lost his land and that he has been exiled to an island. The secretary responds to this by telling the children they should not talk about these things, while at the same time telling the prefect that the children are telling the truth.³¹ The secretary could thus be a caricature of those marshals and ministers around Napoleon who pretended to still be in league with him, while at the same time they were trying their best to secure their own futures by conspiring against him.

One of the children brings up the practice of buying off a conscript. He tells the secretary that his brother had been called to serve in the army as a conscript and that even though he provided someone else to go in his place, the brother was still drafted. He then

²⁹ *De Rarekiekkas van Napoleon en zijn Aanhang*. Amsterdam: J. Radink, 1814: Appendix 7-16.

³⁰ *De Rarekiekkas van Napoleon en zijn Aanhang*, Appendix 9.

³¹ *De Rarekiekkas*, Appendix 9, stanza 9,10.

accuses the secretary of being as trustworthy as his boss, the prefect, meaning he's not trustworthy at all.³² Again, the theme of the conscripts seems to be one of the main bones of discontent the Dutch had with the French occupation.

Another important and widespread complaint was the destruction of trade and the scarcity of goods that followed from Napoleon's Continental System. The prefect orders his servant to provide the children with something to drink, to which the servant replies by asking what he should offer the children: "[W]at verkiest gij dat ik hun geven zal, kunstkoffij, uitgeperste beetwortels of aardappelen brandewijn?" (What do you wish me to give them, artificial coffee, pressed beetroots or potato brandy?).³³ All these drinks are obviously cheap and of low quality and not the sort of drinks one would expect an important political figure to offer his guests. The secretary joins the conversation and tells the servant he should offer the children real coffee. The servant replies by reminding the secretary that there is no real coffee: "Ued (Uw Edelachtbare) zijt zeker vergeten dat al de koffij door de Engelsche schepen is tegengehouden om binnen te lopen." (Your Honour must have forgotten that all the coffee has been held back by the English ships).³⁴

Soon after this exchange the servant asks the prefect whether he should let in a travelling merchant who has offered to amuse the children his puppet show. The prefect agrees to let the man in and the merchant, talking in a mock French accent, complains about the French habit of exchanging their own useless currency (francs) for stronger foreign currencies (in this case Dutch florins), thus impoverishing the conquered countries while making their own currency stronger.³⁵

The puppet play performed by the puppeteer briefly recounts the Prefect's affairs in the Netherlands, again focussing on the conscripts and the former wealth and freedom in the Netherlands. He tells about the coming of poor French soldiers to the Netherlands, without proper clothing or supplies, who had to be fed and clothed by the Dutch.³⁶ During the play, the servant warns the Prefect that he should get ready to leave, as the Cossacks are coming.³⁷ This is a clear allusion to the real invasion of the Cossacks in 1814 as part of the liberating army. The servant also mentions that everywhere people are shouting "Oranje boven",

³² *De Rarekiekkas*, Appendix 10, stanzas 15-19.

³³ *De Rarekiekkas*, Appendix 11, stanzas 31, 32.

³⁴ *De Rarekiekkas*, Appendix 11, stanzas 33-34.

³⁵ *De Rarekiekkas*, Appendix 12, stanzas 46-54.

³⁶ *De Rarekiekkas*, Appendix 13, stanza 56.

³⁷ *De Rarekiekkas*, Appendix 14, stanza 58.

a popular chant in support of the Prince of Orange.³⁸ The puppeteer continues his play and shows the children what happened to the French after the return of the Prince of Orange. Many of Napoleon's accomplices are being tried in court, including the much hated douaniers, the soldiers in charge of customs who made sure the Continental System was kept intact.³⁹ The emperor's flight from Russia is also commented upon before continuing the tale of the recovering country. The puppeteer states that the Netherlands is once again becoming an important country in international trade with the return of the East- and West-Indian companies and the return of religion. He also stresses the hard-working nature of the Dutch and the fact that Dutch florins are once more being spent.⁴⁰ According to the puppeteer, this is all thanks to the return of the Prince of Orange, hailing from the true Dutch royal family, and he even calls Prince William I the founder of freedom in the Netherlands. He goes on to state that this family is a truly virtuous family, with no French or Corsican blood.⁴¹ The puppeteer leaves and the pamphlet ends with a patriotic poem.

This is a particularly interesting poem because it does not focus on Napoleon specifically, but on the French in general, while the rest of the pamphlet was mainly concerned with Napoleon himself and his deeds. The French are seen as having enabled Napoleon to carry out all these deeds, and thus the French are held responsible for the outcomes.⁴² The poem is particularly focussed on the Dutch lives that were lost due to France's continuous wars. One of the most interesting stanzas relates the idea that France received what it deserved: "Franschen! Gij, die vele jaren; Neêrland stortte in gevaren, Door een vuige Kors geleid, hebt tot elks groot verlangen, 't Loon van uwe daên ontvangen; het loon van uw boosaartigheid." (Frenchmen! You, who for many years; plunged the Netherlands into danger, Led by a sordid Corsican, have, to everyone's great desire, earned the reward for your deeds; the reward for your malice).⁴³ The French are blamed for their support of Napoleon and have received their just reward. After this, the poem continues with praising those who helped the Netherlands to become liberated of their French oppressors. It ends with stating that with the return of the Prince of Orange freedom once more returned to the Netherlands⁴⁴.

³⁸ *De Rarekiekkas*, Appendix 14, stanza 58.

³⁹ *De Rarekiekkas*, Appendix 14, stanza 64.

⁴⁰ *De Rarekiekkas*, Appendix 15, stanza 64.

⁴¹ *De Rarekiekkas*, Appendix 15, stanza 64.

⁴² *De Rarekiekkas*, Appendix 15, stanza 65, 66.

⁴³ *De Rarekiekkas*, Appendix 15, stanza 69.

⁴⁴ *De Rarekiekkas*, Appendix 16, stanza 72.

Again, this poem focuses mostly on the issue of conscription and the Continental System, arguably the two policies established by Napoleon that caused the Netherlands most harm. Also interesting is the presence of the Prince of Orange in this poem, who is once again hailed as the bringer of peace, freedom and the recovery of trade. Indeed, freedom and trade were amongst the most important issues according to this poem, both of which were endangered by the French occupation. Some allusions to religion are also made, for instance when the puppeteer relates how the Church was restored to its former glory and churches once again filled with people after Napoleon was gone.⁴⁵ Religion too was thus an important factor in the reasons behind the negative opinion on Napoleon and his rule. This poem is a unique source because it on the one hand uses allegorical characters to represent real persons and real events, while the poem at the end skips this use of allegorical figures and makes it quite clear that it is about Napoleon and the French.

De Braakende Napoleon –Amsterdam, A. Vink, 1814⁴⁶

This poem, again published in Amsterdam, is an interesting one because it is completely different from other poems published in 1814. It consists of 3 pages of lyrics to a song about Napoleon, which in itself is not unique. What makes this poem particularly interesting is the fact that it is the only one that is written entirely from the point of view of Napoleon himself. The lyrics, divided into 10 stanzas of 6 lines each, tell about Napoleon who complains about having fallen ill and having to vomit often.

It starts off with Napoleon telling about his illness and spewing out “brandend Moscou” (burning Moscow) due to all “die vervloekte Pillen” (those damned pills).⁴⁷ Every stanza is build up along the same lines; Napoleon complaining about his fate and his various discomforts, followed by him spewing out a lost battle or territory and cursing the “pills” that led him to this fate. In turn, Napoleon spews out Moscow⁴⁸, Prussia⁴⁹, Spain⁵⁰, Westphalia⁵¹, Austria⁵², Bavaria⁵³, Napels⁵⁴, Wurtemberg⁵⁵, Rome⁵⁶ and Holland.⁵⁷ These are all territories

⁴⁵ *De Rarekiekkas* Appendix 15, stanza 64.

⁴⁶ *De Braakende Napoleon* Amsterdam: A. Vink, 1814: Appendix 17-21.

⁴⁷ *De Braakende Napoleon*, Appendix 18, stanza 1.

⁴⁸ *De Braakende Napoleon*, Appendix 18, stanza 1.

⁴⁹ *De Braakende Napoleon*, Appendix 19, stanza 2.

⁵⁰ *De Braakende Napoleon*, Appendix 19, stanza 3.

⁵¹ *De Braakende Napoleon*, Appendix 19, stanza 4.

⁵² *De Braakende Napoleon*, Appendix 19, stanza 5.

⁵³ *De Braakende Napoleon*, Appendix p. 20, stanza 6.

that were either allied to France or ruled by one of Napoleon's siblings, with the exception of Moscow. No explanation is given about how Napoleon lost these territories, there is only the allusion to the pills Napoleon is forced to take, which make him vomit and thus lose these territories. The pills could refer to the constant attacks and provocations by the Allies. Moreover, Napoleon complains about how these losses turn him into a ghost or corpse; he is losing a lot of strength in losing these territories.⁵⁸

The poem is fairly straightforward and besides the recurring theme of Napoleon losing strength through spewing out his conquered territories contains little commentary on his policies. However, in the case of Holland, the poem does make a remark: "Daar... is ook Holland! Maar hun geld, dat lapte ik door de billen!" ("Here... is Holland, too! But I squandered their money!").⁵⁹ This is an obvious comment on the belief that Napoleon bankrupted the Netherlands with his policies and taxes. This poem is relatively short and clear, it does not make any specific remarks about Napoleon's character, besides showing him as not accepting his fate and instead complaining about it. The only commentary on his policies, besides the fact that the entire poem can be read as a comment on Napoleon's habit of conquering territories, is the abovementioned comment on his policies towards the Dutch. This does make the poem the third poem to specifically mention the negative financial consequences the French policies had on the Netherlands.

⁵⁴ *De Braakende Napoleon*, Appendix p. 20, stanza 7.

⁵⁵ *De Braakende Napoleon*, Appendix p. 20, stanza 8.

⁵⁶ *De Braakende Napoleon*, Appendix p. 20, stanza 8.

⁵⁷ *De Braakende Napoleon*, Appendix p. 20, stanza 9.

⁵⁸ *De Braakende Napoleon*, Appendix p. 19-20, stanzas 5, 7.

⁵⁹ *De Braakende Napoleon*, Appendix p. 20, stanza 9.

Hulde aan Napoleon Toegewijd door een Hollandsch Meisje –The Hague, 1814⁶⁰

This poem is a tribute to Napoleon, given by a Dutch girl. It is a relatively long poem, consisting of 24 stanzas with 6 lines each. While the title of the poem seems to suggest that its contents will offer a positive outlook on Napoleon, this idea is quickly dismissed. The true nature of the poem is already revealed in the second stanza, which starts with the lines “Tot u, O Keizer Bonaparte! Tot u, o bron van leed en smarte! Is deze mijne zang gerigt!” (To you, O Emperor Buonaparte! To you, O source of sorrow and grief! Is my song dedicated!).⁶¹ The song is thus an accusation aimed directly at Napoleon himself and not at the French in general, as seen in the previous poem.

The poem contains many different accusations and allusions. One of the most important points made in the first few stanzas is the idea that Napoleon has killed “deugd” (virtue) in order to become emperor.⁶² The poem then continues with stating that Napoleon gained his throne through spilling innocent blood, making him equal to the devil.⁶³ It is interesting that Napoleon is once again likened to the Devil, the ultimate evil. But this alone is not enough. The poem then states that Napoleon has cursed himself: “Gij hebt, door al uw groote daden, Niets dan den vloek op u geladen, den haat van elke onderdaan.” (Through all your great deeds, you have done nothing but cursed yourself, with the hatred of every subject).⁶⁴ The poem thus makes clear that Napoleon’s conquests and policies were not well-received in the Netherlands.

