



BENJAMIN B. ROBERTS

**SEX, DRUGS
AND
ROCK 'N' ROLL
IN THE DUTCH
GOLDEN AGE**

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Sex, Drugs and Rock 'n' Roll in the Dutch Golden Age

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Benjamin B. Roberts

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1. The Dutch Republic in the Seventeenth Century

Amsterdam, 2017

These days, arriving at Amsterdam's Central Station, many tourists will be overwhelmed by the distinctly sweet, herbal scent of marijuana or hash. Since the late 1960s and the Flower Power days, Amsterdam has been known the world over for its Red Light District and hash bars or coffee shops, where patrons can 'legally' purchase marijuana and hash in small amounts. In the last forty years, the city has become known as a modern-day 'Sodom and Gomorra' for its toleration of prostitution and use of cannabis. In Quentin Tarantino's Oscar-winning *Pulp Fiction* (1994), one of the many eclectic dialogues between mobsters John Travolta and Samuel L. Jackson captures Amsterdam's liberal drug policy in a nutshell.

Jackson: *'Tell me about those hash bars again. It's legal now, right?'*

Travolta: *'Yeah, it's legal now, but not 100% legal. You just can't walk into a restaurant, roll a joint and start puffing away. They want you to smoke at home or in certain designated places.'*

Jackson: *'And those places are... hash bars?'*

Travolta: *'Yeah, it breaks down like this: it's legal to buy it, it's legal to own it, and if you are a proprietor of a hash bar, it's legal to sell it. It's legal to carry it, but that doesn't matter, now get a load of this. If you get stopped by a cop in Amsterdam, it's illegal for them to search you. Now that's the right cops in Amsterdam don't have.'*

Jackson: *'Oh man, I'm going, that's all there is to it. I'm fuckin' going.'*

Otto Copes, 1629

More than twenty years since *Pulp Fiction* was released, a growing number of states in the United States are legalizing the use of cannabis. No doubt, Amsterdam and the Netherlands' liberal policy on drug use have played some role in this development. In the Netherlands, toleration of the use of drugs and other vices, including legalized prostitution, has a longer history; a history that is embedded in the way in which Dutch municipal authorities, schoolteachers, moralists, and parents raised their adolescent children in the Golden Age, in the heyday of abundance and affluence, an era when moderation was a necessity, not an option.

Let us start our story with Otto Copes in December 1629. Otto came from a decent family. They belonged to the elite of the town of Den Bosch, in the Generality Lands of the Dutch Republic. Members of the family held high-ranking public offices as town administrators and mayors. His parents died when he was young, and so Otto was taken in and raised by his paternal uncle, who was a member of Den Bosch's magistrate. By now, Otto was 18 years old and his behavior could hardly be termed appropriate for someone from his background. On a winter's night in 1629, he met up with two friends in a pub in Groningen for a drink that turned into a drinking binge. Earlier that year, Otto had enrolled as a law student at the University of Groningen, a medium-sized town 200 kilometers away from Den Bosch. Groningen took Otto far away from the watchful eye of his uncle, and he felt at liberty to do as he pleased and threw himself into college life. That day in 1629, Otto and his friends started drinking early in the afternoon and by evening they were completely wasted. After they left the pub, things went awfully wrong for them. During their walk home, they became aggressive and started to attack people. The city guard came to the rescue soon afterwards, but by then Otto and his friends had worked themselves into a frenzy of violence, and they started to fire their pistols at the city guard. Miraculously, no one was injured.

Today, the mere thought of drunken students staggering down the street in the middle of night carrying firearms would cause immediate public outrage. Bystanders would call the emergency services and the police would become involved, as well as politicians. The media would have a field day and the newspapers would be filled with moral panic. Commentators would complain about the violence of today's youth. Lawmakers would likely call for an increase in the legal age for alcohol consumption, and the media would speculate about how young people were able to buy weapons.

In the seventeenth century, however, municipal authorities made little fuss about juvenile delinquency. Neither did the media, as in the seventeenth century there were no newspapers as we know them today. And it is unlikely the incident would have been cause for moral panic. This *laissez-faire* attitude tells us much about seventeenth-century society and how young people were regarded at that time. It immediately raises the question: if drunken young people and violence were commonplace, what was considered 'normal behavior' for young people in the Dutch Golden Age?

When I was sixteen years old, my older brother and I traveled through Europe together on a Eurail Pass. We were young Americans who wanted to know everything about European culture and civilization. We wanted to immerse ourselves in the culture of Rembrandt, Bach, and Goethe. We walked along the canals of Amsterdam, admiring the seventeenth-century buildings and feats of urban planning, while cyclists whizzed past and cursed at us as we unknowingly used their bike lane as a sidewalk. We marveled at the masterpieces of Rembrandt, Jan Steen, and Vermeer in the Rijksmuseum. In Paris we were awestruck by the nineteenth-century planning of Haussmann, and in the Louvre we got lost because we wanted to take our picture next to the Venus de Milo.

In picturesque Heidelberg, we relished walking around the medieval castle. At the city's university, founded in 1386, we were amazed by the *Studentenkarzer*, or student prison, where

students were incarcerated and given a night to reflect on their inappropriate behavior. To my surprise, the walls of the cells were clad with profanities and obscenities. It reminded me of the toilet stalls at my high school in the United States, where the walls were covered with lewd texts, drawings of joints, and depictions of oversized male genitals. At that point, I started to question my lofty presumption of 'European civilization'. Were those young men the same Europeans who had created the fine art hanging in the museums I had just visited, the literary classics in the world's libraries, and the world's great musical compositions? Could it be true that young students in the early modern period were no better than myself and all those other pimple-faced teenagers in my school? Since that day, I have been wondering what we have in common with our ancestors, as well as how we differ from them. That question runs through this book as well.

The richest country in the world

What was it like to be a teenager and living under different economic and social conditions? During the Golden Age, the Netherlands had an exceptionally large child and adolescent population. How to educate and raise children as decent citizens was one of the main concerns of the early part of the seventeenth century. At that time, the Dutch Republic was the richest country in the world, and with nearly two million inhabitants, the most densely populated country in Europe. It was the most urbanized region in northern Europe, and it was one of the youngest nations, engaged in a fierce battle for independence from Spain and the Roman Catholic Church. The country was itself a teenager, seeking independence and desperately in search of its own identity.

With the eclipse of the Roman Catholic Church in the Dutch Republic, there was no predominant religion to take its place. The Protestant Church tried to gain the former's position as the state church, but failed. The religious landscape of the new

country was fragmented, divided up among different religions, which lived side by side and were obliged to tolerate each other.

After the fall of Antwerp in 1585 and the blockade of the Scheldt River, which closed off the city's main source of trade, commercial trade in northern Europe was diverted overnight from Antwerp to Amsterdam. From one day to the next, Amsterdam became the new staple market of Europe. The sealing off of Antwerp's harbor created a large influx of immigrants, who fled the city and resettled in the north. They brought their knowledge, money, and trade contacts with them. The influx of immigrants from the Southern Netherlands unleashed a wave of economic prosperity and a building boom, and generated unprecedented employment. In 1602, the Dutch East Indies Company (VOC) was founded. It became the world's first multinational, winning exclusive rights to trade with today's Indonesia, India, China and Japan. In 1621, the Dutch West Indies Company (WIC) was established and went on to trade in North America, the Caribbean, and Brazil. With its large trading companies, the Republic straddled the globe like a giant octopus, collecting goods from the eastern and western hemispheres. During this period, many merchant families amassed large fortunes and were able to climb the social ladder. Many times, these families ascended from the merchant class within one or two generations and became members of the ruling elite.

In the seventeenth century, the young Republic covered an area that only partially corresponds to the current boundaries of the Netherlands. The country was divided into seven provinces: Holland, Zeeland, Utrecht, Friesland, Groningen, Overijssel, and Gelderland. The province of Holland with its major trading cities, including Amsterdam, Leiden, Haarlem, Hoorn, Enkhuizen, Dordrecht, Rotterdam, Delft and Schiedam, stood at the helm of the Republic. Among the cities of Holland, Amsterdam quickly emerged as the cultural and economic epicenter of the province and hence of the Republic. The worldwide demand for luxury goods such as porcelain, furniture, books, and paintings transformed the city into a commercial and manufacturing center.

Without the wealth that came from these industries, the artistic achievements of painters such as Rembrandt, poets such as P.C. Hooft, and writers such as Vondel would not have been possible. The new elite wanted to be portrayed and immortalized by the country's most prominent painters. In Amsterdam, the painter Bartholomeus van der Helst was the Annie Leibowitz of the Golden Age, painting the country's rich and famous.

The new wealth of the Republic allowed parents to focus on the education of their children. During the Dutch Golden Age, many books of advice were published on how children should be educated and molded into decent citizens of the new country. Numerous schools were founded and several universities were established. It was as though the country had been swept by a wave of optimism about the future, and was full of hope about the younger generation. According to the Dutch sociologist Henk Becker, in his book *Generaties en hun kansen* [Generations and their chances] (1992), generations of young people growing up during economic hardship and crisis, war, or times of disease, are more likely to be pessimistic and have a negative view of the future. They often see hurdles ahead.

