

2-24-2014

Sobering Anxieties: Alcohol, Tobacco, and the Intoxicated Social Body in Dutch Painting During the True Freedom, 1650-1672

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Sobering Anxieties:
Alcohol, Tobacco, and the Intoxicated Social Body in Dutch Painting During the True Freedom,
1650-1672

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Liberal Arts
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Date of Approval:
February 24, 2014

Keywords: colonialism, foreign, otherness, maidservant, Burgher, mercenary

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Table of Contents

List of Figures	ii
Abstract	iii
Introduction	1
Chapter One: The Prolific Home	10
Chapter Two: Foreign Invasions and the Comforts of Home	24
Chapter Three: Sleeping Sentries and Social Hangovers	37
Conclusion: The Neglected Garden.....	52
References	59

List of Figures

Figure 1:	van Rijn, Rembrandt. <i>The Holy Family</i> (1640)	15
Figure 2:	de Hooch, Pieter. <i>A Dutch Courtyard</i> (1658-1660)	18
Figure 3:	de Hooch, Pieter. <i>A Dutch Courtyard</i> (1658-1660)	19
Figure 4:	Metsu, Gabriël. <i>Woman Reading a Letter</i> (1665)	21
Figure 5:	Galle, Philips. <i>De Hollandse Maagd in de Hollandse tuin</i> (1600)	29
Figure 6:	Steen, Jan. <i>The Idlers</i> (1660)	32
Figure 7:	ter Borch, Gerard. <i>Guardroom with Sleeping Soldier</i> (1652-1653)	35
Figure 8:	ter Borch, Gerard. <i>Woman Drinking with a Sleeping Soldier</i>	43
Figure 9:	Fabritius, Carel. <i>The Sentry</i> (1654)	46
Figure 10:	Steen, Jan. <i>Prinsjedag</i> (1660s)	48
Figure 11:	Steen, Jan. <i>The Drunken Couple</i> (1665)	49

Abstract

During the second half of the seventeenth century, alcohol and tobacco were consumed at all levels of the social strata in the Dutch Republic. These products and their consumption were important to long standing traditions and were vital to the Dutch economy. Paradoxically, however, moralists and ministers attempted to curb intoxication by associating it with the loss of one's masculinity or femininity. Intoxicated men and women were stigmatized as morally inept, unruly, and a threat to the family, community, and even the nation. Dutch genre paintings depicting alcohol and tobacco consumption are often described as moral warnings or didactic messages, but these images were more than teaching aids for Dutch youth. The intoxicated characters in these paintings represented a larger social anxiety towards the threat of foreign invasions. Foreign labor, including soldiers, sailors, and maidservants, held a precarious position within the Republic and in Dutch homes, and these foreign workers became easy targets for moralists and ministers who sought to perpetuate the Dutch national myth of superiority through allegories of foreign otherness. There is a large body of scholarly work that explores seventeenth-century Dutch society; however, little attention has been given to the significance of alcohol and tobacco consumption. This paper addresses these concerns with a special emphasis on paintings created during the True Freedom (1650-1672). Through the examination of paintings, moral treatises, and religious sermons, I will discuss depictions of alcohol and tobacco consumption and juxtapose them to the *ideal* man and woman as described by moralists and

ministers. For the seventeenth-century Dutch, images of alcohol and tobacco represented an insidious infection in a pristine community. But these condemnations tell us much more about the anxieties of seventeenth-century Dutch society than about the inherent evils of intoxication.

Introduction

No other imagery in seventeenth-century Dutch genre painting was so paradoxically associated with malfeasance and national pride; with embarrassing disgrace and economic success; with threatening foreign invasions and the comforts of home; and with masculinity and femininity, as effectively as images of alcohol and tobacco consumption. Both alcohol and tobacco were enjoyed at all levels of the social strata and were frequently depicted in seventeenth-century Dutch art, helping to confirm their significance and popularity in Dutch society. Despite being commonplace activities, moralists and ministers openly described drinking and smoking as sinful, immoral, and a general threat to one's reputation. These attitudes complicate the already ambiguous artistic expressions of early modern Dutch masters, but complications are not necessarily limitations; in fact, they can often serve to enhance our understanding of the cultural objects being studied. Svetlana Alpers is correct to suggest that, "the absence of a special discourse about Dutch art may be a blessing in disguise, for it encourages us to look outside the art itself for clues to its status, role, and meaning in society."¹

This thesis will show that images of alcohol and tobacco consumption in Dutch genre paintings during the True Freedom (1650-1672) signified a larger social anxiety towards the threat of insidious foreign invasions that further threatened the Dutch national myth of superiority. This myth of superiority was largely based on sex-segregated responsibilities. The

¹ Alpers, Svetlana. *The Art of Describing: Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983. 8.

home, in both the familial and national sense, was a pristine, sterile feminine space, while economic, colonial, and military expeditions abroad were male prerogatives. The marriage of these two elements paradoxically nurtured and threatened the Dutch myth. The fear of a foreign infection was personified by images of male and female characters, who, while heavily engaged in alcohol and tobacco consumption, neglected their gender-based assignments.

Alcohol and tobacco consumption was widely blamed for disrupting family cohesion and work ethic, and if the family is not working as it should, then the nation could not work as it should. Catherine Gallagher points out that the individual body is a sign “of the health and infirmity of the larger social body.”² Likewise, the male and female characters in these paintings serve as allegories for the political, religious, economic, and social realities of their time and place. Essential to this argument is the idea that alcohol and tobacco consumption, while economically beneficial to the Republic, consistently undermined the authority and patriotism of the Orangists as well as the religious dogma of the Dutch Reformed Church, thus perpetuating the Republic’s lack of readiness to defend itself from foreign attacks.

This thesis is based on three elements. First, that early modern notions of “ideal” gender roles were a product of a larger discursive history predicated on misogynistic constructions of Christian morality and classical stoicism. The binaries of such depict the domestic home juxtaposed to the foreign brothel or tavern, nursing mothers juxtaposed to whores, and industrious patriotic statesmen juxtaposed to idle foreign mercenaries. These binaries were crucial to the sustainability of the Dutch national myth of superiority, a myth that helped secure

² Gallagher, Catherine. "The Body Versus the Social Body in the Works of Thomas Malthus and Henry Mayhew." *Representations* 14 (1986): 83.

the Republic's economic, political, and social standing in the world during the first half of the century.

The reliance upon a nationalistic myth of superiority is, of course, not unique to the Dutch. Some of the most successful nations in Western history have linked their political ideologies and positional superiority to a larger divine plan.³ The hegemonic reciprocities of such reinforce what that citizen had suspected all along: that he is in control of his world and his economic, colonial, and military successes are proof of his unique relationship to a higher power. As Annette Cozzi points out, "This, of course, is the aim of hegemony: an internalization of ideology so complete that it seems self-evident."⁴

Second, that images of tobacco consumption paradoxically signified both masculine success abroad (i.e. military expeditions, colonialism and mercantile exchange) as well as an immoral penetration of the pristine feminine home and community. Tobacco was simultaneously a trophy of masculine successes, a foreign novelty and a figurative Trojan Horse upon an otherwise virtuous Calvinist community. And lastly, that images of alcohol intoxication were equated to the loss of control over one's body and mind, and as a result blurred gender boundaries and challenged what was considered to be *appropriate* behavior. This blurring effect threatened the security and wellbeing of the home, both in the familial sense and in the national sense.

Around 1650, a dramatic shift took place in Dutch genre paintings, from outdoor or semi-outdoor guardroom scenes depicting large numbers of soldiers to more domesticated and

³ Some examples of this national myth of superiority in Western tradition include Manifest Destiny in North America, Kulturträger in Germany, Nation-in-Arms in Revolutionary France.

⁴ Cozzi, Annette. *Discourses of Food in Nineteenth-Century British Fiction*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. 4.

intimate indoor scenes with fewer characters. This morphology is sometimes referred to as a shift towards “civility and decorum” or the “pacification of masculinity.”⁵ Coinciding with the conclusion of the Eighty Years War in 1648 and with the death of Willem II in 1650, a cultural and artistic revolution took place between 1650 and 1672. More commonly referred to as the *Ware Vrijheid* (True Freedom), this term has come to represent both a time period and a political condition in which the Republic was not under the control of a stadholder. During the True Freedom, the Dutch Reformed Church also found itself in a precarious position, as the House of Orange could not fulfill their role as the church’s patron and protector. As a result, both the House of Orange’s calls to patriotic duty or the Dutch Reformed Church’s moral warnings often fell upon deaf ears. They were simply unable to compete with the economic forces that were reshaping society.

The Dutch Reformed Church’s disconnect with the community extended beyond politics and economics. Scholars such as Jeroen Dekker and John Michael Montias argue that the Dutch art market was not aristocratic and did not rely on patronage from either the church or the court.⁶ In addition, the theatrical nature of painting, and the traditional use of hidden iconography allowed artists to express their individuality in new and sometimes controversial ways. And while conventional thinking often leads one to believe that seventeenth-century Dutch society

⁵ Salomon, Nanette. *Shifting Priorities: Gender and Genre in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Painting*. Stanford, Calif.: Stamford University Press, 2004. 114. Rosen, Jochai. *Soldiers at leisure: the guardroom scene in Dutch genre painting of the Golden Age*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010. 131.

⁶ Dekker, Jeroen. “A Republic of Educators: Educational Messages in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Genre Painting.” *History of Education Quarterly*. Vol. 36, no. 2 (Summer, 1996): 155-182. Montias, John Michael. “Reflections on historical materialism, economic theory, and the history of art in the context of renaissance and 17th century painting.” *Journal of Cultural Economics* 5.2 (1981): 19-38.

was largely Calvinist, it is no coincidence that this period of *freedom* ushered in masters such as Johannes Vermeer and Jan Steen, both of whom were Catholic.⁷

By examining the artwork of Rembrandt van Rijn, Pieter de Hooch, Gabriël Metsu, Jan Steen, Gerard ter Borch, and Carel Fabritius, this thesis will discuss how and why images of alcohol and tobacco consumption reflected an overarching anxiety towards foreign invasions of all kinds - natural invasions such as storms and floods, economic invasions such as foreign labor and novelties, political/military invasions including mercenaries and war, but perhaps worst of all was the threat of a foreign ideological invasion - one that festered from within the Republic and that could deconstruct not only the gender binaries prescribed by the hegemonic elite but the entire foundation of the Dutch myth of superiority.

The power of the Dutch myth of superiority is harnessed not within its explicit messages; rather, it relies upon analogies with the foreign other. Similarly, Michel Foucault writes that, “Power is tolerable only on condition that it mask a substantial part of itself. Its success is proportional to its ability to hide its own mechanisms.”⁸ Through sermons, treatises, didactic artwork, and even rewriting the bible, moralists, ministers, and pro-Orangists employed strategies that linked their ideologies with divinity and Dutch patriotism. Fundamental to their message was the importance of a patriarchal hierarchy, one which began at the home and served to dictate the welfare of not only the home, but also of the community and the nation. By making the Dutch citizen problematic, they had indirectly made the Dutch citizen vitally important. “The body, after all, had been problematized before in both classical and Christian ascetic traditions

⁷ Dekker, 161.