This is made even clearer in four stanzas that once again deal with the theme of slavery: “Wij zagen, door uw Heerschappij, De rust en vrede, ons ontrukken, wij moesten ons verneed’rend bukken, In uwe wreede slavernij!” (We saw, under your command, the peace and quiet being extorted, we had to bow down humiliated, in your cruel slavery).⁶⁵ The perceived loss of freedom under Napoleon’s (in)direct rule is thus again put forward as one of the most important factors in the Dutch’ negative opinion on Napoleon. This is further expressed in the following lines: “Wij haten u, en uw regeering; Uw dwinglandij! uw overheersing, maakte ons het leven moede en bang;” (We hate you, and your government;

⁶⁰ *Hulde aan Napoleon Toegewijd door een Hollandsch Meisje* The Hague, 1814: Appendix 22-27.

⁶¹ *Hulde aan Napoleon Toegewijd door een Hollandsch Meisje*, Appendix 24, stanza 2.

⁶² *Hulde aan Napoleon*, Appendix 25, stanza 7.

⁶³ *Hulde aan Napoleon*, Appendix 25, stanza 9.

⁶⁴ *Hulde aan Napoleon*, Appendix 25, stanza 11.

⁶⁵ *Hulde aan Napoleon*, Appendix 26, stanza 12.

Your oppression! Your domination, made us weary and afraid).⁶⁶ This is perhaps the most explicit and direct assessment encountered in the poems surveyed; the poem openly states that the Dutch hate Napoleon and everything he stood for. The fact that the term hatred is actually used in the poem shows that concealment was no longer necessary after the removal of French censorship.

This newfound sense of freedom is also the main theme of the following stanzas, which recount how Napoleon lost his hold on the territories he conquered and how these territories regained independence and freedom: “’t Was meer dan tijd, o roofgedrocht! Dat wij die vrijheid weer hernamen, Weer in het bezit dier regten kwamen, Door onze vad’ren bloed gekocht.” (It was high time, O plundering beast! That we regained the freedom, once again possessed those rights, which were bought with our fathers’ blood).⁶⁷ The Dutch, not surprisingly, felt that they had the right to possess and rule their own land, which in this case is specifically linked to ancestral rights.

In the last few stanzas the poem calls for Napoleon’s redemption.⁶⁸ This is quite interesting, since one might expect the poem to call for Napoleon’s death, seeing the explicit nature of the rest of the text. However, Napoleon is asked to give up his crown, before it is forcefully taken from him. While this is still relatively polite, the next stanza does call for his exile: “Gij zijt der menschheid van geen waarde, Ga! Vlucht! Naar ‘t uiterste eind der aarde” (You are of no value to mankind, Go! Flee! To the very end of the world).⁶⁹ Perhaps the text does not call for Napoleon’s death in order to contrast Napoleon’s cruelty with the Dutch civility. The second-last stanza explicitly likens Napoleon to animals by comparing him to a tiger and a lion and stating that he would be better off living in the woods with these creatures, as they share his passion for killing: “Daar kunt u regt uw lust genieten, Van roven, slagten, bloed vergieten: daar dit hun werk ook ‘t uwe is” (There you can live your heart’s desire, by pillaging, slaughtering and shedding blood: because their work is yours too).⁷⁰ Once again, Napoleon’s cruelty is stressed, while at the same time this trait is shown to be inhuman, or beastly.

⁶⁶ *Hulde aan Napoleon*, Appendix 26, stanza 14.

⁶⁷ *Hulde aan Napoleon*, Appendix 26, stanza 17.

⁶⁸ *Hulde aan Napoleon*, Appendix 27, stanzas 20, 21.

⁶⁹ *Hulde aan Napoleon*, Appendix 27, stanza 21.

⁷⁰ *Hulde aan Napoleon*, Appendix 27, stanza 22.

This poem is interesting because of its explicit nature and its specific focus on Napoleon himself, rather French rule as such. However, the poem is unlike the other poems, as it hardly mentions any specific reasons for disliking Napoleon. The poem does mention his oppression and bloodshed; recurring themes in almost every text analysed so far, yet does not mention the Continental System or the issue of conscription. The analysis of the other poems found that these two issues were the most important reasons the Dutch seemed to have for having a negative opinion on Napoleon and his policies. It is intriguing that a poem so explicit in its content, and so specifically Dutch by its title, does not refer to these typically Dutch reasons for disliking Napoleon in a text that is solely concerned with denouncing Napoleon.

Chapter 2

1815: “Zijn logenrijk moet zinken”

The year 1815 is a crucial one in both Napoleon’s personal history as well as the history of the Netherlands, and indeed the whole of Europe. Napoleon had been exiled to the island Elba, off the coast of Italy, in 1814. As became clear in the previous chapter, this led to much rejoicing in Dutch pamphlets. The Bourbon monarchy was restored and Louis XVIII became ruler of France. They quickly lost popular support though and many Frenchmen began to passively or actively support the return of Napoleon. In the Netherlands, most people seemed to welcome the return of the Prince of Orange and the fact that the country was no longer under (in)direct rule of France.

Napoleon’s escape from Elba and subsequent landing on French soil on 1 March 1815 surprised both his friends and enemies. His quick march on Paris was met with both resistance and joy. Many troops sent by the King to stop Napoleon’s advance instead decided to join their former ruler. Through decrees issued along the way, Napoleon dissolved the parliament and declared his good intentions before even reaching Paris. On 19 March Napoleon entered Paris and was greeted by enthusiastic crowds. Louis XVIII had already fled the capital at this point. The countries that had opposed Napoleon before and during his exile responded to his return by declaring him an outlaw and signing a decree at the Congress of Vienna on March 13. Where Napoleon had hoped he could start his new reign in peace, he once more had to prepare for war. The troops he had left behind during his exile had been diminished and there was not enough time to properly train new recruits. When the Coalition forces started threatening the northern French border Napoleon had no choice but to attempt to defeat them before they could enter France, even though he was far outnumbered.

This of course led to Napoleon’s final defeat at Waterloo on June 18, following a disastrous campaign in the Southern Netherlands. He attempted to flee France by ship but was intercepted and taken prisoner on a British ship. It did not take long before the British decided it would be safest to exile Napoleon again. This time they made sure it would be a lot harder for Napoleon to escape as they decided to bring him to Saint Helena, a small island in the middle of the South Atlantic Ocean. He arrived there in October and would remain there for the rest of his life, as he died in exile at the age of 51 on May 5 1821.

It can come as no surprise that the events of 1815 influenced the manner in which Napoleon was perceived and represented in the Netherlands. Interestingly enough, the number of pamphlets concerning Napoleon published in 1815 is far lower than in 1814. Perhaps the analysis of some of these pamphlets will explain the reasons behind this.

Bij het intrekken van Napoleon Buonaparte in Parijs by Petronella Moens, Utrecht, F.D. Zimmerman, April 1815⁷¹

This poem is unique in several ways. First, it is one of the few pamphlets of which the author is explicitly mentioned. Petronella Moens (1762-1843) is a familiar name in early nineteenth century Dutch literature. She published poems, books and even children's books, though in this context her reputation as a politically engaged poet is most important. Moens was a supporter of the patriotic movement and the early Batavian Republic and wrote many articles and poems in favour of both. Some of these were published as pamphlets, such as *Onze verplichting om tot nut van 't algemeen te werken* in 1791. Together with Bernardus Bosch, another patriot, she wrote several works and published articles in which she pledged her everlasting allegiance to the Batavian Republic in *De Menschenvriend*, a magazine started by Bosch of which Moens would eventually become chief-editor. In 1798 she started her own patriotic weekly magazine, but had to stop publishing after one year because of financial difficulties. There is thus no doubt about Moens' political position in the 1790s. However, from 1800 onwards her work started to become less political. She seems to have followed the larger trend of the depoliticizing of public life that occurred in the first decade of the nineteenth century. Interestingly enough, she only picked up her political work when the Netherlands once again became independent in 1813. Apparently she felt that the restored independence of the Netherlands was worthy of celebration, even though the newly founded monarchy hardly corresponds with her previous patriotic beliefs. However, it seems that she deemed independence from France to be more important than the Netherlands being a republic.⁷² Her pamphlet about Napoleon's return to France can be seen in this light.

⁷¹ Moens, Petronella. *Bij het intrekken van Napoleon Buonaparte in Parijs* Utrecht: F.D Zimmerman, 1815: Appendix 28 – 37.

⁷² Hagen, Edwina. "Moens, Petronella", in: *Digitaal Vrouwenlexicon van Nederland*. URL: <http://www.historici.nl/Onderzoek/Projecten/DVN/lemmata/data/PetronellaMoens> (accessed July 20, 2011).

Another remarkable aspect of this pamphlet is the date of its publication. According to the publication information on the pamphlet itself, it was published in “grasmaand 1815”. “Grasmaand” refers to the month of April, indicating that the pamphlet was published within several weeks of Napoleon’s return to Paris. This pamphlet was thus a very fast response to current events. This indicates that Napoleon’s return from exile was a much talked about topic in Dutch society, otherwise it might not have prompted such a quick response in the form of a pamphlet.

The content of the pamphlet is also remarkable. It is written in the form of a poem, divided into five parts. The first two parts are written from a more or less general perspective, while the remaining three parts are all written from the perspective of a specific group in Dutch society. The poem starts with relating how the Dutch had just become adjusted to the relative peace of a world without Napoleon when he returned from exile and once again forced them to pick up arms again. Within the first few lines, the writer’s stance on Napoleon is made clear: “God! Ach, de vloek der volken verscheen, gelijk een straal der bliksems, die de wolken in vlam zet en verscheurt” (God! Oh, the curse of nations appeared, like a bolt of lightning, which sets aflame and rips apart the clouds).⁷³ Napoleon is described as a curse that reappeared, with the unexpectedness and unpredictability of lightning. It is not farfetched to assume that this is indeed how many inhabitants of the Netherlands perceived Napoleon’s return to France. In the next lines, the French people are also brought into the picture: “God! Een verraadlijk volk durft weêr den rijkskroon bieden aan ’t monster, dat u tergt en om zijn gruwelen lacht.” (God! A treacherous nation once again dares to offer the nation’s crown to the monster which antagonizes you and laugh about his cruelty).⁷⁴ Not only is Napoleon thus condemned in this poem, but also the French people for allowing him to once again take control of their country.

The next stanza contains a relatively long part that does give some insight into why Napoleon is painted in a bad light in this poem. It relates how millions of lives in Europe were and are affected by Napoleon, while he seems unaffected: “En ’t leven des tirans, die zich op lijken vestte, Voor wien de wroeging lang hem elk genot verpestte; dat leven vlamt nog voort en smoort Europa’s rust” (And the life of the tyrant, who settled himself on corpses, for whom

⁷³ Moens, P. *Bij het intrekken van Napoleon Buonaparte in Parijs* Appendix 30, stanza 1.

⁷⁴ Moens, Appendix 30, stanza 1.

remorse long spoiled all his pleasure; that life burns on and extinguishes Europe's peace).⁷⁵ Napoleon is thus blamed for causing the death of many Europeans. The author questions why he should live while countless people died for or because of Napoleon.

