



*Edited by*  
JANE FENOULHET &  
LESLEY GILBERT

Narratives of Low  
Countries History  
and Culture  
*Reframing the Past*

UCLPRESS



# **Narratives of Low Countries History and Culture**

GLOBAL DUTCH: STUDIES IN LOW COUNTRIES  
CULTURE AND HISTORY

*Series Editor*  
ULRICH TIEDAU

Global Dutch explores Netherlandic culture and history through an international lens. It covers not only the core Dutch language area in north-west continental Europe but also other places where Dutch culture has had or continues to have an impact, including parts of the Americas, southern Africa and south-east Asia. Global Dutch is especially concerned with relations between Netherlandic cultures and other cultures – particularly Anglophone – in all periods from the Middle Ages to the present day.

# Narratives of Low Countries History and Culture

*Reframing the Past*

Edited by Jane Fenoulhet and Lesley Gilbert

 **UCL**PRESS

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## Preface to the new edition

It gives me great pleasure to introduce this second publication in UCL Press's Global Dutch series. *Narratives of Low Countries History and Culture: Reframing the Past* is a new edition of a collection of essays that the UCL Centre for Low Countries Studies produced in the 1990s as part of the occasional series Crossways, self-published in a small edition, no longer obtainable and not widely held by university libraries.<sup>1</sup>

The very fortunate co-occurrence of the refoundation of the UCL Centre for Low Countries Studies in 2014 and UCL Press, the UK's first Open Access university press (and one of the first worldwide), in 2015 finally enables us to make this highly respected but so far difficult to access body of scholarship available to a worldwide audience.

*Narratives of Low Countries History and Culture: Reframing the Past* explores the ways in which our understanding of the past in Dutch history and culture can be rethought to consider not only how it forms part of the present but how it can relate also to the future. Divided into three parts – 'The uses of myth and history', 'The past as illumination of cultural context' and 'Historiography in focus' – the volume seeks to demonstrate the importance of the past by investigating the transmission of culture and its transformations. It reflects on the history of historiography and looks critically at the products of the historiographic process, such as Dutch and Afrikaans literary history. While inevitably research since the original date of publication has added further perspectives on some of the themes covered in the volume, the contributions of *Narratives of Low Countries History and Culture* have stood the test of time, 'making the volume as a whole a worthwhile subject for re-publication', as the anonymous peer reviewers pointed out. We do hope that the new edition will prove valuable for further research in Dutch and Low Countries Studies in the UK and worldwide.

This leaves me to add a few words of explanation to the title of the new book series. Far from trying to be bombastic, although certainly meant to provoke and attract attention to what in today's academia is considered a less-widely taught subject, Global Dutch does not suggest

that the Dutch language would rival English, Chinese or any other more widely spoken idiom for that matter, as *lingua franca* of today's or tomorrow's world. Instead this series focuses on the worldwide impact of the Dutch language and the culture of the Low Countries. Traces of the global spread of Dutch are to be found mainly in the US, the Caribbean, Indonesia and South Africa, which is why this series takes a global perspective. Of course global influences also affect the Low Countries themselves. In other words, the new series Global Dutch aims at exploring the culture and history of the Low Countries through an international lens and is especially concerned with encounters and interactions between Dutch-language cultures and other cultures – particularly Anglophone – in all periods from the Middle Ages to the present day.

Ulrich Tiedau



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# Introduction

This volume contains a selection of papers given at the Second International and Interdisciplinary Conference of Low Countries Studies held at University College London in December 1994. The theme of the conference was 'Presenting the Past', and the three parts into which this volume is divided reflect the different approaches to the theme taken by contributors.

## **The uses of myth and history**

The chapters in this part all consider the ways in which the past is taken up and reworked to form part of the present and also to project into the future.

Jonathan Israel's chapter examines the way in which the past enters current political debate in the Dutch Golden Age. If reference to the past can help to create a sense of collective identity, this process is by no means uncontested. In the Dutch Republic, the absence of either a powerful state church or a monarchy to provide a focus for the creation of social and political cohesion created a climate in which rival ideologies burgeoned. Within this context, myth and history were called upon to buttress conflicting points of view.

This is the case with the Batavian Myth, for example, which, Jonathan Israel argues, comes sharply into focus as a propaganda tool only during the clash between the Remonstrants and Counter-Remonstrants in the first two decades of the seventeenth century. The myth is not particularly potent in the creation of a national identity, if by 'national' the whole of the Republic is meant. It achieves maximum potency at a period of extreme tension between Holland and the other

provinces. Its subsequent manifestations are likewise in a contested context and serve, if anything, to highlight particularism rather than cohesion in Dutch myth-making.

This point is also taken up in the chapter by Meijer-Drees. She considers the use in literature of two symbols related to the 'fatherland': the lion and the cow. Her chapter brings out clearly the ambiguous nature of the 'patria' concept, which may refer to the Republic as a whole, to a province or even to a particular town. Furthermore, slippage in reference is not uncommon within a single text. Since the two texts studied are both anthologies published in Amsterdam, we have to take into account source bias. Nevertheless, it is striking that once again the distinction is largely 'Holland versus the rest'.

In the second part of his chapter Jonathan Israel considers the use made of history in the Dutch republican tradition of political thought in the second half of the seventeenth century. The political theorists develop a critical and comparative approach to their discussions of the past, designed to provide supporting evidence for their theories about the Dutch state. Attention focuses on three areas: the Roman Republic, the Italian republics and the United Provinces themselves. As in the case of the Batavian Myth, however, this is not a case of discovering easy points of identification in the past and simply using them to shape a clear, unambiguous theory for the present. The approach to the past is a subject for hot debate, with little sign of consensus.

The chapter by Schmidt considers the role of geography as well as history in the creation of a sense of national identity in the new Republic. References to Spanish tyranny in the New World are found widely in Dutch literature and popular culture. Here, the Dutch are identifying themselves as a group faced with an external threat. It is interesting to note that Schmidt's chapter does provide an apparent example of the use of an identification, here, geographical rather than historical, to create a sense of identity for the Republic as a whole.

Two other chapters, those by Lawrence and De Groof, deal with the 'creation' of history from current events as a result of the manipulation of the public image of prominent individuals. Not surprisingly, given the circumstances of the time, their chapters are concerned with the creation of 'war heroes'. De Groof deals with the development of the public image of the Southern general Spinola; Lawrence with that of a number of Northern naval heroes. In both cases we find that history is appropriated in the creation of this public image: comparisons with past heroes, use of certain stylistic devices, etc.

Van Dyke's chapter on Groen van Prinsterer provides another example of the use of history to develop a political theory or ideology. Groen interprets the past, and specifically the French Revolution, with the intention of developing a counter- or anti-revolutionary political philosophy. His use of history does help to shape Dutch national identity but, like the revolutionary theorizing of the seventeenth century, it is not uncontested. It forms the basis of a party rather than a national ideology.

The chapters by Peeters and Nörtemann both consider the use of history in the context of Belgium/Flanders. Peeters looks at the attempt to use literary prizes in Flanders to 'improve' the quality of literary output. Perhaps the most striking aspect of Peeters's chapter is the way in which aesthetic criteria are annihilated by the socio-political agenda of those seeking to 'advance' Dutch-language literature. Comparisons with Socialist Realism would doubtless prove interesting.

Nörtemann's study of the creation of the myth of the battle of the Golden Spurs is interesting in that it illustrates the attempt to create a sense of social and political cohesion by using the past to create a collective memory. At the same time, however, the chapter illustrates that in the particular circumstances of nineteenth-century Belgium the use of this event feeds into and becomes part of the political debate within Belgium about 'Belgian' identity and the relationship between the French- and Dutch-speaking communities.

## **The past as illumination of cultural context**

The second part demonstrates the importance of the past in Dutch culture, both in new approaches to cultural output which emphasize the environment in which it was produced, and in investigations of the transmission of culture and its transformations.

Anna Jane Harris's study of a late medieval text makes the point that a scholarly examination of such a text must also examine the context in which it was written. She demonstrates how obscure meanings can be clarified, thus making literature from the past more accessible. Rather than analysing the text, Harris concentrates on its social function as an instrument for promoting a particular behavioural code.

Jaap Goedegebuure's chapter shows that the Bible is still embedded in Dutch culture when he considers it in relation both to recent Dutch fiction and a late twentieth-century readership. He demonstrates the richness of the intertextuality 'even though modern literature has undergone a

process of secularization' and illustrates some of the transformations that biblical stories undergo. However, he also points to the decreasing likelihood that readers, and even critics, will be fully aware of this richness.

In his presentation of Becanus's theory of the history of the Dutch language, Krop demonstrates the importance of classical antiquity as a source of ideas. It is evident, however, that these ideas are grafted on to a Christian root. Krop argues that Becanus's transformation of these ideas in his theory of the ancient pedigree of the Dutch language should be understood against the background of Dutch humanism, particularly as the theory provided a justification for the use of the vernacular.

Ron Spronk's chapter on Maarten van Heemskerck's *Wonders of the World* series emphasizes the importance of Latin and Greek literary sources for the detail of his prints. Spronk sees the *Wonders* as representing 'the achievements of mankind, independent from the Christian deity'. Nevertheless, as in the case of Becanus's theory, classical culture is not reproduced in a 'pure' form, but is an admixture. Spronk points out, for instance, that Van Heemskerck's choice of eight, rather than seven *Wonders* can be traced back to medieval tradition.

Christiane Hertel's chapter, which also looks at the cultural past and the transformations it undergoes, stands apart from the other chapters in this part since the 'cultural past' in question is Dutch seventeenth-century art and the context is that of German culture. Hertel discusses the reception of Dutch genre painting as exemplifying the idyllic in the German aesthetic tradition. She uses the concept of the 'disturbed' idyll to express the intrusion of social and historical conditions which are reflected in the idyllic scenes, concluding her account with contrasting examples from 1930s German art.

## **Historiography in focus**

This part has a double focus: the first three chapters concentrate on the history of historiography, while the remaining contributions look critically at the products of the historiographic process; Dutch and Afrikaans literary history. A theme running through this part is the relationship between history and literature. Whereas the first three chapters explore the interaction between them, discussing the literary qualities of history-writing, or their fusion in the historical novel, the remaining chapters discuss aspects of the historiography of literature, taking a fresh look at established figures and literary works and revising and supplementing the canon.



In her chapter, Anne Marie Musschoot considers parallels between historiography and the historical novel, having established from the outset that history-writing can be seen as a form of storytelling. She draws a distinction between the ‘new’ narrative historians and the ‘positivistic/scientistic’ historians which is based on their attitude to the representation of historical reality, or truth. Unlike positivistic historians, new historians are reluctant to make truth claims, something they share with postmodernist novelists. In the nineteenth century, historiography and the historical novel shared an approach to historical reality as something unproblematic, and a mission to foster national pride through their work.

Musschoot also surveys the historical fiction of Hella Haasse, because its development in the post-war period is similar to that of the historical novel itself since the early nineteenth century. As Musschoot points out, Haasse’s experiments with representing the past evolved in a direction opposed to that of the postmodernist writers she mentions, towards more documentation, less story. A similar development is noted by Liesbeth Brouwer, who describes historiography in the three decades after World War II as being characterized by a rejection of history as story. Like Musschoot, Brouwer acknowledges Hayden White’s importance in describing changing attitudes to representing the past and the return to storytelling in recent historiography which they engendered.

Brouwer uses the *Friese Volksalmanak* to trace the development of Frisian historiography in the nineteenth century, which was principally a development away from history as a branch of letters to a discipline in its own right. What also emerges strongly from this account is the importance of historiography in fostering Frisian national identity.

Verschaffel’s starting point is also linked to questions of identity: in the context of Belgium in the eighteenth century, which vernacular should replace Latin as the language of historiography? He points out that the emerging dominance of French adversely affected the style of Flemish historians who were writing in a language other than their mother tongue. Verschaffel analyses the discourse on the style question and the underlying views on historiography and literature. The subsidiary status of style leads Verschaffel to conclude that, since in this period Belgians considered that rhetoric had no place in history-writing, literature and history were thought to be of a different order. In the course of the eighteenth century, the idea gained ground that it was possible to present the past with minimal intervention on the part of the historiographer. This desire to serve the truth through transparent writing harks back, Verschaffel suggests, to an earlier, ‘purer’ mode of history-writing – the chronicle with its lists.

With Frans Ruiter's chapter, the focus shifts to literary historiography. His aim is to illuminate one of the dark corners of modern literary history, focusing on the journal *Leiding*, founded by P. N. van Eyck and Pieter Geyl. The journal itself, though not a success, is interesting because of the light it sheds on the cultural transformation taking place in the interwar period. Ruiter sees *Leiding* as a last gasp of the old aesthetic ideal, but also as representing what he calls a transitional phase of modernity.

In her chapter, Nel van Dijk also takes a fresh look at the interwar period, focusing on Ter Braak and his role in the formation of literary opinions. Although Ter Braak's influence is not disputed, Van Dijk shows how subsequent critics have used Ter Braak and his stature to help them assert their own views. She also shows how Ter Braak's undisputed position was, to some extent, bolstered by his manipulation of literary opinion, citing the example of Elsschot, whose work he promoted in the Netherlands.

Godfrey Meijntjes also writes about the 1920s and 1930s, although his reappraisal concerns a different canon: that of Afrikaans literature. Like Van Dijk, he also raises the question of vested interests in the canon, and goes beyond this to consider the problem of institutionalized interpretations. His reflections on the 'historicity of texts and the textuality of history' bring the reader back to some of the ideas discussed by Musschoot. Meijntjes, however, goes on to advocate a new historicist approach – a political rereading in order to uncover hidden subject matter, which he demonstrates with reference to three canonical Afrikaans texts.

Marcel Janssens rounds this part off with reflections both on the way the past – in this instance the Prague Spring – is presented by the Dutch writer Robberechts, and on the way critics use the term postmodern in presenting the recent Dutch literary past.

Jane Fenoulhet  
Lesley Gilbert

Part I

## **The uses of myth and history**



1

# The uses of myth and history in the ideological politics of the Dutch Golden Age

Jonathan I. Israel

It is perhaps not surprising that the Dutch Republic with its numerous political assemblies and consultative style of government should have been, in some ways, a more pervasively ideological society than virtually any other in seventeenth-century Europe. It seems likely also that lack of religious unity and of a powerful state church, combined with the inevitable need to deflect some of the impetus of theological strife and confessional rivalry, added to the persistent tendency of the Dutch political scene to become an arena for contending secular political ideologies. The relative weakness of the public church, combined with the comparatively strong position of a variety of tolerated churches – Anabaptists, Lutherans, Remonstrants, Jews and in practice, if not in theory, Catholics – created a situation in which it was plainly impossible to follow the example of neighbouring countries and build political and social cohesion and stability by constantly parading the trappings and proclaiming the teachings of any one church. In the United Provinces, in contrast to the rest of Europe, confessionalization and confessional values could not be employed as the chief means of nourishing and buttressing political authority. Just how dangerous it could be, in the Dutch case, to permit theological preoccupations to dictate the political and ideological agenda was demonstrated for all to see by the strife between the Arminians and Gomarists and the theologico-political crisis of 1617–18 which brought the Republic to the verge of civil war.

Moreover, if the authority of the public church and its theological stance could not be used to justify and bolster political authority, neither did the United Provinces possess a tradition and mystique of kingship, the imposing glow of an illustrious court, capable of functioning

as a unifying focus of loyalty and allegiance. This again constituted a fundamental difference between the Republic and most other European countries. For even in monarchies such as England after the Glorious Revolution, or Spain after the Bourbon Succession, where deep and bitter conflict ensued from conflicting loyalties to competing claimants to the throne, the dynastic factor, and claims in terms of hereditary right, remained so central to the ideological battle that everything else was overshadowed. No one would suppose it an accident that it was precisely after Charles I's head was cut off, during the Interregnum of the 1650s, that England suddenly became fertile ground for rival secular ideologies and a proliferation of new forms of political thought.

Political ideology in the Dutch Golden Age then was a pervasive factor, was predominantly secular in character albeit always tinged with theological concerns and tended to reduce dynastic claims and arguments to a secondary status. Compared to other European countries in the seventeenth century, the United Provinces, with its enviable prosperity and, by the standards of the time, elaborate welfare system, appeared serene, content and stable – and up to a point so it was, at any rate most of the time. And yet what other European country can be said to have experienced such a large number of major internal upsets and revolutions as did the Dutch provinces in 1566, 1572–4, 1580, 1586–7, 1617–18, 1650, 1672, 1702–4, 1747–8 and the Patriot upsurge of the early and mid-1780s?

A striking feature of any society strongly pervaded by ideological tensions is the way that not only the present but also the past becomes prey to being constantly used and abused in ideological terms. Wherever a particular dynasty or a particular church, or both, was firmly in control, the official view of the past may have been highly contentious, and probably was, but it was also rigorously enforced, largely unchallenged and essentially stable. In the Dutch Republic, by contrast, history was a perennial ideological battleground, more fervently fought over and disputed than anywhere else. Helped by the relative freedom of the press, it was also often more obviously, not to say provocatively, linked to current politics and political comment, and entwined with political thought, than virtually anywhere else.

At first, in the decades following the Revolt, ideologues, propagandists and political theorists chiefly confined their deliberations about the past to the history of the Low Countries themselves, rarely alluding to ancient history (apart from the Batavian Myth) or the medieval or modern history of other countries. One argued principally about the Burgundians and Habsburgs, the dynastic rulers of the Low Countries,

here and there dragging in the Batavian Legend, the story of how the ancient Batavians, described by Tacitus as brave, virtuous and freedom-loving, had defended their freedom and their homeland against Roman oppression and avoided becoming subjects of the Roman emperor. After arising in humanist circles in the early sixteenth century, the Batavian Myth had quickly become a significant undercurrent in the culture of the northern Netherlands.<sup>1</sup> However, it was not often employed as a tool of propaganda during the Revolt, in part, no doubt, because it had no broad application to the Netherlands north and south as a whole but applied more specifically to the territory north of the rivers and especially Holland.

Where the Batavian Myth was deployed as an instrument of propaganda after the Revolt this tended to be in a context of internecine strife between the provinces. Much of the resentment against Oldenbarnevelt and his leadership of the Republic which helped fuel the opposition of the inland provinces and of Zeeland to his policies during the years after the signing of the Twelve Years' Truce, in 1609, was directed against Holland's preponderance in the States General. In theory the Seven Provinces were of equal weight in Generality affairs but in practice Holland made nearly all the decisions and Holland refused to be overruled even when she had a majority of four or five provinces voting against her in the States General. Holland's pre-eminence was solidly based in that she possessed the lion's share of the Republic's population, wealth and resources. But it was hard to justify in theoretical terms, and this is where the mystique of the Batavian Myth proved useful. The Batavian Myth was, for example, central to Grotius's argument in his *De Antiquitate Republicae Batavae* (1610), where he endeavoured to add lustre to the system of government by the regents and, by implication, justify the fact that Holland led the United Provinces as a whole.<sup>2</sup>

As the struggle between Oldenbarnevelt and Prince Maurits for control of the Dutch state approached its climax in 1617 and the early months of 1618, Grotius showed no hesitation in restating the Batavian Legend as a means of defending the embattled primacy of the States of Holland. The English ambassador to the United Provinces at that time, Sir Dudley Carleton, an envoy who was not only under orders from his master to back Maurits but also displayed a marked personal preference for the Counter-Remonstrants against the Remonstrants, reported rather acidly, in April 1618, that 'there is a discourse presented to the States of Holland by Mons. Barnevelt but penned by Grotius to the towns of Holland to puff up their spirits, telling them how the ancient Batavi were *socii Imperii Romani*, with such like pedantical stuff, concluding,

because that Holland is more ancient, greater and richer than the rest of the United Provinces, ergo they must have no National Synod'.<sup>3</sup> This discourse circulated at a time when the States of Holland were insisting that they were not obliged to agree to the calling of the National Synod for which Maurits was pressing, to settle the conflict between the Remonstrants and Counter-Remonstrants, even though five provinces were now supporting the proposal and Maurits's policy.

After 1618 the Batavian Myth rapidly receded as a tool of political argument though not of ideological strife in a wider sense. It was too vague and open to dispute to serve as the spearhead of a political argument but continued to play a significant supporting role as a potent symbol of Holland's glorious and freedom-loving past. The most celebrated deployment of the myth in the arts was, of course, the Amsterdam regents' decision, in 1659, to commission a series of large paintings illustrating the stages of the Batavian Revolt against the Romans for the *burgerzaal*, or public gallery, in the city's splendid new town hall. The choice of theme was known about and discussed, among others by Vondel, some years before the actual commission for twelve paintings – two per year to be remunerated at the rate of a thousand guilders each – was assigned, in November 1659, to Govaert Flinck. Flinck had for years been the artistic adviser to, as well as a friend of, Cornelis and Andries de Graeff, then two of the most powerful members of the Amsterdam city government and two of the most prominent figures in the States party-faction, the anti-Orangist block, in the States of Holland. The choice of subject for paintings to adorn what was the largest and most public space in what was the largest and most public building in Amsterdam was undoubtedly recognized by everyone at the time to embody a powerful contemporary political message. What these regent friends of Johan de Witt were proclaiming to the entire world was that Amsterdam, however great and influential, was no city-republic but rather part of Holland, a political entity which with its sovereign claims and freedom-loving traditions, guaranteed the city's freedom and had an ancient, proven right, tested by the vicissitudes of history, to preside over and defend the freedom of the United Provinces as a whole. It was an inherent part of the message that no hereditary figure-head was needed to assist Holland in performing this task, the choice of theme having been decided on only a few years after Prince William II's fateful attempt, in 1650, to seize control of the city by military force.

Flinck died shortly after receiving his commission, and responsibility for the series was then divided up among several artists. One of the commissions, *The Conspiracy of Claudius Civilis*, was assigned to



Rembrandt, who, having painted the picture, duly delivered it to the town hall in August 1662. It was hung in the public gallery but failed to please members of the city government and, after a few months, it was taken down and returned to the artist, who remained unpaid.<sup>4</sup> One can only speculate as to the reasons why the picture was scorned by the authorities but it seems likely that the reasons have to do with the unheroic appearance of Rembrandt's strange Batavians and the rather large crown which, somewhat perversely in so republican a context, Rembrandt set upon Claudius Civilis' head. Altogether more heroic and in tune with the burgomasters' wishes, and therefore more acceptable, was the, for us, conventional and rather uninteresting contribution of Rembrandt's old rival, Jan Lievens.

The ideological battle which characterized Dutch politics during the First Stadholderless Period (1650–72) was particularly intense during the 1660s, when there was a proliferation of important works of political thought and also a notable shift towards debating the past of ancient states and of neighbouring lands in addition to the Dutch past. As is well known, the rise of a fully-fledged Dutch republican political thought tradition in the 1660s, in the works of Jan and Pieter de la Court and of Spinoza, was accompanied by intense preoccupation with the ideas and writings of Machiavelli and an avid interest in the history of republics in general, including the republics of the ancient world.<sup>5</sup> Machiavelli had been the first European writer to put forward a vision of politics in which neither theological sanction nor the hereditary, dynastic principle plays any part in providing political legitimacy and stability and also the first who had presented an essentially political, secular vision of history. The Dutch now likewise became accustomed – much as had some English writers in the 1650s – to analyse and assess the fate of states, including their own republic, in terms of political composition and structures. In this way history became both a guide and the stockpile of ideological ammunition. The Brothers de la Court had much to say about the Italian republics and even the German city-states. Spinoza in his *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (1670) largely confines his attention to the ancient Jewish state but here too the influence of Machiavelli is strongly evident and [chapters 17](#) and [18](#) are, as one commentator aptly put it, 'but the application to Hebrew history of the principles and maxims which Machiavelli had already deduced from Roman history and the history of the Italian states'.<sup>6</sup>

In recent years scholars have gradually become aware that even though the Dutch republican tradition of political thought, with its secular historical approach, was chiefly a phenomenon of the 1660s and

1670s, it was a tradition which was rather wider in scope and also more enduring in its influence than was previously thought.<sup>7</sup> A number of writers and writings, earlier largely ignored, have come to be recognized as compelling instances of the new approach to politics and political history, among them that remarkable book – quite uncompromising in its republicanism – the *Vrije Politieke Stellingen* (1665), which is now known to have been written by Spinoza's friend and Latin master, Franciscus van den Enden (1602–74).<sup>8</sup> But what has not yet been sufficiently stressed, in my view, is that alongside this batch of theoretical writings, including the works of Ulrik Huber, there was a broader, more popular discussion, to be found in pamphlets as well as books, of a more specifically historical character, debating the nature and characteristics of the ancient and medieval republics of Europe, as well as the Dutch past, in a style which shows a definite affinity to the republican trend in political theory. This new type of historical debate, typical of the second half of the seventeenth century, thus reflects many of the same ideological concerns as the theoretical writings of the new Dutch political thinkers.

One clear illustration of this linkage is the discussion, in both theoretical and more occasional, popular works of the ancient Roman Republic. In their judgements about the Roman Republic, Dutch commentators of the later seventeenth century divide into three distinct camps. Firstly, there is what might be described as the mainstream, moderate republican view of ancient Rome such as one finds formulated in Johan de Witt's *Deductie, ofte declaratie van de Staten van Hollandt* of 1654. Here the Roman Republic is held up as an illustrious, thoroughly praiseworthy model, albeit a republic which held virtually all the rest of the world in subjection and which was eventually undermined owing to the fatal error the Romans made of allowing an excessive degree of control over the army to devolve on one man, namely Julius Caesar.<sup>9</sup> Once Caesar had succeeded in turning the army into an instrument of his own ambition, Rome rapidly sank into a condition of decay and wretched servitude. This de Wittian assessment then recurs in several later works, including Walten's *De Regtsinnige Policey* (1689) and Crisped's *Politieque Reflectien* (1690).<sup>10</sup> The latter work, relentlessly anti-Orangist, warmly praises the Roman system of changing their two consuls each year, comparing this with the Dutch method of annually changing the burgomasters of the towns. Rome successfully preserved her freedom, according to this work, until Julius Caesar was allowed too much leverage over the military, which he then used to overturn the Republic. A second and this time distinctly Orangist view is encountered in a very different set of publications. According to works such as Dionesius Du Toict's *Hollands*

*Heyll' en Rampen* (2 vols., Amsterdam, 1686), the Romans best preserved their cherished freedom not in the days of the republic, before Julius Caesar, but in the period before the Republic, under the ancient kings of Rome, who played an indispensable role by lending unity and cohesion to the state.<sup>11</sup> It was precisely when the Romans made the mistake of opting for a republic without a constitutionally circumscribed but illustrious 'eminent head', according to Du Toict, that Rome degenerated into the chaotic disorder which paved the way for tyranny. Not surprisingly, Du Toict's book is dedicated to none other than the Stadholder, Prince William III of Orange.

But there was also a third approach which originates in the view of the Roman Republic put forward in his *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* by Spinoza.<sup>12</sup> One commentator has described this as 'very odd' and in a sense it is.<sup>13</sup> But Spinoza wished to argue that republican freedom is a more intricate and elusive thing than was assumed by those who thought that one achieved a republic merely by expelling a ruling dynasty and adopting ostensibly republican procedures. Spinoza evidently deemed the Roman Republic – like the English Commonwealth of the 1650s for which he evinced an unmistakable antipathy – to be closer, in reality, to tyranny than true republican freedom. All the Romans achieved in their vaunted republican era, insisted Spinoza, 'was to appoint several tyrants in place of one who kept the people miserably embroiled in wars, foreign and civil, until finally the government became once again a monarchy with merely a change of name, precisely as in England'.<sup>14</sup> This was the radical republican, or Spinozist, view of ancient Rome which we find also in Van den Enden's *Vrije Politieke Stellingen*.<sup>15</sup>

A second illustration of the linkage between the new republican theorizing, on the one hand, and discussion about history in the later seventeenth century is the debate, from the 1650s onward, about the degeneration of the medieval and Renaissance Italian city-republics into tyrannies under oppressive despots. De Witt broaches this topic too in his *Deductie*, arguing that it was above all lack of republican vigilance, trusting excessively in a single great but devious and ambitious family, which led successively to the overthrow of the republics of Verona, Perugia, Bologna and, of course, Florence, where the republic destroyed itself by trusting too much, and assigning too much influence and status to, the Medici.<sup>16</sup> The *Politieque Reflectien* repeats this passage almost verbatim but adds the example of Milan which was brought down, we are told, by trusting excessively in Giangaleazzo Visconti.<sup>17</sup> Orangist writers, as one might expect, had a very different story to tell. Du Toict maintains that it was precisely because the Florentines made the disastrous error of

trying to do without a constitutionally limited, hereditary leading figure in their state, to lend an element of unity, that their republic fell under the lamentable despotism of the Medici, an upstart family, he says, who had formerly been mere burghers themselves.<sup>18</sup>

Certain aspects of Dutch history, especially in the recent past, were bound to be hotly disputed. As one would expect, figures such as Oldenbarnevelt, Maurits, William II and, after 1672, also Johan de Witt are frequently and fervently debated in numerous contexts. What is less well known in this connection but also of considerable interest is the intense, ideological tone of what seems to have been a quite widespread debate about the character of the pre-Burgundian and Burgundian medieval counts of Holland. This controversy, which flared up in the 1680s, especially, shows that one way in which the radical democratic republican tendencies of Spinoza and Van den Enden persisted as a factor in Dutch culture after the 1670s was through a tradition of sharp disparagement of the regime of the medieval counts.

In the past, and still in the present, the medieval counts of Holland had enjoyed a relatively good press, especially from Orangist writers. This tendency was encouraged by the fact that the propaganda of the Dutch Revolt had tended to contrast the legitimacy of the pre-Burgundian and Burgundian regime with the alleged misdemeanours and despotic actions of the Habsburgs. In September 1584, the States of Brabant had backed their plea that sovereignty over the Netherlands should now be offered to the French king, Henry III, with the claim that the country's greatness had begun with the Burgundians, members of the French royal house.<sup>19</sup> Du Toict, writing in 1686, advances a positive, even enthusiastic view of the medieval counts of Holland, assuring his readers that these rulers had benefited their subjects by checking internecine strife and upholding the rule of law.

A dramatically different view is put forward in two anonymously published works, apparently by the same writer, which appeared in 1683 and 1684,<sup>20</sup> at a time when there was a bitter political quarrel in progress between William III and Amsterdam, and republican sentiment in the city was reviving. This writer submits a blistering critique of the Burgundian regime, lumping the whole of the Burgundian and Habsburg periods from 1425 to 1572 together as the 'Tyranie onser Graven uyt den huysen van Bourgondien ende Oostenrijk'. But neither does he show the least sympathy for the pre-Burgundian counts of Holland, accounting their regime one of constant warfare and turmoil in which the people were systematically exploited and robbed. The author's stance is decidedly republican and democratic, and to

advance his views he makes use of the Batavian Myth but gives it an unmistakably radical twist: 'dat ten tijden der Romeynen de Bataviërs ende Vriesen vrye volckeren zijn geweest, ende populair geregeert wierden, meenen wy soo klaer te wesen dat niemandt die der selven Historien heeft gelesen daer aen twijffelen kan'.<sup>21</sup>

Although Van den Enden was long since dead, the vigorous prose of these tracts recalls his style as well as his ideas, and it can be no accident that at any rate the longer of the two tracts, the *Begin, Voortgang ende Bind*, was published by the famous Amsterdam Anabaptist publishing house of Jan Rieuwertsz, the same that had published Spinoza's works and the works of several of Spinoza's disciples and allies. What these tracts also show is that under the impact of Spinoza and Spinozism, there was evolving on the radical fringe of Dutch intellectual life a systematic rejection of the dynastic factor in all political life, a total denial of the legitimacy of the hereditary possession of high status in society.

## 2

# The past *in* a foreign country: Patriotic history and New World geography in the Dutch Republic, c. 1600–1648

Benjamin Schmidt

Picture, if you will, Holland in the first half of the seventeenth century. Imagine yourself on a lazy afternoon stroll through Amsterdam, on a warm summer day in the early 1630s. The city, like the province, appears prosperous, though these are not entirely carefree days for the whole of the Republic. The by now Sixty Years War against Spain rages on, if somewhat more faintly at this stage and on the peripheries – in distant cities like Den Bosch, which Frederik Hendrik has recently reconquered, and Maastricht, where Dutch troops maintain a successful siege. Religious feuds inherited from the 1620s continue to simmer, yet they too have been relegated to the back-burner; the Remonstrant church has been quietly reinstated in 1630. On this particular afternoon, however, you seek serenity rather than controversy and you head, accordingly, toward the park. To try something altogether different, you visit the newest *doolhof*, the ‘Oranje pot’, located in the recently constructed, relatively modest neighbourhood of the Jordaan.

A *doolhof* designates, literally, a ‘labyrinth’, yet the word then described, perhaps more accurately, the seventeenth-century equivalent of an amusement park. The ‘Oranje pot’, in any event, was in the business of fun, or at least the early modern Dutch version thereof. It assembled a collection of ‘leisure-time diversions’, which were ostensibly dedicated to ‘the pleasure and instruction of the free Netherlands’ and vaguely associated with the House of Orange – a patriotic theme park, thus, with an assortment of amusing side-shows. Attractions included, on the didactic side of things, a theatrical procession of ‘singing papists’, a drama describing ‘The Exodus of the Children of Israel’, and a grandiose ‘Fountain of the Seven Provinces’ sculpted by Jonas Bargois, fountain-maker to the

prince. In a more light-hearted vein, one could also find a band of pipers and drummers, a menagerie of exotic beasts and ‘green parrots’, and a rare elephant’s skull, tusks intact. Between a carousel-like ‘Fountain of Orpheus’ (somewhat incongruously emblazoned, ‘Vive Orange’) and an exhibition entitled ‘The Land’s Welfare’ (an armada of toy ships in a festive pool of water) stood a central and presumably unifying *tableau vivant* illustrating ‘The Duke of Alva’s Spanish Tyranny Perpetrated in the Netherlands and the West Indies’: two men dressed up as soldiers assaulting a hapless maiden.<sup>1</sup>

Good fun, one might wonder. The *doolhof* is striking for its seemingly haphazard mixture of frivolous distraction and solemn didacticism – *verlichting en vermaak*, as contemporaries might have put it. The visitor to the ‘Oranje pot’ could move easily from papists to parrots and then from Israelites on to the Indies. Yet this patriotic recipe for amusement made perfect sense within the context of seventeenth-century Dutch culture. Like so many works of art and literature, the *hutspot* served up in the Jordaan blended religion and revolt, commerce and conquest, to create the distinct flavour of history and recent Dutch history at that. At the ‘Oranje pot’, citizens of the Republic could study at their leisure the lessons of patriotic scripture and refresh themselves, quite literally, at the fountain of *patria*. They could experience the founding of the United Provinces and observe the benefits as well as the dangers which the young Republic now faced. Visitors could lose themselves in an afternoon of patriotic pastime, part recreation, part indoctrination, and surely part imagination that bridged the two.

The ‘Oranje pot’ reveals much about presenting the past in the early Dutch Republic. First and foremost, it underscores the importance of history at this particular time and place. To the seventeenth-century Dutch, history mattered. The recollection, recitation and representation of the Republic’s past mattered quite a bit, in fact, as is testified by the remarkable production, over the course of the Golden Age, of works dedicated to the project of history. Apart from the *doolhoven*, ample chronicles, dramas, poems, prints, paintings, sculptures and public ceremonies provided the means to narrate the relatively brief, though certainly compelling, story of the Republic’s foundation – of the religious upheavals of the later sixteenth century, the subsequent revolt against Habsburg Spain, and the drawn-out struggle for national survival. History mattered, moreover, in so far as it moralized. To recollect and to recite the saga of the sixteenth century was to rally the younger generation to arms and to rejuvenate its flagging piety. History offered the lessons of life on an ‘elevated stage’, wrote the dean of the Veere rhetoricians, Adriaen Valerius: ‘[It] induced

wisdom, through the remembrance of that which has occurred; devoutness, through the consideration of that which should have occurred; and circumspection, through the observation of that which could yet occur.<sup>2</sup> The designers of the 'Oranje pot' pointedly juxtaposed their display of 'Alva's Tyranny' with that of the 'Land's Welfare', hoping the former would provide a cautionary tale for the latter. Furthermore, history legitimized. During its momentous, yet in certain ways tenuous, transition to statehood, the Republic resorted to patriotic history to support the shaky foundations of a nation founded on 'heresy', revolt and abjuration. Especially during the first half of the seventeenth century, the heirs of the sixteenth-century rebels appealed to the memory of victories and pieties past to justify claims and presumptions for the Republic's future. Within the world of the *doolhof*, the foundations of the Republic were meant to appear every bit as sturdy as the marble 'Fountain of the Seven Provinces'.

Finally, the 'Oranje pot' suggests something of the disparate materials from which the seventeenth-century Dutch fashioned their history. To portray the Republic's relatively recent triumphs, *doolhoven* transported their visitors to the distant past: in the first instance, to the biblical past – as illustrated by the enactment of the Exodus story and the other, primarily Old Testament *tableaux* within the 'Oranje pot' – and in the second instance, to antiquity – as represented, for example, by the classical 'memorials' and statuary advertised in another local park.<sup>3</sup> The other relevant past, described in numerous works of history, if not in any of the *doolhoven* per se, was the Batavian past, identified originally by Tacitus, reconstructed imaginatively by sixteenth-century humanists and embellished lavishly by Grotius in his popular *Liber de antiquitate rei publicae Batavae*.<sup>4</sup> In each instance, the Dutch compared their own history with that of mythical 'forebears'. In each instance, the Dutch drew strength from the heroism and exempla of an imagined past to nourish the claims of an uncertain future. History by analogy – or typology, to use the technical term – lent a patina of respectability to the upstart Republic.

One further facet of Golden Age historiography emerges from a trip to the 'Oranje pot', and that is the lesson delivered in New World geography. Visitors were reminded – initially by the exotic fauna and later by the exhibition of Spanish tyranny – of Dutch affiliations with America. In the first case, the foreign specimens reflected, quite simply, the recent expansion of commerce between the Netherlands and the West Indies, for which a trading company had been chartered in 1621. In the second case, the reference alluded more broadly to the presumed kinship between the respective histories of the Netherlands and the New World,



both of which described the experience of tyranny under Spain. This was no passing reference, but rather one of many made in contemporary histories and part of a broader strategy of Golden Age letters. For patriotic history was presumed to reside not only in the distant past but also in distant lands: pre-eminently in America, where Spain had perpetrated infamies that bore direct comparison with those committed in the Netherlands. Patriotic historians could reach out not only to mythical forefathers, then, but also to imagined brothers-in-arms – to the Indians, in this case – whose history was incorporated into that of the Republic. The Oranje pot's *tableau* of international tyranny indicates a curious, though curiously overlooked, aspect of presenting the past in the early modern Netherlands, and it is on this blend of history and geography which I would like to elaborate.

The image of America, exotic though it might at first seem, entered the discourse of Dutch history by means decidedly domestic. By the seventeenth century, to be sure, the New World would hardly have registered as *terra incognita* in the urbane circles of the Netherlands. Works of geography had always enjoyed great popularity in the Low Countries, and the Dutch, by all indications, avidly consumed the earliest reports of the western discoveries.<sup>5</sup> Yet, more to the point, a peculiarly Dutch portrait of Spanish conquests in America had flourished in the heated political climate of the late sixteenth century. Throughout the Revolt, Dutch pamphleteers attacked the enemy's reputation by pointing to its renowned 'tyrannies' abroad. The rebels pronounced the experience of the Amerindians – conquered by Spain, tyrannized by Habsburg governors and victimized purportedly 'under the pretence of religion' – parallel to their own and justified the relatively radical course of the Revolt with reference to the cautionary example of the Indies. The *topos* of 'Spanish tyranny in America', in fact, became ubiquitous in rebel propaganda, appearing repeatedly in the polemics of Marnix from the 1570s and prominently in the *Apologia* of Willem of 1581. By the seventeenth century, the *topos* had passed from pamphlet literature to patriotic chronicle and from the discursive context of polemical ephemera to the more permanent repository of historical memory. The Dutch were now asked not simply to recognize the relevance of American history, but further to *recall* events in America for the purpose of committing them to memory. Historians entreated their audience to incorporate the narrative of Spain's American adventure into the larger body of patriotic scripture and to commemorate the history of the *Conquista* just as they had memorialized instances of Habsburg abuse in the Netherlands. To the chronicler Pieter Janszoon Twisck, the history of the West Indies elucidated that

of the Republic so vividly that it deserved pride of place within patriotic scripture. 'Although, dear reader, I prefer not to digress too far from my chronicle, nor unnecessarily to prolong or obfuscate my history', Twisck remarks, after a lengthy section on America which might otherwise have seemed digressive,

nonetheless I cannot desist from narrating a little of these affairs, which may serve as a warning and [thus] merit attention. To wit: that in the events of the years 1492 and 1542 discussed above, you may detect, as in a mirror, the character, nature, cunning, deceit, falseness, faithlessness, ambition, cruelty, tyranny and dominion of the Spaniards . . . committed in the New World. It behoves us always to remember, to recollect in lively and plain terms and never to permit to lapse into the house of forgetfulness [*nimmermeer in't huys der verghetelheydt te stellen*] these memories; but rather to remain assiduously alert, diligently prepared, and always on our guard . . . that we shall never again fall under the dominion, tyranny, and violence of Spain.<sup>6</sup>

Rather than in the 'house of forgetfulness', then, the history of America belonged in the palace of memory, preserved there in a prominent wing of Dutch historical consciousness, forever to endure as a locus of patriotic allegiance.

It would be difficult to exaggerate the pervasiveness of this sort of rhetoric or the place of America within it. Images of Spanish tyrannies appealed to an exceptionally broad audience that bridged differences of taste and education, faith and faction. On the most basic level, they thrived in popular, Calvinist historiography, as, for example, in Willem Baudartius's *Morghen-wecker* (1610). Baudartius's seminal text – singled out by bibliographers as the ultimate 'folk' text of the seventeenth century – served as the basis for the immensely popular textbook, *Spieghel der jeught* (1614), two works attributed to Joannes Gijsius and an anonymously published picture-book depicting the 'more than inhuman and barbaric tyrannies of Spain in the Netherlands and the Indies'.<sup>7</sup> One of Gijsius's works was published as the 'Second Part' of Bartolomé de las Casas's notorious American history, *Spiegel der Spaensche tyrannye* (1620), and it carried exceptionally graphic illustrations glossed by equally expressive 'sonnets' of doggerel. This account, together with Gijsius's slightly more literate *Oorsprong en voortgang* (1616), appeared in some dozen editions by the mid-century. As in so many other of these popular histories, Gijsius's narrative began with, concluded with and

referred throughout to the tyrannies of Spain in America. 'One reads from a variety of authors of the insatiable ambition, intolerable haughtiness and unspeakable cruelty of the Spanish nation', Gijsius opens his history of the Dutch troubles. 'First, the Spaniards revealed their blood-thirsty nature to the innocent Indians'; only later does Gijsius turn to their perfidy in the Netherlands.<sup>8</sup>

At the other end of the market were the grander, more learned and more lavishly produced volumes meant to appeal to a more prosperous, if not more refined, audience. A clear-cut division does not always separate the upscale histories from the more 'popular' variant. Gijsius's *Oorsprong* twice appeared in a Latin translation and attracted, presumably, an erudite readership. Yet this work hardly compares in scale, grandeur and refinement to the offerings of a P. C. Hooft or Pieter Bor, works of a more liberal and learned temperament, which fall well outside Breen's rubric of 'gereformeerde populaire historiographie'.<sup>9</sup> Like the popular works, though, the learned ones narrate extravagant tales of Spanish tyrannies in the Netherlands and make appropriate allusions to the memory of atrocities abroad. In recording the death of Philip II, for example, Emanuel van Meteren takes the opportunity to revive the memory of that monarch's far-flung infamies and 'the millions of souls' slaughtered in America 'under the false pretext of religion'.<sup>10</sup>

None of the more prominent figures of Dutch historiography – van Meteren, van Reyd, Bor, Grotius, Hooft – devoted quite as much space to the New World as did the popular historians. They did, however, make careful and strategic reference to America, often at critical junctures in their narratives and always to great effect. Witness the *Neederlandsche hystoorien* (1642) of P. C. Hooft. Elaborately constructed and elegantly composed, Hooft's history of the Revolt reads more like drama than chronicle. Like his earlier theatrical work, *Baeto*, the *Hystoorien* focus on the actions of great men performed on the stage of human history. The *dramatis personae* comprise the prince of Orange in the leading role with the king of Spain and the duke of Alva as his chief antagonists. Alva's departure from the Netherlands after six bloody, costly, yet inconclusive years of war, marks a climactic turning point in the narrative. It comes in the middle of the work and prompts a masterful overview of the iron duke's campaigns, his rise and fall from grace and his ignominious tenure in the Netherlands. Hooft marshals all of his considerable imaginative and descriptive powers to convey the by now legendary tyranny of Alva with renewed vigour and urgency: the cowardly execution of nobles, the greedy confiscation of property, the scandalous desecration of maidens, the unholy slaughter of innocents, the barbaric mutilation

of corpses. As if overpowered by his own prose, Hooft steps back from the carnage and refers his reader, simply, to the literature on America. 'Abominations, surely incomprehensible even to the most impartial observer', he concludes, 'are the likes of which one can find described in [Spain's] own books of the tyrannies committed on the innocent natives of the West Indies.' The curtain thus falls on this closing allusion to the histories of America.<sup>11</sup>

For what purpose did the Dutch exploit these images of the New World? As they had for the rebels a generation prior, so the images of America now served their seventeenth-century heirs by solidifying historians' recollections of tyrannies past and by strengthening the nation's moral suit against Spain. The memory of the conquest of the Indies allowed the Dutch, first, to heighten the drama of their own ordeal through a deliberate programme of historical analogy. *Topoi* of tyranny traded back and forth between the two narratives – of the Revolt and the *Conquista* – such that the Dutch borrowed liberally from American histories to embellish their own with yet taller tales of Habsburg violence and grislier vignettes of gore. The memory of America helped bloody that of the Revolt with uncommonly rich hues of crimson. Second, it permitted the Dutch to place their history in a broader, global context. 'The Netherlands have become a theatre of the world's bloody tragedies', wrote van Meteren in the preface to his *Historien*. The title-page of that work, appropriately enough, showed kings and emperors from around the world and allegories of the four continents where Spain and the Netherlands had waged their struggle. America lent an international facade to what might otherwise have appeared a simple civil war. Third, the image of the New World encouraged the Dutch to associate the birth of their nation with the epochal events of the sixteenth century: the Reformation and the Protestant struggle against papist heresy, and the Discovery and the Indians' struggle against Habsburg tyranny. By placing the story of the Republic's foundation in such prominent company, patriotic historians enhanced the prestige of their past. The analogy of America dignified the revolt of the Netherlands.<sup>12</sup>

Finally, reference to the history of America, like the biblical, classical and mythological allusions so liberally scattered throughout Golden Age historiography, helped to legitimize the Revolt. And here the parallel with the sixteenth century is most revealing. Just as the rebels, in their moment of isolation, turned to the example of the Indies in order to justify their abjuration of Philip II, so the patriotic historians, in a later moment of consolidation, revived the memory of American tyranny to sustain their project of national renewal. The

remembrance of Spanish atrocities in the New World was meant to impress upon the young Republic the validity, solemnity and urgency of recalling the Spanish oppression of the Netherlands. The one reinforced the other, and the two combined galvanized the Dutch to remain alert and ever-watchful for signs of impiety at home and tyranny abroad. Whatever the actual circumstances by now *in* the New World – in Dutch Brazil or in New Netherland, where the Republic had by now commenced its own course of colonization – the image of Spanish tyranny in America remained in this way preserved in patriotic scripture and enshrined in historical memory. The history of America endured, thus, in the collective memory of the Dutch, as part of the very fabric of the commemorative tapestry of the Republic's foundation. Its incorporation into Dutch historiography demonstrates the creativity, adaptability and – indeed – acquisitiveness of the Republic's programme of presenting the past.

### 3

## A noble courtier and a gentleman warrior: Some aspects of the creation of the Spinola image

**Bart De Groof**

Although the military campaigns of Ambrogio Spinola, chief of staff to the archdukes Albert and Isabella, general and later minister to the kings Philip III and Philip IV of Spain, may seem of little importance against the background of the general evolution of the Eighty Years War, they certainly made a profound impression on contemporary historiography. Spinola was a Genoese nobleman with no real public profile until 1602, when he decided to join his brother Frederick in Flanders, bringing with him thousands of Italian soldiers, at his own expense, to serve the cause of the Spanish king and the archdukes in their war against the United Provinces. Of all his military exploits, his sieges and captures of the towns of Ostend in 1604, and Breda in 1625, encouraged dozens of panegyric writers to produce detailed accounts of these victories. None of them, of course, failed to stress the qualities of the victorious general. Filippo Casoni,<sup>1</sup> the grandson of one of Spinola's assistants who had committed himself to write a full-scale biography of the general, put it like this: 'It is clear that to praise the marquis I did not have to use empty common-places; any historian, either Italian or Northern European, offers you plenty of material to exalt him.'<sup>2</sup> His assessment of the variety of material was a correct one; his statement on the absence of stereotypes obviously was not.

Since it would be a trying task even to attempt to give a complete survey of these appraisals, I will limit myself to quoting a few examples. The deeds of the marquis were inserted into the glorious tradition of the exploits of Spanish and Italian military commanders of the army of Flanders. Publications on important contemporary historical events were dedicated to him<sup>3</sup> and his own part in the war of Flanders was added to the

extant historiographical legacy. Moreover the marquis was considered to embody the antique virtues of his own noble family.<sup>4</sup> In the Southern Netherlands, Spinola's fame was based on two main features: his military exploits and his magnanimous nature. Both of these elements were present in the famous work by the Jesuit author and Spinola's confessor Herman Hugo, whose *Obsidio Bredana* was published in Antwerp in 1626<sup>5</sup> and ranged among those publications to contribute to the overstated importance of the ephemeral victory at Breda.<sup>6</sup> The *Obsidio's* introduction immediately comes to the point: it will recite the deeds of a general 'which no Scipio, no Pompeo, no Cesar did ever surpass, in prudence, valor, vigilance, fidelitie, and all other vertues ... Spinola ... or pricking thorne, which hath pricked the harts of all warlike nobilitie, with the Spine or prick of emulation of his incomparable vertues'.<sup>7</sup>

Just after Spinola's death in 1630, Nicolas Vernulæus, a professor at Louvain University and a master in rhetorical arts, urged his students to honour the memory of the marquis by dedicating to him lectures on his virtues. In these speeches, Spinola was not presented as a foreign general but, on the contrary, was completely associated with the Southern Provinces. The orators called him the shield of the Catholic Netherlands and stressed the close link between Spinola and the inhabitants of Flanders: 'even if his memory does not persist in marble and bronze, it will still continue in the heart of the Flemings'. All contributions stressed that Spinola's talents as a military leader were beyond dispute; he shared the harsh life of his soldiers and knew almost every single infantryman by name.<sup>8</sup>

For these humanist authors, links with classical antiquity could always be invoked to increase the glory of their subject. In this way, Ostend for instance became the new Troy, besieged by the Austrian Agamemnon, Albert, but in vain, until the arrival of the Genoese Achilles, the marquis Spinola.<sup>9</sup> For an Italian general, Roman antiquity could always be a stimulating example to live by, but it could also turn against him as a burden of proving himself worthy of the heritage.

Most of these quotations of course have been provided by professional rhetorical writers who shrewdly integrated a few fixed *topoi* of this kind of literature. But there seems to be little doubt about the fact that the marquis certainly did make a fine impression on his contemporaries. I will leave aside his gallant adventures with pretty ladies at the cosmopolitan court at Brussels, certain amorous interludes having been alluded to in a novel by Puget de la Serre, *Le roman de la cour de Bruxelles*, 1630.<sup>10</sup> Positive impressions of Spinola may easily be gathered from such witnesses as Peter Paul Rubens, who, in his own words, dealt with him

on familiar terms: in a letter of January 1628, Rubens wrote to a French correspondent:

He is the most prudent and sagacious man I have ever known, very cautious in all his plans, not very communicative, but rather through fear of saying too much than through lack of eloquence or spirit. Of his valor I do not speak, since it is known to everyone, and will only say that, contrary to my first opinion – I had at first distrusted him, as an Italian and a Genoese – I have always found him firm and sound, and worthy of the most complete confidence.<sup>11</sup>

The element to keep in mind is the very cautious and self-conscious attitude of the marquis: what others would think of his conduct clearly mattered to him. This is the main point I would like to develop in this chapter: the positive and chivalrous image was to a considerable extent created by the marquis himself, partly because he directly informed and influenced some of his biographers, partly because in his actions he, too, was affected by others. He imitated the conduct of famous precursors and proved at all stages to be aware of the importance of a good reputation.

But let us first have a look at the other side of this glorious medal. The Southern Netherlands had been unanimous in their praise of the marquis. Much of Catholic historiography of this period, however, had been written by Italian authors, a fact that did not fail to provoke contempt from the North. The Dutch hardliner Everhard Van Reyd stated that ‘all these foreign authors know as much of our history as a blind man does of paint’.<sup>12</sup> Calling to mind such bold statements, it would be interesting to look at the Dutch side of the Spinola story, narrated by such men as Van Reyd or William Baudartius, who can hardly be suspected of favouring the Spanish cause.

In the early seventeenth century, the Dutch propaganda machine against the Spanish and their commanders in the Netherlands was still going at full speed. According to these publications, Spinola remained a rather treacherous person, a mercenary in the service of the Spanish tyrant. In poems by active pamphleteers such as Jacobus Revius (*Over-Ysselsche Sangen en Dichten*, Leyden, 1634), Spinola’s intentions, after capturing the city of Bergen op Zoom, for instance, bear little resemblance to the attitudes of a noble knight, as Revius foresees that the marquis will ransack the town, divide the loot and cut the inhabitants to pieces.<sup>13</sup> Jesters made jokes about the marquis during interludes of banquets. Baudartius states that Spinola, having assumed that the submission of Holland would only be a question of a few striking actions, had



adopted a motto which would match this idea of *Blitzkrieg*. It ran: 'Aut nunc, aut nunquam' (Now or never). But, according to this Dutch historian, following a couple of disappointing experiences, he had to abandon this optimistic vision of the future and have his motto changed to: 'Nec nunc, ne nunquam!' (Neither now nor ever).<sup>14</sup> Likewise, at the time of the siege of Breda, pamphlets showed the king of Spain looking desperately for the town, with the marquis, scratching his head, standing by. When prince Maurits heard of Spinola's plans to attack Breda, he 'is reported to have said 'merilie, that it had beene beter for Spinola to have gon to Geel (where mad men are delivered from their madnes) then to Gilsh'.<sup>15</sup>

But all joking aside, Maurits in fact had the deepest respect for Spinola as a military commander. He is said to have feared the marquis as the sole person who might be able to withstand him.<sup>16</sup> As a matter of fact, a kind of chivalrous friendship seems to have existed between the marquis and those members of the House of Orange who were fighting against him. In 1608 Spinola travelled to The Hague for talks with Prince Maurits on the terms of a possible peace. When the two most famous generals of their time met, a number of authors grasped the opportunity to refer to antiquity again: they saw how the two men slightly changed colour when they first set eyes on each other, 'as if they were lovers'.<sup>17</sup> A clear precedent in Roman history could be found, for the same thing had happened to Scipio and Hannibal.<sup>18</sup> In the *Histoire des princes et principauté d'Oranges*, La Haye, 1639, Spinola not only benignly receives the keys to the city of Breda which Justin of Nassau offers him, but he also embraces the unfortunate governor and his entire family.<sup>19</sup>

If we may believe the newsletters, Spinola had succeeded in conveying his image of chivalry and goodness to his peers as well as to the imagination of people at large. On his way to The Hague, he was cheered in the streets of Rotterdam; people played music in his honour and street children were heard shouting 'marquis Spinola, a good man, a fair man' (*marquis Spinola, goet man, fray man*).<sup>20</sup> Italian friends of the marquis could delightedly record: 'Such was the reputation of Spinola's name among them'.<sup>21</sup> Even Baudartius was obliged to recognize Spinola's success. He grumbled as he saw the crowds 'that had come from far and wide to greet him, as if they could gain a general pardon'.<sup>22</sup>

One might wonder how this remarkable reputation among the Dutch could come about. A possible answer may be provided by book 17 of Hugo Grotius's *Historiae*. The excerpt states that the marquis, by means of interpreters, had spoken to the Dutch people as he hoped to win [the Catholic part of] them for his cause against the local baronets.<sup>23</sup> This implies that the marquis did not believe positions in the war in

Flanders to be definitive. The population might be brought to his side by offering them respect and courtesy. The fear of Calvinist nationalists like Baudartius that this gentle peace negotiator was a kind of Trojan horse might point in the same direction.<sup>24</sup> It seems, at any rate, that the marquis had succeeded in becoming a kind of popular hero both in the south and in the north. Archduchess Isabella herself wrote in 1604: 'Parece que Nuestro Señor ha enviado este hombre aquí . . . El está generalmente bien quisto con todas las naciones, y con los del pais mucho.'<sup>25</sup>

Whatever may have been Spinola's real intentions, it looks as if the marquis became an exception to the Dutch rule of the *leyenda negra* (the black legend). It may be that some factions of the Dutch political establishment deliberately tried to create or promote the positive image of a formidable but reasonable opponent, with whom one might come to an agreeable solution. The Dutch peace party explicitly put Spinola forward as their champion of reason in the discussion about the prolongation of the Twelve Years Truce. In 1620 a Dutch medal is supposed to have been struck in Spinola's honour, representing an anchor and a sunray, specifically mentioning the *moderatio* of the marquis.<sup>26</sup>

Undoubtedly, Spinola himself had been among the first to appreciate the importance of honour and chivalry. Ever since he was a small boy, Ambrogio seems to have been fond of the stories of his cousins, who served in the army of Flanders under the great Captain Alexander Farnese.<sup>27</sup> Spinola's younger brother Federico was on very close terms with Farnese's son Ranuccio; they had fought side by side in a gallant duel against a Spanish cavalry general.<sup>28</sup>

Spinola's own education included those disciplines that were held necessary for the formation of a future gentleman-knight. He was taught to handle arms and horses. As for his intellectual training, his interests focused on history and mathematics, two disciplines which he would bring into practice during his campaigns. His reputation of being interested in history may have inspired his countryman Lorenzo Conti to dedicate to him, as early as 1594, an Italian translation of the chivalrous Philippe de Comines's story of the late medieval French kings.<sup>29</sup> Spinola is said to have possessed a vast library containing the great classical authors, of whom his favourite was Caesar. It even seems that he made marginal notes to mark those lines which could inspire him in creating his own future image. Spinola would study the campaigns and the character of both ancient and modern generals, act accordingly and see to it that his own historians noticed the resemblances. Ever since Alexander the Great, who had made a pilgrimage to Troy to complete the identification between himself and his Homeric hero Achilles, a successful policy

of exalting military leaders had started with a self-conscious cultivation of reputation by those very leaders. According to his contemporary historians, Spinola had succeeded completely in this identification. To quote just one of his biographers:

In him seemed to revive the strength and the noble nature of Alexander the Great, the sense for quick organization of Themistocles, the humanity of Miltiades, the justice of the Aristeides, the integrity of Phocas, the faith of Thrasibulos, the warmth and prudence of Hannibal, the taciturnity and piety of Philip, the luck of Julius Caesar, the love for his soldiers of Germanicus.<sup>30</sup>

At every stage of his campaigns, Spinola took meticulous care of his reputation. His army had been given strict orders to leave the crops and the peasants alone, even when passing through enemy territory.<sup>31</sup> In discussions on the fate of the city of Breda, which had finally surrendered, Spinola favoured a soft approach, 'houlding them to be more wise who are more gentle in crueltie, and that the fame of clemencie, was to be preferred before the name of severitie'.<sup>32</sup> Likewise, after his successful campaign against Ostend and being decorated with the Golden Fleece, Spinola went back to Genoa to boast his triumphs and to be sure that everyone back home, and particularly the rival family of the Dorias, would notice to what extent he was granted the king's favour.<sup>33</sup>

Spinola was also very attentive to the more local traditions of knighthood and honour. Thanks to his spectacular siege and capture of Ostend, Ambrogio succeeded in gathering universal approval and admiration and was rewarded with the exalted knightly order of the Golden Fleece. The cult of this ancient Burgundian knighthood was very popular among the Habsburg nobility, and Spinola had himself represented by Rubens as a Burgundian knight, wearing a Burgundian cloak that stressed the continuity of prestige of the order and the 'Netherlandish-Burgundian' connection of the marquis.<sup>34</sup> He also eagerly agreed to be associated with military treatises such as the *Imagen de la milicia y de un exercito firme*, written in 1614 by Alberto Struzzi, gentleman of the household of the archdukes.<sup>35</sup>

In the words of Baudartius, the hearts of both Ambrogio and Federico Spinola were so proud that they were constantly looking for dignity, trying to immortalize their name for future generations and to elicit praise from their contemporaries for their deeds.<sup>36</sup> It should be emphasized that Baudartius belonged to the enemy camp and that he was merely referring to the things that were commonly believed. In a letter to the duke of

Lerma (as early as 1604), archduchess Isabella showed she had understood Spinola's intentions immediately: 'El Marqués Espynola ... sirve solo por ganar honra y nombre' and on another occasion: 'él no pretende sino honra y señalarse y tener nombre en el mundo'.<sup>37</sup> A straightforward confession of his aspirations was furnished by the marquis himself in 1613: 'en esta vida la reputación es el alma della y lo que más se estima, y ... por conservarla los di mi profesión, nos ponemos á cuantos peligros se ofrecen en la guerra'.<sup>38</sup>

When in 1609 the counts of Condé fled to the Netherlands (King Henry IV had an eye on the beautiful countess, so her husband wisely decided to remove her from the proximity of the king's bedroom), Spinola told his friend Guido Bentivoglio that there could be no question of handing over the countess to Henry, as the consequences obviously would damage a gentleman's honour.<sup>39</sup> It seems highly unlikely, however, that this would have made him disregard the Reason of State, and that he did not seek to avert a threatening war with France. However, tradition ascribed to him many chivalrous words and noble thoughts. After practically being removed from the war of succession in Mantua by the revocation of his unlimited powers to negotiate with the enemy, he died a bitter death, and his last words are said to have been: 'Me han quitado el honor y la reputación'.<sup>40</sup>

For the creation of his own image, Spinola had not only glorious examples of the distant past at his disposal, but even more the still vivid memory of that other great Italian captain in the Netherlands, Alexander Farnese. Parallels in the lives of Ambrogio Spinola and the duke of Parma were of course far too conspicuous to remain unnoticed. Alexander had met with the same distrust as Spinola on account of his being Italian, but (like Spinola) he had succeeded in overcoming these initial reservations.<sup>41</sup> Spinola constantly bore in mind the ideal of emulating Alexander Farnese. If he had any doubts before attacking the stronghold of Ostend, friends such as Iacopo Franceschini or Pompeo Giustiniani would soon cause them to disappear with impressive speeches that referred explicitly to the deeds of the duke of Parma.<sup>42</sup>

Even in their interest for the history of their own feats, Parma and Spinola thought along parallel lines. Alexander Farnese had his companion, Cesare Campana, publish the official Farnese version of his campaigns<sup>43</sup> and his secretary and friend Cosimo Masi take his personal belongings and his papers to Italy, where they served as a first-rate source to the Roman Jesuit author Famiano Strada.<sup>44</sup> In Spinola's case, it was his Roman sergeant-major Pompeo Giustiniani, another Farnese veteran, who published his *Commentarii* of the war in Flanders, obviously

paying the necessary respects to his master.<sup>45</sup> In 1671, another Roman Jesuit, Angelo Gallucci,<sup>46</sup> published his continuation of Strada's *De bello belgico*, obviously using Spinola's personal papers. Other friends and companions also took care to promote Spinola's positive posthumous reputation. Alvarez Suarez, author of an *Elogio fúnebre ñas exequias do Marqués Spinola*, Amberes, 1631,<sup>47</sup> was the Portuguese secretary of the archdukes, and Gerrat Barry, the man who introduced the translation of Hugo's *Obsidio Bredana*, had served as a captain in the brave Irish regiments that had fought on Spinola's side on the Breda battlefield.<sup>48</sup> Another important witness, the apostolic nuncio and historian Guido Bentivoglio, knew and praised Spinola as a fellow Italian.<sup>49</sup>

Spinola's constant awareness of his own reputation may even have played a part in one of the most famous phrases attributed to him. In Calderón's play *El sitio de Breda*, as in Velasquez's famous painting *Las Lanzas*, Spinola receives the keys of Breda from governor Justin of Nassau. The marquis is of the most gentle disposition towards Justin and he praises him, 'for the valour of the defeated confers fame upon the victor' (*quel balor del benzido haze famoso al que benze*). During Spinola's stay in Madrid in 1628–9 Flemish friends at the court had introduced him to Lope de Vega and maybe also to Calderón, which made him at least a willing witness to that phrase, if not indeed the instigator.<sup>50</sup>

But there was more to it. After his famous campaign against Ostend, his fame became so widespread in Europe that 'some wise and famous men felt it necessary to publish the story of his campaigns, so that future generations would have an example to live by'. This meant that, next to Spinola's own awareness of the importance of image-creating, his contemporaries, too, realized how they would be able to use Spinola's life as a shining example for generations to come. Posterity, Nicolas Vernulaeus stated following the death of the marquis in 1630, would have something to admire and to imitate, and contemporaries would have something on which to congratulate themselves.<sup>51</sup> An official history of Spinola's achievements had to be written. To this end, and this is really most remarkable, King Philip III ordered Ambrogio Spinola to keep a very accurate diary and to send it to Spain.<sup>52</sup> The king made an offer that Spinola could not refuse: nothing less than a royal decree to collect the material which would be used for writing his own history. Gallucci states that Justus Lipsius and later on Erycius Puteanus, professor at Louvain, had taken up this task, but neither of them seems to have completed it.<sup>53</sup>

Keeping in mind the modest dimensions of this chapter any (imperative) further deepening of the argument has to be deferred, but I do

hope to have been able to suggest that any historical research on such famous a personality as the Genoese general should take into account not only the building of his image, but even more his weakness (or strength) in response.

