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Belonging through Languagecultural Practices in the Periphery

The Politics of Carnival in the Dutch Province of Limburg

LEONIE CORNIPS and VINCENT DE ROOIJ

ABSTRACT

In this article, we will present two case studies of language and cultural practices that are part of or strongly related to carnival, in the Dutch peripheral province of Limburg, and more precisely in the southern Limburgian city of Heerlen, which in turn is considered peripheral vis-à-vis the provincial capital Maastricht. We will consider carnival as a political force field in which opposing language and cultural practices are involved in the production of belonging as an official, public-oriented ‘formal structure’ of membership, and belonging as a personal, intimate feeling of being ‘at home’ in a place (place-belongingness) (Antonsich 2010; Yuval-Davis 2006). In the case studies presented here, we take seriously the idea that ideology, linguistic form and the situated use of language are dialectically related (Silverstein 1985). In doing so, we wish to transcend disciplinary boundaries between anthropology and (socio)linguistics in Europe.

KEYWORDS

belonging, carnival, dialect, languageculture, Limburg, parody, periphery

The argument of our article is based on two case studies of carnival-related language practices in the city of Heerlen, located in the Dutch peripheral province of Limburg, that reproduce a sense of belonging and place-based identities. The inhabitants in Limburg consider themselves linguistically and culturally quite distinct from other Dutchmen. Limburgers say about themselves that they have a ‘Burgundian lifestyle’, which is characterised by a relaxed lifestyle, good eating and drinking (Wadsworth 2009), and attach great importance to speaking local dialects (Goeman and Jongenburger 2009; Knotter 2009). People’s self-identification in Limburg heavily relies on the outsider figure of the Hollander, who is thought of as everything the Limburger is not (Knotter 2009; Thissen 2013). This Limburg–Holland opposition has its roots in the Limburg’s late integration into the Dutch state at the end of the



nineteenth century. Knotter (2009) analyses Limburg's relation to the rest of the Netherlands as a case of 'negative integration'. Limburg's linguistic and cultural specificity vis-à-vis the western part of the Netherlands (Holland), is most evidently expressed through the highly popular celebration of carnival and the widespread use, both in formal and informal settings, of dialect (Cornips 2013). The 'dialects' of Limburg in 1997 were extended minor recognition under the label 'Limburgish' by The Netherlands, a signatory of the 1992 European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages. Since then, public funds have been made available for promoting the use of Limburgish, as well as protecting the language rights of its speakers. Some 900,000 Limburgers, 75 per cent of the total population, claim to speak a dialect, showing the high value people attach to speaking their dialects (Driessen 2006).

Within the province of Limburg, Heerlen occupies an exceptional position. In the beginning of the twentieth century, the expanding mining industry in the area attracted numerous workers from elsewhere in the Netherlands, and from abroad. Because of this heavy migration, the local inhabitants became a minority within a time span of thirty years. As a result, language use in the public domain shifted from dialect to Dutch. This Heerlen Dutch, however, was heavily influenced by linguistic features considered local. Regarded as an impure language variety between standard Dutch and what is seen as the pure, authentic dialect, this way of speaking is heavily stigmatised within Limburg (Cornips 1994, 2013). Therefore, Heerlen is constructed as different within Limburg, as we will discuss later.

In this article, we show how carnival is used as a vehicle for two opposed, yet dialectically related, ways of engaging in the production of belonging. On the one hand, belonging takes the form of official, public-oriented 'formal structure' of membership (Antonsich 2010; Yuval-Davis 2006). On the other, belonging takes the form of a personal, intimate feeling of being 'at home' in a place (Antonsich 2010; Yuval-Davis 2006).

First, we examine the politics of belonging engaged in by members of the carnival elite, the people who are in charge of the ways carnival is publicly celebrated. This politics of belonging works in the favour of reproducing the political and social status quo. We therefore focus on a carnival association called *De Blauw Sjuut* (The Blue Vessel) in Heerlen. With very few exceptions, the members of the Blue Vessel are business owners. In their language practices we recognise a tendency to cultivate, conventionalise and codify in an attempt to authenticate and legitimate cultural and linguistic capital. In the second part

of this article, we will focus on carnivalesque (Bakhtin 1968) language practices by a popular band called Getske Boys. The Getske Boys rebel against the codifying and disciplining practices of official carnival associations. As such, both ways of engaging in carnival and the carnivalesque continuously (re)produce different forms of belonging (Antonsich 2010).

The Study of Languageculture in European Anthropology

The case studies presented here show how ideology and the situated use of language are dialectically related. In this way, the article contributes to the development of the interdisciplinary study of ideology, social praxis, and linguistic and cultural form (Eckert 2008; Silverstein 1985, 2003; Woolard 2008) in Europe. Not prioritising either practice, ideology or form, it is vitally important to start from observables, and hence from observable language practices. This approach enables us to understand how people, by using specific linguistic forms and language varieties, position themselves towards received categories and hegemonic ideologies.