⁸ Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality. Vol. 1: An Introduction*. New York: Vintage Books, 1978. 86.

that had made the flesh into a treacherous enemy of man's 'ultimate' good."⁹ This effort was the restructuring of biblical narratives and classical stoicism into a seventeenth-century Dutch framework, one which relied upon assigned gender roles and one which represented a balancing act between faith and disbelief, praise and folly, assurance and fear.

These anxieties are present in art but not always presented as straightforward allegories. In the works of Gerard ter Borch, Jan Steen, and Carel Fabritius, alcohol and tobacco consumption signifies both the fear of a splintering Dutch Republic as well as their disdain and contempt for Orangist political ideologies and church dogma. In these works, there is a tension between the desire for independence and the price, in terms of the welfare of the state, that will be exacted for such independence. Scenes become more intimate in nature as the risks become more imminent. Groups of mercenaries, who were depicted in barns and abandoned churches during the first half of the seventeenth century, were by the second half of the century indoors accompanied by a young maiden or even a housewife. Their proximity was no longer at a relatively safe distance from towns and cities; rather, they were becoming part of the community.

Otherness, marginalization, and dissension from the patriotic Orangists and militant Calvinists was by mid-century not entirely uncommon. Masters such as Johannes Steen, who was not only Catholic, but also a drinker and womanizer, owned a series of taverns and might well have been labeled as a procurer for his efforts. Other artists such as Carel Fabritius, who was killed at a relatively young age—the result of soldiers' negligence—explicitly illuminated his concern regarding the lack of discipline and military prowess of soldiers within the Republic. And Gerard ter Borch, who was part of the Deventer town council, a known anti-Orangist

⁹ Gallagher, 86. "The body can only become absolutely problematic when it is completely valued."

political entity, made a number of similar allegories reflecting the danger of both masculine and not-so masculine foreign mercenaries in the Republic.

Wealthy cities like those of Leiden and Delft, where Dutch masters such as Steen and Vermeer operated, differed from more rural towns such as Deventer, where ter Borch completed some of his most popular works. During the seventeenth century, foreign painters from the South immigrated to the larger port cities, perpetuating the need for guild restrictions in order to protect the established domestic artists. However, in the more rural eastern parts of the Republic, foreign mercenaries employed by the Dutch were increasingly encroaching on townspeople. In the case of ter Borch, the town of Deventer presented unique opportunities as it was largely anti-Orange, it was not restricted by painting guilds, and there was little artistic competition there.

Of all of these masters, Steen will be referred to most often, as no other seventeenth-century Dutch painter that I know of was as effective in explicitly inverting the gender-based hegemonic messages of the Orangists and Gomarist Calvinists. Nanette Salomon argues that Steen “invents himself as an artistic entity defined by his masculine sexual appetite.”¹⁰ His paintings are “less a moralistic admonition than a statement of the human condition in its entirety . . . like Erasmus, Steen praises folly with a degree of ambivalence.”¹¹ In 1648, Steen and Gabriël Metsu founded the painters’ Guild of Saint Luke at Leiden. In 1654, Steen moved to Delft, where he became a member of the local militia and where he ran a brewery/guest house known as *De Roscam* (The Curry Comb). *De Roscam* was destroyed in the explosion in Delft that same year, but Steen would open at least one more tavern before his death in 1679.¹² Steen’s

¹⁰ Salomon, 74.

¹¹ Salomon, 49.

¹² Pieters Kerk Leiden website: <http://www.pieterskerk.com/en/monument/floor-plan/jan-steen/> Steen was buried at Pieters Kerk Leiden on February 23, 1679.

rebel-like behavior comes through in his art, and because of this, his work makes for an interesting case study, specifically in terms of deconstructing the hegemonic elite's attempts at maintaining Dutch cultural hegemony.

In the seventeenth century, the Dutch Republic experienced unprecedented economic prosperity, which paved the way for an emerging middle class, a flowering of individualism, and a growth of secularization. Immigrants from Scandinavia, Germany, and France flocked to the Netherlands in search of employment. They brought with them their own language, customs, and religions. In addition to foreign labor, exotic foreign luxuries also flooded the Dutch marketplace. Dutch printing capabilities rivaled those of their competitors, allowing them to illustrate their global reach in the form of maps, travel accounts, and literature.¹³ Wealth, leisure time, and access to foreign novelties reinforced the Dutch national myth: that the Dutch were inherently connected with God, literally and figuratively in control of the known world. Proof of this divine connection and awesome responsibility could be found in the unprecedented economic and military successes that the Dutch had experienced during the preceding decades.

During the 1650s and 1660s, ministers and moralists employed a moral campaign that made young adults scapegoats for social disorder. Their goal was to incite panic, which they hoped would ultimately lead to religious and political reform.¹⁴ These moral warnings largely fell on deaf ears during the midcentury, but the ministers and moralists would regain traction as the Republic again found itself at war in 1672. The incited *panic*, or what Simon Schama refers to as “embarrassment” was not centered on economic success per se; rather it focused on the

¹³ Schmidt, Benjamin. “Mapping an Empire: Cartographic and Colonial Rivalry in Seventeenth-Century Dutch and English North America.” *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, Vol 54, no. 3 (Jul., 1997): 549-578.

¹⁴ Roberts, Benjamin and Groenendijk, Leendert. “Moral Panic and Holland's Libertine Youth of the Late 1650s and 1660s.” *Journal of Family History* (2005): 327.

vices that accompany wealth and leisure.¹⁵ These included idleness, gambling, drinking, smoking, and womanizing, as well as other sins. For the hegemonic elite, the construction of morality was different for men and women. The Calvinist roots of this construction closely aligned morality with notions of predestination. The resulting ideal gender forms were responsible for specific roles in society as well as in the patriarchal hierarchy, the Dutch national myth, and the ‘Great Chain of Being.’¹⁶

For the ministers and moralists, both tobacco and alcohol carried negative connotations. Tobacco was denounced because it was new and foreign, but also because it quickly became a domestic comfort. Alcohol was attacked because it was deeply rooted in secular and/or pagan traditions that directly challenged the authority and doctrine of the Dutch Reformed Church. It was also a staple of survival and proved impossible to prohibit. The intoxicating effects of either threatened the preconceived binaries of masculinity and femininity. Images of tobacco and alcohol consumption in seventeenth-century Dutch painting served as the manifestations of gender-based anxieties, which if unchecked, would weaken the vigilance and sanctity of the home and by extension, the nation. These paintings served as a microcosm of the Republic itself, and a site of tension between individual desires and social restrictions, between economics and morality, and between masculinity and femininity. Politics, economics, religion, and even gender were all intertwined. One could not be understood without the others.

¹⁵ Schama, Simon. *The Embarrassment of Riches: An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age*. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1988.

¹⁶ Boterbloem, Kees. *The Fiction and Reality of Jan Struys: A Seventeenth-Century Dutch Globetrotter*. Basingstoke England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008. p. 37. “Nationalism defines itself against inferior others . . . Netherlands ranked above the English, who ranked higher than the Italians, followed by the Muscovites, Persians, and Turks, with Tatars or Malagasy bringing up the rear, considered barely more ‘civilized’ than apes. . . Protestantism was superior to idolatrous Catholicism . . . while all of Christianity was superior to Islam and Judaism.”

Chapter 1:
The Prolific Home

The husband must be on the street to practice his trade

The wife must stay home to be in the kitchen

The diligent practice of street wisdom may in the man be praised

But with the delicate wife, there should be quiet and steady ways

So you, industrious husband, go to earn your living

While you, O young wife, attend to your household.¹⁷

*--Jacob Cats, *Alle de Wercken van den Heere Vrouwe*, 1625*

So it was written by Jacob Cats (1577-1660), the poet, politician, moralist, and author. Cats's work was well known among all social strata within the Republic and his popularity among Dutch households earned him the nickname *Vader Cats* (Father Cats).¹⁸ Cats attempted to provide moral guidance without inciting too much curiosity and desire in the minds of his younger audiences. He focused his written and verbal attacks on issues of vice, human folly, and the ideal roles of men and women in Dutch society. Through strict adherence to these gender-based responsibilities, the family, community, and even the Republic could benefit. Politics,

¹⁷ Cats, Jacob. *Alle de wercken van den Heere. Vrouwe*. Amsterdam: 1625. p. 317. Translated in Simon Schama's *The Embarrassment of Riches*, 400.

¹⁸ Roberts, Benjamin. "'Wearing Out a Pair of Fool's Shoes': Sexual Advice for Youth in Holland's Golden Age." *Journal of the History of Sexuality* (2004): 141.

social constructions of morality, and gender dynamics are not mutually exclusive; rather they are inherently linked with one another. Where the family is concerned with “tensions between intimacy and power,” so too are governments concerned with maintaining law, order, and civil obedience.¹⁹ One who broke from these social norms ran the risk of being blacklisted as immoral, lacking in virtue, and proceeding down a slippery slope of vice, sin, and misfortune.

Ministers and moralists like Jacob Cats based many of their analogies on biblical narratives from the Old Testament. In 1651, Jacob Cats referred to the *Staten Generael* as ‘Ye Children of Israel,’ and Simon Schama writes that William of Orange was commonly identified with King David.²⁰ Biblical metaphors were also used to undermine enemies of the state. The minister, Adrianus Hasius, described Spain’s Philip II as the “Spanish Pharaoh,” and despite the power of the Spanish army, God still rescued the Dutch from Spanish tyranny. The siege of Jerusalem, for example, was correlated to the 1574 Spanish siege of Leiden. Hasius maintains that God “destroyed the superstitious walls of the Roman Catholic Jericho” and that “God carries the shield of this state.”²¹

The defensive, righteous element of the Dutch nationalistic myth and its biblical connections to the word of God (i.e., The Old Testament) were valuable pieces of propaganda. Whether it was from enemy nations, foreign immigration, exotic luxuries or from the surrounding sea itself, the Dutch were under constant threat of invasion. For the moralists and ministers, foreign invasions were both a source of infection, as well as an omen: a sign of God’s

¹⁹ Salomon, Nanette. *Shifting Priorities: Gender and Genre in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Painting*. Stanford, Calif.: Stamford University Press, 2004. 25.

²⁰ Schama, Simon. *The Embarrassment of Riches: an Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age*. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1988. 100, 103.

²¹ Roberts, Benjamin and Groenendijk, Leendert. “Moral Panic and Holland’s Libertine Youth of the Late 1650s and 1660s.” *Journal of Family History* (2005): 336.

displeasure with Dutch secularization. Themes such as Moses' parting of the Red Sea signified the Republic's ongoing battles against flooding, which was further connected to the threat of *zondvloed* (flood of sin).²² The benevolence associated with the Dutch identity and the Old Testament metaphors helped shape a complex social hierarchy, the top of which was occupied by the Dutch in general and the Dutch male burgher in particular. The female's role was clearly subordinated, a practice that was deeply embedded in Western tradition and perpetuated in the social interactions of everyday life. A. Lynn Martin argues that the lack of agency among females in early modern Europe was the result of a process that began at birth and continued through marriage "when women passed from the control of their fathers to the control of their husbands."²³

Here again, one encounters Jacob Cats. Svetlana Alpers argues that Cats's emblem books, unlike most paintings, were complete with motto and image and therefore "unproblematic." There was no "puzzle to be solved."²⁴ In *Houwelijck* (1625), Cats argues that the Dutch bible defines woman as *huysvrouwe* (house wife), and even stresses that in the bible, women are not named "*vrouwen van den velde, of vrouwen van de straet*" (women of the field or women of the street); rather "*huysvrouwe is uwen naem*" (house wife is your name).²⁵ Cats's description follows a long line of patriarchal thought derived from the biblical accounts of Creation that

²² Kraus, Helen. *Gender Issues in Ancient and Reformation Translations of Genesis 1-4*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011. 164.