## 4

# The cult of the seventeenth-century Dutch naval heroes: Critical appropriations of a popular patriotic tradition

Cynthia Lawrence

Over the course of the seventeenth century the Dutch national assembly as well as the regional assemblies and admiralties commissioned a series of monuments honouring naval officers killed in the line of duty.<sup>1</sup> The calls for these memorials, their designs and iconography, their popular reception and their propagandistic exploitation offer a unique perspective on the priorities and aspirations of their sponsors, and, more generally, on the political and cultural milieu of the Dutch Republic during its first century.

During this period the tombs of the Dutch naval heroes were elevated to the status of national shrines – public monuments where patriotic virtue was eternalized through art. Like officially sanctioned memorials to patriotic heroes from antiquity to the present, those of the *zeehelden* were conceived, at least in part, as passive testaments to heroic sacrifice: they honoured the lives and achievements of these valiant officers, and they expressed the nation's gratitude for their exemplary efforts on its behalf. At the same time, the *eretomben* were also designed to play a more active role – to evoke a sense of patriotism in their audience, and, more specifically, to encourage future generations to emulate these heroes' service and devotion to their country.

The memorials are also the foremost expression of the cult of the Dutch naval heroes, arguably the most important manifestation of a pantheon of contemporary patriotic heroes in the early modern period, as well as one of the most cherished popular traditions in the Netherlands.<sup>2</sup> Not only were the *zeehelden* among the Republic's first officially sanctioned heroes, but they were also its first demotic folk heroes – courageous

defenders of the nation whose popularity extended to all classes of Dutch society.<sup>3</sup>

Investigation of the cult and its history from the seventeenth to the twentieth century provides a unique opportunity to trace the development of a popular patriotic tradition; at the same time, it also links the cult to a group of related phenomena which are generally considered as manifestations of ‘invented tradition’:<sup>4</sup> these include heroes, especially patriotic or national heroes,<sup>5</sup> or cultural icons, legends and myths,<sup>6</sup> and their role in the development of national consciousness or identity.<sup>7</sup>

In spite of a recent surge of interest in these issues, only a small group of scholars has considered, in more theoretical terms, how and why heroes (or hero cults) are invented and how they evolve over time: this is the major objective of the larger study on the monuments and cult of the Dutch naval heroes from which this essay is excerpted. This project has generated a model based on a core group of five critical issues:

1. The invention of the cult – the impetus for its creation; the set of conditions under which it first appeared.
2. The iconography of the cult – the precedents and sources of its novel formal and literary imagery.<sup>8</sup>
3. The viability of the cult – the identification of those characteristics of the Dutch naval heroes which account for the cult’s having remained meaningful to successive generations of *Nederlanders* over the past 400 years.<sup>9</sup>
4. The transmission of the cult – how the *zeehelden*, as historical figures or cultural icons which symbolize certain events or concepts are retained in the nation’s consciousness or encoded in the fabric of its culture.<sup>10</sup>
5. The appropriation of the cult – under what conditions has the cult been claimed and exploited? By whom? And for what purpose? How does appropriation change the cult? And what are the consequences of each individual appropriation for that which immediately follows?

This chapter considers the last of these phenomena – that of the appropriation of the cult – in terms of the identification of three ‘critical appropriations’ (those claims or promotions of the *zeehelden* which are most responsible for changing and reshaping it) that took place during periods of political crisis or moral revival in the Netherlands from the



death of Jacob van Heemskerk (1607) to that of Jan Carel van Speyk (1831).<sup>11</sup>

## The first critical appropriation: The invention of the cult

Jacob van Heemskerk, who was killed during a victorious offensive against the Spanish at Gibraltar in 1607, was the Republic's first great naval hero; his death, which launched the cult of the *zeehelden*, marks both its invention as well as its first critical appropriation. Heemskerk was honoured with a state funeral (as were eventually Piet Hein, Maerten Tromp and Michiel de Ruyter) and with a monument, called for by the States General and contracted by the Amsterdam Admiralty, which was mounted in the Oude Kerk in Amsterdam in June 1609.

The division of responsibility between the national assembly and the admiralty in the erection of the Heemskerk memorial established a precedent for later commissions; it also prefigured the tendency for individual *zeehelden* to be appropriated by multiple groups, each of which, potentially, could promote the hero in terms which supported its own agenda. The subsequent history of the cult is marked by a number of multiple simultaneous appropriations – instances in which several competing groups claim a particular figure, or the cult more generally, during the same period. These rival claims are especially interesting because they isolate and identify different aspects of the iconography of the naval heroes, or the ethos of the cult more generally, that might coexist at a particular point in the nation's history.

The commemoration of Heemskerk's victory and death defined the cult in three significant ways. First, it required the creation of a *persona* (or an image) and a mode of depicting the admiral-as-hero. The iconography invented to proclaim his achievements, as well as his virtue and fame, combined a broad range of Christian and classical *topoi* to create an original contemporary secular idiom which became identified with the Dutch naval heroes more generally. From Heemskerk on, the long-term utility of the cult was based on its ability to project two distinct conceptual (and iconographic) categories within this idiom – those of patriotic virtue *and* moral virtue – or, the dual image of the patriotic martyr and the secular saint. These different, but not necessarily exclusive or opposing, concepts would be activated, singularly or together, under differing circumstances, over the next three and a half centuries; whether as

alternatives or as reinforcing complements, the options these categories provided gave the cult a flexibility and richness that accounts in large part for its continued viability.

Second, based on the evidence of Heemskerk's epitaph, as well as the descriptions of his victory and death in official histories and in the extensive pamphlet literature, his commemoration also established a set of six conditions for national patriotic hero status:

1. Nationality. Heemskerk is repeatedly identified as Dutch, with familial links to Delft, Amsterdam and Haarlem.<sup>12</sup>
2. A significant display of physical courage or bravery. In addition to documentation of his valour at Gibraltar, Heemskerk was also widely admired for having survived a winter while ice-bound in Nova Zembla.<sup>13</sup>
3. The acquisition of political advantage or wealth for the Republic. Not only did Heemskerk's victory at Gibraltar give the Republic an advantage in the negotiations leading to the Twelve Years Truce, but it also dealt the nation an economic advantage by opening the Mediterranean to Dutch traders and shippers.<sup>14</sup>
4. Evidence of patriotic virtue. Heemskerk's having given his life for his country at Gibraltar provided sufficient evidence of his devotion to his country.
5. Evidence of moral virtue. The pamphlet literature makes frequent reference to Heemskerk's moderation, piety and prudence. That he had apparently rejected a lucrative career with the Dutch East India Company to lead the Republic's fleet at Gibraltar recalls Hercules' choice of virtue over pleasure, the period's favourite *exemplum virtutis*.
6. Evidence of paternalistic concern. Heemskerk's interest in the welfare of those seamen under his command is indicated in his having sustained his crew during the Nova Zembla adventure.<sup>15</sup>

Third, Heemskerk's commemoration also defined the cult in terms of the role of its monuments. If, on one hand, his epitaph recorded his service to the Republic, on the other it was intended to encourage emulation of that service. This is clearly expressed by the States General's request that the monument include a depiction of his victory at Gibraltar – 'so that it might inspire future generations to serve their country with the same courage and duty'.<sup>16</sup>

## The second critical appropriation: The cult as patriotic propaganda

The overt realization and framing of the monuments as patriotic propaganda was generated by the commemoration of Piet Hein who had captured the Spanish Silver Fleet in 1628, and who was killed in a confrontation with privateers near Dungeness the following year. While his funeral and burial were delegated to the municipality of Delft (which had aggressively lobbied for the honour),<sup>17</sup> the commission of his monument, which had been called for by the States General, was delegated to the Rotterdam Admiralty; consequently Hein's commemoration was appropriated not only by the national government and one of its affiliates, but also by a town; all three sought to benefit, in different ways, from his reflected glory.

The Hein mausoleum is considered here as a defining moment in the evolution of the cult and its monuments – it was the first of the memorials of the *zeehelden* conceived expressly as patriotic propaganda. This hypothesis grows out of three sets of observations, both art historical and historical. First, the novelty of the tomb's typology, location, design and iconography all indicate an impulse to maximize its impact on its audience; furthermore, in contrast with earlier monuments, Hein's conveyed more significant allusions, in terms of more empathetic devices (e.g. the inclusion of an effigy), thereby creating a heightened level of engagement. Second, the introduction of an emphatically classicizing vocabulary in the Hein monument was not only a stylistic but also an iconographic or iconological statement intended to establish a link between the Dutch and Roman Republics. Appeals to classicism appear throughout the formal and literary celebrations of Hein's achievements: among the most frequent is his identification as a Dutch 'Jason', with the 'Golden Fleece' as a reference to the Silver Fleet. Elsewhere, Hein is called a 'Roman Batavian'.

Third, the curious timing of the memorial's commission suggests that it may have been conceived as part of a more general revival of Hein at a crucial point near the end of the Eighty Years War; inexplicably delayed for almost eight years after Hein's death, and then undertaken with some urgency, at a point when its sponsors could least afford to do so, the project coincided with the admiralty's preparations for a major naval confrontation with Spain – that which culminated in Tromp's victory at the battle of the Downs (1639).<sup>18</sup>

Circumstantial evidence suggests that the promotion of Hein may have been undertaken to encourage the nation to support the war effort,

as well as to raise its morale. First, Hein's having captured the Spanish Silver Fleet with significantly fewer resources than his powerful opponent represented a compelling secularized home-grown version of the David and Goliath myth – one which inspired optimism that once more the Dutch Republic would emerge triumphant over its larger and stronger enemies. This image of 'small but mighty', which would be recalled during periods of national crisis in the Netherlands to the present day, is repeated in Hein's iconography (which calls attention to his short name, slight stature and unimposing demeanour).<sup>19</sup>

Second, Hein's well-publicized rise from humble cabin boy to lieutenant-admiral – that 'useful patriotic myth' of 'exemplary social mobility' as Simon Schama has described it – may also have been intended to motivate young Dutchmen to enlist in the Republic's navy.<sup>20</sup> Certainly the possibility of economic and social advancement through meritorious service at sea became an essential component of the myth of the *zeehelden*, one that has been periodically appropriated as a recruitment strategy.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, this emphasis placed on meritorious performance, rather than social class or wealth, also directly countered the contemporary Aristotelian-based notion of the aristocracy's claim of a natural predisposition to virtue. As the inscription on Hein's monument notes, 'heroes are not always born, but are also made by daring enterprise'.

## **The consequences of the Hein monument: Subsequent appropriations of the cult**

The appropriation of Hein as patriotic propaganda not only redefined the image of the Dutch naval hero (and the cult more generally), but it also established a model for their presentation which was repeated throughout the second half of the seventeenth century during the Republic's wars with the English and the French. Naval officers honoured with sumptuous monuments whose calls, commissions and dedications were widely publicized include Jan van Galen (d. 1653), Tromp (d. 1653), Witte Cornelisz. de With (d. 1658), Jacob van Wassenaar Obdam (d. 1665), Egbert de Cortenaer (d. 1655), Johannes and Cornelis Evertsen (d. 1666), Abraham van der Hulst (d. 1666), Willem van der Zaan (d. 1669), Willem Joseph van Gent (d. 1672), Isaac Sweers (d. 1673), Johan de Liefde (d. 1673), and de Ruyter (d. 1676).

During the Anglo-Dutch Wars, the concept of the cult of the *zeehelden* was appropriated by the English. Just like their Dutch counterparts,

heroic English admirals were portrayed as national heroes who personified the nation's patriotic and moral virtue. They were also honoured with monuments: those memorials mounted during the second half of the century in Westminster Abbey provided the model for those included in the more ambitious Heronauticum, which paid homage to English naval heroes of the Napoleonic Wars, established in St Paul's.<sup>22</sup> In turn, these later English monuments have had a considerable impact on the design and iconography of later monuments to national heroes, as well as war memorials more generally.

### The third critical appropriation: The cult as legend

Both of the critical appropriations thus far proposed (those of Heemskerck and Hein) have considered the *zeehelden* primarily as exemplars of patriotic virtue; however, at the end of the eighteenth century, certain members of the cult were appropriated by a Dutch political party, the *Patriotten*, as exemplars of both patriotic and moral virtue. Newly instilled with patriotic fervour by the outbreak of the Fourth Anglo-Dutch War in 1780, and critical of the morals of their own age, the *Patriotten* glorified the idealized patriotism of the so-called Golden Age.<sup>23</sup> As Frans Grijzenhout has noted,<sup>24</sup> heroic admirals, such as de Ruyter, were enthusiastically incorporated into the *Patriotten's heidentoneel*, along with other patriotic figures such as Oldenbarnevelt, Grotius and the De Witt brothers.<sup>25</sup> Images of the *zeehelden* were also sometimes paired with those of *Patriotten* leaders, as in those ceramic mugs (Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum) depicting de Ruyter and Joan Derk van der Capellen tot den Pol, which were produced by Josiah Wedgwood.<sup>26</sup>

To some extent, the *Patriotten* appropriation of de Ruyter would appear to have been generated by the coincidence of the centenary of his death (1676), and the mounting of his monument (1681), with the beginning of the Fourth Anglo-Dutch War (1780). Revived interest in de Ruyter's exploits, as well as in those of the heroic admirals of the Golden Age more generally, played directly into the hands of the *Patriotten*, who, to paraphrase Nicolaas van Sas, relied on a nostalgic yearning for that traditional virtue which they believed had been manifested in the Republic of the seventeenth century in their bid to forge a modern Dutch nationalism.<sup>27</sup> In attempting to resurrect the ideals of ancient republicanism,<sup>28</sup> which they believed to have been vested in the Republic during its first century, the *Patriotten* invoked a broad range of Republican exempla, some of which, it should be realized, had already been invented and

assimilated into the iconography of the cult of the *zeehelden* during the 1620s and 30s (that is, around the time of Hein's death and commemoration). Certainly the *Patriotten's* enthusiasm for neoclassicism, both as a style as well as an iconography, is comparable to (and prefigured by) the earlier enlistment of classicism, in both these dimensions, in the promotion of Hein and in the style and iconography of his mausoleum (and in those monuments derived from it), as well as in the formal and literary imagery of the naval heroes more generally.

Although the *Patriotten* promoted the cult of the *zeehelden* as a historic manifestation of patriotic virtue, they also celebrated its expression of moral virtue; according to Willem Frijhoff, this struck a responsive chord with the Dutch middle class, which, whether *Patriotten* or Orangist, 'agreed on the need to regenerate Dutch society by focusing on a historical standard of national virtues'.<sup>29</sup> Ironically, these virtues turn out to be just those qualities which had been associated with the cult of the naval heroes since the death of Heemskerck – goodness of heart, modesty and humility, moderation, prudence and piety. Simplicity of manner was also admired: Hein, Tromp and de Ruyter were lauded not only for having acquired wealth and honour for the Republic, but also for their unaffected manner. Finally, the concept of merit, which was so much a part of the cult's ethos, found a responsive audience in the *Patriotten*, who, as Frijhoff has also noted, advocated 'a redistribution of social and cultural responsibilities' not according to birth but according to achievement.<sup>30</sup>

The *Patriotten* agenda also emphasized the importance of educating the nation's youth in preparation for responsible adult citizenship. Consequently, during the late eighteenth century, the *zeehelden* and their exploits began to appear in books for children, either in school books (those intended primarily for instruction) or in adventure books – a genre which has remained popular.<sup>31</sup> These works not only presented the history of the Netherlands, but also, in their underscoring of those virtues its citizens professed to most admire, they provided an effective means of socializing successive generations of Dutch youth.<sup>32</sup>

## **The consequences of the *Patriotten* appropriation: The veneration of Speyk**

The consequences of the *Patriotten* appropriation of the cult of the *zeehelden* is evident in the commemoration of Jan Carel van Speyk, whose suicidal mission to blow up the Belgian fleet in the harbour of Antwerp in 1831 transformed him into a national patriotic hero.<sup>33</sup>

Just like several earlier *zeehelden*, Speyk was immediately claimed by several different groups, all of whom announced their intention to erect monuments in his honour. The first was the College Zeemanshoop (a charitable organization concerned with the welfare of Dutch seamen and their families) which called for a national monument to Speyk, in the form of a lighthouse, designed to resemble a Roman column of victory, at Egmond aan Zee. Meanwhile, the municipality of Amsterdam commissioned a memorial, based on a Greek *stele*, which was to be placed in the Nieuwe Kerk (among the monuments to van Galen, de Ruyter, Wolter Jan Gerrit Bontinck and Jan Hendrick van Kinsbergen). Finally, the directors of the *Burgerweeshuis* (the town orphanage), where Speyk had spent two years before joining the navy, ordered a monumental plaque, executed in the neoclassical style, to be hung in the building's courtyard.<sup>34</sup>

The veneration of Speyk not only reflected his patriotic and moral virtue, but it also underscored the concept of merit – that his fame, as well as his social and economic advancement, were the result of his achievements, rather than his status at birth. That Speyk was an orphan made the issue of merit even more compelling. At the same time, that he was without family enhanced the status of those institutions who could legitimately claim him as a 'son' – the Amsterdam orphanage, and the municipality more generally, and the Dutch navy – and who now basked in his reflected glory. Finally, as the *Burgerweeshuis* memorial in particular suggests, Speyk's exemplary act of devotion to the nation was widely advanced as a model for its youth,<sup>35</sup> an endeavour that replicates the *Patriotten* promotion and packaging of de Ruyter and the other Dutch naval heroes.

## Patriotism in Dutch literature (c. 1650–c. 1750)

Marijke Meijer Drees

‘Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori’: to die for the fatherland is sweet and beautiful. This line comes from the second of Horace’s Roman odes, which is dedicated to the real happiness of the human being and the greatness of Rome under Augustus. The common *patria* was highly esteemed in those days; it coincided as it were with the *res publica Romana*, that is to say with the ethical, religious and political values which Rome embodied and symbolized.<sup>1</sup> This Rome has been the great inspiration to entire generations of later Western European poets who have sung of heroic self-sacrifices for their fatherlands.

Dutch literature offers an abundance of texts in which the patriotism of the past resounds. Reading them, we repeatedly encounter paraphrases of ‘Pro patria mori’ – the famous Horatian line – as well as quotations from in particular Virgil’s *Aeneid*,<sup>2</sup> and the dictum ‘Pugna pro patria’, which is attributed to Cato.

The subject of this chapter is patriotism in Dutch literature from approximately 1650 until 1750. I consider demonstrations of this patriotism illustrative of a specific aspect of the image-building in this period: the cultivation of a ‘national’ identity, a Dutch self-image.

In this chapter I focus on the concept of ‘fatherland’. My findings connect with those of a number of studies undertaken by historians. I will try to demonstrate that the broad outlines of this concept can be specified on the basis of literary sources. In doing so, I will focus on two symbols related to the concept of fatherland: the lion and the cow.

First, then, ‘fatherland’: Dutch historians nowadays discuss this concept in a broader political-historical frame of reference such as nation-building or ‘Dutch’ national consciousness.<sup>3</sup> This approach makes



it possible to pay attention to matters like the variation in terms that referred to ‘fatherland’, the emotions this concept could evoke and the different images related to national consciousness.<sup>4</sup> A second characteristic of these modern studies is that the authors no longer regard the fatherland as a unity. From around the 1960s, historians have ceased to accept the image of national unity as developed by their predecessors. That image has been shattered.<sup>5</sup>

Let me summarize the views historians now hold of the period 1650–1750. First, leaving aside the eternal, divine fatherland and restricting the use of the concept to the earthly and temporal, the meanings of ‘fatherland’ vary depending on whether they are local (the city), regional (mostly Holland) or supra-regional (the entire Republic).<sup>6</sup> Second, historians have argued that although patriotism could manifest itself in a great number of social and political variants and intensities,<sup>7</sup> it still lacked profundity in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.<sup>8</sup> And finally, it has become clear that nationalism cannot have developed evenly towards the Patriot period.<sup>9</sup>

To what extent does all this apply to literature? The primary sources that I am examining consist mainly of anthologies, collected poetical works of individual authors and historical dramas about the sieges of the cities of Haarlem and Leiden. For the greater part, this literature was written in Holland, the province with by far the largest population and which formed the heart of the Union.<sup>10</sup> It is important to establish this in advance, for it is common for the concept of ‘fatherland’ to be given a broader meaning than just ‘*Hollands*’, especially in texts where the war trumpet is blown with fanaticism. In these texts, it seems the patriotic emotions are felt rather more profoundly and intensely.

Now that we are armed with this knowledge, let us take a look at one example from our material, and investigate the allusions to the concept ‘fatherland.’ The example concerns the *Olyf(-)krans der vre(e) de*, an anthology that had two separate but very similar editions, which more or less mark the boundaries of the period under study. The first edition dates from 1649,<sup>11</sup> the second from 1748.<sup>12</sup> Both editions were published in Amsterdam and contain poems, speeches and other texts on the Peace of Münster and on Amsterdam city hall. The majority of contributions are poems, mainly by authors like Brandt, Vondel and Vos, living in Amsterdam.

To start with, I would like to draw your attention to a speech in both *Olyfkransen*, entitled ‘Trompet of lofrede over den eeuwigen Nederlantschen vrede’ (Trumpet or eulogy on the eternal Dutch peace). Unfortunately, we do not know who the author<sup>13</sup> is, who, in addressing the

States of Holland and Westfriesland, jubilantly praises them in periphrases in italics, such as *grontleggers van den Eeuwige Vrede* and *Handhavers des Hollantschen Vrydoms* ('founders of the Eternal Peace', 'upholders of Holland's freedom'). Moreover, the rulers of Holland are accredited with the realization of the 'Nederlandschen vrede' (Dutch peace). But the author makes yet more propaganda for Holland which finds expression in the three themes encountered elsewhere in the anthology: the history of the Batavian Rebellion of the Hollanders, the brave war against Spain and the worldwide fame of Amsterdam.

In the 'Trompet' we find two essential meanings of the concept of 'fatherland': the fatherland in the sense of native country and that of the country where one actually lives (and which, for instance to Southern immigrants, was no longer the same as their native country).<sup>14</sup> This distinction is of classical origin. Thus, in *De legibus* Cicero similarly distinguishes between two *patriae*: 'unam naturae, alteram civitatis'.<sup>15</sup> In both the *Olyfkransen* it is the *patria* 'civitatis' or 'communis' which prevails, or, in other words, the fatherland as a community of citizens which takes precedence over all individual interest. The loyalty towards the common fatherland matches Cicero's views exactly (I quote from an English translation): 'But that fatherland must stand first in our affection in which the name of the republic signifies the common citizenship of all of us. For her it is our duty to die, to her to give ourselves entirely, to place on her altar, and, as it were, to dedicate to her service, all we possess.'<sup>16</sup> This Ciceronian concept of fatherland centralizes altruistic self-sacrifice, and so it is understandable that in the *Olyfkransen* we find so many retrospectives on the common past of revolts while honourably mentioning heroes who altruistically defended the fatherland. The common past covers both the Eighty Years War and the Batavian period.<sup>17</sup>

If we are to know exactly what territory is covered by this common fatherland, there is no single answer. The two *Olyfkransen* mention one local fatherland, Amsterdam. That is where the primary loyalty appears to be. This is not in the least surprising, for most of the contributions are devoted to the foundation of the Amsterdam city hall and the poems about the Peace of Münster are not infrequently dedicated to Amsterdam burgomasters. But the common fatherland may also extend into the province of Holland (occasionally including Zeeland) and even cover the entire Republic – all this variation may occur within one and the same text. The largest fatherland is called 'Neederlandt', 'de Nederlanden', 'de Verenigde Nederlanden', etc. Occasionally collectivizing possessives have been added: 'ons'/'onze'. Exceptional is the

phrase expressing collective affection ‘ons lieve Nederlandt’ (found in the ‘Oratie van de vrede’ by Van Boxhorn, a professor in Leiden).

The other texts I have studied here do not alter these findings. Poems with a mainly biblical frame of reference – the *Olyfkransen*, by the way, do not provide any examples – obviously accentuate the largest fatherland and the unanimous piety of this common fatherland, sometimes in an odd combination of biblical and profane metaphors. An example of this can be seen in a pamphlet by the Amsterdam poetess Cornelia van de Veer on a sea battle won by De Ruyter and Tromp in 1673:

Vleght Kranssen voor uw BATAVIEREN Die onder *Jesus* strijd-  
Banieren, Elk streden als een *Josua*<sup>18</sup>

(Wreath garlands for your BATAVIANS who, under Jesus’ banners each fought like a Joshua)

Pamphlets written in certain years of crisis, and occasionally included in an anthology, show us the common *patria* must chiefly have been an ideal. The *Bloemkrans van verscheiden gedichten* (1659) includes an Amsterdam pamphlet poem from 1650, one of the many from the year in which stadholder William II clashed seriously with the city of Amsterdam. In ‘Aan de makers van de Bikkerse beroerte en oogenzalve’<sup>19</sup> an anonymous poet denounces the ‘Facti-geest’ (faction-spirit) that is abroad in Holland, urging that it be replaced by a unanimous spirit of freedom:<sup>20</sup>

Maar ijder Hollands hart, en hoofden aldermeest Staan voor de  
Vrijheid nu gemoedigt vast als Leeuwen.

Hollanders who, like lions, stand firm for their freedom – this simile brings us to one of the patriotic symbols I want to discuss briefly: the lion.

Lion symbolism is of heraldic origin. In the early part of the Eighty Years War the heraldic lion with sword and arrows is represented, for example, on coins and prints that are part of the princely propaganda.<sup>21</sup> Literature depicts the lion in a similar way. But as Marijke Spies showed in her article ‘Verbeeldingen van vrijheid’ (see n. 21), in literature a new lion metaphor arose. We find this in the world of Leiden University, in the wake of a student from the circle around Janus Dousa: in 1586, Georgius Benedicti Wertelo published a small epic in two volumes on William of Orange (*De rebus gestis illustrissimi principis Guilielmi, comitis Nassoui etc. libri II*). The end of this work, before inciting a continuation of the fight, gives a description of the

general sadness at the death of the prince of Orange (who had been assassinated in 1584). Inhabitants from Holland and Zeeland stand around the bier weeping, and, as Benedicti tells us (I quote the Dutch translation):<sup>22</sup>

opdat niet hun buurman, de zee, minder bedroefd was dan de Nederlanders heeft, naar men zegt, de stromende Nereus zoveel tranen vergoten, dat de Nederlandse Leeuw middenin de golven van de zee stond, met in zijn rechterklauw een zwaard en een schild in zijn linker, jou, Parma, en de Spaanse tiran met de dood bedreigend.

(lest their neighbour, the sea, be less sad than the Netherlanders, the flowing Nereus shed so many tears, that the Lion of the Netherlands stood in the midst of the sea's waves, carrying in his right claw a sword and a shield in his left, threatening you, Parma, and the Spanish tyrant with death.)

The warlike lion representing the militant fatherland and its heroic inhabitants becomes an extremely fruitful literary symbol. It is used particularly during the Peace of Münster and the various sea wars. All this battle literature teems with lions, sea lions, water lions and war lions, sometimes with additions like 'Bataafs', 'Hollands' or 'Nederlands'. Thus, in one of the many poems on his death (in 1676), Michiel de Ruyter is called 'de Fenix der Bataaffsche Waterleeuwen' (phoenix of the Batavian water lions) providing a nice rhyme with 'De grote RUITER, eer en wel-lust van de Zeeuwen' (the great RUITER, honour and pride of the inhabitants of Zeeland).<sup>23</sup> It is mainly the inhabitants of Holland and Zeeland (and occasionally Friesland) who are involved in the lion symbolism.

The festivities in Amsterdam on the occasion of the Peace of Münster featured a cow – not as the main character from the well-known farce by Bredero, but as a patriotic symbol. The two *Olyfkransen* contain the following description of a *tableau vivant* by Samuel Coster. Spectators saw:<sup>24</sup>

*Argus met hondert oogen, daer mede bedienende de Heeren Staten van Holland, die haer [= die ogen], door het lieflijk pijpen van eenen loozen Mercurius (hy kome waer van daen hy kome) nimmermeer in 't slaap laten speien, maer de Koe (dat is haar elk aengename Vaderland) als wakende sorg-dragers wel sullen bewaren.*<sup>25</sup>

(Hundred-eyed Argus thus served the Gentlemen of the States of Holland, who, by means of the sweet piping of a cunning Mercury (I know not whence he came) never let them [i.e. the eyes]

be played to sleep, but will as watchful carers guard the Cow (that is their Fatherland loved by each one).)

The fatherland, Holland, is represented here by a cow, a dairy cow, guarded by the States of Holland with Argus' eyes.<sup>26</sup> There was a striking similarity between this presentation by Coster and a relief placed over the entrance to the burgomaster's room in Amsterdam city hall, inaugurated in 1655. In this relief the guarded cow represents the prosperous city of Amsterdam, the aldermen of the town are the Arguses.<sup>27</sup>

What was the origin of this concept of the (dairy) cow as a metaphor for Holland or the metropolis of Amsterdam and what did it appeal to? What follows is based partly on considerations of paintings with cows, collected in the catalogue *Meesterlijk vee* from 1988.<sup>28</sup>

Traditionally, the cow lends herself as a representation of the prosperous fatherland that is exploited by some political power or other and in consequence loses its prosperity. In political prints and *Geuzenliederen* (Beggars' songs) from the Eighty Years War we see the Netherlands (or just Holland) represented as a cow being milked dry.<sup>29</sup> Almost a hundred years later, looking back over the second sea war with Britain, the poet Antonides van der Goes writes in his *Bellone aen bant, of vrede tusschen Brittanje en de Verenigde Nederlanden* (1667): 'de melkkoe moest om hals, men had haer dood gezwooren' (the dairy cow had to die, they had sworn her death).<sup>30</sup> In this type of presentation the cow from the Netherlands or Holland is always associated with prosperity, which may originate from the association of the cow with 'Terra' (earth), one of the four elements. Carel van Mander mentions the cow as one of Terra's attributes in his *Van de Uitbeeldinghen der Figueren*, a section of his *Schilder-boeck* (1604). He tells us of the shepherd Argus who guards the cow Io, Argus with his hundred eyes representing heaven and its stars and the cow representing earth. Of course, Van Mander and other authors knew the relation of the cow to earthly abundance and prosperity from the bible: in Genesis 41:17–30, Joseph gives the familiar explanation of pharaoh's dream about the seven thin and the seven fat cows. Also because of their number, the fat cows were eventually to be used as metaphors for the seven provinces which were united in defence against external enemies.<sup>31</sup>

But there is more. The cow was also fitted into the historical conception of ancient Holland as a traditionally prosperous country with simple and brave inhabitants (farmers and fishermen). It was an image that arose from the rediscovered previous history of Holland as a 'Batavian Arcadia', a region abounding in water and lush meadows.<sup>32</sup> From the second part of the sixteenth century, this rustic Holland concept was confirmed more

or less by reality: cattle-breeding in Holland had grown into what may well have been the most important trade in Europe. Cattle-breeding was considered extremely profitable, and was also a result of improvements in the reclamation and impoldering of land. From Holland, cows were exported to the whole of Europe and herds from other countries were grazed, fattened and sold there. Between 1550 and 1650 Holland became the biggest exporter of cream and butter.<sup>33</sup>

Literary figures recognized this; thus *Ystroom* (1671) by Antonides van der Goes mentions ‘ossen’ (oxen) from Denmark that ‘zich zelf herscheppen’ (transform themselves) in the ‘vette weien’ (lush meadows) of Holland, while elsewhere in the poem we find an impression of the scenery of the polders in North Holland, where rich dairy produce, fat cows, lush meadows and brave inhabitants are to be found.<sup>34</sup>

But it was primarily Vondel who managed to evoke the typical scenery of Holland, with cattle, dairy produce in abundance and ‘Melckers’ (milkers) from the farms. Thus for example in his *Vredezing (Olyf-)krans* 1649, 1748): ‘Mael het Haerlemsch meir tot lant . . . Melcker valt aen ’t hotter karnen’ (Drain the Harlemmermeer . . . Milker set to work creaming the butter)<sup>35</sup> and at the end of the play *Leeuwendaalers* the chorus sings:

De koeien geven melck en room. Het is al boter tot den boom.

Men zingt al PAIS en VRE.

(The cows yield milk and cream. There is butter everywhere.  
Peace and Harmony are hymned.)

*Leeuwendaalers* is called a ‘Lantspel’ and even though it is richly adorned with Vergilian literary motifs, we can still recognize the world of the farmer in Holland. Vondel intended this, as we can see also from his motivation of the god Pan’s appearance: ‘de veerrijkheit der Nederlanden’ (the abundance of cattle of the Netherlands) requires ‘een Veegodheit’ (cattle god), Vondel writes in the dedication to his play. In that same dedication he links the Hollandic character of *Leeuwendaalers* to the profession, recreational activities and disposition of the figure he is addressing.<sup>36</sup> For example he praises his Dutch righteousness (‘rechtschapen Neerlanders aert’) and frankness (‘goetrontheit’), and these are not casually chosen characteristics. To a high degree they correspond to characteristics traditionally considered typical of the Batavian Hollanders.<sup>37</sup>

The final point I want to make concerns the transmission of this image beyond Holland. This rural concept of Holland must also have been known in England; witness for example the mention in Haley’s

study<sup>38</sup> of the negative epithet 'butter-boxes' which the English applied to Hollanders. An anti-Holland pamphlet from 1664 (one year before the second sea war) mentioned by Haley shows a similar tendency: it is entitled 'The Dutch Boar [= Boer] Dissected, or a Description of HOGGLAND [= Holland]' and contains the phrase: 'A Dutchman is a lusty, fat, two legged Cheesworm: or a Creature that is so addicted to eating butter, drinking fat drink, and sliding ['skating' as paraphrased by Haley] that all the World knows him for a slippery Fellow.'<sup>39</sup> The slipperiness this 'cheesworm' is blamed for can be traced back to a winter entertainment well known in Holland: skating – think of the winter scenes painted by Avercamp (literary ice-sport is offered in Six van Chandelier's poem 's *Amsterdammers winter*<sup>40</sup>). But of course 'sliding' is also the opposite of righteousness and frankness.

In conclusion, the literary sources I have examined thus far partly confirm the views of Dutch historians in my view. Indeed there was no single common concept of 'fatherland', and one certainly can speculate about the profundity of patriotism in the period concerned. On the other hand, the literature of the period would have us believe in unanimous patriotism, and writers considered it useful to propagate this ideal, using symbols like the cow or the lion. The cow had to be defended against foreign enemies; the lion had to fight against them.

## 6

# Groen van Prinsterer's interpretation of the French Revolution and the rise of 'pillars' in Dutch society

Harry Van Dyke

The historian, publicist and statesman Guillaume Groen van Prinsterer (1801–76) fathered a number of societal configurations in his country which to this day tie together the complex consociational democracy that is the Netherlands. He accomplished this on the basis of a comprehensive historical interpretation of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution. He viewed the 'Age of Reason and Revolution' as the eclipse of Christendom and the emergence of post-Christian modernity, a vision which he summarized in his book of 1847, *Ongeloof en Revolutie*. In a long career he made it his mission to combat the fruits of 'the Revolution' as they were being harvested in his own time, and to formulate 'anti-revolutionary' or 'Christian-historical' alternatives for state and church, education, learning and scholarship.

### Biographical sketch

Groen van Prinsterer was born near The Hague in 1801, the eldest child and only son of the court physician and the heiress of a Rotterdam banking family. The boy was reared with the greatest care, to which he responded well, excelling in French, geography and horsemanship. Late autumn 1813 finds him playing chess with a Cossack officer billeted in Dr Groen's home during the liberation of Dutch soil in the final Allied campaign against Napoleon following the battle of Leipzig.

History does not record who won those matches, but we do know that the lad was precocious. Later, at university, it became an expression among several generations of students: 'To speak Latin like Wim Groen.'



After six years at Leiden young Groen submitted two dissertations for which he was awarded a double doctorate, one in jurisprudence and one in letters. He fitted in well, and his prospects looked good, although attendance at Bilderdijk's private seminar had taught him to keep a critical distance with respect to the received orthodoxy in matters historical and political.<sup>1</sup>

The year 1829 found Groen in Brussels. He was now the king's personal recording secretary and had to compose concise summaries of the proceedings in the parliament of the United Kingdom of the Netherlands. With mounting alarm he witnessed from the public gallery the rising agitation for revolt among liberal members from the South, and during lulls in the debates he sought guidance in the writings of Pascal, Burke and Lamennais. Before long he began to publish, anonymously, a weekly journal which he called *Nederlandsche Gedachten* and in which he criticized what he saw as a tug-of-war between autocratic royal centralism and parliamentary pretensions to sovereignty, both of which he came to see as being rooted in the new liberal doctrine of the state. Behind this doctrine in turn he saw the influence of Enlightenment philosophy with its substitution of divine right with popular sovereignty based on a social contract, and its comprehensive programme for a new European society founded on reason instead of revelation. When the revolutions broke out in Paris and Brussels in the summer of 1830, Groen had convinced himself that their common origin could be traced back to the great revolution of 1789 and its intellectual-spiritual antecedents. He summed up his view of the history of modern times in a simple formula: apostasy the root, revolution the fruit.

Sometime afterwards Groen was appointed curator of the royal family archives. In the next four years he published seven volumes of correspondence of members of the House of Orange, notably of William the Silent,<sup>2</sup> and wrote later that this labour had opened his eyes to the religious faith that had given birth to the Dutch Republic and had provided the backbone for the Dutch nation. From 1841 on, he published instalments of a new handbook for Dutch history, the first such synthesis since the authoritative one of Wagenaar.<sup>3</sup> In advance of its completion Groen composed a compendium for use in schools, *Kort Overzicht* (1841), accompanied by a song book, *Vaderlandsche Zangen* (1842). Concurrently he began an ambitious and wide-ranging inquiry into the causes of the revolutionary era that Europe had entered. Beginning with a study of the Renaissance and the Reformation, he traced the waning influence of the latter and the rising influence of the former, culminating at last in the humanism and rationalism of the Enlightenment, whose lofty ideas were put to the test in the French Revolution of 1789.

By 1845 Groen felt ready to set forth 'the ensemble of his convictions', a blend of his reading of modern history and a diagnosis of his time. His sources were voluminous. Extracts, notes and draft chapters have survived.<sup>4</sup> For the history of the French Revolution, which was then still in its pre-document phase, he relied on memoirs of participants, the narrative accounts of Mignet and Thiers and the highly personal *Considérations* of Madame de Staël.

Groen decided on a series of lectures in the privacy of his home library. In fifteen lectures before an invited audience averaging twenty in number, he explained that the Revolution, such as it was, tried to do much more than right wrongs or bring constitutional reforms. It tried to erect society on a new foundation, a society without God. The revolutionaries were bent on putting into practice what they had come to believe from reading the philosophers (in particular Hobbes and Sidney, Locke and Montesquieu, Voltaire, Diderot and Rousseau). Thus, beneath the violent eruptions on the surface seethed the intellectual-spiritual revolution that had first turned the mode of thinking throughout Europe on its head: the visible upheavals displayed the practical consequences of the hidden. In the words of Guizot (whose method Groen followed here): the 'anatomy' of history sends the historian back to the 'physiology' of history; empirical facts betray the presence of the deeper-lying laws of history. Thus Groen practised a scientific history that looks beneath the surface of recorded events to discern hidden motors, in this case the powerful ideas that were guiding – and on occasion overriding – all human designs.

The lectures were published under the title *Ongeloof en Revolutie*. The volume's *leitmotiv* is summarized on the last page: 'the Revolution, to the full extent of its pernicious fruits, is the consequence of the Revolution doctrine – just as that doctrine itself is the consequence of the systematic rejection of the gospel'.<sup>5</sup> The fatal error of the Enlightenment had been to replace the two cornerstones of Christendom with two foundations of its own: truth was henceforth to be established by human reason, and law was to be determined by the human will. But on this basis, Groen protested, we are delivered over to fallible human insight debated over by rival schools, and to arbitrary human decisions arrived at after naked power struggles. Has not recent history demonstrated, he pleaded, that on that basis we are bound to slide from polite deism to militant atheism in religion, while in politics we shall be doomed to alternate between radicalism and despotism? And has the new legitimation of power been able to safeguard our civil and political liberties? Hardly, for we must bow by turns to the tyranny of an elected majority or the will of an autocrat

endorsed by plebiscites. The Revolution keeps us trapped in a vicious circle. Against this revolution one ought to declare war.

## From interpretation to action

What Groen created with his larger-than-life interpretation of the Revolution was a *myth*. By this term I mean something akin to ‘an intellectual construction that fuses concept and emotion into an image [which may or may not] accurately reflect empirical fact – *it exists on a different plane* – but [which] sometimes exerts a decided influence on practical affairs’.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, Groen’s ‘myth’ self-consciously involved the historiographical conceptualization of both analysis and evaluation, two levels of mental activity that are normally integrated on a still deeper plane, in the human heart, where resides a person’s ultimate commitment; thus Groen’s historical interpretation was squarely rooted in his ultimate value system or religious stance. But, in addition, his myth of the Revolution was intended not just to provide understanding but also to spur on to action and exert a ‘decided influence’ on society: in this sense a myth easily and naturally begins to function as a practical *ideology* (a term which I do not here use in the Marxist sense of a self-serving rationalization of class interests). In all this, Groen understood his work as a historian to be eminently human, personal, subjective, a testimony to the truth one has come to see and believe in, and thus partaking of the very same dynamics that he saw at work in the history that was the object of his study.<sup>7</sup> History-writing for him was intellectual debate, and intellectual debate was a battle of the spirits. Candid about his own special angle of vision, he formulated the paradox, ‘Only he can be impartial who takes sides.’<sup>8</sup>

Huizinga, second to none when it comes to appreciating an evocative image,<sup>9</sup> once said of *Ongeloof en Revolutie* that its image of ‘the Revolution’ was ‘born of anger and alarm’ and drew from the historical event ‘only the point of departure, for the sake of giving a name to the romantic-apocalyptic conception which is the modern form of the Augustinian concept of the *civitas terrena*’.<sup>10</sup>

Augustinian it was, but at the price of inflating the Revolution’s point of departure? Indeed, according to Groen’s view the course taken by the Revolution was implicit in its starting point. François Furet has recently discredited all such conflation of ‘two different levels of analysis’ because they confuse the causes of the French Revolution with the specific dynamics of the Revolution once set in motion.<sup>11</sup> Unquestionably,

*Ongeloof en Revolutie* is a textbook example of such 'confusion'. In effect Groen says: tell me what you believe in, and I shall tell you where you will end up. The revolution of 1789 was first prepared by the revolutionary thought of the Enlightenment; but what is more, once this thought had become common coin – once it had become axiomatic that governments should be based on consent sealed in the social contract and politics should be based on reason harnessed by the collective will – the train of events set in motion in the spring of 1789 would follow a predictable course right down to the abyss: the heady days of '89 were bound to lead to the decapitations of '93 and subsequently.

Groen does not fail to offer the historical proof. Logical consistency was evident, he argues, first in defying the royal will and proclaiming a National Assembly of the sovereign people, and then in reducing church and clergy to a civil service. In his twelfth lecture Groen examines certain 'contingencies' which are purported to have unhappily derailed the Revolution but which can instead be perfectly accounted for, he thinks, from the persistence of the new ideology: the vacillation of the king; the reluctant cooperation of clergy and nobility; the half-hearted intervention of the other European Powers (with the exception of Britain). In similar fashion Groen shows that it was altogether consistent with the new theory of liberty when the Assembly was made supreme, the king denied a veto and soon deposed, the radical element given the reins of power, and the Central Government declared omniscient, dissent a capital crime and periodic *coups d'état* a sacred duty.

Groen tries to clinch his case in the thirteenth lecture. The masterminds of the Reign of Terror, Robespierre and Saint-Just, had logic on their side. With cool calculation they waded through seas of blood to preserve the people's great work of the Revolution and establish the ultimate Utopia. Their fanaticism was free of excitement, resting as it did on the reasonings of the mind, which was captive to the optimistic world view of the Enlightenment. This world view remained popular despite the Thermidorean reaction. It was soon manipulated by Napoleon for his own ends, it was moderated in the Restoration, but it was never disavowed or replaced. We have been living in a state of 'permanent revolution', Groen concluded in 1846, and new outbreaks are gathering force just beneath the surface. To the liberals of his day he said: you endorse 1789 but condemn 1793? But these phases are inseparable. You can't have your cake and eat it too. Embrace the ideals of the Revolution, and you are helping prepare the coming of anarchy, from which the only escape will seem the enthronement of the 'strong man', a dictator. Naturally, Dutch liberals, just then growing in strength and self-confidence, thought the charge

rather unfair. Downright upset were the conservatives of the establishment: Groen called them 'liberals dragging their feet', or worse: 'hand-wringing onlookers' who lacked any alternative of their own.

And so the myth of 'the Revolution' had immediate practical implications. Across the political spectrum Groen saw red only, red in various shades, framed by a broad band of colourless conservatives. Only he and his like-minded friends offered a real choice: ana-revolutionary politics. 'Principle against principle' was to be the watchword. Ideological polarization would clarify the political debate. Involvement by Christians in public affairs was to be the very antithesis of existing trends and currents. Every new proposal in politics and every new development in society would be tested to ensure it was free of the revolutionary virus. 'Resist beginnings!' Groen warned. And to prevent absorption of his fledgling group by either left-wing or right-wing revolutionaries (by liberals or conservatives), Groen began to advocate a strategy of separatism expressed in the maxim 'In isolation lies our strength', a slogan that was meant to encourage involvement in public affairs from a position of ideological distinctiveness guaranteed by organizational independence. Here lies the root of 'pillarization'.<sup>12</sup>

The publication of the lectures in 1847 marks their author as a trailblazer of alternative confessional politics. He was a precursor of what later in the century was called Christian Democracy. Groen's book became a Dutch classic.<sup>13</sup> French had to wait nearly a century before Hazard's studies of the Enlightenment<sup>14</sup> echoed Groen's theme; English did not get a comparable analysis until a posthumous publication by Christopher Dawson.<sup>15</sup>

## Anti-modern, postmodern and pre-modern

Groen's head start, ironically, caused him to spearhead an anti-modernity countermovement in the very days that the spirit of modernity was breaking through triumphantly in nineteenth-century Europe – embraced by most, protested against by many others, but, according to Groen, challenged in its roots by few, and exposed by none in its many ramifications, such as secular scholarship, theological modernism, unbridled capitalism, grasping colonialism and, yes, female suffrage.

Clearly, Groen's quarrel was with the very programme of modernity: to build the City of Man on secular, rational, pragmatic foundations.<sup>16</sup> One might even say that in a double sense Groen van Prinsterer was a postmodernist *avant la lettre*. First, in the science of history he

dismissed the concentration on 'naked facts' as advocated by the new positivism. Second, in the broad area of culture he repudiated his generation's belief in human autonomy and inevitable progress. Rather, he warned that 'the modern theories', which had begun in religious scepticism, would end in relativism and nihilism. According to Groen's ominous prognosis, if the modern concept of rational human self-determination were ever to prevail, a phase of 'despondent resignation' would set in. On this point his train of thought is not hard to follow. For reason varies with the thinker, who is a complex human subject. In consequence, truth will be but consensus, adhered to on pragmatic grounds only. Similarly, the social order will be a mere matter of convention, and justice and right will be defined by the arbitrary will of the majority or by whoever happens to be in power. As a result, sooner or later a mood of utter indifference will settle over the public mind: respect for law will ebb away, claims to truth will be greeted with a shrug of the shoulders and history and literature will be reduced to 'texts', studied by the critics as so many games with words, with the barest of connection to any external reality, let alone to a transcendent realm of normativity. Apathy, Groen predicted, will choke all nobler aspirations, and any remaining ideals for reforming the social order will oscillate between utopias of absolute individual freedom and collectivist democracies administered with bureaucratic regimentation.

On the other hand, of course, Groen was equally a pre-modernist. First, critics are agreed that his representation of the *ancien régime* was far too rosy – in any case insufficiently depicted as requiring a radical overhaul. Secondly, and more importantly, the author of *Ongeloof en Revolutie* still assumed the existence of an objective moral world-order – he called it, by turns, nature, divine law, right, the order of things, the human constitution<sup>17</sup> – something which humankind cannot ignore with impunity. He believed passionately that Truth could be known and was worth contending for, and that laws must serve the Right if they are to avail. Consequently, his lectures were offered as a contribution to the ongoing debate about the 'correct' assessment of an epoch, a contribution which he claimed would yield genuine insight and valuable lessons about the wrong turn Europe had taken.

In the light of this negative assessment of the advent of modernity, should Europe try to forget the Revolution and retrace its steps? As a child of his time Groen was steeped in history and historical sense and could hardly be expected to wish for the clock to be turned back. Besides, he appreciated the Revolution also as a cleansing storm that had removed much dead wood. The new order was therefore to be accepted and utilized to build a better future, but then on principles tried and tested. Not

so much the forms as the Christian foundations of pre-revolutionary society were to be recovered and reasserted. Failing that, the future looked grim. Nevertheless the countermovement could be undertaken with confidence, under the twin motto, 'It is written! It has come to pass!',<sup>18</sup> by which Groen meant: Revelation proclaims the order for creation, and History confirms that order in the judgement of nations and individuals and in the providential realization of history's purpose.<sup>19</sup>

In the third quarter of the nineteenth century, Groen and his anti-revolutionary allies tried to articulate positive alternatives. Accepting the constitutional changes that had irrevocably come about, they would work with them from a sounder basis and a different inspiration. They would apply to the new situation the fundamental principles of historic Christianity in their import for state and society. The liberal-democratic state could work only if imbued with recognition of God, respect for law, love of freedom and the spirit of charity and self-restraint. Historically, we stand for a 'Christian liberalism', wrote one of his friends, and Groen, for all his strictures against liberalism, did not demur.<sup>20</sup>

In the new parliament after the great Constitutional Revision of 1848, a small, informal party began to identify itself as 'anti-revolutionary'. Fearful of democracy, they nevertheless favoured full responsible government in the face of oligarchic and monarchist pretensions. In 1866, during the crisis over the appointment of a Governor-General for the East Indies, Groen shocked the conservative establishment by supporting the Second Chamber's motion of censure of a Cabinet that tried to hide behind the royal prerogative to make such appointments.<sup>21</sup> What Bismarck succeeded in doing in Prussia – have king and government outmanoeuvre the elected legislature – failed in those very years in the Netherlands. As a good Dutch Calvinist, Groen, although agreeing that the king should not just reign but also govern, nevertheless insisted that he should always do so in close consultation with the nation through its representatives. For that matter, no member of the House of Orange could wish to govern in any other way. Revolutionary autocracy – 'Napoleonic Caesarism' – had no place on Dutch soil.<sup>22</sup>

Here we see Groen carrying forward the Orangist interpretation of Dutch history, though updated and purged of some of its less tenable aspects.<sup>23</sup> On this view, not the least of the sins of the Patriots was that in 1795 they had called in the French to help chase out the prince of Orange. While Groen disagreed with his friend Isaac da Costa that the Netherlands was the 'Israel of the West', and avoided portraying the princes of Orange as modern analogues of the biblical Judges, nevertheless he did profess a distinctive place for his country in the designs of

Divine providence: namely, to be a seat of Protestantism and a haven for religious refugees.<sup>24</sup> The Dutch Republic prospered because it harboured the Reformed Church. As he put it in his *Handboek der geschiedenis van het Vaderland*:

The Republic's greatness did not arise from its constitutional arrangement, in which scarcely anything was arranged; nor from its liberty, which often existed more in name than in reality; nor from the character of its people, which does not surpass that of divers other nations. But its greatness arose from the faith, which is inseparable from the blessings of God. The Lord had planted his Church here, protected her against attack from without and apostasy from within, and favoured the State united with her, for her sake, with an abundance of his choicest benefactions, such that our history, more perhaps than that of any other Christian nation, is the story of Divine guidance and miracles.

To what extent may the Netherlands be called a *second Israel*? Not by *identification*, but by *comparison*. The blessings of the gospel were granted to the Netherlands, not *exclusively*, yet *most excellently*. To assert this is not pride. To ignore it would be the height of ingratitude . . . Countries and peoples are blessed and spared on account of the faith of some of the inhabitants. For ten righteous the Lord would have spared the city destined for destruction. 'The Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake, and the blessing of the Lord was upon all that he had in the house and in the field.'<sup>25</sup>

Thus to the extent that the princes of Orange – notably William I, Maurice, William III – had protected the Reformed religion, to that extent Groen marked them as manifest instruments of the Most High.

While anti-revolutionaries were true but guarded Orangists and loyal parliamentarians, they also looked beyond the frontiers. On foreign policy they took the high ground: treaties were sacred and had to be kept, and Europe was a family of nations ruled not by might but by right, not by *realpolitik* but by international law. Accordingly, Groen denounced Bismarck the Iron Chancellor as a second Bonaparte, the Revolution incarnate in continental affairs.<sup>26</sup>

For many years one of the main policy aims of the anti-revolutionaries was to guarantee the Christian character of state education, and gradually of free schools. They campaigned against successive education acts and administrative practices that discriminated



against denominational schools. Freedom of education was to them simply ‘freedom of religion with respect to one’s children’.<sup>27</sup> By 1872 the Rotterdam stockbroker Jacob Voorhoeve, acquainted with things British, persuaded the ageing Groen that, just as good English liberals had had their Anti-Corn-Law League, so Christian liberals in Holland needed an Anti-School-Law League. It was duly founded, and its nearly 150 local branches by the end of the decade were the nuclei of the Anti-Revolutionary Party, the first political party to be properly organized in the Netherlands. By then, the old prophet was dead and his mantle had fallen on his disciple, the pastor-publicist Abraham Kuyper.

## Twentieth-century reception

Kuyper trained his followers in the antithetical ways of Groen. They started Christian trade-unions to parallel the growing power of the socialist labour movement. In this way the existing ‘pillars’ in education and the press were complemented by ‘pillars’ in industrial relations. Our own century saw what I would prefer to call *institutionalized pluralism* (‘pillarization’) in the fields of broadcasting and agricultural organizations. It turns out that with his myth of the Revolution, Groen fathered a ‘pillarized’ society, the *zuilenstaat*.<sup>28</sup> There has been a trend in recent decades toward depillarization, but every now and then there are signs of repillarization; after their setback in the elections of 1994, Christian Democrats were overheard saying: ‘Let’s return to the centre, where the Christian organizations operate.’

For the generation following Groen, whatever smacked of revolution had to be nipped in the bud or scotched. The celebrated railway strike of 1903 was aborted by Prime Minister Kuyper when he threatened to do what US President Ronald Reagan did in 1981 to striking air traffic controllers: conscript them all into the armed forces and order them back to work.

Thirty years later Kuyper’s followers knew almost instinctively what bolshevism and fascism represented: nothing but left- and right-wing variants of the Revolution! Studies appeared exposing the dangerous implications of the movements of Lenin and Stalin, of Mussolini and Hitler. A national synod of the Calvinist churches in 1936 put its members under interdict if they took out membership in either the pacifist socialist or the national socialist party. When the Nazi juggernaut rolled over the Netherlands, anti-revolutionaries were forewarned. Party headquarters advised the locals: ‘Read and discuss Groen’s *Ongeloof en Revolutie*.’<sup>29</sup>

Soon the champions of divine-right government began to swell the ranks of the resistance, hiding Jewish and other fugitives from the regime, raiding distribution offices for ration cards, sabotaging telephone and railway lines, even liquidating opponents. It became a password among the German occupation authorities in The Hague: remember, the worst terrorist pockets are manned by Communists and Calvinists! Indeed, participation in underground activities by both groups was disproportionately high.<sup>30</sup>

In the post-war years the A-R Party held out the longest against decolonizing Indonesia. There were to be no concessions to guerrilla fighters who had collaborated with the Japanese and now held their own people hostage. Sukarno was no William of Orange; his struggle for independence, unlike the Dutch revolt against Spain, was no legitimate uprising: it was a revolution.

In 1853, Robert Fruin, after reading *Ongeloof en Revolutie*, mocked its logicism and biblicism, and he was sure Groen's party ought never to be voted into power.<sup>31</sup> A century later, Pieter Geyl, that master and lover of debates, argued at length that in terms of scholarship Groen's book had been 'one grand mistake', a specimen of history-writing whose unhistorical method and reactionary bias had rendered its contribution to scientific historiography 'more confusing than constructive' and in the long term 'unfruitful'.<sup>32</sup> Historiographically unfruitful?<sup>33</sup> Perhaps.<sup>34</sup> But in any event not without fruit for concrete history, as Geyl notes: Groen was a leader of Calvinists 'whose rise to consciousness and political power is one of the great phenomena in our national history of the last one hundred years'.<sup>35</sup> It was a story of consciousness-raising which was intertwined to a remarkable degree with a historical interpretation first articulated by Groen van Prinsterer.

# Memories and identities in conflict: The myth concerning the battle of Courtrai (1302) in nineteenth-century Belgium

Gevert H. Nörtemann

## Introduction

Recent research on the problem of collective identities points uniformly to the conclusion that the identity of a group is above all the product of a collective memory.<sup>1</sup> In the collective memory, factual history is transformed into myth; yet this transformation does not make history unreal. Quite the contrary, it thereby becomes reality, in the sense of a normative force. The group selectively takes possession of history and imbues it with meaning, in such a way as to create a fiction of continuity that serves the group's self-definition.<sup>2</sup> It is not only the orally transmitted myths of non-literate societies that fulfil this function; even modern historical scholarship participates in the invention or construction of such identity-forming myths.<sup>3</sup> In fact, it was or is one of the central functions of modern historiography to bridge the gap between the premodern and the modern, between the prenationalistic and the nationalistic world, and to provide continuity. Without the myth of a shared past, a shared origin, 'golden age', and its heroes, it is not possible for a nation or ethnic group to survive over a longer period of time.

History is essential for the self-definition of a community; it is an interpretation of the present projected into the past. History legitimates contemporary social structures and power relations – or calls them into question. The collective memory is therefore of the utmost political significance. Political sovereignty necessarily implies control over the collective memory of the governed.

Still, collective identities and memories in modern societies are not homogeneous and monolithic; instead, modern societies comprise a multitude of identities and memories. Their members do not exist in national relationships alone, but also in regional and local ones; they belong to specific classes, age groups, professions or trades, and linguistic communities; they have a world view and a sex. All of these distinctive features can lead to the formation of specific identities and corresponding memories – although they need not always do so. These intersecting multiple identities lead, at the level of society as a whole, to a battle over memory, to a dispute over the correct interpretation of history or certain historical events.<sup>4</sup> I would like to sketch out this struggle concerning the collective memory using the example of the battle of the Golden Spurs, one of the central topics in Belgian and especially Flemish collective memory.

The battle occurred on 11 July 1302, before the walls of Courtrai in West Flanders. A substantial French unit of knights was, to the great surprise of all contemporaries, soundly defeated by the militias of the Flemish artisans and peasants. The Flemish victory was the definitive stroke in extinguishing the attempts of the French crown to annex the county of Flanders, which represented the most important centre of power in the buffer zone between France and the Holy Roman Empire – a fact which has crucially influenced the political geography of the Low Countries up to the present.<sup>5</sup>

## The story of the Golden Spurs as a national myth

It appears that by the eighteenth century the battle of the Golden Spurs had almost completely disappeared from the collective memory. Despite intensive research on this question, only the rudiments of a popular tradition could be found.<sup>6</sup> The first efforts to revive the myth occurred during the union of the northern and southern Low Countries (1815–30), whereby it was hoped that the anti-French spirit of the *topos* could be utilized in the development of a greater Netherlandic identity.<sup>7</sup> But since the citizens of the southern Low Countries refused to identify with the greater Netherlands, the old story from the fourteenth century met with little response from them.

But when Belgium became independent, the narrative of the battle of Courtrai came to play an important role in Belgian discourse about history and nationality. Shortly after 1830, the librarian of the University of Ghent, Auguste Voisin, became interested in the local historical research on the battle of the Golden Spurs that Jacques Goethals-Vercruyse, an

industrialist and local historian of Courtrai, was carrying out.<sup>8</sup> In 1834 the two jointly published an essay about the battle;<sup>9</sup> this then inspired the romantic painter Nicaise de Keyser in 1836 to produce a monumental battle scene of 1302,<sup>10</sup> which in turn stimulated Hendrik Conscience, who up to that point had been quite unsuccessful, to use the material as the basis for a large-scale historical novel.<sup>11</sup> Thus, in 1838 *De Leeuw van Vlaanderen* appeared, one of the most widely read books in Flanders, a real bestseller almost to the present day. This work had the flavour of Homeric epic, with the Flemish people heroically fending off attack by the French.<sup>12</sup> With his work Conscience awakened in the Flemings, or, more specifically, in the Flemish middle classes, the consciousness of a glorious past and along with it a kind of Flemish patriotism, which was simultaneously firmly linked to Belgian nationalism.<sup>13</sup> Conscience's novel created a whole complex of myths and symbols, with which the nascent Flemish movement strongly identified. Most especially it popularized the symbol of the Flemish lion, which is ever ready to defend its rights and its freedom and which for this reason became the emblem of the Flemish movement. *De Leeuw van Vlaanderen* contributed the motif for the Flemish anthem and for the Flemish flag.<sup>14</sup>

Thus, Hendrik Conscience, his novel *De Leeuw van Vlaanderen* and the battle of the Golden Spurs became the symbolic point of departure of the Flemish movement. Yet this did not make Conscience an opponent of the unified Belgian state. On the contrary: he was an ardent Belgian patriot – and simultaneously a flamingant. He fought the Gallicization of Flanders and championed linguistic parity for the Flemings; but he aimed to strengthen Belgian nationalism by doing so. In this way, he was a typical representative of the Flemish movement prior to World War I.<sup>15</sup>

This fact can be understood only against the background of nineteenth-century discussion regarding Belgian nationality and history, whereby the medieval county of Flanders was interpreted as a precursor to modern Belgium. The national history of Belgium was mainly built upon the history of the county of Flanders, and Belgium was represented as the legitimate heir and successor to the medieval county.<sup>16</sup> Flemish language and culture were also the only distinguishing features by which Belgium could set itself off culturally from France. Research into Flemish history and culture was therefore systematically encouraged by the Belgian government.<sup>17</sup> Belgian national consciousness was largely based upon a kind of *cultuurflamingantisme*.

As a result, Henrik Conscience's efforts in this direction were fully rewarded by the Belgian government. Soon after *De Leeuw van Vlaanderen* appeared, Conscience was commissioned by the government

to write a Belgian national history in the Flemish or Dutch language.<sup>18</sup> Conscience was particularly appreciated for the vehemently anti-French tenor of his works; this was especially evident in 1857, when Conscience was appointed county commissioner of Courtrai, because this town was 'on the route of periodic invasions by the French', as the official explanation for the appointment given by the Minister of the Interior put it;<sup>19</sup> Conscience was to act as a symbolic stronghold against French aggression upon the historic battlefield of Courtrai.