As we argue elsewhere (Cornips and de Rooij 2013), a holistic linguistic anthropology does not prioritise the ideational – namely ‘culture’ in classical American anthropology – over practice, nor does it prioritise practice over culture, nor does it, as has often been the case, neglect language form (cf. Woolard 2008), and, by extension, languagecultural form. We want to point out that with many others working within the broad field of linguistic anthropology (Rampton 1995; Silverstein 1985, 2003; Woolard 2008) our primary interest is not in language per se. In focusing on language or, rather, languageculture, we wish to learn about how people use language and cultural resources in processes of identification and the creation of belonging. As we define it, languageculture is that complex whole made up of language practices, informed by cultural beliefs, and necessarily co-articulated by bodily practices and the deployment of material cultural resources (Cornips et al. 2012; see also Agar 1994: 60). The study of how languagecultural stuff is put into use and what its effects are must rely on descriptive and analytic techniques developed in the fields of material culture studies, media studies and the broad field of linguistic anthropology (which in its present incarnation is informed by theories, methods and concepts from discourse analysis, conversation analysis, formal linguistics and sociolinguistics).

Politics of Heerlen Belonging: The Crew of the Blauw Sjuut (Blue Vessel)

Our first case study concerns the men that make up the crew of the Blauw Sjuut (Blue Vessel). (The Blue Vessel, or Ship of Fools, is a popular, recurring theme in medieval texts and paintings, cf. Pleij 1983.) Data of this case study was collected during fieldwork in February 2012 while following the ship's crew on their yearly journey. Further data was collected through participant observation and interviews with members of the Blue Vessel in 2012 and 2014. In their formal meetings there is a strong expectation or even obligation among members of the Blue Vessel to use local dialect by themselves and others. If someone is not able to do so, it will be noticed and commented upon.

Heerlen, Limburg, the Netherlands, 13 February 2012

It's a cold, snowy morning and along the empty streets of Heerlen's city centre a truck thoroughly customised to look like a ship slowly moves in the direction of the city hall. On the deck of the 'ship' two of its crew members load and shoot blanks from a canon producing an impressive roar. Right in front of the entrance of the city-hall the vessel comes to a stop, the crew members, clad in old-style uniforms with a military look, disembark and line up to be inspected by the mayor who invites the men inside. Here, after the men have sung a couple of songs in local dialect accompanied by accordion, the mayor officially welcomes the men who form an association that goes by the name 'de Blauw Sjuut' (the Blue Vessel), whose task is to announce the advent of carnival one week before its beginning and visit neighbouring places throughout south and middle Limburg and the adjacent Belgian and German regions across the national border. Welcoming the men of the Blue Vessel, the mayor's first words are:

'Ik kan gerust dit keer in 't Hollands praten omdat de kapitein volgens mij ook geen Heerlens kan' ['This time I can happily speak in Hollandish because I believe the captain can't speak Heerlen [dialect] either.']

These words were met with laughter from the crowd, including the members of the Blue Vessel, assembled in the central hall.

(from authors' fieldnotes)

Carnival associations like the Blue Vessel are taken seriously by the authorities, and local dialect is held in high esteem, used not only in informal settings but also in gatherings of a more formal nature. Because of this, authorities like the mayor of Heerlen who come from 'outside' and hence do not speak the local dialect feel obliged overtly

to address their incompetence. In this case, the mayor could get away with speaking ‘Hollandish’ by making a joke at the expense of the captain of the Blue Vessel whose proficiency in the dialect was put in doubt.

In what they consider the pure Heerlen dialect, the Blue Vessel describes itself on its website (Gilde Blauw Sjuut 2014) as an autonomous guild that is part of the Heerlen carnival association ‘de Winkbülle’ (the Windbags). Founded in 1949, the Blue Vessel took it upon itself to announce the advent of carnival throughout the region:

Al mieë wie inge hoave ieëuw vieët de zótteboot ing aantal daag vuur ‘t egelige vasteloavesfes rónk en hoakt doa-mit i óp de gebuëtenis i ‘t joar 1133 i ‘t aa de oetlopers va de Eifel geleëge dörpke Inda, ‘t hújtsedaagse Kornelimünster. (...) I Heële is die Inda-sjuut noeëts geweë, evvel ‘t is de verdeenste va de Heëlesje sjtadscarnavalsvereniging de Winkbülle geweë um i 1949 ‘t fenomeen te claimen, de zótteboot i ieëre te hersjtelle en ‘t jieëker joar te loate oetvare. Dat letste is de verantwoordelicheed va ‘t Gilde Blauw Sjuut’ (Gilde Blauw Sjuut 2014).