Young people who grow up during times of economic prosperity and peace, by contrast, often have an optimistic outlook on life. They are hopeful and see opportunities everywhere, even during difficult times. The baby boomers of the twentieth century are a good example of a generation that grew up in an era of economic prosperity. On the contrary, Generation X grew up in the 1980s when there was economic downturn, overshadowed by the threat of nuclear annihilation at the height of the Cold War. They grew up seeing the future as a grim place with few opportunities, if any at all.

For the early modern period, it is impossible (and unthinkable) to divide generations into categories as sociologists and marketing agencies have done for the twentieth century. That does not mean, however, that there were no differences between the generations in the seventeenth century. This book will focus on young men in the early seventeenth century and examine how

they became adults during an economic, cultural, and scientific golden age. Because sources on people in the lower classes are relatively scarce, this book will primarily be concerned with young people from the middle and upper classes. These were young men who were either enrolled at a university or had an apprenticeship, where they learned a craft or trade.

The sources on young people in the Dutch Golden Age used for this book include diaries, paintings, engravings, books on childrearing, educational treatises, police reports, reports from the academic court (the university's own court), and the entertainment books that were produced for young people in the Golden Age. These sources provide us with a glimpse of what it was like to be young in the seventeenth century.

During the Golden Age, a young man was considered a youth until he married; that is, until he was financially independent and had the resources to marry and start a family. In general, this included most men until their late twenties and sometimes as old as their early thirties. In comparison to neighboring countries, the Republic had a large population of young people. They were mostly young laborers or students who had immigrated to the Northern Netherlands. The influx of immigrants had many causes. In the Southern Netherlands, there was heavy fighting during the Revolt against the Spaniards, which disrupted the economy and unleashed social upheaval. This was a major reason for young people to emigrate and seek refuge in the Northern Netherlands.

In the early seventeenth century, there was similar social turmoil in parts of present-day Germany, where a bloody conflict was fought between Roman Catholics and Protestants. During the Thirty Years War (1618-1648), entire towns and villages were destroyed. The countryside was looted and reduced to ashes, crops were destroyed, and livestock were indiscriminately slaughtered. If the inhabitants did not perish from the sword, then they were likely to die from famine and plague. There was little future for the young people in these regions. For them, moving to the flourishing cities of the Northern Netherlands

was often the only option to build a new life. They were like the young men from Syria, Iraq, Iran, and countries in Northern Africa today, who risk the dangerous sea crossing from Turkey to Europe in rickety boats. There was no other possibility for them than to leave everything behind and hope for a better life elsewhere. Staying was not an option, because the future that awaited them in their own country was one of violence and famine.

Although seventeenth-century sources do not provide exact statistics about specific age groups, as modern demographic bureaus can do today, we can assume that early modern cities were inhabited primarily by unmarried young people under the age of thirty. They flocked to the cities of the Northern Netherlands in the early seventeenth century. They gave a boost to the economy and stimulated demand for housing, foodstuffs, and household goods. At the same time, they found work in the flourishing trade sector, and in the emerging textile industry and other industries. They were the driving motor of the economic and cultural boom that was known as the Dutch Golden Age.

A country full of young people

Many of the young immigrant men found work in the shipping industry. One could earn good money working on board one of the many VOC or WIC ships. Such a job provided a young man with at least six to nine months of work, with fixed wages. In addition, he could see parts of the world that he could have only dreamt of as a child. Exact data on how many foreigners were employed by the VOC and the WIC during the early seventeenth century are unfortunately unknown. However, we do know that approximately 475,000 foreigners were employed by the VOC during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. For a country with a total population of two million inhabitants, the proportion of foreigners must have been considerable. The loading and unloading of ships alone required a workforce of 35,000. Most of

these men were not born in the Republic and today they would be called ethnic minorities or guest workers.

The second largest group of young men that came to the country found employment in the army. At least half of the soldiers were foreigners, and sometimes entire regiments came from the same country or region. The Scots, Southern Germans, and the Swiss in particular had a reputation for providing mercenary troops. There are no exact data on the numbers of young men and the regions from which they came. A rough estimate suggests that the Dutch State Army employed one million men during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, half of whom were foreigners.

The third group consisted of 'journeymen', or apprentices learning a craft. They included many Germans, known as *Wanderburschen*, who had internships as craftsmen in the cities of the Republic. There were also many journeymen from the Southern Netherlands who, after the blockade of the Scheldt River, had little or no chance of finding an internship in any of the Flemish cities. In this period, many people from the Southern Netherlands sought refuge in the Republic. During the Dutch Revolt, approximately 150,000 people migrated from the South to the North. Many were wealthy merchants who chose Amsterdam as the new destination in which to continue their trade throughout Europe. Other immigrants in the Republic found work in the growing textile industries of Leiden and Haarlem, or were employed as seasonal workers in the bleaching industry outside Haarlem and Zandvoort, where linens were sun-bleached in the fields along the coast. Every town or village in the Republic had local factories where beer was brewed, or glue and straw were processed. In short, there were plenty of jobs for both skilled and unskilled laborers.

The growing economy also instigated a migration of students to the universities in the Republic. University towns such as Leiden, Groningen, Utrecht, Amsterdam and Franeker attracted many foreign students who wanted to study at a Protestant university. In Europe, with the exception of England, the Republic

was the only country with a Protestant university. Leiden, for example, had a large student population with many foreigners. They made up a considerable proportion of the city's population and were usually responsible for disturbing the peace after sunset. The continuous 'pull factor' of young people searching for economic prosperity in the Dutch Republic unleashed an unprecedented golden age, while at the same time creating a country that bustled with a young and rambunctious population.

Amsterdam, center of the world

In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, Amsterdam inherited Antwerp's crown as the center of world trade. The city experienced a population explosion, similar to those that would occur in London and Paris in the nineteenth century. In 1568, at the beginning of the Dutch Revolt against Spain, Amsterdam was home to barely 30,000 inhabitants. By 1600, the population had more than doubled to 65,000. Fifty years later, it had grown to 140,000 residents. In the course of the seventeenth century, Amsterdam became the third most populated city in Europe.

In the early seventeenth century, there was a high degree of social upward mobility. Merchants who amassed large fortunes in a relatively short period were able to climb the social ladder. During the economic boom they acquired not only wealth, but they also sought political influence, and pursued key administrative positions in town magistrates. Some went further, and gained key national offices. Within one or two generations, this group of merchants had worked their way up the ladder and become the new rulers of the country. The new members of the elite also wanted to flaunt their newfound wealth and position. They built large patrician-style palaces along the canals, spent their summers at extravagant country estates, and acquired aristocratic titles from the impoverished old nobility to consolidate their status. They also raised their children in accordance with their new lifestyle, and provided them with an education that

was similar to that of the nobility. Their sons attended Latin school and university, their education culminating with a grand tour of France, and Italy, sometimes England, which could last for months, if not years. The sons of the new elite were taught about classical civilization, which was considered appropriate for their new status in society.

The wedding party

One tier below the new elite lay the rising middle class, whose members also profited from the Golden Age. Unlike the *nouveau riche* with their large houses on the main canals and children at university, these were the members of the economic class that earned enough money to buy luxury goods, such as entertaining books and fashionable clothing. It was also a new class whose social power and influence were taken seriously. Its members included young men such as Manuel Colyn, who, together with his elder brother Michiel, ran a publishing and printing house on Damrak quay in Amsterdam. Today, Damrak is the first street that most visitors to the city encounter. It is the stretch from Amsterdam's main railway station to Dam Square, with its neon-lite fast-food joints, tacky souvenir shops, and seedy gambling houses. In the seventeenth century, Damrak was the hub of Amsterdam's publishing industry. Books and other publications could easily be loaded into the moored vessels only a few meters across the quay and shipped elsewhere. From the quay of Damrak, the forbidden works of the philosopher Descartes and pedagogue Comenius were published and distributed throughout Europe.

Manuel's parents had died in 1603, during an outbreak of the plague. Manuel, eight years old at the time, was raised together with his siblings by his eldest brother Claes Colyn, who at the age of 23 had become responsible for his younger brothers and sisters. They lived in a small alleyway named Teerketelsteeg, 'Tar Kettle Alley', that veered off into Amsterdam's main Singel canal. Claes was like a father to Manuel, and when he married 24-year-old

Catharina Cloppenburgh on Sunday 7 August 1622, Claes was his witness. Catharina's father, Jan Evertsz Cloppenburgh, was also a witness. Cloppenburgh ran a well-known publishing house that was located on Damrak next to that of Manuel's brother, Michiel. In Amsterdam's publishing world, the union between Manuel and Catherina must have been considered a merger between two leading publishing houses. After the church ceremony in the Nieuwe Kerk on Amsterdam's Dam Square, the couple hosted a wedding party where their guests played music, sang, danced, and drank.