²³ Martin, A. Lynn. *Alcohol, Sex, and Gender in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*. New York, NY: Palgrave, 2001. 10.

²⁴ Alpers, Svetlana. *The Art of Describing: Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983. 231.

²⁵ Kraus, 169.

suggested that “woman was created for man, not he for her.”²⁶ The lack of complication in Cats’s moral judgments conveys a sense of artificial benevolence. T.J. Jackson Lears’s work on cultural hegemony describes a similar process where a community’s sense of superiority is not the result of brainwashing; rather, it is based “on favoritism of certain discourses while ignoring or suppressing others.”²⁷ This process was employed quite effectively in what was arguably the most influential text of early modern Dutch society, the first Dutch vernacular bible.

The Synod of Dordrecht (1618-19), which began as a debate over predestination, resulted in the removal of Remonstrants (Arminian Calvinists) from the theological discourse and led to the political execution of Johan van Oldenbarnevelt (1547-1619). This assault on the Remonstrants excluded them from future political debates as well.²⁸ The Synod of Dordrecht was also responsible for initiating the production of an Orthodox (Gomarist) Calvinist bible. In 1637, the *Statenbijbel* was commissioned by the *Staten Generael*, those ‘Children of Israel,’ and was “very different from the Delft Bible some 150 years earlier.”²⁹ The decision to publish the bible in Dutch rather than in Latin made it available to a larger audience and served to undermine the authority of other religious institutions still using Latin scripts such as the Roman Catholic Church. Benedict Anderson argues that, “after 1640 . . . the fall of Latin exemplified a larger process in which the sacred communities . . . were gradually fragmented, pluralized, and

²⁶ Kraus, 168.

²⁷ Lears, T.J. Jackson. “The Concept of Cultural Hegemony: Problems and Possibilities.” *The American Historical Review*, Volume 90, Issue 3 (Jun., 1985): 577.

²⁸ Johan van Oldenbarnevelt was a Remonstrant statesman partly responsible for the twelve year truce (1609-1621) with Spain, a move that was unpopular among the Orangists and Orthodox Calvinists. He was convicted of treason and beheaded in the Hague on 12 May 1619.

²⁹ Kraus, 170.

territorialized.”³⁰ Furthermore, by claiming that the publication of the *Statenbijbel* was a divine undertaking completed by “learned and experienced theologians,” those who served to benefit from its distribution successfully linked divinity with Dutch patriotism, perpetuating the national myth of Dutch superiority.³¹

In 1657, the *Corrigeerbijbel* was created as a revised version of the *Statenbijbel*, primarily correcting spelling and grammatical mistakes. But it did add some curious annotations such as the introduction to chapter 3 which deals with the “devil [tempting] the woman” and a note relating to *begeerte* (desire) in 3:16 which states that the woman “is bound to submit to the man’s will, to seek his protection and to be ruled by his governance.”³² For the authors of such annotations, the message is clear: one’s place in the home and in society was predetermined by God. It was up to the individual to stay the course and not deviate from God’s plan. Politically speaking, the housewife’s submission to the husband foreshadowed the state’s submission to the House of Orange. Each had their *appropriate* place.

Rembrandt’s 1640 painting, *The Holy Family*, reinforces the idea that a connection between God and all classes of Dutch society was possible, but also that that connection hinged on maintaining an upright and virtuous life, one predicated on the performance of specific gender roles. In Rembrandt’s painting, the mother nurses her baby, as an elderly woman (most likely a grandmother) looks on. The father is not distracted by the domestic affairs of the nursing mother and baby; rather he is focused on his trade. Jochai Rosen writes that parental duties were “sex-segregated: the father provided for his family by practicing his trade, the mother provided the

³⁰ Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Rev. and extended ed. London: Verso, 1991. 19.

³¹ Kraus, 171.

³² Kraus, 171.

very substance of her body.”³³ For women, this gender assignment was of the utmost importance. The nursing mother was the ultimate symbol of domesticity and virtue. She represented “domestic harmony and moreover stood for Dutch society at large, serving as an emblem of good government.”³⁴ Nanette Salomon argues that political and domestic spaces were not mutually exclusive, and Luther and Calvin expressed similar views suggesting that the governing of the family was a “microcosm of the state and its government.”³⁵



Figure 1. Rembrandt van Rijn *The Holy Family* (1640).

³³ Rosen, Jochai. *Soldiers at Leisure: the Guardroom Scene in Dutch Genre Painting of the Golden Age*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010. 136.

³⁴ Rosen, 136.

³⁵ Salomon, 25.

Women who did not comply with their assigned role were stigmatized as *uithuizige vrouwen* (women of the world) and were assumed to have an appetite for gossip, alcohol, tobacco, uncontrollable behavior, and unbridled sex.³⁶ Maidservants were especially at odds with the chaste housewife, and in many respects were more threatening to the traditional family than prostitutes. Whereas the prostitute was largely operating in brothels and taverns, the maidservant was intimately connected with the home and family. To complicate matters further, many maidservants were young foreigners who had immigrated to the Republic. Far from their own family, they were at greater risk of manipulation by a culture they did not yet fully understand. The maidservant's precarious position in the home made them an easy target for moralists and ministers. Images of the domestic maidservant "are scarce in Dutch paintings before 1650."³⁷ And Schama argues that "there was no literature, popular or polite (and no art either), featuring the exemplary servant. More commonly they were shown as mischief makers, barrier breakers, tracking the outside world in and leading the inside world out into the streets."³⁸

This marriage of the outside world with the inside world, or the intersection of the masculine exterior and feminine interior, is perhaps best seen in Pieter de Hooch's *A Dutch Courtyard* (1658-1660). Early paintings by De Hooch focused on soldiers merry making, but after 1655, his work often featured domestic settings with middle-class women as the primary protagonists and, like this one, were meant to convey a didactic message. In *A Dutch Courtyard*, the female, donning the colors of the Republic's flag, represents both the domestic familial

³⁶ Schama, 401.

³⁷ Salomon, 25.

³⁸ Schama, 460.

home, as well as the nation. She has ventured to the courtyard, a quasi-domestic setting and liminal space where the public and private are not clearly differentiated.

The metaphors are obvious. The soldiers, representing the masculine, foreign exterior, welcome the company of the domestic feminine interior. Not surprisingly, she has succumbed to the soldiers' bad influence and is taking a drink, most likely beer or wine. Intentionally, de Hooch has set up the painting's composition in an asymmetrical fashion. On one side of the courtyard, the soldiers sit leisurely, drinking and smoking. Juxtaposed to them is an impressionable young girl standing alone, quietly watching as the older female chooses alcohol over her maternal responsibilities. The image of an elder's influence on a child was reverberated in an old proverb, "*Soo de Ouden songen Soo pypen de jonge*" (As the old sing, so pipe the young). In other words, if the adults are merry making, then they're not parenting effectively and their children will follow suit.³⁹

It is no accident that de Hooch has positioned the open doorway at the very center of the painting. In doing so, he has conceptualized the threshold of domestic space in terms of the female body. The open doorway signifies the open woman: objectified, lascivious, and sexually available. She is the opposite of the *porta clausa* (the locked door), a metaphor for the chastity of the Virgin Mary, the ultimate role model for an early modern bourgeois woman.⁴⁰ De Hooch's female has blurred the boundaries between the unruly exterior and the civilized interior. Her behavior is not only dishonorable to herself; it is also threatening to the wellbeing of the neglected child, the home, the community, and even the nation.

³⁹ Dekker, Jeroen. "A Republic of Educators: Educational Messages in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Genre Painting." *History of Education Quarterly*. Vol. 36, no. 2 (Summer, 1996): 171.

⁴⁰ Salomon, 97.



Figure 2. Pieter de Hooch. *A Dutch Courtyard* (1658-1660).

A close-up of the soldiers and maiden reinforce the metaphors of domestic and foreign spaces. The soldiers drink from a *westerwald* jug, named from that area of Germany in which they were made. And they smoke tobacco that was presumably imported from America. The female drinks from a *pasglas* (measuring glass), implying that she is well on her way towards intoxication. The *pasglas* was marked like a measuring cup and was used by the Dutch for drinking games since the Middle Ages. It was typically “passed from one player to the next, who

was challenged to drink to the next level. If the player failed to drink exactly to that mark, he or she would have to drink to the next.”⁴¹ The imagery is consistent with the stereotypes of maidservants, which suggested that they were prone to gossip, troublemaking, strong drink, smoke, and unbridled sexuality. These themes are reinforced by the soldier’s unfastened breeches, phallic pipe and the direction in which the pipe is aimed.



Figure 3. Pieter de Hooch. *A Dutch Courtyard* (1658-1660).

The *Seeven Duyvelen Regeerende de Hedendaagsche Diensst-Maeghden* (The Seven Devils Ruling Present-Day Maidservants) was published in Amsterdam in 1682 and was based on the premise that the devil was attempting to destroy the Republic “from within by insinuating

⁴¹ Roberts, Benjamin. “Drinking Like a Man: the Paradox of Excessive Drinking for Seventeenth-Century Dutch Youths.” *Journal of Family History* 29, no. 3 (2004): 240.

demons into its homes, there to lure Dutch women to several and particular kinds of moral iniquity.” This tract argued that maidservants were agents of the devil, often drinking excessively and exposing their skin while pretending to work in order to attract men and quench their insatiable lust.⁴²

To protect the Republic from devils and maidservants, the Dutch Reformed Church was forced to rely on rhetoric, rather than physical force. The Republic could not afford to rule with an iron fist, as rioting was not altogether uncommon. Rudolf Dekker argues that between 1600 and 1750, tax riots were both numerous and violent, and while “religious riots almost disappeared after the first half of the seventeenth-century,” religious and political conflicts “split society from top to bottom.”⁴³ Schama writes that “membership of the Reformed Church was a condition of officeholding throughout the Republic”; however “it was made clear that a mere declaration of conformity would suffice . . . social peace was preferred over doctrinal rigor.”⁴⁴ For many pragmatic Calvinists, religious tolerance in the Republic was a necessary byproduct of economic prosperity. One could not be attained without the other. Economic opportunities brought foreign labor and goods into the Netherlands while simultaneously luring Dutch merchants into business ventures far away from their homes.

In Gabriël Metsu’s *Woman Reading a Letter* (1665), two women in a middle-class home are preoccupied with that object which is not present, a man, presumably a husband. One woman reads a letter while the other peers behind a curtain at a painting of ships at sea. This combination of imagery suggests that not only is the missing male far from home, but that both women have

⁴² Schama, 458.

