

TYPICALLY DUTCH ... RUTH BENEDICT ON THE NATIONAL CHARACTER OF NETHERLANDERS¹

ROB VAN GINKEL

Does something like a national character exist? ... On the one hand, common sense opposes such a generalization, on the other, however, in practice everyone acts as if something like it does exist. Thus, a cautioned sociologist must keep his options open.

Rudy Kousbroek, *Nederland: een bewoond gordijn*, 1987, pp. 26–27.

Introduction

Not so long ago, the social anthropologist Trouwborst complained that ‘the *majority* of the Dutch population has only received a very limited amount of attention from anthropologists’ (1988: 63, italics in original). In writing this, he inferred that anthropologists in the Netherlands have conducted considerable research among ethnic minorities, but very little among the indigenous population. Trouwborst (ibid.: 64) went on to note that for ‘good interesting comparative remarks on Dutch culture’ one should consult the work of essayists like Kousbroek (1987) and Rentes de Carvalho (1972).² Trouwborst’s polemic remarks are strongly exaggerated. For about two decades, anthropologists have been conducting research and publishing about various groups and segments of Dutch society. Moreover, from the 1920s to the 1950s, Dutch sociology was dominated by the Amsterdam sociographic school, which had much in common with ethnography. Sociographers did fieldwork – including participant observation – and usually devoted attention to the mentality of the people they studied. Nonetheless, it cannot be denied that there is no strong tradition of anthropology at home in the Netherlands. Even recent ethnographies lack a clear viewpoint on what makes Dutch culture differ from other cultures. Thus, an American reviewer of *Dutch Dilemmas* (Boissevain and Verrips 1989) – published among other reasons to put the Netherlands on the international anthropological map – concluded that ‘the essays do not convey enough sense of the distinctiveness of Dutch culture – national or regional – both as product and agent in the sociogenetic processes [the authors] so ably uncover’ (Taylor 1990: 144).³ It

is my impression that the idiosyncracies of Dutch culture remain equally underexposed in the latest anthropological writings.

Yet, in the 1930s and 1940s there was a veritable boom in scholarly work focusing on the Dutch national character.⁴ These books and articles can be regarded as efforts to gain insight into the specificity of Dutch culture, or at least an aspect of it. The authors tried to answer the question ‘what is “typically Dutch”’. In other words, how do the worldview and behaviour of Netherlanders differ from those of other nations and why? It is striking that anthropologists have not published on this topic. It has predominantly been folklorists, sociologists and historians who have addressed this question. Contemporary Dutch anthropologists have hardly ever studied their own society. Instead, they have almost exclusively focused on colonial ethnography. Their foreign colleagues have been equally uninterested in Dutch society and culture.

Notwithstanding this lack of interest, there is one famous American anthropologist who has devoted attention to the Netherlands. She has also been important in the development of studies on national character: Ruth Fulton Benedict. Her work on the Dutch has remained unpublished. Until recently, anthropologists wrote so little on Dutch society and culture, that it is worth examining Benedict’s material. This article brings to the fore her observations about Dutch national character and compares her remarks with those of Dutch contemporaries who have dealt with the same subject, demonstrating the similarities and differences in their viewpoints. I shall conclude with a critical assessment of the critique on national character studies.

Benedict on Netherlanders

In a recent essay, I indicated how I discovered Benedict’s ethnographic texts on Netherlanders, why and for whom she wrote them, how she went about her research and the sources she used. The article also included one of Benedict’s memoranda (cf. Van Ginkel 1990). I have not alluded to Benedict’s other manuscripts. Nor have I said anything about the value of her work on Dutch society. These matters constitute the core of the present article. Before going into them, I shall summarize why Benedict studied Dutch society and culture at all.

Benedict was one of the founders of the American Culture and Personality School, where the study of national characters was a central focus (Mead 1953: 642). During the Second World War, several anthropologists of this school – including Margaret Mead, Gregory Bateson and Ruth Benedict – were members of organizations engaged in ‘morale building’ and intelligence activities. This heralded the start of ‘the study of cultures at a distance.’ In

1943, Benedict joined the Office of War Information (OWI), an organization employing several social scientists.⁵ She became the head of OWI's Bureau of Overseas Intelligence, Basic Analysis Unit. Benedict's task was to study European and Asian societies and cultures and then report her findings to her superiors.

Of course it was wartime and fieldwork *in situ* was impossible. This was why Benedict used a myriad of informants and archival sources to form a notion of the societies and cultures in question. She even made a virtue of necessity: 'The richness of the data is an asset, and, when lacunae were discovered, it was usually possible to obtain necessary facts from informants' (Benedict 1974: 161–162). Benedict described her method as follows: 'I familiarize myself first with the literature and statistical studies available on these countries' (cited in Modell 1984: 269). Next, she collected official government material, interviewed 'first and second generation immigrants and refugees now in America' and consulted 'current cables, press news intercepts and intelligence from these countries' (ibid.). Finally, 'a basic manuscript is prepared describing the institutions and aspects of adult life in the nation. It analyzes the patterns of behaviour that are prevalent, the way in which these patterns are rewarded and sanctioned, attitudes toward authority, toward violence, toward destiny and the like' (ibid.).

Her analyses aimed to shed light on 'the loyalties, habits, fears, hopes, likes and dislikes of the target peoples'.⁶ The ultimate goal was to conduct psychological warfare, distribute propaganda and facilitate contact between the American army and the civilian population of countries where the Allies were about to carry out military operations against German or Japanese troops.

One of the European nations Benedict reported on was the Netherlands. On January 10th, 1944 she received 'assignment no. 668,' requesting her to write a memorandum on the Dutch in view of the planned American invasion of this country.⁷ OWI wanted to avoid friction between American soldiers and Dutch civilians and felt the troops should have some notion of what kind of people the Dutch were.

For her study on Netherlanders, Benedict used the method described above. She and several assistants interviewed 25 persons and she read letters and underground newspapers intercepted by intelligence agencies. She had a number of proverbs and folk songs translated, and had informants write reports for her. She used folkloristic writings including a book by D.J. van der Ven and novels by such authors as Louis Couperus, Multatuli and Israël Querido (cf. Van Ginkel 1990: 10–11).