Jeunesse dorée

At Manuel and Catharina's wedding party, there were many young people from the same social background. In the seventeenth century, these youngsters were known as *jeunesse dorée*, or gilded youth, because they were a generation of young people who were growing up in conditions of affluence and trying to distinguish themselves from the previous generation. With their optimism and energy, they were innovative and willing to take risks. One of the guests at Manuel and Catharina's wedding party was the 26-year-old Jacomo Pauw, the son of Reinier Adriaensz Pauw, a wealthy mayor of Amsterdam. In 1602 the latter had been one of the initial founders of the VOC, and in 1619 had been directly involved with the trial and execution of Johan van Oldenbarnevelt, the statesman accused of treason. Despite his extreme wealth, Reinier Pauw was also a pious and frugal man.

That was apparent in 1631, when the city of Amsterdam had to levy an extra tax on its wealthy citizens. All those with a personal fortune of more than a 1,000 guilders were required to pay a tax of half a percent. Pauw's private wealth was estimated at 200,000 guilders, which was probably on the conservative side, considering that he most likely played down the actual amount to avoid paying too much tax. Other members of the Pauw family tried to gain political power after they had amassed

great fortunes. Jacomo's eldest brother, Adriaan Pauw, became *raadpensionaris* or Grand Pensionary of Holland. This was the highest-ranking public office in the country, and made Pauw the most powerful man in the Republic. He held the position until 1636, and was re-elected to the office a few years later.

Hendrick Hoochkamer was another guest at the wedding party who had moved up the social ladder. In 1601 his father, Jacob Pietersz Hoochkamer, had started a business importing silk from Italy, which he resold throughout Europe. In 1622, his 21-year-old son Hendrick was a silk merchant with a shop in War-moesstraat, the most expensive shopping street in Amsterdam, where he sold silk cloth and other luxury goods. In 1631, the city taxed his father on a private fortune of 150,000 guilders. In the early seventeenth century, the economy was growing by leaps and bounds. This shaped the prevailing mindset; economically speaking, the sky was the limit. Everybody could become rich and move up the social ladder.

While climbing the social ladder was not difficult at this time, the real challenge was remaining at the top of the ladder and not falling back down. Some were unfortunate and fell faster than they had climbed. That happened to the father of Hendrick Hoochkamer. In 1638, his economic standing and social position collapsed when he was declared bankrupt. Hoochkamer was forced to step down from the city council and resign his position as captain of the city guard. To save face and avoid complete destitution, he was made porter of the municipal militia of crossbowmen.

Guilliaem van den Broeck was also invited to the wedding of Manuel and Catharina. When his father, Hans van den Bergh, went bankrupt a few years later, he was forced to sell all of his personal belongings, including his furniture and clothing and the inventory from his sugar factory, to pay his creditors. Behind closed doors, people gossiped about Van den Bergh's bankruptcy. Some claimed that he had lived an immoral life and had squandered his money on a mistress and alcohol – which was why the Amsterdam church consistory denied him the holy sacrament in 1628.

Consumer goods

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, massive fortunes could easily be made, but also quickly lost. The fear of losing everything hung over the new elite of the Dutch Golden Age, and it influenced their consumption. They tended to be frugal in their daily lives. Nevertheless, the early seventeenth century witnessed a sharp rise in material prosperity and the quantity and quality of consumer goods.

The middle classes and wealthy farmers profited from increased demand for consumer goods, and were simultaneously active participants in the emerging consumer economy. The furnishings in most homes in the late sixteenth century were usually modest, for example: simple wooden tables and plain chairs, rudimentary wooden boxes, and primitive bowls made from tin or wood. By the mid-seventeenth century, Dutch interiors looked quite different. Household inventories and wills reveal that people's homes were elaborately decorated with mirrors, paintings, books, and clocks. Homes were furnished with octagonal or round tables topped with expensive porcelain bowls, the chairs had comfortable armrests, and linen cabinets were made from oak wood and lavishly decorated. This new affluence was also reflected in everyday items, including clothing, dishes, and utensils. In less than half a century, both the quantity and quality of goods had substantially increased. In Europe, demand for such consumer goods originated in Northern Italy during the Renaissance and spread north through Germany and the Southern Netherlands, and finally to the Dutch Republic. The clearest indication of this new wealth in the Dutch Republic lay in the number of paintings that decorated the homes of the urban elite, the rising middle classes, and even those of farmers.

A fascination with children

In the early seventeenth century, the Republic was literally and figuratively a young nation. Not only was the Republic

still establishing its political and geographical boundaries, but it was also a country with many young people. The political and religious twists and turns of the new nation resembled the growth spurts and mood swings of an adolescent. In the seventeenth century, the different stages of life were associated with specific character traits. Old people, for example, were known for their calmness, benign character, and tendency not to become overly upset about things. On the downside, they were known for their melancholy, their frugality, and for the fact that they usually felt the cold (hence old age was often associated with the season of winter). Youth, on the other hand, was associated with passion and love. The sanguine character of young people symbolized the warmest season of the year. The young Republic and its young people oscillated between play and learning, between freedom and obedience, and between independence and security.

In the Republic, almost all of the cohesive elements that the Roman Catholic faith had brought to society had been abolished from the country's religious and cultural life. Moreover, the Protestant Reformed Church failed to assume the old church's role as a state church and work to unify the new state. The country was religiously divided and embroiled in a long, drawn-out war for independence from Spain. Whereas most countries that declare independence from a mother country are involved in a quick war where they cut the umbilical cord, the Dutch Republic needed eighty years to free itself from Spain. In those fourscore years, there was only one period of peace, the Twelve-Year Truce, between 1609 and 1621. For the rest of that time, the Republic was caught up in a continuous war from which there seemed to be no end in sight. One of the consequences of being at war for over four generations was the fact that young people were infatuated with everything that had to do with war and the military. Both adults and young people became obsessed with news about military campaigns. The war propaganda machine produced pamphlets and history books about battles, and prints portraying heroic soldiers engaged in war.

After the Iconoclastic Fury of 1566 and the long war for independence against Spain, younger generations in the Dutch Republic developed an aversion to everything that was Spanish and Roman Catholic. During the Iconoclastic Fury, icons and saints in churches had literally been removed from their pedestals. A didactical vacuum opened up where the empty pedestals now stood. The young people of the New Republic had to find new role models in a society without one common faith and that was slowly becoming more secular. With the exception of new economic-political structures and free-market liberalism, there was little cohesion in society. Against this backdrop, a new secular and urban culture developed in which children and adolescents were raised.

One of the defining traits of the Dutch Golden Age, and the reason why the period fascinates me, is that it was the first time in Dutch history when great interest was shown in children and the education of young people. There was an outpouring of publications, including moralistic treatises, songbooks for young people, and child-rearing manuals books, which were either produced for a young audience or their parents. It was as though the country had become fascinated with the young people who would define its future. In part, this publishing boom was also due to the fact that new forms of media, such as books, had become more affordable, as well as the fact that more people were able to read in the early seventeenth century.

Moreover, it was also fueled by the widely accepted notion that youth were the future of the country. This is evident from the great number of portraits of children that were painted. Nowhere in the world in the seventeenth century were so many children portrayed with attributes such as birds and dogs, which symbolized and emphasized the importance of a good education. Children, like pets, were supposed to be well trained and educated. In the Golden Age, a good education was praiseworthy. It was an asset not only for the family, but also for the new nation.

Founding fathers of a new society

Another striking aspect of the Dutch Golden Age was the fact that the Republic was a nation in the making. The young people of the period were the founding fathers of a new state. When they grew up, they became the bedrock of a new society in the seventeenth century, one that is still recognizable today. Young people were allocated a central role in society and considered an investment in the future of the country. With the attention paid to young people, a rich youth culture emerged during the Dutch Golden Age.

These circumstances had a fundamental impact on how the youth of the early seventeenth century perceived the future. Historically, major societal changes have occurred when there is a substantial young population. In today's society young people are the motor of the economy, and the elderly, who require healthcare and depend on retirement benefits, are often considered a burden for society. In sixteenth-century Germany, the Reformation was driven by a large population of young people who were demanding social and religious changes. At this time, Europe's population had started to grow again after the drastic decline of fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and the Black Death, in which a third of Europe's population died.

In the first decades of the sixteenth century, a new generation of young leaders came to the fore. Martin Luther published his famous 95 theses at the age of 34. In the 1520s, many members of the academic staff at the University of Wittenberg were quite young, aged between twenty and thirty. The historian Matthew Aurogallus, for example, was only thirty years old when he was made a professor. John Hainpol and Philipp Melanchthon, professors and Lutheran intellectual reformers, were even younger than some of the students they taught. The intellectual innovators of the new generation were the movers and shakers of the sixteenth century, who initiated the Reformation and changed Europe and the course of history forever.