Already more than half a century, the ship of fools sails around for a number of days, preceding the vasteloavesfes [carnival] and so connects to the event in the year 1133 in the village Inda, which is now Kornelimünster, in the outliers of the Eifel (...) The Inda-vessel never made it to Heerle; however, it is the merit of the Heerlen city carnival society de Winkbülle [the Windbags] to claim the phenomenon in 1949 to restore the ship of fools and to make it sail away every year. The latter is the Blue Vessel’s responsibility (authors’ translation).

Through this reinvented tradition, the Blue Vessel cultivates, codifies and legitimates cultural and linguistic capital. Over the years the ship’s journey expanded from a one-day return trip to Aachen (Germany) via Vaals (on the German–Belgian–Dutch border), into the five-day programme that it is today. During these five days, the vessel makes some thirty stops on a crisscross journey through South and Middle Limburg and neighbouring areas in Belgium and Germany. In every village or town, the crew are officially welcomed, in most cases at the city or town hall, or in pubs affiliated to local carnival associations, by the mayor and local carnival dignitaries. Mutual gift giving, mostly in the form of exchanging carnival medals, takes place between the men of the Blue Vessel and the members of local carnival associations. After a welcome speech by the mayor in local dialect, the so-called moelemeeëker (chat maker) of the Blue Vessel has to retort the playful insults, often quite mild ones, of the mayor(s) and other dignitaries in his own Heerlen dialect. The Blue Vessel website describes these interactions as follows:

Ing va de wiechtigste dinger bei d'r Togh is waal 't gesjteggel mit de plaatsjelike autoriteite. In alle sjtadhoezer gieëf d'r burgemeester va deens aaf óp Heële woa volgens hun noeëts get good en richtigs is. An d'r moelemeëker, gesjteund durch de toeëne va d'r sjeëpsmuzikant, is 't da um hön te wieze óp alles wat zoeë-al fout geet in hön ege dörp of sjtad. Dat zint ummer hieël vermakelijke confrontaties en natuurlig weëd zich noa afloop inne dróp gedronke (Gilde Blauw Sjuut 2014).

One of the most important issues in the journey is the 'gesjteggel' [playful bickering] with the local authorities. In all town houses, the mayors comment negatively on Heerlen where nothing, according to them, is good or just. It is up to the 'moelemeëker', supported by the music of the ship musician, to point out to the mayors whatever goes wrong in their own village or city. These are amusing confrontations and of course people will drink together happily after (authors' translation).

These ritualised rivalries between hosts and guests are clearly aimed at maintaining friendly relations between the two parties. Differences between them, displayed in the form of each party's own pure dialect, are respected and celebrated as elements of one greater community of carnival associations. The foundation of the Blue Vessel should be seen as an attempt to remedy Heerlen's peripheral status in South Limburg as a former immigrant city and centre of a heavily industrialised area (see intro). In a YouTube video linked to from the Blue Vessel website (Gilde Blauw Sjuut 2014), it is phrased as follows:

In order to distinguish themselves from Kerkrade, Sittard and Maastricht [the major neighbouring cities in South Limburg], the Winkbülle were looking for something unique; and that's how in 1949, the Heerlen Blue Vessel was born. (Blue Vessel YouTube [unfortunately no longer publicly accessible])

The first few years, the Vessel only set out to the German Rhineland. The founders of the Blue Vessel were probably drawn to the Rhineland carnival tradition because of its presumed longevity and, hence, authenticity. Contacts with the Rhineland carnival provided the Heerleners with the cultural capital needed to enter into competition with neighbouring cities. The Blue Vessel has remained a uniquely Heerlen phenomenon and has assumed a prominent place in the yearly carnival cycle that permeates much of public life in Limburg. As a sign of official recognition for the Blue Vessel's promotion of regional culture and regional unity, the crew members were appointed as ambassadors of carnival by the provincial authorities in 2005. The pivotal role of the Vessel in carnival is further emphasised by the grand reception they receive at the palace of the King's Commissioner of the province in Maastricht. Here, the yearly Knoevelement (hugging meet-