The next stanza continues in a similar fashion, evoking God for an answer as to why Napoleon has not been punished for his deeds yet. One of the most interesting remarks made in this stanza is the following: "Waarom heeft weerloosheid, tot wanhoop toe gemarteld, zijn bloed niet, als het bloed van een Marat, geplengd?" (Why has vulnerability, tortured to despair, not shed his blood, like the blood of a Marat?).⁷⁶ This is an allusion to Jean-Paul Marat, a scientist who turned journalist and founded his own newspaper during the French Revolution, who had close links with Maximilien Robespierre and the Jacobins. He became increasingly radical and was elected to the National Convention, where he quickly became one of the most influential persons. His radicalism eventually led to his assassination by Charlotte Corday, a young supporter of the more moderate Girondins, Marat's political enemies. Marat was turned into a martyr by the Jacobins, who seized this opportunity to prove that the Girondins were indeed not to be trusted. It is interesting that Moens sought to associate Napoleon directly with Marat, who to many had become the embodiment of the most radical phase of the French Revolution. Moreover, by this comparison Moens effectively condones an assassination of Napoleon which is one of the most direct and radical threats to Napoleon expressed in the poems analysed. Moens' likening Napoleon to Marat shows that allusions to the radicalism of the Revolution were still in vogue. Another word adds further significance to this comparison; the fact that Napoleon is likened to "a Marat", not simply Marat, signifies that Marat had come to symbolize a certain type of person or even a certain idea.

Moens continues by stating that God must have some reason for making Napoleon survive his return to France. Furthermore, the French people are called out for denouncing their truthful King and welcoming back Napoleon. Moens blames this on their hunger for more war and looting. This is the end of the first part of the pamphlet, which continues with a second poem. Here, Moens ensures the reader that God will surely make an end to Napoleon's renewed reign. She incorporates Europe's response to Napoleon's return: "Europa vordert grootsch den muitling, 't Roept niet ten krijg; - neen – 't vliegt ter straf. Ach, 't koesterde in

⁷⁵ Moens, Appendix 31, stanza 2.

⁷⁶ Moens, Appendix 31, stanza 3.

zijn borst een adder, Toen 't Bonaparte een schuilplaats gaf.” (Europe favours the mutineer, it doesn't call to arms – no – it rushes to punishment. Oh, it cherished in its breast a viper, when it gave Napoleon a refuge).⁷⁷ Indeed, most European nations were quick to declare war on Napoleon after his return to power. Moens' lines seem to be an apt description of the mood in Europe at the time.

Moens goes on to describe how Napoleon should be defeated before evoking several European heads of state. First are Tsar Alexander of Russia and Emperor Francis I of Austria, who should revenge the destruction their countries suffered by the hands of Napoleon.⁷⁸ Next is Frederick William II: “Wraak uw gemarteld rijk en 't schenden, Van grooten Frederik's heldenkroon” (Revenge your tortured nation and the desecration of Great Frederick's hero's crown).⁷⁹ Moens thus calls specifically upon the crowned heads of Europe to vanquish Napoleon, betraying an underlying reason for the hatred of Napoleon that ties in with the earlier comparison with Marat: Moens here seems to support the idea of a hereditary monarchy. Napoleon to many people was the embodiment of one of the most radical outcomes of the French Revolution, the abolition of the monarchy. Apparently Moens found this link particularly important as she keeps referring to it. Of course the recently crowned king of the Netherlands, William I, is not left out and Moens urges him to protect his country.⁸⁰

The pamphlet continues with a short poem from the perspective of fathers sending their sons to war, which is an interesting choice but does not contain any references to Napoleon.⁸¹ Next is a short poem from the perspective of the women and wives of those who will be engaged in a new war with Napoleon. It relates how these men have been raised since birth to be proud of the Netherlands and to fight in its defence. However, like the previous poem it is not concerned with Napoleon but rather with patriotic duty in general.⁸² This is followed by a poem written from the point of view of the Dutch virgins, similar to the previous two poems.⁸³

⁷⁷ Moens, Appendix 32, stanza 8.

⁷⁸ Moens, Appendix 33 stanza 10.

⁷⁹ Moens, Appendix 33, stanza 11.

⁸⁰ Moens, Appendix 33, stanza 12.

⁸¹ Moens, Appendix 34, stanzas 14, 15.

⁸² Moens, Appendix 34-35, stanzas 16-20.

⁸³ Moens, Appendix 35-36, stanzas 21-24.

The very last part of the poem serves as a conclusion to the pamphlet and does contain a direct reference to Napoleon: “Ja, ’t laatste hartebloed van Hollands kroost zal vloeijen; Op ’t puin van stad en dorp zal woestheids distel groeijen; De laatste voetstap gronds verzinkt in ’s afgronds kolk, Eer hier de Corsikaan zijn aadlaars weêr doet zwieren.” (Yes, the last blood from the Dutch youth’s heart will flow, Savageness’ thistle will grow on the rubble of town and village; The last footstep will sink in the whirl of the abyss, Before the Corsican’s will have his eagles flying here again).⁸⁴ The last line is the most interesting one in this part, as it once again shows the importance of Napoleon’s place of birth. By referring to Napoleon as the Corsican, and not the Frenchman, he becomes a usurper even in France, as he was not born and raised on mainland France (even though Corsica had just become part of France at the time of Napoleon’s birth). The eagles refer to the decorative eagles adorning the standards of the units in the Grande Armée. Moens is thus saying that every able-bodied Dutchmen will have given his life before Napoleon’s armies will once again occupy the Netherlands.

Vaderlandse Uitboezeming bij de Roemvolle Zege op Napoleon by Jan van ’s-Gravenweert en
M. Westerman, 1815⁸⁵

Rather than containing one piece written by one author, this pamphlet contains two different victory songs written after Napoleon’s defeat at Waterloo by two different authors. The first is “Zegezing, toegewijd aan Zijne Koninklijke Hoogheid, den Prinse van Oranje” (Victory Song dedicated to His Royal Highness, the Prince of Orange) written by Jan van ’s-Gravenweert (1790-1870). Although a renowned poet and writer, he was primarily known writing and translating plays and epic poems. His most noted achievements were his translations of the *Odyssey* and the *Illiad* into Dutch. He was a member of many cultural and academic institutions and groups. Most important in this context is his association with the Amsterdam theatre, of which he served as a governor for several years.⁸⁶ It is mainly for this contribution to literature that Van ’s-Gravensweert was remembered. His venture into pamphlets thus seems to be a somewhat unique and unusual instance.

⁸⁴ Moens, Appendix 36, stanza 25.

⁸⁵ ’s-Gravenweert, Jan van en M. Westerman. *Vaderlandse Uitboezeming bij de Roemvolle Zege op Napoleon* 1815, Appendix 38-43.

⁸⁶ Zuidema, “Gravenweert” *Nieuw Nederlandsch Biografisch Woordenboek Deel 4*: 673 URL: http://www.inghist.nl/retroboeken/nbw?source=4&page_number=673 (accessed June 15, 2011).

Van 's-Gravensweert starts his song by praising the heroic deeds of the Dutch soldiers at Waterloo and stating that this stems from the struggles with Spain during the Eighty Years' War.⁸⁷ The next stanza is more interesting in terms of how Napoleon is represented: "De Leeuw, die uit zijn banden schiet, Gedooft den basterd Ad'laar niet, In Nederlandsche beemden" (The Lion, shooting from his reins, does not tolerate the bastard Eagle, in Dutch fields).⁸⁸ In clear language van 's-Gravensweert expresses his thoughts on both the French regime and Napoleon. Again, Napoleon's status as a usurper to the French throne is commented upon. Moreover, bastard might also refer to his Corsican heritage. Napoleon is thus seen as the illegitimate ruler of France in more than one way.

In the next stanzas Van 's-Gravensweert makes no references to Napoleon but rather praises those who lost their lives fighting for the Netherlands.⁸⁹ In the last stanza however, there is a clear reference to the battle of Waterloo: "Strijdt voort met dapp'ren Wellington, en buigt voor geen Napoleon; zijn logenrijk moet zinken." (Fight on with brave Wellington, and bow for no Napoleon; his empire of lies should sink).⁹⁰ Again, there is a reference to Napoleon's empire somehow not being true and honest, but rather based on lies and deceit. A last interesting detail about this song is the fact that it is dated 21 June 1815, which was three days after the Battle of Waterloo. This shows that news had spread rather fast, although the date of publication of the pamphlet itself is not stated. Since pamphlets could be produced quickly and were often distributed locally, the pamphlet itself might have appeared relatively soon after the Battle as well.

The next part of the pamphlet consists of a "Vaderlandsch Zegelied, uitgesproken bij het sluiten van den Amsterdamschen Schouwburg, den 24sten van Zomermaand 1815" (Patriotic Victory Song, as spoken at the closing of the Amsterdam Theatre, the 24th of June 1815), written by M. Westerman (1775 – 1852). His full name is Marten Westerman, who wrote several other works related to the Dutch military, including a song for the artillery at Naarden in 1814 and a work on the Dutch Army's volunteer forces.⁹¹ His involvement in this

⁸⁷ s-Gravenweert, Jan van. *Zegezang, Toegewijd aan Zijne Koninklijke Hoogheid, Den Prinse van Oranje*, 1815: Appendix 40, stanza 1.

⁸⁸ s-Gravenweert, J. van. *Zegezang, Toegewijd aan Zijne Koninklijke Hoogheid, Den Prinse van Oranje* Appendix 40, stanza 2.

⁸⁹ s-Gravenweert, Appendix 40-41, stanzas 3-5.

⁹⁰ s-Gravenweert, Appendix 41, stanza 6.

⁹¹ Aa, A.J. van der . *Biographisch woordenboek der Nederlanden. Deel 20*. Haarlem: J.J. van Brederode, 1877: 146. URL: http://www.historici.nl/retroboeken/vdaa/#source=aa__001biog24_01.xml&page=146 (accessed July 10 2011).

pamphlet thus seems less out of the ordinary than Van 's-Gravensweert's. Westerman had various careers, including book-seller and actor, and he was one of the co-directors of the Amsterdam theatre. This connection to the Amsterdam theatre might explain why his and Van 's-Gravenweert's poems were published in the same pamphlet and why Westerman's song was read aloud at the theatre.⁹²

One striking feature of Westerman's lyrics is that Napoleon is never mentioned by either his first or last name. Napoleon is referred to as "wangedrogt"⁹³, "monster"⁹⁴, "volksbeul"⁹⁵ and "dwing'land"⁹⁶(monster, monstrosity, the people's executioner and tyrant). However, Westerman does mention Prince William and Prince Fredrick, the sons of King William I who were both involved in the Battle of Waterloo. Westerman might have done this to show that Napoleon was less than human and thus not worthy of being referred to by his name. The distinction made between on the one hand the Dutch princes and, by proxy, victors of Waterloo and Napoleon, and on the other the defeated emperor, only grows stronger by Westerman's omission of his name. One particularly interesting description is the following: "Het wangedrogt, wiens weerga nooit Door de aarde werd gedragen" (The monstrosity whose equal the world has never seen).⁹⁷ Westerman, apparently not afraid of being overly dramatic, is thus stating that Napoleon is the worst person to have ever existed.

In his next stanza, Westerman tries to show that his opinion is shared by others: "Van rondom vreeslijk opgejaagd, Kan 't monster zich niet Bergen; 't Vindt alle wachters onversaagd, En moe van het heilloos tergen; 't Vindt Moskoviter en Germaan, Gereed verdelgend toe te slaan." (Chased from all around, the monster cannot hide itself, It finds all the guards dauntless, and tired of the depraved antagonizing; it finds the Muscovite and German, Ready to strike devastatingly).⁹⁸ Many others were thus in pursuit of Napoleon, including the Muscovite and the German. The Muscovite refers to the Russian forces participating in the Battle of Waterloo, while the German refers to the Prussian forces. Both countries had their reasons for fighting against Napoleon.