Conscience's depiction of 1302 was quickly followed by numerous imitations. A wave of poems, plays and novellas about '1302' appeared. Many historical investigations attempted to reconstruct the exact course of the battle. At the same time, the description of the occurrences of 1302 took on a central place in accounts of Belgian history. The story of 1302 became stylized to one of the most important events in Belgian national history. Even in the monumental *Histoire de Belgique* by Henri Pirenne, the first volume of which appeared in 1900, the battle of Courtrai was still accorded great significance, since the victory of the Flemish militias had supposedly saved the county of Flanders from annexation by France and thereby left the way open for the later independent Belgium.<sup>20</sup> In this perspective there was no contradiction between a Flemish and a Belgian interpretation of '1302'. Therefore in a public lecture held in 1902 in Ypres the Bruges priest and local historian Adolf Duclos<sup>21</sup> invited all Belgians to celebrate the 600th anniversary of the battle and concluded his speech by shouting: 'Heil aan onze Helden van 1302! Heil aan het onafhankelijk Belgenland! Leve de Koning!'<sup>22</sup> (Hail to our heroes of 1302! Hail to the independent land of the Belgians! Long live the king!)

## The story of the Golden Spurs as a local myth

Besides its national significance, the myth of the battle of the Golden Spurs also had a decidedly local character. It was, after all, mainly because of the local historical research of Jacques Goethals-Vercruyse that the battle was discovered in the early 1830s. It was also certainly no accident that the idea of erecting a monument to the heroes of 1302 was conceived in the mid-nineteenth century in Bruges – the city in which the resistance to the French occupation had formed and which had enlisted the largest contingent of militiamen. The most elaborate festivities to commemorate the battle took place in 1902 on the occasion of the 600th anniversary, in Courtrai, on the historic battlefield, so to speak. Bruges

and Courtrai remained the only towns that raised monuments to the battle of 1302.

In Bruges the project of putting up a memorial to the Bruges heroes of 1302 – Jan Breidel and Pieter de Coninck – came into being in the late 1860s in connection with more extensive plans for the city's economic and social development. The economy of Bruges was seriously depressed in the mid-nineteenth century; the economic heyday of the medieval Venice of the north was over and gone. More than a third of the inhabitants lived on charity.<sup>23</sup> In this situation, among the Liberal-orientated wing of the petty bourgeoisie, initiatives were developed to counteract the image Bruges had of being a dead town<sup>24</sup> by referring to its great past. This image-polishing was closely tied to attempts to revitalize the city's economy.

The erection of the Bruges monument to Breidel and de Coninck was a long and complicated matter. In 1867, a politically Liberal commission was formed, with Hendrik Conscience as honorary chair, for the purpose of raising money to finance the monument. In 1874, all the commission's efforts were rendered futile when the sole Bruges bank, where the monies had been deposited, went bankrupt. It was with great difficulty that the Breidel movement recovered from this blow. When in the early 1880s they finally had sufficient means to commission the monument with financial support from the city government, the province of West Flanders and the Belgian state, they found themselves in open conflict with the local administration, which meanwhile had fallen into the hands of the Conservative Party. The Conservative city government wanted to present the memorial as its own work and to gain control over the arrangements for the festive inauguration. It therefore took away from the Breidel-Commissie the privilege of organizing the dedication ceremony. In the end, the monument was dedicated twice, once in July 1887 by the Liberal Breidel-Commissie, and again a month later with great pomp under the direction of the city government and with the participation of the Belgian king.<sup>25</sup> The municipal authorities took the affair very seriously. Altogether, including the subsidies from the province and the Belgian government, more than 20 per cent of the annual budget of the city of Bruges was spent on the costs of the monument and its dedication.<sup>26</sup> The essential part of the August celebrations was a historical parade, with 1302 participants dressed in accurate replicas of fourteenth-century costume and representing the events and the actors of 1302.<sup>27</sup> In spite of the fact that the anniversary of the battle should have been celebrated in July, the urban administration chose the month

of August for the ceremony because at that season the greatest number of tourists from the coastal resorts nearby could be attracted to Bruges.

The chief founder of the *Breidelbeweging* (Breidel Movement) was Julius Sabbe, a teacher at the Bruges grammar school,<sup>28</sup> who tirelessly publicized the project in numerous lectures and newspaper articles. At the same time, Sabbe was one of the most important supporters of the building of a seaport for Bruges. It was hoped that renewed access to the sea would give the city's economy a major boost.<sup>29</sup> The most important pressure group of the Brugge-Zeehaven project was De Reizigerskring (Travellers' Circle),<sup>30</sup> an association of business people that also was one of the primary sponsors of the Breidel monument.<sup>31</sup> The Bruges division of the Willemsfonds, a Liberal Flemish cultural organization, likewise supported both projects, the monument and the seaport, with all available means.<sup>32</sup> Thus, there were many personal and organizational links between the two projects, so that those involved readily divided up the work of realizing the projects. This cooperation is seen most clearly in the close friendship between Julius Sabbe and Auguste de Maere d'Aertrijcke. In 1878 de Maere wrote to Sabbe that they should both work towards the building of the seaport and the revitalization of Bruges, each in his own sphere – Sabbe in publicity and culture, and de Maere in building up contacts with influential men.<sup>33</sup>

At the same time, conservationists in Bruges were making intensive efforts to maintain the medieval character of the city. If at all possible, new buildings were to be constructed only in the neogothic style. Bruges was to become the Nuremberg of Belgium.<sup>34</sup> The main goal of this movement was to make Bruges into a tourist attraction and, by virtue of the increased tourism, to stimulate the urban economy.<sup>35</sup> Sabbe described the plan as follows: 'Qu'on fasse pour Bruges, ce qu'on fait pour les villes de plaisirs et de bains: une propagande incessante et sous toutes les formes: à l'intérieur et à l'étranger ... et Bruges deviendra un séjour plus recherché, plus agréable que bien d'autres, une "great attraction" si l'on veut.'<sup>36</sup> (If we do for Bruges what is done for pleasure resorts and spas, that is, create constant publicity of all types both at home and abroad ... then Bruges will become a more sought-after and agreeable resort than many others, a 'great attraction', if you like.) And it was for just this reason that the monument to Breidel and de Coninck was erected and the ostentatious dedication ceremony was held, which was supposed to spread the fame of Bruges as a city of art even beyond the Belgian borders and attract countless tourists to the city.

In this way, the historical and cultural inheritance of Bruges, among which the battle of the Golden Spurs and the two local heroes Breidel and



de Coninck were ranked, was made use of for the revitalization of the urban economy.

## The story of the Golden Spurs as a Flemish myth

From 1877, the battle of the Golden Spurs was commemorated annually in Bruges, and from there the custom of holding *guldensporenherdenkingen* (commemorations of the Golden Spurs) spread to nearly all Flemish parishes. The myth of 1302 thereby took on a whole new dimension. The continuation of Conscience's glorification of medieval Flanders in times of increasingly political and militant 'flamingantism' stylized 1302 into a symbol of the purported centuries-long resistance by Flanders to French influence. For instance, in a public lecture in Antwerp in 1874 Julius Sabbe called upon the audience to remember what the Flemings had once been and thereby to learn what the Flemings could be in future. He alluded to the *Brugse Metten* (Bruges Matins) of 18 May 1302, when the French occupying forces were killed or repulsed from Bruges by the call, 'Wat walsch is valsch is! Slaat al dood!' (All that is Walloon is treacherous! Kill them all!) In Sabbe's view, this call was still valid in his own time. For him it was an invitation to fight against the 'Gallicization' of Flanders and to rediscover the Flemish identity: 'Ken u zelve, wees u zelve, reinig u van de vreemde roest, die op u kleeft, wees Vlaming in de taal en Vlaming in de ziel!' (Know yourselves, be yourselves, cleanse yourself of the foreign rust which clings to you, be Flemish in your language and Flemish in your soul!) At the inauguration of the Breidel and de Coninck memorial he wished to see the whole of Flanders shouting in unison, 'Vlaanderen den Leeuw! Ons Vaderland is herboren!' (Flanders the Lion! Our Fatherland is reborn!)<sup>37</sup>

In 1892 the governor of the province of West Flanders gave orders to close the provincial offices on 11 July, the anniversary of the battle, and to raise the Flemish flag. One year later, 11 July was declared a Flemish national holiday by the National Vlaams Verbond (National Flemish League).<sup>38</sup> The myth of 1302 represented the starting point for the crystallization of a pan-Flemish identity applying to the entire Flemish-speaking population of Belgium. Paul Fredericq compared the impact of the Bruges celebrations of 1887 with an 'electrischen schok ... die door de ziel van het Vlaamsche volk [had] doen lopen' (an electric shock which had gone through the soul of the Flemish people).<sup>39</sup> Especially in the former Brabant region of Antwerp, which, historically speaking, had absolutely no link with the events of 1302, a second centre

of an intense cult surrounding the battle of Courtrai came into being in addition to that in West Flanders.<sup>40</sup>

Still this symbolic glorification of Flanders's past did not conflict with the Belgian national consciousness. In fact, the initiators of the 1302 commemorations themselves always stressed the importance of the battle of the Golden Spurs for Belgium as a whole; after all, it was the battle which, according to them, had made the independent country of Belgium possible in the first place. Consequently, 11 July was in their view not only a Flemish affair but should be seen as a Belgian national holiday as well.<sup>41</sup>

The Walloons, however, could not accept the Flemish demand that 1302 had to be treated as an event of Belgian national dimension; in the Walloon regions there had never been *guldensporenherdenkingen*.<sup>42</sup> On the contrary, the Golden Spurs celebrations in Flanders were partly ridiculed by the Walloons, partly viewed with mistrust because of their anti-French attitude and therefore considered dangerous for the unity of Belgium.<sup>43</sup> That the Walloons viewed the *guldensporenherdenkingen* as a Flemish matter and took them very seriously as Flemish national celebrations can be seen from the fact that the Walloon movement, in reaction to the symbolic practices of the Flemings, considered it necessary in 1912 to introduce its own national symbols and a Walloon national holiday – 27 September, in commemoration of the Belgian Revolution of 1830.<sup>44</sup>

Thus there was even before World War I a symbolic splitting-up of Belgium into two regions with their own regional holidays and a corresponding difference in conceptualizing Belgian history. Consequently, when King Albert I in 1914 appealed to the Belgians to resist the German invasion, he was forced to address Flemings and Walloons separately by referring to different historical examples: 'Gedenkt, Vlamingen, den slag der Gulden sporen, en gij, Luikerwalen, die op dit oogenblik onze eer ophoudt, de zeshonderd Franchimonteezen' (Remember, Flemings, the battle of the Golden Spurs, and you, Liegeois, who at this moment are upholding our honour, the 600 Franchimonters).<sup>45</sup> A common historical memory which could bridge the growing gap between Flemings and Walloons no longer existed on the eve of World War I.

## The battle of 1302 between the ideological camps

Parallel to this debate over the national significance of 1302 for Belgians, Flemings and Walloons there was a bitter dispute over whether 1302 had been a conflict between two nations, the Flemings and the French,

or two classes, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. Catholic-conservative leaders continually emphasized that in 1302 all of Flanders had stood up to the French occupation. Liberal and socialist spokesmen, on the other hand, represented 1302 as the resistance of the artisans, who were interpreted as the proletariat in the modern sense, against the Gallicized bourgeoisie. Thus the question was – expressed in the terminology of the times – whether 1302 was a class struggle or a racial struggle.

The liberal point of view was clearly expressed by the writer, journalist and publisher Lodewijk Opdebeek.<sup>46</sup> For him the battle of the Golden Spurs had been an episode in the long struggle between the proletariat and capital. ‘Op den Groeningher kouter [i.e. the battlefield of 1302] stonden niet twee elkander hatende rassen, maar twee elkander hatende klassen overeen. De strijd was het van de democratie tegen de autokratie.’ (On the Groeningher kouter [i.e. the battlefield of 1302] it was not two hostile races, but two hostile classes, which confronted one another.)<sup>47</sup> In Opdebeek’s opinion this was proved by the composition of the two armies confronting each other. According to Opdebeek the French army consisted exclusively of nobles from France, Brabant, Hainault and Germany, in addition to the Flemish Leliaerts, members of the Flemish nobility and the patriciate. Opposing them were the Flemish artisans and peasants led by only a few nobles. Their motivation was not to defend a ‘fatherland’, but for them it was evident that the result of the battle would decide who would rule the country, the patriciate or the common people. ‘In hun oogen, beduidde het te leveren gevecht niets anders dan de voortzetting van dien langen twist tusschen rijken en armen.’ (In their eyes, the battle to be fought represented nothing other than the continuation of that long strife between rich and poor.)<sup>48</sup> On no account had the battle of the Golden Spurs been the outcome of a Flemish national consciousness, which did not exist and which could not exist at that time.<sup>49</sup>

The Catholic-conservative interpretation is given by Adolf Duclos, among others, whom I have already quoted above. He outlined an idyllic image of the medieval society of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, in which no social conflicts existed. According to Duclos, urban society in late medieval Flanders consisted mainly of artisans who were owners of their means of production and of their dwelling. The conditions of production and exchange were regulated by the guilds, which prevented a class of rich ‘capitalists’ emerging.<sup>50</sup> ‘Te lande was de staat van zaken nog voordeeliger.’ (In the countryside the situation was even more favourable.)<sup>51</sup> So it is misleading to search for the struggle of ‘capital’ against ‘labour’ in medieval society. According to Duclos, the Flemish artisans

had two aims: first, to replace the patricians who had monopolized communal power (but this was a political and not a social struggle);<sup>52</sup> second, to defend their fatherland, the county of Flanders, and their legal prince against the French attack.<sup>53</sup> Their inspiration was a patriotic one, based on a Flemish national consciousness which had existed since the eleventh century.<sup>54</sup>

Because of the sharp ideological contrasts that reigned on the Belgian political scene and the explosiveness of this issue, no agreement could be reached on this topic. So it is not surprising that not only was the Bruges monument dedicated twice, but also, in 1902 the 600th anniversary of the battle was celebrated in Courtrai separately by Liberals, Catholics and Socialists.<sup>55</sup> Only in Antwerp, where there already was a tradition of non-partisan cooperation among Flamingants dating back to 1862 in the form of the Meetingpartij,<sup>56</sup> was it possible to bridge the ideological gap for the sake of commemorating 1302. Thus, between 1890 and 1914 the Golden Spurs celebrations in Antwerp were powerful major demonstrations of the Flemish Movement, in which the representation of Flemish culture and history were invariably associated with concrete political demands.<sup>57</sup>

## Conclusion

It has been my intention to show the range of variation in the meanings assigned to the myth of the Golden Spurs and the diversity of contexts in which it was put to use in Belgium before World War I. One should beware of viewing the myth of the Golden Spurs simply as the myth of the Flemish movement. Deconstruction of the myth, i.e. the exact analysis of its genesis and history, shows instead that it was used by very different political and social groups, in a variety of different contexts, and even for opposing purposes. There was not one meaning of the myth; it was not even a single myth, but rather a plurality of interpretations and allusions. It was a cipher that could be applied almost at will.

# The concept of nationality in nineteenth-century Flemish theatre discourse: Some preliminary remarks

Frank Peeters

In 1985 Joris Vlasselaers published a penetrating study of literary awareness in Flanders between 1840 and 1893. He did not base his research on the primary literary material but on a broad corpus of literary periodicals and he justified this choice as follows: 'It constitutes a fully definable and structured network of critical and theoretical metatexts revealing up-to-date concretizations of contemporary and traditional literary production, thematizing aesthetic norms and ideological presuppositions, articulating the current discourse on the cultural and specifically artistic and literary codes.'<sup>1</sup> Although much more modest in its scope, this chapter nevertheless aims to provide an impetus for related research into theatrical awareness in Flanders in the second part of the nineteenth century.

The fact that this area has not yet been extensively researched, together with limitations of space, meant that several choices had to be made concerning both the scope of the material and its treatment. Like Vlasselaers, my interest is focused on the metatheatrical level of nineteenth-century theatre, and the multitude of theatre periodicals with which one is confronted make it difficult to pick out any one in particular. For this reason I opted instead for a clearly defined corpus of metatexts from another area, i.e. the jury reports on the State Prize for drama, awarded since 1858. More than any reflection or review, these reports offer a clear view of the theatrical-dramatic canon. As the Czech structuralist Vodicka rightly remarks, such texts together with the trend-setting primary texts and the reviews in periodicals form the 'exponent' of the 'aesthetic object', i.e. the social interpretation and appreciation of the work of art at a particular moment by a well-defined group. One

could remark that these State Prizes reward dramatic *texts* and not *performances*. Formally speaking this is correct, but one sees that the jury very explicitly made allowances for the degree of theatricality of the competing works. Additionally, the regulations stipulated that the winning play had to be performed during a theatre contest in the month of September following the competition. This stipulation prevented the award being given to *libretti* until the regulation was revised in 1901 after several juries had insisted on the inclusion of these texts. However, there were no awards for the lyric genre.

As far as the content analysis of the material is concerned, this was led by the very specific character of the corpus. Given that these were jury reports for a prize which was awarded by the Belgian government, the investigation of the *statelike* concepts 'national' and 'nationality' was an obvious starting point. The more so as Article One of the regulations (Koninklijk Besluit of 10 July 1858) defines that the prize will be awarded to a work 'the subject of which must be related to national history or national manners and customs'.

One of the aims of the research was to investigate whether and to what extent the use of the concept of nationality and its evolution, as identified by Vlasselaers in the literary metatexts of that period, could also be traced in our corpus.<sup>2</sup> Particular attention will be paid to the specific, possibly deviating, use of this notion made by members of the jury with regard to the Flemish theatre in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Because of the possible extension of this research to broader inquiries into the mental attitudes underlying nineteenth-century theatre in Flanders, I shall occasionally refer to passages which strictly speaking go beyond the research on the concept of nationality but are nevertheless quintessential for an understanding of the contemporary mental predisposition.

As an act of auto-affirmation (the Academy as an institution that bears witness to Belgium as an independent state), the young Belgian state instituted by Royal Decree (Koninklijk Besluit) on 1 December 1845 a quinquennial prize for a work contributing to its national history. In 1851 another quinquennial prize was established for moral and political science, French and Flemish literature, physics, mathematics and the natural sciences, followed in 1859 by a prize for medicine. In 1858 a triennial prize was instituted for Flemish drama, followed in 1859 by a parallel one for drama written in French. The legislation required the Royal Belgian Academy of the Sciences, Literature and Fine Arts to draft the regulations for the contest. The members of the jury were recruited from among the members of the Academy. Regulations for the triennial

prizes for dramatic literature stated that the work should be original. It was up to the members of the jury to judge the degree of originality. The prize consisted of a gold medal worth 150 francs and a sum between 500 and 1,500 francs. It was the prerogative of the Minister of the Interior, who was, politically speaking, responsible for the Academy, to determine the exact amount, 'in conformity with the merits and the importance of the winning-play';<sup>3</sup> the jury, at least three members of which were nominated by the members of the Academy, could only make a recommendation. Further regulations stipulated that the prize-winning play should be performed during the September festivities following the competition. If the performance of the prize-winning play could not take place, the author would receive compensation that would equal the amount of the prize. In addition, the prize was indivisible, a condition that would cause many problems. When in July 1886 the Royal *Flemish* Academy was founded, the authority for awarding the prize was transferred to this institution (from the eleventh period onwards, 1885–8).

Although between 1858 and 1901 fifteen prizes had been awarded, my research has uncovered only eight jury reports. For the first four periods I was served by *Les prix quinquennaux et triennaux en Belgique. Rapports officiels 1850–1870*; from the eleventh period onwards (1885–8) by the *Verslagen en Mededeelingen der Koninklijke Vlaamsche Academie*, with the exception of the thirteenth period (1892–4, laureate Isidoor Albert with *Boudewijn Hapkeri*), for which, for no apparent reason, no minutes were published.<sup>4</sup> Really problematic are the reports relating to the fifth to tenth periods, for which some jury reports apparently cannot be found; research at the Belgian Royal Academy has produced no results. What we did find in the Academy's archives was the ministerial correspondence on all periods.<sup>5</sup> The reports of the sixth and seventh periods are mentioned in A. Deprez, *Bibliografie van de Vlaamse literatuur in de negentiende eeuw*, but this information has not been included.<sup>6</sup>

The anonymous author of the Introduction to *Les prix* evaluates the different State prizes that were awarded in the beginning as definite symbols of Belgium's 'national renaissance and its political independence'.<sup>7</sup> The report of the jury of the first period, consisting of the chair F. H. Mertens, and J. M. Dautzenberg, F. Snellaert and P. Van Duyse, with E. Stroobant as secretary, stresses very strongly the national function of the dramatic literature as requested in Article 1 of the regulations. They begin their report with a historical outline of the dramatic literature, stating that the period that preceded independence is marked by suppression of national identity, which found expression in the theatre in the numerous imitations of mainly French plays. The lack of a national trend

rendered the theatre devoid of any self-esteem: *'But our stage showed no originality, no character, no national tendencies* and as a consequence it had no proper value.'<sup>8</sup> 'National' here still belongs to a mental framework that is predominantly patriotic; i.e. which aims to demonstrate and glorify the characteristics of the nation. This national reflex remains very Belgian: the Belgian state amalgamates with the Belgian nation, in which the Belgian people live with Flemish as their tongue. This even means that the Flemish people consider the Walloons as Gallicized Belgians, for whom the only chance to obtain true national Belgian identity would be to extricate themselves from this Gallicization. It is true that fear of a French annexation, which was tangible during the first decades after independence, had abated somewhat. Still, literature, and perhaps even more markedly the theatre, are considered the pre-eminent device for averting the foreign threat by making linguistic and cultural identification with the French neighbour impossible. With Vlasselaers we, too, can speak of an 'ethnic nationalism', viz. a nationalism which strives for self-identification of the ethnos within the state.<sup>9</sup>

At the basis of this construction lies the idea of common roots, history and culture with special reference to the indicative role of language. In the Belgian context this evolution is linked with the dawning Flemish consciousness within the boundaries of the Belgian state. The distinction between the concepts of political nationality and ethnic nationality becomes more clearly drawn. The following quotation is quite telling in this respect: 'Flemish playwrights have investigated our national history in order to arouse the love of our country in all hearts [i.e. all Belgians, FP], whereas French dramaturgy sometimes draws on our chronicles in order to mock our famous ancestors or to dishonour them.'<sup>10</sup> The jury sees 1841 as the turning point in this a-national and even anti-national tendency. That year Hippoliet van Peene, the laureate of this first period, becomes the writer-in-residence of 'Broedermin en Taelyver', one of the most important amateur companies in Flanders: 'Dramatic art has taken a national turn.'<sup>11</sup> The jury regrets that by way of exception this first period was not allowed to embrace the 1841–8 time span, because then more works of great value by authors like E. Zettemam and E. Rosseels would also have been able to compete for the prize. Ultimately thirty-five plays were taken into consideration. In its deliberations, the jury paid most attention to the degree of nationalism that was displayed, then to morality, *mise-en-scène* and finally to style. We will see that these priorities will have shifted radically by the end of the century. Concerning the first criterion, the degree of nationalism, the jury distinguishes between (a) those works which truly deal with national history; (b) those works which are



not rooted in historical facts but which still possess a real nationalistic character; and finally (c) those works which are set in Flanders but are in fact French both in their content and tenor. This last group was not taken into consideration, 'considering the fact that the national tendency is one of the major criteria for a work to be allowed to enter the competition'.<sup>12</sup>

In connection with the degree of morality in the works we notice the use of the concept of 'Flemish honesty [*l'honnêteté flamande*]':<sup>13</sup> 'Truly, the plays in which Flemish honesty has not been honoured are rare exceptions.' This concept can indeed be linked with what Tindemans has called 'the ethos of virtuousness' (*deugdzaamheidsethos*), which he sees as being organically connected to the notion of 'bourgeois'.<sup>14</sup> The notion of virtuousness is central to the bourgeois ethos. Nowhere, Tindemans says, are *individual* qualities depicted which together would be characteristic for the group of bourgeois people as a whole: 'What is understood by "virtuous" is: the bourgeois way of life.' We also can connect this concept with that of *Volksgeist* (*volksgeest*), a term which from 1840 on is to be found in literary periodicals. The idea of *Volksgeist* encompasses the total network of intellectual, ethnic and religious ideas and habits which people cling to and which pass on the ancestral identity. Snellaert uses the term in 1840 in a sense which is closely related to the concepts of 'national character' and consciousness of one's race.<sup>15</sup> Whereas the former concept is connected with the ethic of a social group, the latter contains a specific reference to the Flemish ethnos. Both concepts reinforce each other, however. Both authors and members of the jury have a common desire to be loyal to the bourgeois ethic and both profess this as Flemings. The fact that Flemish honesty is linked to the principle of morality has to be contrasted to the un-Flemish, hence amoral, French way of life.

When the jury discusses the style of the winning play, it is generous in its judgement, considering it smooth. In some of the other plays the jury discovers a number of barbarisms, but for this they blame the deficient teaching of Flemish in secondary schools. The jury excuses these shortcomings. However, it is less tolerant of authors who use a vulgar or trivial style, for this is definitely against the bourgeois ethic.

After these considerations of a more general nature the jury selects two works that meet the requirements for the award. Besides the prize-winning play by H. van Peene, *Mathias de Beeldstormer* (Mathias the Iconoclast), we also find *De BuschkanTERS of de Vondeling* (The BuschkanTERS or the Foundling) by F. van Geert. Both plays are historical to the degree that they deal with episodes from Flanders's past. The work of Van Geert is a 'drame de mœurs', a 'bourgeois drama'.<sup>16</sup> The

prize-winning work of Van Peene, is a 'drame historique' in five acts. The protagonist Mathias is in fact Don Carlos, the son of Philip II. The story tells us about the struggle between the Sea Beggars and Spain in the Netherlands during the sixteenth century. The subject is at the same time emphatically historical and 'national' dealing with 'patriotic ideas and feelings that fill the heart of the Flemish spectators with wrath against fanaticism and tyranny'.<sup>17</sup> And although the language could have been more pure, the jury nevertheless suggests awarding the work the maximum prize, i.e. the gold medal and 1,500 francs prize money. The minister was to award Van Peene the gold medal (worth 150 francs), but he reduced the sum of money to 1,000 francs.<sup>18</sup>

The last paragraph of the report gives an insight into how the notion of 'national' is interpreted by the jury: 'In spite of the large number of anti-national principles that are aligned against our language in general and against our theatre in particular, these authors have done their utmost to edify our national theatre: many a beautiful work of art has been created in this way; this country should be grateful and generous towards these men.'<sup>19</sup> The aim of the prize is made quite explicit: the country should be grateful to these authors and reward them for stimulating national pride.

For the second period (1859–61) Domien Sleenckx is the laureate with *Grétry*. The jury consisted of J. H. Bormans (chair), H. Conscience, Baron J. de Saint-Génois, E. Stroobant and J. M. Dautzenberg (secretary). The jury mentions a general improvement as far as *mise-en-scène*, the treatment of the characters and language are concerned. The fact that the authors show greater craftsmanship is stressed. The number of works for this second competition has increased considerably to fifty-five plays. For the first time, but not for the last, the jury focuses on a particular problem which arises when judging drama: 'The jury faced a considerable difficulty, namely how to establish a trustworthy comparison between drama, comedy and vaudeville.'<sup>20</sup> That is why the jury asks the minister's permission to award a separate prize for each of the dramatic genres. The minister never complies with this request.

The jury explains the increase in quality by referring to measures taken by the government to stimulate the theatre via the so-called premium system, in use since 1860. Notwithstanding this, many measures can still be undertaken to improve the quality of the theatre. There then follows a lengthy plea to organize professional training for actors:<sup>21</sup> in Holland this was established in 1874; in Flanders a fully-fledged actors' training failed to materialize until 1946. It is striking to read how the jury stresses the necessity of 'ensemble' play at a moment when dramatic practice was still completely dominated by the star system.

In the text the notion of 'people' is used frequently to mean the 'Flemish people'. So for instance in the following passage the jury says it is the government's duty to stimulate and refine the 'innate artistic sense' ('an inalienable quality of our people'<sup>22</sup>) of the Flemish people by means of stimulating and refining their education. Although the use of the language is not yet perfect, the jury notices an enormous improvement compared to the previous contest; an appreciation which tells us more about the goodwill of the jury than an intrinsic improvement in the quality of the plays, for some authors have a tendency to describe unlikely events, while some do not eschew exaggeration. In so doing they are in conflict with the bourgeois idea of 'temperance', the 'bourgeois sense of measure'.<sup>23</sup>

The prize-winning work, *Grétry*, deals with the life of the eighteenth-century composer in Liège. The author writes about Grétry in such a way that he compels 'respect'. The jury proposes to reward Sleenckx with the maximum prize. We do not know whether this suggestion was also endorsed by the minister.

For the third period Frans van Geerts's *Jacob Van Artevelde* is awarded the prize by F. H. Mertens (chair) and H. Conscience, J. M. Dautzenberg, C. Serrure and E. Stroobant (secretary). The work was inspired by Conscience's novel of the same title. The political apology, opposing French pretensions, is quite obvious. The work 'is patriotic in its spirit',<sup>24</sup> and the author is praised for his great *métier* ('a profound knowledge of the requirements of the stage'). The work is considered to be the best of all forty-four and consequently the jury proposes to give it the maximum award.

In conclusion the jury draws attention to the fact that Flemish drama has obviously made some progress thanks to the incentives given by the government 'in favour of the national stage'.<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless the jury regrets that some of the playwrights 'make their plays a cheap imitation of the French stage', which means that they 'chase dramatic effect by a series of murders, poisonings, duels, elopements and similar tricks: they disregard the need for veracity, they insult the rules of common sense lapsing into a pitiful exaggeration, which is completely alien to our morals and *in direct opposition to Flemish honesty*'.<sup>26</sup>

And again the jury repeats its plea to divide the prize according to the different genres of drama, comedy and vaudeville. In their repeated request for the foundation of a school for the professional training of actors in Flanders, we read the following remarkable pronouncement on 'The usefulness of such an institution for the Flemish theatre, *the only national theatre in Belgium*'.<sup>27</sup> This must be connected with what

Vlasselaers has described as follows: 'the Belgian State coincides with the Belgian Nation, in which the Flemish people use Flemish as their language. Flemish authors consider the Walloons as Gallicized Belgians, whose sole chance to acquire the Belgian identity rests in undoing this gallicization as soon as possible.'<sup>28</sup> With regard to the literary system Vlasselaers dates this attitude at the beginning of Belgian independence (1830–40). We also have to keep this in mind when evaluating and interpreting the numerous national theatres that were founded in Flanders from 1853 onwards: 1853, Antwerp; 1863, West Flanders; 1865, East Flanders.

A. van de Kerkhove is awarded the prize for the fourth period for his *De Vrouwenhater* (The Misogynist), a comedy with lyrics in two acts. The jury, with F. Snellaert as its president and H. Conscience, J. M. Dautzenberg, F. Heremans and E. Stroobant (secretary), selects this piece out of sixty-two submissions. The report also mentions six libretti that cannot be taken into consideration for the above-mentioned reason. The jury deplores this and asks the minister to institute a separate prize for these works.

Furthermore, the jury stresses the fact that the quality of the contributions is gradually improving, although some texts seem to be hurriedly written and do not meet expectations. Other weaknesses are illogical situations, the absence of well-defined characters, monotony and tediousness.<sup>29</sup> For one of the members these shortcomings are sufficient reason for not awarding the prize, but the other four do not share his opinion. Because the play could have been better, they agree however to award it only 1,200 francs instead of the maximum 1,500. The theme of the play has little to do with the topic of nationalism. However, if one is willing to make the equation national = bourgeois,<sup>30</sup> then this work does live up to the requirement of being 'national'. Its qualities lie in the bourgeois ethic that is propagandized. Its biggest formal achievement is the fact that the author shuns every exaggeration, every theatrical effect: 'here, everything is natural'. The ideal of being 'natural' coincides with the ideal of being bourgeois.<sup>31</sup>

The Royal Flemish Academy was founded by Royal Decree (Koninklijk Besluit, 8 July 1886). At the opening ceremony the minister responsible, de Moreau (Minister of Agriculture and Industry [*sic*]), speaks briefly in French, for which he apologizes, an apology which is heavily applauded. He mentions 'the firm union that exists between the two races, for the wellbeing of the country (prolonged applause)'.<sup>32</sup> Next comes the governor of East Flanders, who, this time in Dutch, says: 'Let us regard this [the fact that a French-speaking compatriot opens the

Academy] as a salutary proof of the fraternization between the two populations of Belgium, as well as a magnificent testimony to the fact that, albeit their tongues differ, the Belgians are but one people, unwavering in their independence.<sup>233</sup>

The Academy successfully requested of the Belgian government that it be allowed to select the members of the jury itself. In the meantime, the literary climate had changed drastically. Opposed to the traditional point of view as voiced by Max Rooses and others, we find the representatives of the younger generation Pol de Mont and Prosper Van Langendonck, who advocate art as an autonomous enterprise as opposed to the servile function it fulfilled for the traditionalists. They continued to defend the motive of nationalism, using its defence in their effort to thwart literary experiments. Unlike P. Benoit or H. Verriest, to these younger men the concept of nationality is no longer considered to be an enriching, creative factor. We notice that the Academy honours the conservative/traditional point of view, because most of its members belong to the older generation.

Unlike the Royal Belgian Academy, the Flemish Academy took the role of stimulating the production of Flemish drama. Its Belgian predecessor always made it very clear that the jury was selected from among its members, but that the prize itself was a matter for the Belgian state as such rather than the Academy. Because of the different attitudes towards this matter, the reports were published systematically and in full in the *Verslagen en Mededelingen*, the Academy's journal. In general the Flemish Academy encouraged art that it believed would appeal to the masses. The criteria used to decide what was good and what was bad related closely to J. F. Willems's credo stated at the beginning of the century: religiousness, morality and nationality. When faced with the choice between two works of almost equal merit, the jury would decide in favour of the one that dealt with the manners and/or history of the country.

The first report, written by Th. Coopman in 1889, is quite telling in this respect. In this report the jury complained about a lack of originality. The theatre should reflect the national qualities of the people in its subject matter. The resulting plays should bear witness to a high-minded morality and should betray a level of compassion for the people and their devotion to the country and freedom. The jury also called for naturalness both in the language and action of the play.

In 1898 the request to open up the competition to libretti was reiterated and it was eventually granted by the government as from the period 1901–3. Complaints about the gradual pervasion of naturalism into Flemish drama are recorded from 1900 onwards. The jury objected

in particular to excessive pessimism and the predilection for so-called pathological characters and situations portrayed by some authors. The jury deplored the harmful influence of H. Ibsen, G. Hauptmann, M. Maeterlinck or H. Heijermans. The generation gap between the members of the Academy and the new generation of poets and novelists became manifest.

With *De dood van Karel de Goede* by H. Plancquaert and *Een spiegel* by N. De Tiere, the jury rewarded plays of reasonable quality. *Boudewijn Hapken* by I. Albert, prize-winner for the 1892–4 period, was, however, of inferior quality. No winner was proclaimed for the 1895–7 period, although two plays, A. Hegenscheidt's *Starkadd* and H. Melis's *Koning Hagen*, received the jury's prize of encouragement. This was certainly not to the liking of the literary avant-garde, who considered Hegenscheidt's play as an especially good representative of the ideals embodied by *Van Nu en Straks*. For the next period (1898–1900) the winning play was again of mediocre quality. This was *Siddharta* by D. and J. Minnaert, and although the jury praised 'the nobility of its emotions and loftiness of its tenor', it nevertheless suggested the award of only 1,000 francs rather than the maximum possible.

This 'self-restraint' sprang from the jury's intention to regard the prize no longer as an encouragement for the production of Flemish drama, like the so-called premium system (*Premiestelsel*), but as a genuine reward for the most excellent play. However, it would be another ten years or so before they would be inclined to support the innovative trends in Flemish drama, as can be seen by their blunt rebuffing of *Starkadd* and the consequent fierce reaction by *Van Nu en Straks* and A. Vermeylen. Let us now have a somewhat closer look at some of the reports by the Flemish Academy.

Even in the first report (i.e. on the eleventh period), the jury consisting of P. Génard, E. Hiel, P. Alberdingk-Thijm, J. Micheels and Th. Coopman had made a plea for splitting up the prize in order to be able to reward the best play in each genre. Many of the shortcomings identified are due not to the idiosyncrasy of the Flemish people but to their alienation from their roots. And in spite of these shortcomings the plays all have one major quality: 'the right feeling for discipline and morality'. There then follows a long list of all possible shortcomings that are, fortunately, absent in the rewarded *De dood van Karel de Goede*. A good many of these shortcomings point in the direction of the cursed naturalism: 'they [the interested authors] do not want to have anything to do with *animal-like realism* or *unmanly nervosity*' (italics in original). On the question of respect for morality and purity of heart and mind there is 'as far as art and

nationality are concerned, room for improvement'.<sup>34</sup> The main malefactor is the French language and its baleful influence on morals. The prize-winning piece 'stirs, elevates, without seeking extraordinary effects'.<sup>35</sup> The examples are Shakespeare, Goethe, Schiller, Calderon and Goldoni.

The report on the twelfth period, with E. Hiel, F. De Potter, P. Alberdingk-Thijm, J. Micheels, L. Mathot as members of the jury, opens with a historic discussion on the origin of the genres. In connection with this, the jury then remarks that only few of the contributions are comedy or farce, although 'the Flemish people . . . by their nature are inclined towards merriness, yes even boisterousness'.<sup>36</sup> One can detect the influence of H. Taine. And the report continues: 'It is as if the contemporary Flemish-Dutch playwrights judge the nature of their people unfit for staging'.<sup>37</sup> There follows an argumentation against the predilection for pessimistic, unusual subjects and characters that are alien to the nature of the Flemish people. 'This new fancy has led in Paris and Berlin to the "Free Stage" [*het Vrije Tooneel*], on which, under the banner of "naturalness", the concepts of purity and moral beauty are mocked'.<sup>38</sup> This is also the moment when for the first time 'certain theories of an unchristian or socialist nature' are being firmly dismissed. The Belgian Socialist Party (BWP) had been founded in 1885. The prize-winning play by De Tière is said to 'excel in the delicate portraying of the characters and noble patriotism'.<sup>39</sup>

The jury for the fourteenth period, consisting of P. Alberdingk-Thijm, W. De Vreese, Th. Coopman, G. Segers and D. Claes, repeats the old complaints, the plays lack 'originality: they [the authors] stick to the old schemata'.<sup>40</sup> But, 'it is with great pleasure that the jury remarks on the fact that a good many of the playwrights have taken their inspiration from feats of our glorious past'.<sup>41</sup> This is a good thing, because 'historical plays strengthen the national conscience'.<sup>42</sup> The jury could not reach a unanimous judgement (three in favour, two against) on Melis's and Hegenscheidt's work. The reason for not awarding the actual prize but instead giving a prize for encouragement, is to be sought in the changed attitude the jury had adopted in making its awards. From now on they want to reward the best play, so the State Prize can no longer be considered to stimulate the overall production of Flemish drama: 'as from now the requirements should be increased'.<sup>43</sup> The State Prize should become the most prestigious prize there is. Moreover the prize-winning play should excel not only as a work of literature but as a play.<sup>44</sup>

P. Alberdingk-Thijm, D. Claes, A. De Ceuleneer, J. Van Droogenbroeck and G. Segers, constituting the jury for the fifteenth period, appreciated the morality of the contributions. Although the

theatre has to be didactic, it should avoid delivering a lecture. Then we read an important remark: 'Theatre is art, it has to give aesthetic pleasure.'<sup>45</sup> In this sentence we find a clear example of what Vlasselaers calls the 'bending', or shift in attitude from ethical to aesthetic. Within the literary system this change takes place from around 1885. The aesthetic function will from then on compete with the ethical function.<sup>46</sup> However, this does not mean that the aesthetic function is the only one that matters, for: 'It [the theatre] should before anything else depict the Flemish people, the Flemish soul.'<sup>47</sup> The theatre can only fulfil its didactic mission through showing beauty. It should refrain from creating fear and demonstrating ugliness: 'the cacographics serving [moral] improvement [*de cacographieën ter verbetering*]' have been abolished.<sup>48</sup>

As we heard before, the jury complained about playwrights being too easily pleased with the results of their writings, so that they frequently fail to elaborate sufficiently on their subjects.<sup>49</sup> Hence, the jury demands craftsmanship. The playwright has to 'show' things, but without turning to vulgar realism – he must always uplift public taste. There then follows a fairly extensive sermon against naturalism: 'especially [against] the "pessimismus", which is in total opposition to our national character, and which we notice here and there'.<sup>50</sup> Ibsen in particular is warned against.<sup>51</sup> Characters that are depicted too realistically are like 'photographs' and 'Photography belongs to industry, not art.'<sup>52</sup> Works of this kind debase the people in their own eyes, and have no uplifting effect. Finally we read the old credo: 'if the theatre is to be a school, its first and foremost duty is to instil patriotism and civic virtue'<sup>53</sup> – the theatre should never promote uncivil behaviour, however legitimate the reasons for rebellion may be. *Siddharta* is awarded the prize after a split vote: three in favour, two against.

This modest investigation of the conceptual use of some ideological key terms in the nineteenth-century reports of the triennial State Prizes for Flemish drama necessarily leaves many questions unanswered. To give a comprehensive explanation one needs to study the ministerial correspondence, to have a clear idea about the ideological and poetical strategies adapted by each of the members, and to find the reasons why these men were selected as members of the Royal Belgian Academy and Royal Flemish Academy in the first place. One example of the many intricate links between the cultural and political structures of the time is the fact that quite a number of them belonged to or played an active role in the realization of the so-called Committee of Grievances (1856), which was set up to investigate the way in which the Flemish language and literature could most adequately be



integrated in Belgium's cultural, public and political structures. At the time of writing, we are still in need of a comprehensive history of nineteenth-century Flemish theatre. Hopefully this preliminary investigation will serve a double purpose: (a) as a contribution to Flemish theatre history in its own right and (b) as an example and impetus for the many tasks that lie ahead, waiting to be tackled.



Part II

**The past as illumination  
of cultural context**



## *Sinte Lorts bewaer u. Sinte Lorts gespaer u!* Paradox as the key to a 'new morality' in a late medieval text

Anna Jane Harris

*Van Nyeuvont, Loosheyt ende Practike: Hoe sij Vrou Lortse verheffen*, *Nyeuvont* for short, is a play, printed around 1500, revolving around the deceitful elevation of a false saint. It was printed by Roland van den Dorpe, an Antwerp printer who worked between 1496 and 1500.<sup>1</sup> *Vrouw Nyeuvont*, the instigator of this plan, enlists the help of two lawyers, *Loosheyt* and *Practijke*, to aid her with the elevation. They in turn present her with two men, the *cassenaers* *Hardt van Waersegeen* and *Cleyn Vreese*, who help to carry the relics of *Sinte Lorts* and sell indulgences. The word *cassenaer* stems from the word *cas*, which denotes a reliquary. The whole affair is set up with profit in mind, and we even see profiteers such as *Meest Elc*, a banker, being deceived. Throughout the text the author poignantly criticizes the bourgeoisie who, he feels, are only out to make money and to imitate the rich. In addition comic and truth-telling interludes are provided by the fool or sot, *Schoon Tooch*, and his bauble or marot, *Quaet ende Waersegeen*. By means of his text the author paradoxically presents his version of a new morality. Bad behaviour and deceit are specifically highlighted and, especially through the intervention of the sot and the marot, exactly the opposite behaviour is promoted.

Within this volume's overall theme of presenting the past I hope to place this text in the context from which it emerged and to clarify its apparently obscure meaning. The previous in-depth study was carried out in 1910 by Elisabeth Neurdenberg and like many works from the period, concentrates much less on the function of the text than has been the tendency over the last couple of decades.<sup>2</sup> Rather than being a simple attack on clerical practices, as many literary historians have previously thought, I would prefer to think that *Nyeuvont* is an attempt to create a

behavioural code for a bourgeoisie which by 1500, although powerful, was still rudderless.

The dating and localization of *Nyeuvont* are of inestimable importance for a proper comprehension of the text, for with this knowledge a more detailed background can be reconstructed in which the text came into existence. The Antwerp in which Roland van den Dorpe lived and in which our author may have worked was the centre of a Europe-encompassing economic network which was undergoing the transition from a relatively parochial economy to a semi-global one which has been described by Braudel<sup>3</sup> as 'proto-capitalist'. It was in Antwerp that the various trading routes of the world converged, and here the merchants perfected the experiment of the 'credit' economy which had started in the Italian city-states and in parts of France in the thirteenth century.

By the late fifteenth century the credit economy had been receiving two new and vital impulses: an increase in non-European trade and a release of labour resulting from the cheaper supply of wheat to the Low Countries from the Baltic after the conversion of Lithuania. This boost to the economy also gave rise to increased usury and credit, which, as Le Goff, Braudel and Toynbee have noticed, are inherent taboos in all civilizations.<sup>4</sup> It was the sanctioning by the institutions of civilization, whether overtly or implicitly, of the lifting of this taboo which led to social and religious change in the sixteenth century and which probably stimulated the author of *Nyeuvont* to write his play.

## The church and the state

How then did the church react to the growth of credit and usury? The church based its stance against usury on both Matthew 6:24: 'Ye cannot serve God and mammon' and Deuteronomy 23:20: 'Unto a stranger thou mayest lend upon usury; but unto thy brother thou shalt not lend upon usury', the brother being of course all fellow Christians. That the Catholic church and capitalism are natural opposites can, however, no longer be maintained when one considers the period of *Nyeuvont*. From early on, the church responded to capitalism with surprising flexibility. It condemned usury and maintained this stance, but the Scholastics, led by St Thomas Aquinas, had introduced a number of nuances as early as the mid-thirteenth century, which enabled the papacy to turn a blind eye to the emergence of proto-capitalism. He introduced a new subtlety into the anti-usury dogma of the church. Aquinas argued that usury was acceptable if a risk accompanied the investment or if profits were

communal. This in turn led the church to condone lending to rulers and to accept the profit principle for banks and trade companies. During the Papal Schism (1378–1417) the costly maintenance of a Renaissance papal court, a prerequisite for indicating one's worldly power, undermined its prestige and prevented it from taking a puritan stance against the social effects of proto-capitalism, stimulating our author's proposition for a new morality.

At the time when the text was published, the selling of indulgences had reached its apogee. In return for a decrease in the amount of time spent in purgatory, one would pay a certain amount of money which would contribute to the building of religious institutes, the financing of papal wars and the balancing of the papal accounts. The effect of this trade seriously undermined the moral high ground which the church had occupied.<sup>5</sup> That the *Nyeuvont* author deplored the selling of indulgences needs no illumination; it is not accidental that the *cassenaers*, two of the most morally depraved of the characters, sell false indulgences. To him, this is evidence of the church's incapacity to provide proper moral guidance for its flock.

Besides indulgences, the author finds more fault with contemporary religious life. I suspect him to be rather puritanical – or should we say fundamentalist? – for he sees little use in the religious practices of his day. Like Erasmus he wants a church, and not a new church, that can cope with the encroaching proto-capitalist ethos.<sup>6</sup> Thus religious guilds, saint worship and faked confessions are all criticized.<sup>7</sup>

## The social climate

Looming large as the setting of *Nyeuvont* were the prosperous towns of Brabant in the early modern period.<sup>8</sup> Here, the class whose lifestyle is the butt of the author's criticism and wit – the bourgeoisie – developed in a region which had, even at this early stage, become densely urbanized. This was accompanied by a shift in the world view in this part of the Low Countries.<sup>9</sup> *Vrouw Nyeuvont* realizes this and urges her followers to elevate *Sinte Lorts* 'in elcke stede' (in every town).<sup>10</sup> The new element in this world view was the all pervasive influence of money. Instead of being a suspicious practice, the possession of money became the measure of success, and 'correct' behaviour was no longer sanctioned by a commonly accepted set of rules, thus causing many to regard the behaviour of the well-off as 'Scoon Toooh', or Fine Pretence.

The 'rise of money' was also accompanied by a new 'evil', namely money criminality, and it is this that causes the wrongs in *Nyeuvont*. Money is the supreme vehicle for social mobility and it made power and status more accessible.<sup>11</sup> For a powerless bourgeoisie, financial fraud became a means of climbing in society, increasing the sense of social dislocation already keenly felt as a result of proto-capitalism, and represented in the text by Loosheynt and Practijke.<sup>12</sup>

## Satire, parody, irony and allegory

The *Nyeuvont* author's choice of specific literary tools to reinforce the impact of his personal view of the world does not appear to be arbitrary. Apart from comedy, presented mainly by the sot and marot, we encounter four devices: satire, parody, irony and allegory. I demonstrate how these tools contributed to the author's message of a new morality.

One of the most appropriate and concise definitions of the intentions of the author could be to term his work a 'satire of deceit'. The central issue around which the text revolves is the ridicule of deceit, whether through lies, money or appearance.<sup>13</sup> The author is scornful of those who pretend to be what they are not and the means by which they try to climb the social ladder. It is for this reason that the majority of the cast represents exactly those elements of society which he wants to denounce. People's behaviour in general also becomes the target of his satire. When Hardt van Waersegeen encourages the public to come and join the guild of Sinte Lorts, he calls on specific types of people and exaggerates his descriptions: 'Hoort ghi, meyskens, met uwen faelgekens . . . hoort, ghi ghesellekens . . . den aessack opden eers!' ('Listen, you girls with your wide veils, listen, you comrades with your purses hanging from your belt').<sup>14</sup> Next he targets married men and women who do what they should do at home elsewhere. He does not call everyone to join immediately; his first appeal is to certain groups, thus singling these out for specific criticism.

Another main object of satire in *Nyeuvont* is the way in which people dress. Dress at the time was crucial as it reflected one's status in society.<sup>15</sup>

The marot provides us with a direct satirical attack on those who hire their clothes in order to keep up with the latest fashion, thereby attempting to hide their lowly class: 'dat alte menich verrompen vuylvat met ghehuerde cleederen frisch en moy sijn' ('that many a wrinkled dustbin struts around in rented clothes').<sup>16</sup> The marot again criticizes those who try to give the impression of being richer than they are:



‘Sy en hebben naw een mijte oft een hemde aent dlijf tharen onproffijte van buten hem toonende al warent ionckers’ (‘They have hardly a penny to their name, but they dress like lords’), and this satirically stresses their pretence.<sup>17</sup>

The second literary device in *Nyeuvont* is parody. Parody, as is often claimed, is not always used derogatorily, as the parodied object is not necessarily the object under attack. This problem is highlighted in the play, where one could be forgiven for initially regarding the parodying of church practices by the characters as being anti-clerical. In *Nyeuvont* we encounter amongst others the deceptive elevation of Sinte Lorts, false indulgences and a parodic sermon. These practices are employed in the parody to exemplify the presence of deceit in the world and are not expressly intended to undermine the church. A clerical parody replaces a worldly one in order to reinforce the extent to which deceit permeates the world. *Nyeuvont* is therefore not a parody against the elevation of saints or their worship, nor against established religious ritual per se. It does, however, challenge the ineffectiveness of the church in maintaining morality, which expressed itself most blatantly in the use of church practices such as indulgence-selling in order to earn money which is evidence of the church’s open participation in the growing capitalist economy.

In *Nyeuvont* we find a parodic sermon where instead of announcing that he is going to read a passage from the Bible, Hardt van Waerseggen says that his story comes from ‘the book of Lueren’.<sup>18</sup> The word ‘Lueren’ would immediately have conjured up a less than trustworthy atmosphere as it means ‘to mislead’.<sup>19</sup> Similarly Hardt van Waerseggen uses the pattern of the introduction to a hagiography, when he stresses that Sinte Lorts comes from a ‘noble’ lineage: ‘Haer vader was machtich, gehieten Sueringe, ende haer moeder was edel ende hiet Lueringhe’ (‘Her father was powerful and was called Unpleasant Outcome and her mother was noble and was called Deceit’).<sup>20</sup> Again we are informed that Sinte Lorts stands for nothing but deceit, as the family names ‘Sueringe’ and ‘Lueringhe’ suggest.<sup>21</sup> We also find macaronic Latin in the parodic sermon, where Latin-like words have been invented to parody the fraudulent character of Sinte Lorts and her elevation: ‘Lexta, texta. Notoria in maniribus. Luera, Suera, scriptum in pampiribus.’<sup>22</sup> Again we encounter those words linked to falsehood and deceit, ‘Luera, Suera’, intended to inform the public of the deviousness of the *cassenaers* and their practices.

A contrast effect in *Nyeuvont* is obtained by the author’s subtle use of irony. Certain remarks made by some of the characters are humorous or mildly sarcastic and imply the exact opposite of what the words would

normally mean. In this way, the *Nyeuvont* author is also indicating to his audience what he regards as 'correct' behaviour.

Practijke's words stating that if you worship Sinte Lorts you will hardly ever experience poverty and wretchedness sum up the whole devious and deceitful line of thought behind the elevation of Sinte Lorts and they form a sharp ironic contrast with the words spoken by the *cas-senaer*, Cleyne Vreese: 'Men sal u al inscrijven! Wilt nabesaet gheven, so langhe als ghijt hebt' ('We will enrol you! Give a donation for as long as you can').<sup>23</sup> In other words; to be a member of the guild of Sinte Lorts you have to give as much as you can for as long as you can, which certainly will lead you to poverty!

By using irony the author tries to promote a new set of ethics. His ability to see the negative side of society enables him to show that the increasingly powerful mercantile ethos of money-lending and spending beyond one's means is not the way to a secure future. It will inevitably lead to poverty if a strong set of moral guidelines does not accompany it.<sup>24</sup>

Finally we will examine briefly the use of allegory. The characters have all been attributed a particular function which is demonstrated by the author's choice of names. These names are allegorical in nature and their apparent meanings are used as symbols of the deeper moral undertone in *Nyeuvont*.

The character who initiates the plan to elevate Sinte Lorts is Vrouw Nyeuvont. 'Nyeuvont' implies that she is the 'crafty inventor' of the plan, thereby paradoxically becoming the instigator of the *Nyeuvont* author's guide to a new morality.<sup>25</sup> We are introduced to her negative aspect in her monologue at the outset of the first scene when she speaks of the Wheel of Fortune. She herself predicts that she will be favoured by Fortune and that everyone will soon praise her. Here, and later in the play, we see that she is not prepared to wait for Fortune to come her way, but that she is going to take charge of her own destiny and use her 'crafty invention' to crank herself to the top of the Wheel, thereby initiating the action.

The allegorical names of the two lawyers, Loosheyt and Practijke, suggest respectively that they are 'misleading and false' and capable of 'wily practices'.<sup>26</sup> By means of Vrouw Nyeuvont's 'crafty invention' of the plan to elevate Sinte Lorts, the two will 'mislead' people with their 'wily practices' with the goal of making money at the expense of others.

The saint which the three plan to elevate is called Sinte Lorts. 'Lorts' comes from the verb 'lortsen', which means to deceive, and more particularly to deceive in trade.<sup>27</sup> Sinte Lorts's name can therefore be translated as 'Saint Deceit' and represents the crux of the whole text: the worship and practice of deceit.

Hardt van Waersegeen's name, which literally means that he has difficulty in telling the truth, stands for 'mendacity', and this becomes clear when we consider the falsehoods he tells the public about the guild of Sinte Lorts. Cleyn Vreese, his helper, has 'little fear', which points towards his shamelessness. Both allegorical names grasp the mentality which the author dislikes.

Finally we must turn to the character of Meest Elc, whose name implies that he represents 'Nearly Everybody'. Meest Elc does not fulfil the same function as Elckerlijc in the Middle Dutch morality, as he does not undergo a process of sin followed by repentance. This serves to emphasise the depth to which society had plunged and increases the acceptability of the author's message. Meest Elc and his sons, Die Sulcke (Some People), Veel Volks (Many People) and TCommuyt (the Townspeople), all stand for that section of the mercantile middle class who, by whatever means, set out to get rich quickly without any moral scruples.

The obvious failure of the old moral order is reflected by the blatantness of the characters' names, which flaunt their immorality publicly, once more underlining the fact that a new morality based on shame was required.

## Sot and marot

The lack of respect for the truth and of shame is further highlighted by the fool or sot, Schoon Tooch, and his bauble or marot, Quaet ende Waersegeen.<sup>28</sup> Schoon Tooch represents 'fine pretence' as he tries to cover up what is said by his marot, who, by implication of his name, speaks the 'evil truth'.<sup>29</sup>

Together the sot and marot symbolize the paradox of the wisdom of human folly and were used prolifically in literature and art towards the end of the Middle Ages and at the beginning of the early modern era. Around 1500 the fool and his bauble began to take on a highly moralizing stance and the figure of the fool became a commentator on and a 'mirror' of humanity.<sup>30</sup>

In contrast to the tradition in which fools were used to portray wisdom, Scoon Tooch falls for every deceit. Thus he says of the blatantly devious Meest Elc: 'Maer hi es ghetrouwe in sijn wandelinghe' ('He is trustworthy in his ways').<sup>31</sup> The sot's *alter ego*, Quaet ende Waersegeen, however, has here usurped the moralizing role which normally belonged to the fool in this period.<sup>32</sup> Thus Quaet ende Waersegeen is the instrument by which the author introduces the element of shame.

Indicative of their function is the crucial scene where the *cassenaers* start their recruitment drive for the guild of Sinte Lorts. The sot considers entering the guild and asks his marot's opinion, who subsequently 'whispers' in the sot's ear that she thinks that there are a lot of easy women in the guild, thus showing its dubious morality and embarrassing both the sot and the onlooker.<sup>33</sup> Instead of keeping the words of the marot to himself the sot repeats them, gets angry, threatens to hit the marot and curses the marot's mouth: 'God bedroef haer muylgat!'<sup>34</sup> The comical device deployed by the author in this instance heightens the sense of embarrassment and clearly indicates to the onlooker what direction he wants the development of a new moral code to take.

In *Nyeuvont* the marot plays a similar role to that of a feeder in a comical duo to which the sot can then react, and between them they represent and reveal common sense and reason. Their lines are often directly linked to the lines of the other characters, thus facilitating the transfer of their fool's wisdom into the main action. Throughout the play the sot and marot act therefore as the signposts employed by the *Nyeuvont* author to direct his audience towards the path of a new morality.

## The characters as instruments of class criticism

The primary concern of the *Nyeuvont* author as reflected in the text, was centred on the rapid social changes which were being wrought by the burgeoning proto-capitalist economy.<sup>35</sup> Living in or near Antwerp, he witnessed these changes at their most acute, for as Braudel noticed, coastal towns were more open to social mobility than the countryside and those therein.<sup>36</sup> This distrust towards social mobility is not reflected across the board. Indeed, our author is solely concerned with the petty bourgeoisie, a class which was created by the new economic pattern, and not with the extremely rich merchants who were moving up the social ladder.<sup>37</sup> Pirenne noted as early as 1922 that the latter did not form a disruption to the existing social hierarchy, as their offspring allowed themselves to be absorbed into the aristocracy by adopting an aristocratic lifestyle.<sup>38</sup> The characters are therefore utilized to illustrate what is fundamentally wrong with the class born out of capitalism.

The author's major challenge was how to portray the catalyst for the socio-economic changes in a manner which would be comprehensible to his future audiences. This led him to endow the character of Vrouw Nyeuvont with the abstract notion of proto-capitalist values. Seen in this light, her enigmatic figure becomes understandable, for if we take her to

mean the new economic principle, we may understand her role of stimulus, both for the plan to increase wealth, as well as for the moral disruption which accompanies this.

The author has divided the bourgeoisie into two halves: the lawyers who are the parasites and the rest, Meest Elc and his sons, who are parasites being preyed upon. The lack of moral distinction between both halves already indicates the author's feelings that the bourgeoisie as a class is rudderless. It is no coincidence that the *Nyeuvont* author selected two lawyers and a family of bankers to represent the bourgeoisie.<sup>39</sup> Both professions became prominent as a result of the growth of the proto-capitalist economy, without in most cases actually attaining power.<sup>40</sup> Both professions also made their fortune without involving themselves in manual labour.<sup>41</sup> They were, in the old terminology, usurers. As Aubailly mentions, 'avocats . . . ne songent que s'enricher' ('Lawyers dream only of getting rich').

Superficially, the presence of the *cassenaers* in the play seems to be almost accidental, and certainly out of place amongst the other characters. Hardt van Waerseggen and Cleyn Vreese are in all probability not members of the bourgeoisie. They are referred to as 'twee caelgen' ('men of the world') by Practijke, which may lead us to consider them as vagabonds.<sup>42</sup> What, then, are Hardt van Waerseggen and Cleyn Vreese doing in *Nyeuvont*? It seems to me that without their sardonic behaviour, and that of the sot and the marot, the audience would have been at a loss to understand the author's message. Their actions show the unacceptable in the seemingly acceptable facade of the petty bourgeoisie. The *Nyeuvont* author deploys his *cassenaers* on three different levels in order to clarify to his audience what it is that he wants to become the moral basis for the bourgeoisie. The first of these is the pretence at being respectable. This should have a real foundation and not just rest on appearance. As with everything in *Nyeuvont*, the author states the exact opposite of what he believes to be 'good': thus we find Hardt van Waerseggen urging pretentious people to join the guild of Sinte Lorts.

Just as they uncover the truth behind pretence, so the *cassenaers* mercilessly attack that other weakness of the bourgeoisie, sex. Adultery was the main sin against the new bourgeois ethos. This disrupted the essential productive unit and of course also made use of false pretence.<sup>43</sup>

The third area under scrutiny by the *cassenaers* is that of squandering money, which, unlike sexuality, did not have its antecedents in the Seven Deadly Sins of medieval Christian morality.<sup>44</sup> To spend too much money, or to spend beyond one's means, became a major offence against propriety. The *cassenaers* therefore invite everyone to do just this: 'Leent

ende borch, onthoudt dit vaste, ende en past opt betalen niet een jacke' ('Lend and borrow, remember this well, and don't give a toss about repaying it').<sup>45</sup>

A last and all-encompassing attack on the initiator of all this change can be found at the end of the text. It portrays Vrouw Nyeuvont and the lawyers showing a complete disdain for the victims of the new economic system: 'Vrou Nyeuvont . . . seyt: Hach hach hay! Dan selense naect ende bijstier werden' ('Then they'll just have to be broke').<sup>46</sup> Telling also is the remark made by Practijke, who says that these people are without shame, a last indication of the author's preferred foundation for the new moral order.<sup>47</sup>

Ultimately, as we have seen, this text is one of paradox: the evil *cassenaers* indicating the way to salvation; an apparent attack on the church, forming the basis of a new moral code which does not want to do without the church; an attack on capitalism without a wish to abolish it and finally the apparent absence of a solution which is of course to be found in the hidden meaning of the text. *Van Nyeuvont, Loosheynt ende Practike*, long classified by many as just another anti-clerical text, or even as obscure, can, with paradox as a key, be interpreted as an attempt to create order in the confused world of a *fin-de-siècle* new bourgeoisie.

## The Bible in modern Dutch fiction

Jaap Goedegebuure

Reading the fourth chapter of Genesis, which contains the well-known story of Cain and Abel, Samuel Hamilton gives the following comment: 'Here we are – this oldest story. If it troubles us it must be that we find the trouble in ourselves.' For me these words represent the heart of reading and interpreting, writing and rewriting. Whenever we are confronted with the old stories – biblical, mythological, fairy tales – our reactions cannot be limited to aesthetic judgements. We are impressed or even moved by them. We feel the urge to search in our minds for the real causes of our admiration, emotions, trouble. And sometimes we not only react by commenting, but also by composing another story according to the ancient pattern.

Some readers may have recognized Samuel Hamilton. He is not a historical figure, but a fictional character, born in the imagination of John Steinbeck, who gave him an important role in *East of Eden*, the great American novel which was inspired by the story of Cain and Abel. Although he never uses the term, Samuel Hamilton treats 'the oldest story' as a myth, that is to say as an archetypal narrative which embodies fundamental human experiences. As an archetype in the Jungian sense of the word it lends itself to several kinds of changes and transformations. In this case, the archetypal character can be demonstrated by pointing out that the theme of one twin brother slaughtering the other not only presents itself in Genesis but also in the tale of Rome's origins (the Romulus and Remus episode) and in the ancient Greek myth of Oedipus' sons Eteocles and Polynices, who both died while contesting the rulership of Thebes.

It is also clear that the motif of rivalry, inherent in the Cain and Abel theme, is a *leitmotiv* in the Old Testament: Esau and Jacob, Joseph and his brothers and so forth. It is important to stress that an archetypal story like this one often becomes a model within the framework of a cycle of mythological narratives. The same remark could be made with respect to the motif of two women, one good, the other morally depraved. An important source of this contrastive pair is the creation myth underlying the first chapters of Genesis. In this apocryphal story Adam, the first man, has two wives, Eve and Lilith. They represent the standard pair of mother and whore, which has played an important role in Western literature from the Middle Ages until the present day. The same goes for the rival brothers, as Ricardo Quinones demonstrated in his rich and inspiring study *Changes of Cain* (1991).<sup>1</sup> As a matter of fact, Steinbeck integrated both themes in *East of Eden*.