⁴³ Dekker, Rudolf M. “Women in Revolt.” *Theory and Society* 16, no. 3 (1987): 339.

⁴⁴ Schama. 61.

an affinity to him. The stormy seas in the embedded painting speak of the dangers associated with maritime travel but also with the storms of passion. The woman reading tilts her letter towards the window but it is not entirely clear if she is doing this for light or to shield the contents of the letter from the other female.



Figure 4. Gabriël Metsu *Woman Reading a Letter* (1665).

There is tension at work not only regarding the absent husband, but also regarding the juxtaposition between the two females. The one donning the darker clothes stands with her back

to the audience, suggesting that she is not only a maidservant, but one who has something to hide. Furthermore, there is something sexually suggestive about the manner in which she carries her bucket, and her curiosity to uncover and examine a dramatic painting that was previously covered. Even more incriminating is the uncertainty associated with the envelope in the maidservant's hand. Is this evidence of a second letter, perhaps from the same man? The Dutch maiden has leisure time and the ability to read, whereas the maidservant is limited to a quick glance at a picture in between her chores. The maidservant's focus on the painting rather than on a written letter is comparable to the education of children who in the Republic were taught lessons by way of emblem books, similar to Jacob Cats' emblem books discussed previously.

Metsu's maidservant is presented as untrustworthy and he has cleverly added a number of symbols that support this reading. A dog, the symbol of domesticity and fidelity, stares at her as if he is suspicious of her presence in the home and her proximity to the family. Perhaps the dog knows something that the letter reader does not: that the maidservant should not be trusted. A misplaced slipper signifies sexual intercourse, another piece of circumstantial evidence that passion and lust have infiltrated the home.⁴⁵ The mirror aimed at the reader reflects her preoccupation with herself, and as a consequence of her self-absorption, she is ignorant of her husband's adultery. Metsu employs irony throughout this image. The bourgeois reader is literate but she is blind to the maidservant's insidious infiltration within the home. The maidservant, while most likely illiterate, knows more than she admits. The dog too, an animal in every sense of the word, can recognize what the reader cannot, that the foreign maidservant is threatening the home. Finally, the beholder's knowledge of all of these things fulfills the dramatic irony that

⁴⁵ Helgerson, Richard. "Soldiers and Enigmatic Girls: the Politics of Dutch Domestic Realism, 1650-1672." *Representations*, 58 (Spring, 1997): 82.

Metsu has so cleverly designed. He depicts the Dutch home not in a manner befitting of the Dutch Reformed Church, but one that is infected with foreign invasions, secrets, and deception.

The home was a representation of the characters who inhabited it and a microcosm of the Republic itself. In 1688, the term *heimwee* (a longing/yearning for home) first appears in Dutch literature, where it represents the nostalgia and the myth of home.⁴⁶ Likewise, Kees Boterbloem describes Dutch seafaring as a sort of pilgrimage that ultimately would lead the seafarer back to the “Holy Land of the Republic.”⁴⁷ The yearning for home is seen in many of these paintings and in many ways, they tell a story of sacrifice made by enterprising Dutch men, reinforcing what the beholder already knew: that the Netherlands in general and the Dutch male burgher in particular, were on top of the hierarchy, literally and figuratively in control of the known world. But economic success and praise had a price, and the ostensibly harmless open doorways, foreign visitors, and misplaced slippers that one finds lying about canvases are the subtle reminders of the risks associated with economic success at the expense of virtue. These are symbols of a neglected home, one ripe for invasion.

⁴⁶ Salomon, 59.

⁴⁷ Boterbloem, 139.

Chapter 2

Foreign Invasions and the Comforts of Home

During the Middle Ages, Christendom represented the collective European continental identity and the Catholic Church effectively suppressed efforts towards individualism and secularization. This phenomenon is what Benedict Anderson refers to as the “unselfconscious coherence.”⁴⁸ Following the Middle Ages, however, there was a shift away from the unselfconscious coherence towards more localized constructions of authority. The empire of Christendom was re-institutionalized into a continent of competing nation-states. According to Anderson, this shift was due to two main factors: the exploration of the non-European world and the demotion of Latin as the sacred language.⁴⁹ In the case of the Netherlands, the decline in Latin in favor of the Dutch vernacular was addressed in chapter one, but the significance of the Dutch exploration of the non-European world is in need of addressing.

This chapter explores the social implications of tobacco consumption in the Dutch Republic and how images of tobacco signified both an enjoyable pastime that contributed to the Dutch identity as well as a formation of foreign ‘otherness.’ Likewise, this chapter will examine how the mercantile, military, and colonial expeditions contributed to the importation of foreign

⁴⁸ Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Rev. and extended ed. London: Verso, 1991. 19.

⁴⁹ Anderson, 19.

luxuries, mercenary soldiers, and migrant labor. Tobacco paradoxically signified the success of these missions abroad but also threatened the power structures and social hierarchies that the hegemonic elite had relied upon to define their own myth of superiority.

For the Republic, maritime trading expeditions were a double-edged sword. Foreign migration often followed trading routes and as Sølvi Sogner has shown, by the seventeenth century, “every fourth sailor on a Dutch ship was a foreigner.”⁵⁰ Holger Jacobæus (1650-1701), a Danish physician living in Leiden in 1679, proclaimed that “*Amsterdam staaer paa Norge*” (Amsterdam stands on Norway), referring in part to the massive importation of Norwegian timber, as well as the massive immigration of Scandinavians into the Republic.⁵¹ Migrants from Scandinavia, Germany, and other parts of Europe sought work as sailors, mercenary soldiers, laborers, and maidservants. Scandinavians and Germans were often stigmatized as poor, uneducated Lutherans and they are generally described as a blemish on Dutch society. By 1650, the Lutheran Church in the Republic was largely seen as a migrants’ church. In 1668, Amsterdam’s overseers wrote that, “three-fourth of their registered poor consisted of Lutherans.” Immigration literally and figuratively threatened the prosperity of the Dutch community as many of the male immigrants who originally intended to travel back to their country of origin eventually married Dutch women, started families, and permanently settled in the Netherlands.⁵² Even after marriage and/or assimilation, these men and their families remained on the economic margins of society.

⁵⁰ Sogner, Sølvi. “Norwegian-Dutch Migrant Relations in the Seventeenth Century.” *Dutch Light in the Norwegian Night* (2004). 45.

⁵¹ Sogner, 47.

⁵² Sogner 55. Sogner estimates that during the seventeenth-century, Norwegian men living in the Republic were just as likely to marry Dutch women (40%) as Norwegian women (37%).

In 1663, the Lutheran precentor Caspar Caspari wrote that “worst of all were the seafarers and travelers, who promise the Lord many things when they are in distress, but who have forgotten everything as soon as they have returned home safely.”⁵³ Oceanic expeditions were undoubtedly dangerous occupations. Erika Kuijpers argues that only “one-third [of sailors] returned from their trip to Asia with the Dutch East India Company” and that in Amsterdam in 1681 “half of the poor that received aid during winter, were wives and children of men at sea.”⁵⁴ Similarly, soldiers, many of whom were foreign mercenaries, probably envisioned a short, and merry, life. Sir William Temple’s *Observations upon the United Provinces* (1673) compares the antithetical qualities of the soldier and the trader, suggesting that the soldier “intends to make his fortunes suddenly by his courage, by victory, and spoil; the t’other slower but surer by craft, treaty, and by industry.”⁵⁵ The lifestyles of sailors and soldiers threatened to tear apart the moral fibers of Dutch society, putting economic and psychological burdens on the family, the city, and the nation.

The juxtaposition between the domestic home and the foreign exterior is perhaps best seen through the importation and widespread consumption of tobacco. Sailors were said to have introduced tobacco to the Dutch Republic as early as the sixteenth century.⁵⁶ Much like sailors, tobacco was a foreign novelty and loaded with negative connotations. Benjamin Schmidt argues that “New World imports [such] as tobacco . . . became identified with the vices of folly, avarice

⁵³ Kuijpers, Erika. “Poor, Illiterate and Superstitious? Social and Cultural Characteristics of the ‘Noordse Natie’ in the Amsterdam Lutheran Church in the Seventeenth-Century” *Dutch Light in the Norwegian Night* (2004). 63.

⁵⁴ Kuijpers, 66.

⁵⁵ Helgerson, Richard. “Soldiers and Enigmatic Girls: the Politics of Dutch Domestic Realism, 1650-1672.” *Representations*, 58 (Spring, 1997): 58.

⁵⁶ Roberts, Benjamin. The “Marlboro Men” of the Early Seventeenth Century: Masculine Role Models for Dutch Youths in the Golden Age? *Men and Masculinities* (2006): 80.

and corruption America, to a growing number of moralists, represented a breeding ground of sin.”⁵⁷ During the 1620s and 1630s, tobacco consumption sustained an intense attack by moralists such as Jacob Cats, Godefridus Udemans, and Emanuel van Meteren. In his 1638, *‘t Geestelyck Roer van ‘t Coopmans Schip* (The Spiritual Rudder of the Merchant Ship), Udemans argues that tobacco addiction was like a child’s need to be with his mother, correlating addiction not only to lack of control and childish urges, but also to femininity and sexuality.⁵⁸ Males were expected to control their urges and those prone to gluttony, tobacco addiction, or sexual desire were deemed morally inept.

The merchant and writer Roemer Visscher targeted the foreign novelty power of tobacco. In his 1614 emblem book, *Sinnenpoppen*, Visscher writes that “*Veeltijds wat nieuws, selden wat goets*” (New things are often, seldom good).⁵⁹ But perhaps the most all encompassing moral attack on tobacco came from Dirck Pietersz. Pers’ 1628 treatise *Bacchus. Wonder-wercken* (Bacchus. Miracle-works) and its supplemental booklet *Suyp-stad* (Guzzle-city) claimed that “[tobacco] was first used by monkeys, now it is imitated by other monkeys.” The emblems that accompany this motto depict a young woman smoking, something that only became popular during the second half of the seventeenth century.⁶⁰ An educated Netherlander would have undoubtedly recognized the moral message inherent in the title’s associations with Bacchus, the Roman god of wine. For those needing more convincing, the monkey metaphors could be understood in terms of childlike behavior or a woman’s unruliness. The ape or monkey also

⁵⁷ Schmidt, Benjamin. *Innocence Abroad: The Dutch Imagination and the New World 1570-1670*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001. 275.

⁵⁸ Roberts, 80.

⁵⁹ Roberts, 82.

⁶⁰ Roberts, 84-85.

represented imprisonment to vice: an iconographic symbol of appetite and folly, or a racist stereotype in which the Dutch could identify themselves allegorically to the foreign “other.”⁶¹

Phillips Galle’s *De Hollandse Maagd in de Hollandse tuin* (The Dutch Virgin in the Dutch Garden) (designed in 1563, printed in 1600) is a powerful reminder of the pristine feminine space of the home. The Dutch virgin in his print is reminiscent of the heroine Kenau Hasselaer, who during the Spanish siege of Haarlem “led the womenfolk of the city to its ramparts, brandishing a formidable arsenal of domestic cutlery, ironmongery and cauldrons of seething liquids to pour on the heads of the assailants.”⁶² The Dutch virgin’s shield is a defensive weapon and the image of the lion is emblematic of the nation. The Dutch virgin is clothed and contained, virtuous, chaste and patriotic. Despite her stoic qualities, she is still corralled in her *appropriate* place, the home - the “Dutch Garden.” Architecturally, the fence and secured gate that surround her depict an impenetrable barrier between the pristine feminine space within and the foreign masculine world outside.