Based upon this material, Benedict produced four ethnographic texts on the Dutch: a) *A Note on Dutch Behaviour*, b) *The Social Framework*, c) *Suggestions for Adaptation to Holland*, and the unfinished manuscript d)

Pre-War Holland.⁸ An army officer was to use these reports to compile a pamphlet, including a list of 'Dos and Don'ts' for the American troops. One of the things Benedict's manuscripts described was the Dutch national character.⁹ In her view, what was 'typically Dutch'?

She portrayed 'the typical Netherlander' as a moralizing, individualistic, liberty- and peace-loving, tolerant, self-assured, proud, ironic, puritan, tidy, prudent, thrifty, conservative, domestic, serious and somewhat melancholy person, who was very conscious of class and social distinctions. I shall go into the details of Benedict's exposé of these character traits and liberally quote her work.

Moralistic, individualistic, liberty- and peace-loving and tolerant

To start with, Benedict observed that Netherlanders were convinced of being in the right: 'No country in Europe is so jealous of its moral rightness as Holland' (C: 2).¹⁰ The Dutch thought they had Truth on their side and in this sense, according to Benedict, they resembled Americans. They were highly apt to listen to themselves: 'the typical Hollander is so sure of himself that he does not submit to dictation. He stands up for his rights' (A: 2). Thus, Netherlanders disliked authoritarianism. Benedict presented two examples to illustrate this point. One was the attitude of the Dutch to the German occupiers: a German officer complained that the Dutch behaved as if *they* had won the war. The other example was a boy buying a stamp. The man at the counter asked him: 'what must you?', whereupon the boy answered 'I must nothing. But you must give me a stamp of two cents' (A: 2). This anti-authoritarian and critical attitude was also evident in the lack of respect Netherlanders generally exhibited for officialdom and in the many schisms in churches, political parties, unions, co-operatives and so forth (A: 2; C: 2). Nonetheless, the Dutch were not rebellious against authority in itself, so long as the rules pertained to everyone. They accepted 'innumerable dictations from above provided that they apply equally to all citizens' (A: 2).

Closely related to the conviction of their rightness and ability, there was the individualism of Netherlanders, 'which includes their pride in disrespect of authority, their fondness for running things down, their firm stand upon their "rights", and also their particularism' (A: 3). This particularism was also manifest in the omnipresent political, religious and social schisms (C: 2). According to Benedict, the individualistic attitude, the particularism and the moralism of Netherlanders were inextricably intertwined.¹¹ She expected these character traits to give rise to problems in the relations between the American troops and the Dutch population:

This special Dutch ‘individualism’ makes them an especially difficult audience for any propaganda coming to them from the outside. It would be well to try only for clearly identified objectives and not to risk rousing their countersuggestibility when the objectives do not have reality enough to warrant it. Especially we need not try to make them approve of the United States (C: 2).

Netherlanders believed in civil rights and in turn this love of freedom was the basis of their tolerance: ‘In their speech they may be intolerant and condemnatory, but they grant their opponents’ right to have his say. They have consequently been for centuries a haven for persecuted minorities’ (A: 2). Benedict observed that the large Jewish community in pre-war Holland was not discriminated.¹²

Self-assured, proud and ironic

Netherlanders were self-assured (to put it bluntly, pig-headed and obstinate). This expressed itself – especially among the Calvinist majority of the population – ‘in [an] extreme conviction of having Right on its side’ (A: 2). Thus, self-assuredness and a moralistic mind were two sides to the same coin. The Dutch were proud and this pride sometimes led to feelings of superiority. These feelings were rooted in seventeenth-century history (the War of Liberation against the Spaniards) and in the Dutch colonial empire (A: 7): ‘The Dutch generally feel a superiority to other small nations of Europe because Holland owns such an extensive overseas region’ (A: 7). Netherlanders were also proud of their achievements in the field of water management and control: ‘The Dutch boast is that in other countries God made the land but in Holland the Dutch made it for themselves’ (A: 8). At the same time, however, Netherlanders had a sense of national irony: ‘Among themselves they run down even their beloved country and its ways; of course, therefore, they run down aliens and their ways. Their traditional behaviour includes no flattery and little “praising up”’ (A: 3). The Dutch disliked putting themselves in the limelight and disapproved of ‘parading and demonstrating’ (A: 3).

Benedict considered Dutch pride a touchy issue, which American soldiers should take into consideration. As points 2 and 3 on the list of ‘Don’ts’ to be included in the pamphlet, she mentioned:

2. Don’t assume that the Dutch will like to have our troops responsible for liberating Holland; they will certainly complain that we are at fault for not giving the Dutch army permission to do it itself. They do not like to look to outsiders for help. The title of one of their Queen Wilhelmina

Fund pamphlets is 'Keep your pity for the weak' – a sentence of Princess Juliana's when she arrived in Canada, which goes on to say: 'for our terrible fate has made us stronger than ever before.'

3. Don't let anything creep in that will imply that Holland is financially poor. The Dutch is possible [sic] the richest Government-in-Exile and claims its right to pay for the feeding and reconstruction of Holland (A: 8).

Benedict was very sensitive towards potential friction between Americans and Netherlanders. That is why she proposed to OWI, which was to pass on the message to the responsible officers, that it keep a keen eye on delicate matters. Thus, her OWI work was first and foremost an example of applied anthropology.¹³

Modest and tidy

Benedict assumed the Dutch would be apt to observe many puritan taboos, even surpassing Americans in this respect. In the neighbouring countries, these taboos were not as strict. Sex and family scandals were extremely rare in the Netherlands, according to Benedict. The Dutch were so modest that swimming, which requires 'undressing' in public, was prohibited in some places.

In view of this attribute, Benedict expected problems to arise in the relations between American soldiers and Dutch girls:

The American soldier on leave wants to 'go places,' to 'do the town'. Much camp conversation on his return will center around the girls and the drinks he has had, and to fail in either of these objectives will be to many of them a private frustration, and, if acknowledged, a public jest. The proportion of the American army to which this applies should not be exaggerated, but there are enough of them to make trouble. For Dutch girls are relatively little accustomed to take lovers; there are of course domestic servants and poor girls who will acquiesce, but the American soldier will make many mistakes in spotting a possible partner. This will be resented with a moral and physical violence which will often involve the girl's available male relatives. Holland is, even to the Dutch male who may have his own adventures abroad, a land where such things 'are not done' (A: 4).

History has taught us that in practice these things *were* done. However, Benedict was referring to public norms, not private behaviour.