I would like to argue that even though modern literature has undergone a process of secularization during the last two centuries, the Bible has remained a very rich source for poets and novelists, not only because of its stylistic and rhetorical aspects, as Northrop Frye amply illustrated in *The Great Code* and *Words with Power*, but also as a set of narrative models.<sup>2</sup> Within the theoretical framework of intertextuality it is a challenging and stimulating task for literary critics to unravel biblical threads in post-Christian fiction.<sup>3</sup> I shall not go into the question of why the Bible has left such deep traces up to the present day especially in Dutch literature. Let me just say that the Protestant dominance in Dutch culture, with its institutionalized practice of reading the Bible every day, not only in church but also in the family circle and at school, is an important factor. Although this practice is outdated and on the way out, its influence in terms of literacy can still be seen. With one exception, the contemporary Dutch writers that I am discussing here all grew up in a Protestant environment. And even though most of them left the church, they stuck to the first stories they had been confronted with.

A case in point is an essay written by Jan Wolkers, who confessed that in his training as a writer he strongly depended on the Bible, not only in a rhetorical but also in a psychological sense. It is also Jan Wolkers whose work presents a few interesting examples of the transformation of the Cain and Abel theme. In his novels *Kort Amerikaans*<sup>4</sup> and *Terug naar Oegstgeest*,<sup>5</sup> and in some of his short stories, the young hero feels a strong sense of guilt after the death of his elder brother. This guilt has to do not only with the fact that this brother was seen as a rival, someone who is loved far more by the father than the hero is, and who operates more successfully than he does, but also with a



psychological reaction mentioned by Elias Canetti in his impressive study *Crowds and Power*: the death of someone close to us always leaves us with feelings of guilt and with a strong resentment.<sup>6</sup> These ambiguous and mixed emotions constitute a sort of subtext to the archetypal myth of one brother killing the other. Murder is, in a sense, a rationalization of an irrational and hardly explicable guilt. We see Wolkers implicitly commenting on and interpreting the original story, which is integrated in his novels by the motif of the mark of Cain: Erik van Poelgeest in *Kort Amerikaans* and Jan in the autobiographical novel *Terug naar Oegstgeest* had their foreheads burnt during their childhood and they feel the stigma as a sign of doom and guilt.

The intertextual relationship between the rewritten version and the archetypal story always has this function of re-interpretation; I shall illustrate this with reference to some other Dutch novels. But before doing so, I should like to make some preliminary remarks on intertextuality as a problem of biblical interpretation.

What are the criteria that allow us to interpret a fictional text as a transformation of a biblical text? From a strict and somewhat old-fashioned perspective we need textual data to corroborate the observed or supposed relationship between the *architext* and the *phenotext*.<sup>7</sup> To give a clear example: the discussion about the fourth chapter of Genesis, which is a crucial episode in Steinbeck's *East of Eden*, serves as an indication of intertextual relationship. Clues which were given at an earlier stage, such as the names of the characters (in several generations the initials of the two sons are A and C) and their actions are validated by the reference to the original Cain and Abel story.

Of course, there are many other examples of fictional prose without such explicit indications. Clues are implied in the text or result from projection by the reader. To illustrate this last type of intertextuality, I shall quote a passage from Connie Palmen's best-selling novel *De wetten*.<sup>8</sup> Marie Deniet, the heroine of the novel, who fights her way up in society and uses men as her stepping stones, slips into an erotic relationship with a defrocked priest (who still remains a priest; an ordination is not undone by leaving the church, marrying or whatever; even a satanist can be a priest, providing he has taken his vows). The relevant passage reads as follows:

I kneel down in front of him and undo his shoelaces, sit him down on the edge of the bed and take off his shoes and then his socks. One after the other, I take his feet into my hands, rub the instep, knead the soles, slip my tongue between his toes, lick his feet clean.

Although there is no explicit reference to the seventh chapter of the gospel of Luke, the connection can be made by association. Marie can be seen as a transformation of the anonymous woman (often identified with Marie's namesake Mary Magdalene) who, having wept over Jesus' feet, dries them with her hair and anoints them. Clemens Brandt still represents Christ, not only as a priest but also as a beloved idol. Although such an interpretation can be stimulated by knowledge of biblical texts, it is based on the activity of the reader who associates two narrative patterns.

In modern fiction this latter type of intertextual relationship between a narrative text and a biblical text is dominant, although in many cases there are at least one or two clues. To give two examples: in Doeschka Meijsing's novel *De beproeving* and Frans Kellendonk's story 'Buitenlandse dienst' the names of the main characters, Jonah and Job, refer to the two books of the Old Testament respectively. Additional references can be found in literal or slightly altered quotations from these books. The problem, of course, is that a reader has to be aware of the reference in order to interpret the information within an intertextual framework. Even well-educated and experienced readers can overlook these clues. In an elaborate essay on Kellendonk's novel *Mystiek lichaam*, Ernst van Alphen does notice the fact that certain sentences are printed in italics, but not that they are quotations from the Petrus Canisius translation of the book of Isaiah.<sup>9</sup> In 'Buitenlandse dienst' one sentence is foregrounded in the same way; in the final analysis it is also a quotation from the seventh chapter of Job. These few clues prove to be a solid basis for an interpretation which reads the story as a comment on the biblical book. Over the years I have read this story with several groups of students and there was never anyone who followed the trace leading from Kellendonk's text to the Bible. This of course has to do with decreasing literacy as far as the Bible is concerned. I am putting this as neutrally as possible, in order to avoid taking the moral stance from which critics such as Alan Bloom and George Steiner evaluate this situation.

In the second section of this chapter I concentrate on two different examples of modern Dutch novels that refer to biblical texts and employ them as subtexts which enable author and reader to interpret the story as the transformation of a myth.

My first example is Gerrit Krol's short novel *De Hagemiejertjes* (1990).<sup>10</sup> At first glance there is nothing biblical about this story. It deals with the modernization of a small town in Groningen, in the north-east of the country, near the German border. The city council dreams of reshaping Grootzijl into a futuristic megalopolis and is encouraged to do

so by property developers, architects and town planners. Some of these foreigners share the bed of Willeke Hagemeijer, the local *femme fatale*. However, in the end she and her husband are the only winners in a game with many losers. The greatest loss is to the city of Grootzijl itself: the new buildings remain empty and useless, the harbour becomes silted up, the municipal budgets are in disarray.

Again the question can be asked: what has this story got to do with the Bible? There is at least one reference to a half-historical, half-mythical background. Speaking of Grootzijl's fall, the narrator puts things into perspective: 'Many big cities came to an end. Ashdod, Nineveh, Troy, Jericho.' More significant is the novel's epigraph, taken from Joshua 2:1–6:27. This reference takes us to the sixth book of the Old Testament, which contains the first episode in the story of the conquest of the Promised Land by the Jewish people: the siege and fall of Jericho, one of the towns listed by the narrator. An important role in this biblical story is played by the whore Rahab. As a sort of quisling *avant la lettre* she hides two Jewish spies who have come into the city of Jericho to conduct some investigations. As a reward her life and the lives of her family are saved.

In the light of this reference Willeke Hagemeijer can be interpreted as a transformation of Rahab. The fact that she sleeps with intruding strangers (the planners and developers) labels her as the 'stadspoes', a euphemism for 'city whore'. Just like Rahab she is the only resident of Grootzijl to triumph. In the end she proudly walks along the streets of Grootzijl, with her husband Frank Hagemeijer, the city's new mayor, and her two healthy children. In her own way she has contributed to Grootzijl's ruin, as Rahab contributed to Jericho's fall.

This may sound like a negative appreciation, but there is another way to look at Willeke's performance. Again we can compare her with her role model Rahab, not only from a biblical perspective but in a broader mythical framework. The name Rahab is given not only to this Canaanite woman, but also to a Phoenician fertility goddess, whose attribute is a red cord, the same thing which serves as a means of escape to the two Jewish spies and as a token of recognition enabling the God of Israel to save Rahab's house and family from destruction. In her quality of shameless hussy and modern fertility goddess Willeke Hagemeijer is the personification of life continuing, of nature living on when all culture has vanished. It is significant that Krol has situated the end of his novel in a future in which the present seems unimportant.

Here we see how old myths can control the interpretation of a modern novel. A question worth asking is whether all the implications of the intertextual framework are intended by the author. From an essay on the

art of writing ('Meesters over tijd') we know that Krol did indeed want to write a new version of the Jericho myth.<sup>11</sup> He was probably not aware of the archaic intertext of the Phoenician goddess included in the chapters of Joshua from which he took his inspiration. In his transformation Krol turns one of the intentions of the genotext upside down. The fertility goddess Rahab, whom the Jews called a whore, is subjugated by the God of Israel, just as Jericho is subjugated. Krol rehabilitates female sexuality, which was discredited by the patriarchal God of the Old Testament.

The deconstruction of old myths by transforming them into a new literary text is an important feature in the work of Frans Kellendonk. All of his narratives are grafted upon old stories, sagas, canonized genres and so on. His first novel, *Bouwval* (1977), played with the family saga in the tradition of the nineteenth century. His second novel, *De nietsnut* (1979), is a sort of *Hamlet* revisited. In *Letter en Geest* (1982) he links a famous quotation from St Paul's second epistle to the Corinthians ('The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life') to the theme of the delusive nature of reality and the isolation within a state of mind conditioned by language and literature. In this way, his work increasingly became a criticism of modern civilization. The same holds true for his story 'Buitenlandse dienst', mentioned earlier.

For the moment I would like to concentrate on his last novel, *Mystiek lichaam* (1986).<sup>12</sup> Once again there is a great difference between the surface-story and all the intertextual implications of the biblical framework. We are confronted with a father and two grown-up children, all of whom are on their own. Old Gijsselhart is a widower, the daughter, Magda, is left by her lover after she has become pregnant and Leendert, the Prodigal Son, has come home after his boyfriend has died of Aids. This Unholy Trinity represents the postmodern family, split up, unbalanced, frustrated, unhappy, morally disorientated now that faith and ideologies are lacking.

There is a productive antithesis between the present situation represented in the plot and the ideal world which is symbolized in biblical myths. A good example is the rainbow, according to Genesis 9 the expression of God's new covenant with mankind. In *Mystiek lichaam* the rainbow becomes an allegorical image of the continuity and coherence which is painfully lacking in modern society, postulated by people who believe in the unity of heaven and earth. The One and Only Rainbow which God created for Noah is literally deconstructed when Leendert sees numberless rainbows in the sprinklers on the lawns. There is no single and unique Truth, but numberless points of view, which move while we are passing by.

As a result of the fragmentation of the mystical body, spiritual values have had to give way to material ones. Father and son Gijsselhart are confronted with this, each in their own way. Gijsselhart senior experiences an alternative form of mysticism by considering money as something of religious value, as 'the blood of the social body'. The sacraments undergo a metamorphosis that is in accordance with this. For a proper understanding of the following quotation, it should be pointed out that the Dutch words for 'debt' and 'guilt' are identical (*schuld*), as are the words for 'atonement' and 'penalty/fine' (*boete*) and 'pity' and 'sin' (*zonde*). One hardly needs to point out that *Mystiek lichaam* is a highly ambiguous novel.

Guilt, atonement, remission – for him it was evident that these terms belonged just as much to bookkeeping as to the confessional box. His million was his salvation, the thing was to keep it intact. Wasting money was a sin, just as people say. The Inland Revenue was the original sin. . . . He was guiltless as a newborn child, thanks to taxes. (pp. 16–17)<sup>13</sup>

Although Leendert is less eager for money than his father, for him, too, the material has taken the place of the spiritual. An expert in the field of modern visual art, he has taken up residence in Manhattan, the world's financial centre. On this 'rock where pride had built its church' (an allusion to Jesus' promise to Peter that he is the rock on which the church will be founded) artistic taste is a rare commodity which well-to-do collectors have contracted out to money-grabbing art dealers. The value of a painting is judged by its price, which in turn depends on whether or not it is fiscally deductible.

Magda's return to her father's house, the opening scene of the novel, is one of the many mirror images in which the lost ideal of the Christian community appears in the form of a caricature. Very appropriately, therefore, the first part is called 'Valse Lente' (False/Phoney/Nasty Spring). It is Easter, the church festival at which Jesus' resurrection from the dead is commemorated. At the Garden of Thorns Magda keeps watch as if she were a sculpted angel at the entrance of a graveyard. Gijsselbert himself observes her from afar, and compares his house to a tomb. Tonia, a passing neighbour, refers to the house as a white sepulchre, thus repeating the words used by Jesus to rebuke the scribes. To rouse her father from his sleep, Magda three times utters the cry 'Lamzak' ('lazy sod'), which is reminiscent of the formula used by Jesus when raising Lazarus, resting in his grave, from the dead: 'Lazarus, come forth'. Such

allusions to originally biblical texts lend stylistic and thematic support to the insight that not only the religious community but also religious experience – liturgy, dogmas, sacraments, sacred texts and so on – have been eroded and fossilized. In the words used to express this insight, irony not infrequently turns into sarcasm. When the bride and groom, Scott and Liliane, are together with their three special guests, the narrator comes up with the expression ‘Tobias’ Night’, thus referring to the biblical character who, in order to drive out an evil spirit, wanted to remain chaste the first three nights of his marriage. In this case, however, it is not a matter of chastity, but of the revulsion felt by the homosexual Scott when it comes to consummating his marriage.

The ironic treatment of Bible and liturgy is only one part of the picture. Kellendonk’s way of weaving quotations from the Old and the New Testament into the structure of his novel is in the vein of an established tradition of Bible exegesis known since the early Christian period as typology. This is a way of reading and interpreting aimed at coherence, in which the (so-called) ‘types’ or ‘figurae’ form a network of meaningful analogies. Let me give an example to illustrate this: The most important type of ‘liberation’ in the Bible occurs in the Old Testament stories about Noah’s Ark, Abraham’s sacrifice, the exodus of the Jewish people from Egypt and so on, and culminates in the passion of Christ. Every type has its own anti-type. If Adam is type, Christ is anti-type. Eve is the opposite of Mary, there is the earthly versus the heavenly Jerusalem, the fall of man versus death on the cross, Creation versus the Last Judgement.

The characters, situations, motifs, symbols, allusions and the like occurring in *Mystiek lichaam* can be described in terms of the system of the exegetic doctrine of types. A number of examples of this have already been given above. Some additional examples will illustrate the idea in more depth. At some point Gijssels says to Magda that she must be a child of the devil. This makes her the anti-type of the Virgin Mary, who, according to Catholic doctrine, was conceived without original sin and ‘specially favoured by God’. In her letter to Leendert, Magda herself admits that she is anything but pure in spirit and conscience. In it she confesses that she has been pregnant before, but had an abortion. Her second pregnancy is penance for the first. ‘There was only one way to undo my sin and once I knew this, I also knew what the name of my ghost child would have to be, because he had been a foreshadowing, paving the way for my real and only-begotten child, rendering it necessary and inevitable’ (p. 81). The name that is not mentioned here is of course that of John, after the New Testament prophet heralding the coming of Christ. Just how far Victor is seen

as the anti-type of the Saviour becomes apparent in the words from Simeon's hymn which Leendert repeats and parodies: 'Show me the fruits of your envy, Magda, the good you have done to the world, that light for the heathens, and then let your servant go in peace' (p. 123). After the birth of his grandson Victor, Gijsselhart feels reborn as a 'wonderful, counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace', echoing qualities ascribed by the prophet Isaiah to the coming Messiah.

The type/anti-type framework, which in the case of *Mystiek lichaam* can be used as a frame of interpretation, also provides a fruitful tool for arriving at a possible explanation for the oppositions that determine the content of this novel. These oppositions can be labelled using cultural-historical pairs of concepts that are as well known as they are loaded: life/art, nature/culture, earth/heaven and life/death. On the basis of the biblical references each of these can be fitted into the typological framework.

*Mystiek lichaam* is not so much a transformation of the mythical framework of the themes and motifs contained in the Bible, as a travesty, a radical change which substitutes the opposite values for the original ones. Literary theory has coined a phrase for this kind of travesty. Its name is parody. Literary theoreticians, such as Gérard Genette, consider parody as a specific device by which intertextuality manifests itself.<sup>14</sup> The relationship between architext and phenotext cannot be described in terms of epigonism or influence; it is always characterized by a form of change, which varies from slight alteration to violation of the originally intended meaning. *Mystiek lichaam* can be placed on the extreme end of the scale. In the way it quotes and alludes to the Scriptures it is a very subversive text.

Some people may find it tragic or ironic that the traditions of the past can only stay alive as caricatures. Especially for them I should like to underline the affinity between the original meaning of the Latin word *traditio*, which means not only 'survival' but also 'surrender', often as a result of treason. 'He who commits treason is the most faithful and pious disciple', the nineteenth-century German author and philosopher Friedrich Hebbel said of the biblical anti-hero Judas Iscariot. Frans Kellendonk, who characterized himself as 'an unbelieving believer', was the postmodern author *par excellence*. He honoured the Great Tradition by betraying, that is to say transforming it. In this respect his work is a representative example of the way the Bible survives in modern fiction.

## The antiquity of the Dutch language: Renaissance theories on the language of Paradise

Henri A. Krop

Many Dutch humanists – Stevin, Grotius, Geulincx, Hooft, Van Beverwijck, Van Leeuwenhoek, Leeghwater – were convinced of the great antiquity of the Dutch language, and of its decisive influence on other languages. As Dijksterhuis has observed, their views on this matter originated in the ‘fantastic’ theories of the Antwerp physician Johannes Goropius Becanus (1518–72),<sup>1</sup> according to whom the language of the Low Countries surpasses all other tongues in perfection and antiquity.<sup>2</sup> The popular seventeenth-century Dutch writer Gerbrandt Bredero praised him for calling the Dutch language (*ons eijghen moederstael*) an originator of other languages (*een taelmoeder*),<sup>3</sup> and in the first non-Latin Dutch grammar, published in 1584, the authors acknowledged that it was Becanus who had inspired them.<sup>4</sup> Although Becanus was highly esteemed in his own day, since the eighteenth century he had been ranked simply as an eccentric.<sup>5</sup> The Dutch preacher and linguist Carolus Tuinman (1659–1728) criticized him for basing his theories on ‘unfounded presuppositions and vague surmises’.<sup>6</sup> Kooiman, at the end of the nineteenth century, was of the opinion that it was ‘evident that this voluminous work is in fact a series of absurdities’.<sup>7</sup> In his *Nouveaux essais* (1714), Leibniz derives from Becanus’s second name Goropius the verb to ‘goropise’, that is to say, to make use of ‘queer and often ridiculous etymologies’.<sup>8</sup> Leibniz does add, however, that ‘his thesis that the Dutch language, which he calls Cimbrian, has the same root as Hebrew, and retains even more aspects of the original tongue, is not completely wrong.’ This praise is a faint echo of Becanus’s days of glory, but it is also evidence that Leibniz and Becanus have more in common than might at first be expected.



The sixteenth century saw the publication in the Netherlands of the first grammars, dictionaries, manuals of orthography and translations of the philosophical works of classical antiquity.<sup>9</sup> Dutch was to become an instrument for the arts and the sciences. Modern scholars have called attention to the merits of Simon Stevin in developing a Dutch scientific vocabulary.<sup>10</sup> His efforts, together with those of Coornhert and Spiegel, in creating a pure and efficient Dutch are a clear indication of a growing self-consciousness in the Low Countries. This humanist movement for making Dutch a medium of scholarly culture was by no means primarily philosophical. It was, however, based on certain linguistic conceptions worked out by Becanus, which gave it coherence and provided it with the power to convince. In this chapter I show that it was not eccentric for Becanus to maintain that Dutch is the most perfect language. I do so firstly by discussing his argument for the antiquity of the Dutch language, and secondly by examining his philosophical presuppositions concerning the existence of an ideal language. In the third section I outline the aftermath of Becanus's theories during the seventeenth century, and pay particular attention to analysing the reception of his ideas by Heidanus.

## The antiquity of the Dutch language

Becanus is the Latinized form of Jan van Gorp, who was born in Hilvarenbeek in 1518, studied medicine and philosophy and died in 1572.<sup>11</sup> After wandering all over Europe, he established himself at Antwerp and became personal physician to Philip II. In 1569 he published his *Origines Antwerpianae, sive Cimmericorum* ... at the printing house of Plantijn. It is a voluminous work, dedicated to Becanus's employer, who is praised on account of his benevolent and paternal manner of governing, which Becanus sees as 'quite the opposite of tyranny, if we take Plato and right reason into consideration'.<sup>12</sup> Philip II is a prince indeed, since he combines knowledge of many things with power and determination, and a striving for the common good. His royal majesty is pre-eminent not only through the fact that in the Antwerp polyglot Bible he shows himself to be unwilling to restrict himself to the Latin and Greek versions, but also through his founding of the *Academia Complutensis*, the University of Madrid. The validity of the first of these criteria of a true prince is evident from the Dutch word *koning* (king), since in the first syllable we find the word *kennis* (knowledge).<sup>13</sup>

Among other things, the aim of the *Origines Antwerpianae* is to trace the origin of Antwerp back to the golden age, that is to Paradise.<sup>14</sup>

Becanus drew his primary proof from history. Such an argument is only possible if one starts from the presupposition, supported by the Bible, that there was an initial linguistic unity which has been lost, that there is, so to speak, a genealogical history of languages. Although in this historical process the languages have changed, it is frequently the case that one language or another is exempt from the general rule.<sup>15</sup> According to Becanus, the Dutch, and more particularly the inhabitants of Antwerp, are directly descended from the patriarchs. Antwerp was founded by the Atuatiars. According to Caesar, the Atuatiars were descended from the Cimbres, a Nordic people who formerly lived in Jutland.<sup>16</sup> The Cimbres are identical with Cimmerii or Combres, a people mentioned by Homer in the *Odyssey*, who originated from a region near the Black Sea. According to Becanus, this nation received its name from Cimen or Gomer, the eldest son of Japhet.<sup>17</sup> The inhabitants of Antwerp were therefore descended directly from the patriarch Noah. It was this Old Testament figure who had taught the Cimbres the language of Paradise. This had been handed down to the inhabitants of Antwerp unaltered. Since their forefathers had not helped with the construction of the tower of Babel, they had escaped the punishment meted out to those proud builders: they were not dispersed throughout the world as a result of the corruption of the original language.<sup>18</sup>

The idea of an original language almost completely lost as a result of the erection of the tower of Babel was not only current among linguists. Erasmus, in his *Apotheosis Capnionis*, which he wrote in honour of Reuchlin, expressed his gratefulness for the labours this Hebrew scholar had undertaken in unravelling the secrets of the divine language. Just as the apostles, inspired by the Holy Ghost, preached the gospel to all the nations of the world, so the knowledge of Hebrew will give us a better understanding of God's word. By regaining knowledge of that sacred language, the sin of the *impia turris* of Babel will be washed away. The confusion of languages will come to an end, and mankind will once again bear the marks of being the image of God. It is by this means that man recovers his original knowledge of God and of the creation. Consequently, the hypothesis of an original language also had religious and philosophical connotations.<sup>19</sup>

According to Becanus, scholars had failed to notice the historical fact of the antiquity and the purity of the Dutch language because they had considered it to be vulgar and underdeveloped. With the help of Mercurius, however, he had been able to trace the historical connections and acquire the divine philosophy and theology once possessed by the Cimbres.<sup>20</sup> Speculation of this kind about the original wisdom which had

been lost in the course of history is to be found in the works of many of the humanists. Francis Bacon, for example, in *Of the Wisdom of the Ancients* (1609), tried to reconstruct the primeval insights he regarded as being embedded in the Greek and Egyptian myths. The Dutch mathematician Stevin refers to the Age of Wisdom in which men were cognisant of the unchanging essences of things.<sup>21</sup>

Becanus goes on to put forward etymological arguments. He notes that according to some of the secondary literature, the antiquity of the Dutch language is apparent from the fact that the word *Duyts* is the same as *Douts*, and that this word consists of the more basic words *de* and *oudste*.<sup>22</sup> This view is, of course, incorrect. According to Becanus the Dutch tongue derives its name from its ‘architect’. His argument for this is somewhat complicated. He maintains that the Germans are descended from the biblical figure Askenaz, son of Gomer. This was also Melanchthon’s view, but Becanus rejects Melanchthon’s etymology,<sup>23</sup> and maintains that the name gives expression to the brutal character of Askenaz, since it enshrines the idea that a man is acting like a falcon.<sup>24</sup> After the dispersion of the languages, the Germans regarded him as the founder of theirs, and called him Man. According to Tacitus, Tuiscon was Askenaz’s father, and this is the Germanic equivalent of Gomer. This identification is already suggested by Melanchthon, who says in his comments on Tacitus’ *Germania* that Tuisco is Gomer and ‘the Tuiscones are etymologically *die Ascanes*, for the “T” refers to the article’.<sup>25</sup> The name Tuiscon derives from Thoutsson [the + eldest + son] for he is the eldest son of Japhet. So, ‘the name of our language Thouts, Thuyts, or with a “middle”<sup>26</sup> letter Douts or Duyts, refers to the universal language Gomer spoke, and all who use it are called Thoutsen or *Teutones*.’ Although this etymology is outlined in only a few sentences, it displays an intriguing intermingling of the Bible, Greek mythology and classical historiography.<sup>27</sup>

At that time another explanation of Duits, the name of the language, was that ‘on account of the clarity and distinctness with which this perfect language conveys our thoughts, it is quite rightly called clarity [*duidelijkheid*], Duits’.<sup>28</sup> This quotation is from the appendix to a seventeenth-century translation of the *Elements* of Euclid, in which there is a discussion of the superiority of the language of the Low Countries. According to Becanus, the meaning of all kinds of biblical names only becomes clear in a Dutch context: Noah (Noach), for example, is a contraction of *noot* (need) and *acht* (pay attention to). This saviour of mankind got his name from having given thought to the troubles of his generation and having built the ark.<sup>29</sup> Adam, who knew the nature and properties of all things, named them and so gave expression to their

essence. It is important to note that in this linguistic theory words are originally the proper names of things.<sup>30</sup> The language of Adam revealed divine things and the secrets of nature in such a way that all true philosophers are sure to be amazed by it.

Although Becanus does not regard Hebrew as the first language, he does think that there are in it remnants of the tongue of Adam. In the biblical names in particular, many divine prophecies lie hidden. One of his examples is the name Adam. In Dutch *hat*, pronounced with a long vowel, means hatred, and is sometimes pronounced without aspiration. *Dam*, literally, means barrier holding back water. In Dutch, moreover, the ‘t’ is sometimes assimilated to the ‘d’. Consequently, the secret message hidden in the name *Adam [h]at/dam* is that he was a barrier against hatred. That is why the serpent chose his wife, the weaker vessel, to introduce hatred into the world.<sup>31</sup> Even the name Babel is only intelligible to a Dutch-speaker: ‘for to babble *b[r]a[h]belen* means to speak indistinctly, and in an unintelligible and unarticulated manner’.<sup>32</sup> Such etymologies, based as they are on the sound of letters, were usual until well into the eighteenth century. For example, in the essay in which Leibniz ridicules Becanus, he also states that river names such as Rhine, Ruhr, Rhone, as well as other German words such as *rauben*, *Radt* and *rauschen* (rustle) – a verb, which Leibniz regards as having no good French equivalent – are etymologically related, and that this is apparent from the fact that they all begin with an ‘r’. This was a letter which was used instinctively by the ancient Celts and Germans at the beginning of words, in order to denote a violent movement or forceful sound, a sound comparable to that produced by pronouncing the letter ‘r’.<sup>33</sup> According to Leibniz, such words have a natural meaning and denote these things on account of their sound. Just as Rhine is a suitable name for a river because the R-sound at the beginning of it makes us think of a mighty flowing of water, so *rauschen* is appropriate for the rustling of a silk dress or of the leaves of a tree when moved by the wind. In more philosophical terms: words are not arbitrary signs, but the natural images of the things they signify. The relation of such images to the thing represented is comparable with the relation between a lifelike statue or portrait and the person who is depicted. This kind of speculation derives from antiquity and was also common in the Middle Ages. Henry of Ghent (1225–80), for example, comments extensively upon it in his *Summa questionum ordinariam* a. 73 q. 1. The classical tradition knew of two different theories concerning the origin of language: an idealist approach, which is to be found in St Augustine’s *De dialectica*, and a materialist approach. According to the first of these theories,

words were imitations of natural phenomena.<sup>34</sup> St Augustine defined a word as a sign of a thing. A sign is an instrument and presents the thing in the outside world to the mind. This requires that there should be a certain intrinsic relation between the word and the thing. According to the Stoics – St Augustine doubts the universality of their claims – if one traces the genealogy of words, one arrives at some similarity between the sound of the word and the thing itself: for example, *hinnitus equorum* (the whinnying of a horse), *turbarum clangor* (the blare of trumpets), etc. In things which do not make sounds, touch will be the basis of the similarity: for example, *lene* (smoothly) has a smooth sound, and *crux* (cross) a rough sound. From these ‘primal words’ the other words of a language are formed. Words are formed on account of the similarity between things. For example, legs are called *crura*, because their length and sturdiness are comparable to the length and firmness of a *crux* (cross). A *piscina* (a swimming pool) has its name because it resembles a fish pond. Contrast can also play a part: for example, *bellum* (war), derives from its opposite *bellus* (pretty) and *foedus* (alliance) from *foeda* (dishonourable). Another aspect of this theory, as seen in Leibniz, above, is the meaning of the individual letters. ‘No one will deny that syllables in which the letter “v” functions as a consonant, produce a dense and powerful kind of sound’: for example, *vis* (power), *vulnus* (wound), *vomis* (ploughshare), etc.<sup>35</sup>

In the sixteenth century the art of etymology, which resulted from such an idealistic theory of the origin of language, was sometimes treated with disrespect. Although Lipsius, for example, shares the concept of the language of Paradise, he regards the search for the origin of words as a waste of time: *ad meliora ad graviora eamus*.<sup>36</sup> In his *Colloquia* Erasmus criticizes those etymologists who discuss seriously the origin of some sounds which are not even a word. It seems at the first sight that Becanus’s etymology is only a form of ‘goropising’ – neither the principles nor the method are ever discussed, and his presuppositions never become apparent. After discussing some twenty etymologies, Frederickx comments that ‘this is all so captious that the reader asks himself if Goropius ... himself believed it all’.<sup>37</sup> At first sight this bewilderment seems justified, for nowhere does Becanus make explicit his system of what is phonetically comparable, and he never lays down specific rules concerning what is admissible.<sup>38</sup> From his practice, however, it appears that he regarded words as a combination of intrinsically meaningful elements. This presupposition of the intelligibility of the element, that is to say letters and syllables, is at the same time a criterion for judging the validity of etymologies. What is more, as Nabord has argued in his analysis of

the etymologies provided in the first hundred pages of the *Hermathena*, Becanus uses the four rules employed by Plato in the *Cratylus*: insertion and addition of letters, deletion, replacement and inversion. Here are some of his examples:

<i>Insertion</i> mutus (Latin) mino (Latin) horos (Greek) ordo (Latin)	muit (Dutch) mute men (Dutch) to drive animals hort (Dutch) belonging to someone or (Dutch) beginning
<i>Deletion</i> Aristoteles fer (beautiful Eng.) Athana magal (Arab.)	aristos + telos (he who brings all to the best end) fier (Dutch) proud hat het ana (Dutch) has it Ana mag hal (Dutch) a big and roomy house
<i>Replacement</i> vinum qui ager mela (sheep Greek)	wijn (Dutch) wine wien (Dutch) who acker (Dutch) land maal (Dutch) meal
<i>Inversion</i> barg (mountain Dut) iet (Dut) as (food Dut) an (at Dut)	grab (ditch Dutch) ti (Greek) something sa (sow Dutch) na (after Dutch)

Although half a century later Rodornius Schieckius followed basically the same procedures of etymologizing, in the seventeenth century these ‘Platonic’ rules were generally regarded as being too liberal, since they enabled any language to be compared with any another. Notwithstanding this criticism, it should be observed that at that time they were followed by most authors.<sup>39</sup> The power to convince, however, derives from a presupposition: the existence of an ideal language which reflects our thought perfectly.

## The ideal language

In his *Works*, published posthumously in 1590, Becanus returns to the subject of the antiquity of the Netherlands and of the Dutch language.

The first part of the book, entitled *Hermathena*, contains a great number of etymologies. For example, the Dutch word *aesem* or *aesum*, which is the origin of the Latin *anima*, derives from *aes* (food), because *aesum* (breath) is the food of the voice.<sup>40</sup> The Dutch word *letter*, which is the origin of the Latin *littera*, derives from *lid* (limb, member) and the article *der* (the), the reason being that a letter is a member of a word.<sup>41</sup> The name given to the book refers to those Greek statues in which the heads of both Athene and Hermes are placed on one pedestal. Athene is the goddess of wisdom, Hermes the god of interpreters. According to Becanus, this is obvious from the name Hermes, which is derived from the Greek *hermeneuo* (to explain or interpret). Together, therefore, they form a mighty symbol of the true wisdom which is able to translate the secrets of nature, that is, to name and conceptualize.<sup>42</sup>

To say that Dutch is the finest language involves distinguishing languages according to their quality, and in that he does so, Becanus develops a philosophical line of argument. He begins by enquiring into the origin of language, 'for since language is the most excellent gift of the Creator to man, making him superior to all other animals, an enquiry into the origin of language and into the great distinctions between languages, is of the utmost importance'.<sup>43</sup> According to Herodotus, the Phrygians had invented language. According to many Christians, the Hebrew nation had done so, and according to Aristotle, language was the invention of the Egyptians. The question as to which nation should be awarded the prize for having discovered language can only be answered if one knows how language originated and what its nature is. According to Becanus, the tongue is the organ of the sense which all animals need in order to taste their food. Man, however, also needs it for his wellbeing, which explains why in most tongues the word for the sense organ also denotes the meaningful sounds produced by it. Becanus acknowledges historical change in language: 'I know that practically no language is in all its aspects the same.' The Ancients had also observed that certain old Latin words had gone out of use, and sunk into oblivion. On account of the connections between neighbouring peoples, words are introduced into languages. Latin, for example, acquired new words from Greek. Although not only words but also the construction of sentences undergoes alteration, the possibility of linguistic change is not unlimited. It cannot go so far that the capability of being understood – *facultas intelligendi* – between the speakers of a language no longer exists. 'If [the Roman king] Numa had returned to life, he would probably have been able to understand Cicero, despite the language having changed from what it once was.'<sup>44</sup> The Spanish tongue is different from Latin because the Germanic tribes

who invaded the Peninsula introduced so many new words and constructions that a new language resulted. It was for this reason that Becanus rejected the traditional doctrine of the fixed number of seventy-two languages.<sup>45</sup> He also distinguishes between dialects and languages. Despite certain difficulties, speakers of the different dialects of a language can make themselves understood. The inhabitants of Ghent, Antwerp and Brussels, for example, can converse together, whereas a Dutchman, a Swede and a Spaniard cannot. Becanus therefore defines language as a body of words making possible communication between persons who are capable of using them.

After this analysis of the concept of language, Becanus returns to the traditional question of its origin. In late antiquity Gellius pointed out that: 'it is usual among philosophers to raise the question whether words exist by nature [*phusei*] or by imposition [*thesei*]'.<sup>46</sup> This tradition dates back to the *Cratylus*. There are two possibilities: either language came into existence in a natural way,<sup>47</sup> or it was originally based on convention.<sup>48</sup>

The first alternative was put forward by Heraclitus and by the sophist Cratylus, in Plato's dialogue of the same name. It involves accepting three theses. The first is that a word has a natural similarity with the thing referred to, that is to say, that it depicts the thing. The second is that it is through the word for it that the mind becomes acquainted with the essence of a thing. According to this thesis, a word can be correct in the same manner as a concept, and such correct words are to be found in all languages. The third is that the phonological structure of a word is semantically relevant: as an illustration of this I have already referred to Leibniz's remark about words beginning with 'R'. In support of the first two of these theses, Becanus refers to the history of Adam, the first man, who according to the Bible gave all things their names in Paradise, and did so in such a manner that the true nature of things appeared from their names. The words which provide us with insight into the essence of things sometimes have a miraculous power. By saying certain words, for example, or by making use of formulae, serious illnesses can be cured. According to Becanus, voluminous books could be written describing instances of the magical power of words. This is, however, unnecessary, for one example will suffice to convince everyone. We all know of those peoples who have kept the name of their god secret from their enemies for fear that knowledge of his name might give them power over them, or the way in which Jews were forbidden to pronounce the name of their God. This can only mean that the name of a god is not given arbitrarily, for if it were, the fear of these peoples would be pointless. Consequently,



the correct words have their magical power on account of its being derived from nature.<sup>49</sup>

Becanus puts forward another argument for the natural origin of language. He refers to the language of animals, proving its existence by an example taken from antiquity.<sup>50</sup> A classical author informs us that if an elephant falls into a bog and is unable to escape, it is able to convey this to another elephant, which understands what has happened. The second animal grasps the difficulty of the first, and calls other elephants to help by various signs. They eventually draw the imperilled elephant out of the mud. And is there not a city in India, the inhabitants of which are able to understand the language of animals after they have eaten the liver or the heart of a dragon?

According to Becanus, the natural origin of words would also appear to be obvious from their sound. He gives the example of the Latin words *vos* and *nos*, you and we. If we say *vos*, we make a certain movement with the mouth suitable to the idea being evoked. We open our lips and push our breath in the direction of the persons we are speaking to. If we say *nos*, however, we close our mouth, and by keeping our lips tight, retain the breath within us, so to speak.<sup>51</sup>

This theory of the natural origin of language implies that we speak as automatically as we breathe. Producing and using the correct words is the same as breathing correctly, for no choice is involved in creating words. This, in turn, provides a simple and efficient argument against the natural origin of language, for it is evident that 'the same things could be denoted by different persons with other names. . . . Just as military commands change many times while their basic meaning remains identical, so the same man can be denoted by means of different names.'<sup>52</sup> When a man becomes pope he takes another name, a Christian receiving the sacrament of confirmation can also choose a new name. The practice of changing one's name is to be found in all religions. Every horse, however, is of the same nature, and possesses the same characteristics, so in all situations it produces the same knowledge. The image of this animal in everybody's mind is the same. And yet some peoples use the word *equus*, while others use *hippon*, *sus*, *mar*, *pert*, *bos*, *guil* and *hors*. This is clearly the significance of the plurality of tongues. Words must be the arbitrary signs of things, just as the blaring of trumpets is: for some the sound of the trumpet signifies the start of a battle, for others it is associated with the solemnization of a marriage. It has to be observed, moreover, that if language were natural, etymology would be superfluous, for there would be no need for experts to explain the true origins of words. They would be obvious to all.

Which view of the origin of language is correct? Becanus tries to find the golden mean. He refers to Ammonius Hermias, the commentator of Aristotle, who said that the Greek terms *phusei* (by nature) and *thesei* (by imposition) are to be understood in two ways: ‘by nature’ could mean either that words are formed in the same manner as the sounds of the animals, or that they are produced by a human forming the word in accordance with the nature of things.<sup>53</sup> ‘By imposition’ means that words are formed either by an arbitrary act of will in spite of the nature of things,<sup>54</sup> or that they are based on a will engaged in investigating the nature of things. According to Plato and Socrates, however, this kind of imposition is not opposed to natural denotation. It would seem that Aristotle is of the same opinion as Hermogenes, for he remarks that the images in the mind are produced naturally, but that words are formed at discretion, by agreement and convention. Becanus observes that if this were the whole of Aristotle’s opinion, the great master would have made a fool of himself, but that he does in fact make use of etymology. In the *Physics*, for example, he states that the corporal bodies move eternally, noting that in Greek *aether* means a body that is moving constantly. Such an etymological argument would be pointless if Aristotle really meant to say that the creation of a word is a completely arbitrary convention. Another example Becanus takes from Aristotle is that of *eudaimonia*, meaning happiness – the happy man conditions himself in such a manner that his soul is a good *daimon*. Becanus concludes that all words have a natural signification, which can also be based on an act of the will. When they are formed by man and also approximate to the nature of the things they denote on account of an act of the will, they are indeed formed in such a way as to be in agreement with the nature of the things they signify. The correctness of the words depends upon the will – not any will whatsoever, but a will depending on right reason contemplating the nature of the thing named.<sup>55</sup>

Becanus develops the meaning of these phrases with reference to Aristotle. In the first instance, according to the Greek philosopher, words denote the affects of the soul. These affects are resemblances or images of the things themselves, and are common to all men. Such first impressions could be called natural. It should be noted, however, that the things bring about different images in us. This is why we have different words denoting the same thing. In Greek, for example, man is denoted by *anthropos*, *brotos* (mortal), *merops* (with clear eyes) and *thnetos*. We have different words, denoting the same thing, because we consider it under its different aspects.<sup>56</sup> This variegated consideration produces different images in our mind. The name resulting from such a consideration Aristotle calls a

*symbolum*, and Becanus observes that there are therefore good and bad words, just as there are good and bad symbols. Starting from this premise, he works out the notion of a perfect language. He argues that creating a language is an art, a skilful architect of speech produces words which fit well with the essence of things. He compares such a creator of language with a painter who produces an image by means of colours and lines, which evoke the thing represented in the mind of the spectator.<sup>57</sup> The better the painter the more closely his painting resembles nature. Consequently, the saying *natura artis magistra* also applies to the art of naming. Even the creating of a proper name is an art. One of Becanus's examples is the name of Aristotle, which he says suits this particular philosopher best, since he taught nothing that does not guide us to the best (Greek: *aristos*) life. The best language is a language created by a perfect architect.

What are the characteristics of such a language? It is, first of all, the oldest, and Aristotle observes at the beginning of his *Metaphysics*, that this also signifies that it is the most honourable.<sup>58</sup> This view seems preposterous, 'are we to regard these animal-like mountain people, the only survivors of the deluge, as having knowledge of all things, their judgement as being more to be honoured than that of men living in a later age, who have exercised themselves over a long period of time in the liberal arts?'<sup>59</sup> The answer is that these primeval men lived in close communion with the gods. That was why Socrates maintained that all science and truth is from the gods. It was Prometheus who brought this knowledge to mankind, together with fire. According to Becanus, the Greek Prometheus is the same as the Noah of Jewish-Christian tradition. From him, divine science degenerated slowly from the light of Truth to darkness. Noah's knowledge brought concord among all peoples, who therefore venerated the authority of the earliest man as holy and divine. This divine knowledge is preserved more clearly in poems and myths than in straightforward philosophy. Hesiod, Homer and Moses are therefore more revered than Pythagoras, the most distinguished of philosophers. These poets are the earliest theologians and discussed subjects beyond human reason, such as the creation and the beginning of the world. No proof is needed that they were informed by God himself, by his *Ruach*, or serving spirits. For otherwise no reason could be given why there are notions, institutions and laws approved by all.<sup>60</sup> So according to Becanus, the fundamental agreement of all men concerning essential things is a sign of the divine origin, and the knowledge of it is preserved in the perfect language.

Although Grotius, in his *Parellelon rerum publicarum*, does not consider Dutch to be older than Hebrew, he does insist on its being 'equally

ancient'. According to him, during the primeval period there were no languages, only unarticulated sounds. It was the creation of states which made the development of language a necessity. What is more, a distinction has to be drawn between original languages such as Greek, Latin, Hebrew and Dutch, and derived languages such as the Romance tongues. For example, the words in French which are not adopted from Latin are taken from the Germanic languages. Grotius refers to the word *rijk*, which became *riche* in French, and to the Germanic ending *-ik*, to be found in Dutch names such as Hendrik, Diederik, etc., which is also to be found in Gallic proper names such as Ambiorix and Vercingétorix. Even Latin is not completely original, for this language also adopted words from 'Dutch'. He calls our attention to such words as *verum* (true), *vermis* (worm), *vallum* (shore). By means of this ingenious argument, Grotius presents Dutch as being the equal of the classical languages.<sup>61</sup>

What is more, on account of its clarity, the ideal language is the best possible means for getting to the bottom of the truth. It is the only language with those features which Plato regards as being appropriate to linguistic perfection – that is to say, it is able to guide our mind by means of the most certain and infallible signs to the final end of all human knowledge. A language is perfect if it expresses clearly, briefly and with appropriate sounds our elementary concepts and their combinations.<sup>62</sup> Such a language has at its disposal not only signs for referring to the things themselves, but also signs which indicate to hearers how these things can be useful to them. The words of a perfect language teach us not only the nature of things, but also how to live in such a way as to return to God. Conversely, as Becanus observes, the imperfection of a language becomes obvious in its lack of clarity and ambiguity. Ambiguity is a consequence of the various meanings attached to its words and the great number of phrases which can be interpreted in various ways. The perfect clarity of a language requires that each simple thing should be signified by a single word. This condition cannot be fulfilled if there is an infinitude of things and the number of words is finite. The perfect language, however, possesses the greatest possible number of words. Becanus argues that this implies that Hebrew is not perfect and that it is not the oldest language, for the number of words which can be formed in Hebrew is limited since in Hebrew it is only possible to begin a word with a consonant. It is, moreover, impossible in Hebrew to create compounds from simple words.<sup>63</sup> In the ideal language, the elementary words are monosyllables.<sup>64</sup> Their number is of such a nature that phrases formed from them are never ambiguous. Of all languages, it is Dutch which approaches most clearly this ideal, since it excels all others in its number of monosyllabic words.

Since Dutch has one consonant more than all other tongues – the ‘w’ – it has more letters at its disposal for creating monosyllabic words than any other language.

This assertion by Becanus is proved empirically by Stevin, who compiled an extensive list.<sup>65</sup> Here is a short extract:

Acht	j'estime	existimo
Acs	j'apaste	inesco
Back	je cuis	pinso
Baeck	–	pono pharum
Baen	je prepare le chemin	praeparo viam

In all he lists 742 monosyllabic forms of Dutch verbs. Greek, according to another list drawn up by Stevin, has only forty-two such forms, and Latin, with five, comes even further down the list. Stevin's procedure involves enumerating monosyllabic nouns, adjectives, adverbs, etc. For Dutch, he reaches a total of 1,128, while Greek and Latin are shown to have no more than 220 and 158 respectively. Stevin acknowledges the fact that French contains many monosyllabic words, but observes that they are what is left over from the period during which the French spoke 'Dutch'. In contrast with the Dutch language, however, French is incapable of creating compounds. This observation by Stevin brings us to the following point made by Becanus in respect of the ideal languages. All multi-syllabic words can easily be formed from primary words in accordance with certain simple rules of 'derivation, declension, conjugation or compounding'. This notion is also to be met with in Stevin's writings: an ideal language is able to form compounds easily, for such compositions are in fact short definitions. The example he gives of this is that of fire-works lit on the water on the occasion of a king's entering into a city. The Dutch compound *watervuur* (waterfire) is easily formed, and is a clear definition of the phenomenon. In Dutch, this kind of compound is formed according to a fixed system intelligible to every child, that of adding (*aankleven*) a determination to a noun. The more fundamental of the words is obvious from the sequence: a *waterput* (well), for example, is a well from which water is drawn, and is not the same as *putwater* (well-water): *vensterglas* (window-pane) is not identical with *glasvenster* (glass window).

According to Becanus, it is also easy to speak the perfect language quickly: it is a good instrument for the efficient communication of ideas. The Dutch language is just this, for its architect provided it with a melodic pronunciation, which burdens the organs of speech to the least possible

extent. He carefully avoided difficult combinations of vowels, collisions of sounds, the need for vehement gestures or for panting from beneath the midriff. The number of sounds in Dutch helps the Dutch-speaker to learn other languages. Native speakers of foreign tongues, however, are only able to learn Dutch with difficulty.<sup>66</sup>

The twentieth-century scholar investigating Becanus's theories concerning the perfection of the language of the Low Countries may well be surprised to find all these arguments expressed in a highly polished humanistic Latin. As far as is known, Becanus himself did not make use of his ability to write in this 'divine language'.<sup>67</sup> The same was true of Grotius, who was influenced by Becanus's arguments. It was only Stevin who actually used the vernacular he was praising, and in doing so he created many Dutch philosophical terms: *algemeyn voorstel* (universal proposition), *beghinsel* (principle), *bewysredenering* (argument), *hebbelykheid* (habit, disposition), *ondeligh* (individual), *zelfstandigheid* (substance). It is a pity that Stevin's philosophical terms did not hold their ground in the same way as his mathematical vocabulary. We still use *af trekken* (deduce), *as* (axis), *delen* (divide), *driehoek* (triangle), *vermenigvuldigen* (multiply), *middelpunt* (centre), and so on, as part of our everyday speech.

## Becanus and Heidanus

It is well known that Becanus's speculations concerning the ideal language and the antiquity of the Dutch tongue were popular among his contemporaries. Kiliaan,<sup>68</sup> the authors of the *Twe-spraack*<sup>69</sup> and Stevin<sup>70</sup> made use of his ideas. In the first half of the sixteenth century the Dordrecht preacher Abraham van de Myle (1563–1637) praised him for the depth of his erudition, the equity of his judgement and the acuteness of his intellect.<sup>71</sup> It is, however, less well known that his works were also read during the second half of the seventeenth century. In order to illustrate this, I shall take the example of the influential Dutch theologian and Leiden professor Abraham Heidanus (1597–1678), reputedly a Cartesian. During his studies in France Heidanus was influenced by Ramism, and although he was an orthodox Calvinist, during the Remonstrant–Contra-Remonstrant controversy he put forward a plea for refraining from force, insisting that: 'arguments should be met by arguments, not by the sword'.

The most philosophical of his works, *Of the Origin of Error*, was first published in 1678, although it was based on earlier disputations. According to its preface, the aim of the book is to liberate man from the

vices and the staining of the soul which have their origin in ignorance and desire. Man should be aware of the things he is able to know and not hanker after things he cannot know.<sup>72</sup> Modesty is, therefore, essential to the avoidance of error. This notion derives mainly from St Augustine, who considered presumption in intellectual and moral matters to be the primary sin, but Heidanus fuses it with Cartesian issues, such as the search for certainty and the idea that the will is the prime source of error.

In Paradise only one language was spoken. There was, therefore, no need to learn languages: simple communication with one's fellows facilitates a peaceful society and efficient commercial relations. The only drawback of the unity of speech in the Garden of Eden would have been that the wise would have been unable to distinguish themselves from lazy and stupid persons by means of their linguistic erudition. Heidanus refers with approval to Plato, saying that someone who knows the words also knows the things being referred to. He adds, however, that this is only the case with perfect languages.<sup>73</sup> The barbarous tongues spoken by Americans, and by the inhabitants of Angola and Guinea, do not have this power. The architect of such imperfect languages formed their words *ad placitum*, 'based on an arbitrary will devoid of true reason'. The languages used by scholars are of a different kind. They have been formed by a learned architect. Such languages inform us about the things themselves: 'As does an expert in natural philosophy, or someone who knows how to rule men: a jurist, a theologian, a physician, a mathematician. Who can deny that it was such a man who has left his traces in the language created?' A thing produces in us many different images. The sun, for example, is experienced by all as giving a certain amount of light and warmth, as being symbolic of justice, liberality and so on, but these images are of no avail for the creation of words, because the maker of language directs himself towards the ideas created by the intellect, which are not to be found in everyone. The different images explain why a language contains more than one word denoting the same thing. Words based on true ideas, however, are not arbitrary signs, but unchanging symbols of the essence of things, which on account of their affinity and adequacy resemble a painting of the thing.<sup>74</sup> In support of this argument Heidanus quotes the *Hermathena* of Becanus, and adduces the example of the four Greek words signifying 'man'. It is interesting to note the rationalistic touch in his argument.

The perfect language denotes by means of an adequate sound the images of the mind and their combinations. It not only provides insight into the nature of things, but also helps us to live virtuously and justly.<sup>75</sup> Its primary features are the clarity and unambiguity resulting from the

number of monosyllabic words in it, the ease with which compounds are formed and the melodic nature of the words, all of which make it easy to learn and pronounce. Adam was taught the perfect language by God, but in the course of history this divine knowledge changed and degenerated. This appears from the fact that several texts in the Bible are unclear to us. After the Fall many words had to be learned on account of the various activities humans had to undertake in order to survive – agriculture, forging, weaving, navigation, warfare and so on. Heidanus doubts if such words were already part of the original language, since Adam would have had no use for them. This implies a discontinuity between the Adamic language and languages after the Fall. In Heidanus's view, therefore, Becanus's thesis that Dutch was the language of Paradise should not be taken literally. According to the Dutch theologian, however, the Dutch tongue possesses, as nearly as is possible after the Fall, the features of the perfect language formulated by Becanus. It is, therefore, not surprising that Heidanus should pay tribute to him, the writer who had brought to light the intrinsic genius of the Low Countries. He concludes his praise of the reputedly eccentric Dutch humanist by observing that: 'One should avoid the common error of cultivating the lands of others, while neglecting one's own.'<sup>76, 77, 78</sup>



## Maarten van Heemskerck's use of literary sources from antiquity for his Wonders of the World series of 1572

Ron Spronk

In 1572 Philips Galle engraved the Wonders of the World, after designs by Maarten van Heemskerck. Eight engravings were part of this series. In this chapter, I want to examine Maarten van Heemskerck's use of literary sources for this series, especially those from antiquity.

Celebrated monuments that were labelled as Wonders of the World have been known since antiquity. The history of this concept is complicated, however, since the canon of monuments accepted as Wonders of the World has always been subject to change,<sup>1</sup> even in recent studies.<sup>2</sup> Eight distinct lists of Wonders existed in antiquity, but only the Colossus of Rhodes was listed in all of them. The Egyptian Pyramids and the Hanging Gardens of Babylon both scored seven out of eight, followed by the Mausoleum in Halicarnassus, with six out of eight, and the Olympian Zeus, which was listed five times.<sup>3</sup> Together with these frequently listed Wonders of the World a wide variety of other monuments were also named as such, but less regularly. To mention just a few of many examples: Noah's Ark, the Library of Alexandria, the Walls of Thebes, the Temple of Solomon, the Temple of Hadrian and the Roman Capitoline were also on one or more of these lists.

In the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century literature, two distinct canons of the Seven Wonders remained. For his 1572 series Maarten van Heemskerck probably used a list of Wonders which was based on the canon compiled by the Spanish humanist Pedro Mexia (1499–1552), which was published in his *Silva de varia lección*.<sup>4</sup> Mexia listed the Lighthouse at Pharos, the Walls of Babylon, the Colossus of Rhodes, the Pyramids of Egypt, the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus, the Temple of Diana at Ephesus and the Statue of Zeus in Olympia. All seven of these

Wonders are part of Heemskerck's series. Mexia not only provided a list of the Wonders of the World, he also quoted descriptions from classical literary sources. However, it is still unclear to what extent Mexia's list directly influenced Heemskerck, since the order in which the Wonders of the World are listed by Mexia does not correspond with the numbers that Heemskerck inscribed on his preparatory drawings. Moreover, Mexia listed seven Wonders, while Heemskerck depicted eight. By expanding the canon of the Wonders of the World from seven to eight monuments Heemskerck was following an older, medieval model.<sup>5</sup> Heemskerck added the Colosseum in Rome to Mexia's list. The list of the Seven Wonders of the World did not hold a very dominant place in Mexia's work: they are described in two short chapters, while the entire *Silva de varia lección* contains four books and 148 chapters.<sup>6</sup>

Maarten Van Heemskerck was the very first artist to design a series of engravings of the Wonders of the World. The renewed interest in the Wonders of the World relates directly to the increased appreciation of antiquity in general during the Renaissance. Under the growing influence of humanism, the Egyptian, Greek, Roman and other ancient societies were no longer regarded as mere pagan communities, but as the predecessors of Christian history. The Wonders of the ancient world illustrated and celebrated the achievements of mankind, independent from the Christian deity.

Four of Heemskerck's design drawings for these engravings still exist today, and are divided between the Courtauld Institute in London and the Louvre in Paris.<sup>7</sup> These drawings played a crucial role in the highly efficient working procedure in Heemskerck's print production. In his design drawings, Heemskerck prepared every individual line that was to be engraved, which enabled Galle to work quickly and efficiently. Indentations on the back of the paper reveal that the lines of the drawings were transferred onto the copper plate by means of tracing. By engaging professional engravers to cut the plates after his designs, Heemskerck organized a division of labour that facilitated the enormous output of his shop. The design drawings differ strongly in function and in character from Heemskerck's sketches after nature.

Heemskerck was not able to observe any of the seven traditional Wonders of the World himself, but during his stay in Rome from 1532 to 1536 he did see and draw the Colosseum in Rome, which he added to his subjects. For his depiction of the others, he based his series on the descriptions in sources from ancient authors, such as the *Histories* by Herodotus, the *Description of Greece* by Pausanias, the *Geography* by Strabo, the *Natural History* by Pliny, the *Library of History* by Diodorus

Siculus and the *Epigrams* of Martial.<sup>8</sup> Even in the case of the Egyptian Pyramids, for which contemporary literary and pictorial descriptions were available to Heemskerck, he preferred to base his designs on the ancient sources.

In the Netherlands, these literary sources in Greek and Latin were studied meticulously and frequently in the *Rederijkerskamers*, the Chambers of Rhetoric. As illustrated in a number of studies of Ilja Veldman on this subject, Maarten van Heemskerck had very close contact with several humanists in Haarlem. He collaborated closely with Dirck Volkertszoon Coornhert, who engraved a large number of prints after Heemskerck's design, and Hadrianus Junius, who wrote a large number of captions for Heemskerck's prints. Heemskerck most probably was a member of one of these organizations, the chamber of the *Wijngaardranken*, the Shoots of the Vineyard, in Haarlem. As Veldman has pointed out, one of the devices of the chamber of the *Wijngaardranken* was most likely produced by Coornhert after Heemskerck's design.<sup>9</sup>

Like many other prints from the sixteenth century, the series of the eight Wonders of the World served an edifying purpose. The narratives must have been very appealing to the *cameristen*, the members of the Chambers of Rhetoric, and other literati and artists. These engravings instructed the beholder and, moreover, the prints enabled the beholders to demonstrate their erudition. An important innovation which was instigated by the market had taken place by the 1550s. According to Peter Parshall, the publishing houses succeeded in converting the print 'into an important arena for humanist literary invention, such that putting together a print collection could be a useful exercise in moral rhetoric'.<sup>10</sup>

The captions for the series are by the versatile humanist scholar Hadrianus Junius, and are written in a rather complicated Latin. The verses often allude clearly to the ancient literary sources, and invite games of erudite connoisseurship: since the names of the ancient authors were not included in the captions, but other directly related information was, it was up to the beholder to recognize the sources. In the intellectual culture of the *Rederijkers*, such riddles and mind games were common: a rebus was even part of the device for the chamber of the *Wijngaardranken*, which reads 'Deur der druiven's soetheit rapen wij vreugdevol spel'.<sup>11</sup>

I will illustrate the use of literary sources by Maarten van Heemskerck and Hadrianus Junius in discussing two individual Wonders of the World, the Egyptian Pyramids and the Colosseum in Rome.

The print of the Egyptian Pyramids measures, like the other engravings in the series, 214 × 260 mm. It is entitled: 'Piramide Aegypti' and it is signed at the lower left: 'P Galle Fecit' (with the 'P' and 'G'

monogrammed) and 'Martinus Heemskerck Inuentor'.<sup>12</sup> The caption by Hadrianus Junius reads, in translation:

Lofty pyramids, miracles built by the pharaohs, Massive structures rising in steps, sepulchral monuments, Built and then seized in the gaze of cruel enduring Hyperion, near the borders of Memphis.<sup>13</sup>

The Egyptian Pyramids were the only Wonder of the World, forming part of the canon in antiquity, which still existed during Heemskerck's lifetime. The Pyramids were described in several contemporary sources that were available to Heemskerck,<sup>14</sup> and he had actually seen and drawn obelisks and the small pyramid of Cestus in Rome.<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless Heemskerck chose to depict very different structures, based on descriptions from antiquity, in this case Herodotus, and, especially, Strabo and Pliny. Heemskerck combined these early descriptions with classical structures that he had seen in Rome, and with structures formed in his own imagination.

The relief sculpture ornamenting the base of Heemskerck's pyramid probably derives from the Greek author Herodotus, who lived in the fifth century BC. Herodotus gave elaborate descriptions of the Egyptian Pyramids and their building process in his *Histories*. On the Large Pyramid of Cheops he wrote that, 'It is built of polished stone, and is covered with carvings of animals.'<sup>16</sup> His countryman Strabo, who lived from 63 BC to c. 21 AD, also described the Egyptian Pyramids in his *Geography*. In his descriptions Strabo included the ancient fable that Heemskerck has depicted in the left foreground. Strabo wrote:

[O]n it are numerous pyramids . . . and two of these are even numbered among the Seven Wonders of the World . . . [F]urther on, at a greater height of the hill, is the third, which is much smaller than the two. . . . It is called the 'Tomb of the Courtesan' . . . . They tell the fabulous story that, when the courtesan Rhodopis was bathing, an eagle snatched one of her sandals from her maid and carried it to Memphis; and while the king was administering justice in the open air, the eagle, when it arrived over his head, flung the sandal into his lap; and the king, stirred both by the beautiful shape of the sandal and by the strangeness of the occurrence, sent men in all directions into the country in quest of the woman who wore the sandal . . . she was brought up to Memphis, became the wife of the king, and when she died she was honored with the above mentioned tomb.<sup>17</sup>

The Roman author Pliny the Elder, who lived from 23 to 79 AD, described a number of Egyptian Pyramids in his *Natural History* and contemplated their enigmatic building process. Pliny also addressed the ancient prototype of the modern fairy tale of Cinderella:

Such are the wonders of the pyramids . . . the smallest but most greatly admired of these pyramids was built by Rhodopis, a mere prostitute. She was once the fellow slave and concubine of Aesop, the wise man who composed the Fables; and our amazement is all the greater when we reflect that such wealth was acquired through prostitution.<sup>18</sup>

The prominent depiction of the obelisks and hieroglyphs, which Heemskerck had seen and drawn in Rome,<sup>19</sup> can be explained from the fact that in the ancient world the word 'pyramid' also meant 'obelisk'.<sup>20</sup> It is remarkable that although Heemskerck had several examples of actual hieroglyphs at his disposal in his workshop, since he had sketched them during his stay in Rome, he still chose to depict imaginary ones.

Two woodcuts from Francesco Colonna's *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, which was first published in Venice in 1499, might have served as additional visual sources for this print. The first woodcut shows a pyramidal structure with an obelisk on top. It is rather similar to the obelisk on the left side of Heemskerck's *Pyramides Aegypti*, and it is an indication that Heemskerck knew this book. The statue of a nymph on top of Colonna's obelisk, whose clothes moved freely in the wind, compares well with Heemskerck's figure with the burning torch on his obelisk.<sup>21</sup> A second illustration from the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* that might be related to Heemskerck's Pyramids depicts an obelisk that rests on a base and four sphinx-like figures, like the left obelisk in the Heemskerck. However, Heemskerck sketched such an obelisk at Rome,<sup>22</sup> so it remains as yet unclear to what extent this more contemporary source might have influenced him. Colonna's work also provided realistic examples of hieroglyphs, but, again, Heemskerck depicted imaginary ones instead.

The second print that I would like to discuss is the *Colosseum in Rome*, which is the last in the series. This engraving is entitled: 'Amphitheatrum' and signed: 'Martinus Heemskerck Inventor'. The construction of the Colosseum was started c. 70 AD, under Emperor Vespasian, whom Heemskerck has depicted in the right foreground. It owes its name to the Colossus of Nero that stood next to it, and which was later transformed into a statue of a sun-god. The Roman Colosseum is the only monument in Heemskerck's series that he had actually seen for himself. During his

stay in Rome in the 1530s Heemskerck drew the Colosseum several times, and he depicted the Colosseum in the background of his *Self Portrait* of 1553, a painting now in the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge.

The Colosseum in Rome is usually not included in the Wonders of the World series, but it was labelled as such by Marcus Valerius Martial, a first-century AD Roman poet who was born in Bilbilis in Spain. It is to this poet that Hadrianus Junius referred in his caption. The rather enigmatic caption reads:

The poet, of whose origin Bilbilis boasts, added to these wonders Caesar's sacred amphitheatre. The massive structure, imitating the circular appearance of the world, entertained the people by providing spectacles and games.<sup>23</sup>

By giving only a hint of who this poet is, and by using a number of direct quotations from the description of Martial, Junius invites erudite beholders to test their knowledge in identifying this author. Hadrianus Junius was very much at home with the *Epigrams* of Martial since he had worked on an edition of the *Epigrams* in the early 1560s, which was published in Antwerp in 1579.<sup>24</sup> Martial wrote in the first epigram of the book, *On the Spectacles*, which was published in the year 80 to celebrate the opening of the Colosseum by Titus:

Let not barbaric Memphis tell you of the Wonder of her Pyramids, nor let the Assyrian boast the labours of Babylon; let not the Ionians glorify Diana's Temple at Ephesus . . . let not the Carians exalt the Mausoleum to the skies in boundless praise which is based on empty air. All labours succumb to Caesar's Amphitheatre: this work shall outshine them all.<sup>25</sup>

It is not yet clear if Junius had as large an influence on Heemskerck's choice of subject matter as the other great humanist with whom Heemskerck worked in an earlier stage of his career, Coornhert.<sup>26</sup> This might well be the case, and certainly deserves more study.