We can find other examples in history of times where young people took the lead in changing society. It was mostly young people who stormed the Bastille in 1789 and started the French Revolution. And almost two hundred years later, in 1968, it was the students of Paris who took to the streets and demanded more democracy. In the same year, young people made up the majority of demonstrators in Prague who were demanding more freedom from the Soviet Union. In the United States, it was mainly young people who held protests and supported the Civil Rights Movement. As a rule of thumb, it is young people who bring about change in society. Change, whether it is backwards-looking or progressive, is an expression of youth culture.

By nature, youngsters are more inclined, and even willing, to take risks. Some are not afraid to use violence to achieve their objectives. Young people tend not to have social and economic obligations. If things go wrong, they have little to lose in terms of social status. This makes it easier for them to stand on the barricades and fight for what they believe is right, without having to pay the consequences of losing their jobs and endangering their family's livelihood.

One of the reasons why young people are capable of changing society is that they simply have more leisure time than any other age group. In the early modern era, people in general had more recreational time than today. Unlike the regimented work schedules of today, the working day in the seventeenth century was shaped by external factors. Weather and technological conditions regularly stopped the work of laborers, who then had to wait and literally had 'free time'. Men employed at sea and in the fisheries worked on a seasonal basis and had nothing to do during the winter months. Even during working periods, ships could remain at dock for days, sometimes months, waiting for favorable winds before they could sail. In the meantime, a small army of sailors and dockworkers had little to do. Other sectors were also dependent on weather conditions. Millers, for example, were dependent on wind, and construction workers and farmers had to wait for dry weather before they could build and sow.

Unlike in modern Western society, where free time is equated with wealth and luxury, in early modern society it simply meant that many people had nothing to do for several days.

For a young person, having too much time on one's hands could be disastrous. When young people were bored, they were more likely to commit acts of violence, obsess about their appearance, drink too much alcohol, fornicate, take drugs, and play music. During every period of economic prosperity, these aspects of youth culture seem to reappear, but they often assume a different shape or form. In the Dutch Golden Age, for example, juvenile violence was rampant. Young people did not hesitate to use violence against each other or the authorities. Moreover, many young people suffered from pent-up aggression, and violence was a means of venting this. In this respect, early modern society understood this problem and turned a blind eye. Society recognized that violence in young people was temporal. Today, by contrast, politicians take violence and juvenile delinquency seriously.

In the Golden Age, violence committed by youngsters was commonplace. What is more, violence played an important role for boys who were becoming men. University students, for example, were granted a special privilege that allowed them to carry a firearm. Young men from the lower classes, who did not have that privilege, were known to be just as violent, if not more. Foreign students who came from the countryside were particularly notorious for their frequent clashes with the officers of the peace, who were responsible for maintaining law and order.

Young people in the Republic

This book will examine the great social changes that young people brought about in the Dutch Golden Age. It will unveil the contribution that young people made to seventeenth-century Dutch society, and what remains of this today. In this book, I

use the term 'youth' to refer to male adolescents and young men between the ages of thirteen and thirty. In the early modern era, young unmarried men were still considered to be youths. Once they crossed the threshold of marriage, they 'graduated' and were considered adults.

A wide array of sources has been examined in order to reconstruct youth culture in the Golden Age. Primary sources such as moralistic treatises, educational books, and emblem books, where textual messages were reinforced with images, played a key prescriptive role, while the archives of the university courts reveal the wayward side of young people and their mishaps. Another source that was consulted were songbooks, which reveal the leisure activities of young people. In this study only male youths will be examined, for the simple reason that more sources reveal the behavior of boys and young men in the early modern period. In general, males were raised in the public domain and their misdoings were often recorded in public records. Sources that reveal the behavior of adolescent girls are rare, namely because they were raised by mothers or other female relatives in the private sphere of the home.

In Chapter Two, I shall look at how violence played an important role in the process of becoming a man. Parents and institutions were equally concerned about juvenile delinquency and the rampant violence that was committed by young people. Violence in the early modern period was not only a danger to others, but also their children were often the victims of violence.

Chapter Three will examine the hedonistic lifestyle of young people. Moralists accused wealthy parents of indulging their offspring with expensive clothes. The 'calculated slovenliness' of new trends in young people's clothes and fashion in the seventeenth century was considered an omen of moral and social decay.

Besides violence and hedonism, parents were concerned that their children were drinking too much alcohol. Young people in the seventeenth century were notorious for their binge drinking. In Chapter Four, we shall see how parents taught their children

to drink in moderation, and how doing everything in moderation was a sign of maturity. Chapter Five, in turn, will discuss how young people dealt with their budding sexuality and learned to temper their sexual urges in a period when there was no contraception and venereal diseases such as syphilis were rampant among young people.

Much like the youth of today, the young people of the Dutch Golden Age also experimented with mind-altering stimulants. In Chapter Six, we shall see how tobacco from the New World became the new experimental drug in the early seventeenth century. The young people of the Golden Age were the first generation in history to embrace smoking and turn it into a mainstream habit and national pastime. Indeed, one of the most striking aspects of the young people of the Golden Age was how they spent their leisure time. In almost every society and era in history, young people have found ways to rebel against their parents and spend time with their friends. Chapter Seven examines how the youth of the Golden Age entertained themselves with music and song. The lyrics were often about young people and the dilemmas that they faced. As such, they were universal and equally fitting today.

This brings us back to the earlier question, of whether the generation of the early seventeenth century was revolutionary in historical terms, or whether it was just like any other generation of young people. In the Conclusion, we will return to Otto Copes and consider the consequences that the youth of the Dutch Golden Age had for the youth of today.

2. Violence

If a distinctive sound could capture a time and place in history, then the Dutch Republic in the early seventeenth century would be represented by the clamor of breaking glass. This was the dominant noise at night. Throwing stones at windows was the most common form of vandalism by students. Regardless of whether they were locals or foreigners, young men vented their frustration by throwing stones at windows. The city council of Schiedam went so far as to forbid young people from playing *kolf*, a primitive form of golf where balls were battered around on the ground with sticks. A common sport for youngsters to play on town squares, it became a problem when the golf balls became airborne, smashing windows and damaging roof tiles on public buildings and churches.

College life

In university towns, the vandalism was of a different nature. Whereas flying golf balls accidentally caused damage to property, in university towns the violence was deliberate. The academic court of the University of Leiden, which held jurisdiction over the students and protected them from civil law, offers a glimpse of what student life in the seventeenth century entailed. One of the most common crimes committed by students was throwing stones at windows. Most Dutch houses in the seventeenth century had shutters on the outside, which the inhabitants closed at night to conserve heat. One of the most common misdeeds committed by students in Leiden was to open the shutters and smash the tiny paned windows with the butts of their pistols or cobblestones from the street.

On a December night in Leiden in 1623, Lucas van Hulten and Otto Farnesom were struck by the same idea. Both young men were law students and had known each other a long time from

their student days in Groningen. Six months earlier they had arrived in Leiden, where they enrolled at the university. Like many students, they went out late at night, gallivanting and throwing stones. This time, however, everything went wrong. Having thrown stones through somebody's window, the boys ran in opposite directions and 23-year-old Otto was arrested. After two days of incarceration, Otto finally confessed, claiming that he had not thrown any stones and that he was an innocent by-stander. It was his friend, Lucas, who had tossed the stones. Not long afterwards, Lucas was arrested. He eventually confessed to his crimes, having first been incarcerated in a cold prison cell and given only bread and water. Lucas had to pay 40 guilders to the tribunal and had to pay for the repair of the windows. Moreover, he had to serve another six weeks in prison. Otto, by contrast, was given a mild sentence and had only to pay a 20-guilder fine, and was put under house arrest in his landlord's house. Lucas did not give a reason for his crime in his confession. Both Lucas and Otto came from Groningen, where they had been enrolled at the university and where both had lived with their parents. Their families held important administrative and church positions in Groningen, and most likely they were kept on a short leash. Once the two boys arrived in Leiden, they escaped the leash and consequently ran wild.

The rebellious behavior of Lucas and Otto was by no means exceptional in the Golden Age. It was an important aspect of the camaraderie between young men that helped forge friendships and male bonding. The unruly behavior of students took place at night, usually after a lot of drinking. In Leiden, the academic court often made a distinction between student misdemeanors that happened under the auspices of night and those that occurred in broad daylight. The academic court was more lenient regarding the transgressions that occurred at night than those that happened during the day.

Lucas learned a valuable lesson from his incarceration. His brush with the law and brief stay in a student prison had no ramifications for his career. He finished his law studies, worked

as an administrator for the magistrate of Groningen, and eventually became a member of the Council of State for the province of Groningen. If Lucas had not confessed to his crimes, however, his career would have been quite different. Students who did not admit their wrongdoings, or who even tried to flee the city, faced having their names officially removed from university registers.