Many a foreign traveller has observed that the Dutch are tidy. Benedict

also mentioned this virtue, but noted that cleanliness was restricted to the home and the stable and did not necessarily pertain to the body.¹⁴ Benedict even drew a link between Dutch tidiness and social policy: 'The clean comfortable houses of Holland are proverbial. ... It is highly characteristic therefore that better urban housing has been the most vigorously pressed and successful betterment program of this century' (D: 10).

Prudent, thrifty and conservative

Netherlanders are not foolhardy. Rather, they are characterized by wariness and circumspection: 'The Dutch are proverbially prudent. Their proverb is: If it's only a penny a year lay it by' (C: 3).¹⁵ This prudence, then, apparently includes thrift. Benedict wrote:

A favorite national character is Jantje Secuur (Johnny Secure) who is not only thrifty and cautious, but having decided that a famine – or a war – can't possibly happen, takes all precautions against it and only then is completely sure it won't occur (A: 2).

Interesting in this connection is Benedict's prediction that:

Dutch prudence will have been outraged by destruction and hoardings and patrimonies in this war, and the Dutch will certainly demand that detailed consideration be given to their claims for restitution; even though the amount may be trifling, claims based upon it will be persistently pressed (A: 2).

And some Netherlanders did indeed feel they could claim German territory and considerable reparations after the war was over. However, this opinion was certainly not widespread, even though nowadays there are still Dutch people who ask unsuspecting German tourists to give them back their bicycle, allegedly stolen as war booty. In another text, Benedict addressed this matter and the anticipated Dutch attitude towards American assistance:

The loss of their savings and possessions during German occupation will be traumatic, and their knowledge that America has come out of the war richer and more powerful does not make them receptive to material that involves the prosperity of the United States. Fortunately the Government-in-Exile will handle rehabilitation and our output need not take up the theme of America's generosity (C: 3).¹⁶

Dutch conservatism fits in nicely with these character traits: 'The Dutch have been conservative primarily because they had something they valued to conserve. Their liberties were not threatened either by the Crown, the nobility or the Church' (C: 9). In this connection, Benedict mentioned the proverb *niet over één nacht ijs gaan* (don't go over the first night's ice).¹⁷

Home and family-oriented

Domesticity was a salient feature of Dutch social life: 'Holland is pre-eminently a country of dependable and hospitable *homes*' (A: 4, italics in original). Benedict drew attention to another proverb which she considered typical: *zoals het klokje thuis tikt, tikt het nergens* (the clock ticks in your own home like nowhere else).¹⁸ She comprehensively discussed this domesticity and the central place of family life:

In Holland that male typically regards himself as most fortunate who is most surrounded by the trappings and comforts of domesticity. Their women are devoted homemakers and are approved for their domestic virtues rather than for their erotic appeal. They are careful, bountiful and responsible mothers, and keep a watchful and inspecting eye over their children (A: 3).

Benedict must have been thinking of this aspect of the Dutch national character when she proposed that the American soldiers who were to liberate the Netherlands be portrayed as temporarily motherless young men, who were terribly homesick:

The Dutch think that a home is every man's due. They have no desire to escape from it. Both men and women are calmly parental. During a period of fighting for Holland, they will undoubtedly take billeted soldiers into their homes with an intimacy which could not be expected of the French. The feeling that these are homesick boys will be relatively congenial to the Dutch even under conditions of considerable strain such as the two-day leave. (...) Playing up this theme would also assure them that the American boys would like to 'drop in'. The Dutch home – i.e. the family living room – is practically the only one in Europe which has always stood uncurtained to the street; it does not face inward to a courtyard, and no wall encloses the house. It is not 'strictly private' like a French home. Even under war-time conditions the tradition of an 'open' house will remain and it could be fostered (A: 4–5).

Serious and melancholy

Netherlanders were serious and somewhat melancholy. Adults 'do not value the lighter things of life in the way in which e.g. Belgians do' (A: 3). They were given to practical jokes but not to satire: 'Some European nations seem to lack the concept and the practice, but Hollanders like to play practical jokes' (A: 5). According to Benedict, this Dutch seriousness was rooted in their upbringing: education was an obligation, not a pleasure. Schooling was taken very seriously, and turned the 'unformed' child into a 'formed' person. In her suggestions to OWI, Benedict took into account the seriousness of this attitude. She advised against striking too light a tone in the pamphlet to be written: 'Dutch newspapers, etc. are very staid, and by and large humor in this pamphlet will be regarded as out of place' (A: 8). Benedict thought the only form of 'lightweight' behaviour on the part of Dutch men concerned flower-growing and painting.

Conscious of class and social distinctions

The Dutch were very conscious of class and status distinctions, as was illustrated by the strong stratification of social classes and the lack of class mobility, the maintenance of social distance and class distinctions. Benedict called Netherlanders 'extremely class conscious' and continued to say that '[g]ood Dutch observers who have lived for years in England contrast the fraternizing of the classes in England with the social distance maintained between minutely subdivided strata in Holland' (B: 10). I assume that as to this topic, Benedict's informants must have deluded her with a rather twisted picture of Dutch society.

As to social distance, Benedict (again) mentioned the schismatic tendencies in unions, cooperatives, political parties and churches. They:

were only the reflection in national organizations of tendencies which ran deep in Dutch culture. People divided along the same various lines in their choice of cafés, stores, friends and associates. Within any one of these groups, small nuances of appearance or accent allow most Hollanders to 'place' a Dutch stranger at first meeting. As several informants said, 'In Holland you can always *tell*' [...] In Holland, 'A Calvinist doesn't speak to a Catholic nor a Catholic to a Protestant'; 'the classes must stay separate; it's a sin to mix them' [...] This observance of social distance in Holland is omnipresent and well attested, but the distinctions that are observed are impossible to describe accurately; one must have grown up in Holland to steer one's way accurately (B: 14-15).

She further stated that even labourers kept a strong eye on who was allowed to associate with whom: the head gardener's children were allowed to play with the head coachman's, but not with the under-gardener's children (B: 15).¹⁹ Benedict also discovered that social distance could be maintained by terms of address, for instance in using the word *mevrouw* (Madam) or *juffrouw* (Miss). She stated:

The Dutch, in trying to describe who is *mevrouw* and who is *juffrouw*, usually fall back on mentioning the street they live on; they say that often people sacrifice everything else in order to live on a respectable street whose house-mistresses are almost automatically called *mevrouw*. ... The distinction rests on a power to exclude, not on any institutional class arrangement (B: 16).