⁹² Aa, A.J. van der. *Biographisch woordenboek der Nederlanden. Deel 20*, 146.

⁹³ Westerman, Marten. *Vaderlandsch Zegelied, uitgesproken bij het sluiten van den Amsterdamschen Schouwburg, den 24sten van Zomermaand 1815* 1815: Appendix 41, stanza 2.

⁹⁴ Westerman, M. *Vaderlandsch Zegelied* Appendix 41, stanza 3.

⁹⁵ Westerman, Appendix 42, stanza 4.

⁹⁶ Westerman, Appendix 42, stanza 9.

⁹⁷ Westerman, Appendix 41, stanza 2.

⁹⁸ Westerman, Appendix 41-42, stanza 3.

The next stanza gives more insight into why Westerman believed the Dutch had won a deserved victory at Waterloo: “De volksbeul ziet, terwijl hij beeft, Hoe eendragt magt aan Neêrland geeft, En we allen wrevel smoren. Hoe ’t volk, dat zich op God verlaat, en met Oranje strijden gaat, De zege is toebeschoren.” (The people’s executioner sees, while he trembles, how concord strengthens the Netherlands, and extinguishes all spite. How the people, that trusts in God, and goes to battle with Orange, has victory bestowed upon it).⁹⁹ Westerman thus on the one hand praises the sense of unity and harmony amongst the Dutch as a particularly important source of power. On the other hand, the trust the Dutch place in God and the Prince of Orange are other important reasons for their, in Westerman’s eyes, deserved victory at Waterloo. Again, religion and the monarchy are cited as two of the most important weapons against Napoleon, possibly because Napoleon was seen as irreligious and was not accepted as a proper monarch.

The following stanzas continue to praise the Dutch and various members of the family of Orange in a similar fashion.¹⁰⁰ Napoleon is only specifically referred to again in the second- last stanza: “De Dwing’land door zijn trots verrast, Stikke in ’t stuiptrekkend woelen; Daar ’t bloed, waarin hij weel’drig plast, Zijn dorst niet kon bekoelen. Als hij in d’afgrond nederschiet, Verheff’ heel de aarde ’t zegelied, En jubele allerwege, En viere, met de heldenbloem, Prins Willems lof, en Frederiks roem, En Neêrlands oorlogszege!” (The tyrant startled by his pride, Suffocates in the convulsing drudge; Since the blood, in which he opulently bathes, Cannot satisfy his thirst. When he plunges into the abyss, The whole world sings the song of victory, And rejoices, And celebrates, with the greatest heroes, Prince William’s praise and Frederick’s glory, And the Dutch triumph of war).¹⁰¹ Napoleon’s downfall is here partially blamed on his pride, which can in this context be taken to mean that his return from exile was seen as an act fuelled by pride on Napoleon’s part an unwillingness to accept his fate.

According to the next lines, Napoleon was also extremely bloodthirsty and could perhaps not imagine a life without war and bloodshed. His defeat is pictured as anything but honorable, but rather like a beast dying a slow and painful death, as described by “Stikke in’t

⁹⁹ Westerman, Appendix 42, stanza 4.

¹⁰⁰ Westerman, Appendix 42, stanzas 6-8.

¹⁰¹ Westerman, Appendix 42-43, stanza 9.

stuiptrekkend woelen”.¹⁰² Moreover, Westerman once again stresses that the Dutch are not the only ones who are glad to be rid of Napoleon, as according to him, the whole world joined in celebrating his defeat. What is particularly interesting is that unlike Van 's-Gravensweert, Westerman only alludes to some of the other nations involved in the battles that led to Napoleon's final defeat, in the case of the Muscovite and the German. He seems to want to bring across the idea that the Dutch army was solely responsible for defeating Napoleon.

The final stanza of the song contains a particularly interesting part: “Hier, als zich 't koor opnieuw ontsluit, Galme alles vreugdezangen uit, Om 's dwing'lands dood te vieren! Dan stijgt de welvaart weer ten top; Dan rijst de vrede-olijf weer op, Omheind van krijgslaurieren” (Here, when the choir once again opens itself, Resound all the songs of praise, To celebrate the tyrant's death! Then prosperity will ascent; Then the olive (branch) of peace will rise again, Surrounded by the laurels of war).¹⁰³ The line referring to the celebration of Napoleon's death is puzzling. It is unclear whether Westerman believes Napoleon to actually be dead or whether he believes his defeat to be as definite as his death would have been. Or is Westerman merely referring to what the celebrations will be like when Napoleon will actually die? Perhaps Westerman is referring to the idea that the tyrant is dead, even though Napoleon as a man still lives. It is difficult, if not impossible to grasp Westerman's thoughts about this line. However his intention remains clear and in line with that of the entire poem; showing that the world will be a better and happier place without Napoleon.

De Zegenpraal der Menschlijkheid, bij den Val van Napoleon Buonaparte –Alkmaar, I.A. van Harencarspee in Alkmaar, 1815¹⁰⁴

Unlike the previous two poems, but similar to the poems published in 1814, this poem is anonymous. The pamphlet containing this poem was published in Alkmaar in June 1815, so like the previous pamphlet within two weeks of the Battle of Waterloo. Again, the pamphlet consists of a victory song, which is six pages long. Interestingly, the song is prefaced by a short poem written by an author only identified by the initials V.Z.

¹⁰² Westerman, Appendix 42-43, stanza 9.

¹⁰³ Westerman, Appendix 43, stanza 10.

¹⁰⁴ *De Zegenpraal der Menschlijkheid, bij den Val van Napoleon Buonaparte* Alkmaar: I.A. van Harencarspee, 1815: Appendix 44-49.

This poem also deals with the Battle of Waterloo and relates how the Duke of Wellington, Blücher and the prince of Orange ended Napoleon's tyranny. However, in terms of imagery it is not particularly interesting¹⁰⁵.

The song itself starts off with several stanzas praising the victors of Waterloo, specifically the Dutch "heroes" who fought in the battle. The last stanza on the first page is particularly interesting: "Zingt triomf: de woeste moorder, Is van kracht en magt beroofd, Al zijn trotsch is door uw grootheid, Roemvol in het niet gedooft". (Sing triumph: the raging murderer has been robbed of strength and power, your greatness has gloriously extinguished his pride).¹⁰⁶ Napoleon is thus, perhaps unsurprisingly after the analyses of the previous poems, once again referred to as a particularly evil murderer. Moreover, his supposed pride and presumed vanity are referred to and have now been permanently eradicated. It is interesting that Napoleon's pride is perceived as one of his most important characteristics. His pride is often named as both the cause of his downfall and the needless suffering of those he subjected. His persistence in fighting against the various coalitions that declared war on France during Napoleon's reign was also perceived as stemming from pride.

The song continues by echoing the preface in an appraisal of Wellington, Blücher and the Prince of Orange.¹⁰⁷ After this, a stanza is dedicated to Napoleon: "Napoleon! Woeste woeler – Eedverbreker! – schrik der aard! – Ondervind in 't eind, ô moorder! Eene straf uwe wreedheid waard!" (Napoleon! Furious agitator! – Transgressor of oaths! – Terror of the earth! – Encounter in the end, O murderer! A punishment worthy of your atrocities!).¹⁰⁸ Many of these names given to Napoleon have already been encountered in the previous poems examined. The fact that Napoleon is said to have broken an oath is peculiar. It could refer to his return from Elba, on which he was supposed to stay. Again, the author tries to show that the Netherlands was not the only country to suffer under Napoleon's rule by naming Napoleon 'the terror of the earth'. Perhaps this is done to justify the next few lines that call for a very severe punishment of Napoleon.

¹⁰⁵ *De Zegenpraal der Menschlijkheid, bij den Val van Napoleon Buonaparte*, Appendix 46, preface.

¹⁰⁶ *De Zegenpraal*, Appendix p. 46, stanza 3.

¹⁰⁷ *De Zegenpraal*, Appendix p. 47, stanzas 4-6.

¹⁰⁸ *De Zegenpraal*, Appendix p. 47, stanza 7.

The next stanzas continue to berate Napoleon in a similar fashion. He is named “helgedrocht”¹⁰⁹ (creature from hell), “monster”¹¹⁰ and “koningsmoorder”¹¹¹ (killer of kings). The last stanza in particular stands out: “Weg met uwe Throonsafzwering; Gij die daar geen recht op hadt; Gij verrader van uw Koning! Die uw woord – Uwe eer vertrad!” (Be gone with your abdication; You who were not entitled to it; You betrayer of your king! Who defiled your word – your honor!).¹¹² Napoleon’s illegitimacy and his status of usurper are once more used as reasons to oppose him. He is also once again linked to the overthrow of the monarchy and the French Revolution by calling him a ‘killer of kings’.

The name-calling persists in the next stanzas, where Napoleon is likened to a tiger¹¹³ and a villain.¹¹⁴ Moreover, the author warns that, had Napoleon not been defeated, the Netherlands would have faced “plunder, moord en vrouwenschennis” (plunder, murder and rape).¹¹⁵ In short, nothing good was expected to come from Napoleon. Not many other interesting claims are made about Napoleon in the following stanzas, which once again focus on the victors of Waterloo.¹¹⁶ In the last stanzas of the song, Napoleon is once again mentioned: “Buonaparte is weg gevloeden; Heeft zijn kroonrecht afgestaan; Nimmer zal dien schrik der menschheid; Zijn verdiende straf ontgaan” (Buonaparte has fled; has given away the rights to his throne; Never will the terror of mankind; Escape the punishment he earns).¹¹⁷ As in the title of the poem, the Italianised spelling of Napoleon’s last name is used, probably to highlight his disputed French heritage and his status as usurper. The line about Napoleon’s right to the throne is peculiar and seems to go against what the author stated previously. Instead of claiming Napoleon did not have rights to the throne to begin with, the author here seems to imply Napoleon did have some claim to the throne. It could be that this was not the author’s intention at all and that this is merely a rather poor choice of words.

The second to last stanza is the last one to actually address Napoleon in a significant way: “Eerlang moog hij, eindelijk, vallen; Onder ’t lot door hem verdiend; In den diepsten ramp verlaten, Zelfs van zijnen laatsten Vriend” (May he soon, finally, fall; Bear his deserved

¹⁰⁹ *De Zegenpraal*, Appendix 47, stanza 8.

¹¹⁰ *De Zegenpraal*, Appendix 47, stanza 9.

¹¹¹ *De Zegenpraal*, Appendix 47, stanza 10.

¹¹² *De Zegenpraal*, Appendix 47, stanza 11.

¹¹³ *De Zegenpraal*, Appendix 48, stanza 12.

¹¹⁴ *De Zegenpraal*, Appendix 48, stanza 13.

¹¹⁵ *De Zegenpraal*, Appendix 48, stanza 15.

¹¹⁶ *De Zegenpraal*, Appendix 48, 49, stanzas 16-20.

¹¹⁷ *De Zegenpraal*, Appendix 49, stanza 21.

fate; Abandoned in the worst disaster; Even by his last friend).¹¹⁸ Again, it is stressed that Napoleon is receiving his just reward. The disaster referred to is most likely the Battle of Waterloo, which was his last chance at regaining a foothold in Europe and which he also disastrously lost. The last friend referred to might be purely metaphorical and refer to Napoleon's good luck finally forsaking him. It could also refer to an actual person, although there was no notable figure that left Napoleon's side just before or after the Battle of Waterloo.