Veldman observed that Heemskerck rendered the Colosseum in a more ruinous state than it is even now, let alone in the 1530s.<sup>27</sup> Although Heemskerck meticulously worked out architectural details of the exterior such as the Doric, Ionic and Corinthian capitals, he did not depict a realistic image of the Colosseum. Instead, he created a pastiche of various Roman motifs. For the rendering of Emperor Vespasian, the commissioner of the structure, Heemskerck used the equestrian statue of

Marcus Aurelius that stood on the Capitoline. The colossal foot and the relief of Remus and Romulus in the left foreground were actually seen and sketched by Heemskerck in Rome, but not at this location.<sup>28</sup> The two figures on the lower right foreground seem to be taken out of the Arch of Titus.<sup>29</sup> The statue of Jupiter in the Colosseum is Heemskerck's own invention, but is probably also based on Martial. In the second epigram of the book *On the Spectacles*, Martial described the Colosseum, and the Colossus of Nero:

Here, rayed with stars, the Colossus stands tall . . .

Here, where the far seen Amphitheatre lifts its massive structure, was Nero's domain.

Although this statue had been lost long before Heemskerck saw the Colosseum, he depicted a similar colossal statue, one of Jupiter, in the middle of the amphitheatre. Veldman has identified the *Jupiter Granvelle* in the Villa Madama in Rome as the source for this sculpture.<sup>30</sup> Through this rendering of the scene as a pastiche of Roman motifs, it seems that according to Heemskerck not just the Colosseum, but the entire Eternal City was the Eighth Wonder of the World.

## The legacy of Hegel's and Jean Paul's aesthetics: The idyllic in seventeenth-century Dutch genre painting

Christiane Hertel

The idyllic may be one of the concepts of everyday life one trusts least today and the same may be said about the idyll as a genre of writing and of painting. Within a primarily German cultural context, the best formulation of such scepticism may be Theodor W. Adorno's *Aesthetic Theory*, in which the author argues the impossibility of any resting place in art.<sup>1</sup> Good and important art may exist, yet it must come to an end in itself, must be prepared to silence itself through its own self-critical negation. Such negation means risk-taking: productive within the work of art, it leaves its mark on it. What is particularly challenging in Adorno's view is his scepticism of irony as well.<sup>2</sup> With regard to the idyllic this means that even the ironical dwelling at a resting place might be a dubious practice. As we shall see, there is a strong link between the discussion of irony, humour and the idyll in the German tradition of aesthetics. In this chapter I intend to demonstrate that this link plays an important role in the German reception of Dutch genre painting.

Let me begin my discussion in early nineteenth-century Dresden, that is, with a remarkable passage in Wilhelm von Kügelgen's memoirs.

Father moved with us to this lovely paradise in order to finish here at leisure [some] as yet unfinished Berlin paintings. He painted coats, medals, shawls and rural background, and Mother . . . often read to him aloud, spiritual and worldly literature, and among it the 'Flegeljahre' by Jean Paul, which so highly amused Father that he had to rest his brush, in order to finish laughing.<sup>3</sup>



This passage interestingly describes an artist's family life by taking up the *topos*, associated in modern times for example with Rubens, of the learned artist who engages his mind intellectually by listening to a reader while working on a mere commission or on the less demanding parts of a picture. Here these are referred to as so many 'coats, medals, shawls and rural backgrounds' with a slightly comical, slightly resigned tone, a tone which anticipates, through the emulation of his style, the novelist Jean Paul mentioned in the following sentence. The humour of his *Flegeljahre* effectively disrupts the painter's enactment of the *topos*, rendering its later remembrance ironic. While this irony serves to enhance the pleasurable informality of the summery family idyll, it also frames this idyll in a specific way. Kügelgen Jr's placement of it in his memoirs means to represent as well as extend the reconciliation of the Kügelgen family with an all but idyllic life situation in the preceding years, when the Kügelgens had lost their security and prosperity to the Napoleonic era. As a consequence of this period of hardship the family was broken up;<sup>4</sup> the summer of 1816 reunited most of the dispersed Kügelgens in a summer cottage in the vineyards just outside of Dresden. By having them read Jean Paul's *Flegeljahre* and letting the novel's humour enter this first and still shaky scene of wellbeing, Kügelgen Jr implies yet another meaning here, namely that of limited freedom, the pleasure taken in the idyllic situation as a means of private resistance and recuperation.

It is this last meaning, then, which points to a relation between the well-known account of Dutch scenes of social life in Hegel's *Aesthetics* of 1827/9 as the 'Sunday of Life' and the less known account of the 'Dutch style of writing' and of the idyll as 'the epic representation of complete happiness in limitation' given in Jean Paul's (Johannes Paul Richter, 1763–1825) *Kleine Vorschule der Aesthetik/Preschool of Aesthetics* of 1812. In my discussion of this relation I shall concentrate on what I consider to be a critical dimension in both accounts, namely their polarization of naivety and the comical on the one hand and of sentimentality, detachment and irony on the other.

In his *Aesthetics* Hegel expresses a high esteem for the 'romantic' and 'subjective' Dutch school of painting which he recognizes at once as an art reflective of its own historical present.<sup>5</sup> Within the practice of pictorial representation he distinguished between the activities of a creating and a beholding subjectivity (between 'Darstellung' and 'Vorstellung') while also pointing to their conceptual interdependence. To describe the dialectics of representation he uses the terms 'appearance' ('Schein') and 'inwardness' or 'interiority' ('Innerlichkeit'). 'Appearance' extends both temporally and spatially without determinable limits. The value

associated with it is freedom. The term is used throughout Hegel's *Aesthetics*; here I will focus on its function in his section on painting and in the three passages devoted to Dutch painting of the seventeenth century.<sup>6</sup> In these it is clear that Hegel recognizes and esteems in Dutch painting the artistic mastery of a tension between individual and world, between internal and external existence. In the paintings this tension appears as the mediation between their realistic subject matter and their ideal representational appearance. By representational appearance Hegel means not only the virtuosity of Dutch painting, as such its capacity for producing illusionistic deception by capturing the most fleeting phenomena, but also the self-absorption of representation. He calls this self-absorption 'pure appearance which is wholly without the sort of interest the subject matter has'.<sup>7</sup> The key phrase here is, literally, 'disinterested appearance' ('interesseloses Scheinen'). In his reference to Kant's *Critique of Judgment*, Hegel shifts Kant's 'disinterested pleasure' ('interesseloses Wohlgefallen') from the judgement of beauty in art to the nature of art in general, and of Dutch painting in particular, and at the same time to the nature of representational practice. In doing so, he echoes classical French art theory.<sup>8</sup> In general, one might say that Hegel makes much use of a French art-critical terminology which he interprets in such a way that the polarity of affect and reason becomes dialectically mediated. In the case of his use of the phrase 'disinterested appearance', this mediation pertains to his view that while in Dutch painting representation is apparently solely absorbed in its subject matter, in fact it is primarily absorbed in the act of representation as such without knowing it. 'Disinterest', then, corresponds to the content of painting which is 'subjectivity aware of itself'.<sup>9</sup> It is precisely Netherlandish painting which receives the highest marks from Hegel with respect to realizing this content. As Netherlandish, Protestant painting no longer requires either Christian iconography or doctrine – this central, objective reference 'now falls away'<sup>10</sup> – genre painting in the sense of 'Gattungsmalerei' takes their place. Far from diminishing the spirituality and reflexivity of painting, this process liberates it in Hegel's eyes. It is in the ordinary subject matter, in the insignificant detail of empirical reality that the artist makes perceptible and transparent his own inner relationship to the world.<sup>11</sup> Hegel's primary interest is clearly in depictions of social life, and explicitly in scenes with lively and active figures. He names 'peasant life and the down-to-earth life of the lower classes', with their 'naive cheerfulness and jollity'.<sup>12</sup> It is with reference to the appearance of 'utterly living absorption in the world and its daily life' in these scenes that Hegel ends with his famous phrase: 'It is the Sunday of life which equalizes everything and

removes all evil.<sup>13</sup> As examples for the art he has in mind, we might think of Jan Steen's *The Dancing Couple* (1663) and *Card Players Quarrelling* (1664).

Inseparable from this understanding of painting are its material means: paint and its inherent capacity for representation, for 'Farbenschein', 'Farbenmagie', for colouristic appearance and magic. These are the terms Hegel borrows from Diderot, whose *Essays on Painting* of 1765/95 he quotes from Goethe's fragmentary translation into German of 1799.<sup>14</sup> In his essay on colour, Diderot uses the word 'magic' in the context of discussing 'clair-obscur' to describe the irresistible affective power of colour over the beholder.<sup>15</sup> The term 'Farbenmagie' reinforces Hegel's understanding of appearance, as it is also the term by which he links the materiality of painting to its spiritual content.<sup>16</sup> The technical quality in Dutch painting is thus directly and positively related to its subjectivity and to the freedom achieved by an artist's absorption in his representational practice.<sup>17</sup> Achievement of 'Farbenmagie' – and according to Hegel, here 'the Dutch too were the greatest masters' – is the achievement of 'pure appearance of animation; and this is what constitutes the magic of colouring and is properly due to the spirit of the artist who is the magician'.

Hegel's passage on the 'Sunday of Life' in Dutch painting makes a clear association of tolerance and conciliation. This tolerance is historicized in two ways. First, it is seen to evolve from the 'civil and religious independence' of the Dutch nation and, second, it is seen as something entirely different and missing from the cultural products of Hegel's own times. Hegel's simplification of the Dutch historical and cultural situation allows him to address the historical difference between his present and the Dutch past. Thus he believes that it is the role of the comical to express the tolerance and openness of Dutch culture in the shared practice of painterly representation:

In the Dutch painters the comical aspect of the situation cancels what is bad in it, and it is at once clear to us that the characters can still be something different from what they are as they confront us in this moment. Such cheerfulness and comicality is intrinsic to the inestimable worth of these pictures. When on the other hand in modern pictures a painter tries to be piquant in the same way, what he usually presents to us is something inherently vulgar, bad, and evil without any reconciling comicality. For example, a bad wife scolds her drunken husband in the tavern and really snarls at him;

but then there is nothing to see, as I have said once before, except that he is a dissolute chap and his wife a drivelling old woman.<sup>18</sup>

To illustrate Hegel's judgement, we might compare ter Borch's so-called *Paternal Admonition* of 1654–5 with Theodor Hosemann's *The Caretaker as Father* of 1847, evidently modelled after the ter Borch, with a supposedly amusing shift in social class.<sup>19</sup> Hegel's point applies to the modern beholders of such works as well. Lacking the dimension of 'Schein', these beholders too cannot 'still be something different from what they are as they confront' the painting. By contrast, the 'Schein' character of Dutch seventeenth-century painting is its true character. It is an ideality with a material basis, an ideality earned through real historical and cultural accomplishments, above all the Dutch war of independence. If simulated, as happens in the nineteenth-century German genre painting of the Düsseldorf Academy, the result is nothing at all, because just such unity of art and political culture is lacking.<sup>20</sup> At the same time that he rejects German neo-Dutch painting, Hegel is rather confident that he can enter and partake of the subjectivity of seventeenth-century Dutch painting and its humour.

Nonetheless, the role of humour is not throughout a positive one in Hegel's account. He ends his second passage on Dutch painting with the observation that if 'it is the stark subjectivity of the artist himself which intends to display itself', then 'art ... becomes the art of caprice and humour'.<sup>21</sup> This ending turns out to be a negative judgement on his part. No longer the result of an at once naive, absorptive and tolerant immersion in the world, with 'the later Dutch painters' humour serves to dissociate them from that world. 'Disinterested appearance' turns into apparent self-interest. This loss of naivety, then, is the subject of the following discussion of 'Subjective Humour', in which Hegel briefly accounts for the phenomenon of Jean Paul:

So with us Jean Paul, for example, is a favourite humourist, and yet he is astonishing, beyond everyone else, precisely in the baroque mustering of things objectively furthest removed from one another and in the most confused disorderly jumbling of topics related only in his own subjective imagination. The story, the subject-matter and course of events in his novels, is what is of the least interest. The main thing remains the hither and thither course of the humour which uses every topic only to emphasize the subjective wit of the author.<sup>22</sup>

The distinction between the earlier naively humorous and the later self-indulgently humorous Dutch painter, or the neo-Dutch author Jean Paul, is that

true humour . . . requires great depth and wealth of spirit in order to raise the purely subjective appearance into what is actually expressive, and to make what is substantial emerge out of contingency, out of mere notions.<sup>23</sup>

Thus Hegel distinguishes between true and false appearance, between true and false humour, and between true and false affirmation of the present in art. Recognizing that it would be wrong to align Jean Paul with the modern genre painter he rejects, Hegel assigns him to a place nearer to those unnamed 'later Dutch painters' whom I take to be mainly painters of the second half of the seventeenth century.

In his *Preschool of Aesthetics* of 1812 (1804), Jean Paul makes several references to Dutch art. His account of the three schools of the novel (§ 72), the Italian, the German and the Dutch school, distinguishes the first by an elevated style, the second by an intermediate style and then focuses on the third, the Dutch school of the novel. Hegel's connection of the 'naive' with the 'true' was indebted to Diderot, who furthermore called the naive the 'voisin du sublime'.<sup>24</sup> But while Hegel further related the true and naive to the comical and applied these terms to Dutch low-life painting, he did not take up Diderot's suggestion of the proximity of the naive to the sublime, and thus of the comical to the sublime. This is precisely what Jean Paul does. He proceeds to define 'the low as the inverted high (altitudo)', considering both the 'high' and the 'low' equally poetic and attributing to the Dutch style of writing a 'comical, or even serious depth'.<sup>25</sup> In terms of Hegel's distinctions between true, naive humour on the one hand and destructive, self-indulgent humour on the other, Jean Paul here explicitly aligns himself with the former. In the long run, however, he will adopt a merger of the two, called 'humorous contempt of the world' ('humoristische Weltverachtung').

It is in the section (§ 73) on 'The Idyll' that Jean Paul tries to come to terms with this merger. He defines the idyll as 'the epic representation of complete happiness in limitation' ('epische Darstellung des Vollglücks in der Beschränkung').<sup>26</sup> This limitation may regard material goods, social rank and horizon of insight. Its site may be the Alps, Tahiti, the rectory, the fishing boat, the fenced-in garden, in short, anywhere. But the size of the idyll, on all levels – extent, number of inhabitants, implied larger world – must be contained and rather small. This condition is

comparable to Hegel's condition for the spirituality of seventeenth-century Dutch art, namely, that the paintings be very small. Jean Paul mentions his own short novels in the Dutch style as 'indisputably' belonging to the genre of the idyll. Literary critics have confirmed Jean Paul in this, albeit with the persuasive qualification that his idylls are 'gestörte Idyllen' – 'disturbed idylls'.<sup>27</sup> What disturbs his idylls is the presence of the social and historical conditions from which they are wrested and which they comically reflect, i.e. the German 'Duodezstaat' of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In short, what disturbs them is their own critical dimension, something Hegel evidently did not perceive in Jean Paul's writings. In turn, the term 'disturbed idyll' may be productively applied to some Biedermeier painting, such as Ludwig Deppes *Houses on the Mühlengraben Berlin* of 1820 with its emblematic juxtaposition of idyllic 'Hinterhof' details like the neatly hung laundry beyond the canal with the bones and skull on this, i.e. the beholder's, side of the canal, and Friedrich Göser's *Self-Portrait in the Studio* of 1835 with its odd dynamics of direct and indirect gazes, mirror images and shielded or hidden identities of figures.

In his autobiography (*Selberlebensbeschreibung*) of 1818–19, Jean Paul analyses his own preference for the idyll as indicative of his 'own inclination towards the homely, the still life, and spiritual nestbuilding', an inclination captured by his contemporaries in images of Jean Paul at work in a gazebo and honoured at a picnic. Jean Paul's confessed taste for bourgeois privacy was widespread in the Biedermeier era after the Vienna Congress, as we also saw earlier in the example of the Kugelgen family. Yet his understanding of the idyllic and the Dutch style in his fiction and in his earlier *Preschool* differs significantly from the Kugelgens' renewed self-confidence. The restlessness noticeable even in Jean Paul's idylls, along with their critical dimension, seems to be missing from Hegel's notion of Dutch art. Thus the most fundamental difference between the two authors is that of temporal sequence. In Hegel's account the Dutch style of 'satisfaction in present-day life' is literally conservative, albeit a conservatism justified by the Dutch people's hard and successful struggles for freedom which preceded this artistic practice and in fact made it a practice of conciliation. Such a struggle had obviously not taken place in the German states by 1812, nor was it completed in any comparable way after the Liberation Wars until the revolution in 1848. Jean Paul tried to integrate a satirical critique of the state of affairs with a humorous reconciliation to it. In contrast to Hegel's emphasis on the preservation of the 'high' (the historical struggle) in the 'low' (the genre painting) through 'true humour' is Jean

Paul's definition of the 'low as the inverted high', which might bear a promised hope for a historical struggle yet to come (§ 32): 'Humour, as the inverted sublime, does not annihilate the individual, but rather the finite through the contrast with the idea.' The difference between Hegel and Jean Paul is expressed most clearly in the word 'annihilate' ('vernichten'), a word Hegel uses in the context of discussing irony, not humour. Irony, for Hegel, is associated in particular with Friedrich Schlegel's philosophy. It is synonymous with the latter's attitude, seen also in his art, of total negativity and destructive individual consciousness, not with freedom.<sup>28</sup>

Jean Paul, by comparison, discusses both internal and external freedom in the context of 'Humorous Subjectivity' (§ 34), associating the one with the idyllic, the other with what is great or sublime and both with 'the spirit of the artist as well as the reader'. Among other places he finds humorous subjectivity 'in the Netherlands';<sup>29</sup> and in order to explain the relationship between these two kinds of freedom (§ 28) he uses a Dutchman in a situation which becomes comical only because of one's knowing or imaginative insight into his Dutchman's inner life. As might be expected, in this example the presumed internal and external freedom of the Dutchman becomes linked with the idyllic:

For instance, a Dutchman stands in a beautiful garden at a wall and looks through a window in it at the scenery beyond: so far there is nothing about this man . . . that could be called comical in any pre-school of aesthetics.

But soon this innocent Dutchman is transferred to the realm of the comical, if one adds to the story that he, who saw all his neighbouring Dutchmen enjoying villas or cottages with splendid views, did what he could, and since he could not afford an entire villa, had built for himself at least a short wall with a window, from which, when he leaned into it, he could view very freely and without obstacle the scenery before him. However, if we wish to pass by his head in the window and laugh in his face, then we need to impute something to him, and that is that he simultaneously wished to wall up his view and to open it to himself.<sup>30</sup>

The comical Dutch character is naive and idyllic inasmuch as he is aware of the strategic role of self-limitation, yet unaware of the limitations of self-limitation. To him his practice is a satisfying mediation of internal wishes ('owning' a view in a country of ideally equal citizens) and external conditions (limited financial means). Thus, what he lacks is

irony and its critical dimension, the two things his observers are all the more conscious of.<sup>31</sup>

Returning now to Adorno's profound scepticism of art as a resting place we might contrast Jan Steen's scene of a pious family, *Prayer before the Meal* (1660s), with two political images made in the German historical context from which Adorno's argument derives its urgency. They are Adolf Wissel's painting *Kalenberg Farm Family* of 1939, exhibited at the Hayward Gallery in the show 'German Romantic Art from 1790 to 1990') and John Heartfield's satirical photomontage *Hurrah! the Butter Is All Gone* of 1935. Wissel's painting may be seen as an attempt in the idyllic mode meaning to present the exemplary Aryan farm family around the table outside their home: a prosperous middle-class family, the children blond, all six figures healthy, strong, self-conscious and yet earnestly immersed in a world supposedly within their grasp.<sup>32</sup> The style of the painting is a mode of 'Neue Sachlichkeit', emphasizing an unsmiling rigidity which we may read as symptomatic of something unseen in the image. With reference to Adorno one might speak of a latent, but not a consciously critical negativity. Heartfield assembles another exemplary contemporary family in their home, emphasizing their togetherness during a meal. Yet by substituting metalware for food Heartfield exposes the anticipated misery of hunger and food shortage and the economic primacy of the war industry. Heartfield's distribution of 'food' among the family members emphasizes their potential brutalization through the nutrition of propaganda. The family's youngest member feeds on an axe, a motif associated in Heartfield's iconography with National Socialism and with Göring.<sup>33</sup> The wallpaper's swastika pattern, a framed motto: 'Lieb Vaterland magst ruhig sein!' and the caption, 'Hurrah, die Butter ist alle!', dramatically underscore Heartfield's point in suggesting the family's crazed, whole-hearted participation in this false idyll. Heartfield's image is a critical image, but how can one describe its mode? One possibility is to call it a satirical treatment of the idyll. Such a description implies humour at the expense of the represented family as well as, perhaps, of artists like Wissel who were painting such families at the time. This is not to suggest that Heartfield explicitly employed older aesthetic traditions of conceptualizing the idyllic, and yet it appears that he was keenly aware of the critical dimension of the 'disturbed idyll' in a way forgotten by most and suppressed by others.



Part III

## **Historiography in focus**



## The rhetoric of narrative historiography

Anne Marie Musschoot

It is a strange but meaningful coincidence: never before has representation of historical reality been questioned so severely and intensely as today, at a time when eminent and successful historians tend to consider historiography as an ennobled form of storytelling, and when the genre of the historical novel gives evidence of a clearly marked revival.<sup>1</sup> Postmodern fiction, to name the unnameable, seems to have reintroduced the historical novel, which is now proliferating on a wide scale and in many varieties likely to fascinate the public and maybe even more so literary historians and typologists for many years to come. But why, one wonders, why this coincidence?

Let us first have a quick glance at this very successful 'new historian' and let us call him, for the sake of convenience, Simon Schama or Le Roy Ladurie. He is a representative of a new movement in the philosophy of history, introduced by Hayden White, Dominick LaCapra and others. In the Low Countries F. R. Ankersmit, the author of the seminal study *Narrative Logic. A Semantic Analysis of the Historian's Language* (1983), is the theoretician of this new school of thought and A. Th. van Deursen, if not an adept of the school, is one of the well-known practitioners of narrativism in historiography. *Metahistory*, as it was called by Hayden White in 1973, has now developed into a broad stream of narrativism in historiography.<sup>2</sup> The shift of thought that is implied by the term reveals a fundamental change in the assumptions of theory. Traditional universalism aiming at unity and coherence of human knowledge has given way to a general distrust of universal truth and theoretical universality. The same shift is to be found in the ideas of French philosophers, of American 'anti-foundationalists' and of philosophers such as Gadamer and Kuhn.<sup>3</sup> The

point they all make is that our knowledge has lost its solid foundations, that there is no common ground in science, nor in an all-encompassing belief, nor in an unquestionable ideology. We have been able to read it before in Lyotard: great stories ('les grands récits') have been stripped of their appeal and validity.<sup>4</sup> New historians, then, being cut off from the assumption of ever being able to reconstruct the past as it really was, turn to narrative techniques in order to present possible reconstructions of the past as it may or could have been. The basic assumption here is that our knowledge of historical reality will always be restricted and conditioned by the necessarily biased opinions of the narrating subject or the narrating instance. With slight exaggeration, it could be said that the new historian is writing historical novels.

Not all historians, of course, are 'new historians'. There are still a considerable number of supporters of the positivistic-scientific view of historiography who, naturally, consider themselves to be the real historians, the scientists. This 'real' or 'true' historian fears subjectivity and emotion, he stands, as a scientist, for objectivity and distance. The scientific historian abhors narration. He collects facts and dates, he draws diagrams, handles mathematical tables. It is his aim to discover underlying structures and to detect connections that lead to explanations.<sup>5</sup> And it is no secret that these true historians in a traditional sense – and among them we count such eminent representatives as Johan Huizinga, who quite paradoxically did not refrain from using narrative techniques himself – profoundly despised the genre of the historical novel.

We are indeed dealing with a complicated matter, and truth is the issue at stake. At this point it may be worth noticing that there is a long tradition of writers captivating their audience with statements about truth in diverse and sometimes opposite ways. The author of the medieval epic *Karel ende Elegast*, for one, was convinced that he could attract his listener and his reader by pointing out the validity of his story: 'Vraye historie ende al waer sal ic u tellen, hoort ernaer' (A veritably true and real story, I shall tell you, listen to me). The very tautology of the opening phrase reveals that narrators of medieval epic had something of a problem; if they stress that what they are telling is the truth, it is because their statements were questioned by their contemporaries. Yet there is another, quite different and equally famous statement about truth (in literature and in general). Multatuli, whom we might call a nineteenth-century postmodernist *avant la lettre*, turned it all around in saying: 'maybe nothing is completely true and not even this'.

Now, if we try to trace some outlines in the common ground of historiography and historical fiction, we might first observe that the rhetoric

of historiography, both narrative and 'scientific', shows a clear parallelism. Traditional history-writing – call it 'positivistic' or 'empiricist' – was and still is firmly committed to the idea that the past can be re-created or reconstructed objectively. This very assumption, of course, is the basic premise of the historical novel starting with Walter Scott's *Waverley* novels in 1814. The historical novel, as such, was a realistic novel. It pretended to present a picture of the past that was realistic and accurate, i.e. true to nature. That the rhetorical devices available for this proved to be far from objective is not paradoxical, the traditional nineteenth-century novel being an authorial novel in which a personalized, i.e. subjective, omniscient narrator is running the show.

Ignoring for the time being the different types and subtypes of this traditional historical novel (listed for Dutch literature by W. Drop),<sup>6</sup> we can observe that it is part of the rhetoric or the conventions of the realistic novel to create the illusion, or to force the reader into the delusion, that what she or he is reading *is* reality, that fiction *does* represent true facts. If it is, at the same time, very difficult to distinguish between fiction and non-fiction, this is due only to the art of the writer, to the tricks she or he is using, to his virtuosity in depicting vivid portraits and lively situations. The rhetorical convention of Scott's type of novel is that the past is represented in such a lifelike way, in such minute and striking detail, that the reader feels part of the historical reality and identifies with it. In addition, the Scott-type of novel portrays precisely those common people that the common reader easily identifies with.

The immense success of Scott and his many imitators, of course, does not follow merely from his literary qualities as a narrator of exciting, fascinating stories. In Holland, for example, the increasing interest in the recent past of the nation was clearly stimulated by the French occupation in the years 1795–1813. In this period it was quite normal for historical novelists to look back on happier days in the past. Adriaan Loosjes published a historical novel set in the seventeenth century – *Het leven van Maurits Lijnslager* – in 1808, some six years before Scott started the *Waverley* series. Loosjes's novel does not succeed in capturing the *couleur locale* – a mode of writing characteristic of Scott that was to be highly praised and duly imitated by Jacob van Lennep, some members of his family and some of his devoted disciples, such as Arnout Drost. What all of these novelists have in common, however, is that they are wistfully looking back towards their own past and nation. Loosjes prefaces his novel with these words: 'In order to raise my spirits, so troubled by the misfortunes that continue to come down on my ravaged country, I have displaced myself in its most brilliant, if not happiest era: the era in

which, after having shaken off the yoke of Spain, its Flag was respected in the oceans all over the world.' Clearly, the historical novel here serves the purpose of escaping into happier times.

The second impulse in the history of the historical novel in Holland is characteristic of the other function implied in the quotation from Loosjes: the novels appeal to the feeling of national pride. The Belgian insurrection in 1830 caused an upsurge of national virtues such as courage and loyalty. Not only that: it also gave the Dutch a true national hero to revere, Van Speyk. Similarly, the success of Hendrik Conscience in the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium was due less to his literary qualities than to the values he was promoting. From 1840 onwards the historical novel in Flanders was serving a patriotic purpose, it was a means or an instrument in the Flemish Movement, used to promote the cause of national emancipation. And again, it was entirely in accordance with the conventions of realistic writing for Conscience's omniscient narrator, clearly an *alter ego* or double of the author, to be discussing ethical matters and to provide his readers with the right answers. Realism, in Conscience's case, evidently did not exclude subjective and suggestive authorial comments: his source of inspiration was not Scott, but Victor Hugo, the author of impassioned and glowing prose. By this very choice, recognizability and identification, the true marks of realistic novel writing, were of course intensified.

In the traditional historical novel, then, the allegedly realistic representation of historical reality serves a nationalistic purpose. As such, its claims to truth were never questioned. Novelists and historians have the same aims and act in an identical fashion. As a matter of fact this similarity of approach was never to disappear entirely. Nowadays, in the age of new historicism and of postmodernist fiction, the similarity is as striking as ever. The leading historians and the most successful new writers of fiction still have many points in common, the central one, however, having been reversed: both historians and historical novelists are now very modest about making claims to truth, if not averse to doing so. However, only the truly creative author is capable of giving expression to this new awareness in all its implications. For in spite of the criticism, formulated by neo-Marxists such as Frederic Jameson and Terry Eagleton, that the postmodernist novel should be politically disinterested, the postmodernist historical novel, for one, shows a manifest interest in the past. In standard studies on postmodernist fiction, such as the analyses by Linda Hutcheon,<sup>7</sup> it is stated that postmodernists merely undermine what is considered to be reality and never offer serious alternatives (if any). Yet it may be argued, with Elisabeth Wesseling, that some

postmodernist novelists, such as Carlos Fuentes, Gunter Grass, Thomas Pynchon, Ishmael Reed and Salman Rushdie, do indeed contribute to a certain kind of utopian thinking. Some of them, Wesseling points out, engage in exploring the possibilities that were inherent in historical situations but have never been realized, and then go on to speculate about questions such as what history would have been like if these possibilities had been realized.<sup>8</sup>

Whereas the traditional historical novel fills in the gaps left by historians by adding the details of 'real' life to the facts handed down from the past, the postmodernist historical novel envisages more: it questions the historical facts, turns them upside down, reverses them, mutilates and rearranges chronology. In short, the postmodernist alternative is set squarely against reality. In the literature of the Low Countries we have many examples of good postmodernist fiction, and we even have striking examples of the 'counterfactual history' variety discussed by Wesseling – 'counterfactual' being the Anglo-Saxon equivalent of what is called 'Urchronie' in German, a genre that is usually dealt with as a subtype of science fiction. The example I want to bring to your attention is Leon de Winter's *La Place de la Bastille*.<sup>9</sup> De Winter's prose is characterized in general by a recurrent underlying scheme. His characters experience life as empty and senseless. They are, in the fashion of Kafka's characters, alienated strangers in their own world, trying to escape from its emptiness by different variations of what we might call the escape or flight movement. Another, undoubtedly postmodern, characteristic of De Winter's fiction is that storytelling is thematized. To De Winter storytelling in fiction as well as in history is but one possible, tentative and conventional reconstruction of reality. It is the central theme in *Looking for Eileen W.*<sup>10</sup> and in *La Place de la Bastille*.

Let us now concentrate for a while on the latter book which refers, in its very title and by a quotation in the text, to *La Place de l'Etoile* by the French novelist Patrick Modiano, another novel whose main character is in search of his own past. The subtitle of *La Place de la Bastille*, 'A Study of Coincidence in History', reveals similar concerns. The main character in De Winter's novel is a young historian, Paul de Witt, a married teacher with two children. As a historian he is interested in the theory of 'model-building', i.e. working with hypothetical cases. This is where the 'counterfactual history' comes in. Paul de Witt is working on a study of Louis XVI's flight in 1791 and is fascinated by the thought that the course of French history could have been completely different. As a Jew, the first-person narrator finds that his past is empty – his parents and family having disappeared – and he gradually becomes

obsessed with the idea that history is non-extant: archives to him are just heaps of useless old paper. His fascination with alternative stories, then, can be interpreted as a means of filling in the past, as a way of looking for what is lacking and, ultimately, of shaping his own life and identity. His counter-study or counterfactual story reconstructs the historical facts in such a way that Louis XVI's escape was successful, whereas in reality it failed, after which he was beheaded. De Witt insists that history has no sense in itself: it is a chain of coincidences with no coherent causality.

In accordance with this central message the structure of the novel is a-chronological and fragmentary; it is a construction, or rather, a deconstruction based on the principle of dismounting and dismantling. Also according to the French motto of the novel, 'L'histoire n'est qu'une fable convenue', history is shaped, by convention, from the viewpoint of today. The statement cannot fail to remind us of a leading idea to be found in the work of Hella Haasse, undoubtedly the most prominent living author of historical fiction today. I quote from one of her essays and from an interview: 'The past is changing retrospectively by the way it is approached and interpreted' and, similarly: 'The past changes continually by the interpretation of it.'<sup>11</sup>

Clearly, if postmodernist fiction ridicules canonical history, it does not seem to do so in a completely arbitrary way.<sup>12</sup> There are, of course, many different ways of recycling historical material. In Dutch literature the most far-reaching and eye-catching experiment in this respect has been provided by Louis Ferron, in his novel *Turkenvespers* (1977) seemingly an evocation of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna (cf. Elrud Ibsch<sup>13</sup>) but in fact a timeless allegory, since the very destruction of historical order is at stake. Anachronisms are the rule, historical figures from different ages and centuries meet and talk to each other, reference is made to inventions that were yet to be made. Within the time frame of the novel, the turn of the nineteenth century, Vienna is besieged by the Turks. Historical facts have obviously been manipulated or distorted: in reality the first attack of the Turks took place in 1529 and they repeated their unwanted visit in 1683. The deliberate amalgamation or factual impossibility (some frustrated readers would call it a historical blunder) is somewhat bewildering at first sight, but a more careful reading of the novel reveals that the Turkish assaults stand, allegorically, for the invasion of a country by a new and foreign culture and for the loss of cultural identity in Europe. Like Borges, obviously one of his models, Ferron is convinced that man is not changed by the course of history and that reality is but a dream. His world of experience and opinions prove to be a solipsist's.



The examples given could be supplemented with many more that might possibly offer you a better idea of the broad scope of experiments than can be given here. However, a detailed description of the many ways historical material is dealt with in literary texts, ranging from obtrusive overdetermination as in Mulisch's *De ontdekking van de hemel* (I borrow Douwe Fokkema's interpretation<sup>14</sup>) to the increasing underdetermination, the blurring or fading away of reality, as in Ritzerfeld (Oscar Timmers; cf. *De Poolse vlecht*), would only confirm that all of them can be reduced to a principal feature of postmodernist fiction: it questions reality, it problematizes the thin borderline between fiction and non-fiction, literature and reality. And, what is more, the picture is not likely to change if we were to add examples of more moderate or traditional representations of history, staying closer to reality, such as can be found in Hugo Claus (*Het verdriet van België*), Monika van Paemel (*De vermalen vaders*) and, more recently, Nelleke Noordervliet (*De naam van de vader*). It is no coincidence, by the way, that all of the examples given are associated with Auschwitz and the Holocaust, as the very coming to terms with the calamity of war is still central in our collective conscience and memory. As Douwe Fokkema pointed out at the conference of the International Association of Dutch Studies in Antwerp in 1994, the obvious concern with the recent past, which is at the heart of the revival of historical fiction today, can be connected with the fundamental changes in Europe in the last few years. Totalitarian regimes having been completely undermined or having totally collapsed, there is now ample space and opportunity for individual and speculative presentations of the past and of the future. The variable solutions those visions seem to proffer, however, all reveal a refusal or a failure to state the truth. Here our story seems to have come full circle. What narrativism in history (metahistory, according to Hayden White) and the postmodernist variant of historical fiction (historiographical metafiction, according to Linda Hutcheon) have in common, is their distrust of facts and of objective, inalterable truth. They both confirm the general tendency towards increasing subjectivity and solipsism.

It would, however, be an unforgivable oversimplification to jump to this conclusion (if in the given circumstances we would be allowed to jump to a conclusion at all). First I could observe that the problematization of the distinction between fiction and non-fiction has yet another important aspect that has not yet been mentioned: the late sixties/early seventies trend of novels that make use of ready-mades and tend to be documentaries. The genre spread internationally (from Mailer to Solzhenitsyn) and was labelled defictionalization, the implication being

that simple storytelling was discredited and temporarily obsolete. The novel, then, was in need of hard facts, of concrete reality.

Second, no matter how popular this hard-boiled defictionalized fiction may be, no matter how much the borderlines can be and have been manipulated in practice, from a theoretical *and* humanitarian point of view it would certainly be foolish to ignore the distinction between fiction and non-fiction. The point at stake, as we remember, is the crisis of traditional realistic fiction. Whatever solution is chosen, be it a documentary representation of reality or an autobiographical approach that seems to stay close to reality on the one hand, as opposed to a more fanciful imaginative vision of a possible reality on the other hand, what we should always keep in mind is that all degrees on the graduated arc of fiction only provide pseudo-statements on reality. This particularity of the narrated world has already been stressed by the New Critics and, long before them, by the Polish theorist Roman Ingarden in *Das literarische Kunstwerk* (1931). Unfortunately, these purely theoretical considerations do not seem to be accepted in the current opinions of all cultures. For if they did, Salman Rushdie could indeed feel the happiest of all happy contemporary writers, since the statements in his *Satanic Verses* would be interpreted (as they should be) as pseudo-statements and not as statements on reality.

Basically, as we know, the question whether stories are fictitious or not is irrelevant in literature. What is important is not to determine the amount of truth, but the quality of storytelling, that can indeed simulate a high truth content.

Be that as it may, modern and postmodern fiction has developed along two different tracks: for some time the practical deconstruction of the representation of reality as a result of increasing subjectivity has been balanced by the montage-like construction of facts that would guarantee a maximum of objectivity by eliminating the narrating subject. I would suggest here that both tracks are just possible solutions for one and the same problem, since, quite remarkably, this paradoxical bifurcation is to be found in the work of the Dutch novelist Hella Haasse. Her work clearly illustrates the different stages of storytelling discussed earlier, ranging from uncomplicated fictionality to defictionalized documentary. It has been pointed out before, both by M. J. ten Berge and by Jaap Goedegebuure, that the development of Haasse's narrative technique parallels the evolution in historiography. From a technical point of view she first made use of the traditional omniscient narrator that was the symbol of naive confidence in objectivity, but gradually she was to express the more sceptical conviction that every single point of view is

personal and hence interchangeable, by using double or multiple perspectives and, ultimately, by eliminating the very act of narrating. In her double novel *Mevrouw Bentinck of Onverenigbaarheid van karakter* and *De groten der aarde of Bentinck tegen Bentinck* (1981), narration is reduced to the manipulation or arrangement of different types of texts (letters, documents and other materials) by the editor, who in so doing refuses to develop a unifying theme or synthesis and illustrates that in reality opinions will always clash.<sup>15</sup>

As is well known, Hella Haasse herself had commented widely on her own works and development as a novelist. She gave an account of the procedure she followed in writing the Bentinck novels in a very revealing lecture, commissioned by the Society of Dutch Literature.<sup>16</sup> Haasse here refers to what she calls 'Manzoni's doubt', i.e. the doubt expressed by the author of *I promessi sposi*, a classic historical novel written in 1840, as to the possibility of reconciling real facts belonging to history, and personal facts invented and added by the artist, within one framework. But then, Haasse goes on to say, what is historical conscience, what is the present and what is the past? What is happening now, actually never is, as we cannot grasp it. There is only 'passing time', changing from moment to moment in 'time past', the past. Hence our reality is constituted by things that are passing and our knowledge of it is based on reconstructions, it is the sum of an indefinite number of opinions, of events, facts and personalities as experienced by the narrating consciousness. This, then, is Hella Haasse's own view.

As we can see, the author has a strong sense of the past. Remarkably enough, as an individual writer she has lived through the same development as that of the historical novel in Western literature since the middle of the nineteenth century, i.e. since Manzoni expressed his doubts as to the combination of facts and fiction. In addition, in practising the genre of the historical novel, Hella Haasse proved to be well ahead of her time. *De scharlaken stad*, published in 1952, concentrates on Giovanni Borgia and Renaissance Italy. Haasse chose a multiple viewpoint for the narration of her story, a form that stresses and intensifies its meaning, the principal character's search for his own identity.<sup>17</sup> In so doing Hella Haasse was, together with Louis Paul Boon and his *pièce de résistance* *De Kapellekensbaan* (1953), clearly a precursor of postmodernist fiction in the Low Countries. Quite like Boon again, and in opposition to the current development in Dutch fiction, the turn to documentary fiction in Haasse's work was to follow only two or three decades later. What Boon did in *Pieter Daens* (1971) and *Het geuzenboek* was paralleled by Haasse in her Bentinck

novels in 1978 and 1981. The least one can say is that this is a remarkable retrogressive movement in the career of two of our great historical novelists. They turned to the documentary novel at the very moment when other postmodernists went back to plain storytelling, or rather, to a variant of plain storytelling. But maybe it would be too rash to suggest an explanation for this late development. I would rather not try. Literary history, of course, being just another form of historiography, i.e. of reconstructing the past and of storytelling, may provide us in due course with the right – though temporary and provisional – answers to that question.

## The disciplinization of historiography in nineteenth-century Friesland and the simultaneous radicalization of nationalist discourse. Source: *De Friesche Volkstalmanak* (1836–1899)

Liesbeth Brouwer

Look into what has passed. It will comfort you!<sup>1</sup>

Hayden White, a theoretician of history who has recently gained a considerable influence among historians and those scholars interested in the philosophy and theory of history, called the nineteenth century 'history's golden age'.<sup>2</sup> The twentieth century cannot be so regarded. On the contrary: in the three decades following World War II historiography and the historical outlook on the world seemed to be linked with everything that characterized the old Europe, everything that was conservative and that had somehow failed to put an end to that same war. These three decades have not without reason been called neo-positivist and pragmatist. A desire to do away with traditions prevailed in this epoch; structuralism, system theory, methodology gained the floor; the simple art of storytelling was looked down upon, and as a consequence that aspect of historiography did not receive much scholarly attention.<sup>3</sup> From the eighties onwards things changed, however. Structuralism made way for post-structuralism, in which the process rather than the system became all-important; deconstructivism discovered the story in every text, and as a consequence the special features of stories in making the world intelligible, thus becoming in a way also a rehabilitation and vindication of the story. In historiography, the fierce disputes of the seventies about whether historiography was a science or an art waned. In this discussion the majority of the participants had taken great pains to show that it was a science, and if that was not yet the case, it would

most certainly be so tomorrow. But in the nineties historians are once again proud of their art of storytelling, and they now seem to consider the narrative element as one of the fundamental aspects of their art.

Together with the vindication of historiography the history of historiography became a point of interest. The question in the seventies was, more or less, how to write good history, whereas it is now, 'how did good historians do it?' One of the most interesting questions that have of late been asked is 'what kind of stories is told in the discipline that we call historiography?' And 'what developments can be discerned?' My research into the Frisian nineteenth-century almanac can be seen in this light. I consider the historiography that we find in this almanac as a way in which the intellectuals in those days made the world intelligible.

Let me first give a short characterization of the Frisian almanac, called *De Friesche Volksalmanak* or Frisian People's Almanac.<sup>4</sup> In some ways it links up with the genre as we see it in the seventeenth and eighteenth century, but in many other ways it is wholly different. As far as the differences are concerned, we might say that it is what E. J. Hobsbawm has characterized as the bourgeois attempt to do away with popular traditions that were considered either irrational, immoral or indecent, or a combination of the three. The almanac, which used to be a popular genre, was, as it were, fashioned or civilized in the hands of the Frisian bourgeois intellectuals who took hold of the genre. The almanac traditionally contained two parts: the *utile*, or *useful part*, consisting of weather forecasts, calendars, chronologies, memorable historical events, market days and the timetables of ships and stage coaches, and the *dulce*, or *sweet part*, with amusing, sometimes indecent and racy stories and light verses, brought together under the heading *mengelwerk*, or 'miscellany'. This division is maintained in the nineteenth-century almanac, with the difference that the stories and verses are no longer indecent, fantastical and smutty. On the contrary they are for the most part quite serious, and the authors of the almanac hardly ever fail to press home their constructive, yet highly moral message.

My study of the Frisian nineteenth-century almanac is aimed at finding developments in the representation of Frisian national identity; I want to find out why and how national identity was created; what purposes it served; what anxieties were overcome by it; what desires we can read in the fixing of national identity; what served that purpose in one era, and failed to do so in another. It appears that in the representation of Friesland and Frisian identity in the nineteenth century, historiography played a major role, as it was in the past that Friesland had been a nation in its own right. In the present it failed those institutions and practices

aimed at making it more than an imaginary nation. The only thing it had was its language, its literature and its history. The study of these contributed to the realization of the Frisian nation; it existed only in so far as it was talked about.

I now return to Hayden White, who, as we have seen, called the nineteenth century history's golden age; it is also the golden age of nationalism. Do the two have anything in common, or is the correspondence only chance? I would say that they are linked in many ways. It might even be assumed that the one cannot be imagined without the other, that they are in fact intimately associated. Why is the nineteenth century history's golden age? Because that century demanded representations of identities (or ideologies) that were more stable, more fixed than in any epoch before, because the steady progression of rationality and emancipation meant a challenge to the fixed and stable order that had until then mostly been enforced in other ways: through bodily coercion, through taxation, etc. The nineteenth-century European states and nations needed representational legitimation. And in this need for legitimation historiography played a considerable role. It linked up the past with the present, as it created identities on which time had performed its tricks.

With this in mind I looked at the Frisian almanacs. The *Friesche Volksalmanak* was published for the first time in 1836, and the last edition dates from 1899. In the sixty-odd years of its existence the situation of the graphic industry, the printing press and of reading in general changed enormously. In spite of the fact that industrialization took place late in the Netherlands, compared with the situation in England, France or Belgium, the graphic industry seemed to follow its own course: from c. 1850 onwards it grew steadily.<sup>5</sup> In Friesland this had the effect that in the course of the nineteenth century other magazines were published besides the *Friesche Volksalmanak*, which competed with it, but did not succeed – at least not before the eighties – in overtaking it. However, competition from other magazines must also be seen as a factor in the specialization of genres or text types that took place in the almanac. I discern three phases in the period of publication. In the first period the articles were already for a large part historiographical (about half of the articles), but in the last period the almanac was even more strongly historiographical (more than 70 per cent). As the historiographical articles were usually the longest, this means that towards the end of the century by far the largest part of what people were offered to read was Frisian historiography.

Having established this I became curious as to what type of historiography the almanac offered, for the nineteenth-century authors did not

practice history in the way we understand the term. It was well into the century before they began to differentiate between the various genres that we find in the almanac; before this it was all *letterkunde* or *letters*, a term which stands for something like learning, and it consisted of linguistics, historiography, literature and rudimentary forms of sociology. A first, superficial, look shows that in the course of the century Frisian historiography changed considerably; from *histoire romanesque* – sometimes in poetic or dramatic forms – it gradually changed to lengthy, precise texts about a very small historical detail. The literary element – in the modern sense of the word – present in the earlier histories gave way to a dry, straight, enumerative style of discourse. In short, at first sight one can say that historiography became much more professional in the course of the century. My contention now is that professionalism is not the only thing we should look at in historiography. As I am not a historian by profession – I am a semiotician – I did not restrict myself to the investigation of the historiographical in the strict sense of the word. I looked at the almanac as a whole in order to be able to say something about the general atmosphere of the discourse presented in the *Volksalmanak*. The scope of this chapter does not permit me to elaborate on this point, but it is my conviction that what surrounds a text also in a sense determines the way the text can be read and interpreted. So in a way the co-text or the vocabulary surrounding it determines its meaning. So besides looking at the way historiography developed in the almanac, I also looked at the development of the almanac in general. By taking this road I hoped to gain an idea of the uses to which the writing of history in the nineteenth century was put.

In his essay 'The Politics of Historical Interpretation' published in *The Contents of the Form*, Hayden White wonders why in the twentieth century historiography lost the supremacy it had in the nineteenth century. He thinks that the fact that historians left the imaginative element to other discursive domains accounts for this change. The process of disciplinization and specialization that he sketches is also a process of curbing the imagination to an ever larger extent. One of the main reasons for the supremacy of historiography in the nineteenth century according to White is that it presented history as meaningful; it thus precluded the possibility that the passing of time was meaningless and discontinuous, chance and arbitrary. If history was meaningless, it would be impossible to tell a true story about it, and the truth of the story, he says, was politically necessary. The main nineteenth-century political movements rested firmly upon historical discourses; discourses which legitimized the alleged realism of the respective political ideologies. One can think



of Hegel's support of the modern secular state, Marx's deduction of political action from the necessary historical process and the support organicism gave to nationalism. In the Netherlands the liberals based their political ideology on stating that they were the true descendants of the seventeenth-century rebels who in the name of individual freedom and liberty of conscience advanced the course of humanity on its road to Enlightenment.

History then served a political purpose, says White, and this politicization of history was a condition for its professionalization and disciplinization. The law which underlies this assumption is that those discourses that have an important social and political meaning are worth controlling. What was it then that had to be controlled or checked? Was it not utopian thinking that had to be eliminated? Utopian thinking presupposes the possibility of revolution, of changing the historical process qualitatively, of making the present and the future radically other. White states that in the end it was political interests that caused the professionalization of historiography. Knowledge of history based upon a detached and empirical method was used as a weapon against revolutionary political movements. He observes that historiography at a certain moment in this development pretended to be above or beyond politics, but at the same time it discarded as unrealistic any political programme with a tinge of utopianism. This raises the question of the politics implicit in the discipline of historiography from the nineteenth century onwards.

To find an answer to this question White examines what nineteenth-century historians saw as undisciplined in the older historiography. What he discovers is that historiography was formerly seen as a branch of rhetoric; it was put to a moral, intellectual or aesthetic use. Historiography was not seen as establishing a correspondence between the past and itself; actually the past was a chaos or an order with as many meanings as rhetorical talent and creativity could attribute to it. In the nineteenth century a de-rhetorization of historiography took place. But, as White convincingly shows, the language of the anti-rhetoric bore such a strong similarity to that of the rhetoric that we can in fact speak of a rhetoric again: what he calls the rhetoric of the anti-rhetoric. The disciplined historiography is, says White, a rhetoric of the middle style with a preferred range of set phrases and *topoi*, and a prohibition of the representation of certain types of events and experiences. Things that are usually associated with religion and superstition, such as miracles, divine interferences and dispensations, but also the grotesque, the burlesque and satire cannot find a place in stories of this rhetorical type. As a consequence those events, experiences and processes that a level-headed civilized man

could perceive were assigned to the domain of history. As such it was the rhetorical style of the historical discipline that determined what could be discerned in the past, rather than the past that determined what could be observed.

Imagination was the other thing that had to be curbed and disciplined. The nineteenth-century historians did not deny that any historical representation was to a certain extent a product of the imagination, and as imagination was a prominent subject in aesthetics, ideas about historical imagination followed developments within aesthetics. Here a divide was made between the category of the beautiful and the category of the sublime; both were seen as reactions of the imagination to natural phenomena. Those that had the power to charm were seen as beautiful, those that inspired terror and awe were considered sublime. In the course of its disciplinization the passing of time was increasingly considered to be a beautiful process, not a sublime one. Those romantic historians who considered history to be sublime, are no longer included in the history of the discipline, but are considered to have written literature: a sign of the desublimation of the historiographical representation of the past.

The desublimation of time and de-rhetorization of historiography that took place in the disciplinization of history have the effect of detracting from utopian and visionary types of politics. In the process the past has been tamed and domesticated; historians have mastered the past which in turn enabled them to unmask what in their eyes were utopian and distorted misrepresentations. But at the same time, and this is the pressing question Hayden White poses, could it be that the 'enthusiastic, romantic and dangerous ideologies' – he is thinking of the totalitarian ideologies of the right and the left, but also of aggressive forms of nationalism – are the price that has to be paid for that same domestication of the historical conscience? In other words, could it be that what is repressed, returns in a distorted form? With reference to my material, the *Friesche Volksalmanak*, I reformulate this question and ask what has happened to the representation of national identity – certainly one of the enthusiastic, romantic and dangerous ideologies White talks about – in the time that this specialization and disciplinization took place.

In terms of Hayden White's analysis of nineteenth-century historiography it is possible to view the historiography in the *Friesche Volksalmanak* as being in the process of de-rhetorization and desublimation. I will show this on the basis of the work of two almanac authors: Dirk Bouma Nieuwenhuis (1814–73) and Montanus de Haan Hetteema (1796–1873), and on the basis of an analysis of the general tone and atmosphere of the almanac in its last phase, between about 1880

and 1900. Dirk Bouma Nieuwenhuis is not remembered today, neither in Frisian literary history (probably because earlier he was seen as a historian), nor in the discipline of history (because Time for him is sublime). In my view, however, he is one of the few interesting authors of the almanac. Montanus de Haan Hetteema is still considered a distinguished Frisian scholar, probably because he played a pivotal role in the professionalization of historiography. I will conclude with a brief characterization of the *Volksalmanak* in the last period, from about 1880 to 1900, to elaborate upon White's question of whether what is suppressed returns in distorted forms. In my thesis, shortly to be published, a thorough analysis of the material will be presented. For now the reader must trust that I have selected elements of a structure, rather than random entities.

Dirk Bouma Nieuwenhuis's romantic histories are written both in prose<sup>6</sup> and in poetry.<sup>7</sup> He is preoccupied with the power of time; it inspires him with terror and awe; he stresses changeability and transience; these are the results of the workings of Time. Time in his contributions is personified: it is the 'Old Wrecker', the 'Old Demolisher',<sup>8</sup> the 'Overwhelmer' or the 'Restless Usurper'.<sup>9</sup> Great Frisian buildings and manors are the subjects of his histories, but however great they are, however great the institutions they once accommodated, Time, the Demolisher, erodes them in the end. Nieuwenhuis's perspective on human affairs and the affairs of the state is from a great distance. In one of his contributions, Frisian history is seen from the perspective of the evening star. She is a symbol of love, constancy and therefore of consolation as well. What she has seen and what she will see, she will keep in her memory. For Nieuwenhuis reminding, remembering are an act of love. Historiography is the human form of remembering, and so also a form of loving attention. Through the writing of history, which is an act of love, transience can in a certain sense be transcended.<sup>10</sup>

The historiographical style of Montanus de Haan Hetteema is wholly different. Here we see a historian who is discontented with the tendency to exaggerate and to idealize the Frisian past. He wants a historiography that is neither *prejudiced* nor *partial*.<sup>11</sup> For him Friesland and the Frisians were no longer reality, since in 1795 they became one with the other Dutch provinces; from 1795 onwards Frisian history should be a part of Dutch history, states De Haan Hetteema. So as far as Frisian historiography is concerned, it stops at 1795. For him national identity is not something in the people, their language or their spirit: it is just an effect of a form of government. Frisian historiography, then, should concentrate on describing the Frisian polity through the centuries. In his contributions he discusses sixteenth and seventeenth-century Frisian historiographers,

finding them ‘uncritical’; what they were doing was inventing an origin, but, I quote, ‘their histories cannot bear the test of *healthy* criticism – they rest only on the conception that no people can be without origin, and that they therefore invented one according to the prevailing ideas and spirit of the age, with reference to what Moses did for the history of the Jewish people’.<sup>12</sup> In De Haan Hetteema’s day many adhered to the idea that there is a relation between a language and a people, or a religion and a people; he discarded ideas like these and shows in his linguistic essays that the boundaries between languages are highly fluid, rather than sharp and well defined.

De Haan Hetteema also attacks the idea of the original Frisian polity, called *De Friesche vrijheid*, or Frisian Freedom, which many a Frisian intellectual in those days – and many a Frisian nowadays – took pride in. A number of historians have tackled this idea of Frisian Freedom, and explained it as a myth. It is against mythical, exaggerated and in a sense politically radical interpretations of the *Friesche vrijheid* that De Haan Hetteema offers resistance. He interprets Frisian Freedom as a false doctrine in medieval times, which caused interior strife, instability and in the end loss of freedom. The nineteenth-century idealization of that freedom seems to him very much heterodox. The medieval freedom was, I quote, ‘lawlessness, debauchery and licentiousness’ – a heterodoxy which he finds in his contemporaries as well. He states:

The old Frisians dreamed of a freedom, which cannot exist in a society. They wanted a society, but were not willing to subject themselves to the necessity of the law; because they felt that it contained the germ of domination; they were all, they said, equal, and so they were and everyone should be equal to everyone else; but this doctrine is only conceivable outside, and not inside a society.<sup>13</sup>

It is the French and the Germans in particular to whom he attributes such an exaggerated idea of freedom. It should be pointed out that he wrote the article from which I quote just after 1848, the year of the revolutions. Frisians must guard themselves against such exaggerations! And historiography should support this moderation.

In De Haan Hetteema’s historiography we find the beginning of a disciplined historiography. The quotations given above do not corroborate this contention, however. They were used to show how within historiography an anti-radical political stance was taken. In his historiographical work De Haan Hetteema is the one who is most explicit in defining the object of Frisian history. For readers who are familiar with Hayden

White's concept of historiographical style,<sup>14</sup> it may not come as a surprise that De Haan Hetteema's approach is *satirical*. His aim is to unmask and expose ideas that we find in the works of other historians. He is *critical* where his mode of argument is concerned; in this respect his work reminds us of the Enlightenment historians who concentrated on source criticism. But in another respect he is much more modern; neither first or last causes nor universal laws and principles preoccupy him. His aim is the description of factual relations in a concrete historical field. The ideological implications of his works are, as we have seen, rather conservative, although he places great trust in rationality and scientific progress. In this sense he adheres to a more liberal ideology.

From 1860 onwards the disciplinization of history becomes stronger. No more sublime Time, no more literary genres like poems and drama to convey the past, just straight discourses about well-defined historical facts. But what happened to the almanac in general in the same time span? Did its tone and atmosphere undergo changes? In the first phase of its publication the almanac was colourful, lively and varied. Frisian nationalism in the modern sense of the word was not found in the almanac; it contained a passionate plea for a Dutch unity based on diversity. But from about 1880 onwards the tone and atmosphere changed considerably. The central author in this last period is Johan Winkler (1840–1916), a physician. For the first time we find outright Frisian chauvinism in the almanac: the *purity* of the Frisian people is stressed – they are the true descendants of the old Germanic people. More than any people around them the Frisians have preserved the pure Germanic customs and traditions. For the first time we also find outright enmity towards the Dutch, which is motivated by the idea that the Dutch did not keep to their Germanic origins; the Dutch language and culture is not as pure as the Frisian, it is the product of 'corruption and degeneration'. The opposition purity versus degeneration is characteristic of quite a few of the contributions to the almanac in its last phase. The atmosphere, then, has become quite reactionary; history is not seen as progressing, but as degenerating. For Winkler this process started in the Middle Ages and accelerated from 1550 onwards. In Winkler's eyes a sustained effort should be made to return to the pure originality of the older times. He understands the revival of regional languages and literatures as a proof of this effort; as a proof of the love for the simple and the natural, as against classicism, modernity and positivism, which he sees as artful and contaminated. I quote: 'Pedantic learning', that denies 'everything that cannot be seen with eyes and that cannot be grasped with hands', to conclude that, 'in

our times, now that *Der Geist der stets verneint*, which is the spirit of disbelief, of the devil, is little by little driven back by the spirit of belief, and banned into the abyss from which it had risen.<sup>15</sup>

In conclusion I should like to draw attention to this strange parallel development of the disciplinization of the historical conscience on the one hand, and the radicalization of nationalist discourse on the other. Is this parallel incidental, or should we consider it as determined and motivated? White thinks the latter, but as it stands the matter cannot be finally settled. However, the issue is much too important to dismiss, so I would like to reformulate the question: if it is true that the disciplining and control of the historical conscience served a political purpose, the purpose of moderation, to be precise, then the question to be asked is why this is so. What gave moderation and the related specialization and disciplinization its authority? Why did the historical conscience of the romantic type, with its innocent idealization and sublimation, not gain this authority? Part of the answer must be that in that case historiography would not have followed the trend towards realism that characterized science and philosophy in general in those days. If it had missed that opportunity, it would certainly not have gained the authority it had acquired by the end of the century, but instead would have become a branch of literature, which from then on would lack the authority it had previously had. From that moment on historiography was in keeping with authority; it provided the liberal and conservative middle and upper-middle classes with a world view and a view of the past that agreed with their ideal selves, their projects, their actions and their plans. Transience, the smallness of man in the face of Time, did not appeal to their imagination; instead they rendered them taboo by their ceaseless activity, vitality and liveliness. But for those who were excluded from this great feast of activity – for reasons varying from bad health to poverty, old age and sex – and who were increasingly subjected to the activities of the others, life somehow seemed different. For them injustice reigned, and they clung to an idea of the past which was somehow much more pure and honest than the present in which they were forced always to move and to migrate, modern nomads in strange lands. White's 'dangerous ideologies' were reactions to this estrangement, to which historiography, in its own moderate way, had contributed. As such the simultaneity of specialization in historiography and the radicalization in the nationalist discourse is no coincidence.

## The unimportance of writing well: Eighteenth-century Belgian historians on the problem of style of history

Tom Verschaffel

Ce n'est pas un si grand crime  
 De ne s'exprimer pas bien  
 (It is not such great crime  
 Not to express oneself well)  
 Quinault

In the Southern Netherlands as elsewhere in Europe, Latin had been the language of intellectual life and higher culture for centuries. In the eighteenth century, it had lost this privileged position. It nevertheless remained the language of the church and the university and, to a certain extent, of education in general. This general view is reflected in the position of Latin as used in the historiography of the time. Even here, Latin went out of use, with the exception of the fields of monastic and church history and that of legal history.<sup>1</sup> For example, monastic histories were still frequently written in Latin, because they aimed at an international public, as they were meant in the first place for the (international) authorities and fellow monks of the order, and not, as were profane histories, for a socially broader but at the same time more local public.

Latin had become the exception, and most of the general, modern and profane histories were written in the vernaculars of the country. Since – as is now well known<sup>2</sup> – the reading public was growing in the course of the eighteenth century, and thus the group of potential history readers was becoming wider and more diverse, writers who wanted their books to be read not only by monks and jurists but also by (more or less) ‘common’ readers, had to take into account the fact that a great many of

those readers were not able to read Latin at all, or at least preferred not to do so.<sup>3</sup> Latin had become 'une langue qui n'est point à la portée du commun des lecteurs' ('a language which is not understood by the common reader') and therefore, 'l'histoire, dont la lecture est devenue un besoin presque général, veut être écrite dans la langue vulgaire' ('history, the reading of which has become an almost general necessity, needs to be written in the vernacular').<sup>4</sup>

History had to be written in the vernaculars, and therefore, during the first half of the century, most of the general histories were written either in Dutch or in French. The choice between these was essentially determined by the actual linguistic situation of the country. In those days the Southern Netherlands already consisted of Dutch-speaking and Walloon-speaking parts. The linguistic border between them was at the time more or less what it is today, and did not correspond with the borders between the provinces. The northern parts of (the provinces of) the country were Dutch-speaking. In the southern parts (of the same provinces) Walloon was spoken. The latter was a popular language, cognate to French, yet different from it. In the Dutch-speaking parts Dutch was used to write histories for the public. French – and not Walloon – was used in the Walloon parts. To complicate this picture there were French-speaking people living both in the North and the South. Moreover, even at the beginning of the century, there were authors who were bi- or trilingual, writing in French, Dutch and/or Latin, according to the circumstances and the specific public they were aiming at.