ing; *knoevele* – to hug) takes place, an exclusive gathering of invited-only carnival dignitaries from all over Limburg, and delegates from the provincial government and parliament. The crew of the Blue Vessel make their entrance, marching to the tune of the ship's accordionist through the applauding audience up to the front stage where the King's Commissioner gives them a warm welcome. In his speech at the 2012 *Knoevelement*, the King's Commissioner thanks the men for continuing the age-old tradition of the Blue Vessel announcing carnival. He credits the Blue *Sjuut* with the idea to organise the *Knoevelement* as a festive gathering during which the winners of the provincial carnival song contest were to be honoured; without the Blue Vessel the King's Commissioner jokes 'he would now be working behind his desk'. Continuing on a joking note, he points out that it is only once a year that Maastricht (the capital of Limburg) and Heerlen are hugging each other; the rest of the year they bicker over political issues. The King's Commissioner's address in the prestigious Maastricht dialect is followed by the Blue Vessel's *moelemeëker* speaking Heerlen dialect. At this time and place Heerlen symbolically equals, or even surpasses, the status of Maastricht's leading position in what is seen as one of the defining elements of Limburgian culture, namely carnival.

Like all official carnival associations in Limburg, the Blue Vessel values order and protocol (Wijers 1995). As such it is quite the opposite of the Blue Vessel as we know it from medieval tradition, characterised by anarchy and topsy-turviness. The members of the Heerlen Blue Vessel, mostly business owners belonging to the higher socio-economic strata of the Heerlen population, are dressed in black old-style military uniforms that dramatically differ from the uniforms worn by dignitaries of regular carnival associations that seem to be modelled after medieval jester costumes. The Vessel's crew has a strict hierarchy and the individual members each have a well-defined task (captain, chairman and vice-chairman, 'chat maker', musician, 1st and 2nd treasurer, secretary, bell-ringer, marconist [wireless operator], cannoneer, pilot etc.).

The five-day campaign of the Blue Vessel is thoroughly prepared during meetings in which the plan of action is communicated with the carnival associations to be visited. These meetings take place in Heerlen's oldest edifice, the so-called *Schelmentoren* (Rascals' Tower), dating from the twelfth century and located right in the middle of the old city centre. The tower is the official home of the *Winkbülle*. The fifty-metre square room on the first floor is in use as the association's common room. Its interior breathes history and tradition: the walls

are completely covered with carnival medals received from other carnival associations and photos of all ‘princes’ (the chief dignitary, elected for a one-year term by the members) since the founding of the association in 1947. The rest of the room is filled with all sorts of gifts, mainly in the form of statuettes, certificates and standards, some of them visibly worn by time.

When we were invited to attend one of the preparatory meetings on 9 February 2014, the room was swarming with members of associations from the wider region, including neighbouring parts of Belgium and Germany, who were all warmly welcomed by members of the Blue Vessel. One by one, delegations of these associations were then invited to mount the upper floor where members of the board of the Blue Vessel were seated on antique chairs behind an impressive oak table. This room has a more solemn feel with only a few decorations on the wall. Although we were not present during the meetings of the board and delegations of the associations from outside, we got a very good idea of the languagecultural conventions followed in this setting. One of us (LC), being professor of languageculture in Limburg at Maastricht University, was treated as a guest of honour. We were addressed in Heerlen dialect, which, as the chair pointed out, was an essential part of the tradition of the Blue Vessel. The importance of the dialect was highlighted by informing VdR that although he would have problems understanding him he would still use dialect. LC, being born in Heerlen and having spent her youth there, was expected to reciprocate, which she did while excusing herself for possible imperfections in her performance of the dialect. It was clear and made clear explicitly that the use of pure dialect was an essential ingredient of the event.

We also observed The Blue Vessel’s heavy emphasis on what is seen as authentic Heerlen language, tradition and protocol in other events. After the reception by the mayor of Heerlen in 2012 described earlier and before the Vessel set out for its five-day journey, the novice sailors underwent a ritual baptism on Heerlen’s central square Pancratiusplein, under the guidance of the spiritual advisor of the Winkbülle, almoner of the Blue Vessel crew. First there was some communal singing of carnival songs in dialect with the small group (about forty people) that had assembled on the square to send off the Vessel. The almoner was the only person not speaking dialect, for which he excused himself, and for which he was excused, hailing from outside the province. The presence and role of a member of the Catholic clergy requires special attention: in the past, especially dur-

ing the interbellum, the Catholic Church raised concern over the wild carnival celebrations that were seen as a threat to people's spiritual welfare. Therefore, the Church did all it could to domesticate carnival celebrations (Wijers 1995), and the presence of an almoner should be seen in this light: he is there to show and to guarantee that the Blue Vessel's carnival activities remain within the limits of what is sanctioned by the church. At the same time his presence seems motivated by a continuation of the old social order sanctioned and controlled by the Church.

One could say that a fixation on order permeates everything the crew does. This became evident during the event at the Pancratiusplein in how all traces of filthy, messy baptism ritual are removed or avoided: the novices are carefully wrapped in plastic before the actual baptism with whipped cream and herrings is placed on their heads, topped with confetti. The messy heads were then carefully washed and dried with a clean towel, the plastic cover removed to leave the newly baptised crisp and clean. Two of the crew members then disembarked and swept the square clean of the confetti that had fallen on the pavement.