On the whole, this poem gives a rather unsurprising negative view of Napoleon. Many of the aforementioned nicknames are once again used in this song. Moreover, the same reasons are given for the immense dislike for Napoleon: he was seen as a usurper to the French throne and as a bloodthirsty tyrant. The victors of Waterloo are praised for stopping Napoleon from once again overrunning Europe and from preventing more murder, plunder and other crimes.

Alleenspraak van Napoleon Buonaparte in zijne Engelsche Gevangenschap-
Amsterdam, H. Moolenijzer, 1815¹¹⁹

This is perhaps the most interesting poem from 1815 analysed in this chapter, as it is the only poem that is written from Napoleon's point of view. In 1814, the poem "*De Braakende Napoleon*" used the same idea, while in 1815 most authors focused on writing victory songs from the Dutch perspective. Another interesting aspect of this poem is that, although the author is unidentified, it is signed with the initials W. B. In the pamphlet, the B is followed by seven periods, which would indicate that the author's last name consisted of eight characters. However, it could also be a reference to Willem Bilderdijk, which would lend the poem a certain air of authority.

Although the title of the poem refers to Napoleon's imprisonment by the British, there is no reference in the poem itself to Napoleon being kept on the island of Saint Helena. It is possible that this poem was written and published before Napoleon was sent to exile on this island. Napoleon tried to escape to the United States in July 1815, but was intercepted by the

¹¹⁸ *De Zegenpraal*, Appendix 49, stanza 22.

¹¹⁹ *Alleenspraak van Napoleon Buonaparte in zijne Engelsche Gevangenschap* Amsterdam: H. Moolenijzer, 1815 Appendix 50-53.

British navy and, although he applied for political asylum, imprisoned on the ship that intercepted him. This ship anchored at a safe distance from the British coast and remained there for several months. There was some debate about whether Napoleon should get a fair trial, but eventually, in August, the ship he was imprisoned on set sail for Saint Helena, without trial. Napoleon was to remain on this small island until his death in 1821. It is quite possible that this pamphlet was published in the three weeks between Napoleon's capture in and his final voyage to Saint Helena. However, it could also be that the author of the poem simply forgot to mention the island all together.

The author does mention what Napoleon did to deserve this punishment. Napoleon himself relates how he conquered most of Europe and subjected the countries under his control to his laws. Napoleon relates how far his influence reached: “Ik, die in vroeger tijd was heerscher en bewerker, van bijna gansch Euroop, 't welk ik mijn wetten gaf, 'T vloog alles op mijn wenk, 't hong alles van mij af” (I, who in earlier times, was the ruler and initiator, of almost the whole of Europe, which I gave my laws, it was at my beck and call, it completely depended upon me).¹²⁰ According to the author of this poem, Napoleon thus perceived himself as instrumental for Europe; it both served him and fully depended on him. It is also interesting that Napoleon in this poem mentions that he gave Europe his laws, a reference to the Code Napoléon, the French judicial code almost all countries that fell under Napoleon's influence were forced to adopt. This also happened in the Netherlands, where it would continue to serve as the foundations of the laws of the later Kingdom of the Netherlands. In the next few lines, the author has Napoleon tell how he dealt with resistance: “En die niet bukken wouw dwong ik door vuur en staal (And I forced those who would not bend with fire and steel).¹²¹ Napoleon is thus described as a ruthless leader, unwilling to put up with any form of disobedience. His rule was to be enforced by military action.

The next lines of the poem deal specifically with the Netherlands: “Het Nederlandsche Volk ontnam ik zijn regering; Zijn Zeevaart stuite ik en zijn handel en handtering” (From the Dutch people I took their government; Their maritime trade and business).¹²² Interestingly enough, this is the first poem from 1815 that alludes to the Continental System, showing that even though it might no longer be amongst the main reasons for despising Napoleon, the

¹²⁰ *Alleenspraak van Napoleon Buonaparte in zijne Engelsche Gevangenschap*, Appendix 50, stanza 1.

¹²¹ *Alleenspraak van Napoleon Buonaparte*, Appendix 51, stanza 1.

¹²² *Alleenspraak van Napoleon Buonaparte*, Appendix p. 52, stanza 2.

Dutch had not forgotten about the economic troubles this particular measure caused. Moreover, the fact that Napoleon installed his brother as King, and would later annex the Netherlands, thus completely undermining the country's independence, is also referred to by stating that Napoleon took the Dutch government from its people. The poem continues with relating what eventually caused Napoleon's downfall, giving most credit to the British and the fatal Russian campaign of 1812.¹²³ The next lines are intriguing: "Ik koos toen Elba's rots, en schond daarna mijn eed, Toen ik in Frankrijk weêr mijn intree deed" (I then choose Elba's rock, and violated my oath, When I returned to France).¹²⁴ This is the first time that the violating of an oath is brought into direct relation with Napoleon's return to France. This makes the idea that the violation of Napoleon's abdication is referred to whenever authors speak of the violation of an oath more plausible.

The poem continues with giving Napoleon's thoughts after his capture: "Ik die mij noemen deed, Napoleon de grooten, Ik zie mij nu vervloekt, ja in ieder land, Daar ik regeerder was, noemt men mij dwingeland" (I who had myself called Napoleon the great, I seem myself being cursed, yes in every land, where I once ruled, they now call me tyrant).¹²⁵ Napoleon thus notes that there was a change in attitude towards him in the countries he once ruled. Napoleon's behavior after his loss at Waterloo is commented upon: "'K zoek bij mijn vijand heul en geef mij zelve aan, Ik zit geheel beschaamd om mijn zoo laf bestaan, 'K zal smecken om gena, doch mijne gruweldaden, Zijn vrees ik al te sterk, die dulden geen genade" (I seek shelter with my enemy, and turn myself in, I am thoroughly ashamed of my cowardly existence, I will beg for mercy, But my cruel deeds, I fear are far too strong, and will tolerate no forgiveness).¹²⁶ Napoleon's request for political asylum is, perhaps not unsurprisingly, perceived as an act of cowardice. It is interesting that the author assumes Napoleon himself also saw his request in this light by having Napoleon say that he is "ashamed of [his] cowardly existence". Moreover, the author indicates Napoleon also felt his reign had been particularly cruel, too cruel to hope for forgiveness. It is unlikely that Napoleon truly saw himself in this light and the author probably included this to show his personal opinion on this issue.

¹²³ *Alleenspraak van Napoleon Buonaparte*, Appendix 52, stanza 2.

¹²⁴ *Alleenspraak van Napoleon Buonaparte*, Appendix 52, stanza 2.

¹²⁵ *Alleenspraak van Napoleon Buonaparte*, Appendix 52, stanza 2.

¹²⁶ *Alleenspraak van Napoleon Buonaparte*, Appendix 52, stanza 2.

The idea that Napoleon's deeds were irredeemable is elaborated upon in the following lines: "Mij dunkt men roept mij toe: ô geessel van deze aard, Gij zijt het levenslicht en onze gunst onwaard" (It seems to me that they will cry out to me: o scourge of this earth, You are unworthy of life and our favour).¹²⁷ Exactly who the "they" in this line are is not made clear, although it is reasonable to assume that it refers to the people of Europe, or perhaps the general public. The author here makes a not very subtle allusion to the idea that Napoleon should be killed for his crimes by stating that he is not worthy of living. In the next line, Napoleon states that he quivers at the thought of his wrongs. It seems Napoleon is too late with regretting his deeds, as the final lines of the poem relate how he is taken by the Devil to be brought to Hell. Here he is tortured and burned and the Devil justifies this: "Hij grauwt mij toe, tiran, die ieder hebt misdaan, Dit is uw regte loon, voor al uw wanbedrijven" (He snarls at me, tyrant, who has done everyone wrong. This is your just reward, for all your crimes).¹²⁸ Perhaps inevitably religious imagery had to be brought in at some point, as a kind of ultimate proof that even in the eyes of God, Napoleon's deeds had to be punished.

¹²⁷ *Alleenspraak van Napoleon Buonaparte*, Appendix 52, stanza 2.

¹²⁸ *Alleenspraak van Napoleon Buonaparte*, Appendix 52, stanza 3.

Chapter 3

1821: “Gelaarsd, gespoord, gelijk een *held*”

It seems that after his exile to Saint Helena, the Dutch lost their preoccupation with Napoleon and started focusing on other, more pressing issues in their pamphlets. It seems that once Napoleon was practically imprisoned on an island in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean he was no longer seen as posing a threat to the Netherlands. Some groups in France still held on to their hope that Napoleon might somehow escape and once again return to rule France. However, this movement was strongly opposed and oppressed by the reinstated Bourbons. Most activity was thus underground and rather passive and took the form of, for instance, wearing violets on items of clothing to show support for Napoleon. Interestingly enough, a similar movement occurred in Britain. Some felt that Napoleon had not received the treatment a political prisoner should get and urged for a renewed trial. When Napoleon died while effectively still in British custody many Brits expressed feelings of guilt and regret in pamphlets and letters published in newspapers. Apparently a Europe without Napoleon was not as good as it had once seemed.

In the Netherlands, only two pamphlets concerned with Napoleon published in 1821 can be found in the database, both of them containing poems. More might have been published but it is fair to assume that Napoleon's death simply was of no great concern to the Dutch. An analysis of these two pamphlets might confirm whether this is true. Moreover, the specific sentiments towards Napoleon and his death can be investigated. It is also interesting to see whether there has been a notable shift in the manner in which Napoleon is represented and perceived in these two poems compared to the poems published in 1814 and 1815, when Napoleon did still, in some way, pose a threat to the Netherlands. Since Napoleon obviously no longer threatened the Netherlands in any way after his death, it can be expected that the views on his person and deeds would be milder or more positive. The following analyses should answer these questions.

Op het Afsterven der Gewezen Keizer, Napoleon Buonaparte, overleden op St. Helena, den 5 Mei 1821 –Rotterdam, H. van der Sprong, 1821¹²⁹

The title of this poem is very straightforward and already contains some clues about the author's position regarding Napoleon. The fact that Napoleon is referred to as the "former emperor" emphasizes his position as an outcast, while using the Italianised spelling of his last name emphasises his otherness. From these two seemingly small details, it can already be assumed that the poem will most likely describe Napoleon in a negative manner. It is not clear when the pamphlet was published exactly, but it did take some time for the news of Napoleon's death to reach Europe. News of his death reached Britain by midsummer, so it is reasonable to assume that the news had spread to the Netherlands by mid-July or the beginning of August as well.¹³⁰ It is thus reasonable to assume that this pamphlet was published sometime after mid-July in 1821.

The pamphlet contains a poem consisting of five pages. It is prefaced by a short poem mentioning "tyranny", which serves as another indicator that this pamphlet will not be particularly positive towards Napoleon.¹³¹ The first three stanzas of the poem are not specifically related to Napoleon's death but deal with the inevitability of death in general, telling how neither kings nor slaves are able to escape death. Moreover, the author wonders why people strive to gain distinction, glory and honour as everyone will end in dust anyway.¹³² The next stanza does refer to Napoleon: "Daar viel de dwing'land ploffend neder, en vrijheid klonk bij zijnen val; Zijn grootheid zonk bij 't vreugdegalmen, van 't volk in 't uitgebreid heeral" (There the tyrant fell down with a thud, and freedom sounded at his fall; His greatness sank with the sounds of joy, from the people in the expansive universe).¹³³ If there was any doubt about the author's inclination towards Napoleon, this stanza proves that he or she is clearly against Napoleon and his actions. The reference to freedom is interesting, since Napoleon had not posed a direct threat to freedom in Europe for almost six years at the time of his death. This line signifies that apparently many believed the world was only safe from Napoleon once he had died. It is slightly confusing that amongst all the negative

¹²⁹ *Op het Afsterven der Gewezen Keizer, Napoleon Buonaparte, overleden op St. Helena, den 5 Mei 1821* Rotterdam: H. van der Sprong, 1821: Appendix 54-58.