In the course of the second half of the century, the situation changed and became clearer. A Frenchification of the Southern Netherlands occurred in that period.<sup>5</sup> This implied not only a diffusion and a generalization of the use of French, but also, as was said and lamented, a diffusion of French morals and (bad) manners;<sup>6</sup> a *francophilie* affected at least parts of the population – especially, as some historians have indicated, the female part.<sup>7</sup>

Traditionally this Frenchification is connected with the occupation of the 1745–8 period. During the Austrian War of Succession, the Southern Netherlands were occupied by the French (who after the war vacated the country for the Austrians, in accordance with the Treaty of Aachen). In those years, the French brought not only soldiers to Brussels, but also theatre, fashions and styles. Another explanatory factor is the fact that the Brussels court and central administration were French-speaking. The influence of these factors is undeniable, but the actual diffusion of French among the population of the Dutch-speaking parts of the Southern Netherlands must not be exaggerated.<sup>8</sup> A study by Hervé



Hasquin on the French-speaking population in Brussels of the period reveals on the one hand that this French-speaking part was indeed increasing; it also made clear that on the other hand this part remained a rather small minority (not more than 15 per cent of the population of Brussels).<sup>9</sup>

It is also obvious that the Frenchification concerned in fact part of the upper class, but left the lower classes untouched. In other words: in the Dutch-speaking parts French increasingly became the language of the upper classes, while Dutch remained the language of the 'people'. But French not only became the fashionable language for the social upper classes. It also became, more than ever before, the language of the intellectuals. It replaced Latin as the indisputable language for international communication; as the language of the *république des lettres*. So French was becoming the fashionable language of the upper classes, of functionaries and intellectuals. French, at that moment, also became the language historians simply had to (and actually did) use. The Imperial and Royal Academy of Brussels, founded in 1772, had a great influence on, and a certain power over, historiography and its evolution during the last decades of the century. In the Academy three languages were officially accepted (French, Dutch and Latin), but it is obvious that in practice, French firmly dominated.<sup>10</sup> French was used in documents, publications and meetings.

Yet this did not imply that literally every historian wrote in French. Smeyers has convincingly pointed out that, whereas French dominated the (historiographical) activities *within* the Academy, it hardly surpassed Dutch in the entries for essay competitions (written by 'outsiders').<sup>11</sup> Frenchification remained, to a certain extent, the theory; an evolution that was counterbalanced by other – partly opposite – tendencies. There were also specific reasons why certain historians did not use the international language. Since Dutch remained the language of the lower classes, authors who definitely wanted to write for a broad audience and did not want to confine themselves to writing for an elite, needed to write in Dutch. Others explicitly deplored and disputed Frenchification. Well known in Belgian and especially in Flemish historiography is Jan Baptist Verlooy, who wrote a 'dissertation on the neglect of the mother tongue in the Netherlands' (*Verhandeling op d'onacht der moederlyke tael in de Nederlanden*, 1788), a rather extended plea for the use of the native language and against writing in French by Dutch-speaking authors. Another author, Verhoeven, indicated, like Verlooy, that all great writers, from antiquity on, had written in their own language.<sup>12</sup> For those authors, the use of Dutch could be a statement of cultural politics.

But these authors were rather exceptional, and one might say that French was more or less accepted as the language historians ought to use. In 1779 Du Chasteler wrote a plan for a national history of the Austrian Netherlands. The language in which this history should be written is no point of discussion; 'je ne m'arrêterai pas à discuter dans quelle langue cette histoire doit être écrite' ('I shall not take time to discuss in which language this history ought to be written'); that it should be French was completely self-evident; 'la langue française est devenue tellement dominante dans nos provinces, qu'on ne peut guere lui refuser la préférence' ('the French language has become so dominant in our provinces that one could scarcely fail to give preference to it').<sup>13</sup> It was in fact to the – French-speaking – Academy that he presented this plan.

Although the use of French had become self-evident, some authors seemed to have felt the need to justify this choice. Custis (sometimes) wrote in French because this language was 'universellement connue dans toutes les parties du monde' ('universally known in all parts of the world').<sup>14</sup> Lamoot, who published a plan for a history of Flanders in 1760, revealed that, unlike others, he did not believe in addressing such a history to readers of lower classes: 'l'histoire n'est utile qu'à ceux qui la lisent. Ce n'est pas le bas peuple qui lit; ce sont les personnes aisées et instruits' ('history is only of use to those who read it. It is not the lower classes who read; it is the well-to-do and educated').<sup>15</sup> Such readers, even in the Dutch-speaking parts, understood either Latin or French, he argued. The history he proposed was to be written in French.

In other words, in using French, many of the historians of the Southern Netherlands wrote in a language which was not their own. Therefore, it was considered to be virtually impossible for them to write really well, let alone 'beautifully'.<sup>16</sup> They were aware of that and they apologized, by arguing that they had to use a foreign language and that therefore they should not be criticized too harshly on the matter of style.<sup>17</sup> They said this in the introductions and the *avis au lecteur* of their works. This might of course be a *captatio benevolentiae*, a mere figure of speech, a strategic anticipation of expected criticism, an indication of a certain modesty, not altogether sincere. However, although some historians were obviously better writers than others, it is undeniable that the literary qualities of most of the works considered here were indeed rather modest. And this was noticed by contemporaries, as it is by today's readers.

But to see whether Belgian historians of the eighteenth century did write well or not is not all that important. More interesting is the discourse on the importance, or, more precisely, the unimportance of this

question. A good style was, for a historian, a point of minor importance. He, 'plus amateur de la vérité des faits historiques que de termes choisis ou de phrases ampoulées' ('more a lover of the truth of historical facts than of choice terms or bombastic phrases'),<sup>18</sup> had, after all, other and greater goals to pursue. The primary mission of the historian was to serve the Truth. Beyond that, he had to serve his readers, to instruct and educate them by showing the truth and by indicating the lessons that history was believed to contain. In order to do this, a historian had to write correctly and comprehensibly. 's'il veut instruire, il faut qu'il s'explique nettement, et se rende clair et intelligible' ('if he wishes to educate, he must give lucid explanations and make himself clear and intelligible').<sup>19</sup> But 'more' style than that was not required.

The significance of the style of a historical text depended entirely on its contribution to the higher and specific goals history was meant to serve. Some authors stressed that an exuberance of style could even be dangerous, since it could distract the attention of writer and reader from what was really important. Others placed more emphasis on style, since it was a means to attract the attention of readers who would otherwise perhaps not read at all. Nelis pointed out that many interesting and important histories unjustly remained unknown and unread, precisely because their style was poor.<sup>20</sup> Perhaps it was necessary to 'plaire pour convaincre' ('to please in order to persuade').<sup>21</sup> But it is clear that even from a perspective which did stress this, style remained completely secondary. The style of a historical text could by no means represent a value on its own; its value lay only in its subordination, its service to the historical reality and its implications. It was in fact this auxiliary status of style that distinguished history from literature, a distinction which was unproblematic for the Belgian historians of the time. History and literature were thought of as two different – even opposite – issues.

It is not entirely clear whether history was considered to be part of 'literature', *belles-lettres*, in a broader sense of the term. According to the French classification system for libraries,<sup>22</sup> which was also used more or less generally in the Southern Netherlands, history was a category on its own, distinct from *belles-lettres*. But on the other hand, there was the Brussels Academy, which consisted of two parts, *deux classes*, namely *sciences* and *belles-lettres*. The activities of the *classe des belles-lettres* were almost entirely historical, but this need not imply that the historical texts that were written in this setting, were considered to be literary. This becomes evident when we consider the attitude towards a specific genre that, at first sight, seems to bridge the gap between history and literature; that of the *éloge historique*. An *éloge* was a text devoted to a historic

person, a text that had the form of an oration and thus had to possess rhetorical qualities. The eulogist was expected to display knowledge both of history and of *eloquentia*; he had to be both historian and orator.

An *éloge historique* may be considered a historical text that had to have literary qualities. But considering the distinction that was made between those *éloges* on the one hand and the ordinary historical dissertations on the other, and the way both kinds of texts were clearly judged differently by the Academy, it becomes evident that both genres were not merely different, they were opposites, notably concerning the importance of style. For a eulogist, it was essential to write well; for the genuine historian, it was a minor matter. History and rhetoric were two different things; the orator had to worry about style, whereas the historian did not. For a literary text, style was the crucial part; in a historical text, it was superfluous.

Obviously, there was a distinction made between the 'fond' ('la partie historique'<sup>23</sup>) and the 'style', or (although these pairs of terms may have varying meanings) between *res* and *verba*,<sup>24</sup> matter and manner.<sup>25</sup> This distinction established, as far as historiography was concerned, an undisputed hierarchy. In itself it might be recommendable for a historian to write well, but if he wasted his time by worrying about style, he was overturning the natural order of historiographical values. According to this way of reasoning, it was indeed possible to write history without (having to think about) style, because style was considered to consist of additions made to the text; style was decoration; it concerned things that were not essential to the text such as rhetorical devices and ornamentation, which could therefore just as well be left out. It was possible – historians seem to say – to write without any style. As a genuine historian also should. The attitude towards style was negative: stylistic additions were always superfluous. When historians indicated how history should be written, they mostly concentrated on what an author should not be and not do. The historian was no orator, even less a novelist. His texts should not be too elegant,<sup>26</sup> or 'trop fleuri'.<sup>27</sup> Declamations and rhetoric should be left out of academic dissertations also ('ce style de rhéteur, qui est de si mauvais goût dans un mémoire académique') ('this rhetorical style, which is in such bad taste in an academic paper').<sup>28</sup>

The extreme version of this anti-rhetorical idea of history was that it was possible to present the past, the historical data, almost without intervening as a writer. This idea seems extremely naive to us, as – since Buffon's 'Le style est l'homme même'<sup>29</sup> and since (post)modern ideas on the content of the form – we generally accept that the dichotomy of content and form is absurd and unreasonable. 'By the time we reach

the criticism of our own day we find that this whole distinction between matter and manner has been decisively rejected. To reject it has indeed become one of the principal dogmas of current critical thought', Hough wrote in 1969.<sup>30</sup>

However, the historiographical praxis of the time reveals that a kind of history-writing with an invisible historian was almost a reality. In the first half of the century, histories were still very often like chronicles, annals. What a historian did was not so much 'describe' events, but rather collect and 'mention' them. Moreover histories of this period often contained lists (e.g. when the building of a church was mentioned, a list of the parish priests was inserted – in the text, not in a footnote), which offer a rather good example of a form in which historical data were presented without visible style.<sup>31</sup> A great deal of information in history books was given in stereotyped series of stereotyped little biographies, in uniform descriptions of villages, parishes and so on.

It might seem as if these works were to be regarded as mere – more or less erudite – compilations of material, meant to be 'consulted' and 'used' by other writers. There were in fact authors who modestly pretended that the main objective of their work was to be useful for future historians, brighter and better writers than they were themselves. But otherwise this did not imply that they considered their work as essentially different from what a proper historian had to write; it simply meant that they – sincerely or not – considered their work as imperfect, susceptible to improvement. Nevertheless their works were actually published as completed works, and under the ambitious titles of 'history of [a (geographical) entity]'. In fact what else could the history of a town or province be but a collection of the historical information concerning the subject – which was as complete as possible? According to this definition these histories were in fact proper histories. Therefore it seems to me that distinctions between, on the one hand, erudition (or antiquarian research) and, on the other, history (or philosophical or literary historiography)<sup>32</sup> are inappropriate to describe the historiography under consideration here.

Of course, these histories did not only consist of lists and series. Most of the texts were surveys of historical events which were sometimes merely mentioned, and sometimes more extensively reported in what can be seen as 'narratives'. They were always in a strictly chronological order and divided, in a stereotypical way, according to two *rythmes de base* (basic cycle) of history, which are *le rythme annuel* (annual cycle) and *le rythme dynastique* (dynastic cycle) (in the last case, the history is divided in chapters which all consist of a term of office of a prince).<sup>33</sup> Thus the form of these histories was highly standardized. This standardization

was a means of removing, to a certain extent, the stylistic uncertainty for the historian, and the need to be adventurous as a writer.

In the course of the century however, the evolution of historiography demanded the growing intervention of the writing historian. It was no longer acceptable for his work to be seen as mere 'compilation', unlike that of older historians, who would have admitted without hesitation that they were compilers and who described the work of the historian essentially as the 'collection' (albeit critical) of historical data. It was increasingly stressed that a qualitative intervention of the historian was required, an intervention situated in two fields. First, indication of explanations (motives, reasons, what was called 'reflexions'<sup>34</sup>) in history was called for. It was necessary to 'aprofondir les causes, les circonstances & les suites' ('go deeper into the causes, the circumstances and the effects').<sup>35</sup> Historians became convinced that history could not be useful and therefore was not interesting when, as was the case in a great deal of the older historiography, historical facts and data were presented without being linked and explained satisfactorily.

Second, there was the expanding need for discussion and criticism. Of course, the idea of a critical attitude towards traditions and sources had already been firmly established. Yet in the second half of the century, innovations which had developed in and around the Academy, in particular, considerably increased the possibilities for putting this principle into practice. Fields of research in what were later called the 'auxiliary sciences' (archaeology, numismatics, etc.) became more developed. Furthermore, critical historiography, until then reduced to parasitical additions to 'proper' histories (introductions, footnotes, dissertations and discussions at the end of the volume, *pièces justificatives*, etc.), now received a historiographical form of its own: the historical dissertation.<sup>36</sup> Historians did not just write 'histories' devoted to geographical entities (towns, provinces): they also wrote monographs on specific problems. It is obvious that in such texts, the person who writes is omnipresent and clearly perceptible. But nevertheless, style remained a superfluous quality for this critical, researching and problem-solving historian of the end of the century. In spite of being more modern and more scientific than his predecessors, he too showed some reluctance to use rhetorical devices and stylistic ornamentation. He stressed the subordination of style to the (changing) content just as much.

The anti-rhetorical attitude evidently does not imply that the eighteenth-century Belgian historian was advised to write badly. Of course it was better to write well; 'il est toujours blamable d'avoir plus mal écrit que l'on ne faisoit communement de son temps' ('it is always

reprehensible to have written less well than others did in one's time').<sup>37</sup> Of course a historian who was able to use a good style was worthy of praise and compliment. And historians were actually judged on their style by their colleagues and bibliographers. Thus not all talk of style was negative. There were ideas on what historical writing should be like – even though these were very often expressed in a critical and negative way. What remained when superfluity was lifted from the historical text was a way of writing that was good and at the same time appropriate for history. It was 'clarté, netteté, précision' ('lucidity, clarity, preciseness').<sup>38</sup> It was 'l'aisance & la simplicité, qui conviennent à la narration historique' ('fluency and simplicity which are fit for historical narrative').<sup>39</sup>

A historical dissertation aimed to solve a problem and to convince the reader to accept the proposed solution, and therefore had to be written in a style that focused on argument and discussion, criticism and interpretation, correctness and precision. The text had to be clear and perspicuous, and the information and the argument could not be buried under (hidden behind) a (decorative) style. Also the style of a proper history had to be transparent, since a historian had to focus on the content, on the historical reality and truth, which he was to present in as pure a form as possible. The language of the historian was transparent. The idea was that of a plain, unadorned language.<sup>40</sup> History was artless. It needed to have the same qualities the historical reality was believed to have: it was simple and natural (following the nature of history itself). A historical text had to be like the past. The historical style was noble, as were the character and the characters of history, its meaning and mission. The historian's language, for that matter, was 'le langage simple & noble de l'histoire'.<sup>41</sup>

## The apostle of a wooden Christ: P. N. van Eyck and the journal *Leiding*

Frans Ruiter

In this chapter, I would like to sketch the historical background of the journal *Leiding*. In particular, I shall concentrate on its main editor, the poet and literary critic P. N. van Eyck. *Leiding*, which can be translated in English as ‘guidance’, existed for only two years, from 1930 to 1931. It published articles on literary, historical and political topics.

So far, literary historians have not paid much attention to the journal. In comparison, other journals from the same period, such as *De Vrije Bladen*, *Forum*, *De Gemeenschap*, have been studied exhaustively. Clearly, *Leiding* has not been considered very interesting. And, in a way, the literary and cultural historians are correct. *Leiding* was a failure, and it did not add anything new to Dutch literature, or to any of the other domains it covered.

Nevertheless, it is not for antiquarian reasons that I intend to pay some attention to this journal here. I think, in an interesting and complicated way, *Leiding* can be related to the cultural transformation which took place between the two world wars. *Leiding* has traits of turn-of-the-century aestheticism, and of the proto-fascist mood of the interbellum. And to the extent that *Leiding* mixes two different modes of modernity, it is an ideal example with which to reflect on the issue of continuity and discontinuity of that period.

At the turn of the century, poets, writers and intellectuals often considered themselves to be the inspired high priests of a new world view. This era had begun with the writers of the 1880s, who had put the watered-down Christian world view of the bourgeoisie behind them. They, or at least their immediate successors, felt challenged to fill the glaring metaphysical gap. The modern substitutes they offered took all kinds



of forms: a redeeming message of beauty, the prefiguration of a utopian socialist society, the return to an aesthetic kind of medieval mysticism, or whatever. As long as it was something that would have more appeal than the inauthentic compromise the bourgeoisie was satisfied with.

The conviction that modernity was a great opportunity for radical and visionary cultural and social renewal, in which poets and intellectuals would play a major part, was tenable for quite a long time. But little by little – World War I is an important rupture here – the notion was becoming apparent, that, more than anything else, modernity had the character of an ordeal. Dutch poets and intellectuals were not accepted as the natural-born spiritual leaders of the new social mass movements (in the Netherlands Protestant, socialist and Catholic mass movements crystallized in strictly separated pillars). Modern, non-denominational intellectuals and the elevated conception of culture they embodied were threatened with marginalization. As a consequence, their words took on an increasingly shrill tone. Their reactions assumed many guises, but common to all was a strong anti-democratic drive.

I have so far drawn a fairly general picture. Van Eyck is closely connected to the first decades of the twentieth century. In his younger years, he had contributed to *De beweging* (The Movement), the famous and rather idealistic journal led by Albert Verwey. Verwey is the perfect example of the rather optimistic period of modern culture. Verwey still had the firm conviction that he could (or at least had to try to) turn the tide of social and cultural fragmentation. He believed that in the end there was just one big movement (hence the name of his journal). It was clearly Van Eyck's ambition to follow in Verwey's footsteps.

But events took a different course. Instead of becoming an inspired spiritual leader of a younger generation, Van Eyck was never really taken seriously. His critical judgement was respected, but it was not liked and his world view was considered to be somewhat out of phase with the times. His short collaboration with the highly reputed journal *De gids* ended (in 1926) in conflict.<sup>1</sup> Immediately after this rather unfortunate experience, Van Eyck, together with Pieter Geyl and Carel Gerretson, began to devise a plan for a new journal.

Let me introduce very briefly the two other editors. Pieter Geyl was a liberal historian. In the twenties and early thirties he was a very energetic and rebellious promoter of the idea of a Greater Netherlands. Like Van Eyck he was living in London, where he taught at University College London. Later he became a respected professor of Dutch history in Utrecht, and, during the Cold War, a staunch defender of the values of the West.

Carel Gerretson is by far the most colourful of the three. In his youth he had published a small collection of poetry, entitled *Experimenten*. This one volume has secured him a place in Dutch literary history as one of the few Protestants who contributed to the canon of modern Dutch literature. In the twenties he earned his living as a businessman and a university professor. He was a restless political activist and his conservative ideas drew him dangerously close to the emerging fascist movement in Holland.

It took a couple of years before these three men succeeded in realizing their plans for the journal. Following a suggestion by the now elderly Albert Verwey, the journal was called *Leiding*. Initially, though, Pieter Geyl preferred the name *Eigen* (which means something like ‘of one’s own’). The reason why is telling enough. In a letter to Gerretson, Geyl described the motivations of his preference thus:

We believe in our own people, we want to develop our own traditions, we don’t want anyone to hijack our own selves. Against hollow and vague cosmopolitanism, we stick to our own national identity.<sup>2</sup>

With reference to the vague cosmopolitanism that Geyl describes, one should bear in mind that Verwey, the mentor of Van Eyck, was known as a confirmed cosmopolitan. And Geyl’s words were approved of by Gerretson, who wrote the following to Van Eyck:

Our basic idea is national. I think that our people still have a special vocation among other peoples. It is only through self-assurance and not by self-erasure that the Netherlands can mean something to the rest of the world.<sup>3</sup>

In the same letter Gerretson argued in favour of an organic democracy, in contrast to the existing parliamentary system, which, in his opinion, had failed. Only an organized group and not the masses could be a safeguard against the revolutions which were threatening from all sides. By return post Van Eyck endorsed all these ideas. He strongly felt that these times needed other principles and another form of organization; law as opposed to anarchy, form as opposed to disintegration, order as opposed to chaos.

All these themes recurred in the introduction of the first issue of *Leiding*, which appeared in 1930. It cannot have happened often that a new journal welcomed its readership with a manifesto as ponderous as

this one. Compressed into a mere few pages are a penetrating diagnosis of the times, a complete political theory and cultural anthropology.

The aim of the journal, so the introduction tells us, was to combat the prevailing formlessness of society. Only under an organic regime would it be possible for a society to be healthy. The journal urged the Dutch readers to work unremittingly to transform their people into such a national organism. Culture, in this organic and healthy view, is both the sum and the pinnacle of national life. The editors expressed their hope that the journal would be the centre around which the Dutch people would organize this kind of healthy life. Their ambitions could not exactly be described as modest. The whole combination is a curious mixture of starry-eyed idealism and a sense of doom. It is easy to recognize elements both of the turn-of-the-century optimism and of interbellum pessimism.

The editors of *Leiding* generously offered the younger generation a helping hand. In their opinion this younger generation had gone astray through lack of formative power. It had lost itself in spasmodic trends. However, the younger generation firmly rejected this offer of guidance. For instance, the two up-and-coming men of the moment, Edgar du Perron and Menno ter Braak, had no affinity whatsoever with *Leiding*. Du Perron, in a letter, tried to induce Ter Braak to write a review, but he added 'assuming you do not fall asleep while reading the journal' – which Ter Braak obviously did.<sup>4</sup> But who can blame him, as even Gerretson had to admit that he tried to read the first issue to absolutely no avail. I would imagine that he floundered in trying to read Van Eyck's studious article on Dutch literary history. In any case, Gerretson explicitly expressed his hope that Van Eyck would not contribute too much to the forthcoming issues. As it turned out, Van Eyck was the most prolific and Gerretson the least. And as Van Eyck is notorious for his stylistic byzantinism, this partly explains the short life of *Leiding*.

The only member of the younger generation who was in touch with Van Eyck on a more or less regular basis was Hendrik Marsman. Marsman was the *Mann ohne Eigenschaften* of the Dutch literary scene during the interbellum. Unlike anyone else, he was in league with all the conflicting, spasmodic trends of his period.<sup>5</sup> And as one might expect, his relations with Van Eyck were also rather ambivalent. During the earlier conflict between Van Eyck and *De gids* it had transpired that their views on poetry differed, subtly but decisively. For both, poetry was nothing less than the expression of the divine. Van Eyck held the view that the poet had to forgo the right to satisfy individual wants and needs. The poet had to sacrifice himself totally and unconditionally for his poetry. Marsman had

once said that writing poetry is to practise the supreme function of life, a statement which sounds highly compatible with the elevated poetical conceptions of Van Eyck. However, Marsman meant something else. In his view, it is not necessarily the whole human being that is involved in this divine sublimity. The simple truth is, he told Van Eyck, that even the biggest skunk can be the greatest poet.<sup>6</sup> He abhorred what he referred to ironically as Van Eyck's ideal of 'a theocracy of beauty'. A poet's life is not a lyrical exordium to eternity.<sup>7</sup>

I think that Marsman's typification of Van Eyck's position as a pursuer of a theocracy of beauty is rather apt. In a letter to Marsman, Van Eyck even agreed with it, proudly stating that his aesthetics was indeed comprehensive. Because God reveals Himself to man in forms of beauty, Van Eyck says, the universal law of life is of an aesthetic nature.

My aesthetics is an epistemology, a metaphysics, it is also an ethics, not for the individual alone, but for the community as a whole. In fact, it offers the fundamental principles for a political theory. In other words, it is all-embracing, it is a religion. This aesthetics permits no departures. Once one has found this truth, it is impossible to dismiss it.<sup>8</sup>

In other words, Van Eyck's poetics strongly resembles a religious fundamentalism. In a way, it is very close to the aesthetics of the Catholic French philosopher Maritain, who was greatly admired by Marsman. In fact, Marsman's famous remark that a poet can be a skunk is a frivolous echo of Maritain's scholastic division between the good and the beautiful.

If it is true that both Van Eyck and Marsman felt drawn to rather fundamentalist solutions, why, then, did Van Eyck push things too far for Marsman? In my view, the answer has something to do with the spirit of the times. In Marsman's opinion, there was too little tragedy and too little inner conflict in Van Eyck's position. In a review of a volume of poetry by Van Eyck, Marsman makes it very clear that, in his opinion, Van Eyck, as a poet, was crippled, because he excluded nihilism and despair. For Van Eyck, on the other hand, Marsman is a failure as a poet, because, ultimately, he was a decadent and an individualist.

There is one further point worth noting on the difference between Van Eyck's and Marsman's aesthetics. Van Eyck's aesthetics is coloured by the philosophy of Spinoza. Marsman's aesthetics, on the other hand, as I have already said, is influenced by Maritain. Both aesthetics are equally totalizing. But the former is connected with an optimistic narration of gradual progress, the latter with a pessimistic narration of tragic decline

and loss. The former seems to be in harmony with the direction history has taken. The latter is in conflict with it and is rebellious. And it is at this juncture of two historic narrations that Van Eyck and Marsman, as representatives of two generations, clash.

Though he was invited by Van Eyck to contribute to *Leiding*, Marsman refused. He felt that the journal was hostile to his sensibility and to the sensibility of his whole generation. It is very telling that in 1932, Marsman, in a letter to Van Eyck, refers as follows to Van Eyck's relation to Verwey:

I just cannot forgive you, that you are the Paul, the apostle, of this Wooden Christ [the wooden Christ is of course Albert Verwey]. Even if Verwey's spiritual notions should turn out to be right, his poems are an effective remedy against poetry.<sup>9</sup>

One has to read this passage very closely. Marsman does not reject Verwey's and Van Eyck's position outright. And he concedes that their positions may even be right. It is just that he has no affinity with the poems that are the result of this spiritual position.

Van Eyck and Marsman represent two different strategies for coming to terms with the spiritual problem of modernity. The first strategy, the one chosen by Van Eyck, is compensatory. The old Christian belief is abolished, but, with a show of confidence, it is replaced with something new. The second strategy, the one chosen by Marsman, is far less confident. Although he tries to resist it, he seems well aware that he has to live in a world without any metaphysical proof and without certainty. He simply does not believe, in the same way that Van Eyck does, that the arts can fill the transcendental vacuum, at least not in a straightforward way. And with this, any claims to provide leadership and guidance can no longer hold water. Marsman and his peers, of course, feel themselves far superior to the masses, but they are, at the same time, empty-handed. This causes a strong feeling of doom in the young intellectuals, and, simultaneously, it promotes a strong anti-social, anti-democratic and elitist frame of mind.

In conclusion it seems to me that *Leiding* is the last convulsive emergence of an old set of ideals, which had already outlived themselves by the thirties. The journal represents the final chord in a transitional phase of modernity. Nevertheless, the shrill sounds of a new phase can be detected in it although it did not succeed in attracting any serious attention from the younger generation. This ambitious journal, so keen to offer guidance, has fallen, so to speak, between two stools.

## Menno ter Braak in Dutch literature: Object and subject of image-building

Nel Van Dijk

In the Netherlands Menno ter Braak (1902–40) is considered a leading critic of the pre-war period.<sup>1</sup> The importance attached to him is comparable with that attached to T. S. Eliot in English literature. Like Eliot, Ter Braak had a wide range of talents and like Eliot, he left his mark on various areas of cultural life. Two short quotations may serve to illustrate the lasting presence of Ter Braak. Recently, the author Willem Frederik Hermans called him ‘the last Dutch taboo’. Hermans was referring to Ter Braak’s suicide shortly after the outbreak of World War II. He was trying to debunk the established view of Ter Braak as a hero who had died for his country. And in an article on the growing influence of fascism, Hugo Brandt Corstius, a well-known columnist, lamented: ‘if only Menno ter Braak were still alive’. He expected Ter Braak’s pencil to have somehow provided an antidote to the extremist right-wing movements trying to obtain a foothold in the Dutch political field.

These two examples make it clear that Ter Braak is the object of image-building. Since the 1930s authors and critics have pointed to his influence and discussed his significance. They use his thoughts as a stepping-stone for putting forward their own ideas. Ter Braak’s name functions as a label that is referred to either in a negative or a positive way, depending on place and time.

In this chapter I wish to argue the following thesis: Ter Braak was not only the object, but also the subject of image-building. Underlying this view are two assumptions. First: the literary field consists of various institutions. The members of these institutions are involved in the material production of literary works. However, this is not their only concern. They also create images of these works as possessing certain traits

and qualities. This process, which can be called the symbolic production, results from the interaction between agents in the different institutions. Second: agents involved in symbolic production aim not only at assigning quality to literary works, but also at obtaining an authoritative position in the literary field. What is said and done by members of the institution of criticism is greatly influenced by their ambition to obtain a respected reputation. In support of this, I will discuss Ter Braak's strategic activities as a literary critic, focusing on the manner in which he dealt with the work of the Flemish author Willem Elsschot.

## **Literary institutions and the key position of literary criticism**

Pierre Bourdieu's metaphor of the cultural field inspired my colleagues at Tilburg University to generate a series of questions on the production and consumption of literature.<sup>2</sup> They view the literary field as a set of literary institutions.<sup>3</sup> This set includes the organizations involved in the material production and distribution of books (publishing houses, public libraries, booksellers and book clubs); the councils that advise national and local authorities on public subsidies for the arts, as part of their cultural policy (departments of arts councils); and finally the somewhat loosely organized group of people who seek to specify and propagate conceptions of literature in terms of which value can be assigned to literary and non-literary fiction (literary criticism). This last group employs specific channels of communication (literary education, scholarly and literary magazines, press and media).

The literary field embodies a varied network of relations. Members of different institutions engage in specific professional activities with respect to literary texts. These activities are shaped by the institutional framework.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, in order to gain insight into an agent's functioning and its effects, one must take into account the rules and conventions governing both the institution to which she or he belongs and the other institutions in the field.

The institution of literary criticism plays a crucial role in the symbolic production of literature. The complementary activities of journalist, essayist and academic critic determine to a great extent which texts are held to be legitimate forms of literary fiction in a given period, the rank they are supposed to occupy within the hierarchy of literary works and which statements count as proper ways of characterizing these texts. The main responsibility for the constitution of the repertory and for the

ranking process rests with reviewers and critics from the field of journalism. The attribution of grades and quality by authoritative members of the institution of criticism has proved to be socially effective, as other reviewers and critics – and even the writer of the work under discussion – appear inclined to reproduce their view.<sup>5</sup>

The main task of critics is to ascribe properties and value to literary works. In my opinion, critics also have other interests, interests which can be called political or strategic. Bourdieu describes the literary or artistic field as a stage on which there is constant competition. It is a field of forces, but it is also a field of struggles which tend either to transform or conserve this field of forces.<sup>6</sup> Irrespective of friendships and pleas for a common conception of literature, all reviewers and critics are involved in this competitive struggle. ‘Newcomers’ in literature, those with little esteem, want to improve their position; they are looking for change. Those with a respected position try to defend this position and, therefore, wish to maintain the status quo.

To illustrate this institutional view of the functioning of criticism, I will now discuss the case of Menno ter Braak. I will restrict myself to Ter Braak’s support of Willem Elsschot’s authorship and show that he also had strategic interests in focusing attention on this writer.<sup>7</sup> I do not wish to detract from Ter Braak’s many qualities. He had highly original opinions and his manner of arguing was very effective. Those qualities are not being disputed here. What interests me here is the strategic dimension of his behaviour as a participant in the literary scene. My aim is to show that his actions were to a significant extent determined by his striving for authority.

While Ter Braak’s literary critical activities and his conduct in the Dutch literary field are the object of analysis, it should be pointed out here that many of the observations made can also be applied to situations in other countries. In this respect it is worth mentioning Webster’s *The Republic of Letters* (1979) about the history of post-war American literary opinion and John Rodden’s *The Politics of Literary Reputation* (1989) about the literary career of George Orwell.<sup>8</sup>

## **Menno ter Braak as a literary critic**

Many literary historians look upon Ter Braak as the man who gave new life to the career of Willem Elsschot. Indeed, as an editor and as a reviewer, Ter Braak argued strongly for the re-evaluation of this author. In the period 1914 to 1924 Elsschot published four books. After that he



was silent for close to a decade. In common opinion, he retreated because recognition of his authorship failed to materialize. Indeed, attention to Elsschot's work decreased, but it is not certain that this was caused by a lack of appreciation of his literary work. Non-literary aspects have to be taken into account when looking at Elsschot's early reputation. His books were marketed by three different publishers in the turbulent period of World War I. Moreover, one of his books was placed on a list of forbidden literature, drawn up by an organization which was working in the service of the Catholic church. Finally, Elsschot himself acted as an outsider: he was not connected with any literary movement, nor did he contribute to any literary magazine on a regular basis. This made it very difficult for the reading public to look upon Elsschot as a productive and promising new author.

After ten years of silence Elsschot made a comeback in the early thirties. At that time Ter Braak's career was making important progress. In 1931, he had become the editor of *Forum*, the literary magazine he had founded with his friend Edgar du Perron. Two years later he would be appointed the literary editor and, thus, main reviewer for the newspaper *Het Vaderland*. Ter Braak no longer needed to concern himself with trying to gain a foothold in the Dutch literary scene; his years as a newcomer were a thing of the past. He now had at his disposal two important media organs through which he could promote his conception of literature to his colleagues and to the reading public. He was in a position in which he could regularly state his literary preferences.

As editor of *Forum* Ter Braak invited Elsschot to contribute to his magazine. Besides several early poems, Elsschot published his new novel, *Kaas*, in *Forum*. As a reviewer at *Het Vaderland* Ter Braak would discuss every new book Elsschot wrote. In his reviews, Ter Braak repeatedly pointed out Elsschot's qualities as a writer and would repeatedly recommend his work to the reading public. Yet there was a striking inconsistency between Ter Braak's public support and his private opinion of Elsschot. In his letters to Du Perron, he took a drastically different position on the value of Elsschot's work. Du Perron is the first to call Elsschot a second-rate author, and it is remarkable that Ter Braak does not contradict this harsh judgement. On the contrary, he actually admits he too has a poor opinion of Elsschot's talent. How can we explain this discrepancy between public support and private condemnation? In my opinion, it confirms the view that Ter Braak pursued strategic aims in his critical and editorial work.<sup>9</sup>

First, there is the aspect of incorporation and group formation. As founder and editor of *Forum*, Ter Braak attempted to gather a permanent,

recognizable group of authors around the magazine. Elsschot was a more than suitable candidate, in part because of his position as a writer. He was not very well known and was not already linked to a specific literary movement or magazine. Therefore, it was possible to present him as an author who 'belonged to the club'. As he had made his debut in 1914, Elsschot clearly belonged to an older generation of writers. But Ter Braak ignored Elsschot's early work without comment and presented him to the reading public as both a young and a typical 'Forum author'.

At the same time, on account of his early work, Ter Braak typified Elsschot as a 'forerunner'. Here we touch a second aspect of the function Elsschot performed for Ter Braak. Referring to Elsschot as a 'forerunner' permitted Ter Braak to take a firm position on the issue of what constitutes the Dutch literary heritage. In *Het Vaderland*, Ter Braak repeatedly wrote about 'the authors of common sense'. These authors, including Multatuli, Nescio and Elsschot, functioned as a model. They were referred to as favourable exceptions to the bulk of past writers. A positive reference to 'the authors of common sense' implied resistance to the still present authority of tradition.

In addition, Elsschot also served as a reference point in Ter Braak's reviews of contemporary literary works. In this context, it should be remembered that Elsschot was a Flemish author and thus came from the wider Dutch-language area. As a literary critic for a Dutch newspaper, Ter Braak also had to deal with publications from neighbouring Flanders. He had to keep abreast of literary developments in Flemish literature as a whole. Stemming from a feeling of solidarity, 'integration' has been a constant element in the relationship between Flemish and Dutch literature. Many Flemish authors had and have Dutch publishers and Dutch literary magazines often have Flemish co-editors and contributors. Yet this integration has always given rise to controversy. The amount and quality of the attention Dutch newspapers give to Flemish literature is as topical a subject in the 1990s as it was for Ter Braak in the 1930s. His assessment of Flemish literature carried more weight than his evaluation of French and English works. Nevertheless, for Ter Braak the striving for integration was a thorny issue. Most Flemish authors were Catholic and Ter Braak was an atheist. As Elsschot constituted a favourable exception to the widespread Catholicism of Flemish writers, he was perceived as a worthy representative. In Ter Braak's reviews of Flemish literary works, Elsschot was often referred to positively while his fellow countrymen were judged negatively.

Ter Braak's remarks on Flemish literature were also influenced by problems surrounding the publication of *Forum*. The magazine was

not doing well and in 1934 the publisher insisted on cooperation with Flemish authors. In this manner, he hoped to broaden the range of the periodical. Ter Braak resented this reorganization. In his reviews of Flemish literature, his concern about this development can be read between the lines.

## Concluding remarks

One can conclude that Ter Braak succeeded in his efforts on behalf of Elsschot, who became a well-known writer and is still seen as a typical *Forum* author'. Still, it would be incorrect to reduce Ter Braak's conduct in the literary field to a ruthless, strategic game. Here, the literary context must be taken into account. It is a context that is constantly changing, a context in which different and divergent interests are at stake. In such a context, agents have to adjust opinions, shade judgements and make compromises. This is true of writers, critics, publishers and other members of literary institutions. That is why preconceived strategies and long-term planning are out of the question. We must take into consideration that Ter Braak was only one of many critics. We now consider his conduct as successful and look upon him as one of the most important spokesmen of his time. But this view is based on knowledge of later developments and thus it is a view dependent on hindsight.

In my current research I am attempting to specify the different elements of literary reputation by studying the aspects that affect the literary careers of contemporary Dutch authors and critics. Both textual and non-textual aspects are being taken into consideration. In this chapter I have restricted myself to one aspect of this large project. My aim was to make clear that strategic goals are inextricably linked to the conduct of those holding or trying to hold a position in the literary field.<sup>10</sup>

# The reviled and the revered: Preliminary notes on the reappraisal of canonized literary texts

Godfrey Meintjes

I began with a desire to speak with the dead.<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction

Literature written in the Afrikaans language, an offshoot of the seventeenth-century Dutch dialect of the province of Holland, is by definition a product of the socio-political power emanating from a colonial hegemony; moreover, the very canonization of that literature is a product of a particular ideological network. The aim of this investigation is to *revisit* examples of texts which were written prior to the so-called 'Renewal of Sixty' and which traditionally were *revered* and more recently *reviled* by critics.

## Reading and rereading

The traditionally acceptable and therefore institutionalized readings of canonized Afrikaans literary texts can inhibit the process whereby meanings are generated in texts. Roland Barthes stresses the co-authorship of the reader in the following way: "The more plural the text, the less it is written before I read it."<sup>2</sup> However, the canonized and canonizing readings of texts tend to lock the text into a specific system. Andre Lefèvre formulates the problem of the institutionalized

interpretation of texts as follows: 'What further contributes to the increasing irrelevance of literary studies in our time, is the dogged persistence with which corporate critics beholden to a certain set of values, epitomized by a certain canon tend to insist on . . . the "right" or "acceptable" interpretation of that canon.'<sup>3</sup>

The history of literary theory in the Western world reflects the gradual but consistent decentring of the author and the foregrounding of the reader. Jefferson describes reader-centred criticism as follows: 'For Barthes criticism consists in actively constructing a meaning for a text and not in passively deciphering *the* meaning, for in the structuralist view there is no single meaning in literary works.'<sup>4</sup> Van Zyl describes the reader involvement in the generating of meanings in texts in the following way: '[T]he reader is not viewed as passive and will because of art's capacity to model reality project into the work not only the structures of his artistic experience, but structures of his life experience as well.'<sup>5</sup> Kermode, on the other hand, focuses on the text and its openness to new interpretations: 'It seems that on a just view of the matter, the books we call classics possess intrinsic qualities that endure, but possess also openness to accommodation which keeps them alive under endlessly varying dispositions.'<sup>6</sup>

Roland Barthes proposed the following reading strategy in order to escape the tyranny of institutionalized meanings: '[R]ereading is here suggested at the outset for it alone saves the text from repetition.'<sup>7</sup> One should nevertheless be aware that, as Robert Scholes puts it, 'we can't bring just any meanings to the texts, but we can bring all the meanings we can link to the text by means of an interpretive code. And, above all, we can generate meaning by situating the text among the actual and possible texts to which it can be related.'<sup>8</sup>

The act of rereading by definition confronts the reader with what Montrose calls the 'historicity of texts and the textuality of history'.<sup>9</sup> Although this chapter will confine itself to the historical implication of texts, it is a matter of some interest to the literary theoretician that modern historiography finds itself confronted by the notion that history, in the words of Collingwood, is viewed as a 'web of imaginative construction'<sup>10</sup> rather than, in the words of von Ranke, a presentation of the past 'as it actually happened' ('Wie es eigentlich gewesen').<sup>11</sup> While 'the unimpeded sequence of raw empirical realities' as described by Krieger may appear to be knowable, historiography involves 'critically examining and analysing the records and survivals of the past'.<sup>12</sup> It has to take cognisance of the possibility of what Foucault calls the 'ancient proliferation of errors'.<sup>13</sup> Nor can it be assumed that history would necessarily be

free from forgetfulness, concealment and misunderstanding, as listed by Derrida.<sup>14</sup>

The practitioner of historiographic metafiction in the words of Marshall ‘refuses the possibility of looking to and writing about the past “as it really was”. Rather s/he takes on an active role and “does the past”, participates, questions, and interrogates.’<sup>15</sup> In opposition to this fragmented view of history, Marxists like Jameson prefer to view history as ‘a single great collective story’ containing a ‘single fundamental theme ... the collective struggle to wrest a realm of Freedom from a realm of Necessity’.<sup>16</sup>

The advent of the practice of *the new historicism* as outlined by Stephen Greenblatt in the early 1980s goes some way towards incorporating some of the important features of both postmodernism and Marxism.<sup>17</sup> While reading the text from a historical perspective as would a Marxist, the new historicist also remains aware of the open-endedness of texts and of *différance*.<sup>18</sup> In line with poststructural thinking, new historicism as indicated by Abrams also takes cognisance of Foucault’s view that ‘power relations at any given era in society contribute the concepts, oppositions and hierarchies of its discourse and in this way determine what will be counted knowledge and truth.’<sup>19</sup> New historicism further accepts Bakhtin’s view that literary texts tend to be dialogic, and this feature of conflicting and contradictory elements merges in new historicist practice with the postmodernist notion that texts tend to deconstruct themselves.<sup>20</sup>

Abrams succinctly describes the approach of the new historicism:

This historical mode is grounded on the concepts that history itself is not a set of fixed, objective facts, but like the literature with which it interacts, a text which needs to be interpreted: that a text whether literary or historical is a discourse which although it may seem to present or reflect an external reality, in fact consists of what are called representations – that is verbal formations which are the ideological products or constructs of a particular era.<sup>21</sup>

In this way the new historicism, in the words of Ruthven, writing about feminist criticism, becomes a ‘scanning device’ in the sense that ‘it operates in the service of new knowledge which is contributed by rendering visible the hitherto invisible’.<sup>22</sup>

In essence a new historicist reading is political in nature. Abrams describes a political reading of texts as follows: ‘The primary aim of a political reader of a literary text is to undo the ideological disguises and

suppressions in order to uncover the historical and political conflicts and oppressions which are the text's true, although covert or unmentioned, subject matter.<sup>23</sup> We shall use three traditional texts from Afrikaans literature in order to demonstrate how a political reading of a text can uncover 'covert or unmentioned, subject matter'.

### ***Hans die Skipper* (1928) by D. F. Malherbe**

The publication of D. F. Malherbe's novel *Hans die Skipper* coincided with the PACT coalition government between the Nationalist party and the Labour party which governed the Union of South Africa from 1924 to 1929.<sup>24</sup> The fact that the author received the coveted Hertzog prize for the novel in 1930 is proof of the literary (and political) status of a text which over many years was revered as a classic in the Afrikaans canon. Kannemeyer in his monumental Afrikaans literary history calls this text Malherbe's 'suiwerste' (purest) work and refers to the conflict between father and son in the text.<sup>25</sup> Traditional institutionalized readings of the text tended to emphasize this generation conflict as well as the notion that the text was a novel in praise of labour. Fifty-four years after its first date of publication, the text was – for the very first time ever – read from a historical perspective by Gerwel.<sup>26</sup> In 1991 Bertelsmann subjected the text to an incisive rereading from a historical perspective.

Instead of decoding a hymn to labour per se or a mere generation conflict between father and son, Bertelsmann traces the ideological project of a text which, according to him, sets out to encourage the likely reader (poor 'platteland' Afrikaners, locked into a rural economy) to enter into a 'Volkskapitalisme' in the cities in line with the so-called 'civilized labour policy' of the PACT government. This ideological project, according to Bertelsmann, was disguised by the fact that it is not so much the family farm as the small-scale fishing lifestyle which Johan, the son of Hans die Skipper in the text, leaves for the industrializing town, where, incidentally, he becomes involved in wagon building with its obviously acceptable symbolic connotations. While Johan becomes very successful in town, the text, Bertelsmann points out, describes his father Hans's dependence on the seasons and on nature in general.<sup>27</sup>

Bertelsmann indicates that certain *silences* reveal the ideological project of the text. One such *silence* is in connection with the history of Johan's so-called 'coloured' counterpart Willem. Willem and his wife display the very characteristics which the texts propagate: they are of sober

habits, hard-working, decent-living, etc. However, Bertelsmann points out that because the portrayal of a successful 'coloured' man in town or in a city would undermine the ideological project of the text, this figure had to be dropped from the narration altogether.<sup>28</sup>

Gerwel is of the opinion that this novel reflects attitudes in the social environment from which the text emanates.<sup>29</sup> Bertelsmann takes issue with Gerwel and states that the very ideological project of this text is not to portray the extra-textual status quo, but to attempt to change the socio-political situation by encouraging a new economic dispensation.<sup>30</sup> Similarly, when Gerwel sees the portrayal of 'coloureds' in the text as a group of people with inherent defects, Bertelsmann is of the opinion that the opposite is true in this novel.<sup>31</sup> The economic system propagated by the text would inevitably lead to the demise of the feudal social order and for this very reason the text envelops the future of the so-called 'coloured' in textual silence.

The following general description by Abrams is directly applicable to the very process at work in Malherbe's *Hans die Skipper*:

Furthermore, what may seem to be the artistic resolution of a literary plot yielding pleasure to the reader, is in fact deceptive, for it is an effect which serves to cover over the unresolved conflicts of power, class, gender, and social groups, that make up the real tensions that underlie the surface meanings of a literary text.<sup>32</sup>

## **Somer (1935) by C. M. van den Heerver**

*Somer*<sup>33</sup> is a typical Afrikaans farm novel which in the words of J. M. Coetzee 'celebrated the memory of the old rural values or proclaimed their desirability and elaborated schemes for their preservation'.<sup>34</sup> The setting for the novel is a Free State farm at the time of the harvest. Traditionally the text was read as a story dealing with problems affecting farmers such as natural disasters and problems related to ownership rights. At a different level it was read as a love story involving Linda and Wynand, registering notions regarding the futility of love against the background of the eternal movement of the seasons. This is another text central to the traditional Afrikaans canon and originally revered by establishment critics. Kannemeyer in the seventies still described this text as one of van den Heerver's best: 'een van Van den Heerver se suiwerste werke'.<sup>35</sup>

Gerwel, in sharp contrast to Kannemeyer's reverent attitude towards the novel, represents a revisionist reading. He states that this



novel is one of the 'most reactionary' of the texts under discussion in his essay *vis-à-vis* the portrayal of so-called 'coloured' people. He says that they are described in the most banal of terms and that they remain mere aspects of the background, portrayed as obedient serfs of their white masters.<sup>36</sup>

Mackenzie<sup>37</sup> rereads *Somer* from what she calls a 'sexual political' perspective and decodes patterns of patriarchal domination represented in the text which, according to a traditionalist reading like that by Kannemeyer, was regarded as a romantic and idyllic treatment of abstract, so-called universal problems.<sup>38</sup> Mackenzie's reading has much in common with Dollimore and Sinfield's 'commitment to the transformation of a social order which exploits people on the grounds of race, gender and class'.<sup>39</sup>

This kind of reading achieves the very opposite of the traditional kind, which tends to 'naturalise the text ... that is interpret its culture-specific and time-bound representations as though they were features of universal and permanent human experience'.<sup>40</sup>

## ***Boplaas* (1938) by Boerneef**

The short texts in Boerneef's *Boplaas* provide typical examples of Afrikaans prose from the pre-1948 period.<sup>41</sup> The texts in this volume, in which a white narrator relates experiences from his childhood on a Bokkeveld farm, deal with the day-to-day activities on a Karoo farm and encode blatant racism as part and parcel of a specific view of life.

While some critics revere these texts as respectable, first-class literature belonging to the canon, the texts also fall into the very category of those which are reviled by revisionists.

The canonized readings of these texts traditionally established and entrenched certain meanings comfortable to the hegemony. In the late sixties, F. I. J. Van Rensburg described what in effect represents a description of a feudal order in the *Boplaas* texts as a 'natural hierarchy'<sup>42</sup> and Merwe Scholtz in the late seventies still regarded the *Boplaas* texts as images of a kind of farm idyll.<sup>43</sup>

Mphahlele's reading of Afrikaans literature as a whole epitomizes a reading strategy which reviles Afrikaans literature on the grounds of its surface structure: 'Were it not that it glorifies white supremacy, and were it not for the unutterable evil this literature breathes, one would simply dismiss it as inane, a crushing bore'.<sup>44</sup> Gerwel, in a report of a revisionist reading of the older Afrikaans prose, says that many of these texts

(the *Boplaas* texts by Boerneef, although not specifically mentioned in his essay, fit into this ethos) tend to affirm attitudes which might contribute to colour and race discrimination.<sup>45</sup> Here we have typical examples of a dilemma. Gerwel and Mphahlele decode devastating racism in these (kinds of) texts and Scholtz and Van Rensburg report the reading of an idyll.

In addition to the two approaches outlined above, Aucamp suggests that some of the older Afrikaans texts represent the Afrikaans writer's own demythologization of a feudal and presumed paradisiacal world.<sup>46</sup> It is, however, not merely a matter of decoding blatant racism on the one hand, or assuming an idyll on the other hand. The primary aim, in the words of Abrams, of a political reader of a literary text is 'to undo these ideological disguises and suppressions in order to uncover the historical and political conflicts and oppressions which are the text's true, although covert or unmentioned subject matter'.<sup>47</sup> Read in this way the *Boplaas* texts become discourses representing historical power structures.

A historical rereading of this text indeed portrays a feudal racist social order. The paradox in these texts is that the very uncensored portrayal of the social order to which Mphahlele refers unmasks a system which could, as indicated by Scholtz's reading, be mistaken for a peaceful farm idyll. The text involves a narrative process within which the narrator employs the narrative elements, *figures, events, space and time* in order to generate a *Boplaas* code. This code indicates paternalism, racism and feudalism as major aspects of an ethos, and read in this way, the text demythologizes the notion of a farm idyll. The text also, as the result of its capacity to represent aspects of history, not only questions Mphahlele's negative view of Afrikaans literature in general,<sup>48</sup> but can even meet Mphahlele's own social criteria for literature, which demand that 'it should order our experiences and responses and help resolve conflicts inside ourselves'.<sup>49</sup>

This kind of reading strategy enables the decoder of the text to trace the representations of the past, and in the process, to quote Abrams, the 'voices of the oppressed, the marginalized and the dispossessed' can be decoded.<sup>50</sup>

## Conclusion

The rereading of texts traditionally revered and currently reviled might assist the reader, in the words of Kumar d'Souza, taken from a

different context, 'to move into another space, another time recapturing submerged knowledge, generating new spaces'.<sup>51</sup> Fiction is indeed a kind of history, as Doctorow asserted.<sup>52</sup> Whether history is a kind of fiction, as he also postulated, is the subject of another investigation.

## Postmodern Dutch literature: Renewal or tradition?

Marcel Janssens

This volume has an overall theme of 'presenting the past'; among other things, the past of Dutch literature. My chapter deals with a rather new-fashioned approach to presenting the very recent past of Dutch fiction (occasionally also of Dutch poetry).<sup>1</sup> I am referring to Dutch prose texts written from the 1950s and the 1960s onwards, which are now generally and comprehensively called 'postmodern', whereas until some seven years ago they were not perceived in these terms at all. No contemporary critic ever used the label 'postmodernism' for the overtly non-mimetic, even anti-realistic texts of Ivo Michiels for instance, back in the recent past of 1963 (*Het boek alfa*) or 1971 (*Exit*, one of the most audaciously abstract texts ever written in Dutch). Michiels was called a master of 'abstract' prose up to the late 1980s, but is considered to be a paragon of postmodern writing now. Louis-Paul Boon is said to be a forerunner of postmodern storytelling, and so are Hugo Claus and Harry Mulisch, Cees Nooteboom and Gerrit Krol, Willy Roggeman and Claude C. Krijgelmans.<sup>2</sup>

Dutch contemporary literary history is also catching up with the authors connected with *Raster* and *De Revisor*, Frans Kellendonk or Jacq Firmin Vogelaar for instance, but also Willem Brakman, A. F. Th. van der Heijden, Walter van den Broeck, Jeroen Brouwers,<sup>3</sup> and of course Sybren Polet, the spokesman of the 'other prose' movement in the sixties. The 'other prose', both in the Netherlands and in Flanders, was presented as a linguistic opus, very close to abstract painting and minimal music, deliberately deviating from 'straightforward naive or mimetic realism'.

Not only does it appear to be fashionable to incorporate the founding fathers of the other prose into the postmodern mood: the label proves to be suitable for the newest generation of prose writers – not altogether

surprisingly, you might say. Authors of the more or less reflexive or critical type like Kristien Hemmerechts, Eriek Verpale, Koen Peeters and Patricia de Martelaere are said to exhibit postmodern features beyond any discussion; and there is no doubt about the predominance of postmodern procedures in recent texts of Pol Hoste, Stefan Hertmans, Boris Todorov and Paul Claes.<sup>4</sup> Those postmodern features would be: multiplicity of points of view, intertextual references, allusions to archetypes, destroying the illusion of fiction in order to stress the plurality of reality and the difficulty of gaining a grip on reality by literary means.<sup>5</sup> The obnubilating of the borderline between reality and fiction, the predominance of scepticism, eclecticism and relativism characterize the underlying poetical presupposition.<sup>6</sup> All this is said to be postmodern, just like ‘the empty narrative’,<sup>7</sup> or ‘the decentred narrative’ and ‘the labyrinth of various types’.<sup>8</sup> In summary, the fragmentation of great ideological frameworks would be the key element of postmodern writing.<sup>9</sup> ‘Petites histoires’, ‘petits récits’ – those are the stories that could still be told nowadays.<sup>10</sup>

In 1981 Mark Insingel gave the following comment on the title of his opus-text *Woorden zijn oorden*:

My ‘territory’ consists of words, of linguistic configurations and constructions. As such it can be thought of as ‘not belonging to this world’. It is not realistic – some blind people will say. As a matter of fact [my territory] cannot be found on a map, it does not create the illusion of being completed and measurable, it exists in continuous new constellations made of the driftwood of reality.

A more programmatic deviation from straightforward mimesis can hardly be found in recent Dutch prose writing. Texts like *Woorden zijn oorden* or *Mijn territorium* could be submitted to a new screening by means of postmodern poetics. There was undoubtedly a tradition of non-mimetic writing back in the 1950s. Such texts, then, are some twenty-five years older than the more recently invented label ‘postmodern’. Even metafiction, parafiction, eclecticism, relativism and the labyrinthine mixture of various types and modes of writing could be traced back to the late 1950s.

Another important characteristic of postmodern writing is the ironic inclusion of pulp texts in so-called ‘serious’ literature,<sup>11</sup> and one example of this can be seen in my discussion of Robberechts’ *Praag schrijven* – a text that could be considered to be postmodern *avant la lettre*. On the other hand, the outspoken engagement of the late sixties and the seventies is being abandoned in postmodern writing. This aspect

can also be seen below in the section on *Praag schrijven*, which exhibits the ideological and political commitment of May 68, something which has by now almost completely disappeared.

As far as the concept of postmodernism in literature is concerned, the term 'postmodernismo' had already been introduced in the 1930s in connection with some reactions against modernist trends in Spanish and South-American poetry.<sup>12</sup> But with regard to American literature Leslie Fiedler's survey of contemporary postmodern literature since 1960 was published no earlier than 1970; the title of his essay contains two slogans of postmodern culture: 'Cross the border. Close the gap'. Dutch comparatists like Fokkema, Bertens and D'Haen introduced the term around 1983, preceding our historians of Dutch literature by some four or five years with their publications in English and Dutch. As far as I know, Ton Anbeek was the very first Dutch critic to use the label 'postmodern' back in 1984 with regard to the *Revisor* prose which he connected with postmodern tendencies in his review of the book *Houdbare illusies* by Carel Peeters.<sup>13</sup> From 1988 on there is widespread use of the term with regard to contemporary Dutch fiction, including – as I said in my introduction – the 'other prose' of the sixties,<sup>14</sup> despite the fierce campaigning of a prominent Dutch critic like Carel Peeters against the use of the term.<sup>15</sup> Peeters's essay was full of praise for the *Revisor* group, but he refused to call them postmodernists. In the meantime the terms 'pre-postmodern'<sup>16</sup> and even 'post-postmodern'<sup>17</sup> no longer come as a surprise.

So the first point I want to make in this chapter concerning the theme 'presenting the past' is this: many contemporary historians of our recent literature tend to present the past of the last quarter of a century as 'postmodern', which represents a new view of those texts or at least the use of a new label rapidly growing increasingly familiar. It is even expanding beyond expectations, or perhaps even far beyond justifications. We are presenting that past of some twenty-five years as a thoroughly contemporary episode. We are bringing that recent past closer to us; or we are detecting contemporary attitudes, with which we are so familiar now, in a very recent past.

Let me now briefly present my second look at 'presenting the past' referring to only one example, the novel *Praag schrijven* written by Daniël Robberechts in 1967–71 and published in 1975. The novel itself must be approached in two ways. First, the author himself appears to present a past with a rather narrow time gap of at the most three years; in relation to the history dealt with in the book there is a small distance of four years again between the writing and the publishing of the book. Contemporary readers in 1975 were already looking back on the events of 1968–71

narrated and commented upon in the book. Second, from my point of view as a critic and as a historiographer of contemporary Dutch literature I shall attempt in turn to read that book twenty-five years later as a 'postmodern' text. Or at least I shall endeavour to attach the label 'post-modern' to that book.

*Praag schrijven*, a book of 275 pages, was published in the *Raster* series edited by H. C. ten Berge, Lidy van Marissing, Pieter de Meijer and Jacq Firmin Vogelaar. The journal *Raster* cherished the heritage of the 'new prose', promoting a modernist type of storytelling, which undermines the clichés of the traditional narrative: i.e. unquestioned 'realism', non-problematic relations between language and reality, the illusion of veraciously depicted characters, straightforward chronology, the naive psychological and epistemological veracity of a world on paper. The poetics of *Raster* can be seen as a symptom of an international trend that moved away from traditional poetics in the direction of a thoroughly problematic narratology. The *Raster* series contains only one sample of a Flemish author, Daniël Robberechts, who had in 1970 already produced a similar project, called *Aankomen in Avignon*. Also, through a number of poetological essays Robberechts had gained the status of an anti-traditional writer *par excellence*.

Robberechts was a believer. He published the one-man reviews *tijdSCHRIFT* and *tSCHRIFT*, journals and essays displaying his modernist view. *Praag schrijven* also is a kind of manifesto, a testimony or a credo concerning the very nature of storytelling, but also concerning the act of writing as such. Such a book invites the reader or, better, forces him or her to reflect upon various metafictional problems, such as those mentioned above. At the heart of the project *Praag schrijven*, there is the poetological doubt, like a worm in an apple.

The book contains no chapters, but rather long fragments named after the month and the year in which they were written: sometime between November 1967 and November 1970, with a closing statement written in 1971. On one particular day the moment of writing is noted very precisely: 'Wednesday 21 August 1968' – the day the armies of the Warsaw Pact invaded Prague. We may assume that the book was written between 1967 and 1970, in other words that the period of writing coincides with the historical events referred to, i.e. the Prague Spring, the 1968 Revolt, the murder of Robert Kennedy, the Vietnam War and other events that surrounded Dubcek's resistance to the Soviet regime. As a matter of fact, the greatest number of pages can be read as a historical report of the political revolution in Prague and elsewhere in Europe around 1970. Let us trust the author with regard to what he says about

the historical setting of his writing. At the end of the book there are fourteen pages with 128 notes (mostly Dutch translations of French and German quotations) and ten more pages containing a list of names.

These two types of supplementary information may already indicate the nature of *Praag schrijven* as a project.<sup>18</sup> That writing such a text can be seen as a project is already suggested by the title *Praag schrijven*, with the infinitive pointing to a certain task to be accomplished, a mission to be fulfilled, a deliberately self-imposed job. The writer wants to cover the object 'Prague' with words. The object turns out to be a project, or better: a problem. Considering it was already so difficult, not to say impossible, to enter Avignon, how could one possibly write so complex a thing as 'Prague'?

The undertaking looks mainly scriptural or metapoetic in the beginning, but after four months (that means after forty pages) the task is suddenly complicated with the outburst of the Prague Spring. Another four months later the Dubcek affair has been fully integrated in the project. The author behaves like a journalist and writes the chronicle of the events in Prague, hour by hour, day by day, far away from the Golden City. All the news he collects from newspapers is incorporated in the project. This journalistic type of writing constitutes a new level in the book. After eight months, Prague has become Prague in the making. In the middle of the book the author says: 'Prague now is Prague what Prague becomes together with what Prague was.' As a matter of fact, a true *Raster* project that makes one dizzy. The conclusion, which could already be drawn right from the beginning, must be: Prague cannot be written.

The book contains some experiments, however, in gaining a firmer grip on Prague by means of words on paper, but those attempts are immediately put aside as offering no way out. My father Jan-Emmanuel, the author says, visited Prague as a young man in 1922; perhaps I could use his postcards in order to give a description of the city? Or I could outline other pictures linguistically, like in a book of Jules Verne's. Or I could use a photograph of Doctor K. (Franz Kafka), looking like my father, or a biography of Jan Hus, or a city map. All those attempts prove to be completely treacherous and useless. *Praag schrijven* is nothing less than a question of trial and error, of starting and abandoning, of failure and endurance, lasting three years up to the final recapitulation or capitulation in 1971, when the author admits that he has been defeated by his self-imposed task.

The ideal text turns out to be the text that cannot be written. The book becomes a sort of 'mediamix', an assemblage of various types of texts: news, comments, testimonies, addresses, quotations, which in



their variety show how the project has become a desperately complicated matter in the course of three years. The author even writes a letter to Rilke – one more type of text to be integrated in the ‘mediamix’. Or he quotes eight pages out of the theoretical works of the Russian formalists and Prague structuralists. He even adds quotations from judgements of a court of justice concerning his father. Or he turns to Kafka once more for several pages ... Prague cannot be written, not even from a journalistic point of view. The author demonstrates the falsification of the information in the newspapers by means of a confrontation of a version of an article written by the Czech Ilia X and published in the review *Soma*, with his own translation. Thus the poetics of the impossible is reinforced with the demonstration of public lying.

In a text like this the degree of self-reflection is inevitably prominent. Self-reflection and self-criticism emphasize the problematic status of the relation between writing and reality. He even examines the efficiency of his writing so thoroughly that he decides to rewrite a piece of text.<sup>19</sup> Such procedures as metafiction and rewriting come very close to postmodern techniques – as can be seen in my conclusion.

This would not be a book from around 1970 if it did not combine a very outspoken political commitment with all those poetological problems and with the hazardous mixing of various types. The Prague-writer professes his ideological views overtly. Writing is a vital necessity or the utmost refuge for a man who uses the text as a tool of self-improvement and self-examination, in the philosophical, aesthetic, ideological and political senses of the word. To write is a compromise with the commitment on the streets and the barricades. Instead of shouting slogans on the streets he withdrew to his study, however committed he may have been to the same objectives of fundamental social change. This commitment is part and parcel of the Robberechts profile around 1970 – a sort of extra value he introduced into the poetics of the *Raster* group.

Let me conclude my presentation of a very recent past by drawing your attention to so-called ‘postmodern’ features of *Praag schrijven*. From this point of view the book might turn out to be even more ‘modern’ than it was thought to be before or, if you like, even ‘prepostmodern’ or something like that.