Carnival is often seen as the festival of role reversals and temporary suspension of the social order (cf. Bakhtin 1968). The men of the Blue Vessel are doing carnival in a very different manner. Carefully cultivating local lore and dialect, referring to the Blue Vessels medieval origin, the crew of the Blue Vessel represent Heerlen as a place with a respectable old tradition, and a pure, authentic Limburgian dialect (Lacoste et al. 2014), countering the stereotype of the city as a marginal, not truly Limburgian but a Hollandish and hybrid place. Literally moving this representation of Heerlen through the Meuse-Rhine Euregio for many years, the men of the Blue Vessel have succeeded in accumulating status and respect from provincial authorities and carnival associations all over the region. The places in Heerlen used by the Blue Vessel as a base (The Schelmentoren), and as both starting and endpoint of their journey (the central Pancratiusplein), all construct a continuous and fixed link from the here and now to the medieval past. The Blue Vessel is clearly engaged in a politics of belonging in which purified dialect becomes indexical of local belonging and also of its membership to the Heerlen carnival elite and by extension to the larger Limburgian one. As this and the following case study shows, available languagecultural resources are exploited in different kinds of belonging (cf. Antonsich 2010; Johnstone 2010).

Senses of Heerlen Belonging: The Getske Boys

In our second case study, we will focus on a popular band from Heerlen, the *Getske Boys* consisting of two men and their brother-in-law – Wim, Ad and Jan (cf. Cornips et al. 2012). (This case study emerged from online research conducted from 2008 to 2014 as well as a half-day group interview with the Getske Boys on the afternoon of 11 May 2013). In contradiction to the members of the Blue Vessel, Wim (teacher of art), Ad (physical therapist) and Jan (life-coach) are no businessmen but have professions characterised with human interest. Wim, Ad and Jan perform the figures Takkie (small branch), Freddie and Klets (Chatty) respectively, who make up the Getske Boys. As part of the carnival scene of Heerlen, the Getske Boys were already locally known as the triumvirate Demi Sec: three so-called ‘dry’ figures usually dressed in black with whitened faces who have participated in the Heerlen carnival parade since 1986. Wim (Takkie) explained to us that in 2003, looking around in a second-hand store, he found more or less by accident a beige outdated suit and a mullet wig. The suit and the wig became the defining attributes of their new act: the carnivalesque popular music band Getske Boys (Interview, Heerlen, 11 May 2013). Just like the Blue Vessel, the Getske Boys are considered a uniquely Heerlen phenomenon. They have a prominent position in the yearly carnival cycle in Heerlen in opening the annual Heerlen carnival season Aod-op-Nuj (from old to new) which is a large-scale public event that takes places at the central square, Pancratiusplein in Heerlen.

On their website, The Getske Boys present themselves as the habitués of the fictitious pub ‘ut Getske’ walking around with bottles and glasses filled with beer. The conversations in this pub revolve around three topics: beer, women and soccer/football, which are the most important topics of the Getske Boys’ songs too (cf. Cornips et al. 2012). In 2008, they made their first hit, with the carnival song ‘Oh Temara’ (theme: women). In 2009 they made a song titled ‘Insjchudde’ (theme: pouring beer). In ‘Naar Talia’ (2010) women, pasta, beer and church/Vatican are important topics (see later).

The Getske Boys personify a second mode of carnival, the one that, in contradiction to the Blue Vessel, subverts conventional forms and themes of carnival (although they get conventionalised in the long run through media attention). They challenge the official institutionalised mode of carnival, the disciplining which reproduces the status quo authenticating Heerlen belonging. Commenting on the Blue Vessel, they told us:

‘Blauwe Schuit is een elite club, wat moet je niet allemaal doen om lid te worden. Die club meent zich een dikke.’ (‘The Blue Vessel is an elite club, the things one has to do to become a member [of that association]. That club has a lofty attitude!’) The beige costumes of the Getske Boys and their simple hats without peacock feathers are the inversion of the official carnival uniforms, their showy ‘golden’ medals parody the official orders that are ritual gifts in the performance of the Blue Vessel, and their mullets, their rowdy behaviour and exaggerated facial expressions are carnivalesque comments on the neatly coiffured well-behaved dignitaries of regular carnival associations. Moreover, their language use is in sharp contrast with the ‘pure’ dialect used by the crew of the Blue Vessel (see later). In sum, they clearly turn the conventionalised, ordered, hierarchical and disciplined routines of the official carnival upside down.