⁶¹ Schmidt, 271.

⁶² Schama, Simon. *The Embarrassment of Riches: an Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age*. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1988. 88.



Figure 5. Philips Galle *De Hollandse Maagd in de Hollandse tuin* (1600).⁶³

During the seventeenth century, colonialism and international trade were effective tools in undermining the influence and hegemony of rival nations. As such, the Dutch East and West India Companies took on a patriotic role that positioned industrious merchants above soldiers in discourses of masculinity and *pro patria* ideologies. Ministers such as Samuel Ampzing aligned themselves with the West India Company, linking divinity and patriotism with Dutch masculinity abroad. Ampzing describes the Spanish booty stolen by the Dutch pirate, Piet Heyn, also known as “Saint Piet,” as a “gift from God.” Others described the American treasure as Spain’s mistress - a mistress whom Heyn won over within the Spanish king’s own house. The New World had become an embraced mistress and as such, her “age of innocence had passed.”⁶⁴ And as the New World was “embraced” by the masculine prerogatives of Europe’s superpowers, so too was the

⁶³ Museum Plantin-Moretus. <http://www.geheugenvannederland.nl/?/nl/items/BVB01:MB1563DIPK>

⁶⁴ Schmidt, 227.

Republic “embraced” by New World novelties such as tobacco that had systemically infiltrated Dutch society.

Benjamin Roberts writes that the “Dutch craving for nicotine was widespread among all social strata and the country’s production of tobacco had become a flourishing industry.”⁶⁵

Likewise, Simon Schama argues that in the Republic during the seventeenth century, demand for tobacco, pipes, and tobacco boxes was so high that many public officials turned a blind eye to the potential moral ramifications of smoking.⁶⁶ Rather than taking a hard line towards tobacco consumption, it seems that the Dutch embraced smoking as a common pastime and a comfort of home: “As they did with Ming china and Turkish carpets, the Dutch domesticated the exoticism of tobacco.”⁶⁷

The domestication of foreign luxuries contrasted with the lofty ideals proposed by more militant ministers and moralists. As significant producers and recorders of Dutch society, Dutch masters invariably contributed to the domestication of tobacco. They sought to make their art marketable, but they also sought to convey a message. In the ostensible realism of these paintings, the message is often hidden and opaque. But inherent in all of humanity is a desire to express one’s individual desires. Men and women in any society are held to certain expectations and standards of civility. To fall short, or to overshoot these expectations, is to ruin oneself and one’s reputation. Both individual transgressions and social restraints are at work in these images. Both must have existed, otherwise these images would have no effect on their audience. In this arena, artists were forced to employ a complex formula of ambiguity, symbolism, and irony. This

⁶⁵ Roberts, 76.

⁶⁶ Schama, 195.

⁶⁷ Schama, 196.

process of layering meaning took place as a means of expressing the artists' individual desires while protecting themselves from potential political, religious, legal, or social backlash.

Using Jan Steen's *The Idlers* (1660) as an example, the beholder is immediately confronted with what appears to be a comedic satire. Steen presents a peasant household that is paradoxically domestic and disorderly. The tobacco is neither good nor evil, nor moral or sinful on its own; rather the tobacco relies on the setting, props, and on the actions of the characters to illustrate its full potential. Tobacco smoked in pipes during the seventeenth century was not like tobacco of the twenty-first century. It had a narcotic effect, was "more potent" and "resembled unfiltered cigarettes or *zware shag* (loose tobacco)." It also had a "penetrating odor" and was meant to be "smoked outside or in tobacco houses and taverns."⁶⁸

The self-portrait of Jan Steen looks directly at the audience, laughing as he raises his pipe for another "drink" of tobacco.⁶⁹ Steen's masculinity is displayed by his ability to withstand the somniferous effects of the foreign novelty. Unlike Steen, the female has presumably passed out from smoking, or drinking, or both. The maiden's pipe lies broken on the floor signifying her unfamiliarity and subordination to the exoticism of tobacco as well as her relative weakness when compared to her male counterpart, not to mention her "broken" hymen. At the center of the composition, a crevice in the wall is filled with a *westerwald* jug. The sexually explicit symbolism is exaggerated by the vaginal shape of the drinking vessel in front of them as well as the misplaced slipper on the floor and the phallic dagger teetering on the edge of the table. The

⁶⁸ Roberts, 78.

⁶⁹ Roberts, 76. The late sixteenth century Dutch historian, Emanuel van Meteren described smoking as "drinking a pipe of tobacco."

sleeping female's legs spread above an apparent peephole on the box supporting her feet add to the sexual suggestiveness of the scene.



Figure 6. Jan Steen *The Idlers* (1660).

Steen's incorporation of images of tobacco consumption are not morally prescriptive, nor are they limited to theatrical displays of human folly; rather they are part of a larger social movement towards individualism and secularization. Natalie Zemon Davis makes a brilliant case for the potential for social reform through the inversion of sexual symbolism. She suggests that

inversions of sexual symbolism, such as depictions of unruly women, do not reinforce authority; rather they undermine it. Unruliness is therefore a display of power and can serve to “widen behavioral options for women” and “sanction riot and political disobedience for both men and women.”⁷⁰ Steen uses tobacco consumption to promote his own masculinity, not in terms of Christian morality; rather in terms of his *natural* dominance over both the domestic and the foreign, the woman and the tobacco.

The struggle for dominance through the possession of space can be seen in a number of ways: colonized land, an abandoned farmhouse occupied by soldiers, a public marketplace, a seat in a local church, the corner of a clandestine bordello, or the domestic interior of a peasant kitchen. The occupation of space is a signifier of power, and the use of space on the canvas is no different. It is a limited resource and one of value. For a seventeenth-century artist to incorporate images of tobacco consumption on his canvas and in his art speaks to familiarity and significance of this activity in everyday life.

The act of smoking literally and figuratively occupies space and as such is an appropriation of power. In Gerard ter Borch’s *Guardroom with Sleeping Soldier* (1652-1653), smoke is blown into the face of a sleeping patron. The gesture is more than a joke about overindulgence; rather it is a sexual jest and a territorial display of domestic power. Tobacco by itself was a foreign novelty, but having someone’s personal smoke blown into one’s face was a form of foreign slander. Schama, for example, argues that the act of blowing smoke at a woman

⁷⁰ Davis, Natalie Zemon. *Society and Culture in Early Modern France*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1975. 131.

was a sexually charged insult.⁷¹ Ter Borch's painting illustrates the same insult being applied to a man.

The sexual subversion is further displayed in the phallic positioning of the pipe lying close to the character's midsection. Across the table, an older man watches the action while slipping his pipe into a pouch. The sleeping soldier's breeches are unbuttoned, his boot tops lie unsecured at his feet, and a strategically positioned hole in the barrel between the characters adds to possible sexual innuendoes. The exhaled smoke is undoubtedly a referent for the joker's power through the possession of space and the domination of the sleeping patron. The sleeping soldier, much like the female in Steen's *The Idlers*, has succumbed to the effects of this early modern tobacco. The sleeping soldier wears a shiny armored chest plate for protection, but ironically it cannot protect him from the effects of tobacco or from the insults that follow.

Gerard ter Borch's paintings are renowned for depicting subtle, psychological dramas, usually in the form of objectified females who are desirable but unattainable. In *Guardroom with Sleeping Soldier*, ter Borch has inverted this gendered theme in order to make a powerful anti-Orangist political statement. Ter Borch was a member of the largely anti-Orange, Deventer town council until it was overrun by the combined armies of Münster and Cologne in 1672. Shortly after the foreign militaries withdrew in 1674, Willem III "dismissed the entire Deventer council . . . and appointed a more sympathetic new body."⁷² In Deventer, certainly during the True Freedom, ter Borch encountered "neither guild restriction nor significant competition from other artists."⁷³ This unusual freedom allowed Ter Borch to invert his typical subject, that of a

⁷¹ Schama, 206.

⁷² Kettering, Alison McNeil. "Gerard ter Borch's Portraits for the Deventer Elite." *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art*, 27, no. 1/2 (1999): 50.

⁷³ Kettering, 46.

contemplative female, with a dishonorable masculine figure. As such, the soldier serves as a mockery of Orangist patriotism. He is ironically prone and undoubtedly feminized. The three men occupying the canvas are a far cry from the idealized Scipionic image with which the Orangists aligned themselves.



Figure 7. Gerard ter Borch *Guard Room with a Sleeping Soldier* (1652-1653).

In his book, *Vermeer and the Dutch Interior*, Alejandro Vergara argues that where de Hooch was concerned with setting and space, ter Borch was concerned with characters. Vergara suggests that ter Borch introduced “a level of sensuality and refinement into interior painting

around 1650 which was not previously evident.”⁷⁴ Of course both de Hooch and ter Borch are concerned with space - all artists are. It is the use of space, however, that is significant. By insisting that his characters fill up the canvas, ter Borch formally illustrates the larger cultural movement towards individualism and secularization.

For the moralists and ministers, the ostensible gift of tobacco was the devil’s Trojan Horse: an insidious and immoral penetration of the pristine Dutch community. But for much of Dutch society, there was a reciprocating relationship between tobacco’s negative connotations and its exoticism; they reinforced one another. What was once a product reserved for foreigners and men of questionable character soon became a common pastime enjoyed by almost all members of society. The depictions of tobacco consumption did invoke issues of morality, but morality was just one layer of meaning. These paintings were not necessarily didactic, taxonomic or prescriptive. On the contrary, there was an intentional duplicity employed by the artists that made the images appealing to a large audience, protected the artists from moral assaults, and deceptively challenged the social order of the hegemonic elite. Despite their realism, these paintings are fictional, and they challenged the rigid gender-based binaries upon which discourses of Christian morality and Orangist patriotism relied.

⁷⁴ Vergara, Alejandro and Westermann, Mariët. *Vermeer and the Dutch Interior. Madrid*: Museo Nacional del Prado, 2003. 210.

Chapter 3

Sleeping Sentries and Social Hangovers:

In her essay, "The Body Versus the Social Body," Catherine Gallagher argues that, "the body can only become absolutely problematic when it is completely valued."⁷⁵ As "God's Chosen People," the seventeenth-century Republic had prescribed a standard of superiority to their own populace that was difficult for even the most virtuous of Burghers to uphold. As a result, the protagonist, Dutch society in general and the Dutch male burgher in particular, became problematic. As nation-states began their maturation process in the early modern period, the depictions of society and its heroes were not the only things changing. The personification of villains also evolved. Monsters, devils, and demons which predominated the works of Albrecht Dürer, Hieronymus Bosch, and Pieter Brueghel the Elder during the sixteenth century, were replaced in the seventeenth century by villains who represented the apocalypse in more subtle forms of foreign otherness.