The anthropologist also discovered indications of stratification and distinction in Dutch proverbs:

Many Dutch proverbs, variants of which are used in other countries to refer to individual peculiarities, are used in Holland with special reference to social strata: 'The place of the eagle is not next to the dove' means that people of different classes do not belong together, though Hollanders recognize that it can be used to mean that people of different character belong apart. 'A bird sings how its mouth is' also popularly means that a man acts in the fashion of the group he was born to, and 'An apple doesn't fall far from the tree,' that a man, in spite of his pretenses, has betrayed his origin (B: 16).²⁰

Benedict pointed to the relation between social stratification and schismatic tendencies in Dutch society:

Minute social stratification in Holland, with the strong affect that accompanies it, makes appropriate their multiplicity of political parties, trade unions, cooperatives, cafés, cliques and the like. It also gives a Dutch coloration to religious affiliation. The Dutch often speak of Catholics as 'the poor,' of Calvinists as 'kleinburgerlyk' and of Dutch Reformed as 'good family' – not that they all do belong to these classes, but that class associations come easily to their lips (B: 17).

The social distance between the various social strata and religious 'pillars' (though Benedict did not use this word) was perpetuated by the educational system, in which the "children of the covenant" – the non-conforming

Calvinists – had to have separate schools from the Dutch Reformed or from the godless’ (B: 17).

Taking these aspects of the Dutch national character into account, one might expect Netherlands to be strongly attached to status, pride themselves in it and derive their authority from it. However, this was not the case: ‘In all Dutch interpersonal relations authority which is based on personal status is easily and constantly resented’ (A: 2).

On social mobility, Benedict wrote that it did of course exist in the Netherlands, but that the Dutch, unlike Americans, tried to conceal it. People who had climbed the social ladder were not apt to reveal their background to members of the class they had since come to belong to (B: 16). She illustrated this with an example: a businessman had not told his friend, a general practitioner, that his father was a butcher: ‘The doctor’s family found out by the grapevine that his father was a butcher and they were grateful to their friend for his delicacy’ (B: 17).

In the next section, I shall compare the character traits Benedict felt were typical of Netherlands with the ones Dutch folklorists, sociologists and historians who wrote about this topic at more or less the same time came up with.²¹

Other viewpoints

It is interesting to make this comparison, since Benedict used different sources than her Dutch colleagues. From the contents of her files, it appears that she was unfamiliar with what such authors as Steinmetz (1930), Kruijt (1934, 1939) and Huizinga (1946[1934]) had said about the subject.²² Thus, the question arises as to whether she arrived at similar or different viewpoints.

Several authors offered more or less extended lists of character traits they felt were typical of Netherlands. It would be impossible to present all of them in article.²³ Table 1 summarizes twenty of the traits that were mentioned most frequently. The entries are based on the writings of Steinmetz (1930), Huizinga (1946[1934]), Kruijt (1934), Van Schelven (1938), Romein (1946a[1940]), Waterink (1943) and Meertens (1950). In a separate column, I indicate which of the character traits were also cited by Ruth Benedict.

This table needs some clarification. I have included several concepts the authors sometimes used other words for. Thus, the notion of ‘reserve and sobriety’ is a condensation of a string of terms including a lack of emotion, passion and fantasy, calmness, moderation, stiffness, dourness, reticence, modesty, self-containment, composure, coldness, dullness, conservatism, a

Table 1 Some Dutch national character traits according to various authors (1930–1950)

	STE	HUI	KRU	SCH	ROM	WAT	MEE	BEN
Spirit of liberty	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Individualism & particularism	X		X		X	X	X	X
Critical attitude	X	X	X			X		X
Aversion to self- glorification	X	X	X					X
Penchant for irony	X		X			X		X
Reserve & sobriety	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Prudence	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Frugality	X	X	X	X				X
Seriousness	X						X	X
Peacefulness	X	X	X	X		X	X	
Tolerance			X		X		X	X
Faithfulness	X			X			X	
Perseverance	X		X			X		
Diligence	X		X					
Honesty	X	X	X	X		X		
Odium theologicum	X		X	X	X			
Domesticity	X		X					X
Malice	X	X	X	X				X
Bourgeois mentality		X		X			X	
Cleanliness		X		X	X		X	X

STE = Steinmetz; KRU = Kruijt; ROM = Romein; MEE = Meertens; HUI = Huizinga; SCH = Van Schelven; WAT = Waterink; BEN = Benedict

penchant for routine and limited interest in the new, the unknown and the romantic. It appears, then, that it is difficult to compose a clearcut cross-section of the concepts used in the literature. Such concepts can be interpreted in many ways. Besides, some indications of character traits seem to overlap. For example, Huizinga was very imprecise as to the concept of 'bourgeoisness' (*burgerlijkheid*). He wrote: 'Our national culture is bourgeois in every sense of the word' (Huizinga 1946: 20). This is not insignificant, since Huizinga held the view that all the other character traits of the Dutch were derived from *burgerlijkheid*.²⁴ Perhaps he would include domesticity, perseverance, diligence and prudence. This might explain why he did not deal with them separately.²⁵ The fact that some authors failed to mention certain traits does not necessarily mean that they considered them atypical of the Dutch national character. It may instead reflect linguistic flexibility and the problem of how to express often ambivalent and contradictory behavioural dispositions in words.

Most of the attitudes Benedict mentioned were also referred to by Dutch authors. Even with limited information at her disposal, the American anthropologist was apparently able to reconstruct the national character of Netherlanders in a way that was more or less congruent with what her

colleagues considered 'typically Dutch.' For all in all, there are strong resemblances between the character traits Benedict specified and the ones Dutch sociologists, historians and folklorists cited. Yet, there are also differences. I shall now go into the most striking of these discrepancies.

Benedict went into considerable detail on the Dutch class consciousness and penchant to maintain social distinctions. These are character traits neither of the Dutch authors exposed to any extent. On the contrary, Huizinga felt the contrasts and oppositions between various social groupings in Dutch society were far less enunciated than in most European countries. Meertens (1950: 35-36) claimed the oppositions between classes and ranks in the Netherlands were underemphasized, other than elsewhere in Europe. However, he pointed out that there were indeed social and economic differences between employers and employees in the cities as well as in the countryside. They were of such a nature that one could speak of two different classes. But:

c'est là le phénomène qui se retrouve partout. Il est cependant curieux de constater qu'elles ne sont pas basées sur une idéologie sociale ... Ce n'est plus l'intérêt de la communauté, mais l'intérêt d'une certaine communauté de parti qui l'emporte. En effet, la communauté hollandaise est traversée par des courants intellectuels: on est d'appartenance catholique, protestante, libérale ou socialiste. ... Nulle part cette démarcation n'est plus nette qu'en Hollande (Meertens 1950: 36).