¹³⁰ Semmel, *S. Napoleon and the British*, 218.

¹³¹ *Op het Afsterven der Gewezen Keizer, Napoleon Buonaparte, overleden op St. Helena, den 5 Mei 1821* Appendix 56 preface.

¹³² *Op het Afsterven der Gewezen Keizer*, Appendix 56, 57, stanzas 1-3.

¹³³ *Op het Afsterven der Gewezen Keizer*, Appendix 57, stanza 4.

imagery the author chose to mention Napoleon's "greatness". This might somehow be related to how the author believed Napoleon would be remembered and that nothing of his carefully constructed reputation would last once the people of the world and indeed the entire universe rejoiced at the news of his death.

The poem continues in a similar fashion: "Daar ligt hij nu, de held, de Heerscher, de dwing'land die, steeds, onvermoeid, De vrijheid en der volken regten, In 't kwellend dwangjuk hield geboeid" (There he lies, the hero, the ruler, the tyrant who, continuously, tirelessly, held the freedom and the people's rights, under his yoke).¹³⁴ This stanza is intriguing, as it appears to be in favour of Napoleon at first, by calling him a "hero" and a "ruler". However, this is followed by "tyrant", making clear that the author's true intention. The fact that an opposing view of Napoleon is incorporated in the poem shows that the author was aware that some people might perceive Napoleon as a hero. The author quickly shows why he or she believes Napoleon was far from a hero. This poem can thus be seen as countering the pro-Napoleon movement that existed in France and Britain and perhaps also in the Netherlands. This is done by once again mentioning Napoleon's crimes, with a particular stress on the loss of freedom that resulted from his rule.

The next stanza once again handles the theme of mortality and relates how even Napoleon could not escape death: "Zoo grootsch en zoo vol koene daden, Maar nu verteerd in asch en stof" (So great and full of audacious deeds, Yet now decayed to ash and dust).¹³⁵ Again, the author seems to praise Napoleon by calling him great and praising his deeds. Yet this time it is without a hint of irony, which is rather strange when compared to the preceding stanzas. Of course the author follows his words of praise with stating that even this is not enough to save Napoleon from death, although this seems to be more in line with the general message of the poem than necessarily attacking Napoleon.

The author continues with two stanzas reflecting on the transience of life in general.¹³⁶ These reflections give the poem a distinctly religious tone, which is further emphasized by the following lines: "En met zoo veel regtaarde braven, Stapt hij nu heen in d'Eeuwigheid. Oneindig Schepper! Gij zijt regter! Wat loon hebt gij hem toegezeid?" (And with so many

¹³⁴ *Op het Afsterven der Gewezen Keizer*, Appendix 57, stanza 5.

¹³⁵ *Op het Afsterven der Gewezen Keizer*, Appendix 57, stanza 6.

¹³⁶ *Op het Afsterven der Gewezen Keizer*, Appendix 57, stanzas 7-9.

right-minded men, He now steps forth in Eternity. Eternal Lord! You are the judge! What have you offered him?).¹³⁷ On the one hand, the author likens Napoleon to other honest and true men, while also indicating that God will be his final judge and wondering what the verdict on Napoleon's deeds will be. The author continues with a similar stanza relating how, together with many others, Napoleon will appear before God's throne.¹³⁸ The following stanza shows a clear opinion of Napoleon: "Ja het onzinnig bloed vergieten, En 's menschen vrijheid hen ontrukkt, Staan voor God's troon, met vuur'ge lett'ren, Hem in het voorhoofd diep gedrukt" (Yes, the senseless bloodshed, and freedom extorted from the people, stand before God's throne, with fiery letters, emblazoned on his forehead).¹³⁹ Napoleon's crimes are once again 'simplified' to bloodshed and the extortion of freedom and these are, according to the author, the crimes God will judge. Moreover, the author makes clear that, to God, these crimes are as visible as if they were emblazoned on Napoleon's forehead, so there is no chance of hiding his crimes. Where the preceding stanzas gave a more neutral, or even positive, view of Napoleon, these lines once again show the author's true colours.

In the two following stanzas the author relates how Napoleon must despair about his fate, yet the author also wonders why Napoleon's crimes have to be retold. The author argues that both vice and virtue are allowed to occur under God's supervision, thus saying that Napoleon's deeds only happened because God somehow allowed them to happen.¹⁴⁰ This sheds an interesting light on the poem as a whole, because it might explain the rather ambivalent opinion the author has about Napoleon. The author might be afraid of criticising Napoleon too much, because according to his or her own logic, his deeds were somehow condoned by God. Therefore, by criticizing Napoleon and his deeds the author might be afraid of also criticizing God's ways. This seems to be confirmed by the next stanza: "Maar toch het mensch'lijk mededogen, Vereischt voor hem, van elk, een traan; O ja, een traan, als mensch, als christen, Zal van mij voor hem grafwaards gaan." (But still human compassion, obliges for him, from everyone, a tear; Oh yes, a tear, as human being, as Christian, Shall from me, for him, fall to his grave).¹⁴¹ The author thus believes that no matter what the deceased might be found guilty of, as a human being, and perhaps more importantly, a Christian, one is obliged to mourn him. The author's stance on Napoleon can perhaps best be described as a rather

¹³⁷ *Op het Afsterven der Gewezen Keizer*, Appendix 57, stanza 10.

¹³⁸ *Op het Afsterven der Gewezen Keizer*, Appendix 58, stanza 11.

¹³⁹ *Op het Afsterven der Gewezen Keizer*, Appendix 58, stanza 12.

¹⁴⁰ *Op het Afsterven der Gewezen Keizer*, Appendix 58, stanzas 13, 14.

¹⁴¹ *Op het Afsterven der Gewezen Keizer*, Appendix 58, stanza 15.

practical one, based on his or her Christian beliefs. The author does not want to place too much judgment on Napoleon, as ultimately, God is the one who will judge Napoleon's deeds: "wij mogen immers hem niet rigten, God wekt hem eenmaal uit het graf" (After all, we are not the ones to judge him, God will once wake him from his grave).¹⁴²

The last stanza of the poem perhaps best captures its rather confused tone: "En dan zal straf vergelding wezen, Ja dan ontvangt hij 't eindloos lot; Maar toch genade is ook te vinden, daar voor 't gerigt van onzen God" (And then punishment will be retribution, Yes then he will receive the endless fate; But still mercy can also be found, there in front of our God's judgment).¹⁴³ Where the author starts out by reassuring the readers that Napoleon will eventually receive his just punishment, he or she finishes by stating that God might still see fit to grant Napoleon his mercy. Again, the author is torn between wanting to express what he or she believes should befall Napoleon while at the same time making sure the readers understand that eventually God is the only one who can truly judge Napoleon. This makes this poem the most religious poem analysed in this study, although it is quite understandable that a poem dealing with death would be more concerned with religion than poems dealing with different themes.

Bonapartes Reize na de Elizeesche Velden. – Amsterdam, M. van Kolm Jr., 1821¹⁴⁴

This poem's title refers to the Elysian Fields, an intriguing allusion. The Elysian Fields are part of Greek mythology and were believed to be the place where heroes and such spend their afterlives. At the time this poem was published, knowledge about Classical mythology was common and the general public would have understood the reference to the Elysian Fields. The title seems to indicate that Napoleon was deemed to be blessed in some way; otherwise it would make no sense for him to travel to the Elysian Fields.¹⁴⁵ A further analysis of the poem has to confirm whether this is true or whether the unidentified author is using the allusion to the Elysian Fields in another way. The poem counts ten stanzas, of which the seven middle stanzas are written from Napoleon's perspective. The other three stanzas are

¹⁴² *Op het Afsterven der Gewezen Keizer*, Appendix 58, stanza 16.

¹⁴³ *Op het Afsterven der Gewezen Keizer*, Appendix 58, stanza 17.

¹⁴⁴ *Bonapartes Reize na de Elizeesche Velden.* Amsterdam: M. van Kolm Jr., 1821: 59-64.

¹⁴⁵ Interestingly, the French for Elysian Fields is Champs Élysées, now mostly associated with the Avenue de Champs Élysées in Paris which ends at the Arc de Triomphe, the triumphal arch Napoleon commissioned to commemorate his victories. The Arc was only completed in 1836 and when Napoleon's remains were returned to Paris in 1840, they passed under it and traveled down the Champs Élysées. He did thus truly travel to the Elysian Fields.

written from the point of view of Caron, or Charon, the ferryman who was in charge of transporting the souls of the deceased across the river Styx. The poem's author here continues the allusion to Greek mythology, and specifically the mythological afterlife. Another interesting detail in the title of the poem is the manner in which Napoleon's last name is spelled. Instead of using the Italianised Buonaparte, which seems to have been the standard spelling utilised in Dutch poems concerning Napoleon, the author chose to use the French and nowadays most commonly used spelling, Bonaparte. It remains to be seen whether this choice of spelling has anything to do with the author's opinion on Napoleon.

The poem starts with a stanza relating the spread of the news of Napoleon's death in Europe and how people imagined this: "Gelaarsd, gespoord, gelijk een *held*, Al moest hij weer na 't oorlogs-veld" (Wearing his boots and spurs, resembling a hero, like he was going to battle again).¹⁴⁶ It is interesting that Napoleon's death was imagined and described as a heroic death, while in truth he died in bed after a progressive illness had weakened him for months. There was hardly anything heroic about this and it is unlikely that Napoleon wore his boots and spurs on his deathbed, although he was buried wearing his favourite uniform. This shows the discrepancy between what occurred on Saint Helena and how it was perceived in Europe. The following stanza reveals that it was Charon who was relating the speculations surrounding Napoleon's death. He continues by inviting the readers to guess the identity of the man whose soul he has to ferry across.¹⁴⁷ This is rather strange since the man's identity was already revealed in the first stanza which mentioned 'Bonepart'. Perhaps the author was merely interested in having Charon question the reader as a literary device for the introduction of Napoleon himself, who relates his life and death in the following seven stanzas.

This starts with Napoleon telling about his youth and making the following statement: "Ik ben de man van Korsika, vond bij mijn eerste jeugd weldra, Een neiging tot het oorlogs-leven" (I am the man from Corsica, and already in my earliest years, I felt inclined towards waging war).¹⁴⁸ Unsurprisingly, Napoleon's place of birth is mentioned here, as the intriguing statement that from an early age he felt the need to wage war. Not much is known about Napoleon's earliest years on Corsica, although he did indeed enrol at a military school at age nine. It is not likely that Napoleon chose this path himself though, so where it might appear

¹⁴⁶ *Bonapartes Reize na de Elizeesche Velden*, Appendix 61, stanza 1.

¹⁴⁷ *Bonapartes Reize na de Elizeesche Velden*, Appendix 61, stanza 2.