Images of alcohol consumption in seventeenth-century Dutch painting served as a political allegory, a microcosm of the welfare of the state, and a foreshadowing of the disastrous years that follow the True Freedom. The home depended on adherence to assigned gender roles:

⁷⁵ Gallagher, Catherine. "The Body Versus the Social Body in the Works of Thomas Malthus and Henry Mayhew." *Representations* 14 (1986): 86.

vigilant men and chaste women, who were obliged to conform with an ethos centered on hard work and strict morality. Simply put, alcohol threatened these roles. The amount of alcohol consumed and the variety of alcoholic beverages available in the Netherlands were enough to shock many foreign visitors⁷⁶, but the drinking habits of the Dutch were based more on survival and tradition than on compulsive addiction. Besides being safer to drink than water (the canals were notorious for being contaminated), alcoholic drinks were part of a wider social tradition dating back hundreds of years. Images of alcohol consumption in seventeenth-century Dutch paintings, and especially those produced during the True Freedom, represented a gender-based power struggle that undermined the strength of foreign mercenaries, ministers, moralists, Orangist patriots, and masculinity in general.

Since the Middle Ages, toasts were made for a variety of social events, such as the birth of a child, seasonal and religious festivities, funerals, homecomings, farewells, engagements, and business ventures. Like most aspects of seventeenth-century Dutch life, alcohol consumption was sex-segregated. A new mother, for example, would often provide *kinderbier* to the women who assisted her with the delivery of her baby. Other drinking occasions called for the presence of both men and women, and each event had a specific type of alcoholic drink associated with it. *Kermisbier* was brewed for festivals such as St. Gregory's Day (The Twelfth of March), and *troostbier* was served at funerals.⁷⁷ Many occasions also had drinking rituals that had specific

⁷⁶ Schama, Simon. *The Embarrassment of Riches: an Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age*. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1988. 190. Schama references a number of English, French, and Italian visitors to the Republic who expressed the drinking habits of the Dutch as being "abnormal", systemic, and the cause of unruliness and riotous behavior.

⁷⁷ Roberts, Benjamin. "Drinking Like a Man: the Paradox of Excessive Drinking for Seventeenth-Century Dutch Youths." *Journal of Family History* 29, no. 3 (2004): 240. *Kinderbier* from the Dutch *kinder* (children's) was a "thick beer of high quality." *Kermisbier* was named from the Dutch *kermis* (carnival or fair) and *troostbier* from the Dutch *troost* (consolation).

drinking vessels assigned to them. Some of these included ceremonial horns for patriotic events and the *pasglas*, which was mentioned in chapter one, for drinking games. The *roemer* goblet, which appears in many Dutch paintings, originated in Germany, where it is still referred to as *Römer*. The *roemer* dated back to the days of the Roman Empire when Roman soldiers brought grapes with them to make wine while on military campaigns. In wealthier homes, husbands and wives would often host dinner parties presenting a special goblet known as *Hansje in de kelder* (little Hans in the cellar), which signified that the couple was expecting a baby.⁷⁸

These rituals contributed to what A. Lynn Martin describes as “social cohesion,” wherein alcohol consumption in early modern Europe “fostered communal solidarity.”⁷⁹ Benedict Anderson refers to a similar phenomena where “soft factors” (cultural factors), rather than legal restrictions, bond inhabitants together.⁸⁰ Toasts and their respective drinking vessels often signified trust and fraternity. However, this was not a welcome occurrence for everyone. Many of the rituals associated with alcohol consumption were tied to ancient pagan feasting traditions and pre-Christian roots; and many of these drinking traditions were difficult for moralists and ministers to accept. For the moralists and ministers, alcohol intoxication was not only sinful, but also would certainly lead to other vices which threatened a man’s reputation, wealth, and social standing; while for women, the effects of alcohol were understood in terms of her sexuality, “a sober woman was chaste while a drunken woman would be promiscuous.”⁸¹

⁷⁸ Roberts, Benjamin. *Through the Keyhole: Dutch child-rearing practices in the 17th and 18th century. Three urban elite families*. Hilversum: Uitgeverij Verloren, 1998. 65.

⁷⁹ Martin, A. Lynn. *Alcohol, Sex, and Gender in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*. New York, New York: Palgrave, 2001. 5.

⁸⁰ Salomon, Nanette. *Shifting Priorities: Gender and Genre in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Painting*. Stanford, Calif.: Stamford University Press, 2004. 88.

⁸¹ Roberts, 238.

Despite their best efforts to curb drinking, moralists and ministers could not eradicate alcohol consumption completely, so they focused their discussions on moderation rather than prohibition. Many sermons and treatises “recommended no more than three glasses a day.”⁸² Those who overindulged in food or drink were believed to have been prone to overindulge in other aspects of life as well. This view on moderation was embraced by both Protestant and Catholic leaders. However whereas Protestants may have seen overindulgence as spiritually irrecoverable, Catholics had the privilege of nursing their physical and spiritual hangovers in the sanctity of confession. These religious and moral-based arguments for moderation were challenged not only by traditions but also by contemporary politics and economics. For example, in an attempt to lure students to their city and school, the University of Leiden allowed students to purchase 194 liters of wine and ten barrels of beer tax-free each year. Furthermore, the city often shied away from punishing students who engaged with prostitutes. “University administrators did not mean for the students to become drunk and rowdy and terrorize Leiden’s populace, yet this was the result of cheap booze.”⁸³ As is often the case in economics, self-interests benefit a few while society bears the costs. What moralists, ministers, and city officials feared most about excessive drinking was its potential to lead to other vices. Just as tobacco was paradoxically essential to the economy and a moral dilemma, alcohol consumption was both “top on the list of national activities” as well as the mother of all sins: a slippery slope to unbridled sex, violence, rape, and even murder.⁸⁴ In 1588, Sebastiaen Franck asked what was worse, a

⁸² Roberts, 240.

⁸³ Roberts, 124-125.

⁸⁴ Roberts, Benjamin and Groenendijk, Leendert. “Moral Panic and Holland’s Libertine Youth of the late 1650s and 1660s.” *Journal of Family History* (2005): 333.

drunkard, a gambler, or a womanizer—the answer of course being the drunkard, implying that he was also a gambler and a womanizer.⁸⁵

In all of these condemnations, what was really at stake was one's masculinity or femininity. Gender, in terms of a cultural practice where one is expected to behave in an *appropriate* manner, is complicated by the inclusive nature of alcohol consumption. The traditional binaries found in the ideological discourses of the patriarchal and hegemonic elite polarize masculine and feminine forms. In some respects, images of intoxicated subjects symbolize the negative effects of excessive drinking, namely the loss of wealth, credit, pride, and status, which ultimately pushed one to the periphery of society and down the social ladder. Moralists would suggest that intoxicated women lose their chasteness while intoxicated men lose their money. However, some images of alcohol consumption do not fit neatly into these categories, and the use of ambiguity and even humor serve to effectively blur these binaries.

In Gerard ter Borch's *Woman Drinking with a Sleeping Soldier* (mid 17th Century), the theme of the male taking advantage of the intoxicated female has been reversed. The sleeping soldier in this scene may or may not be losing his money, but it is clear that his masculinity is at risk. Salomon argues that ter Borch is playing on old stereotypes as the female out-drinks and out-smokes her partner, a joke that dates back to at least the fifteenth century in northern Europe.⁸⁶ The scene is also reminiscent of the Greek myth of Argus and Hermes. In the myth, Hermes (the god of transition and boundaries) lulls the giant Argus to sleep and then slays him. In ter Borch's work, Hermes is replaced with the maiden who is both alluring and untrustworthy.

⁸⁵ Roberts, 244.

⁸⁶ Salomon, 28. Salomon references *The Misercord* from the Church of St. Pierre in Saumur and Jost Amman's *Kartenspielbuch* (1588) as examples of this "joke" in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Her drinking vessel is phallically positioned in her lap and undoubtedly aimed at her sleeping, defeated, and subordinated counterpart. Works such as this represent a significant shift in consciousness towards more secularized issues of civility, class, and human folly. Ter Borch is not only poking fun at the hyper-masculine mercenary soldier, but also at conservative ideologies that perpetuated binaries of good/evil, male/female, and human/animal.

There is an inclination to read images such as this one in terms of a domestic home, family cohesion, or a loving couple. But these images and the characters in them are far from the ideal Dutch family unit. The clear-cut binaries that exist in Rembrandt's *Holy Family - Household of the Carpenter* (1640) are nowhere to be found in ter Borch's *Woman Drinking with a Sleeping Soldier*. Ter Borch does not include a respectable father figure, a nursing mother, or a hard-working ethos. On the contrary, the couple represents sexuality, financial exchange, and power. Richard Helgerson argues that "sometime early in the 1650s, carousing soldiers, who for decades had most often been seen in barracks and guardrooms, began appearing in settings that belonged more to their female companions than to them: in brothels, inns, and private domestic interiors - settings that . . . are not easily distinguished from one another."⁸⁷ And after 1650, middle-class homes featured paintings of guesthouses, taverns, and bordellos. Jochai Rosen describes the shift at mid-century as the pacification of masculinity and argues that during this time, attention "shifted away from men . . . to women, often one woman."⁸⁸

⁸⁷ Helgerson, Richard. "Soldiers and Enigmatic Girls: the Politics of Dutch Domestic Realism, 1650-1672." *Representations*, 58 (Spring, 1997): 59.

⁸⁸ Rosen, Jochai. *Soldiers at Leisure: the Guardroom Scene in Dutch Genre Painting of the Golden Age*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010. 131.



Figure 8. Gerard ter Borch, *Woman Drinking with a Sleeping Soldier*.

The consumption of alcohol and tobacco was equally risky to individuals struggling for power in the social arena. Unemployed mercenaries, for example, found ways to express their masculinity outside of the battlefield. This was often attained through drinking competitions and fraternizing. This particular soldier's defeat, however, comes not in battle or from a brutish enemy, but at the dinner table and from a female maiden who continues drinking while he sleeps. Her untrustworthiness is associated with the Prodigal Son theme that categorized females with agency as procuresses, whores, or thieves; while a woman who obeys her role as a chaste housewife is perpetually regarded as meek and vulnerable. The Prodigal Son theme was also

critical of the male subject who squanders his money while in a foreign land. Passions, prostitution, thievery, and immorality become intertwined in these images. Overindulgence of alcohol, tobacco, food, and lust all serve to blur the boundaries between an unruly exterior and the civil interior, between male and female, and between rational human and wild animal behavior.

In 1623, Daniel Souterius wrote *Nuchteren Loth* (Sober Lot), which was a contemporary version of the biblical story of Lot. Souterius stressed two points: one, that alcoholism was the result of spiritual depravation; and two, that the mind was uniquely human, distinguishing man from animals.⁸⁹ The early modern European belief was that rationality, logic, and control of one's self were the qualities that not only differentiated men from animals, but also men from women. Just as alcohol lead Lot, a pious man, to submit to his animal-like passions, sin and even incest, so too could alcohol ruin one's reputation and livelihood. Catherine Gallagher describes a similar early modern belief system where "the human body is unfit for utopia" and that "the intensity of misery" is in direct proportion to its "healthiness and legitimacy."⁹⁰ When combined with alcohol, sailors and their closely aligned and often similarly marginalized cousins, mercenary soldiers, made convenient exemplars for these unhealthy transgressions, foreign "otherness," and self-destructive behavior.