Thus, Meertens held that Dutch society was segmented in 'pillars' rather than classes. However, he did not refer to the Dutch penchant for social distinction, a characteristic Benedict stressed. In my opinion, Benedict was wrong to stress the class consciousness of Netherlands, although her observations on preserving social distance were quite right. Researchers who studied social relations in pre-war Holland could probably cite numerous instances of this phenomenon. But one might wonder whether it was really 'typically Dutch.' This predilection for distinction was apt to exist in other European nations as well. Whatever the case might be, I can only guess why Dutch authors underexposed this aspect of the Dutch national character. Perhaps their European frame of reference kept them from noticing it, while Benedict, coming from an American background, had a keen eye for it.

Other virtues and vices that Benedict observed, and Dutch researchers did not, include moralism, pride and modesty. Since Benedict did not deal with these character traits in detail, I shall confine my remarks to this observation.

Taking the plethora of typifications into consideration, one might wonder why certain attitudes are stamped as 'the Dutch national character.' Why are

some traits mentioned, and others not? And why do some authors explicitly cite certain traits, and overlook others, which are in fact alluded to by their colleagues? Are they arbitrary enumerations, or elements selected at will? In this connection, Van Heerikhuizen speaks of 'a loose collection of qualifications' (1980: 651). The methodology of national character studies is indeed a field strewn with pitfalls. I shall not address this topic in the present article.²⁶ Suffice it to say that a large part of these studies have an impressionistic touch, which they share with ethnographic work. All I shall do here is critically assess the general critique on national character studies.

National character or national caricature?

Following the end of World War Two, descriptions and theories on national character became highly controversial. Among anthropologists, the concept of national character is now surrounded by negative connotations. Apart from the link often established between these notions and extreme forms of nationalism or racism, there are problems of an academic nature. In his survey of the work of sociologists and historians writing on Dutch national character in the 1930s and 1940s, Van Heerikhuizen contends that considering the pluriform nature of Dutch society, 'the ever more pressing question arises whether there *is* such a thing as a Dutch national character' (1980: 666, italics in original). The term may easily lead to misunderstandings: e.g. homogenization, staticization, reification and psychologizing (ibid.: 673).

Similar and other criticism was uttered during a debate on national character in April 1985 at the University of Nijmegen. The speakers and commentators alike were generally critical about national character studies and the name of Benedict came up several times in this respect.²⁷ Bob Scholte (1986: 77–78) referred to the dangers of reductionism, determinism, simplification, caricaturization and stereotypification. Besides the problems of 'infantile determinism' and stereotypification, Silverman criticized the a-historical nature of such studies, a point also raised by Eric Wolf (see Bonsen and Marks 1986: 10–12). Wolf observed that the emphasis of national character studies is on uniformity, which makes for overgeneralization and disinterest in differentiations (ibid.: 13–15). Moreover, portraying nations as homogeneous social formations creates imaginary boundaries (ibid.: 31).

In his commentary, Dutch sociologist Zwaan was quite a faultfinder. He considered the concept of national character impracticable in social science discourse: 'It rests on untenable presuppositions, it does not do justice to the historicity and the complexity of human societies and cultures and therefore it obscures more than it reveals' (1986: 83–84). Pursuing his critique, Zwaan went into the disadvantages of the noun 'character' and the adjective

'national'. The noun could lead to personification, determinism and staticization, the adjective to homogenization (*ibid.*: 84–85). Nonetheless, like other critics, Zwaan pointed out that there are, of course, 'culturally formed differences between individual people and between larger social formations' and 'divergent patterns – however filled with contradictions and ambivalences – ... in the behaviour, feelings and values of members of different societies' (1986: 86). But he proposed studying them using other concepts, *in casu* nation-building and civilization, so as to avoid the pitfalls of the loathed concept of national character. During the debate, Silverman, Wolf and Burke stressed the importance of an approach focused on the genesis of – for want of a better word – a national character (cf. Bonsen and Marks 1986).

Thus, an impressive gamut of objections have been raised against the concept and studies of national character.²⁸ One might add to them Phillips' remark that in this type of study, the other nations character traits are being compared with usually remains implicit (1985: 17). However, in her memorandum on Netherlanders, Benedict did make explicit comparisons, to wit between Americans and Netherlanders.

One might wonder whether all the objections are well-founded and if anthropologists, sociologists, historians and folklorists have really failed to address them. Should we dismiss national character studies as utterly useless? I shall now deal with the staticization and generalization supposedly inherent in these studies.

The problem of staticization has preoccupied many of the scholars involved in national character studies. Duijker and Frijda maintained that 'knowledge of a phenomenon is incomplete, as long as we lack insight into its *origin*, c.q. development. Thus with national character' (1960: 4). And compare what folklorist Van Schelven said about the 'mentality of a people': it is 'determined by psychic, linguistic, cultural, economic and historical factors' (1938: 1) and it is in 'the history ... where lies the solution of the puzzle of why a heterogeneous population has been welded into a national homogeneity' (1938: 7). In a 1940 lecture,²⁹ historian Jan Romein put it quite clearly: 'we can not refer to a certain Dutch characteristic as specifically Dutch, as partly determining the Dutch mind, until we have succeeded in linking its genesis with the specificity of Dutch history' (1946a: 149). Next, he dealt with the Netherlanders' love of freedom and how it is rooted in their history.