This is what happened in 1624 to Jacob Velius, who was also accused of breaking windows. He was banished for three years from both the university and the province of Holland and West Friesland. Velius objected to the ruling and appealed to the Prince of Orange for help. The stadholder did not come to his rescue, however, something that was not altogether unexpected. Six years earlier in 1618, as a political and religious conflict raged between the Remonstrants and Counter-Remonstrants, Jacob's father had sided with the Arminian strongman, Johan van Oldenbarnevelt, who was a sworn enemy of the Prince of Orange. After this conflict ended, Velius' father had been ousted from the magistrate of Hoorn. The young Jacob was thus unable to count on political favors from the House of Orange. In the end, Jacob's name was removed from the University of Leiden's records, as if he had never studied there or even existed at all.

Frères d'armes

In the seventeenth century, students would sometimes band together like brothers in arms. On the night of 22 February 1626, two brothers, Jacobus and Juriaan Sevelt, together with 22-year-old Caspar von Nostitz, had their minds set on celebrating carnival. The three probably belonged to a fraternity of students from Silesia in Germany. In the early seventeenth century, Roman Catholic festivals such as Shrove Tuesday, known for their excessive consumption of food and drink, were not welcomed by the city magistrates or by staunch members of the Protestant Dutch Reformed Church. That evening, however, the boys were out to make trouble. Dressed in disguise and wearing masks, they

paraded through the streets of Leiden, where they slammed open shutters, smashed windows, and ransacked houses, including the home of Isaac Doreslaer, who was a devout Protestant. Moreover, he was rector of the Latin School. At the time, Doreslaer was also enrolled as a law student at the university. The following evening, the three German boys went out again and did the same. This time, they returned to Doreslaer's house and 'scandalously' abused his servant girl. The sources are unclear as to what exactly this meant, but most likely the three boys sexually abused the innocent girl. The boys were apprehended for their crimes, and the Sevelt brothers lost their privileges as students at the university. They were banished for twelve years from the province of Holland and West Friesland. Worst of all, their names were removed from the university records as if they had never attended the university or studied there. The primary sources leave us in the dark as to what happened to Caspar von Nostitz. As he belonged to the Silesian nobility, it is most likely that behind the scenes, his parents or associates arranged for him to be exonerated. The shame would have been too great for him.

As for Isaac Doreslaer, within a year he had moved to England, where he was made a professor of history at Cambridge. Unfortunately for him, he continued to make enemies, mainly due to his outspoken political and religious views. Doreslaer was a supporter of Oliver Cromwell in England, and during the 1640s he would play an important role in a smear campaign against the English king, Charles I, who was ultimately convicted as a traitor and beheaded. The Scots were not happy with the trumped-up charges of treason against the English monarch, however. When Doreslaer visited the Republic in 1649, a Scottish royalist stabbed him in the back while he was quietly eating his dinner in a tavern.

Throwing stones through windows was not only a cheap thrill for young men. There was also a deeper underlying meaning, with social connotations that included the public disciplining of the person's whose windows had been smashed. When someone's windows were broken, they were publicly humiliated. It was a public means of expressing that someone's conduct or

behavior was not appreciated. This was probably the case for Isaac Dorselaer, whose windows were demonstratively broken on the street side for all passers-by to see. The deed was a public humiliation for Dorselaer. By contrast, when the windows at the back of somebody's home were smashed, it was a different story; then it was a personal vendetta.

This distinction was evident in the numerous cases of smashed windows that were recorded in the archives of the Republic's university courts. Students preferred to break the windows of the houses of men in authority or buildings that represented power, such as university buildings and the homes of university professors or rectors. From the University of Franeker's founding in 1585 to its dissolution in 1812, most cases of windows reportedly broken by students at the university occurred between 1605 and 1650. One possible reason for this is that glass was a costly material in the early seventeenth century, and windows were expensive. In the second half of the century, the production of glass became cheaper and there were far fewer cases of vandalism involving windows.

Armed young men

During the early modern period, one of the many privileges that students were granted when they enrolled at a university was the right to carry a weapon. This was an old privilege dating from the Middle Ages, when university students were mostly from the nobility, which was the only class in Medieval society allowed to bear arms. When new universities were founded in the Dutch Republic in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, administrators followed the example of the medieval universities and granted students the right to carry a firearm or sword, or even both. In a trading nation like the Dutch Republic, such weapons were easy to come by. Metalworkers in Utrecht, for example, were known for producing the best guns in Europe.

In the course of the seventeenth century, with growing affluence in Dutch society and demand for more highly educated

people, more young men from the upper and middle classes started to attend university. During this period, several universities were founded. After the outbreak of the Dutch Revolt, Willem of Orange, the stadholder of the country, granted the city of Leiden the right to found a university in 1575. In a period of less than 75 years, universities were also established in the towns of Franeker (1585), Groningen (1614), Utrecht (1636), and Harderwijk (1648).

The quality of education at the newly established academic institutions in the Republic was comparable to, if not better than, that of the older universities founded in the Middle Ages. The new universities followed the same structure and created senates and faculties, and even copied medieval rituals such as wearing special gowns and caps and granting exclusive privileges to students, including the ancient privilege that allowed them to carry a weapon. Thus the seventeenth century saw an alarming number of armed young men wandering the streets of university towns.

Towns in the Dutch Republic that had a university started to witness a large influx of young men. The combination of young men and weapons became a growing source of violence and social upheaval for urban residents. It became a burden for the municipal guards, who were responsible for maintaining law and order. The city guard frequently had confrontations at night with disorderly students who had had too much to drink and become unruly. In the early seventeenth century there was no street lighting in Dutch cities, which made the city guard's task especially difficult. Students usually went out late at night or in the early morning hours when it was still dark, often with the intention of stirring up trouble. The rapier was the most popular weapon among students in the early seventeenth century. It was a narrow, sharp sword, measuring little more than a meter long and 2.5 centimeters wide, and had a protective handle with which to hold it. With a quick stab to the heart or one of the other vital organs, the rapier was more lethal than a standard sword, which was blunt.

For the city councils of university towns, the students' recklessness in drawing their rapiers became a major headache. During the seventeenth century and even well into the eighteenth century, the ownership of weapons and violence committed by students resulted in an ongoing battle between the municipal governments and the university administrators. Several times, universities tried to restrict the right of students to bear arms. In 1637, the University of Groningen banned students who had a scholarship from carrying guns, sticks, or other weapons. However, these measures were never considered far-reaching enough by the city councils, which had to deal with city dwellers complaining about the continual noise and ensuing disruption of the peace. In the end, there was little that municipal councils could do when universities threatened to close and move to another town.

In Leiden, for example, the members of the town council were asked to be more lenient towards the students; after all, students were an important source of income, not only for the university, but also for the local economy. Grocers, landlords, booksellers, and taverns all profited considerably from the presence of the students. However, the overwhelming presence of students in Leiden came at a price. The academic court was often tolerant of student crime, which required the good citizens of Leiden to turn the other cheek. In the course of the seventeenth century, they were often the victims of student violence and the disturbance of the peace.

It is noteworthy that most mischievous acts recorded in the academic courts were committed by foreign students. In many cases, these students hailed from the upper social classes, which gave them a feeling of contempt for the local population. This was especially the case for foreign students, who were usually of aristocratic blood. In the Republic in the early seventeenth century, there were hardly any nobles left. In Leiden, the conflict between the classes was often between the lower classes who were employed in the textile industry and related industries, and aristocratic students. Leiden's working-class women were often the ones to suffer most from their arrogance and disdain.



Student armed with a rapier, in: *Tegenspoed is God een toeverlaat*, Gaspar Bouttats, F. Franciscus Lijftocht and Arnold van den Eijnden (1679) (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam).

Leiden's women felt intimidated by the overwhelming presence of young male students in their city. They were often surrounded in the street by groups of young men, who if they had the chance would put their hands up their skirts or grope them. Sometimes their intimidating behavior did not stop at wandering hands. If a young woman was caught on the street late at night, she risked running into groups of drunken students, who might force her under threat of a knife to have sex with them. This was what happened in 1640, when a pregnant woman, walking alone late at night, ran into three students. The young men threatened her and forced her to have sex with them. While the number of rape cases reported by the academic court in the early seventeenth century was relatively small, there were plenty of incidents where students intimidated the local women of Leiden by dragging their swords over the cobblestones, making a frightening, screeching sound.

Besides harassing Leiden's working-class women, the students also antagonized the municipal guard. The guardsmen were the

only men in the city, besides students, who were allowed to carry a weapon. In this respect, the municipal guard – as armed men – were the students' equals. In 1627, Anselm van der Deurverden van der Voort, a twenty-year-old student from Utrecht, opened fire and hit a municipal guardsman in the head. Anselm, who had arrived two months earlier in Leiden and had enrolled at the university as a law student, had little experience in handling a weapon. The young man was probably trigger-happy and overly anxious when he aimed at the guard's head. The academic court fined him 100 guilders and he lost his student privileges.