No image in this genre so effectively portrays the unflattering nature of a drunken soldier quite as well as Carel Fabritius' *The Sentry* (1654). This image does not show the act of drinking, rather the consequences of it. Presumably drunk, the protagonist soldier has abdicated his military powers in favor of a drunken sleep. His only companions are a stray dog and his rifle,

⁸⁹ Roberts, 241.

⁹⁰ Gallagher, 89.

which would be of little use to him in his inebriated condition. Behind him is a dilapidated pillar and arch, the decaying relics of an old Republic, one built on order, logic, and honor; a political allegory for the new Republic that has become a victim of neglect and corruption. The overgrowth of plants on top of and between the stonework is further evidence of a building, a town, and a nation in disarray. The soldier's masculinity has been compromised by his own doing and with that loss, he can expect further losses in reputation, honor, and credit.

The sleeping soldier's sad state has put him on equal levels with a stray dog. Neither seems to have a home of their own, or if they do, they are unable to reach it. The mercenary soldiers who were at once feared, admired, and essential to the Republic's victory over Spain, had since the Eighty Years War become a blemish on society and a moral disgrace. While the True Freedom brought relative peace to the Dutch populace, unemployed mercenaries became known for wasting away their days in idle sins. In Fabritius' work, alcohol has destroyed this soldier's ability to defend the city and himself. He has subordinated himself, physically, morally, and intellectually. His neglect is not only detrimental to himself, but it is actually a liability to the entire community. This doomsday scenario tragically played itself out shortly after this painting was complete. Fabritius was killed in an accidental explosion of gunpowder in Delft in October 1654. He was 32 years old. Fabritius' work seems to be an eerie premonition of the tragedies that lay ahead for the Republic's military. Duty, honor, responsibility—those stoic characteristics previously associated with the hyper-masculine soldier, had by mid-century been replaced with terms like drunkard, womanizer, gambler, and idler.

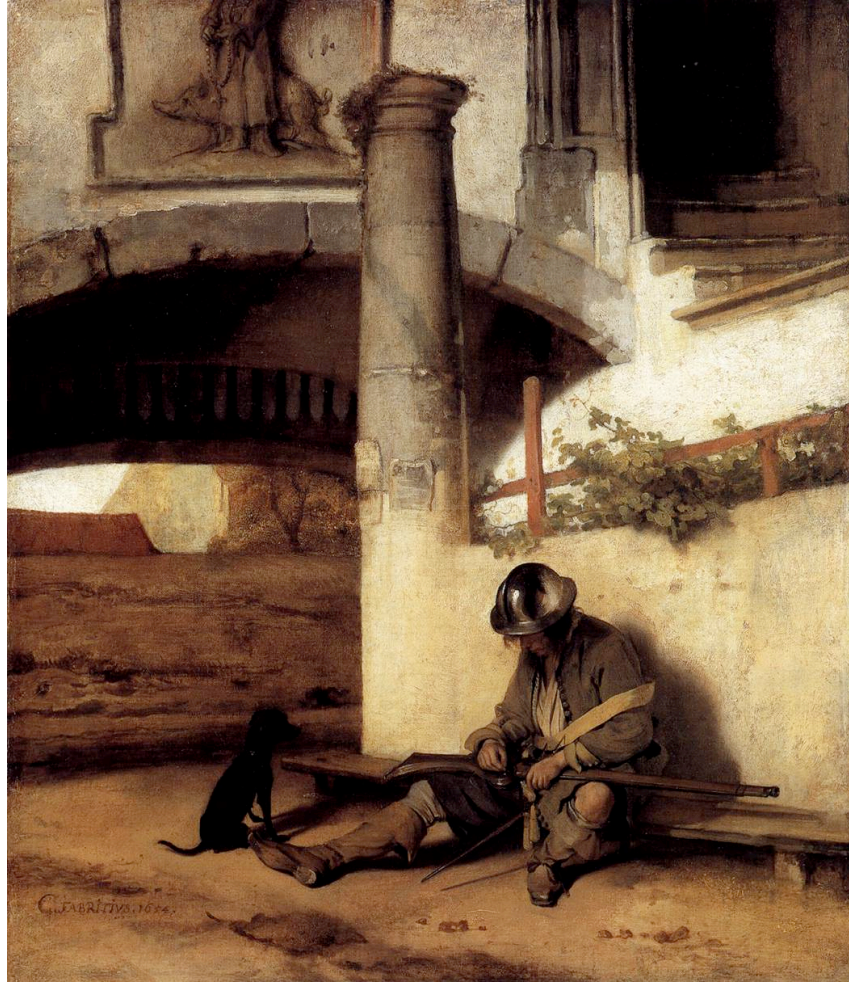


Figure 9. Carel Fabritius *The Sentry* (1654).

Explicit in Fabritius' *The Sentry* is a disdain towards the military, but implicitly there is an even greater dissatisfaction with the political leadership that allowed so many mercenaries to penetrate Dutch society. Kees Boterbloem argues that "despite the appearance of great religious zeal in this era, many obeyed governments faithful to other religions . . . mercenary soldiers fought for pay in religiously fueled wars . . . adapting to local rules and customs in their pursuit of profit."⁹¹ Keeping this general lack of religious or patriotic loyalty in mind, images of alcohol intoxication should be understood as political allegories that challenged the hegemonic

⁹¹ Boterbloem, Kees. *The Fiction and Reality of Jan Struys: a Seventeenth-Century Dutch Globetrotter*. Basingstoke England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008. 48.

ideologies of those who paid the mercenaries' salaries, namely the "war-party," the pro-Orangists.

Jan Steen was a master in the use of rhetoric to attack the logic and hypocrisy of these political ideologues. Salomon argues that Steen's "primary strategy is the incorporation of the sexual/public/outlaw into the percept of the civil/private/lawful."⁹² As such, Steen utterly deconstructs the rigid Calvinistic categories that defined masculine and feminine behavior. In *Prinsjedag* (1660s), a large group of pro-Orangists are feasting, drinking, and celebrating the birthday of William III, whose portrait hangs at the high center background of the painting. On a piece of paper at the middle of the floor are the words, "*Op de gezondheid van het nassaus basie, in de eene hant het rapier, inde andere hant het glaesie*" (To the health of the Nassau lord, in one hand a sword, in the other hand a glass). William III's sword, that timeless symbol of masculine strength and military prowess, is juxtaposed to the drinking vessel. Steen is clearly mocking the stoicism and patriotism of the monarchy, suggesting that William III's drinking was just as important to him as defending the nation. The ironic political symbolism continues in the foreground with the spear and hat. Pierre Bizot and Gerard van Loon, writing in 1688 and 1732, respectively, explain that the hat is a symbol of freedom, especially when depicted at the end of a spear.⁹³ By the 1660s, the hat and spear was a well-understood political device closely associated with Orangist patriotism.

⁹² Salomon, 61.

⁹³ Salomon, 21.



Figure 10. Jan Steen, *Prinsjedag* (1660s).

The Orangists promoted a strong central government and were closely aligned with the Dutch Reformed Church, but they differed sharply with the Republicans who promoted more autonomy and power at the state's level. Jan Steen, who has placed himself in the center of the painting, was anything but a devout Calvinist. On the contrary, he was a Catholic, probably more so in name than in practice, but more to the point, he was a self-described drinker and womanizer. His presence in this scene can only be understood as comic relief. Additionally, Steen has intertwined so much patriotic and moral symbolism with feasting and drinking that he is obviously being ironic. Along these lines, Simon Schama argues that heavy drinking and

smoking could be linked to concerns of the state “in terms of betrayal”⁹⁴ - a symbolic act of treason byway of one’s noncompliance to their prescribed gender-based responsibilities.



Figure 11. Jan Steen, *The Drunken Couple* (1655-65).

In Jan Steen’s *The Drunken Couple* (1655-65), the dangers of overindulgence, the risks of foreign invasion, and the loss of wealth, do not discriminate between the sexes. Like Fabritius’ sleeping soldier, both the husband and wife have been subordinated to animals (i.e., the cat observing them). Their victimization by the opportunistic thieves in the background is of their own doing. In fact, the couple is so intoxicated that they are unaware that they are even being robbed. The open flapkan helps to confirm that alcohol has transformed an otherwise vigilant husband into an oblivious drunk who raises his *roemer* goblet while singing. Both he and his

⁹⁴ Schama. 203.

wife have unwittingly made their home ripe for invasion just as she has made herself sexually available. This lack of defense is further evidenced by her misplaced slipper, and the strategically placed dangling hands along both her lap and her husband's mid-section. The printing of an owl, an animal that during the seventeenth century was generally considered blind and unintelligent, hangs on the fence behind the protagonists, signifying their foolishness and moral nearsightedness. Schama describes the owl as an illustration of two simultaneous proverbs: "drunk as an owl" and "what use are candles and spectacles if the owl will not see?"⁹⁵ Likewise, the couple is so intoxicated that they are simultaneously helpless and hopeless.

In the previous chapter, tobacco consumption was described as a Trojan horse, a foreign novelty with negative implications. In Steen's painting, the foreign invasion is not tobacco or alcohol, rather the alcohol allows for an invasion of criminals. In other words, both tobacco and alcohol presented a risk to the home and the nation by allowing foreign invaders to penetrate the sanctity of the home. By enslaving those who overindulged, alcohol made it possible for unsuspecting idlers not only to become sinners themselves, but also to fall victim to opportunistic criminals. It was the wife's responsibility to maintain the home and her chastity. It was the husband's responsibility to maintain his trade and provide financial sustenance for the home. In Steen's painting, alcohol intoxication has incapacitated both; neither are upholding their gendered responsibilities, and as a consequence, both will suffer a physical and financial hangover when they awake.

⁹⁵ Schama, 209. Schama describes the owl as "myopic" and argues that the use of the owl originates from the proverb "Drunk as an owl." The owl is also described as a proverb "blind as an owl" which later becomes "blind as a bat" on the Rijksmuseum website: <https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/search/objecten?s=objecttype&p=1&ps=12&f.principalMaker.sort=Jan%20Havicksz.%20Steen&ii=9#/SK-C-232,9>

Like Steen's *Prinsjedag*, the hangover that the *Drunken Couple* will experience is a political allegory, a microcosm of the welfare of the state, and a foreshadowing of the disastrous years that follow the True Freedom. Ultimately, the affairs of the home were in direct correlation with the affairs of the state. The home, in both the familial and national senses, depended on adherence to assigned gender roles; vigilant men and chaste women, combined with a strong work ethic and strict morality. Alcohol intoxication threatened the myth of Dutch superiority by attacking those qualities that defined Dutch masculinity and femininity. Images of alcohol intoxication targeted the masculine and feminine binaries defined by the hegemonic elite, but also signified the anxieties that were pressing seventeenth-century Dutch society. These anxieties were also paradoxically associated with Dutch financial and military successes. An emerging middle class had more leisure time; the state's power limited the House of Orange from waging war; and the presence of disloyal mercenaries created a very real hazard for townspeople and city dwellers. The nomads of foreign otherness had not only penetrated Dutch society, but had infected its most productive portion of the population.⁹⁶ Images of alcohol consumption reflect these anxieties but do so through a gendered lens, emphasizing both the importance of sex-segregated responsibilities in Dutch society, and the realization that the feasting, drinking, and celebrating associated with the Dutch Golden Age would inevitably succumb to a disastrous hangover.