In their performances, the Getske Boys are constantly occupied with persuasive place-making (Johnstone 2010). The name of Takkie – one of the members of the Getske Boys – literally refers to a ‘little branch’ and is identifiable as ‘Hollands’ by its use of the diminutive form – (k)ie whereas standard Dutch would require -je. In using this form, we already come to know that the Getske Boys play with the Limburg–Holland and Limburg–Heerlen opposition (cf. Cornips 2014). Takkie lives in Takkenberg (the mountain of branches) where people talk like the Getske Boys. These people live in Heerlen-Noord and especially in the former coalminer neighbourhoods like Vrieheide, Hoensbroek, Passart and Nieuw-Einde. According to the Facebook page of Demi-Sec aka The Getske Boys, their hometown is Heerle-Noord (Demi-Sec n.d.). Thus, they are very precise and eager to localise their languagecultural practices. The Getske Boys parody the people from the lower working class whom they call krau(w):

Het is een persiflage op mensen uit de volksbuurt, uit de (koel)kolonie, die vrijgevochten van aard zijn, een grote bek maar een klein hartje hebben. Waar zij vandaan komen heersen de wetten van de straat. In Heerlen waren dat doorgaans de wijken aan de verkeerde kant van spoor zoals dit in de volksmond genoemd werd. De taal die gesproken wordt is een combinatie van Nederlands met dialect, een taal met knoebelen, maar erg herkenbaar (Alaaf Limburg n.d.).

It’s a parody of people from the popular neighbourhood, from the ‘pit’ colony, who are unruly, have a rough tongue (big mouth), yet soft-hearted (a small heart). Where they come from, the law of the street rules. In Heerlen, these were usually the neighbourhoods on the ‘wrong side of the tracks’ as they are popularly called. The language spoken is a com-

bination of Dutch and dialect, a language with ‘lumps’, but a very recognisable one (authors’ translation.)

The labelling of how people speak in Heerlen as ‘a combination of Dutch and dialect, a language with “lumps”’ is indeed a very recognisable one in Heerlen and elsewhere in (south) Limburg (Cornips 1994). Heerlen occupies/(d) an exceptional position in Limburg and the Netherlands since it was the centre of the coalmining industry since 1900 (until it closed down in the 1970s). Between 1899 and 1930, the huge, expanding mining industry in the area attracted numerous workers from elsewhere in the Netherlands. In 1930 54.7 per cent of the inhabitants in Heerlen were born outside Limburg, of whom 22 per cent outside The Netherlands (Dieteren 1962). These demographic changes caused a language shift in the public domain from dialect to Dutch in the early beginnings of the twentieth century. This early language shift in Heerlen is in sharp contrast with other localities in Limburg where Dutch entered public life much later, presumably in the early 1960s (cf. Cornips 1994, 2013). Previous studies (Cornips 1994 and references) have shown that how people speak in Heerlen is a kind of Dutch that is different from codified or what is labelled standard Dutch. This kind of spoken Dutch is heavily stigmatised within Limburg and Heerlen, which does not hold for what is called the local dialect spoken by the crew members of the Blue Vessel. The use of spoken Dutch in Heerlen falls outside the existing order, which is neatly divided into two categories: a language is either a standard one or a dialect. Heerlen Dutch, therefore, may be regarded as an anomaly, as finding itself in the margins (cf. Cornips 1994; Cornips et al. 2012). In Limburg there are many more or less denigrating nicknames to denote Dutch spoken in Heerlen and its speakers. These nicknames or stereotypes reinforce social divisions (Eckert 2012): they picture Heerlen as ‘Holland’ within the Limburg area (it is to ‘Holland’ to which the name Takkie refers). This perception is based on the idea that Heerlen cannot be considered as part of ‘authentic Limburg’. The nicknames emphasise the Dutchness of the language – or maybe rather its non-Limburgness. Examples of stereotypes are among others: In Heerlen is Limburg gestorven (Limburg died in Heerlen), Hollanders (Dutch people, i.e. western people), Misjmasj (mixed language), Hollesj mit kneebele (Dutch with lumps), Steenkolen nederlandse (coalmining Dutch) and Huillands (a kind of Dutch that makes you cry). These nicknames show that we are dealing here with a language ‘from the margins’, that is with a language that falls outside the dominant categories of society. They also express the significance of the ‘dialect and Dutch normative

perspective' from within Limburg on the kind of Dutch that is used in Heerlen. In other words, Heerlen is constructed as different, as 'Holland' within Limburg due to its past as a city overwhelmed with immigrants. Moreover, the part of the migrants who occupied the highest and leading positions in the coalmining companies were from the dominant western part of The Netherlands speaking 'Hollands'. All these migrants settled in Heerlen-Zuid, reflecting geographically the functional segregation between people in low labour positions underground and high ones above in the public domain: the coalminers were assigned to specific coalminer neighbourhoods (called koloniën) in Heerlen-Noord and the upper (middle) class in Heerlen-Zuid.