In Groningen, there were even cases of students aspiring to become guardsmen. In September 1629, twenty-year-old Cornelis Damman, a philosophy student, was infatuated with the guardsmen, and after only five months at the university wanted to join the civic guard. The academic senate of the University of Groningen was opposed to this, however, and prohibited students from becoming members, arguing that the university had a responsibility (to the students' parents) and had to guarantee their physical safety. Nevertheless, many students were mesmerized by the militia and wanted to join. This was probably for the simple reason that guardsmen used their weapons on a regular basis. The ordinance that forbade students from joining the municipal guard had to be renewed repeatedly in 1639, 1666 and 1667.

In Leiden during the seventeenth century, the magistrate had to reinforce the municipal guard several times in order to maintain law and order among the students. There were too many incidents such as that involving Caspar von Waldo, a 21-year-old son of a Saxon nobleman who studied in Leiden and caused a great deal of trouble. In 1638, Von Waldo was involved in a skirmish with a member of the guard after one of his servants had been in a fight with a Dutch student. What began as a simple ruckus between two men ended in tragedy after the municipal guardsman, Franco van der Burg, was killed. The academic court sentenced a 27-year-old student, Henricus van Aleveld from Holstein, and 24-year-old John Graro from

Brandenburg for the murder. Von Waldo and his household of servants (it was common for students from the nobility to travel and study at a university with their entire entourage) were accused only of being accomplices. This was not the first time that Von Waldo had stood before the academic court. Three months earlier, he had had to explain why he and his servants had challenged the municipal guard. In that incident, nobody had been injured.

Student violence

Violence of this level was nothing new for young men who wanted to show their bravado. There is little doubt that Von Waldo was quick-tempered and not inclined to eschew a good fight. With his violence, he wanted to show the other students that he was brave and not afraid of taking risks. Today we would call Von Waldo a real 'alpha male'. By putting his own life in danger, he earned respect from his fellow students. At the first sign of a student commotion in public, the municipal guard was usually quick to restore peace and order. They were eager to suppress any kind of rowdiness, especially at night, when students were most likely to disturb the peace. Everardus Bronckhorst, professor of law at the University of Leiden, remarked that Leiden's municipal guard had no reservations about using violence against students. In 1607, after the professor had spent an evening drinking with students, he saw the guard's ruthlessness with his own eyes. Because the group had made too much noise, the civil guard opened fire on the young men. Twenty-one shots were fired at one student alone. However, these incidents were more the exception than the rule. In Leiden, most of the fighting and violence was between students.

In December 1640 a Danish student named Dionysius Christianus challenged another student, Johannes Schönborner, to a duel. Schönborner, who was a Silesian, was encouraged by

his friend and compatriot Jan Frederick Nimptisch to accept the challenge. The two agreed to meet in an open area outside the city gate (Haarlemmerpoort). The Dane was assisted by his friend, Caspar Hendriks Bonsdorft. The records did not cite the reason for the challenge, but it is likely that the Dane's honor had been insulted. In the early seventeenth century, the honor of one's family, one's country, or even a friend, was justification enough for a challenge or to accept a challenge. The duel proved fatal for the 26-year-old Dane. He died on the spot from a jab from his opponent's sword. According to the rules of dueling, Schönborner should have lunged at Christianus and hit him with the flat side of his sword. However, the Silesian must have struck him with the tip of his sword and punctured his side. Immediately after the duel, Schönborner knew the fate that awaited him. After all, like most men who had a sword, he was familiar with the rules of fencing. The academic court accused him of murder and sentenced him to death.

Those who received the death sentence had usually committed crimes such as repeated theft, murder, arson, and counterfeiting. Death sentences could also be carried out in different ways. A criminal from the lower classes was usually hung or strangled to death. The more severe the crime that was committed, the crueler the punishment would be. The limbs of a convict would be tied to a rack, which was designed to dislocate every joint in the person's body. The rack consisted of a wooden frame with two ropes on the bottom and other ropes tied to a handle at the top. Once the convict was tied in, the torturer would turn the handle until all the limbs were dislocated. They would continue to turn until the limbs had been completely pulled off the person's body. Only at the last moment did the torturer give the convict a final blow to the heart with a hammer. Because Schönborner was a member of the nobility, however, he would have been beheaded with a sword. Before the authorities could arrest him and sentence him to death, Schönborner fled Leiden and most likely returned to Silesia.

Nations

Schönborner and his friend Jan Frederick Nimptisch belonged to the same 'nation' or fraternity of students from Silesia. The Danish students, Christianus and Bonsdorft, were also members of the same association of students from their country. In the early modern period, these fraternities and associations were called 'nations' because they were based on geographic origin or country. In the administrative councils of the Italian universities in Bologna and Padua, which had been founded in the Middle Ages, the nations had considerable authority. They played an important role in student life and had significant influence on university policy, sometimes to the dismay of the university's senate.

In the newly established 'enlightened' universities of the Republic, the senate was not willing to yield authority to the nations, with their uncontrollable behavior and tendency towards violence. University administrators in the Dutch Republic were aware of the nations' capabilities and preferred to keep the students under strict control. In 1659, the States of Holland decided to ban nations from universities, but this did not stop students from congregating and uniting in fraternities. From the time of the official ban, the nations went underground and operated clandestinely. This means that little is known about them. Much of the information we have is from one book, which includes the names of members of the nation from the provinces of Gelderland-Overijssel in the Dutch Republic. This nation had 670 members between 1617 and 1660.

There is likewise a book with a list of students from the same nation who studied at the University of Franeker. The book also contains regulations for the holding of meetings, which usually began with a song of praise. In quasi-military fashion, early modern universities tried to shape the characters of young men. This is evident from the secretive practices of the nations, which made members swear an oath to the nation and also to the university. Nations were especially grateful to their universities for granting

students the privilege of carrying a weapon. The nations even stipulated rules of etiquette on how their members should use their weapons. According to the rulebook, members of the nation were not allowed to challenge each other. Offenders were fined. If a member was caught verbally challenging someone to a duel, he was fined four guilders. If a member accepted a challenge, he was fined two guilders. And if a member was wounded, the fines were doubled. In other words, violence and challenges were strictly forbidden by the nations, but if they did take place, then they did so in secret and violence was sanctioned.

Karel Vijgh

There could be no doubt about it: everything that happened within the confines of the nations was supposed to remain a secret. Members were sworn to secrecy about the nations' initiation rites and other suspect activities. This became apparent to the outside world in 1652, when Karel Vijgh, a student in Groningen, refused to become a member of the nation from Gelderland-Overijssel. At that time, Karel was living at the home of Samuel Maresius, who was also the rector of the university senate. Karel told Maresius about the coercive practices of the nation. It is not exactly known what Karel disclosed to Maresius, but the rector and senate reprimanded the nations. By now, Karel had betrayed not only the Gelderland-Overijssel nation, but also all the nations in Groningen.

Shortly afterwards, a large group of students gathered from various nations in Groningen, armed with swords and pistols, and marched in the direction of Maresius' home. The nations had united and were about to vent their frustration on the university senate. They intended to defend the autonomy of the nations and the privileges of students. They felt that the rituals of the nation were an internal matter that was none of the university's business. During their march towards Maresius' home (where Karel lived), the nations became involved in a skirmish with the

municipal guard, who were unable to stop the students. Once they arrived at the house of the rector, the students unloaded their firearms into the windows of Maresius' home. By the time the smoke had cleared, there was not a pane of glass left unbroken in Maresius' house or that of his neighbors.

On the other hand, the nations fulfilled an important role for foreign students. Members helped each other in times of need, and when a student was sick or had an accident, it was usually his fellow countrymen from the nation who cared for him. In the nations, these mutual relations often turned into lifelong friendships, which included defending each other's honor. It was precisely this latter element of the nations that posed a danger to the university and municipal authorities. They were not just groups of students; they were bands of blood. Once the honor of a member had been tarnished, the entire nation of students was affected and came to the defense of that one member. After nations were officially banned, the universities lost any influence they might have had over them and their activities were pushed underground.

There were only a few incidents that revealed to the university senate what happened behind the closed doors of the nations. One of these was an episode that occurred beyond the White Gate of Leiden in June 1624, after Johannes Vossius and Johannes Luce Bevervoorde attacked a German student named Cuno von Bodenhausen with a torrent of stones. The attackers were members of the Dutch nation, who used their guns to intimidate students from the German nation. The two also egged on spectators against the Germans. Two days later, Bodenhausen took his revenge on Johannes Vossius. Early in the morning, the 22-year-old German assaulted Vossius with a stick and stones. The academic court was aware of public displays of violence among the students, but most of the aggression took place within the world of the nations and never saw the light of day.

Each nation had its own rituals with which it initiated new members. In Leiden, freshmen students were known as *groentjes* or greens, and were bullied and teased. On the street they were

booed, and in the classrooms the older students harassed them. Sometimes an older student would come to their defense and protect them. But most of the time, they demanded some kind of financial compensation in return.