Self-reflection is one of the main characteristics of postmodern storytelling and of *Praag schrijven* as well. The ‘indeterminacy’ of postmodern discourse can be found everywhere in Robberechts’s book. Indeterminacy in fluctuating fragmented points of view and idealizations: the I of the author, his father Jan-Emmanuel, Doctor K., Rilke, and so on. Frame-breaking (or metalepsis) is produced by the mixture

of levels and trials. There is also frame-breaking in the fading away of the borderline between fiction and reality or between the fictional and journalistic levels. I have already mentioned the procedure of rewriting, but such a necessity permeates the undertaking as a whole, since every month the author is forced to sit down in front of a sheet of white paper, facing his 'mission impossible'. Furthermore, the postmodern project intends to close the gap between various types of texts, which is what happens with the mixture of postcards, letters, biographies and – above all – journalism. In that mixture high culture (Kafka, Rilke, the Russian and Czech structuralists) encounters low culture (the postcard messages). *Praag schrijven* is especially a book on the writing of *Praag schrijven* and as such it presents itself to the reader in the shape of a huge question mark that raises other questions over and over again, not questions about what happened in Prague exactly or what Prague looks like for a tourist, but metafictional questions about the very nature of such a text. As if the mixture of the texts I mentioned was not sufficient in order to articulate the complexity of the undertaking, the author also adds many quotations taken from essays on the Prague Spring to his reports based on the daily news in the media. Such a promiscuity of texts could be called postmodern.

It was not my intention to enhance the intrinsic artistic relevance of *Praag schrijven* by calling it postmodern. I wanted to show how modern Daniel Robberechts was in 1967–71. The strategy of *Praag schrijven* was undoubtedly up-to-date in those years; updating the evaluation of the book in postmodern terms might not be such a bad idea for us now.

# Notes

## Preface

- 1 First published in the occasional book series Crossways that accompanies *Dutch Crossing: Journal of Low Countries Studies*, as Jane Fenoulhet and Lesley Gilbert, eds., *Presenting the Past: History, Art, Language, Literature*, Crossways 3, London: Centre for Low Countries Studies, 1996. Some art-historical articles have had to be excluded from republication as a result of issues in connection with reproducing the original illustrations.

## Chapter 1

- 1 On the role of the Batavian Myth in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Dutch culture, see Ivo Schöffer, 'The Batavian Myth during the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries' [1975], in I. Schöffer, *Veelvormig Verleden. Zeventien studies in de Vaderlandse Geschiedenis*, Amsterdam, 1987, pp. 63–77; and K. Tilmans, *Aurelius en de Divisiechroniek*, Hilversum, 1988, pp. 122–7, 146–56, 204–6.
- 2 Schöffer, 'Batavian Myth', pp. 71–2.
- 3 *Letters from and to Sir Dudley Carleton Knt. During his Embassy in Holland from January 1616 to Dec. 1620*, 2nd edn, London, 1775, p. 265.
- 4 Schöffer, 'Batavian Myth', p. 73; Gary Schwartz, *Rembrandt, his Life, his Paintings*, London, 1985, pp. 318–20.
- 5 See E. O. G. Haitsma Mulier, *The Myth of Venice and Dutch Republican Thought in the Seventeenth Century*, Assen, 1980, pp. 170–212; E. O. G. Haitsma Mulier, *Nederlandse gezicht van Machiavelli*, Hilversum, 1989, pp. 16–18.
- 6 R. A. Duff, *Spinoza's Political and Ethical Philosophy*, Glasgow, 1903, p. 10.
- 7 Hans W. Blom, *The Rise of Naturalism in Dutch Seventeenth-Century Political Thought*, Rotterdam, 1995, pp. 217–78.
- 8 See Wim Klever, 'Inleiding' to the new edition of Franciscus van den Enden, *Vrye Politieke Stellingen en Consideratien van Staat*, Amsterdam, 1992, pp. 13–109.
- 9 [Johan de Witt], *Deductie, ofte Declaratie van de Staten van Hollandt*, The Hague, 1654, pp. 36–7.
- 10 Ericus Walten, *De Regtsinnige Policy*, The Hague, 1689, p. 53; [J. Crispeel?] *Politieque Reflectien van Staat*, 1690; 2nd edn, Utrecht, 1739, pp. 67–9.
- 11 Dionisius du Toict, *Hollands Heyll en Rampen*, 2 vols., Amsterdam, 1686, vol. I, pp. 80–3.
- 12 Benedict de Spinoza, *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, trans. S. Shirley, Leiden, 1989, pp. 253, 278.
- 13 See the editor's footnote, Spinoza, *Tractatus*, p. 278.
- 14 Spinoza, *Tractatus*, p. 278.
- 15 Van den Enden, *Vrye Politieke Stellingen*, pp. 166–7.
- 16 [De Witt], *Deductie*, pp. 37, 39.
- 17 [Crispeel], *Politieque Reflectien*, pp. 227–9.
- 18 Du Toict, *Hollands Heyll*, vol. II, pp. 371–2.
- 19 See G. Jongbloet-van Houtte, 'De belegeringen de val van Antwerpen belicht vanuit een koopmansarchief', *Bijdragen en Mededelingen betreffende de Geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 91 (1976): 29, 35–6.

- 20 See *Begin, Voortgang ende Eind der Vrye, ende der Gewaande Erf-Gravelij Bedieninge in Holland en West-Vriesland*, Amsterdam, 1683; and *Vertoog van de algemeene Vryheydt der Staten van Hollandt ende West-Vrieslandt, onder ende gedurende de Bedieninge onser Graaven*, 1684, Knuttel, 12169.
- 21 *Vertoog van der algemeene Vryheydt*, p. 4.

## Chapter 2

- 1 For their suggestions and comments on earlier versions of this chapter, I would like to thank S. Schama, L. Townsend and J. Pollmann. I would also like to acknowledge the support of the H. F. Guggenheim Foundation for its financial assistance. The title of this chapter puns on D. Löwenthal's *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge, 1985), which itself refers to the opening lines of L. P. Hartley's *The Go-Between* (London, 1953): 'The past is a foreign country; they do things differently there.' The make-up of the *pot* can be studied in a contemporary print, *Int Nuwe doolhoffinde Orange pot tot Lubbert Janssen Root*, engraved by Hessel Gerritsz (1632) and intended, presumably, as an advertisement for the park. There were two other well-known *doolhoven* in Amsterdam, both of which had 'memorials' to Alva's tyrannies. The first, the 'Oude Doolhof' of Vincent Peylder, had a 'panopticum' that showed important figures of Dutch and European history, including the 'iron duke'. The second, the 'Nieuwe Doolhof op de Roosegracht' owned by David Lingelbach, had a collection of statuary representing 'the tyranny of the duke of Alva' among a variety of other patriotic themes. See D. C. Meijer, 'Het Oude Doolhof te Amsterdam', *Oud Holland* 1 (1883): 30–6, 119–35; and N. de Roever, 'Het Nieuwe Doolhof, "In de Oranje Pot", te Amsterdam', *Oud Holland* 6 (1888): 103–12. The articles reproduce the respective prints of the 'old' and 'new' *doolhoven*.
- 2 Adriaen Valerius, *Nederlandsche gedenck-clanck*, ed. and introd. P. J. Meertens *et al.*, Amsterdam, 1947, pp. 5–6.
- 3 Cf. Meijer, 'Oude Doolhof', and de Roever, 'Nieuwe Doolhof', for examples. A rather vivid illustration of the use of Old Testament statuary, in particular, can be seen in the imposing representations of David and Goliath that today decorate the coffee shop of the Amsterdams Historisch Museum and originally stood (apparently) in a nearby *doolhof*.
- 4 Hugo de Groot, *Liber de antiquitate reipublicae Batavae*, Leiden, 1610, also appearing in a Dutch translation as the *Tractaet vande oudtheydt vande Batavische nu Holländische Republique*, The Hague, 1610. On the Batavian theme in Renaissance Dutch historiography, see I. Schöffer, 'The Batavian Myth during the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', in J. S. Bromley and E. H. Kossmann, eds., *Britain and the Netherlands V*, The Hague, 1975, pp. 78–101. On early modern Dutch representations of the past more generally, see the seminal study (primarily concerned with visual sources) of H. van de Waal, *Drie eeuwen vaderlandsche geschied-uitbeelding*, 2 vols., The Hague, 1952; and the contribution of S. Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches. An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age*, New York, 1987, esp. pp. 69–125.
- 5 For the presence of early Americana in Dutch libraries, see Jan Lechner, 'Dutch Humanists' Knowledge of America', *Itinerario* 16, 2 (1992): 101–13; and the more general study of B. van Seim, *Een menigte treffelijke Boecken. Nederlandse boekhandelscatalogi in het begin van de zeventiende eeuw*, Utrecht, 1987.
- 6 Pieter-Jansz. Twisck, *Chronijck van den onderganse der tijrannen: ofte jaerlycksche geschiedenissen in werltijcke ende kereklijcke saecken, van Christi geboorte af tot desen tyt toe*, 2 vols., Hoorn, 1619–20, vol. I, p. 898 (and cf. vol. I, pp. 893–9 for the principal materials relating to the conquest of the New World): 'Hoe wel beminde Leser, dat ick in Chronijcksche beschrijvinge niet geern veel in-reden ghebruycke, om de Historie daer door niet te verduyteren ofte al te seer te verlangen ... Soo en can ick het nochtans hier niet wel voor-by u een weynich te verhalen van dese saken die tot waerschouwinghe dienen, ende tot opmerkinghe verwercken te weten: Dat u al-hier bysonder vanden Jare 1492. tot den Jare 1542. voorghedraghen, ende als in eenen Spiegel ontdeckt wordt, den aert, nature, listicheyt, bedroch, valscheyt, ontrou, eergiericheyt, wreetheyt, tyrannie, ende heerschappije der Spanjaerts ... inde Nieuwe Werelt ... bedreven: Ons dienende om altijd inde memorie ende ghedachtenisse levendich ende naeckt voor onse ooghen te houden, ende nimmermeer in't huys der verghetelheydt te stellen, maer neerstich waken, verghetelheydt te, ende altijd op

onse hoede te zijn ... om niet weder te vallen onder de Spaensche heerschappije, tyrannie, ende ghewelt.'

- 7 Willem Baudartius, *Morghen-wecker der vrye Nederlandsche provintien*, 'Danswick', 1610; [Herman Allertsz. Koster?], *Spiegel der jeughl*, Amsterdam, 1614; Johannes Gijsius, *Oorsprong en voortgang der nederlandscher beroerten ende ellendigheden*, [Leiden], 1616; [Joannes Gijsius?], *Tweede deel van den Spiegel der Spaensche tyrannye gheschiet in Nederlandt*, Amsterdam, 1620; and *Warachtighe beschrijvinghe ende levendighe afbeeldinghe van de meer dan onmenschelijke ende barbarische tyrannije bedreven by de Spaengiaerden inde Nederlanden*, 1621. Baudartius's text was distinguished as the standout volkschrift of the seventeenth century by P. A. Tiele in the 'Bijlage' to his *Bibliotheek van Nederlandsche pamfletten*, Amsterdam, 1858, p. 1.
- 8 [Gijsius?], *Tweede deel*, p. 1. All of the other 'popular' histories noted above also mention, somehow, the fate of the Indians in their opening pages.
- 9 J. C. Breen, 'Gereformeerde populaire historiographie in de 17de en 18de eeuw', *Tijdschrift voor geschiedenis* 37 (1922): 254–273, 372–382.
- 10 Emanuel van Meteren, *Historie der Neder-landscher ende haerder na-buren oorlogen ende geschiedenissen*, The Hague, 1614, fol. 418. Mention should also be made here of the many other relevant works of history that defy simple categorization: Petrus Hondius's elaborate country-house poem, *Dopes inemptae, of de Moufe-schans*, Leiden, 1621, which contains a lengthy section on history, half of which concerns America; Johan van Heemskerck's omnibus work of patriotic pastoralism, *Inleydinghe tot het ontwerp van een Balavische arcadia*, Amsterdam, 1637, which revives for its readers 'the [memory] of how the Spaniards intended to desolate and annihilate our dear Fatherland as they have the West Indies'; and Adriaen Valerius's, *Nederlandsche gedenck-clanck*, Haarlem, 1626, which opens with a typical section on Habsburg global ambitions and the tyranny of Spain in America.
- 11 Pieter Cornelisz. Hooft, *Nederlandsche hystoorien, sedert de ooverdracht der heerschappye van kaizer Karel den Vyfden op konning Philips zynen zoon*, Amsterdam, 1642, pp. 333–4.
- 12 Van Meteren, *Historie der Neder-landscher ende haerder*, 'Voor-reden aenden Leser', sig. \*3r.

## Chapter 3

- 1 See M. Cavanna Ciappina, 'Casoni, Filippo', in *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, part 21, Rome, 1978, pp. 393–6.
- 2 F. Casoni, *Vita del marchese Ambrogio Spinola, l'espugnator delle Piazze*, Genova, 1691, p. 349 (author's translation).
- 3 See for instance A. Sanderus, *Lacrymae in funere Alberti Austriaci optimi et clementiss. Belgarum principis*, Antverpiae, 1621.
- 4 For instance in R. Mirteus, *Historia Belgica sive commentarius brevis rerum in Belgio gestarum ... Accedunt illust. et excell. Marchionis Ambrosii Spinulae Victoriae, & res praeclarè in Belgio gestae; describente Iosepho Gamurino &c. cum Elogiis Spinulae gentis*, Coloniae, 1611. *The Elogia illustrium gentis Spinolae* was originally published by Aubertus Miraeus in Antwerp as early as 1608. See a list of Flemish panegyrics in R. A. Vosters, *Het beleg en de overgave van Breda in geschiedenis, litteratuur en kunst* (Publicatiereeks gemeentearchief Breda, Studies, 8), Breda, 1993, vol. I, p. 171.
- 5 H. Hugo, *Obsidio Bredana armis Philippi IIII. Auspiciis Isabellae Ductu Ambr. Spinolae Perfecta*, Antverpiae, 1626. On the author see J. Andriessen, *De Jezüieten en het samenhorigheidsbesef der Nederlanden 1585–1648*, Antwerp, 1957, p. 31 along with n. 33, and of course C. Sommervogel, ed., *Bibliothèque de la compagnie de Jésus, Bibliographie*, Brussels; Paris, 1893, vol. IV, cols. 512–22.
- 6 R. A. Stradling, *Europe and the Decline of Spain. A Study of the Spanish System, 1580–1720*, London; Boston; Sydney, 1981, pp. 57–8.
- 7 Introduction by the Irish captain Gerrat Barry in the English translation, *The siege of Breda by the armes of Philip the fourth under the government of Isabella atchieved by the conduct of Ambr. Spinola*, Lovanii, 1627.
- 8 *Trophaea Ambrosii Spinolae supremi Exercituum Catholici Regis in Belgio y Italia Ducis, celebrata à sex oratoribus. Flandro, Trans-Rhenano, Caesareo, Branbanto, Hispano, Italo ...*, Lovanii, 1631, pp. 7, 81.

- 9 A. Gallucci, *Historia della guerra di Fiandra dall'anno MDXCIII sin alla tregua d'anni XII conchiusa l'anno MDCIX . . .*, Roma, 1673, vol. I, p. 5. The Troy identification was also used by H. Haestens. *La nouvelle Troye, ou memorable histoire du siège d'Ostende*, Leiden, 1615.
- 10 On this publication see K. Porteman, 'J'ay pui pour dupes tous les Pays-Bas. Jean Puget de la Serre en de Nederlanden', in A. Keersmakers and P. Lenders, eds., *Cultuurgeschiedenis in de Nederlanden van de Renaissance naar de Romantiek. Liber amicorum J. Andriessen*, A. Keersmaeckers, P. Lenders, Leuven; Amersfoort, 1986, pp. 217–38.
- 11 Pieter Paul Rubens, Antwerp to Pierre Dupuy, Paris, 27 January 1628, in R. Saunders Magurin, *The Letters of Peter Paul Rubens*, Cambridge, MA, 1955, pp. 234–5.
- 12 'Voor-reden', in E. van Reyd, *Historie der Nederlantscher oorlogen begin ende voortganck tot den jaere 1601*, Leeuwarden, 1650 (author's translation).
- 13 Cited in W. J. C. Buitendijk, *Nederlandse strijdzangen (1525–1648)*, Culemborg, 1977.
- 14 G. Baudaert, *Pourtraits en taille douce, Et descriptions des Sieges, Batailles, rencontres & autres choses advenues durant les guerres des Pays bas . . .*, better known under its false title, *Les guerres de Nassau*, Amsterdam, 1616, vol. II, p. 384.
- 15 Hugo, *The siege of Breda*, p. 18.
- 16 *Trophaea Ambrosii Spinolae*, pp. 77–8.
- 17 Rome, Vatican Library (henceforth BAV), Urb. Lat. 1076, fols. 149–50: 'questi due signori vicino l'un l'altro cento passi messero piede à terra per incontrarsi l'un l'altro, et fattosi un cortesissimo accogliemento, si stavano guardando, rubbandosi il tempo da vagheggiarsi, come se fussero stati due amanti'.
- 18 Casoni, *Vita del marchese Ambrogio Spinola*, p. 181.
- 19 Vosters, *Het beleg*, vol. I, pp. 286–7.
- 20 BAV, Urb. Lat. 1076, fol. 149v: 'et si sentivano le voci de le ragazzi per le strade, Marquis Spinola goet man, fray man'. According to the same source, Spinola was equally well received in Dordrecht, where people 'embraced him as if they were Jews and the marquis their Messiah', fol. 149.
- 21 P. Giustiniani, *Delle guerre di Fiandra . . .*, Venetia, 1612, p. 311: 'Tanto era fra loro formidabile il nome d'esso Spinola.' On this author and his work, see below.
- 22 Baudaert, *Guerres de Nassau*, vol. II, p. 436.
- 23 H. Grotius, *Annales et Historiae de rebus Belgicis*, Amstelædami, 1658, p. 762.
- 24 See similar fears in A. Valerius, *Nederlantsche Gedenck-clanck*, ed. P. J. Meerrens et al., Amsterdam; Antwerp, 1947, pp. 204–5.
- 25 All nations are fond of him, and particularly the local population. Quoted by A. Rodriguez Villa, *Ambrosio Spinola, primer marqués de los Balbases*, Madrid, 1904, p. 655.
- 26 Villa, *Ambrosio Spinola*, p. 724. It should be noted that A. Olivieri, *Monete e medaglie degli Spinola . . .*, Genova, 1860, pp. 147–9 and pl. 20, does not mention this medal.
- 27 Casoni, *Vita del marchese Ambrogio Spinola*, p. 11.
- 28 Gallucci, *Historia della guerra di Fiandra*, vol. II, p. 103.
- 29 L. Conti, *Delle memorie di Filippo di Comines, cavaliere, & signore di Argentone, intorno alle principali attioni di Ludovico Undicesimo, e di Carlo Ottavo suo figliuolo, amendue re di Francia . . . all'illustriss. Sig. Marchese, il Signor Ambrogio Spinola*, Genova, 1594. On Conti see R. Savelli, 'Conti, Lorenzo', in *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, part 28, Rome, 1983, pp. 444–6.
- 30 *Trophaea Ambrosii Spinolae*, p. 90. Identification of the Athenian and Byzantine generals for instance in C. Andersen et al., eds., *Lexicon der alten Welt*, Zurich; Munich, 1990, vol. I, cols. 302–3, vol. II, cols. 1960–1, vol. III, col. 3041–2 and A. Pauly and G. Wissowa, *Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, vol. XXXIX, Stuttgart, 1941, cols. 449–50 and Zweite Reihe, Stuttgart, 1937, vol. VI, cols. 568–75.
- 31 G. Bentivoglio, *Historie der Nederlantsche oorlogen . . .*, Leeuwarden, 1674, p. 720.
- 32 Hugo, *The siege of Breda*, pp. 142–3. Respect for the local population was one of the maxims of Spinola's warfare. See the conversation between Spinola and Jean Richardot, referred to by G. Parker, 'Il soldato', in R. Villari, ed., *L'uomo barocco*, Rome; Bari, 1991, pp. 43–4.
- 33 Gallucci, *Historia della guerra di Fiandra*, vol. II, p. 478: 'Ritornando il Marchese per l'Italia in Fiandra volle riveder Genova sua patria, da lui resa più gloriosa; e farsi riveder da lei, che sommamente lo bramava.' On his rivalry with the Dorias see the letter by the Venetian ambassador Alvise Mocenigo quoted by Villa, *Ambrosio Spinola*, p. 727.
- 34 The drawing is published in D. Bodart, ed., *Pietro Paolo Rubens*, [Rome,] 1990, p. 173.
- 35 *Imago militiae auspiciis Ambrosii Spinolae / Imagen de la milicia de un exercito firme*, Bruxellæ; Brusselas, 1614. On Struzzi see, M. A. Echevarria Bacigaiupe, 'La Huella de Farnesio en el

- pensamiento de Alberto Struzzi', in B. de Groof and E. Galdieri, eds., *La dimensione europea dei Farnese, Bulletin van het Belgisch Historisch Instituut te Rome – Bulletin de l'institut Historique Belge de Rome*, Special Issue, 63 (1993): 221–34 and M. A. Echevarria Bacigaiupe, *Alberto Struzzi: un precursor barocco del capitalismo liberal* (Avisos de Flandes 4), Leuven, 1995.
- 36 Baudaert, *Guerres de Nassau*, vol. II, p. 383.
- 37 'He only serves to gain honours and fame. He is only seeking honour, eager to attract attention and enjoy a good reputation.' Quoted by Villa, *Ambrosio Spinola*, pp. 653, 655.
- 38 'Reputation is the very soul of this life, the most esteemed part of it . . . in order to conserve it, those of my profession expose themselves to any risks war may offer.' Quoted by Villa, *Ambrosio Spinola*, p. 593, along with n. 3.
- 39 See on this issue R. Belvederi, *Guido Bentivoglio diplomatico*, vol. II, Rovigo, 1948, and R. Belvederi, *Guido Bentivoglio e la politica europea del suo tempo 1607–1621*, Padua, 1962, pp. 443–516.
- 40 'They have deprived me of my honour and my reputation.' Villa, *Ambrosio Spinola*, pp. 588–97; Vosters, *Het beleg*, vol. I, p. 200.
- 41 Baudaert, *Guerres de Nassau*, vol. II, p. 180.
- 42 Gallucci, *Historia della guerra di Fiandra*, vol. II, p. 279.
- 43 B. de Groof, 'Alexander Farnese and the Origins of Modern Belgium', in B. de Groof and E. Galdieri, eds., *La dimensione europea dei Farnese, Bulletin van het Belgisch Historisch Instituut te Rome – Bulletin de l'Institut Historique Belge de Rome*, Special Issue, 63 (1993), p. 197, along with n. 10.
- 44 F. Strada, *De bello belgico . . .*, Romae, 2 vols., 1640. About the author see Sommervogel, ed., *Bibliothèque de la compagnie de Jésus*, vol. VII, 1896, cols. 1605–17.
- 45 P. Giustiniani, *Delle guerre di Fiandra . . .*, Anversa, 1609. Pompeo Giustiniani was a veteran of the war of Flanders, see A. Carnero, *Historia de las guerras civiles . . .*, Bruselas, 1625, p. 487. The close relation between Pompeo Giustiniano and Spinola may be gathered from the mere fact that Pompeo's son was named after the marquis, see Rome, Biblioteca Casanatense, *Piemonte e Fiandra*, Tomo I, R. S. 2432, fols. 56–56v. See the *avviso* on the publication of Giustiani's book in BAV, *Urb. Lat.*, 1078, fol. 268v, Anversa, 21 April 1610.
- 46 Sommervogel, ed., *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jésus*, vol. III, 1892, cols. 1134–5.
- 47 J. Peeters-Eontainas, *Bibliographie des impressions espagnoles des Pays-Bas méridionaux*, Nieuwkoop, 1965, vol. I, p. 26.
- 48 On the important Irish contribution to the war of Flanders see G. Henry, *The Irish Military Community in Spanish Flanders, 1586–1621*, Dublin, 1992.
- 49 On the anti-Spinola sentiments in the Spanish ranks see Belvederi, *Guido Bentivoglio*, p. 81; on the Spanish mistrust during the Casale siege see for instance G. Dethan, 'Mazarin et Genes', in R. Belvederi, ed., *Atti del congresso internazionale di studi storici; rapporti Genova-Mediterraneo-Atlantico nell'età moderna*, Genoa, 1983, pp. 165–166.
- 50 On the contacts between Spinola, Lope de Vega and Calderón de la Barca see Vosters, *Het beleg*, vol. I, p. 180.
- 51 'Epistola dedicatoria' in *Trophaea Ambrosii Spinolae*.
- 52 Gallucci, *Historia della guerra di Fiandra*, vol. II, pp. 470–1.
- 53 Erycius Puteanus, Milan to Ambrosio Spinola, Brussels, 14 June 1606, in *Eryci Puteani Epistolarum Bellaria Centuria III. & Nova*, Lovanii, 1612, pp. 28–9, Epistola XXII.

## Chapter 4

- 1 This chapter, part of a projected book-length study of the monuments and cult of the Dutch naval heroes, incorporates material originally presented in a paper entitled 'The Cult of the Seventeenth Century Dutch Naval Heroes: The Invention and Exploitation of a Popular Patriotic Tradition', presented at Presenting the Past: History, Art, Language and Literature, Centre for Low Countries Studies, University College, London, 18–21 December 1994.
- 2 The history of the cult (its origins, development and propagandists application) has yet to be written; for a list of seventeenth-century sources, see C. Lawrence, 'Hendrick De Keyser's Heemskerk Epitaph: The Origins of the Cult and the Iconography of Dutch Naval Heroes',

- Simiolus* 21 (1992): 265–95, n. 6. Later sources include: Gerrit R. V. van Boekeren, *Het leven en de daden van Nederlands meest beroemde zeehelden en vlootvoogden*, Amsterdam, 1841; J. C. Bosch, *Geschiedenis van het Nederlandsche Zeewezen*, 3 vols., Zwolle, 1869; H. J. Broers, *Bijdragen tot de geschiedenis van het Nederlandsche zeewezen*, Utrecht, 1869; S. H. ten Cate, *Neerland's roem ter zee. De geschiedenis van ons zeewezen van zijn ontstaan tot den vrede van Utrecht*, Amsterdam, 1877; J. Elias, *Schetsen uit de Geschiedenis van Ons Zeewezen*, 6 vols., The Hague, 1916; J. C. de Jonge, *Geschiedenis van het Nederlandsche Zeewezen*, 6 vols., Haarlem, 1833–48; Jacob de Liefde, *Nederlandse Zeehelden van de 17e eeuw*, Leiden, 1893; D. F. Scheurleer, *Herinneringsdagen uit de Nederlandsche zee-geschiedenis*, The Hague, 1913; *Onze mannen ter zee*, The Hague, 1912–14; *Van varen en van vechten: verzen van tijdgenooten op onze zeehelden en zeeslagen, Lof- en schimpdichten, matrozenliederen*, 3 vols.: I, 1572–1654; II, 1655–1678; III, 1679–1800, Nijhoff, 1914; P. J. Schotel, *Heldendaden der Nederlanders ter zee, van de vroegste tijden tot op heden*, Amsterdam, n.d.; *Vier Eeuwen Varen. Kapiteins, Kapers, Kooplieden en Geleerden*, ed. L. M. Akveldetal, Bussum, 1973.
- 3 For discussions of the zeehelden as folk heroes, see A. Th. van Deursen, *Plain Lives in a Golden Age. Popular Culture, Religion and Society in Seventeenth-Century Holland*, Cambridge, 1991, pp. 76–78; and S. Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches. An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age*, New York, 1987, pp. 242–8.
  - 4 See E. J. Hobsbawm, 'Introduction: Inventing Tradition', in E. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger eds., *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge, 1992, pp. 1–14.
  - 5 Significant case studies of the invention and evolution of the cults of historical heroes include R. Graf, 'Die Mythenmaschine. Überlegungen zum Mythos am Beispiel eines Schweizerischen Nationalmythos', in *Die Schlacht von Sempach im Bild der Nachwelt*, Sempach; Lucerne, 1986, pp. 58–70 (the myth of Arnold von Winkelried); and Y. Zerubavel, 'The Historic, the Legendary, and the Incredible: Invented Tradition and Collective Memory in Israel', in John R. Gillis, ed., *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*, Princeton, 1994, pp. 105–3 (the legend of Joseph Trumpeldor). See also R. Stam, 'Reinventing Heroes in Renaissance Italy', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 17 (1986): 67–84. Other authors have considered the veneration of heroic admirals in England: G. Jordan and N. Rogers, 'Admirals as Heroes: Patriotism and Liberty in Hanoverian England', *Journal of British Studies* 28 (1989): 201–24; A. Yarrington, *The Commemoration of the Hero 1800–1864: Monuments to the British Victors of the Napoleonic Wars*, New York, 1988, and 'Nelson the Citizen Hero: State and Public Patronage of Monumental Sculpture, 1805–18', *Art History* 6 (1983): 315–29.
  - 6 See, for example, **Chapter 1** in the present volume by Jonathan I. Israel. For other significant considerations of this phenomenon, see C. Amalvi, *De Tart et la manière d'accommoder les héros de l'histoire de France: essais de mythologie nationale*, Paris, 1988; M. Burleigh, 'The German Knights: Making a Modern Myth', *History Today* 35 (1985): 24–9; M. de Certeau, *The Mystic Fable*, vol. I, *The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, Chicago, 1992; R. T. Matthews, and P. Mellini, 'From Britannia to Maggie: The Fall and Rise of John Bull's Descendants', *History Today* 38 (1988): 17–23; I. Schöffer, 'The Batavian Myth during the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', in J. S. Bromley and E. H. Kossmann, eds., *Britain and the Netherlands*, 5 vols., The Hague, 1975, vol. V, pp. 78–101; and M. Tanner, *The Last Descendant of Aeneas. The Hapsburgs and the Mythic Image of the Emperor*, New Haven, 1993.
  - 7 For the role of heroes or myths in the development of nationalism, see: R. E. Asher, *National Myths in Renaissance France: Francus, Samoths and the Druids*, Edinburgh, 1993; C. Beaune, *The Birth of an Ideology: Myths and Symbols of Nation in Late-Medieval France*, trans. S. Ross Huston and ed. F. L. Cheyette, Berkeley, 1991; D. A. Bell, 'Nation-Building and Cultural Particularism in Eighteenth-Century France: The Case of Alsace', *Eighteenth Century Studies* 21 (1988): 472–90; F. Cullen, 'The Art of Assimilation: Scotland and its Heroes', *Art History* 16 (1993): 600–18; R. Gildea, *The Past in French History*, New Haven, 1994; R. J. Goldstein, *The Matter of Scotland. Historical Narrative in Medieval Scotland*, Lincoln, 1993; A. Malkolkin, *Name, Hero, Icon: Semiotics of Nationalism through Heroic Biography*, Berlin; New York, 1992. See also those authors cited in n. 4.
  - 8 This issue has been considered in papers by the author: 'The Iconography of Jacob van Heemskerck: How a Hero Was Invented in the Early Modern Period', presented at Sixteenth Century Studies Conference, Philadelphia, October 1991; and 'The Battle at Gibraltar: The Heemskerck Epitaph and its Iconographic Legacy', presented at The Low Countries and the World, Centre for Low Countries Studies, University College, London, April 1989; see also Lawrence, 'Hendrick De Keyser's Heemskerck Epitaph'.



- 9 For discussions of the viability of particular myths, see Graf, Tanner and Zerubavel.
- 10 This raises the larger issue of the social nature of memory – namely how (and why) a country's past is remembered, forgotten, resurrected or selectively modified. For a discussion of 'public memory' or 'collective memory' as a political construction during the period in question, see David Cressy, 'National Memory in Early Modern England', in John R. Gillis, ed., *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*, Princeton, 1994, pp. 61–73; see also B. Schwartz, 'The Social Context of Commemoration: A Study in Collective Memory', *Social Forces* 61/62 (December, 1982): 374–402. That the cult of the *zeehelden* has passed into the twentieth century in the Netherlands is largely due to the number and prominence of its monuments; to public celebrations or tributes linked to the celebration of significant anniversaries (e. g., the births or deaths of the *zeehelden*, or their victories); to official promotion of individual figures in philatelic and numismatic art; and to their promotion by the Dutch navy (e.g. the naming of battleships, naval bases and academies as well as the medium of Dutch naval folklore more generally).
- 11 It is perhaps significant that many of the major studies of the *zeehelden* were produced during periods of political crisis – the wars with the English and French (1652–78), the conflicts of the 1830s which led to Belgian independence and World Wars I and II.
- 12 That the Republic's naval officers and the majority of its seamen were Dutch was one of several important factors which created the perception that the navy was a more *vaderlandse* institution; see Lawrence, 'Hendrick De Keyser's Heemskerk Epitaph', p. 272; Schama, *Embarrassment of Riches*, pp. 246–7, and van Deursen, *Plain Lives*, p. 77.
- 13 Heemskerk first gained recognition following voyages (1595 and 1596) in search of a polar route to the Far East: contemporary accounts of the second expedition, which was trapped for the winter off Nova Zembla by the icing over of the Kara Sea, praised his safeguarding of the cargo and crew; see S. P. L'Honore Naber, ed., *Reizen van Willem Barents, Jacob van Heemskerk, Jan Cornelisz Rijk en anderen naar het Noorden (1594–97), herhaald door Gerrit de Vere*, 2 vols., 's-Gravenhage, 1917.
- 14 Heemskerk's capture of a treasure-laden Portuguese battleship near Malacca (1603) prefigured Gibraltar and was later compared with Hein's capture of the Silver Fleet.
- 15 See Schama, *Embarrassment of Riches*, p. 248 (paternalism as a component of the image of the *zeehelden*); Jordan and Rogers, 'Admirals as Heroes', p. 217 (Nelson and paternalism).
- 16 *Resolution der Staten-Generaal van 1576 tot 1609*, vol. XIV, ed. H. H. P. Rijperman, The Hague, 1970, p. 30.
- 17 Some of this material was first presented in a paper entitled 'The Piet Hein Monument (Oude Kerk, Delft): The Cult of the Dutch Naval Heroes as Patriotic Propaganda', presented at Sixteenth Century Studies Conference, Toronto, 26–28 October 1994. It will be considered in greater detail in a later article.
- 18 For a summary of the background of this period, see Jonathan I. Israel, 'Frederick Henry and the Dutch Political Factions, 1625–1642', *English Historical Review* 386 (January, 1983): 1–27.
- 19 This sentiment is most strongly and popularly reflected in that seventeenth-century song, still sung today, which bears Hein's name. See A. Zuidhoek, *Piet Hein en de Zilvervloot*, Bussum, 1978, pp. 130–1 for a discussion of Hein's exemplification of the David and Goliath myth.
- 20 Schama, *Embarrassment of Riches*, pp. 248–249.
- 21 See Lawrence, 'Hendrick De Keyser's Heemskerk Epitaph', p. 291; see also M. Philips, 'Barefoot Boy Makes Good: A Study of Machiavelli's Historiography', *Speculum* 59 (1984): 585–605.
- 22 See Yarrington, *Commemoration of the Hero* and 'Nelson the Citizen Hero'. For monuments in Westminster Abbey, see A. P. Stanley, *Historical Memorials of Westminster Abbey*, 2 vols., New York, 1889, vol. II, pp. 58–9 (for monuments to English naval heroes of the Anglo-Dutch Wars); see also 'Reflections in Westminster-Abbey', in *The Works of Joseph Addison*, 5 vols., London, 1887, vol. V, p. 82. For the 'Hieronauticon', a proposed national shrine (1799–1800) to naval victory, see Yarrington, *Commemoration of the Hero*, pp. 338–45.
- 23 Frans Grijzenhout, 'A Myth of Decline', in M. C. Jacob and W. W. Mijnhardt, eds., *The Dutch Republic in the Eighteenth Century. Decline, Enlightenment, and Revolution*, Ithaca, NY, 1992, p. 334.
- 24 Grijzenhout, 'Myth of Decline', p. 334.
- 25 Grijzenhout, 'Myth of Decline', p. 334.
- 26 For other examples of Wedgwood's production for the Dutch market, see Leeuwarden, Prinsessehof and 's-Gravenhage Gemeentemuseum, *Wedgwood en Nederland in de 18de eeuw*, 1982.

- 27 Nicolaas F. C. van Sas, 'The Patriot Revolution', in M. C. Jacob and W. W. Mijnhardt, eds., *The Dutch Republic in the Eighteenth Century. Decline, Enlightenment, and Revolution*, Ithaca, NY, 1992, p. 98.
- 28 Grijzenhout, 'Myth of Decline', p. 335. For a parallel experience in the United States, see B. Knox, *The Founders and the Classics*, Cambridge, 1994.
- 29 Willem Th. N. Frijhoff, 'The Dutch Enlightenment and the Creation of Popular Culture' in M. C. Jacob and W. W. Mijnhardt, eds., *The Dutch Republic in the Eighteenth Century. Decline, Enlightenment, and Revolution*, Ithaca, NY, 1992, pp. 293–4.
- 30 Frijhoff, 'Dutch Enlightenment', p. 293.
- 31 For the cult's presentation in moralizing books for children, see R. Ruggerberg, 'Leugens over de Armada', *Brabants Dagblad* 16, 7 (1988): 27.
- 32 The significance of heroic English admirals in books for English school children (and their role in the socialization process more generally) has been proposed by Stephen Heathorn (University of Toronto), in a paper entitled 'English National Identity and the Content of Elementary Education, 1880–1914', presented at the Sixteenth Century Studies Conference, Toronto, 1994.
- 33 See Sandra de Vries, *De lucht in gevlogen, de hemel in geprezen. Eerbewijzen voor van Speyk*, Haarlem, 1988.
- 34 The monuments are admirably discussed by de Vries, *De lucht*, pp. 41–5.
- 35 See de Vries, *De lucht*, fig. 7, of a *kinderprent*, a rudimentary comic strip, with scenes from Speyk's life.

## Chapter 5

- 1 See M. Dietz, 'Patriotism', in T. Ball, J. Farr, ed., *Political Innovation and Conceptual Change*, Cambridge, 1989, pp. 177–93 (p. 178) and E. H. Kantorowicz, 'Pro Patria Mori in Medieval Political Thought', *American Historical Review* 56 (1950–1): 472–92 (p. 474).
- 2 Thus, 'Eer-spore's motto is 'Vitamque volunt pro laude pacisci' (To pay for one's honour with one's life), *Aeneid* V, 230.
- 3 See for example G. de Bruin, 'Patriottisme en verraad', *Geheimhouding en Verraad* (1991): 580–601; S. Groenveld, 'Natie en nationaal gevoel in de zestiende-eeuwse Nederlanden', *Nederlands Archiefblad* 84 (1980): 372–87; S. Groenveld, 'Naties en patriae' and 'Nationale gevoelens en sociaal-politieke verhoudingen', *Verlopend getij* (1986): 15–22 and 55–66; E. H. Kossmann, 'The Dutch Case: A National or a Regional Culture?', *Politieke theorie en geschiedenis* (1987): 198–210; J. W. Muller, 'Vaderland en moedertaal', *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsche Taal- en Letterkunde* 47 (1928): 43–62; P. J. A. N. Rietbergen, 'Beeld en zelfbeeld. "Nederlandse identiteit" in politieke structuur en politieke cultuur tijdens de Republiek', *Bijdragen en mededelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 107 (1992): 635–56.
- 4 See Rietbergen, 'Beeld en zelfbeeld'.
- 5 A similar process occurs in the – far younger – study of identity and image-building. This type of study recognizes the danger of various forms of reductionism with regard to the national concept of identity, that is to say, thinking in terms of a simple identity. (See the thematic issue of *Bijdragen en mededelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden* of 1992, dedicated to 'de Nederlandse identiteit'– 'Dutch identity'.)
- 6 See among others Groenveld, 'Naties en patriae', pp. 17–19; *Woordenboek der Nederlandsche taal*, vol. XVIII, pp. 176, 177.
- 7 In 'Nationale gevoelens', pp. 58ff., Groenveld departs from two poles (Orange-minded nations and state-minded nations), with all variants in between; a similar spectrum concept is offered by De Bruin (the 'Hollandse tradition' – the tradition of Holland, the 'gereformeerde tradition' – the reformed tradition): 'Patriottisme en verraad', pp. 586ff.
- 8 Groenveld, 'Natie en nationaal gevoel', pp. 384, 385; De Bruin, 'Patriottisme en verraad', passim. Groenveld in particular claims that this profundity did not exist during the Revolt against Spain either, the period on which earlier historians based their concept of unity.
- 9 De Bruin, 'Patriottisme en verraad', p. 595.
- 10 Cf. H. Wansink, 'Holland en Zes Bondgenoten: de Republiek der Zeven Verenigde Provinciën', in G. A. M. Beekelaar, ed., *Vaderlands verleden in veelvoud*, The Hague, 1975, pp. 252–73 (p. 254). Hegemony also occurred in the cultural field. Thus, till well into the eighteenth century, in the field of drama, Holland was the only province where plays were

- staged in official theatres and where travelling theatre groups performed regularly. See also the only general study in this field available so far: J. A. Worp, *Geschiedenis van het drama en van het tooneel in Nederland*, 2 vols., Rotterdam, 1903–7. Also: B. Albach, *Langs kermessen en hoven. Ontstaan en kroniek van een Nederlands toneelgezelschap in de 17de eeuw*, Zutphen, 1977 (particularly the map on p. 152); E. F. Kossmann, 'Reizende troepen', in *Nieuwe bijdragen tot de geschiedenis van het Nederlandsche tooneel*, 's-Gravenhage, 1915, pp. 139–52.
- 11 Ex. UBA (University Library Amsterdam) 2452E22. M. Spies, 'Minerva's commentaar: gedichten rond het Amsterdamse stadhuis', *De zeventiende eeuw* 9 (1993): 1, 15–33, deals with poems on the city halls in this anthology.
  - 12 Ex. UBA OG 66–6.
  - 13 'Verduitscht door D. A.' is at the end of the 'Trompet'. I do not know who is meant by these initials, nor do I know what the original text may have been (in Latin? French?). An identical version of the 'Trompet' published in Haarlem in 1659 is in the UBA (OK 77–215).
  - 14 The author speaks of 'een ander en eigener vaderland, waar aan de Natuur ons bindt' (a different and more personal fatherland, to which Nature ties us) and the 'gemeenen groote vaderlandt' (the common and great fatherland).
  - 15 Cicero, *De re publica*; *De legibus*, with an English translation by Clinton Walker Keyes (Loeb Classical Library XVI), Cambridge, MA; London, 1978, p. 374 (II, 5). As synonyms of 'civitatis' Cicero uses 'communis' and 'iuris'; as a synonym for the natural or native *patria* he speaks of *patria* 'loci' (*De legibus*, II, 5). Cf. J. Huizinga, *Patriotisme en nationalisme in de Europeesche geschiedenis tot het einde der 19e eeuw*, Haarlem, 1940, 17. In Cicero's days, 'patria' usually meant town. See for example Kantorowicz, 'Pro Patria Mort', p. 474 and Dietz, 'Patriotism', pp. 177, 178.
  - 16 *De legibus*, pp. 374, 375: 'sed necesse est caritate eam praestare, qua rei publicae nomen universae civitatis est; pro qua mori et cui nos totos dedere et in qua nostra omnia ponere et quasi consecrare debemus'.
  - 17 For example, a presentation by Geeraerd Brandt associates the revolt of the Batavians against the Romans with the Revolt against Spain of 'de Neederlantsche Staat'. This association is more generally discussed in M. Meijer Drees, '... Betekenis van de vaderlandse geschiedenis voor de literatuur', in M. A. Schenkeveld-van der Dussen *et al.*, eds., *Nederlandse literatuur, een geschiedenis*, Groningen, 1993, pp. 243–7.
  - 18 From: *Triumphante vreugde-galm, over de bevoghte victorie van onse scheeps vloot, door de manhafte, strijdbare en onvergelijckelicke Helden: de heeren Michael de Ruyter en Cornelis Tromp*, 1673. Kn. 10776.
  - 19 Included in the *Bloemkrans van verscheiden gedichten*, 1659, p. 368.
  - 20 Quoted from *Bloemkrans van verscheiden gedichten*, p. 368. The text of this poem was published in 1650 in pamphlet style (Kn. 6856). See for context: S. Groenveld, *De prins voor Amsterdam. Reacties uit pamfletten op de aanslag van 1650*, Bussum, 1967. On the role of factions: D. J. Roorda, *Partij en factie. De oproeren van 1672 in de steden van Holland en Zeeland, een krachtmeting tussen partijen en facties* (Historische Studies 38), Groningen, 1978; S. Groenveld, *Evidente factiën in den staet. Sociaal-politieke verhoudingen in de 17e-eeuwse Republiek der Verenigde Nederlanden* (Zeven Provinciën Reeks 1), Hilversum, 1990.
  - 21 M. Spies, 'Verbeeldingen van vrijheid: David, Mozes, Burgerharten Bato, Brutus en Cato', *De zeventiende eeuw* 10 (1994): 141–58 (p. 147); for other illustrations, see for example *Medallische historie der Republyk van Holland ...*, Amsterdam, 1690 (e.g. on the year 1576); J. Tanis and D. Horst, *Images of Discord/De Tweedracht verbeeld ... Prentkunst als propaganda aan het begin van de Tachtigjarige Oorlog*, Lancaster, PA, 1993, pp. 34, 35, 44, 59, etc.
  - 22 Georgius Benedicti, *De krijgssdaden van Willem van Oranje*, trans. and annotated by Coll. class., c.n. E.D.E.P.O.L., Leiden, 1990, p. 139.
  - 23 See G. Brandt, *Het leven en bedrijf van den Heere Michiel de Ruyter ...*, Amsterdam, 1687, p. 1049 (poem by A. Moonen).
  - 24 On the realization: D. P. Snoep, *Praal en propaganda. Triumfalia in de Noordelijke Nederlanden in de 16de en 17de eeuw*, Alphen aan de Rijn, 1975, pp. 77–82.
  - 25 *Olyf-krans* (1649), fol. M5r; the production is part of a series of six, a printed edition of which was published as pamphlets twice in 1648; see Kn 5741, 5742.
  - 26 Without Argus, but as a metaphor for Holland (and possibly the entire Republic; however, this is not clear), we find the dairy cow once more in a poem 'Op 't vyeren vande vrede', also

- included in both *Olijfkransen*: 'Men ziet zigh Luypers, en veel wrede Wolven toonen / Die nu de Mellek-koe aanbidden'. The author is Boëtius van Elstlant of Haarlem.
- 27 K. Fremantle, *The Baroque Town Hall of Amsterdam*, Utrecht, 1959, pp. 57, 58.
- 28 C. Bosschmae et al., eds., *Meesterlijk vee. Nederlandse veeschilders 1600–1900*, 's-Gravenhage, 1988.
- 29 *Woordenboek der Nederlandsche taal* VII, k. 4861: 'Ghy ["Duckdalve"] zyt ten heelen noch ten halven, U Koe [i.e. the Netherlands] wil niet meer Calven'; *WNT* IX, k. 503, 504: 'Carolus groot van machte . . . Was hy t'eenich tijt bezwaert, 't [i.e. the Netherlands] Gaf ongespaert: Daerom ginck hy 't een melk-koe noemen.' See also the contributions by S. van Heugten and Alan Chong, in Boschmae et al., *Meesterlijk vee* (esp. pp. 11, 34–39, 65–71).
- 30 J. Antonides van der Goes, *Gedichten*, vol. II, Amsterdam, 1685, p. 14. I have the impression this sentence was inspired by the previous page, namely that before "t Batavische gewest" had managed to steer clear 'vljijch on de wacht, met meer dan Argus ooggen' of the faked friendship of the enemies from outside, whose sole aim it was to cut off 'het vrye lant een lit . . . / En zich met 's nabuurs scha te mesten rijk en vet'. A similar concept of the dairy cow is used by Antonides van der Goes in book 4 of *Ystroom* (1671): 'noch wort de vette koe / van Holland, bloet en vleeschten jadders uitgemolken' (*Gedichten*, vol. I, p. 120; 'jadder' was a regional term for udder, see *Woordenboek der Nederlandsche taal* VII.i, k. 113). A later example: a text to a cartoon from 1690 mentions "t Hollantze Koetje" that becomes restless on account of "t gestoorde Graalje", i.e. count Bentinck van Portland, authorized by William III, who rides it after it had been blindfolded, an allusion to the abuse caused by the high-handed actions of this count, such as the disappearance of 'Vreede en Welvaart, met Merkuur' (Boschmae et al., *Meesterlijk vee*, p. 34).
- 31 Boschmae et al., *Meesterlijk vee*, pp. 37, 38.
- 32 On this subject: K. Tilmans, *Aurelius en de Divisiechroniek van 1517. Historiografie en humanisme in de tijd van Erasmus*, Hilversum, 1988, pp. 145ff.
- 33 Boschmae et al., *Meesterlijk vee*, p. 70. Considering this development, it is almost self-evident that in *D'oude chronijcke ende historiën van Holland (met West-Vriesland)* . . . (1620), Wouter van Gouthoeven considers cattle breeding and the dairy industry as two out of 'dry Mijnen of Bergen' of Holland, 'die alle Neeringen ter werelt te boven gaan, ende daer so grooten ende onsprekelijcken gelt ende goet af komt': in addition to the fishing of herring and other fish, the prosperity of Holland is based on cattle breeding (horses, oxen, cows and sheep are of 'onsprekelijke profijten') and 'de ontellijcke menigte van butter, kasen en ander zuysel dat men in Hollandt vint, ende ghevoert wert alle werelt door' (quoted in Boschmae et al., *Meesterlijk vee*, p. 70). Gouthoeven's work was an adaptation of the *Divisiechroniek* (1517), in which various elements of the Batavian history were developed, among others the idea of Holland being a society of free, brave and decent fishermen and farmers, with its economy resting almost entirely on fishing and cattle breeding. See Tilmans, *Aurelius en de Divisiechroniek*, pp. 147, 180ff.
- 34 The Danish oxen can be found in book 2 of *Ystroom* (*Gedichten*, 1685, part 1, p. 61); the quotation dealing with the rich dairy produce (Edam cheeses), brave inhabitants, etc. are in book 4 (*Gedichten*, part 1, pp. 120, 121).
- 35 Cf. also Six van Chandelier in 'De Saphoosche Her', a part of his 'Vreughde-zangen over den eeuwigen vreede' (quoted from *Olyfkrans*, 1748, p. 149):
- De Huys-lien nu haar Koeyenruymer graazen  
Zullen vervroolykt offren vette Kaazen  
Dien goeden Wey-Godt . . .
- 36 Dedication to Michiel Le Blon, *Olyf-krans*, 1649, fol. C3r.
- 37 In Erasmus's adage 'Auris batava' we find on the character of the old inhabitants of Holland: 'si mores domesticus spectes, non alia gens est ad humanitatem . . . Ingenium simplex et ab insidiis omnique fucio alienum' ('if you consider their native character, there is no race more inclined to humanity and kindness . . . They are straightforward, averse from treachery and any kind of deceit'). Quotation and translation from: A. Wesseling, 'Are the Dutch Uncivilized? Erasmus on the Batavians and His National Identity', *Erasmus of Rotterdam Society, Yearbook Thirteen* (1993): 68–102.
- 38 K. H. D. Haley, *The British and the Dutch. Political and Cultural Relations through the Ages*, London, 1988, pp. 108, 120.
- 39 Haley, *The British and the Dutch*, pp. 108, 120.
- 40 J. Six van Chandelier, *'s Amsterdammers winter*, published and annotated by Maria A. Schenkeveld-van der Dussen with the cooperation of Hans Luijten, Utrecht, 1988.

## Chapter 6

- 1 The lawyer-poet Willem Bilderdijk (1756–1831) had gone into exile in 1795 upon refusing to swear the oath of allegiance to the new regime. He personified two sources of resistance to the Batavian Revolution. As an *Orangist* he felt that the displacement of the House of Orange was a disgraceful act of ingratitude toward the founding dynasty of Dutch liberty and an affront to Divine providence. As a *Calvinist* he could not accept a political system that was rooted in the Enlightenment's belief in the natural goodness of man and its confidence in humanity's rational insight to order life and society without the aid of the wisdom of the ages and the instruction of Divine revelation. In countless writings, and later as a private lecturer in Leiden, he taught that people's finite minds needed the sure guidance of transcendent norms and their selfish drives the safeguards of an objective morality.
- 2 G. Groen van Prinsterer, ed., *Archives ou correspondance inédite de la maison d'Orange-Nassau*; 1st series: vols. I–VII, Leyden, 1835–9, vols. VIII, IX, Leyden, 1847; 2nd series: vols. I–V, Utrecht, 1857–61.
- 3 G. Groen van Prinsterer, *Handboek der geschiedenis van het Vaderland*, Leyden, 1846. Jan Wagenaar, *Vaderlandsche Historie*, 21 vols., Amsterdam, etc., 1749–59. I leave out of consideration Bilderdijk's fiercely polemical, anti-Wagenaar *Geschiedenis des Vaderlands*, 12 vols., Amsterdam, 1831–9. Groen's *Handboek* is really a history of the Dutch Republic (pp. 62–819); the Middle Ages are little more than a prelude (pp. 4–61) and the period since 1795 is an epilogue entitled 'The Revolution' (pp. 820–1080). Deep into the twentieth century it continued to be widely consulted particularly for the eighteenth century. A revised edition appeared in 1872 (8th impr., in 2 vols., 1928; repr. 1978).
- 4 Algemeen Rijksarchief, The Hague, Collection Groen van Prinsterer, no. 29; now published in Groen van Prinsterer, *Schrijftelijke Nalatenschap, Bescheiden*, ed. J. Zwaan, The Hague, 1990, I, 388–595. RGP, Grote Serie, no. 209.
- 5 G. Groen van Prinsterer, *Ongeloof en Revolutie; eene reeks historische voorlezingen*, Leyden, 1847, p. 411. The work is found in abridged translation in H. Van Dyke, *Groen van Prinsterer's Lectures on Unbelief and Revolution*, Jordan Station, Ont., 1989, pp. 293–539.
- 6 Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth*, Cambridge, MA, 1950, Preface; emphasis added.
- 7 Cf. the essay 'Groen van Prinsterer and His Conception of History' in J. L. van Essen and H. Donald Morton, *Guillaume Groen van Prinsterer: Selected Studies*, Jordan Station, Ont., 1990, pp. 15–54.
- 8 Cf. P. Geyl, *Encounters in History*, Gloucester, MA, 1977, pp. 324–5; Van Dyke, *Groen van Prinsterer's Lectures*, pp. 266–8.
- 9 Cf. J. Huizinga, *Verzamelde Werken*, vol. II, Haarlem, 1948, p. 528: 'To be truly a national treasure, a historical representation must culminate in a heroic unity: in an image of a person, or a struggle, or an idea.'
- 10 J. Huizinga, *Verzamelde Werken*, vol. VIII, Haarlem, 1951, p. 265.
- 11 F. Tutsi, *Interpreting the French Revolution*, Cambridge, 1981, p. 18.
- 12 Most of the literature on the peculiar 'pillars' in Dutch society assumes sociological emancipation as the motor of the phenomenon; its historico-religious provenance is often forgotten.
- 13 Rev. edn 1868, reissued ten times, lastly in 1976.
- 14 Paul Hazard, *La crise de la conscience européenne, 1680–1715*, Paris, 1935, and a decade later, *La pensée européenne au XVIIIe siècle: de Montesquieu à Lessing*, Paris, 1946.
- 15 Christopher Dawson, *The Gods of Revolution*, introd. by Arnold Toynbee, London, 1972.
- 16 The Enlightenment project has received detailed and sympathetic analysis in the works of Peter Gay, esp. *The Party of Humanity: Essays in the French Enlightenment*, New York, 1954, and *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation*. vol. I, *The Rise of Modern Paganism*, New York, 1966.
- 17 And some twenty other designations; see Van Dyke, *Groen van Prinsterer's Lectures*, p. 232. The terminology for the seminal concept of 'creation ordinances' had not yet been formalized, as was done later by Abraham Kuyper (1837–1920) in his doctrine of 'sphere-sovereignty' and by Herman Dooyeweerd (1894–1977) in his Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea, with its 'modalities' and 'individuality structures'.
- 18 As he put it toward the close of the Preface to *Unbelief and Revolution*, p. xi: 'I conclude with the declaration that, over against all the wisdom of men and in awareness of my own frailty, my motto consists of two words that assure me of victory: *It is written!* and *It has come to pass!* – a foundation that will stand against any artillery, a root that will hold against every whirlwind of

- philosophic unbelief. History – which is also the flaming script of the holy God. Scripture – which is also the historical Scripture since what comes to pass is inseparable from what is taught.’
- 19 The view resembles that of Edmund Burke, for whom history manifested the ‘known march of the ordinary providence of God’.
  - 20 H. J. Koenen to C. M. van der Kemp, 29 November 1845, in G. Groen van Prinsterer, *Schriftelijke Nalatenschap, Briefwisseling*, vol. II, The Hague, 1964, p. 966. RGP, no. 114. The self-designation ‘een Christelijk liberalisme’ is given qualified endorsement in *Ongeloof en Revolutie*, pp. 144–8. See also Groen to Kuyper, 7 February 1874, in *Briefwisseling*, vol. VI, The Hague, 1992, p. 507. RGP, no. 219. Unlike the adjectives *anti-revolutionair* and *christelijk-historisch*, the tag *christelijk liberaal* never caught on.
  - 21 S. L. van der Wal, *De Motie-Keuchenius: een koloniaal-historische studie over de jaren 1854–1866*, Groningen, 1934, pp. 169–84; G. J. Schutte, ‘Keuchenius als minister van Koloniën’, in Th. B. F. M. Brinkel, J. de Bruijn and A. Postma, eds., *Het Kabinet Mackay: opstellen over de eerste christelijke coalitie (1888–1891)*, Baarn, 1990, pp. 191–223, esp. p. 194. See also G. Groen van Prinsterer, *Mr. Keuchenius en zijne wederpartijders*, Amsterdam, 1869.
  - 22 To what extent Groen’s ideas about Dutch nationhood were rooted in the Romantic paradigm of his age is analysed in Joris van Eijnatten, ‘God, Nederland en Oranje. Dutch Calvinism and the Search for the Social Centre’, dissertation, Free University, Amsterdam; Kampen, 1993.
  - 23 H. Smitskamp, *Groen van Prinsterer als historicus*, Amsterdam, 1940, pp. 146, 167. See also Da Costa to Groen, 1 August 1847 and 15 September 1847; in G. Groen van Prinsterer, *Brieven van Mr. Isaac da Costa*, Amsterdam, 1872, vol. I, pp. 268–73, esp. 270.
  - 24 This was the theme that drew the late Queen Wilhelmina to Groen’s *Handboek*; cf. Thys Booy, *Het is stil op het Loo: overpeinzingen in memoriam koningin Wilhelmina*, Amsterdam, 1963, p. 153.
  - 25 G. Groen van Prinsterer, *Handboek*, par. 105; cf. Gen. 18:32; 39:5. Groen employed a corporate conception of God’s relation to human history, valid not just for the people of the Old Covenant but no less for the nations of Europe that had once embraced the Christian gospel.
  - 26 See his forthright pamphlets of 1867, *A mes amis de Berlin* (reviewed in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, 27 April 1867), and *Ongeloof en Revolutie*, 2nd edn, 1868, p. 409, n.
  - 27 So defined in G. Groen van Prinsterer, *Bijdrage tot herziening der Grondwet in Nederlandschen zin*, Leyden, 1840, p. 89.
  - 28 H. W. J. Mulder, *Groen van Prinsterer, staatsman en profeet*, Franeker, 1973, p. 90.
  - 29 E. van Ruller, ‘De Anti-Revolutionaire Partij en het verzet’, *Anti-Revolutionaire Staatskunde* 24 (1954): 133–44, at 143.
  - 30 L. de Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, vol. VII, The Hague, 1976, p. 1049 (pop. edn, 1014).
  - 31 R. J. Fruin, *Verspreide Geschriften*, vol. X, The Hague, 1905, pp. 84–90, 112–20.
  - 32 P. Geyl, *Reacties*, Utrecht, 1952, pp. 6, 10, 19.
  - 33 Cf. L. C. Suttrop *et al.*, *Groen’s ‘Ongeloof en Revolutie’: een bundel studiën*, Wageningen, 1949, a largely negative reappraisal of the book as a work of history by mainly anti-revolutionary historians. It was this volume that prompted Geyl’s ‘reactie’ (see previous note). Cf. A. Th. van Deursen’s recent ‘rehabilitation’ of Groen as a serious historian in G. Harinck and R. Kuyper, eds., *Groen van Prinsterer en de geschiedenis. Historische opstellen*, Kampen, 1994.
  - 34 Today, a quarterly for Christian students and teachers of history, *Transparant*, now in its fifth year, is published by the Vereniging van Christen-Historici, an explicitly ‘Groenian’ club with a membership exceeding 300.
  - 35 Geyl, *Reacties*, p. 19.

## Chapter 7

All translations from the Dutch and the French are by the editors.

- 1 James Fentress and Chris Wickham, eds., *Social Memory*, Oxford, 1992; Ernst Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, Oxford, 1983; Georg Eiwert, ‘Nationalismus und Ethnizität. Über die Bildung von Wir-Gruppen’, *Kölnner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie* 41 (1989): 441–2; Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, Oxford, 1986, pp. 2, 24–5.
- 2 Jan Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis. Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen*, Munich, 1992, pp. 16–133.

- 3 Peter Burke, 'Geschichte als soziales Gedächtnis', in Aleida Assmann and Dietrich Harth, eds., *Mnemosyne. Formen und Funktionen der kulturellen Erinnerung*, Frankfurt/M., 1991, pp. 289–304.
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- 6 Jan Frans Verbruggen, 'De historiografie van de Guldensporenslag', *De Leiegouw. Vereniging voor de studie van de lokale geschiedenis, taal en folklore in het Koninkrijk* 19 (1977): 245–72; Willy Muylaert, 'Sporethematiek in de Zuidnederlandse poëzie vóór Consciences "Leeuw van Vlaanderen" (1838)', *Het Brugs Ommeland* (1977/2): 203–42; W. Muylaert, 'De hoorn des overvloeds: 1302 in de Vlaamse letterkunde', in F. Demeyer, ed., *Breydel en De Coninck herdacht. 1887–1987*, Bruges, 1987, pp. 31–8; Filip Demeyer, 'De Guldensporenslag, Jan Breydel en Pieter de Coninck iconografisch bekeken', in F. Demeyer, ed., *Breydel en De Coninck herdacht. 1887–1987*, Bruges, 1987, pp. 39–48.
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- 8 A. Verstraete-Augustyn et al., *Goethals-Vercruysse en zijn tijd*, Tentoonstelling, Stedelijk Museum Kortrijk, 29 October–18 December 1988, Courtrai, 1988, p. 38.
- 9 A. Voisin, 'Bataille de Courtrai ou des Eperons d'Or gagnée par les Flamands en 1302, décrite après des documents inédits ou contemporains ... par J. Goethals-Vercruysse, traduite du flamand ... par M. A. Voisin', in *Messenger des sciences historiques de Belgique*, 1834.
- 10 Jaspin Aîné, *Inauguration du tableau de M. Dekeyser 'La bataille des éperons d'or', Souvenirs de l'exposition de tableaux et d'objets d'art et d'industrie à Courtrai au mois d'août 1841*, Courtrai, 1842.
- 11 Ger Schmook, 'De genesis van Conscience's "Leeuw van Vlaanderen"', *Verslagen en Mededelingen van de Koninklijke Vlaamse Academie voor Taal- en Letterkunde* (1952), p. 951.
- 12 Walter Gobbers, 'Consciences "Leeuw van Vlaanderen" als historische roman en nationaal epos: een genrestudie in Europees perspectief', in Ada Deprez and W. Gobbers, eds., *Vlaamse literatuur van de negentiende eeuw*, Utrecht, 1990, pp. 45–69.
- 13 Bert Brouwers, *Literatuur en revolutie*, vol. II, *De Vlaamse literatuur en de revolutie van 1848*, Meppel, 1971, pp. 100–7; Ludo Simons, Marc Somers and A. van Kuyssevelt, *Hendrik Conscience of de Vlaamse 'wedergeboorte'*, Tiel, 1983, pp. 21–4.
- 14 *Encyclopedie van de Vlaamse Beweging*, vol. II, Tiel; Amsterdam, 1975, pp. 1889–92.
- 15 Eliane Gubin, 'Flamingantisme et patriotisme en Belgique au 19e siècle', *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 95 (1982): 558–76.
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- 18 Hendrik Conscience, *Geschiedenis van België*, Antwerp, 1847.
- 19 Fernand Vercauteren, *Cent ans d'histoire nationale en Belgique*, vol. I, Brussels, 1959, p. 193.
- 20 Henri Pirenne, *Histoire de Belgique*, vol. I, *Des origines au commencement du XIVe siècle*, 5th edn, Brussels, 1929, pp. 413–35.
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- 22 Adolf Duclos, *Ons 1302. Wat het was. Wat wij eraan verschuldigd staan. Vordracht gegeven in de Katholieke Wacht te Ieper den 6n in Hooimaand 1902*, Ypres, 1902.
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- 24 Andries Van den Abeele, *Emiel Van den Abeele – Een vechter*, Tielt; Utrecht, 1969, pp. 99–150.
  - 25 Stadsarchief Brugge, XI a 93 bis: Verslagboek van de Breidelcommissie 1877–1887; Paul Fredericq, *Schets eener Geschiedenis der Vlaamsche Beweging*, vol. I, Ghent, 1906, pp. 212–24; Whim (Willem de Zeine), 'De oude Breydel-Beweging', in *Burgerwelzijn*, May 1912–July 1913; André Vanhoutryve, *Geschiedenis van standbeelden en andere memorabilia te Brugge*, vol. I, *Jan Breydel en Pieter de Coninc*, Bruges, 1987, pp. 26–117.
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  - 28 Kris Carlier, Julius Sabbe (1846–1910). Een leven in dienst van het cultuurnationalisme en de herleving van Brugge', dissertation, Rijksuniversiteit Gent, 1992–3.
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  - 31 Vanhoutryve, *Jan Breydel en Pieter de Coninc*, pp. 36–7.
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  - 43 Cf. de Visschere, *Eeuwfeesten 1302–1902*, pp. 4–5.
  - 44 Thus the satirical magazine *Pourquoi pas?* asked on 25 July 1912, 'Bruxelles, qui est belge, a la fête nationale. . . La partie flamande du pays a la fête des Eperons d'Or. Et la partie wallonne?' Philippe Carlier, 'La Wallonie à la recherche d'une fête nationale. Une épisode du mouvement wallon à l'aube du 20e siècle', *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 78 (1990): 902–20.
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- 47 Lodewijk Opdebeeck, *De historische beteekenis van den Gulden-Sporenslag*, Antwerp, 1902, pp. 16–17.
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## Chapter 8

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- 5 Académie royale de Belgique, *Inventaire des Archives. Prix triennal de Littérature dramatique*, pp. 130–1, nos. 2061, etc.
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- 23 Tindemans, *Mens, gemeenschap en maatschappij*, p. 38.
- 24 *Les prix quinquennaux et triennaux*, p. 253.
- 25 *Les prix quinquennaux et triennaux*, p. 254.
- 26 *Les prix quinquennaux et triennaux*, p. 254, my emphasis.
- 27 *Les prix quinquennaux et triennaux*, 1865, pp. 254–5, my emphasis
- 28 Vlasselaers, *Literair bewustzijn in Vlaanderen*, pp. 107–8.
- 29 *Les prix quinquennaux et triennaux*, p. 371.
- 30 Vlasselaers, *Literair bewustzijn in Vlaanderen*, p. 118.
- 31 Some information on the reports 1868–85 can be found in A. Van Impe, *Over toneel*, Tiel; Amsterdam, 1978, pp. 191–4. The list of plays and playwrights in receipt of award is as

follows: 1868–70, F. Van de Sande, *Het vijfde rad van den wagen*; 1871–3, D. Delcroix, *Philippine van Vlaanderen*; 1874–6, D. Delcroix, *Elisa*; 1877–9, not awarded; 1880–2, F. Gittens, *Jane Shore*; 1883–5, H. B. Peeters, *Karel Stolk*. Van Impe, a former civil servant at the Ministry of Culture, apparently had access to information that has since then been irretrievable.