⁹⁶ Gallagher, 91. Gallagher summarizes Henry Mayhew's philosophy that nomadic hard bodies were more concerned with issues of economic exchange rather than production, and therefore were not contributing to the growth of society.

Conclusion:

The Neglected Garden

Stephen Greenblatt argues that painting is a site of “struggle” between “doctrinal and historical impulses” and we cannot accept either on its own terms. “Doctrinal formalism expresses in structure, rather than in narrative terms, the ideological consensus of a dominant institution, a ruling class, or a hegemonic elite.”⁹⁷ Likewise, historical narratives also contribute to discursive mistruths. “The pressure of linked events and the assumed coherence of the tale help to pull the reader past the awkwardness of incommensurable positions and silenced voices.”⁹⁸ Although focused on Dutch genre painting, this thesis has attempted to maintain this hermeneutic truth regarding doctrinal formalism and historical narratives. This, I feel, has been accomplished by examining a range of cultural artifacts. In the analysis of these cultural artifacts, there is a hegemonic reciprocity that can and should be deduced. The apparent differences in the works researched do not limit our understanding; rather, they enhance the complex nature of early modern Dutch society. Seventeenth-century Dutch genre paintings are, like all art, both fictional and mimetic. They reflect the living conditions of the culture in which they were made.

For a nation so paradoxically consumed with external threats and internal prosperity, it is no surprise that Dutch genre paintings during the Golden Age often include a shadowy

⁹⁷ Greenblatt, Stephen, and Michael Payne. *The Greenblatt Reader*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell Pub., 2005. 55.

⁹⁸ Greenblatt, 88.

mercenary juxtaposed to a glowing young maiden. Both are mysterious figures, opaque in both their origins and intentions. Their interactions reflect both the self and society, the body and the social body. They are independent and free thinking characters on the canvas, but they are also part of a larger early modern discourse, one deeply intertwined in notions of patriotism, religion, and morality. The mercenary and maiden were brought into regional contact with one another through the invisible hand of economics and the ideological hand of geo-political, colonial, and military expeditions.

During the second half of the seventeenth century, Dutch masters began depicting foreign characters in domestic setting. Whether it was a burgher home, a tavern, or a whore house is often difficult to surmise. Nevertheless, in this setting, surrounded with all the amorous accoutrements of a social gathering - food, drink, tobacco, a young female companion, and a warm bed - the mercenary was able to relinquish his military prowess for a more sensual campaign. His surrender to the passions does not go unnoticed by the more virtuous Dutch beholders. His character is called into question, confirming what the Dutch already knew - that the Dutch in general and the Dutch male burgher in particular were not only divinely linked to the almighty, but that this superiority could be observed by way of comparison to the foreign other.

The demotion of the foreign mercenary to that of a drunk, gambler, idler, and womanizer was paradoxically at odds with the *pro patria* ideology needed to protect the Republic from rival nations. A character who was once feared and admired, the mercenary was by the mid-seventeenth century, repeatedly humiliated on the battlefield, in the tavern, and on the canvas. This ridicule was sometimes the result of his own doing, but the perpetuated conjecture that the

soldier should be neither feared nor admired due to his constant inebriation, preoccupations, and transgressions, was part of a larger cultural movement towards the splintering of the Republic's social cohesion. The disunity that was brought on in part by the Dutch appetite for luxuries and leisure time made the Republic an opportunistic target for rival nations conspiring against her.

In 1672, *het rampjaar* (the disaster year), the Dutch anxieties regarding the risk of invasion came to pass. The combined assault by French, English, and German military forces solidified the fears that had been brewing during the True Freedom of the previous two decades. During the True Freedom, the need for sailors far outweighed the need for a standing army. Mercenary soldiers, who having few land battles to attend to, instead sat idle, drinking, smoking, gambling, and womanizing. The foreign mercenary seemed to be not only an economic waste, but also a threat to established cultural norms as they served as masculine role models for young men who no doubt had heard stories of their greatness during the Dutch fight for independence.⁹⁹ Benjamin Roberts argues that, "During the 1620s and 1630s, paintings, prints, and pamphlets depicting military men as virtuous were used to create a unified war effort and to produce a feeling of Dutch unity and identity. . . . [and] from 1621 until the end of the war in 1648, military men started to represent good patriotic and masculine virtues such as courage and perseverance."¹⁰⁰

But as the need for soldiers declined, so did their reputation. They quickly became scapegoats for inflicting the Dutch with foreign addictions and sinful behavior. The mercenary's image is reminiscent of Catherine Gallagher's discussion of early modern economic theory in

⁹⁹ Roberts, Benjamin. "The 'Marlboro Men' of the Early Seventeenth Century: Masculine Role Models for Dutch Youths in the Golden Age?" *Men and Masculinities* (2006): 76.

¹⁰⁰ Roberts, 88.

which nomadic and “fatted beasts of circulation” were juxtaposed to the domestic “puny bodies of production.”¹⁰¹ The mercenary’s appearance in Dutch art, and his incessant desire for alcohol and tobacco, served as a microcosm for Dutch anxieties of foreign invasions and the decline of economic, political, and social control.

At the heart of this tension was a struggle to maintain a social hierarchy that adhered to the sex-segregated responsibilities defined by the seventeenth-century Dutch moralists and ministers. Biblical narratives and classical motifs were reformulated into a seventeenth-century Christian framework that prescribed specific roles for men and women. To under perform or overreach one’s expected behavior was to jeopardize one’s wealth and reputation - two vitally important elements of a Dutch burgher’s social standing, especially during times of war. The de Witt brothers came to learn this difficult lesson in 1672, as they sought out more diplomatic resolutions with the Republic’s enemies. When negotiations failed to secure the nation, and the English, French, and Germans conspired against the Republic, Johan and Cornelis de Witt quickly became scapegoats for the Republic’s military and political weakness. In the summer of 1672, both were accused of treason, captured and executed by a mob of soldiers and militia men loyal to the Orangists.

The *rampjaar* also signified the beginning of the end of an artistic era. Prior to the sixteenth-century Protestant rebellion, the Dutch art market relied almost entirely on Church patronage. Soon afterwards the iconoclasts not only destroyed as much Christian artwork as possible, but they also indirectly and unintentionally created an economic supply shortage of

¹⁰¹ Gallagher, Catherine. "The Body Versus the Social Body in the Works of Thomas Malthus and Henry Mayhew." *Representations* 14 (1986): 98.

visual art in the Dutch Republic.¹⁰² For the better part of the seventeenth century, demand for artwork would be fueled by patronage, not from the church or the state, but from domestic homes. The virile and vibrant Dutch art market thrived until Louis XIV invaded the Netherlands in 1672. Soon after the invasion, the art markets declined, but this was not the only contributing factor. Montias suggests that demand for more expensive “fine painting” was favored over the mass-produced cheaper genre, landscape, and flower pieces.¹⁰³ In the 1680s, moralists shifted their attack towards “the decadence of manners and the aping of French modes of fashions.”¹⁰⁴ It seems that the Franco-Dutch war, a broader desire for peace, and a larger cultural shift towards civility and decorum all played a part in the decline of the school of Dutch painting.

Just as the Dutch had successfully kept nature, storms, floods, and the sea at bay, so to did they desire to prevent being overwhelmed by other foreign invasions. Images of tobacco and alcohol consumption in seventeenth-century painting represented this anxiety of a foreign “other” and its perpetual inclusion into an otherwise chastised society. Moralists and ministers, unable to eliminate tobacco or alcohol consumption from society, instead attempted to curb demand by focusing their sermons and treatises on the importance of moderation and the dangers of overindulgence. Annette Cozzi argues that, “Food paintings are particularly revealing because the ‘body politic’ is both metaphorical and literal: the relationships among nation/land/food/

¹⁰² Montias, John Michael. "Reflections on Historical Materialism, Economic Theory, and the History of Art in the Context of Renaissance and 17th Century Painting." *Journal of Cultural Economics* 5.2 (1981): 28.

¹⁰³ Montias, 35.

¹⁰⁴ Schama, Simon. *The Embarrassment of Riches: an Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age*. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1988. 458.

body/body politic are so intricate that governments regulate the amounts and kinds of food their citizens consume.”¹⁰⁵

For the seventeenth-century moralists and ministers, as well as for the patriotic convictions of the pro-Orangists, overindulgence, in all its forms was a dangerous enterprise. This was especially true in cases of alcohol and tobacco use. “Healthy individual bodies represent a healthy social organism . . . the strong body entails a present and a future social condition: first a society of innocence and health and then one of vice and misery.”¹⁰⁶ Incidentally, a healthy body was also understood to be a body capable of reproduction, a characteristic of importance to the vitality and economic prosperity of the state. Paradoxically however, reproduction by those procreators who were financially or otherwise unable, or unwilling, to raise their children were frowned upon by Dutch society. And while alcohol consumption may have led to sexual dalliance but tobacco consumption was believed to have a sterilizing affect. Both fears were equally risky to the sustainability of the Republic and of their national myth of superiority.

Tobacco, an exotic foreign novelty, taken from the land of savages and domesticated in the Dutch Republic, simultaneously represented both the New World and the comforts of home. It was a contradiction in it of itself. Its exoticism added to its demand, and its demand added to one’s addiction. Moreover tobacco was the Trojan Horse of the seventeenth century. For the entire century, physicians debated whether it caused or remedied melancholy, but one thing is for sure, the economic expansion of the Dutch Golden Age was in large part to the importation,

¹⁰⁵ Cozzi, Annette. “Composed Consumption: Picturing Nascent National Identity in Food Paintings.” *Food, Culture and Society: An International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*. 16 no.4 (2013): 574.

¹⁰⁶ Gallagher, 84.

production, and consumption of tobacco. It was at once a moral dilemma, an accepted practice, and an economic necessity.

Similarly to tobacco, alcohol not only led to both unruliness and sleepiness but was also a slippery slope to other sinful behaviors including gambling, unbridled sex, violence, rape, and even murder. For a female, alcohol was a surefire means towards the loss of one's chastity. For males, intoxication was equated to the loss of one's mind, wealth, and reputation. Furthermore, an intoxicated soldier was a symbol of neglect, not only of his self, his wealth, and his reputation. More importantly, a neglectful soldier not only gambled with his own livelihood, but he also gambled with the safety of the community and the nation.

Images of alcohol and tobacco consumption in seventeenth-century Dutch painting were a reflection of an immoral proliferation. The unpredictability of an intoxicated individual not only equated the accused to that of an immoral, illogical, and animalistic being, but it also threatened society. Dutch youths who learned from their elders, from their maidservants, and from the soldier/merchant/sailor role models were bound to repeat these vices as adults. Alcohol and tobacco, like other foreign novelties, were blemishes on an otherwise pristine community, and they perpetuated a culture of shame rather than superiority.

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