These mafia-like practices, whereby some freshmen lost all their scholarship money, were child's play in comparison to the initiation rituals endured by German students in the Middle Ages. In medieval Germany, a freshman was called a *beanus*, from the French phrase *bec jaune*, meaning 'yellow beak'. It is not clear where the name originates from, but it is probably a reference to the color of the beaks of parakeets that are yellow when they are first born. As they mature, their yellow beak slowly turns blue. During the initiation ceremony, the *beani* were treated like cattle by the older students. Before the ritual started, a hood with protruding horns was placed over a freshman's head, and he had to wear teeth from a wild boar in his mouth. Throughout the ceremony the *beani* were continuously humiliated by the older students, who lectured them about how unworthy they were to become members. In the course of the ritual, parts of the initiation outfit were removed with extremely large tools in order to magnify the sense of fear.

In the Middle Ages and early modern times, humiliation fulfilled a symbolic purpose, marking the transition from boyhood to manhood. Like a phoenix, an adult man was resurrected from the ashes of childhood. The initiation symbolized the transition from boy to man, or rather from savage to civilized human being. The ceremony and its symbolism were deeply rooted in the Christian faith, with its notion of resurrection from the dead.

The same ritual was described in Crispijn de Passes' book, *Academia sive specvlvm scolasticae Vitae* [The University, or Mirror of Student Life], which was published in 1612. The book prepared pupils at the Latin school for their life as university students. One of the emblems in De Passe's book shows students wearing a cap with horns, waving axes and other frightening implements. A young man is strapped to a table, anxiously looking around while older students swing their axes. When the book was published,



Initiation of freshman students in the Dutch Golden Age, portrayed in: *Academia sive specvlvm vitae scolasticae* (1612), printed in Ilja Veldman's *Profit and Pleasure*. Print Books by Crispijn de Passe (Rotterdam: Sound and Vision Publishers, 2001).

De Passe was living in Leiden. The initiation ceremonies that he portrayed were probably based on the rituals that he had witnessed or heard about in stories. Below the illustration is the text: 'To help the freshman with his uncivilized behavior, he has to make sacrifices to the gods to become sophisticated'. The freshman has to be tortured with whips and axes. De Passe noted that the act might seem barbarous, but that it nevertheless symbolized the transition from childhood to adulthood. We do not know, however, whether the prospective young students understood the greater purpose of the rite when they experienced it.

Loco parentis

In the early modern period, the unruly behavior of university students must have been a true horror for parents. To keep an eye on their sons, parents often hired a *loco parentis* or governor. In Leiden, parents who had sons attending the university had

three options from which to choose. The first was to have their son live at the home of a professor, who usually kept a sharp eye on their young son. The second was to have their son stay with relatives who lived in Leiden. It was not uncommon for young men to reside at the homes of their uncles, cousins, brothers, or other family members for the entire duration of their university schooling. The third possibility was more drastic and entailed the entire family moving to Leiden, whereupon the young student would remain under the direct supervision of his parents. In Leiden, there was no other student in the seventeenth century who caused more fanfare than the 18-year-old prince Radziwill Janis from Poland. When he became a student at the University of Leiden in 1631, he arrived with an entourage of fifteen members of his court, including his court master, chaplain, and several servants. For the inhabitants of Leiden and his fellow students, it must have been a real spectacle to witness Radziwill and his court move through the narrow streets of Leiden.

Group behavior

In the early seventeenth century, committing acts of violence was an integral part of the socialization process for young men. The group played an important role in the development of boys into men, a process in which tomfoolery played an intricate part with a pedagogical component. In public, boys had to display their boldness. They were required to show their bravery and valor, and most importantly, take risks. Today it is known that males have the highest level of testosterone between early puberty and around the age of 25. This accounts for the level of aggression often found in young men. In the early modern period, many young men in the countryside had a certain degree of autonomy, and their tendency towards tomfoolery was often channeled in the right direction. The rural community tended to tolerate their rowdiness and misbehavior as an outlet for their pent-up sexual energy. After all, adolescent

boys and young men were expected to refrain from giving in to their sexual urges until their wedding day, which was often not until their late twenties. In other words, committing acts of juvenile mischief and insubordination was their way of letting off steam. Young men in the country misbehaved against conventional authority in many ways, from dressing up and masquerading on Roman Catholic holidays to parading and dancing in the streets, begging for money and candy, and making their presence known with loud noises and other cacophony. Sometimes their mischief had a playful element and included stealing chickens in the middle of the night, soiling clean laundry hanging from a washing line, and even defecating in people's vegetable gardens. Obviously, the targets of these incidents were not happy, but the behavior was condoned for the simple reason that the culprits were youngsters and their antics reflected their time of life.

Immigrant families that moved from the countryside to the cities of the Dutch Republic did not find it easy to adapt. Their adolescent children had the most difficult time adjusting to the new norms of city life. City magistrates, in particular, did not appreciate groups of young people with their own norms and conventions, operating autonomously within the city. After all, the municipal government's main task was to maintain law and order. An independent group with its own norms and values posed a threat to municipal authority. Although there are no precise statistics relating to non-native youngsters, it can be presumed that the majority were foreign-born or from the countryside, where young people were socialized in collective groups. For example, there was an old rural tradition that newly-weds were obliged to give money to the local youth group to buy drinks.

In the town of Almelo in the eastern part of the Republic, young men wanted to uphold this tradition, but the city council refused to tolerate it. In November 1630, after Steven Lucas and his bride were married, the newly-weds were ambushed by four young men, who poured beer over them. They pulled off Lucas'

coat and tossed it in the mud. Afterwards, the couple reported the incident to the sheriff, and the young men were forced to pay a fine.

The old rural traditions were deeply rooted in Almelo. On the night of carnival in 1636, a group of young people gathered outside the home of the newly ordained minister, Molanus, and his wife. The youngsters demanded a gift of money or a chicken to celebrate carnival. Molanus refused. One of the boys threatened to kill some of the minister's chickens, and another called Molanus a 'stingy dog'. Eventually, the crowd left without any fracas. Molanus did not let it go, however, and complained to the city council about the boys, because he believed that papal rituals belonged to the past.

Channeling violence

By passing numerous municipal ordinances, towns and cities throughout the Republic tried to discourage young people's violence and tomfoolery. The senates of universities were also active in trying to restrain the misbehavior of students, especially because they were responsible for the physical wellbeing of their students. After the death of Dionysius Christianus in 1641, the University of Leiden banned dueling altogether. When students were caught, they were fined 100 guilders and lost their university privileges. Even in death, violators were to be shamed; if a student died during a duel, he could only be buried without a religious service and at night. No family or friends were allowed to attend, and those who did faced a fine of 60 guilders. A student who had died during a duel could not be glorified. The authorities wanted to prevent the culprit from becoming a martyr or hero in any way whatsoever.

The academic court was relentless in its determination to ban violence among students. In the same month that Christianus was killed in a duel, Leiden's academic court discovered that a German student from nobility, Baron Bernard von Khevenhüller,

had challenged another student to a duel. For the verbal challenge alone (no physical duel had yet taken place), the young baron had to pay a fine of 150 guilders, but was not banished from the city. Between 1620 and 1630, German students in particular were involved in challenges to duel. This was mainly due to the fact that honor played a more important role in German culture. If one of the German students was insulted or offended, they were more likely to resort to physical violence to restore their honor. Students from other countries were more apt to seek compensation for their honor through other means, such as the legal system or financial indemnity.

In Leiden, a wine merchant named Van Cortenbosch insulted the Danish student Dirck Quitzau by calling him a *mof* (kraut) and a dick. Quitzau, a descendant of the Danish nobility, felt that his honor had been insulted and dragged Van Cortenbosch to the academic court, demanding restitution for the shame brought to his good name. Quitzau claimed that he had suffered from the wine merchant's accusations. The academic court agreed with the Dane and ordered Van Cortebosch to pay him a 400 guilder fine.

In the early modern period, attitudes toward the use of force changed. In the largely urbanized Dutch Republic, where trade and good relations had become valuable assets, there was an increasing tendency to refrain from resorting to violence and a move towards judicial compensation, where the shame that had been incurred was reimbursed with money. This was starting to become noticeable in many cities throughout the Dutch Republic in the early seventeenth century. In university towns such as Leiden, however, with their many foreign students, often from the nobility, the transition was less noticeable. Moreover, students had more leisure time on their hands than adults, and would commit acts of violence out of sheer boredom. In the early seventeenth century, the university recognized this problem. Students did not have enough educational distractions while they were not studying; they needed recreation that would release their pent-up energy.