With regard to the problem of generalization and homogenization: it is indeed difficult to picture national characters as stopping at geographical boundaries. Symbolic and mental boundaries are hard to distinguish; they become blurred and overlap. Thus it is likely that a Dutchman from Netherlands Limburg will have more in common with a man from Belgian Limburg than with a Frisian.³⁰ Likewise, a Dutch fisherman is apt to have

more in common with a Danish fisherman than with a Dutch anthropologist at a university. But sociologists and folklorists did devote attention to matters of this kind, and noted differences in the mentalities prevalent in various occupations, regions and religions (Kruijt 1943).³¹ Psychologists Duijker and Frijda also made this clear: 'Next to, and on an equal basis with national characters we find other "characters": sexual, developmental, occupational, etc.' (1960: 2). Similar remarks were made by Meertens (1950: 47-48). With respect to these problems, sociologist Bierens de Haan wrote:

... is it possible at all to speak of a Dutch national character where there is so much diversity? Frisian and Zelander, Limburger and North Hollander each have their own character, and the history of the various regions is not the same. Yet, these varieties have grown into a national unity. The respective regions speak the same language, though various dialects exist; they are subordinate to the same government, serve the same state institutions and know the same societal relationships. Moreover, local differences are bridged by the same church denominations and other forms of associations. The feeling of belonging to an aggregate national unity is stronger than regional consciousness. This applies all the more to cultural life, which has spread from the circles that are most aware of the general national bonds and that least embody regional peculiarities. This influence, which has spread from the western provinces in preceding centuries, has also reached the eastern provinces. The religious oppositions, which are of great significance in our country, are of a general extent – at the same time, however, they do not have such an effect that it is impossible to speak of a Dutch national character. Especially since the national virtues and vices appear on both sides of the borders [...] We do not deny the existence of regional distinctions, but we do deny that they are of such a radical nature that a national character ... does not exist (1942: 143–144).

Taking these observations into consideration, it is clear that many folklorists, sociologists and historians had a keener eye for the pitfalls and problems confronting national character studies than their later critics presupposed. However, this does not mean there are no questionable examples of such studies or that the objections against them and the concept of national character can be disregarded. My point is that the critique on this type of research is often one-sided and generalizing. I have shown that there are authors who have, or at least have tried to do justice to the historical dimension and the complexity of Dutch society and culture.

Conclusion

To return to Ruth Benedict's writings: she devoted very little attention indeed to the genesis of the Dutch national character and the diversity within it. Should we conclude, then, that her remarks are null and void? I do not think so. First of all, her memoranda are significant as ethnographic texts. I need only bring to mind Trouwborst's lamentation referred to in the introduction. Anthropology publications on the Netherlands are extremely scanty, especially with respect to the era Benedict described. Moreover, in this case the same applies as what Verrips-Roukens wrote on regional character studies. She noted that the observations of regional experts 'on the thoughts and behaviour of their regional compatriots can perform a very useful signalling function in the reconstruction of behavioural dispositions of certain social groups in the (recent) past' (1988: 67).³²

But is this the only reason to appreciate Benedict's 'Dutch material'? It is certainly true that certain points of criticism on the concept of national character similarly apply to her study of Netherlanders. As has been noted above, it is staticizing and presents a generalizing and homogenizing picture. Benedict hardly alluded to any differences in the mentality of people from various regions or from urban and rural areas. Nor did she note any differences between men and women or among various age groups, social groupings, classes, occupations, religious denominations and so forth. However, even the most skeptical critic of national character studies could not fail to see that Netherlanders do differ from Italians or Saami, even though the differences are merely gradual. And it is precisely the insight that 'we' differ from 'others' that has given rise to cultural anthropology. This discipline 'is born from the contrast people experience between their own society and culture and other societies and cultures' (De Waal Malefijt 1977: 269).³³

Furthermore, we should not forget that at least in the United States, national character studies arose from the need for practical knowledge about various nations involved in World War Two. These studies were a form of applied anthropology, whatever the objections might be. The key question in studies of this kind was 'what *are* these people like?' To answer this question, anthropologists like Benedict were less concerned with the theoretically equally important question of 'how did they *become* this way'? This does not mean the former question is any less legitimate than the latter.

As a sensitizing concept for specifying the nature of such differences, the word national character might be used, even if it can easily lead to psychologizing. However, one can only start analyzing a people's character after drawing up an inventory of its traits. Differences must be *explained* and in doing so, ecological, socio-economic and political contexts and processes should not be overlooked. Indeed, as an analytical concept national character

is inadequate. But the same goes for related concepts like mentality, identity and culture. They are also structural concepts without any explanatory value. On the concepts of national character and mentality, Swedish ethnologist Orvar Löfgren wrote in a commentary on the debate mentioned above: 'both of them can hardly be used as strict analytical terms but rather as focusing concepts: they direct our attention towards those aspects of culture which are difficult to verbalize' (1986: 73). It is striking that concepts like culture, identity and mentality are as yet less controversial than national character, which has become taboo due to the link often established with eugenetics and nationalist ideologies. The same applies to the concept of race, which has fallen into disrepute and has been abandoned in anthropology. A similar fate seems imminent for the concept of national character, even though it is still used – mainly by folklorists. In the anthropological and sociological conceptual apparatus, the term has often been replaced by national identity, national culture and mentality.³⁴ This conceptual triad also merely bears sensitizing rather than analytical value. Moreover, the objections raised by critics of the concept of national character also apply to these notions. The objections and dangers of static descriptions, homogenization, reification and determinism are inherent in these concepts as well. Sometimes, moreover, they are merely another name for the same thing. Verrips-Roukens (1981) uses the word mentality, while the authors she cites in her essay use the words national and regional character. If anthropologists banish the historically tarnished concept of national character in an effort to avoid all the problems it entails, they should also critically assess the key concepts mentioned above. This might then face social scientists with the task of developing a more adequate terminology.

NOTES

1. I should like to thank Birgit Meyer, Milena Veenis, Jojada Verrips and Nico Wilterdink and his co-editors of *Amsterdams Sociologisch Tijdschrift* for their constructive comments on an earlier version of this article. Thanks also to Prof. Heinemeijer.
2. Trouwborst belittles the work of scholars on Dutch culture, but fails to refer to sociologist Ernest Zahn's fascinating book (1984).
3. Other reviewers are equally critical (see Bouquet 1991 and Wilterdink's book review in *NRC-Handelsblad*, March 3, 1990).
4. See, e.g. Van Heerikhuizen's overview (1980).
5. See Caffrey (1989), Modell (1984), Mead (1974) and van Ginkel (1990) for more extensive descriptions of Benedict's involvement in OWI. See Doob (1947) for the role of social scientists within this organization.
6. Letter from Ruth Benedict to Mr. Eugene Katz, July 2, 1943 (Benedict Papers, Vassar College Library, box 90, folder 1124).
7. Letter from Samuel Williamson to Ruth Benedict (Benedict Papers, Vassar College Library, box 90, folder 1128).