- 32 *Moniteur belge*, 17 October 1886.
- 33 *Moniteur belge*, 17 October 1886.
- 34 *Verslagen en mededeelingen der Koninklijke Vlaamsche Academie voor Taal- en Letterkunde*, 1899, p. 172.
- 35 *Verslagen en mededeelingen*, 1889, p. 179.
- 36 *Verslagen en mededeelingen*, 1892, p. 177.
- 37 *Verslagen en mededeelingen*, 1892, p. 178.
- 38 *Verslagen en mededeelingen*, 1892, pp. 178–9.
- 39 *Verslagen en mededeelingen*, 1892, pp. 186–7.
- 40 *Verslagen en mededeelingen*, 1898, p. 391.
- 41 *Verslagen en mededeelingen*, 1898, p. 391.
- 42 *Verslagen en mededeelingen*, 1898, p. 391.
- 43 *Verslagen en mededeelingen*, 1898, p. 396.
- 44 *Verslagen en mededeelingen*, 1898, p. 400.
- 45 *Verslagen en mededeelingen*, 1901, p. 205.
- 46 Vlasselaers, *Literair bewustzijn in Vlaanderen*, p. 119.
- 47 *Verslagen en mededeelingen*, 1901, p. 205.
- 48 *Verslagen en mededeelingen*, 1901, p. 106.
- 49 *Verslagen en mededeelingen*, 1901, p. 208.
- 50 *Verslagen en mededeelingen*, 1901, p. 222.
- 51 *Verslagen en mededeelingen*, 1901, p. 226.
- 52 *Verslagen en mededeelingen*, 1901, p. 228.
- 53 *Verslagen en mededeelingen*, 1901, p. 233.

## Chapter 9

This chapter is an abstract from my Master's dissertation in Medieval Vernacular Languages and Literatures at the University of Hull.

1. Wytze Hellinga and Lotte Hellinga, *Fifteenth-Century Printing Types*, vol. I, Amsterdam, 1966, p. 97.
2. Elisabeth Neurdenberg, ed., *Van Nyeuvont, Loosheit ende Practike: Hoe sij Vrou Lortse verheffen. Met inleiding, aantekeningen en woordenlijst*, Utrecht, 1910.
3. For a complete and very detailed study of this process see: Fernand Braudel, *Beschaving, Economie en Kapitalisme*, vols. I to III, Amsterdam, 1987.
4. The fullest possible exposition can be found in: Jacques Le Goff, *De Woekeraar en de Hel*, Amsterdam, 1987, which deals in its entirety with this problem. See further: Braudel, *Beschaving*, vol. III, p. 528 and Arnold Toynbee, *A Study of History*, Oxford, 1979, p. 97.
5. This had Erasmus fulminating. One of his biting satirical comments on the practice reads as follows: 'Arnold ... He will be in heaven, I think. Cornelius: Was he that pious? A: On the contrary, he was the biggest lover of fun of us all. C: So what makes you think he is in heaven? A: Because he held the most generous indulgences. C: Written in which language? A: The language of Rome. C: So he is safe. A: Yes, unless he met some ghost who doesn't know Latin. He'll have to return to Rome in that case to get a new Bull. C: Are they being sold to dead people? A: Yes of course!' Quoted in J. Van Herwaarden, *Erasmus over bedevaarten en heiligenverering*, Amsterdam, 1974, p. 69. The translation is the author's.
6. Van Herwaarden, *Erasmus*, p. 66. That the author did not wish a new church may be deduced from the absence of attacks on the higher clergy.
7. Amongst others on [F. a5R], [F. b2R] and [F. b3V].
8. T. de Vries, *Ketters*, Amsterdam, 1987, p. 293.
9. W. Prevenier and W. Blockmans, *De Bourgondische Nederlanden*, Antwerp, 1983, p. 359.
10. [F. a3V], line 70.
11. Braudel, *Beschaving*, vol. II, p. 409.
12. For a full exposition, on crime and its motivations, see: D. A. Berents, *Het Werk van de Vos*, Zutphen, 1985, esp. pp. 10–11, 56–65 and 83.

- 13 That *Nyeuvont* is a satire of deceit is immediately obvious from the title – [F. a1R] – *Van Nyeuvont, Loosheynt ende Practike: Hoe sij Vrou Lortse verheffen*, which translates as: Of Crafty Inventor, Misleading and Wily Practices: How they elevate Lady Deceit.
- 14 [F. a5V], lines 122–6.
- 15 Braudel, *Beschaving*, vol. I, p. 303 and H. A. Miskimin, *Money and Power in Fifteenth-Century France*, New Haven, CT, 1994, p. 118.
- 16 [F. a5V], lines 137–8.
- 17 [F. b3R], lines 271–3.
- 18 [F. b5R], lines 374–6.
- 19 *Middelnederlandsch Handwoordenboek*, 's-Gravenhage, 1981, p. 338, col. B., Lueren from Lore: to mislead.
- 20 [F. b5R] and [F. b5V], lines 377–80.
- 21 *Middelnederlandsch Handwoordenboek*, p. 589, col. A., Sueringhe from Suur; unpleasant in its consequences. For Lueringhe from Lore, see n. 19.
- 22 [F. b5V], lines 393–4.
- 23 [F. a5R], lines 120–1.
- 24 That such a new morality enjoyed a disparate development becomes clear if one compares the perceived lack thereof in *Nyeuvont*, with its presence in the *Volksboek van Margarieta van Lymborch* of 1515. This adaptation of a classic courtly romance features a scene in which Heinric, the hero, is elevated to the knighthood. Besides the traditional vows to help the orphans and the widows, the bourgeois editor added: 'Betaelt wel waer ghi vaert oft keert, so sal men eer van u spreken.' In other words, be frugal and pay in time, the new morality of the bourgeoisie had clearly wormed its way into this aristocratic tale! *Volksboek van Margarieta van Lymborch*, quoted in: H. Pleij, 'Burgermoraal in Laat Middeleeuwse Stadsliteratuur', *Neelandica Extra Muros* 32, 3 (1994), p. 4.
- 25 *Middelnederlandsch Handwoordenboek*, 1987, p. 385, col. A., Nieuvent; listige vond, gemeenestreek.
- 26 *Middelnederlandsch Handwoordenboek*, 1987, p. 338, col. A., Loosheynt, from Loos; valsch, bedriegelijk; and *Middelnederlandsch Handwoordenboek*, 1987, p. 474, col. A., Practijke, from Practike; list, kunstgreep.
- 27 *Middelnederlandsch Handwoordenboek*, 1987, p. 338, col. B., Lortsen; to be unscrupulous in trade. This is the essential theme of *Nyeuvont*, for the combination between deceit and trade causes the author's call for a new morality.
- 28 For a depiction of a sot and a marot see Hans Holbein the younger's drawing in Erasmus's *In Praise of Folly*, Basle, 1515, shown after p. 28. from: A. C. Zijderfeld, *De hofnar als instituut, I, II, III*, in *Spiegel Historial*, Amsterdam, 1976, vol. II, p. 600.
- 29 *Middelnederlandsch Handwoordenboek*, 1981, p. 613, col B., Tooche; schijn, zweem.
- 30 V. Wilberg-Schuurman, *Hoofse minne en burgerlijke liefde*, Leiden, 1983, p. 11.
- 31 [F. b1R], line 174.
- 32 Although it is often unclear whether it is the sot or the marot who is speaking, we can deduce from the context that the critical lines should be attributed to the latter. The clearest evidence for this is formed by the fact that the sot tries to hush the marot up whenever the truth is told.
- 33 The *Nyeuvont* author pinpointed the two gaps in the defence of the appearance of the bourgeoisie with great accuracy. By exposing their sexual behaviour – which was a taboo issue amongst them, and thus regarded as 'misbehaviour' – and the fact that they tended to live above their means, he shatters their propriety and causes them embarrassment.
- 34 [F. a5V], line 136.
- 35 In this *Nyeuvont* has a catalyst similar to the French *sotties* which were its contemporaries. Unlike the *sottie*, however, *Nyeuvont* at no point attacks those who climb the social ladder and have the means of doing so. Thus: 'Face Justice gouverner Chascun et garder ses etas' has no place in the text. H. Arden, *Fool's Plays*, Cambridge, 1980, pp. 139–40. This quotation is from *Folle Bobance* (1500), lines 372–3.
- 36 Braudel, *Beschaving*, vol. II, 1987, pp. 447–50.
- 37 The development of the petty bourgeoisie in the Low Countries is mirrored by that in France: 'Au XIVE et au XVE siècles, la bourgeoisie se fractionne en patriciat et petite bourgeoisie; de plus, la féodalité tombe sous les coups de la royauté, et la haute bourgeoisie opère une main-mise progressive sur l'appareil de l'Etat.' Here too the high bourgeoisie are being absorbed into the

- ranks of the aristocracy, leaving their lesser brethren behind in their in vain attempts to climb the social ladder. J.-C. Aubailly, *Le monologue, le dialogue et la sottie*, Paris, 1976, p. 428.
- 38 Henri Pirenne, *Les périodes de l'histoire sociale du capitalisme*, Brussels, 1922, p. 112.
- 39 From [F. b2R], lines 222 and 228–9, it seems to me to be justifiable to conclude that Meest Elc was indeed a banker. He is described as a 'wachtere' over other people's 'saken van laste, silver, gelt oft pant'.
- 40 There were some exceptions. The most famous of these were the banker families of the Medici, whose wealth enabled them to acquire Florence, and that of the Fuggers, whose lending to various rulers gave them a say in the affairs of state. In general, however, bankers did not reach this status.
- 41 A. Gorevich, 'The Merchant', in Jacques Le Goff, ed., *The Medieval World*, London, 1990, p. 248.
- 42 [F. a4R], line 87. Neurdenberg translates 'caelgen' as men of the world. Interpreting this early twentieth-century euphemism, we may end with something like 'men who know the ways of the world'. Neurdenberg, *Van Nyeuvont, Loosheit ende Practike*, p. 92.
- 43 The nuclear family became at this point in time the smallest and most important commercial unit in the towns. E. Uitz, *Women in the Medieval Town*, London, 1990, p. 84.
- 44 The Seven Deadly Sins were Pride, Avarice, Gluttony, Lechery, Wrath, Envy and Sloth. Le Goff, *Medieval World*, p. 28.
- 45 [F. b5V], lines 400–1.
- 46 [F. c2V], line 518.
- 47 [F. c2V] and [F. c3R]. That this new moral order is only a servant to the petty bourgeoisie's futile attempt at working their way up the social hierarchy is something which the *Nyeuvont* author apparently failed to recognize.

## Chapter 10

- 1 Ricardo Quinones, *Changes of Cain. Violence and the Lost Brother in Cain and Abel Literature*, Princeton, 1991.
- 2 Northrop Frye, *The Great Code*, New York, 1981; Northrop Frye, *Words with Power*, San Diego, 1990.
- 3 Michael Wornton and Judith Still, eds., *Intertextuality. Theories and Practices*, Manchester, 1990.
- 4 Jan Wolkers, *Kort Amerikaans*, Amsterdam, 1962.
- 5 Jan Wolkers, *Terug naar Oegstgeest*, Amsterdam, 1965.
- 6 Elias Canetti, *Masse und Macht*, Hamburg, 1960.
- 7 The term 'architext' was coined by Genette, 'phenotext' by Julia Kristeva.
- 8 Connie Palmen, *De wetten*, Amsterdam, 1991.
- 9 Ernst van Alphen, 'Mystiek lichaam: een geschiedenis tegen allegorie', *De revisor* 18 (1991): 34–40.
- 10 Gerrit Krol, *De Hagemijertjes*, Amsterdam, 1990.
- 11 Gerrit Krol, 'Meesters over tijd', in *Wat mooi is is moeilijk*, Amsterdam, 1991, pp. 89–150.
- 12 Frans Kellendonk, *Mystiek lichaam*, Amsterdam, 1986.
- 13 Author's translation. In Dutch the quoted passage reads as follows: 'Schuld, boete, kwijschelding – voor hem sprak het vanzelf dat die termen evenzeer thuis zijn in de boekhoudkunde als in de biechtstoel. Zijn miljoen was zijn zaligheid, het ging er om die intact te houden. Verkwisting was zonde, precies zoals de volksmond zegt. De fiscus was de erfzonde. . . . Hij was schuldeloos als een pasgedooptkind, dankzij de belastingen.'
- 14 Gérard Genette, *Palimpsestes*, Paris, 1982.

## Chapter 11

All translations of quotations from works cited below are the author's, except where otherwise stated.

1. E. J. Dijksterhuis, *Simon Stevin*, 's-Gravenhage, 1943, p. 320.
2. Becanus was not the first scholar to claim that the *lingua teutonica* was the oldest tongue. In an anonymous manuscript from the beginning of the sixteenth century, this 'heilige

- dudeschesproch' was said to have been spoken in Paradise: see L. Weisgerber, *Die geschichtliche Kraß der deutschen Sprache*, Düsseldorf, 1959, p. 155, and A. Borst, *Der Turmbau von Babel. Geschichte der Meinungen über Ursprung und Vielfalt der Sprachen und Völker*, vol. III.i, Stuttgart, 1960, pp. 1053–94. In the sixteenth century there was much criticism of the idea that Hebrew, Latin and Greek were the oldest, most genuine and most sacred languages: see also G. J. Metcalf, 'The Indo-European Hypothesis in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', D. Hymes, ed., *Studies in the History of Linguistics*, Bloomington; London, 1974, pp. 238–9. It was Becanus, however, who made the thesis widely known: see D. Droixhe, *La linguistique et l'appel de l'histoire (1600–1800)*, Paris, 1978, p. 54.
- 3 Quoted by Dijksterhuis.
  - 4 *Twe-spraack van de Nederduitsche letterkunst*, Leiden, 1584, p. A2v: see the edition of this work by G. R. W. Dibbets, Assen, 1985, p. 327.
  - 5 Cf. J. H. Zedler, *Grosses vollständiges Universal-Lexicon*, Halle; Leipzig, 1733, vol. III, col. 857: 'lächerlich ... er sich bey denen Verständigen durch seine Meinung gemacht daß Adam im Paradiese holländisch geredet habe'.
  - 6 *Fakkel der Nederduitsche taele*, Leiden, 1722, p. 2\*4r, quoted in R. de Bondt, 'Grasduinen in Carolus Tuinman (1659–1728), Oud en Nieuw', *Voortgang, Jaarboek van Neerlandistiek 14* (1993–4), p. 26.
  - 7 K. Kooiman, *Proeve eener critiek op het woordenboek van Kiliaen*, Groningen, 1913, p. 77.
  - 8 *Nouveaux essais*, vol III, ch. 2, p. 1.
  - 9 L. van den Branden, *Het streven naar verheerlijking, zuivering en opbouw van het Nederlands in de 16e eeuw*, Arnhem, 1967.
  - 10 Dijksterhuis, *Stevin*, pp. 307–15 lists a great number of Latin terms, together with the Dutch equivalents thought up by Stevin. See also B. C. Damsteegt, 'Simon Stevin. Taalspiegeling en Taaldaad', in M. Wildiers et al., eds., *Tussen intuïtie en wetenschap*, Muiderberg, 1982.
  - 11 A. J. van der Aa, *Biographisch Woordenboek der Nederlanden*, Haarlem, 1852, vol. I, pp. 225–6; *Biographie nationale*, Brussels, 1884–5, vol. VIII, cols. 120–4; C. R. Hermes, 'Joannes Goropius Becanus', *Noord-Brabandsche Volksalmanak* 3 (1854): 75–86; P. C. de Brouwer, 'Johannes Goropius Becanus, één der Brabantse humanisten uit de 16e eeuw', *Brabantia* 2 (1953): 270–2, and E. Frederickx, 'Ioannes Goropius Becanus, arts, linguist, Greacus', *Hermeneus* 43 (1971/2): 129–31. The latter author wrote an unpublished thesis: 'Leven en werk van Joannes Goropius Becanus', Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, 1973, which I have not seen. The most recent work is the introduction to the unpublished MA thesis 'Etymologies in Joannes Goropius Becanus' *Hermathena*', University of Kansas, 1978, pp. 7–26, by R. A. Naborn. It is strange that Becanus's name should be absent from certain twentieth-century Dutch and Belgian biographical reference works – the *Nieuw Nederlands Biografisch Woordenboek*, Leiden, 1910–37, for example.
  - 12 *Origines Antwerpianae*, Praefatio ad Philippum, p. 4.
  - 13 *Origines Antwerpianae*, Praefatio ad Philippum, [p. 10]: 'For four things are denoted by the word *Coning*. The first is that much knowledge of many things is required; the second that not only science but also as much power is in a King as is sufficient to protect the citizens over whom he rules; the third is that the knowledge which gives rise to prudent government and reasonable power is combined with firmness and intrepidity; the fourth and last condition, denoted by the second syllable, requires that a King presents himself and all his belongings in such a manner that all believe that it is on him exclusively, and not on any inferior, that all their wellbeing depends. The Northern peoples, presumably being of the opinion that in this requirement all other conditions are contained, call kings not *coningen*, but *ingos*.'
  - 14 *Origines Antwerpianae*, pp. 26–8.
  - 15 Metcalf, 'The Indo-European Hypothesis', p. 237.
  - 16 *De bello gallico* II, c. 29: 'Ipsi [Atuatici] erant ex Cimbris Teutonique prognati'.
  - 17 *Origines Antwerpianae* IV, 'Cronica', p. 367: 'From Cimmeriis therefore Cimri developed by concision of the word and then they were called, for the sake of a pleasanter sound, Cimbri': see Metcalf, 'The Indo-European Hypothesis', pp. 241–2. Becanus proves the identity of Cimen with Gomer by stating that in Greek the letters kappa and the gamma are closely related. Another possibility he considers is that foreigners rendered the Hebrew gimel with a kappa. In Hebrew gomer and gimer are two forms of the verb *G M R*, the first in the Qal meaning 'that which is finished and perfect', the second in the Piel meaning 'he has the thing he has finished': *Origines Antwerpianae*, p. 375. Since Gomer, the eldest son of Japhet, had

- accomplished more than any other in spreading the fame of his father, this form of the name provides the best insight into his significance.
- 18 *Origines Antwerpianae* V, 'Indoscythica', pp. 532–4. Becanus says that Noah planted the first vineyard in Margiana, a small region surrounded by high mountains near the Caspian Sea and Mount Ararat. Shortage of food drove most of the first humans to other parts of the earth, and those wanderers built the tower of Babel. Some, however, stayed peacefully in Margiana, and they were the forefathers of the Cimres. As Becanus observes, this argument accords with the Bible, since whereas in Genesis 11:1 it is said that all the earth had one language, verse two qualifies this by saying that those who went eastwards started to build a tower, etc. Since a qualified proposition is indefinite, the Bible cannot be taken as evidence that *all* peoples were present at the building of the tower of Babel. Becanus also observes that Josephus (*De antiquitatibus judaicis* 1, c. 4) quotes the Sibylline Oracles when referring to this passage in the Bible, saying explicitly that only 'some' were present.
  - 19 See A. Kluyver, *Proeve eener critiek op het woordenboek van Kiliaan*, Den Haag, 1884, pp. 31–2.
  - 20 *Origines Antwerpianae*, Praefatio ad senatum Antwerpiensem (pp. 9–10): 'manu Mercurialia quae mihi ad secretissimam theologiae et antiquitatum arcana viam ostendit, ab omnibus, quotquot post Orphicos fuerunt, ignoratam'.
  - 21 *Wisconstighe ghedachtenissen* ... Leiden, 1608, vol. I, c. 21, pp. 9–48. See further L. Malusa 'Introduzione. sez. 1', in G. Santinello, ed., *Storia delle storie generali della filosofia*, vol. I, pp. 14–25 and C. B. Schmitt, 'Perennial Philosophy from Agostino Steuco to Leibniz', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 27 (1966): 505–32. Both authors stress the importance of the Renaissance idea of an original wisdom.
  - 22 Kluyver, *Proeve eener critiek*, p. 77. He refers to *Origines Antwerpianae* V, 'Indoscythica', p. 460.
  - 23 According to Becanus, Melanchthon was referring to the Hebrew word for the fire of the priest: 'sj and k h n.
  - 24 From the Hebrew 'sj sj (axt manly), k (like, *the nota comparationis* in Hebrew) and n ts (a falcon). Becanus changes the zain of the name Askenaz into a tsade, arguing that the right part of the Hebrew letter was effaced. He maintains also that this is confirmed by Josephus, who gave Ascanaxasas the name of Japhet's son.
  - 25 Borst, *Turmbau von Babel*, vol. III.i, pp. 1070–1.
  - 26 Sixteenth-century Dutch linguists saw 'a great affinity between the d and the t': see Dibbets, *Twe-spraack*, pp. 418–19.
  - 27 Borst, *Turmbau von Babel*, vol. III.i, pp. 1056ff.
  - 28 J. W. Verroten van Haerlem, *Euclides Zes Eerste Boekken, van de beginnelen der Wisconsten*, Hamburg, 1633, p. 315; M. J. van der Wal, 'Verrotens taalbeschouwing, een onbekend voorbeeld van Stevinreceptie', *TNTL* 109 (1993): 328–47.
  - 29 *Origines Antwerpianae*, p. 549.
  - 30 H. Bloch, *Etymologie et généalogie*, Paris, 1989, p. 52.
  - 31 *Origines Antwerpianae*, p. 538. Naborn's view ('Etymologies', p. 82) 'a dam against sin' is incorrect.
  - 32 *Origines Antwerpianae*, p. 551. See also *Hermathena* IX, p. 218.
  - 33 *Nouveaux essais* III, ch. 2, § 1. See also Plato, *Cratylus* 426 D, where it is said that the Greek letter rho expresses motion. Becanus also accepts this theory of the meaning of the letter, *Hermathena* III, p. 46. In the following pages he discusses the meaning of the other letters.
  - 34 P. Diderichsen, 'The Foundation of Comparative Linguistics', in Hymes, ed., *Studies in the History of Linguistics*, p. 279.
  - 35 Augustine, *De dialectica* c. 6. I use the English translation by B. Darrell Jackson, Dordrecht, 1975, pp. 91–7. For its influence in the Middle Ages: see pp. 18–26. In the sixteenth century *The Dialectics* was edited in Basel, 1528/9, by Erasmus and in 1577 in Antwerp. Erasmus comments in the margin of ch. 6: *ex Cratylo Platonis*.
  - 36 See also Kluyver, *Proeve*, p. 30–1.
  - 37 Frederickx, 'Ioannes Goropius Becanus', p. 132.
  - 38 Metcalf, 'The Indo-European Hypothesis', p. 244. The discussion in the seventeenth century focused on the rules and their justification.
  - 39 For example Kiliaan; see Kluyver, *Proeve eener critiek*, p. 34.
  - 40 *Hermathena*, p. 37.
  - 41 *Hermathena*, p. 37.
  - 42 *Hermathena*, p. 170–1.

- 43 *Hermathena*, p. 1.
- 44 *Hermathena*, p. 4.
- 45 Borst, *Turmbau von Babel*, vol. III.i, p. 1217.
- 46 *De noctibus atticis* X, c. 4: see H. Steintal, *Geschichte der Sprachwissenschaft bei den Griechen und Römern*, Berlin, 1890, vol. I, pp. 338–9.
- 47 *Hermathena*, p. 7: ‘Vocabula rerum propria similia esse imaginibus, non ab artificis cuiuspiam volúntate sed ab ipsa natura expressis’ (words are the proper likenesses of things, imaginations produced not by the will of a craftsman but by the nature of the things).
- 48 ‘Signa ex pura voluntate et consensu perfecta.’
- 49 *Hermathena*, p. 6.
- 50 Becanus refers, *Hermathena*, p. 5, to the *Stomata* of Clemens Alexandrinus.
- 51 *Hermathena*, p. 7; Becanus quotes the sequel of *De noctibus atticis* X, c. 4: see n. 46.
- 52 *Hermathena*, p. 6.
- 53 This text is discussed by Steintal, *Geschichte der Sprachwissenschaft* I, pp. 170ff.
- 54 ‘Ex voluntate vaga et libera, . . . ex libidine’, *Hermathena*, p. 9.
- 55 The rest of ch. 1 is devoted to the detailed refutation of the arguments of Cratylus. The difference between the natural sounds of animals and the words of man is underlined in accordance with the Aristotelian definition of action. Becanus attacks the idea of the magical force of things, maintaining that such an idea leads to impiety: ‘Only God, who created the universe, can command nature and heal the sick’ (p. 17).
- 56 *Hermathena*, p. 19: ‘Non ex prima illa similitudine . . . sed ex diversis simulacris in animo nostro eadem de re fabricatis.’
- 57 *Hermathena*, p. 21.
- 58 *Hermathena*, p. 22.
- 59 *Hermathena*, p. 23.
- 60 *Hermathena*, p. 24.
- 61 *Parellelon rerum publicarum*, ed. and trans. J. Meerman, Haarlem, 1803, pp. 54–73 (Latin), 81–109 (Dutch).
- 62 *Hermathena*, p. 24.
- 63 *Hermathena*, p. 25.
- 64 It is probable that Stevin took this view from Becanus: Damsteegt, ‘Simon Stevin. Taalspiegeling en Taaldaad’, p. 34.
- 65 *Wisconstige gedachtenissen*, Leiden, 1608, book I, part 1, vol. II, *Het eertclootschrift*, book 1, pp. 9–48. Dijksterhuis, *Stevin*, p. 300, n. 2 remarks that the view that the number of monosyllables in a language is an indication of its relation with the perfect language was common in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. According to my knowledge, however, Becanus was the first to advance this view.
- 66 *Hermathena*, pp. 26–7.
- 67 *Twe-spraack*, ed. Dibbets, p. 327.
- 68 In his *Dictionarium Teutonico-Latinum*, Antwerp, 1574: see Kluiver, *Proeve eener critiek*, ch. 2.
- 69 *Twe-spraack*, ed. Dibbets, pp. 3267. Becanus is the most frequently mentioned name in this grammar.
- 70 Damsteegt, ‘Simon Stevin. Taalspiegeling en Taaldaad’, p. 34. In particular the idea that the oldest words are monosyllables.
- 71 *De lingua belgica*, Leiden, 1612, p. 187.
- 72 *De origine erroris*, Amsterdam, 1678, Praefatio [pp. 4–7].
- 73 *De origine erroris* V, c. 3, p. 271.
- 74 *De origine erroris* V, c. 3, pp. 272–3.
- 75 *De origine erroris* V, c. 3, p. 274.
- 76 Heidanus quotes here *Hermathena*, p. 24.
- 77 According to Borst, *Der Turmbau von Babel*, vol. III.i, p. 1216: Becanus’s theory would have made the tower of Babel superfluous. This conclusion is correct if Becanus really thought that the Dutch language as it was in his time had been spoken by Adam and Eve in Paradise. In my opinion such an interpretation is unnecessary if one focuses on the important part played in his argument by the creator of a language.
- 78 *De origine erroris* V, c. 4, p. 278. Heidanus acknowledges that just like Dutch, Hebrew, Greek and Latin contain remnants of the Adamitic language. More than Becanus he separates biblical history from Greek mythology and Germanic (pseudo-)history.

## Chapter 12

This chapter is based on the research for my entry 'Philips Galle after Maarten van Heemskerck, the Eight Wonders of the World', in the exh. cat. *Professional Printmaking in the Sixteenth-Century Netherlands*, Indiana University Art Museums, Bloomington, IN, 1994. I am grateful to Marjorie B. Cohn for her critical reading of this text, and to Molly Faries for her valuable comments on the original entry.

1. G. Brett, 'The Seven Wonders of the World in the Renaissance', *Art Quarterly* 12 (1949), p. 339.
2. According to Brett, it was not the Temple of Diana at Ephesus but the Temple of Solomon that belonged to the canon. See Brett, 'The Seven Wonders', p. 345. According to I. Hupert, 'Martin van Heemskerck's Seven Wonders of the World and the Colosseum', unpublished master's dissertation, New York University, 1966, two different canons existed in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. According to I. Veldman, *Leerrijke reeksen van Maarten van Heemskerck*, exh. cat. Haarlem, Frans Halsmuseum, 1986, p. 94, a canon of seven Wonders of the World existed from the sixth century, and consisted of: (1) the Pyramids of Egypt; (2) the Walls of Babylon; (3) the Statue of Zeus in Olympia; (4) the Temple of Diana at Ephesus; (5) the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus; (6) the Colossus of Rhodes; and (7) the Lighthouse at Pharos. The last monument replaced the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, which were considered part of the Wonders before the sixth century. See also Spronk, 'Philips Galle after Maarten van Heemskerck', pp. 19–28.
3. W. H. Roscher, 'Die Sieben- und Neunzahl im Kultus und Mythos der Griechen', *Abhandlungen der Sächsische Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig* 24, 6 (1960), pp. 186ff. See also S. Hornblower, *Mausolus*, Oxford, 1982, pp. 233–4.
4. According to Hupert, Mexia's work was published in 1520 and 1542 in Seville, and a third edition with additional chapters was published in Antwerp in 1544. See Hupert, 'Martin van Heemskerck's Seven Wonders of the World'. Hupert's information on the editions of the *Silva de varia lección* is not in accordance with more recent scholarship. According to Castro, the first edition was not published in 1520 but in 1540, and the first full edition was published in Valladolid in 1550–1. The first Italian edition was published in Venice in 1544, and the first French edition was published in Paris in 1552. Translations from the French edition into English (1571) and Dutch (1587) followed later. See the introduction to the 1990 Madrid edition of the *Silva de varia lección*, ed. Antonio Castro, pp. 54–9. The second canon of Wonders was compiled by Cyriacus d'Ancona and published in 1436, and was based on the fourth-century writings of St Gregory Nazianzus. Cyriacus listed: the Walls of Babylon, the Colossus of Rhodes, the Pyramids of Egypt, the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus, the Temple of Hadrian, the Capitoline in Rome and Egyptian Thebes.
5. See Brett, 'The Seven Wonders', p. 346.
6. P. Mexia, *Silva de varia lección* (sev. edns), book III, chs 32 and 33.
7. Maarten van Heemskerck, *Walls of Babylon*, 1570. Pen and brown ink on paper, 203 × 267 mm. Signed bottom right: 'Martyn Heemskerck / inventor'; dated and numbered lower right of centre '1570/3'; inscribed top left: '3 Babylonis Muri' and right centre: 'Seppulcrum Semiramis'. Musée du Louvre, Cabinet des Dessins, Paris, inv. no. RF 36730. Maarten van Heemskerck, *Temple of Diana at Ephesus*, 1570. Pen and brown ink on paper, 202 × 268 mm. Signed and dated lower left: 'Heemskerck / inventor / 1570'; inscribed top left: '4. Dianae Ephesiae Templum'; numbered, lower right of centre: '4'. Courtauld Institute, London. Maarten van Heemskerck, *Colossus of Rhodes*, 1570. Pen and brown ink on paper, 204 × 263 mm. Signed bottom left: 'Martijn van Heemskerck / inventor'; dated bottom right '1570'; inscribed top left: '5. Colosus Solis'; numbered, bottom right of centre: '5'. Courtauld Institute, London. Maarten van Heemskerck, *Colosseum in Rome*, 1570. Pen and brown ink on paper, 207 × 265 mm. Signed centre left: 'Martyn van Heemskerck / inventor et fecit'; dated lower centre: '1570'; inscribed top left '8 Amphitheatrum'. Musée du Louvre, Cabinet des Dessins, Paris, inv. no. RF 36729.
8. See Veldman, *Leerrijke reeksen van Maarten van Heemskerck* and Spronk, 'Philips Galle after Maarten van Heemskerck'.
9. See I. Veldman, 'Maarten van Heemskerck and the Rhetoricians of Haarlem', in *Hafnia: Copenhagen Papers in the History of Art*, Colloque VII (1975), Copenhagen, 1976, pp. 96–112.
10. P. Parshall, 'Art and the Theater of Knowledge: The Origins of Print Collecting in Northern Europe', *Harvard University Art Museums Bulletin* 2, 3 (1994): 7–36.



- 11 'Through the sweetness of grapes we harvest joyful play.' See Veldman, Maarten van Heemskerck', p. 97. Her source is H. Gerlings, *De aloude Rhetorykkamer de Wijngaardrunken onder het blazoen: Liefde Boven Al te Haarlem*, Haarlem, 1874, p. 14.
- 12 See Spronk, 'Philips Galle after Maarten van Heemskerck', p. 26, n. 1.
- 13 'ARDDUA PIRAMIDUM PHARY MIRACULA REGES, – SURGENTES GRADIBUS MOLES, MONUMENTA SEPULTIS, – STRUXERE, ET RAPIDI DODUERE HYPERIONIS IGNIS – VICINOS FERRE, AD MAGNAE CONFINIA MEMPHIS.' The translations of the captions from Latin are based on those by Droppers, and taken from Hupert, 'Martin van Heemskerck's Seven Wonders'.
- 14 See Hupert, 'Martin van Heemskerck's Seven Wonders', no. 3.
- 15 See Chr. Hülsen and H. Egger, *Die römischen Skizzenbücher von Marten van Heemskerck im Königlichen Kupferstichkabinett zu Berlin*, Berlin, 1913–16, vol. II, fol. 54v.
- 16 Herodotus, *Histories* II.124–33, trans. G. Rawlinson, New York, 1875.
- 17 Strabo, *Geography* XVII.1.33, trans. H. L. Jones, London, 1932.
- 18 Pliny, *Natural History* XXVI.16–17, trans. D. E. Eichholz, London; Cambridge, MA, 1962.
- 19 Heemskerck must have seen the obelisks at St Peter's and the Ara Coeli in Rome. See for the sketches Hülsen and Egger *Die römischen Skizzenbücher*, vol. I, fols. Hr, 21r, 53r, 63r; vol. II, fols. 22v, 50v.
- 20 Pliny had said: 'An obelisk is a representation of a ray of the sun, and the Egyptian name of these obelisks proves it; and thus the pyramidal or obelisk form of these structures refers to the worship of fire.' See *The Seven Wonders of the World, with their Associations in Art and History*, London; New York, 1856, pp. 57–8. See also Veldman, *Leerrijke reeksen van Maarten van Heemskerck*, p. 95.
- 21 Francesco Colonna, *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, Venice, 1499, and several later editions and translations. See the edition of 1546, p. 5, and the English edition of 1592, p. 8. The statue of the nymph on top of this obelisk, whose clothes moved freely in the wind, compares well with Heemskerck's figure on his obelisk. According to Veldman, *Leerrijke reeksen van Maarten van Heemskerck* and Hupert, 'Martin van Heemskerck's Seven Wonders', this illustration depicts the Mausoleum at Halicarnassus, but this is not correct. The placing of the illustration in the text clearly indicates that it illustrates a pyramid. Moreover, the early descriptions of the Mausoleum describe a chariot on top of the tomb, which does not compare with Colonna's nymph. See also Spronk, 'Philips Galle after Maarten van Heemskerck', pp. 24–5, 27, nn. 21 and 51.
- 22 See Hülsen and Egger, *Die römischen Skizzenbücher*, vol. I, fol. 11r.
- 23 'ADIICIT HIS VATES, CUIUS SE BILBILIS ORTU – IACTAT, CAESAREI SACRUM DECUS AMPHITHEATRE – QUAE MUNDI SPECIEM MOLES MENTITA GLOBOSAM, – ACCEPIT CAVA POPULOS, IUDOS QUE PARAVIT.'
- 24 See I. Veldman, 'Maarten van Heemskerck in Italie', *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 44 (1993): 125–42.
- 25 'Barbara pyramidum sileat miracula Memphis, Assyrius iactet nec Babylona labor; nec Triviae templo molles laudentur Iones, dissimulet Delon cornibus ara frequens; aere nec vacuo pendentia Mausolea laudibus inmodicis Cares in astra ferant. Omnis Caesareo cedit labor Amphitheatro; unum pro cunctis Fama loquetur opus.' See Martial, *Epigrams*, trans. W. C. A. Ker, London, 1919, p. 2.
- 26 See I. Veldman, *De Wereld tussen Goed en Kwaad*, exh. cat., Stedelijk Museum het Catharina Gasthuis, Gouda, 1990, p 12–13.
- 27 Veldman, *Leerrijke reeksen van Maarten van Heemskerck*, p. 105.
- 28 According to Veldman, *Leerrijke reeksen van Maarten van Heemskerck*, p. 105, the foot is probably a remainder of the colossal statue of Domitian, and not that of Nero as Hupert stated. In the sketch book there is a drawing of a similar foot, see Hülsen and Egger, *Die römischen Skizzenbücher*, vol. I, fol. 32r. Heemskerck used this fragment twice in his paintings: the *Landscape with the Abduction of Helena*, now in Baltimore, and the *Triumph of Bacchus*, now in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna.
- 29 I am grateful to Henry D. Fernandez, who made this observation.
- 30 According to Hupert this is a statue of Nero with the attributes of Jupiter. See Hupert, 'Martin van Heemskerck's Seven Wonders', no. 8. According to Veldman, *Leerrijke reeksen van Maarten van Heemskerck*, p. 105, the statue is a colossal Jupiter which is derived from the standing *Jupiter Granvelle* in the Villa Madama in Rome, the same statue that influenced the engraving of *Statue of Zeus* in Olympia. Heemskerck painted a similar statue in his *Bullfight*, now in the museum in Lille.

## Chapter 13

- 1 Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, trans. C. Lenhardt, London; New York, 1986, *passim*, very clearly, for example, pp. 57–60.
- 2 Theodor W. Adorno, *Minima Moralia. Reflections from a Damaged Life*, trans. E. Jephcott, London, 1974, p. 240.
- 3 Wilhelm von Kügelgen, *Jugenderinnerungen eines alten Mannes*, Leipzig, 1989, p. 234.
- 4 Mrs Kügelgen and two of the children stayed in Dresden while the painter moved to Berlin, where his portraits were much in demand with the Biedermeier bourgeoisie, and the youngest son was sent from there to the court of the duke of Bernberg.
- 5 G. F. W. Hegel, *Vorlesungen Über die Aesthetik*, Werke in 20 Bänden, ed. Eva Moldenhauer and Karl Markus Michel, Frankfurt am Main, 1983, vols. XIII, XIV and XV. *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Arts* by G. W. F. Hegel, trans. T. M. Knox, 2 vols., Oxford, 1975, pagination continues in vol. II. In the following both works will be referred as H., vol. no., p. no; K., p. no. Quotations from Knox's translation are sometimes adjusted to provide a more literal sense of Hegel's phrasing.
- 6 Seventeenth-century Dutch painting is treated three times in Hegel's *Aesthetics*: in Part I, in the section on the relationship of the ideal of beauty to nature (H. XIII, pp. 214–24; K., pp. 161–71); in Part II, in the section on the dissolution of the romantic art form (H. XIV, pp. 223–9; K., pp. 595–600); and in Part III, in the section on the historical development of painting as a romantic art (H. XV, pp. 123–31; K., pp. 882–7)
- 7 H. XIV, p. 227; K., p. 598.
- 8 'Pure Pleasure' ('plaisir pur') versus 'natural pleasure' ('plaisir naturel'), and of 'interest' ('intérêt'). See Peter-Eckhard Knabe, *Schlüsselbegriffe des kunsttheoretischen Denkens in Frankreich von der Spätklassik bis zum Ende der Aufklärung*, Düsseldorf, 1972, in particular the chapters on 'intérêt' and on 'illusion', pp. 330–8, and pp. 299–304. The question of German-French mutual influence is rather complicated, as Wolfgang Becker has shown in *Paris und die deutsche Malerei 1750–1840. Studien zur Kunst des 19. Jahrhunderts*, vol. X, Munich, 1971.
- 9 H. XV, p. 24; K., p. 802.
- 10 H. XV, p. 127: 'jetzt fortbleibt'.
- 11 '[N]ot only a mere copy of these external things but at the same time himself and his inner soul' (H. XV, p. 26; K., p. 804).
- 12 H. XV, p. 130; K., pp. 886f.
- 13 H. XV, pp. 127, 130; K., pp. 884, 887.
- 14 See H. XV, p. 77; K. 845. Denis Diderot, *Essais sur la peinture. Salons de 1759, 1761, 1763*, ed. Gita May and Jacques Chouillet, Paris, 1984. This edition includes a glossary of art terms used by Diderot, among them 'magic' and others such as descriptive adjectives like 'vigoureux', which we find still used with a certain sense of binding meaning in the French art critics of the nineteenth century discussed in Part II of this book. Goethe's translation is of Diderot's first two essays on drawing and design and on colour, which he published with an interpolated commentary in the *Propyläen* of 1799. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, 'Diderots Versuch über die Malerei', in *Schriften über die Kunst*, Zurich, 1954, pp. 201–53, p. 240. On 'Zauberei' in the harmony of colours, see, p. 240. The first translation of Diderot's *Essais* is Diderot, *Versuche über die Malerey*, 'übersetzt von Carl Friedrich Crammer, dt. Buchdrucker und Buchhändler zu Paris', Riga, 1779. This is not to say that Diderot was not read in French. A very interesting example of implying knowledge of Diderot's terminology and yet rejecting it in search of a more personal and expressive language for the description of paintings is August Friedrich Schlegel's 'Die Gemälde' of 1798, a fictive art-critical conversation among three friends in the Dresden Gallery. See A. W. von Schlegel, *Kritische Schriften*, 2 vols., Berlin, 1828, vol. II pp. 145–252.
- 15 See again Knabe, *Schlüsselbegriffe*, chapters 'couleur/coloris', pp. 129–40; 'clair-obscur', pp. 116–22; 'illusion', pp. 299–304. See also Antoine-Joseph Pernety, *Dictionnaire portatif de peinture, sculpture et gravure* (1757), repr. Geneva, 1972: 'clair/obscur', pp. 610–64; 'couleur', pp. 109–14.
- 16 Obviously, the tracing of the history of art critical concepts to their origins is a very complicated task; here it is sufficient to compare the usage of 'colour magic' in Hegel and Diderot. Diderot uses the term 'magic' not only for skilful imitation of the sheen of textiles but explicitly for an affective quality in colour. Diderot, *Essais*, p. 276: 'a seductive charm which attracts the beholders, arrests them with satisfaction and prompts them to admiration

and astonishment'. "Magic" is 'a word used metaphorically for painting to express the great art of representing the objects with much truth, so that they produce an illusion, to the point of enabling one to say, for example, that these flesh tones, this arm, this body is fleshy . . . This magic does not depend on the chosen colours themselves, but on their distribution, according to the artist's understanding of chiaroscuro. If it is well handled, it results in a seductive charm which attracts the beholders, arrests them with satisfaction and prompts them to admiration and astonishment.' The entries are quoted from the *Encyclopédie* and from Antoine-Joseph Pernety's *Dictionnaire portatif*. The entry on 'magic' is taken from Pernety, *Dictionnaire portatif*, pp. 396f.

- 17 Peter Dementz, 'Defenses of Dutch Painting and the Theory of Realism', *Comparative Literature* 15, 2 (1963): 97–115. This view can still be found in Oskar Fischel, *Die Meisterwerke des Kaiser Friedrich-Museums zu Berlin*, Munich, n.d. [c. 1900–5], p. xxvii, where he writes that ter Borch's paintings are much more elegant and distinguished than the society they represent. Analogously, even the most merciless accounts of nineteenth-century German and Austrian genre painting tend to exempt Ferdinand Georg Waldmüller from their polemics on the basis of his extraordinary technical achievement. On Waldmüller, see Bruno Grimschitz, *Ferdinand Georg Waldmüller*, Salzburg, 1957. See also Nikolaus Pevsner, *Academies of Art, Past and Present*, Cambridge, 1940, repr. New York, 1973, p. 235: 'combining the sugary taste of his time with a surprising Pre-Impressionism'.
- 18 H. XV, p. 130; K., p. 887.
- 19 See Ingeborg Becker, *Theodor Hosemann. Illustrator – Graphiker – Maler des Berliner Biedermeier*, exh. cat. Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin, 1983, cat. no. 7, p. 50.
- 20 See also H. XIII, p. 222; K., p. 169. He specifically targets the painters of the Düsseldorf Academy. On this art, see Ute Ricker-Immel, 'Die Düsseldorfer Genremalerei', in exh. cat. *Die Düsseldorfer Malerschule*, Kunstmuseum Düsseldorf and Mathildenhöhe Darmstadt, Mainz, 1979, pp. 149–64. On Hegel's conflictive attitude towards such contemporary painting, see also Werner Busch, *Die notwendige Arabeske. Wirklichkeitsaneignung und Stilisierung in der deutschen Kunst des 19. Jahrhunderts*, Berlin, 1985, pp. 22, 109f., 170ff. It must be noted that Hegel was no less critical of contemporary history painting taking its subject matter from literature (Shakespeare, Tasso, Goethe). See H. XV, pp. 91–4; K., pp. 856–8, where he reviews the 1828 art exhibition in Berlin.
- 21 H. XIV, p. 229; K., p. 600.
- 22 H. XIV, p. 230; K., p. 601.
- 23 H. XIV, p. 231; K., p. 602.
- 24 Knabe, *Schlüsselbegriffe*, p. 380, chapter 'naïveté/naïf', pp. 381–4: 'le naïf sera tout voisin du sublime'.
- 25 Jean Paul, *Vorschule der Ästhetik*, Werke, ed. Norbert Miller, Munich, 1980, vol. V, pp. 253–7: 'Die Tiefe als die umgekehrte Höhe (altitude)'; '[die] weder die Erhabenheit der Gestalten der italienischen Form, noch die komische oder auch ernste Vertiefung der entgegengesetzten niederländischen annimmt'; 'nur aber spreche nicht der Dichter, sondern der Character das Komische aus'. A partial translation of Jean Paul's *Vorschule* is included in Kathleen M. Wheeler, ed., *German Aesthetic and Literary Criticism: The Romantic Ironists and Goethe*, Cambridge, 1984, pp. 162–201.
- 26 Wheeler, ed., *German Aesthetic and Literary Criticism*, pp. 257–62.
- 27 This term was coined by Jens Tismar and applied by him to several authors. See *Gestörte Idyllen. Eine Studie zur Problematik der idyllischen Wunsch vorstellungen am Beispiel von Jean Paul, Adalbert Stifter, Robert Walser, Thomas Bernhard*, Munich, 1973, pp. 7–11, 12–42. Tismar's thesis is approvingly summarized in Renate Böschstein-Schäfer, *Idylle*, 2nd rev. edn, Stuttgart, 1977, pp. 34 and 120–3.
- 28 Jean Paul, *Vorschule*, p. 125: 'Der Humor, als das umgekehrte Erhabene, vernichtet nicht das Einzelne, sondern das Endliche durch den Kontrast mit der Idee.' In the current context it is important to see that Jean Paul links humour and its annihilating power with both folly and insanity, with 'Torheit' and 'Tollheit'. His novels *Titan* and *Siebenkäs* each includes one highly strung character who represents this kind of humour. These characters are humane, incorruptible, impulsive, critical, solitary, and, as a consequence, self-destructive. But his novels also include characters who naively aspire to the highest achievements and moral standards without realizing the comical aspects of their sublime aspirations. These two types of characters represent insanity and folly as well as comical inversions of the sublime.

By contrast, Hegel rejects positions of extreme subjectivity, as he sees no possibility for an absolute freedom of the human spirit in art other than as a negative abstraction and isolation of artistic practice. On Hegel's critique of subjectivity in this sense, see Otto Pöggeler, *Hegel's Kritik der Romantik: Abhandlungen zur Philosophie, Psychologie und Pädagogik*, vol. IV, Bonn, 1956, passim.

- 29 Jean Paul, *Vorschule*, pp. 132–39; quotation, pp. 138f.
- 30 Jean Paul, *Vorschule*, p. 112.
- 31 Friedrich Theodor Vischer, in his *Aesthetics of 1847–57*, elaborated an aesthetic of the comical as the inverted sublime, crediting Jean Paul with most of its ideas, including the humorous contempt of the world ('humoristische Weltverachtung'). But for Vischer, writing after 1848, this position of a merely ideal subjective freedom had become a problematic deception, an 'appeasement', 'consisting of the perception that everything is ultimately common existence and yet the idea is present there too'. Vischer demanded a real counterpart to this illusion in art. In the end, Vischer himself came to doubt Jean Paul's notion of the 'echt deutsche Humor' (the typically German humour), a humour of 'Hausväterlichkeit', of homeliness. See Friedrich Theodor Vischer, *Aesthetik oder Wissenschaft des Schönen*, ed. Robert Vischer, 3 vols., Munich, 1922, repr. Hildesheim; New York, 1975), § 154, p. 374; Jean Paul, *Vorschule*, § 34.
- 32 Bertold Hinz, 'Malerei im "Dritten Reich" und ihre antagonistische Provenienz', in exh. cat. *Realismus. Zwischen Revolution und Reaktion 1919–39*, Munich, 1974. Hinz attempts to link the revival of genre painting of the 1930s to Dutch art in the seventeenth century; pp. 61–74.
- 33 The caption's subtitle quotes Göring's statement: 'Iron has always made an empire strong, butter and lard have at most made a people fat.' This photomontage first appeared in *AIZ*, 19 December 1935; it was adapted by Heartfield for an act in a revue put on for the Free German League in London in the summer of 1939. See *Photomontages of the Nazi Period: John Heartfield*, Munich; New York, 1977, p. 130. On this image and others involving the barbaric axe with an engraved or otherwise applied swastika, see David Evans, *John Heartfield AIZ/VI 1930–38*, ed. Anna Lundgren, New York, 1992, pp. 332f., as well as 154f.: 'Göring the Executioner of the Third Reich'; pp. 196f.: 'The Difference'; pp. 262f.: 'Protect the Saar from the Executioner's Axe'; pp. 288f.: 'Free Plebiscite on the Saar'; pp. 354f.: 'They judge the people, as long as the people do not judge them.' The absence of illustrations is not the result of the author's errors or negligence.

## Chapter 14

- 1 I wish to thank my colleague J.-P. Van der Motten of Ghent University for his critical revision of the text.
- 2 H. White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, Baltimore; London, 1973.
- 3 F. R. Ankersmit, *De navel van de geschiedenis. Over interpretatie, representatie en historische realiteit*, Groningen, 1990, p. 29.
- 4 J.-F. Lyotard, *La condition postmoderne. Rapport sur le savoir*, Paris, 1979.
- 5 M. Kuiper, 'Verloren en verzonnen leven', in *Nederlands in culturele context. Handelingen twaalfde Colloquium Neerlandicum Antwerpen 1994*, Woubrugge, 1995, pp. 31–46.
- 6 W. Drop, *Verbeelding en historie. Verschijningsvormen van de Nederlandse historische roman in de negentiende eeuw*, 3rd edn, Utrecht, 1975, ongewijzigde druk (orig. pub. 1958).
- 7 L. Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism. History, Theory, Fiction*, New York; London, 1988; L. Hutcheon, *The Politics of Postmodernism*, London, 1989.
- 8 L. Wesseling, 'De politiek van het postmodernisme: Utopie en geschiedenis', *Forum der Letteren* 32, 1 (1991): 23–34 (p. 25).
- 9 L. de Winter, *La Place de la Bastille. Vertelling*, Haarlem, 1981. See also A. M. Musschoot, 'Leon de Winter and Peter Handke: Varieties of Postmodernism', in J. P. Snapper and Th. F. Shannon, eds., *The Berkeley Conference on Dutch Literature 1991*, Lanham, MD, 1993, pp. 157–70.
- 10 L. de Winter, *Zoeken naar Eileen W*, Haarlem, 1981.
- 11 J. Diepstraten, *Hella S. Haasse. Een interview*, 's-Gravenhage, 1984.
- 12 Wesseling, 'De politiek', p. 20.
- 13 E. Ibsch, 'Postmoderne (on)mogelijkheden in de Nederlandse literatuur', in W. F. G. Breekveldt, J. D. F. van Halsema, E. Ibsch and L. Strengholt, eds., *De achtervolging ingezet. Opstellen over moderne letterkunde aangeboden aan Margaretha H. Schenkeveld*, Amsterdam, 1989, pp. 346–73.

- 14 D. W. Fokkema, 'De culturele verwerking van het verleden in literatuur', in *Nederlands in culturele context. Handelingen twaalfde Colloquium Neerlandicum Antwerpen 1994*, Woubrugge, 1995, pp. 47–62.
- 15 H. S. Haasse, *Mevrouw Bentinck of Onverenigbaarheid van karakter. Een ware geschiedenis*, Amsterdam, 1978; H. S. Haasse, *De groten der aarde of Bentinck tegen Bentinck*, Amsterdam, 1981.
- 16 H. S. Haasse, 'De moderne historische roman', in *Bladspiegel. Een keuze uit de essays*, Amsterdam, 1985, pp. 154–74. Originally in *Jaarboek Maatschappij der Nederlandse Letterkunde Leiden 1981–1982* (1983): 17–34.
- 17 J. Goedegebuure, 'Verhaal en waarheid in Hella Haasse's historische romans', in *Nederlandse literatuur 1960–1988*, Amsterdam, 1989, pp. 85–98 (pp. 94–8).

## Chapter 15

- 1 The quotation is from Dirk Bouma Nieuwenhuis, a romantic historian whose work will be discussed briefly in this chapter.
- 2 Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, Baltimore; London, 1975 (1973); in 1987 *The Content of the Form*, Baltimore; London, 1987, a collection of essays, was published. The essays elaborate on several of the themes already present in *Metahistory*. In this chapter most references are to the essay 'The Politics of Historical Interpretation' from *Content of the Form*, pp. 58–83.
- 3 White, *Content of the Form*, p. 83.
- 4 *De Friesche Volksalmanak* appeared from 1836 to 1900 with an interruption between 1867 and 1884; it had various editors and publishers.
- 5 J. A. de Jonge, *De Industrialisatie in Nederland tussen 1850 en 1914*, Nijmegen, 1976 (1968), p. 343.
- 6 Historiography in prose in the almanacs of 1854, 1859 and 1860.
- 7 Historiography in poetry in the almanacs of 1856, 1863 (2) and 1864.
- 8 'de oude slooper', *De Friesche Volksalmanak*, 1854, p. 1.
- 9 'de rustelooze overweldiger', *De Friesche Volksalmanak*, 1854, p. 2.
- 10 *De Friesche Volksalmanak*, 1859.
- 11 *De Friesche Volksalmanak*, 1850, pp. 3–29.
- 12 My translation. '[G]eene gezonde kritiek [kunnen] doorstaan, en alleen berust[en] op het denkbeeld, dat er geen volk, zonder oorsprong zijn kan, en [men] daarom ook eenen [heeft] uitgevonden volgens den toen heerschen den tijdgeest en begripen en naar aanleiding van hetgeen Mozes omtrent de geschiedenis van het Joodsche volk gedaan heeft' (*De Friesche Volksalmanak* 1850, p. 6).
- 13 My translation. 'Zij droomden van eene vrijheid, welke in het maatschappelijke onbestaanbaar was. Zij wilden een maatschappij, maar wilden zich niet aan de daarin noodwendig te makene wetten onderwerpen; omdat daarin de kiem van opperheerschappij lag; zij waren zeiden zij allen gelijk en dit waren zij inderdaad, en behoort ieder aan den anderen te zijn; maar deze stelling is alleen denkbaar buiten, en niet in eene maatschappij' (*De Friesche Volksalmanak*, 1850, p. 27).
- 14 See White, *Metahistory*, pp. 1–43.
- 15 My translation. '[W]aanwijze geleerdheid' (*De Friesche Volksalmanak*, 1897, p. 168), 'die platweg loochent alles wat zij niet met oogen zien en met handen grijpen kunnen' (*De Friesche Volksalmanak*, 1897, pp. 168–9). '[M]aar, in onzen nieuwen tijd, nu "der Geist der stets verneint", en die de geest is des ongeloofs, des duivels, gaandeweg weer wordt terug gedrongen door den geest des geloofs, en in de afgrond waaruit hij was opgerezen, weer verbannen wordt' (*De Friesche Volksalmanak*, 1897, p. 169).

## Chapter 16

All translations from the French are by the editors.

1. Although even in the field of legal history Latin lost importance; see J. van den Broeck, *De historiografie van het recht*, Brussels, 1990, pp. 114–15.

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- 5 See J. Smeyers, *Vlaams taal- en volksbewustzijn in het zuidnederlands geestesleven van de 18de eeuw*, Ghent, 1959, and various other publications by the same author.
- 6 Derival, *Le voyageur dans les Pays-Bas autrichiens, ou lettres sur l'état actuel de ces pays, 1782–3*, vol. V, p. 13; Smeyers, *Vlaams taal- en volksbewustzijn*, pp. 192–209; J. Smeyers and J. van den Broeck, eds., introduction to J. B. C. Verlooy, *Verhandeling op d'onacht der moederlyke tael in de Nederlanden (1788)*, The Hague, 1979, p. 6–7.
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- 11 Among others J. Smeyers, 'De Vlaamse aanwezigheid in de Theresiaanse Academie', in G. Verbeke, ed., *De weg naar eigen academieën 1772–1938*, Brussels, 1983, pp. 43–65.
- 12 See W. G. F. Verhoeven, *Antwoord op de vraag: sedert wanneer is het roomsch regt bekend in de gewesten der Oostenryksche Nederlanden, en sedert wanneer heeft het (in deeze) de kracht van wet, 1783*, p. 49.
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- 15 P. Lamoot, *Discours sur l'utilité d'une histoire générale de Flandre et sur la manière de l'écrire, 1760*, pp. 82–3.
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- 17 For example, [J. des Roshes], 'Discours préliminaire sur l'état des lettres dans les Pays-Bas', 1777, pp. xvi–xvii (concerning the publications of the Academy); F. J. Galliot, *Histoire de Namur*, vol. I, 1788, p. xii; M. J. de Bast, *Recueil d'antiquités Romaines et Gauloises, 1808*, p. xxii.
- 18 Bertholet, 'Histoire de l'église et de la principauté de Liège', p. 296.
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- 20 C. F. Nelis, *Belgarum rerum prodromus; sive de historia belgica ejusque scriptoribus praecipuis commentatio, 1790*, p. 13.
- 21 See D. Roche, *La France des Lumières*, Paris, 1993, p. 92.
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- 24 See F. Waquet, 'Res et verba. Les érudits et le style dans l'historiographie de la fin du XVIIIe siècle', *Storia della Storiografia* 8 (1985): 98–109.

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- 27 de Feller, *Dictionnaire historique*, vol. IV, p. 90.
- 28 Protocol of the academic session of 16 September 1777, in Maily, *Histoire de l’Académie*, vol. II, 1883, p. 277 (‘this rhetorician’s style which is in such poor taste in an academic dissertation’).
- 29 Gay, *Style in History*, p. 5.
- 30 Hough, *Style and Stylistics*, p. 4.
- 31 Gay, *Style in History*, p. 188 (‘the unliterary presentation of historical material has a long and respectable tradition behind it’).
- 32 See various studies by A. Momigliano, esp. in his *Studies in Historiography*, London, 1966; see also C. Grell, *L’histoire entre érudition et philosophie*, Paris, 1993, p. 14 and *passim*.
- 33 See B. Groperrin, *La représentation de l’histoire de France dans l’historiographie des Lumières*, Paris, 1982, p. 774.
- 34 For example, K. F. Custis, ‘Bibliothèque choisie d’un gentilhomme’, Ghent, University Library, ms. 455, p. 30.
- 35 T. Bouille, *Histoire de la ville et pays de Liège*, vol. III, 1732, ‘avertissement’. See also Lamoot, *Discours sur l’utilité*, pp. 16–17.
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- 38 F. Weil, ‘Le dilemme de l’histoire’, in *L’histoire au dix-huitième siècle*, Aix-en-Provence, 1980, p. 483, referring to Mably.
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- 41 As it was put in the description of the prize question for 1788 of the Société Libre d’Emulation de Liège. It is easy to understand why I have – uncharacteristically – saved my *captatio benevolentiae* for the end. This text has been written in a language which is not my own. I therefore could only try to write correctly and understandably. The style of this chapter was of course completely unimportant.

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- 7 Interview with H. Marsman in *De gulden winckel*, 20 April 1927.
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## Chapter 20

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- 4 Cf. Hugo Brems, *Nieuwe Vlaamse Verhalen. Gekozen en van een nawoord voorzien door Hugo Brems*, Amsterdam; Antwerp, 1993, p. 280.
- 5 Brems, *Nieuwe Vlaamse Verhalen*.
- 6 Cf. Goedegebuure and Musschoot, *Hedendaagse Nederlandse prozaschrijvers*, pp. 33–4.

- 7 Cf. Hugo Bousset, *De gulden snede. Over Nederlands proza na 1980*, Amsterdam; Leuven, 1993, p. 19.
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- 10 Bousset, *Gulden snede*, pp. 17–18.
- 11 Hugo Bousset, 'De gulden snede. De Nederlandse prozaliteratuur uit het Noorden na 1970', *Ons Erfdeel* 35, 1 (1992), p. 86. In this article, the author, one of the most prolific users of the term himself, admits that the term is being broadly interpreted ('vrij ruim geïnterpreteerd', p. 86) in recent publications. In the first chapter of his *Grenzen verleggen. De Vlaamse prozaliteratuur 1970–1986*, vol. I, *Trends*, Antwerp, 1988, pp. 9–10, he introduced the term 'postmodern', but did not make further use of it. Cf. Anne Marie Musschoot, 'Hugo Bousset, *De gulden snede*', *Ons Erfdeel*, 37, 3 (1994): 425–6.
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