¹⁴⁸ *Bonapartes Reize na de Elizeesche Velden*, Appendix 62, stanza 3.

that Napoleon had an inclination towards the military, this was simply one of the career options for a son of minor Corsican nobility. He continues with explaining his rise to power: “Zoo; dat men mij den hogen rang, Bij Frankrijks Revolutie-dwang, Den rang van Generaal deed geven; Door zucht door grootheid nu bekoord, Drong ik tot aan Turkijen voort” (So that they the high rank, under pressure of the French Revolution, gave me the rank of General; Now taken by this hint of greatness, I got through to Turkey).¹⁴⁹ It is indeed true that the French Revolution enabled Napoleon to rise through the ranks of the army, as it did for many other soldiers. Before the Revolution, it was virtually impossible for soldiers who did not belong to the nobility to become commanding officers. So there is truth in the claim that the French Revolution played an important role in Napoleon’s military career. Napoleon distinguished himself on various occasions and was eventually allowed to launch a campaign to Egypt. This is referred to by the line stating that Napoleon almost made it to Turkey. Apart from the remarks about the French Revolution and Napoleon’s supposed bloodlust, this stanza is not particularly critical of Napoleon, although this can be expected from lines written from Napoleon’s own perspective.

Napoleon goes on relating his life story and recalls how, upon his return from Egypt, he became Consul and later Emperor of France. He states that he was well-loved by the French people. Moreover, he mentions he also became King of Italy and promised peace to the whole of Europe.¹⁵⁰ It is all fairly straightforward and does not contain particularly interesting remarks that indicate how Napoleon was perceived and received. The next lines however do contain opinionated remarks: “Want ’t oorlog was mijn grootst vermaak, ’k Wilde eerst geheel de wereld dwingen” (Because war was my greatest amusement, I wanted to rule the entire world).¹⁵¹ Again, the author makes it appear that Napoleon did not fight wars out of necessity, but because he enjoyed warfare. Also, he or she makes it appear that Napoleon’s ambition was to rule the entire world. These remarks show two important reasons behind the overtly negative way in which Napoleon was perceived and received in the Netherlands: people seemed to be convinced that Napoleon was bloodthirsty tyrant bent on ruling the world. Another important reason is named in the next lines: “Den handel kwijnde overal, En elk verlangde na mijn val” (Trade dwindled everywhere, And everyone desired my

¹⁴⁹ *Bonapartes Reize na de Elizeesche Velden*, Appendix 62, stanza 3.

¹⁵⁰ *Bonapartes Reize na de Elizeesche Velden*, Appendix 62, stanza 4.

¹⁵¹ *Bonapartes Reize na de Elizeesche Velden*, Appendix 62, stanza 5.

fall).¹⁵² Similar to the poems published in 1814, the diminishing trade due to the Continental System is referred to. More important is that this is cited as one of the reasons why, according to the poem, everyone wished for Napoleon's fall.

The next stanza focuses specifically on Napoleon's involvement in the Netherlands: "Schoon ik veeltijds deelde in ongemak, Werd ik ook Koopman in Tabak, Deed Holland in mijn Rijk besluiten" (Although I often shared the burden, I also became a tobacco merchant, and annexed Holland to my empire).¹⁵³ While it is unclear to which burdens the author refers, it might refer to the hinder caused by the Continental System, which also greatly affected the French economy. The remark about the trade in tobacco refers to Napoleon effectively taking over and regulating Dutch trade. Eventually, in 1810, Napoleon annexed the former Kingdom of Holland to the French Empire. This move was not received well in the Netherlands as it further stifled what was left of the country's independence. The following lines elaborate on this: "Zond overal Douanen heen, Om dat ik Meester bleef alleen, En alle welvaart daar bleef buiten" (Sent my custom officers everywhere, To make sure I remained the Master, And all prosperity was excluded).¹⁵⁴ Indeed the custom officers sent to the Netherlands by Napoleon were disliked by the general population. They were put in place to ensure no English goods were smuggled into the country and conducted rigorous searches. To many it might indeed have appeared that these custom officers and the system they enforced were the source of their poverty, feelings this poem seems to reflect.

Succeeding this stanza, Napoleon relates the various actions that led to his downfall, blaming his pride for his losses against Russian and Prussian forces.¹⁵⁵ This likely refers to the ill-fated invasion of Russia in 1812 and the Battle of Leipzig in 1813, where the Grande Armée, barely recovered from the losses it suffered in Russia, was greatly outnumbered by the Coalition forces and again suffered huge losses. Napoleon was forced to retreat and France was invaded, eventually leading to Napoleon being sent to exile on Elba. As we know, Napoleon did not stay on Elba for long, something that the author chose to explain as follows: "'k Bleef tuk op roof en menschenbloed, Schoon ik die stap beklagen moet" (I remained keen on plunder and human blood, Though I should regret this move).¹⁵⁶ Napoleon's return is

¹⁵² *Bonapartes Reize na de Elizeesche Velden*, Appendix 62, stanza 5.

¹⁵³ *Bonapartes Reize na de Elizeesche Velden*, Appendix 62, stanza 6.

¹⁵⁴ *Bonapartes Reize na de Elizeesche Velden*, Appendix 62, stanza 6.

¹⁵⁵ *Bonapartes Reize na de Elizeesche Velden*, Appendix 63, stanza 7.

¹⁵⁶ *Bonapartes Reize na de Elizeesche Velden*, Appendix 63, stanza 7.

explained by his fascination with plunder and bloodshed, fascinations he has been accused of having in other poems analysed in this study. The poem continues with recounting Napoleon's final downfall, though without actually mentioning or referring to the Battle of Waterloo. He recounts how he, as ex-emperor, was sent to exile on Saint Helena and how people had held him for dead several times before he actually died.¹⁵⁷

The story of how Napoleon died is the main subject of the last stanza told from Napoleon's perspective: "Ik kreeg gewis geen kleine plaag, Op 't laast de kanker in de maag, Die gaf mij onderscheiden zweeren; Ik stierf als Krijgsman welgekleed, gelaarsd, gespoord, want Caron! Weet Dit was mijn allerlaatst begeeren" (I certainly was not overcome with a small plague, eventually it was stomach cancer, that gave me various ulcers; I died well-dressed as a warrior, in boots and spurs, because Caron knows that was my very last wish).¹⁵⁸ This author seems to be better informed about the circumstances of Napoleon's death than the author of *Op het Afsterven der Gewezen Keizer*, which might indicate that this poem was written and published at a later date, when details of Napoleon's death had been more widely circulated. The description is rather factual and without references to the author's opinion on Napoleon. The one curious thing is that it again refers to the idea that Napoleon died wearing his boots and spurs.

While the second-last stanza was relatively free of judgement on Napoleon, the last stanza, although it only consists of two lines, does contain a rather definitive statement. It is once again written from Charon's perspective: "Genoeg; - stap nu maar in de Boot, Wie drommel treurt er om u dood?" (Enough – now get on the boat, Which poor sod grieves your death?).¹⁵⁹ Charon has clearly had enough of Napoleon's story and urges him to get on his boat and wondering who would grieve, or even care, about his death. Whether this implies that Napoleon might not be brought to the Elysian Fields after all remains a mystery, but it is a clear indication of the author's opinion.

¹⁵⁷ *Bonapartes Reize na de Elizeesche Velden*, Appendix 63, stanza 8.

¹⁵⁸ *Bonapartes Reize na de Elizeesche Velden*, Appendix 63, stanza 9.

¹⁵⁹ *Bonapartes Reize na de Elizeesche Velden*, Appendix 63, stanza 10.

However, the author obviously did care enough about Napoleon's death to write a poem about it. Again, this poem has a more ambiguous nature than those published in 1814 and 1815. While it mentions the common grievances expressed about Napoleon and his rule, it also seems to imply that Napoleon will be granted a place in the mythological afterlife normally reserved for heroes and the virtuous, which would indicate Napoleon can be counted as belonging to either of those groups.

Chapter 4

The Dutch Situation in Context: A Comparison to France and Britain

After the analysis of ten poems on Napoleon published in 1814, 1815 and 1821, it is now time to place the outcomes of these analyses into perspective. The results of the analyses will be compared to similar research that was conducted to analyze the manner in which Napoleon was perceived and received in France and Britain. This will show that research into these matters is indeed useful and may serve as a prompt for future, more extensive research into how Napoleon was perceived and received in the Netherlands. The comparison that can be made between the representation and perception of Napoleon in Dutch poems and in France and Britain is an important aspect that demands some consideration. In particular, some interesting conclusions found in the works by Hazareesingh and Semmel on the perception and representation of Napoleon in France and Britain respectively will be used in this comparison.

Sudhir Hazareesingh reviews the formation of the Napoleonic legend in France from 1815 to the end of the Second Empire. The Bonapartist movement that emerged in this period is proved not to have merely been political; popular Bonapartism was equally, or perhaps even more widespread. This ranged from the persistent rumours of Napoleon's return from exile throughout the country, which usually sprang up around the month of March, the month in which Napoleon had first returned to France from Elba.¹⁶⁰ Next to this, a cult arose around objects that had something to do with Napoleon and the Empire. This happened on an enormous scale: "In the years between 1815 and 1830 thousands of coins and medals, hundreds of thousands of busts and small statues, and millions of images representing Napoleon were sold, distributed and exchanged across France".¹⁶¹ Even more impressive is that this all happened under the watchful eyes of the Bourbons, who tried to suppress any kind of Napoleonic 'worship'. Hazareesingh explains how Napoleon came to be seen as a symbol of freedom and better times to those disappointed by the rule of the Bourbons.

¹⁶⁰ Hazareesingh, S. *The Legend of Napoleon*, 44-47.

¹⁶¹ Hazareesingh, 74.

Not surprisingly, this image was to a large extent constructed by veterans of the Grande Armée, many of whom remained supporters of Napoleon, and indeed later his nephew Louis-Napoleon. This part of the Napoleonic legend was also largely constructed by Napoleon himself, who spent part of his time on Saint-Helena writing his memoirs. In these, he contradicted many of the arguments raised against him, such as his supposed despotism and his continuous war efforts.¹⁶²

The French cult of worship that came into being after Napoleon's downfall could hardly have been different from the situation in the Netherlands as seen in the poems analysed. While there undoubtedly must have been some Dutch citizens still in favour of Napoleon, these were very unsuccessful in making their views heard. No pamphlets written in support of Napoleon after 1813 can be found. Whether this had to do with censorship on the part of the newly installed monarchy is not sure, although one could assume that if Napoleon's supporters were able to express their views under the Bourbon regime, possible Dutch supporters should have been able to do the same under the rule of the Prince of Orange. One important aspect enabling Napoleonic worship in France missing from Dutch society was the large number of Grande Armée veterans. While many Dutchmen fought in the Grande Armée, many of these later fought in the Dutch army against Napoleon. Another important reason might be that these former veterans simply felt less attached to Napoleon and the French Empire because they themselves were no longer part of this Empire or France. Even if Napoleon returned, this would not immediately affect them. Where Napoleon became a symbol of freedom and better times in France, he remained a symbol of the exact opposite in the Netherlands.

As the poems have shown, Napoleon was most often blamed for robbing the Dutch of their freedom and trade. Instead of hailing him as the opposite of monarchical oppression, the Dutch seemed to welcome the new monarchy as liberators from Napoleon's tyranny. Another obvious, yet important reason for the difference between the reception of Napoleon in France and the Netherlands is that in France, Napoleon was merely the next leader in the long range of changing leaders and governments France fell under after the Revolution. And for almost fifteen years he provided France with a more or less stable government. It is therefore not strange that many French citizens would have felt that everything had indeed been better

¹⁶² Hazareesingh, 170-173.

under Napoleon's rule. In the Netherlands however, Napoleon was mostly regarded as a foreign invader oppressing the Dutch. While the reign of his brother Louis-Napoleon as King of Holland was quite well-received, the annexation of the Netherlands to the French Empire in 1810 was not. It is most likely this period of 1810 until 1813 that the pamphlets denouncing Napoleon and his rule referred to.