8. I shall refer to these texts as A, B, C and D. The documents are in the collection of Benedict Papers, Vassar College Library, box 83, folder 1060 (text A), box 83, folder 1062 (text B), box 90, folder 1127 (text C) and box 83, folder 1060 (text D). See Van Ginkel (1990: 10–11) for the sources Benedict used. Benedict's work on Netherlanders has been quoted with the permission of her literary executor, Mary Catherine Bateson.
9. The Dutch equivalent of the concept of national character is *volkskarakter*. In this article, I define national character as a complex of notions, attitudes and behaviour by which one nation distinguishes itself from other nations.
10. Where Benedict writes 'Holland,' she means the Netherlands as a whole. Technically, the word Holland would only refer to the provinces of North Holland and South Holland.
11. For that matter, Benedict was wrong when she remarked that Dutch particularism was part and parcel of their individualism. Rather, particularism indicates that people align in groups. See Phillips (1985) for a critique of the idea that Netherlanders are individualists.
12. However, this observation is inaccurate. There was prejudice against Jews in the Netherlands and they were discriminated to a certain extent.
13. Benedict's remarks with regard to the drinking behaviour of American soldiers and the attitude of Netherlanders towards (excessive) drinking are another example: 'The Dutch do not like noisy and aggressive drunks, even if they are Dutch; Hollanders are much less convivial in their public drinking than other neighbouring countries. The exhibitionism of American army drinking will offend them' (A: 4).
14. In *Notes*, a basic manuscript Benedict prepared to take note of certain traits of Dutch national character (Benedict Papers, Vassar College Library, box 83, folder 1061).
15. It is unclear which Dutch proverb Benedict hints at. There are several proverbs with this tenor, for example: *Een stuivertje gespaard is een stuivertje gewonnen* (a penny saved is a penny earned), *op de dubbeltjes passen* (to watch the pennies), or *op de penning zien* (to be very tight with money).
16. Here, Benedict was referring to the possibility of transferring financial aid for economic recovery through the government-in-exile. In doing so, the Americans would not portray themselves as generous donors.
17. *Notes*, Benedict Papers, Vassar College Library, box 83, folder 1061.
18. In *Notes*, Benedict Papers, Vassar College Library, box 83, folder 1061.
19. From the examples in the section on 'Social Distance' (B: 14–17), it is clear that Benedict did not distinguish between 'horizontal' and 'vertical' distance.
20. The Dutch versions of these proverbs are: *kraaien en duiven vliegen nooit samen; ieder vogeltje zingt zoals het gebekt is* and *de appel valt niet ver van de stam*. Benedict's interpretation of the meaning of the latter proverb was rather liberal (if not erroneous).
21. There are many publications on the Dutch national character, not only dating from the 1930s and 1940s (see Van Heerikhuizen 1980), but from earlier years as well. For references to this older work, see Kruijt (1934) and Romein (1946b). Sociographers usually included sections on the mentality of the people they studied.
22. However, it is possible that Benedict was indirectly influenced by these authors, or by Fruin (1871) and others, for example through informants or written sources.
23. See Van Heerikhuizen (1980). He came across a similar set of character traits. This is not so remarkable, since for the greater part I used the same literature.
24. Of all the authors, the historian Huizinga demonstrated the most clearcut sociological perspective. He tried to explain the Dutch national character by referring to the social and cultural hegemony of the bourgeoisie in Dutch society.
25. Where Huizinga used the concept of *burgerlijk* (bourgeois, conventional) as a catch-all, other authors did the same with the word *bedwaard* (composed) (cf. Van Heerikhuizen 1980: 648 ff). Meertens used the concept of *deftig* (distinguished) in a similar fashion. He stated that this word

- 'exprime une idée typiquement hollandaise. C'est une mélange de dignité, de solennité, de décence, de pondération, de gravité, de retenue et de majesté' (1950: 34).
26. This would require a whole new article. The major difficulty is operationalizing national character. For these and other methodological problems, see Den Hollander (1946), Romein (1946b), Gorer (1953), Mead (1956), Duijker and Frijda (1960), and for more recent literature, Van Heerikhuizen (1980: 660ff), Peabody (1985), Wilterdink (1990) and the special issue of *Ethnologia Europaea* on national cultures (1989, No. 1).
 27. For a summary of the debate and the comments, see *Focaal* 1986, no. 2/3.
 28. See also Cieraad (1988: 72–75).
 29. Romein gave his lecture a few months after the Germans invaded the Netherlands. His words can be seen as a strong and courageous protest against the occupation. National character studies seem to flourish in times of war and integration conflicts. 30. See also Wichers (1981).
 31. Kruijt stated that for each character trait, it should be established how strong it is and how widespread among the population (1934: 52).
 32. She adds a number of remarks worthy of consideration, i.e. that researchers should pay attention to their social position vis-à-vis that of their informants, that mentalities are created sociogenetically, that changing power balances are of the utmost importance in this process and that one should avoid stereotypes and homogenization (cf. Verrips-Roukens 1981).
 33. These contrasts are not always made explicit. It then remains unclear who is being compared with whom. It is the study of salient boundaries which might prove fruitful in examining which contrasts people perceive and who reckons himself or herself a member of a certain social formation. Such boundaries are clearly expressed in the participation in (national) celebrations and rituals (cf. Wolf, cited in Verrips 1984: 456).
 34. Zwaan suggested replacing the structural concept of national character with processual concepts like nation-building and civilization (1986: 87). However, these concepts refer to quite different phenomena. Again, it concerns the difference between what people *are* like (description) and how they have *become* that way (analysis).

REFERENCES

- Benedict, R.F. (1974) 'The Study of Cultural Patterns in European Nations' in: M. Mead and R. Benedict (eds.) New York, pp. 159–165.
- Bierens de Haan, J.D. (1942) 'Eenige opmerkingen over Nederlandsch volkskarakter en letterkunde' (Some remarks on the Dutch national character and literature) in: C.H. Edelman *et al.* (eds.) *De Nederlandsche geest*, Naarden, pp. 141–155.
- Boissevain, J. and Verrips, J. (1989) *Dutch Dilemmas: Anthropologists Look at The Netherlands*, Assen.
- Bonsen, R. and Marks, H. (1986) 'Colloquy on National Character: Summary of the Seminar', *Focaal*, 2/3, pp. 9–32.
- Bouquet, M. (1990) 'Anthropology at Home', *Amsterdams Sociologisch Tijdschrift* 17 (4): 144–151.
- Caffrey, M.M. (1989) *Ruth Benedict: Stranger in This Land*, American Studies Series, Austin.
- Cieraad, I. (1988) *De elitaire verbeelding van volk en massa. Een studie over cultuur* (The elitist imagination of people and mass. A study about culture), Muiderberg.
- Doob, L.W. (1947) 'The Utilization of Social Scientists in the Overseas Branch of the Office of War Information', *The American Political Science Review*, 41 (4): 649–667.
- Duijker, H.C.J. and Frijda, N.H. (1960) *National Character and National Stereotypes*, Amsterdam.
- Fruin, R. (1900[1871]) 'Het karakter van het Nederlandsche volk' (The character of the Dutch people) in: R. Fruin (ed.) *Verspreide geschriften. Deel 1. Historische Opstellen*, The Hague, pp. 1–21.