The Getske Boys explicitly voice the former coalminers in these specific neighbourhoods by using their parodied linguistic features that are indexical of working-class male types. The Getske Boys note on their Facebook page that their hometown is 'Heerle-Noord ouwhoer'. The linguistic form *ouwhoer* is in their view indexical for present-day Heerlen-Noord. *Ouwhoer* etymologically means old whore but is used by the Getske Boys as a frequent tag in sentence-final position, as in their Facebook comment *Doe sjtemme ouwhoer!* (Do vote *ouwhoer!*) (dated 7 May 2014). From a languagecultural perspective, the Getske Boys transgress both national and Limburgian norms in (re)producing the local Heerlen ones. They transgress national ones by stylising a kind of Dutch that is no longer recognisable as standard but as local and they transgress local Limburgian norms in stylising Huillands 'Cry-landish' which is salient as local for it is not perceived as 'Dutch' or 'dialect' but as something 'in-between'; it is immediately recognisable as typical for Heerlen (cf. Cornips 1994). They also transgress norms by using linguistic forms as *ouwhoer*, which might be perceived as a taboo word by many others.

Their song *Naar Talia/Talië* (to Italy), performed in 2010, tells us that the protagonists go to Italy in a fast car to steal little songs. While in Italy they eat pasta instead of French fries and mashed potatoes and they drink a lot of beer that they took with them because the Italian beer has no taste. They lie on the beach to watch women skimpily dressed in tiny bikini's (only a shoelace between their buttocks). The pasta causes them diarrhoea and they have to fart. While in Rome, they go to the Vatican to light a candle for one of their fathers who is ill. The priests close the doors when seeing them arriving and therefore they burn down the Vatican with petrol. This activity is in sharp contrast with the holy blessing of the Blue Vessel, its crew and audience by the almoner. Hence, in *Naar Talia* the Getske Boys do not

comply but rebel against the old social order sanctioned and controlled by the Church.

The text below, extracts from captions in one of their YouTube videos (Demi-Sec aka de Getske Boys 2010), shows the Getske Boys' selection of linguistic forms that in their view is indexical of Heerlen-Noord. All italics reveal non-standard use of Dutch, that is something in between dialect and Dutch or other varieties at the level of lexicon, phonology, morpho-syntax and semantics (Cornips 1994):

He Klets, wat gaan jullie doen in Italië
Zeik bouwe, liedjes *klauwe*

Hey Klets, what are you going to do in Italy?
*Fool around, nicking songs [zeik 'urine',
klauwe 'to steal']*

Naar Talia, naar Talia, Talia *heer wie cum*

To Talia, to Talia, Talia *heer wie cum*

Ken je Genaro Clementaro,
Die tot voor 'n jaar of twee
Bij de la Veneziana

Do you know Genaro Clementaro,
Who until a year of two ago
At Veneziana [Italian ice-cream shop in
Heerlen]

Alle ijsjes *draaje dee*

Did turn all ice-creams

...

...

Pasta *vreete*, knoflook*sjcheete*,
hendig *zjweete*, aan de *dunne op de plee*

Chowing pasta, garlic *farts*
Sweating a lot, *having the runs at the loo*

...

...

Aan de *labia Maggiore*, ken je *vet* score
Hei je zo 'n 'Bella' mee

At the *labia Maggiore* [pun on Lago
Maggiore], you can score big time
Have a 'Bella' on your side in no time

Buona note, lekkere *votte*
met zo'n *veeter* in de *sjnee*

Buona note, nice *bootie*
With a shoelace in the *crack*

Vroeg aan Sophia:

Asked to Sophia

O cara mia

O cara mia

Of ze nederlands

Whether she

sjpreeke dee

did speak Dutch

'*Mi scusiare*,

'*Mi scusiare*,

non parlare'

non parlare'

dus daar ken

thus that is beyond

jeeeeeeeeeeee

all practicalities

Dus *niente* mee!

—

The Getske Boys stylise Huillands (Cry-landish) by means of hybrid use of English and dialect as in '*heer wie cum*' (here we come) with sexual allusion (word order is English with the finite verb following the subject pronoun instead of the adverb as in Dutch but dialect phonology) and language jokes with sexual connotation as in *labia Maggiore*. They also use vocabulary that might be easily interpreted as obscene

by many, like *zeik* (urine), *klauwe* (to steal), *vreete* (to chow), *sjcheete* (farts), *votte* (bootie), *sjnee* (crack), *me ouwe* (my old man). They display hybrid use of Dutch and Italian in ‘*Mi scusiare, non parlare*’ dus daar ken jeeeeeeeeeeee ... Dus **niente** mee! [I apologise, I don’t speak thus this is beyond all practicalities]. (Note the infinitives *scusiare* and *parlare* instead of expected inflected *mi scusi, non parlo* and the insertion of *niente* [nothing].)