A different sentiment existed in Britain, as explained by Stuart Semmel in his work "Napoleon and the British". In this work, Semmel explains how Napoleon was represented in the British press from his first successes in the Italian Campaign of 1796-1797 to the mid-nineteenth century. Not surprisingly, most of these representations, be it in the form of pamphlets, newspaper articles or political cartoons, were far from positive. In his introduction, Semmel gives a brief overview of phrases used to describe Napoleon, most of them including "the Corsican", "the Impostor" or "the Usurper".¹⁶³ These phrases were probably well-known across Britain as they were repeated again and again. However, his book shows that not all British representations of Napoleon were negative. Even more interesting is the fact that some representations of Napoleon led to people questioning British politics itself. For instance, Semmel expands on the persisting debates about whether Napoleon's reign as emperor, and even as Consulate, was legitimate or not, most often coming to the conclusion that he was an illegitimate ruler, since his rule was not based on dynastic heritage. These debates led people to question whether the British monarch himself could actually be seen as the legitimate ruler.¹⁶⁴

A striking point made by Semmel is the fact that Napoleon was perceived far more positively after his return from Elba and the subsequent Hundred Days of renewed Napoleonic rule, ending in Waterloo. This was partially due to Napoleon's own careful reconstruction of his image. He sought to present himself as a more liberal ruler and his general acceptance by the French people seemed to confirm the idea that he was truly chosen to rule by the French. This was attributed by one British pamphleteer to "wholly changed" character of the French, which disabled the restored Bourbons from "speak[ing] the language or wishes of the people".¹⁶⁵ Even more interesting are the descriptions of thousands of Britons who came to catch a glimpse of Napoleon when he was held prisoner on a ship near the

¹⁶³ Semmel, 1.

¹⁶⁴ Semmel, 116-118.

¹⁶⁵ Semmel, 164-166.

British coast. While some expressed their hatred for their former enemy, many instead expressed feeling sympathetic and pitying Napoleon and his fate.¹⁶⁶ This suggests that the anti-Napoleonic propaganda the public had been presented with the past 15 years was somehow less impressive than an actual confrontation with the man himself.

This trend continued during the time of Napoleon's exile in Saint Helena and even after his death on the island in 1821. Pamphlets protesting Napoleon's supposed ill-treatment on Saint Helena by his British captors circulated in Britain and some even argued for his release, or at least transportation to a healthier environment.¹⁶⁷ After his death, many Britons sought to own relics of the Emperor. Napoleon came to be seen as a figure representing a rather romantic and poetic fall from greatness and many images now showed him contemplating his fate on the rocks of Saint Helena.¹⁶⁸ This humanised, and at the same time romanticized, vision of Napoleon to some extent became more lasting than the idea of Napoleon as a tyrant and a monster.

Again the Dutch situation is strikingly different from that in Britain. The Dutch representations of Napoleon in poems seem to resemble the way Napoleon was represented in the British press before his exile to Elba. Where the British became more appreciative of Napoleon and his achievements over time, the Dutch were more relentless in their negative depictions of Napoleon. For instance, the British used the example of Napoleon's supposed illegitimacy to question the legitimacy of their own monarch. The Dutch could have done a similar thing after the return of the Prince of Orange in late 1813 and some might indeed have done so. Yet most poems instead use Napoleon's contested status as an argument for the Prince of Orange's legitimacy. Moreover, the British seemed to change their attitude when the French welcomed Napoleon back after his exile on Elba and took this as a sign that Napoleon was indeed the ruler the French desired and deserved. In the Dutch poems however this move was interpreted more as an act of pride and vanity on Napoleon's part. Once again he overthrew the 'legitimate' royal rulers, something the newly crowned Dutch king probably greatly feared.

¹⁶⁶ Semmel, 170-172.

¹⁶⁷ Semmel, 213-218.

¹⁶⁸ Semmel, 233.

Of course one main difference existed between Britain and the Netherlands in the early nineteenth century; while Britain had been involved in fighting Napoleon, it was never subjected to his rule and the chance of Napoleon successfully invading Britain was marginal. The Dutch on the other hand did fall under Napoleon's rule and suffered the consequences. It is not surprising that this altered their view on Napoleon and explains why, even after his exile and death, pamphlets still portrayed him in a mostly negative manner. The British eventually warmed to Napoleon, while the Dutch seemed to have more difficulty in overcoming their grudges against him. As soon as Napoleon no longer posed a direct threat, the British seemed willing to forgive his wrongdoings and at times even pity him and question the manner in which Napoleon had been treated by the British. The Dutch poems show no such sentiments; Napoleon was still largely despised even after his death. Yet, the fact that only two Dutch pamphlets were published about Napoleon's death might indicate that the Dutch simply had other matters on their minds in 1821. Napoleon no longer posed a threat, so he no longer warranted their attention. It is sure that the romanticized depiction of Napoleon which became influential in Britain never truly caught on in the Netherlands.

In short, the manner in which Napoleon was perceived and represented in the Netherlands differs greatly from how this happened in France and Britain. The studies by Semmel and Hazareesingh are obviously far more extensive than the study of ten poems presented here. Yet the general idea that arises from these poems is that Napoleon was mostly depicted as a bloodthirsty tyrant who only brought poverty and misery to the Netherlands. In France and Britain, the depiction of Napoleon was more nuanced, while at times becoming slightly sentimental and perhaps slightly biased in Napoleon's favour. A multitude of reasons can be given for the discrepancy between the British and French representation and perception of Napoleon and that in the Netherlands, yet this is such an extensive topic it could merit an entirely new study.

Conclusion

This study set out to find out how Napoleon was perceived and represented in Dutch poems published in 1814, 1815 and 1821, years of particular significance in Napoleonic history. By analyzing ten poems published in the form of pamphlets in these years, the Dutch public opinion on Napoleon becomes clearer. Of course, this study of ten pamphlets is far from exhaustive, although the ten selected pamphlets do provide a good insight into the Dutch popular perception of Napoleon and his actions in 1814, 1815 and 1821. Because the chosen texts were either plays, poems or songs, a more liberal use of symbolic language was expected. Indeed, all poems used forms of imagery, allusions and symbolic references to make a point about Napoleon and his policies, especially in connection to the Dutch. What is interesting though is that there appears to be no standard way of describing Napoleon. Some poems do indeed use similar imagery, such as likening him to the Devil or to beasts, yet there is no uniform manner of description or particular nickname given to Napoleon. Variations of “dwingeland” were particularly popular and appear in almost every poem, although no poem uses only this word to describe Napoleon. The repetition of this word might have made sure that the readers were instilled with the idea that Napoleon was a tyrant and should not be seen in any other light.

Religious imagery also plays an important role in the manner in which Napoleon is depicted. Napoleon’s rule in the Netherlands brought more religious freedom for the Dutch Roman-Catholic population. The poems published in 1821 specifically rely heavily on religious imagery, which is perhaps unsurprising, as they deal with the theme of death. It is also in one of these poems that the author calls upon the readers’ Christianity to not judge Napoleon as God is the only one who can pass the final judgment. The other poems using religious imagery mostly do this to liken Napoleon to the Devil or to show how he will be punished. Napoleon is sometimes described as anti-religious, which again can be explained by his supposed bias towards Catholicism. However, besides ensuring religious freedom for the Roman-Catholic population, Napoleon also ensured Protestants living in predominantly Catholic areas had their own place of worship. He was thus less biased towards one particular religion and more likely in favour of promoting religious freedom in general. However, the Dutch Protestant population apparently felt he posed a great threat to their beliefs as witnessed by the manner Napoleon was described in these ten poems.

Another frequent occurrence in the poems is somehow likening Napoleon to animals or calling him bestial in some form. This has the effect of dehumanizing Napoleon, which makes it easier to wish terrible things upon him. Another possible reason is that Napoleon's actions were perceived as inhuman and the supposed cruelty of his actions and policies could not be attributed to a human being. However, it is more likely that by portraying Napoleon as a non-human monster, the writers tried to make sure people would not sympathise with Napoleon and his fate in any way. By not attributing any human qualities to Napoleon, it would be more difficult for people to feel sorry for him. It also ties in to the frequent claims about Napoleon's supposed bloodthirstiness, a particularly 'animal' attribute.

There are several reasons for the manner in which Napoleon was perceived and represented. Almost every poem makes some reference Napoleon's bloodthirsty nature and his constant craving for glory and new conquests. Whether or not this characterization is based on facts, it proved to be particularly effective and durable. Of course by stating Napoleon enjoyed killing and was vain, he is immediately attributed with two sins, thus making him a sinful character. The poems cite several reasons for this characterization: the very unpopular Continental System, which had a devastating effect on trade in the Netherlands, the introduction of conscription and the general sense that Napoleon had robbed the Netherlands of its freedom. These actions are mentioned in almost all poems analysed and especially the Continental System and conscription were the two most unpopular measures taken by Napoleon in the Netherlands according to the poems. The poems express their repulsion at the Dutch youth being drafted into the Grande Armée to fight abroad in Napoleon's wars. There is a clear connection with the accusations of Napoleon's love for war and bloodshed, which according to the authors caused the death of many Dutchmen. Moreover, the decrease in trade brought about by the Continental System was seen as a particularly devastating blow to Dutch independence, as trade, especially maritime trade, had traditionally been an important factor in this independence. On top of this, the decrease in maritime trade brought about widespread poverty, for which Napoleon received most of the blame.

The ten poems analysed thus give a good insight into the manner in which Napoleon was perceived and represented in the Netherlands in 1814, 1815 and 1821, so after his downfall. The main reasons for the negative image created around Napoleon can be distilled from these poems, together with the most important characterisations used at the time. The comparison with the manner in which Napoleon was perceived and represented in Britain and

France shows that there were some important differences. The reception and representation in the Netherlands was far less nuanced and definitely more negative. In fact, no pamphlets written in support of Napoleon after 1813 are found in the database. The authors of the Dutch poems bear a particular grudge towards Napoleon which is not easily done away with. Of course, pamphlets were not the only means of expressing one's opinion in the early nineteenth century, though it has been established that this was a particularly important medium at the time. Undoubtedly, some Dutchmen still supported Napoleon after his downfall, although public opinion seems to have largely been against Napoleon.

This study serves as a first step into the research of the representation and reception of Napoleon in the Netherlands. As the study of Napoleon in the Netherlands in any form is still very much underdeveloped, this thesis will hopefully contribute to a larger interest in studying Napoleon and his relation to the Netherlands. With the upcoming bicentennial of the return of the Prince of Orange to the Netherlands in 2013 and the bicentennial of the Battle of Waterloo in 1815, interest in Napoleonic history might increase. Furthermore, this study has only covered the representation and reception of Napoleon in ten Dutch poems published in 1814, 1815 and 1821. This is far from exhaustive and could easily be expanded into a broader study. It would be interesting to study the reception and perception of Napoleon in the Netherlands using a broader range of sources and covering a larger period of time. Such a study will provide an even better insight into the development of public opinion regarding Napoleon in the Netherlands. Ideally, a work similar to Semmel's and Hazareesingh's will someday be published about Napoleon in the Netherlands as this study has shown that this topic does warrant further research.

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Appendix