- Van Ginkel, R. (1990) 'Ruth Benedict over Nederlanders' (Ruth Benedict on the Dutch), *Etnofoor* 3 (2): 5–16.
- Gorer, G. (1953) 'National Character: Theory and Practice' in: M. Mead and Métraux R. (eds.) *The Study of Culture at a Distance*, Chicago and London, pp. 57–81.
- Van Heerikhuizen, B. (1980) 'Sociologen in de jaren dertig en veertig over het Nederlandse volkskarakter' (Sociologists in the 1930s and 1940s on the Dutch national character), *Amsterdams Sociologisch Tijdschrift* 6 (4): 643–675.
- Den Hollander, A.J.N. (1946) *Het andere volk* (The other people), Leiden.
- Huizinga, J. (1946[1934]) *Nederland's Geestesmerk* (Dutch culture), Leiden.
- Kousbroek, R. (1987) *Nederland: een bewoond gordijn* (The Netherlands: an inhabited curtain), Amsterdam.
- Kruijt, J.P. (1934) *Het Nederlandse volkskarakter en het socialisme* (The Dutch national character and socialism), Arnhem.
- Kruijt, J.P. (1939) 'De psychologie van het Nederlandse volk: gisteren, heden, morgen' (The psychology of the Dutch people: yesterday, today, tomorrow) in: C.A. Mennicke (ed.) *Tijdsproblemen. Sociaalpsychologische beschouwingen over de hedendaagse maatschappij*, Amsterdam, pp. 27–43.
- Kruijt, J.P. (1943) 'Mentaliteitsverschillen in ons volk in verband met godsdienstige verschillen' (Differences in mentality in our people in connection with religious differences), *Mensch en Maatschappij* 19: 1–28, 65–83.
- Löfgren, O. (1986) 'Towards an Anthropology of the National', *Focaal* 2 (3): 71–74.
- Mead, M. (1953) 'National Character' in: A.L. Kroeber (ed.) *Anthropology Today. An Encyclopedic Inventory*, Chicago, pp. 642–667.
- Mead, M. (1974) *Ruth Benedict*, New York.
- Meertens, P.J. (1950) Le caractère néerlandais et ses variétés régionales, *Revue de Psychologie des Peuples* 5 (1) 33–49.
- Modell, J. (1984) *Ruth Benedict. Patterns of a Life*, London.
- Peabody, D. (1985) *National Characteristics*, Cambridge.
- Phillips, D. (1985) *De naakte Nederlander. Kritische overpeinzingen* (The naked Dutchman. Critical reflections), Amsterdam.
- Rentes de Carvalho, J. (1972) *Waar die andere God woont* (Where that other God lives), Amsterdam.
- Romein, J. (1946a[1940]) 'Oorsprong, voortgang en toekomst van de Nederlandse geest' (Origin, development and future of the Dutch mind) in: J. Romein (ed.) *In opdracht van de tijd. Tien voordrachten over historische thema's*, Amsterdam, pp. 145–170.
- Romein, J. (1946b[1941]) 'Beschouwingen over het Nederlandse volkskarakter' (Reflections on the Dutch national character) in: J. Romein (ed.) *In opdracht van de tijd. Tien voordrachten over historische thema's*, Amsterdam, pp. 171–200.
- Van Schelven, T. (1938) 'De Nederlanders' (The Dutch) in: P.J. Meertens and de Vries A. (eds.) *De Nederlandse volkskarakters*, Kampen, pp. 1–14.
- Scholte, B. (1986) 'On "National Character": Some Critical Remarks', *Focaal* 2 (3): 75–82.
- Steinmetz, S.R. (1930) *Die Niederlande*, Weltpolitische Bücherei, 15, Berlin.
- Taylor, L.J. (1990) Book review of J. Boissevain and Verrips J. (eds.) (1989) *Dutch Dilemmas: Anthropologists Look at The Netherlands*, Assen, *Etnofoor* 3 (2): 140–144.
- Trouwborst, A.A. (1988) 'Antropologie dicht bij huis' (Anthropology at home), *Antropologische Verkenningen* 7 (3): 62–65.
- Verrips, J. (1984) 'The Worst of Architects is Better than the Best of Bees. Het debat Wolf-Godelier', *Sociologisch Tijdschrift* 11 (3): 449–472.
- Verrips-Roukens, K. (1981) 'Mentaliteiten en machtsbalansen' (Mentalities and power balances), *Symposion* 3 (1/2): 197–211.

- Verrips-Roukens, K. (1989) 'Mentality and Power Balances in Salland' in: J. Boissevain and J. Verrips (eds.) *Dutch Dilemmas: Anthropologists Look at The Netherlands*, Assen, pp. 53–69.
- De Waal Malefijt, A. (1977) *Beelden van de mens* (Images of man), Baarn.
- Waterink, J. (1943) 'Het Nederlandsche volkskarakter' (The Dutch national character) in: J. de Vries *et al.* (ed.) *Volk van Nederland*, Amsterdam, pp. 18–33.
- Wichers, A.J. (1981) 'Mentaliteit als deel van de figuratie van samenlevingen' (Mentality as a part of the figuration of societies), *Symposion* 3 (1/2): 169–177.
- Wilterdink, N. (1990) *Where Nations Meet: National Identities in an International Organisation*, EUI Working Papers in Political and Social Sciences No. 90/3, Florence.
- Zahn, E. (1984) *Das unbekannte Holland: Regenten, Rebellen, und Reformatoren*, Berlin.
- Zwaan, T. (1986) "'Nationaal karakter" in ontwikkelingsperspectief' ('National character' in a developmental perspective), *Focaal* 2/3: 82–91.

Other sources

Ruth Fulton Benedict Papers, Vassar College Library, Poughkeepsie, N.Y.