The use of declarative do+infinitive as in ‘Of ze nederlands **sjpreeke dee**’ (whether she did speak Dutch) is immediately recognisable as non-standard Dutch and hence as a local feature (Cornips 1994).

Furthermore, palatalised /s/ as /ʃ/ is a good example of a hybrid use of dialect and Dutch as in **sjcheete** instead of Dutch *scheten* (to fart), *zjwete* instead of Dutch *zweten* (to sweat), **sjnee** instead of Dutch *snee* (crack), **sjlech** instead of Dutch *slecht* (bad, ill), **sjteek** instead of Dutch *steek* (to light).

The same holds for the use of *t*-deletion which is a dialect and not a Dutch feature as in *sjlech(t)* (ill), *dee(t)* (do), *dich(t)* (closed). Finally, the Getske Boys localise Heerlen by mentioning the famous ice-cream shop *La Veneziana*, which started in Heerlen in the 1930s.

Examining the Getske Boys’ carnivalesque, serious-play performance as a vehicle of indexing the local, we get an insight into how people may creatively exploit languagecultural resources to resist and subvert codifying efforts by elites (in this case official carnival societies such as the *Winkbülle* and the *Blue Vessel*) and their disciplining influence. The Getske Boys’ performances may be seen as a critique of middle-class norms and sensibilities being artificial and out of touch with ‘real’ places. The Getske Boys mobilise indexicalities between languagecultural forms and places: in their production of belonging they parody and in doing so also produce a recognisable bodily, intimate feeling of being ‘at home’ in a specific place. Conversely, the *Blue Vessel*’s production of belonging revolves around formal languagecultural requirements needed to claim membership of a public-oriented structure, in this case claiming belonging to an official local carnival association.

Conclusion

In our two case studies of the production of belonging through languagecultural practices we have shown how available languagecultural resources are exploited in radically different ways, producing two

opposing, dialectically related ways of belonging. With their strict observance of ‘pure’ dialect use, and their carefully crafted and cultivated invented tradition (Hobsbawm 1983) the crew of the Blue Vessel work to produce a kind of belonging to Heerlen emphasising formal requirement for membership, in this case membership to the Heerlen carnival elite and by extension to the larger Limburgian carnival elite. The authentication and legitimation of this belonging through membership in a public-oriented formal structure is achieved not only through the use of ‘pure’ Heerlen dialect but also by claiming places connected with authority and history (the Schelmentoren and Pancratiusplein in Heerlen’s historical city centre), and seeking mutual recognition of authorities in Heerlen and neighbouring places within and across borders. The conventionalising, disciplining practices of the Blue Vessel are countered by an alternative production of belonging by the Getske Boys. Their subversive, creative exploitation of languagecultural resources critiques the Blue Vessel’s language ideology in which pure dialect is the index of belonging. Not only do the Getske Boys go against the language norms propagated by the Blue Vessel, they also rebel against the mainstream middle-class norms of tidiness, order and its sanctioning by the Catholic church. Where the languagecultural forms and conventions of the Blue Vessel are indexing Heerlen belonging by stressing membership to a social group, namely the larger official carnival community, the Getske Boys mobilise a totally different belonging – place-belonging. Their languagecultural forms index a place, a neighbourhood, where real people live who speak a ‘real’ vivid language, a dynamic variety in between dialect and Dutch, contrasted with an artificial, strictly monitored ‘pure’ dialect.

The languagecultural practices of the Blue Vessel and the Getske Boys are highly reflexive but in radically different manners. The Blue Vessel’s practices are strictly monitored and subjected to norms and conventions in order to safeguard members’ languagecultural capital. In their practices, there is little or no trace of irony or parody, in contrast to the Getske Boys’ performances. The belonging produced through the languagecultural practices of the Blue Vessel also figures in discourses on citizenship in many European nation-states today stressing authentic and legitimate membership of a particular group (Geschiere 2009). The Getske Boys’ practices provide an alternative to this discourse of inclusion/exclusion: their parodic practices, characterised by hybridity and hyperbole, play with indexicalities of place leaving ample space for everyone willing to play along and experience a shared sense of place-belongingness. As such, it may be read as a cri-

tique of contemporary political discourses of belonging and citizenship that emphasise purity, autochthony and integration, and as a plea for conviviality in contemporary societies dealing with migration and languagecultural diversity.

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