Sports

Through sports, students and young men could vent their frustrations in a civilized manner and show their courage and manliness at the same time. This was the reason why Girard Thibault opened a fencing school in Leiden in 1622. Thibault had been a fencing master in Spain, the home of fencing. From there, the sport had been exported to all the corners of the Spanish Empire, including the Northern Netherlands before the Revolt. Fencing was a good sport for young men. It taught them discipline and courage, and they also learned good carriage and posture. In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the sport had become popular among the elite and university students, and was considered preferable to the Italian *vendetta*, which involved fighting with knives in a manner usually more reminiscent of animals than men. After Thibault returned from Spain, he started a fencing school in Amsterdam at the Nes, a side street off Dam Square where the famous Dutch poet Bredero also learned to fence. Thibault expected to make a greater profit from teaching university students in Leiden, however, and considering that Amsterdam did not yet have a university, at the age of 40 he left for Leiden and enrolled at the university. Thibault lived in the boarding house of Richard Jean de Nerée, where many other students lived.

Thibault was an expert swordsman. In Spain he had developed new techniques and methods, whereby fencers had to maneuver within the parameters of an imaginary circle, with areas of middle lines, cords, and home lines that mathematically demarcated the boundaries of one's opponent. The circle later became known as the 'mystical circle of Thibault'. The method was new and innovative, and it was not long before it had become popular among wealthy young men. Along with dancing, fencing became an important part of the education of young men, especially for the elite, who could afford to take lessons. After all, both physical activities were good for the posture and helped create a balanced body.



Fencing according to the mystical circle of Girard Thibault, in: *Académie de l'espée, ou se demonstrent par reiglés mathématiques sur le fondement d'un cercle mystérieux la theorie et pratique des vrais et iusqu'à présent incognus secrets du manient des armes a pied et a cheval* (c. 1630) (Courtesy of the Special Collections, University of Amsterdam).

Having an elegant carriage and good posture were considered signs of a well-educated and honorable gentleman. Parents with children who stooped and had poor posture were willing to pay what was necessary to correct their children's physical disposition. In this respect, fencing was an ideal sport for young people to improve and correct their posture and an excellent means to vent their energy. In the early seventeenth century, there was explosive growth in fencing schools in most towns and cities in the Dutch Republic.

Besides the popularity of fencing in the Dutch Republic, playing tennis also became a trend among men. In Leiden, young men did not have to wait for good weather to show off their physical strength; indoor tennis halls already existed in 1600. In 1616, the University of Groningen issued a permit to Cors Louiszoon to operate a tennis court for students. The university, which had been founded two years earlier, was concerned about the *eerlijck* or honest recreation facilities it had to offer its students. The same

occurred at the University of Franeker. In 1628, Johannes Coumans, an administrator at the university, requested permission to start a tennis court for the students. According to Coumans, the tennis court would attract more domestic and foreign students to the university, and moreover he argued that it was a noble sport that was played by kings, princes, dukes, counts, and their children. Coumans stressed that the university urgently needed facilities for its young people. There was an urgent demand for a place where they could do *eerlijcke lichamelijke exercitia*, or 'respectable physical exercise', instead of wasting their leisure time drinking and engaging in other tomfoolery.

In his *Academia sive specvlvm vitae scolasticae*, Crispijn de Passe, who we mentioned earlier, also encouraged students to play tennis. It was the ideal sport, good for both body and mind. After hours of studying, it was an excellent means of refreshing the mind. Besides tennis, other sports became popular in the early seventeenth century. One of them was horseback riding, which was initially a sport of the nobility and elite, but slowly became common among university students.

In the wake of the Dutch Revolt in the late sixteenth century, unlike most countries in Europe, the Republic did not have a court culture. Horseback riding was an essential part of the upbringing of young noblemen, which is why this sport did not play an important role in the education of the sons of merchants and the urban elite in the sixteenth century. This attitude changed quickly in 1621, however, after the exiled King Frederick of Bohemia (nicknamed the Winter King, because he reigned for only one winter) and his wife Elizabeth settled and made their court at The Hague. The couple introduced their passion for riding and dressage to the court of the Dutch stadholders and other elite families of The Hague. One of first games they learned was the tilt at the ring, which required horsemen to develop special riding skills. In 1624 and 1626 there were ring tournaments that lasted several days. These games required a rider to jab his lance through a small ring that hung from a hook. Not long afterwards, these events were hosted at The Hague's

prestigious Hofvijver and Lange Voorhout squares, where Queen Elizabeth congratulated the winners.

In the course of the early seventeenth century, sports such as fencing and tennis gradually became a major physical outlet for young men. Sports became an important means for young men to display their skills in public. Through sports, they were able to demonstrate that they were willing to take risks. The rowdy and hooligan-like behavior exhibited by young men in the countryside slowly began to make way for more civilized sports. The new institutions of the Dutch Republic, such as the universities and municipal councils, played a key role in this development. These institutions did so mainly in their own interests, not those of young men. Through sports, municipal councils had more control over young people. This was not enough, however; numerous factors influenced the behavior of young people. The taming of the youth of the Dutch Golden Age would require more than just fencing schools and tennis courts.

3. The Prodigal Son

In the seventeenth century, one of the most common metaphors for the immoral behavior of young men was the biblical story of the Prodigal Son. Early modern painters, engravers, and playwrights often used the topic in their works. They admonished the young men of the country for their debauchery, but also the children of foreigners, especially those from Flanders, who were known for their supposedly wayward and excessive lifestyles. The theme of the Prodigal Son was the epitome of everything that could go wrong when raising children. It symbolized the foolish behavior of young men who would simply not grow up. The story, based on the Gospel of Luke in the New Testament, is about the younger of two sons who asks his father for his inheritance before his father dies. After receiving the money, the young man travels to a distant country where he squanders his inheritance on expensive clothing, wine, women, and other vices. He is left penniless and without a home, and is forced to live with pigs. Eventually, the young man comes to his senses and returns to the family home, where his father welcomes him with open arms.

The story is one of forgiveness and redemption. In the early modern era, painters such as Rembrandt used the story to symbolize the topsy-turvy transition from childhood to adulthood. The parental and moral anxiety represented by the Prodigal Son reflected many facets of youth culture and masculinity in the early modern period. Johan van Beverwijck, a well-known physician and author of medical and moralistic books, alluded to this parental fear. Referring to the Prodigal Son, he hinted at the concerns of parents and moralists in the early modern period, and their worries about how young people spent their leisure time.

The history of youth culture in the early modern period runs parallel to the history of recreation. Most parents were concerned about what their adolescent offspring were doing when they were not at school, at work, or engaged in normal activities such as

eating, drinking, and sleeping. According to moralists in the seventeenth century, the real danger for young people occurred when they were not engaged in everyday activities. The Prodigal Son was an example of everything that could seduce young men in the Golden Age. Moralists were especially concerned about young people, because they were known to be vain. They were mainly interested in expensive clothes and obsessed about their appearance.

The book *De Secreeten* [The Secrets] describes how far young people were willing to go to change the way they looked. This work, which was originally published in Italian, was translated into Dutch for the first time in the early seventeenth century. It contained a range of beauty tips on how men and women could remove hair from their armpits, bleach their teeth, and even dye their hair blond and green (!). Throughout the book, hair is a recurring theme. In the early seventeenth century, it became more fashionable for men to have long hair. Rembrandt painted a self-portrait of himself in 1629 with mid-length hair. The new fashion of long hair for men formed a stark contrast to the hairstyles of the older generation, who kept their hair short. Staunch Calvinists, in particular, ridiculed men with long hair; they considered it unmanly and believed that it defied the codes of masculinity.

The Mennonites, who shunned any display of color and luxury and only wore black, denounced the new fashion as a sinful. According to the story 'Mennonite Vryagie', or Mennonite Love Affair, which was included in Jan Jansz Starter's popular songbook *Friesche Lusthof* [Frisian Paradise] (1621), long hair is problematic for young men. The girl in the story, who comes from a Mennonite community, turns down the advances of a young man with long hair. As the story progresses, the young man becomes completely frustrated and asks himself: 'What have I done wrong? I told her that I was madly in love with her, but nothing affects her. He bemoans that she lives according to the Bible and' has Moses in her head... and; everything is wrong [with him]. The girl can only complain: she grumbles that his

hair is too long, his collar and sleeves are too wide, the starch in his clothes is too blue, his pants are too baggy, his jerkin is too big, and even protests at his little bows for shoelaces. Slowly, the young man finds out that the Mennonite girl will only show an interest in him if he wears a black coat and white collar, and cuts his hair.

Starter's *Friesche Lusthof* was widely read, and mostly purchased by the children of wealthy parents who lived in the cities of the Republic. They were the 'fashionistas' of their time, following their generation's latest trends. This is probably why they enjoyed making fun of the old-fashioned clothes of the Mennonites depicted in Starter's story. The Mennonites were known for looking down on everything that was colorful, frivolous, excessive, and worldly. The Mennonites themselves were austere and wore black clothes without any decoration or pattern. Starter, who was 27 years old when he published his songbook, also dressed in the latest fashions. On the title page of his songbook, the picture of the author shows a trendy young man with a mustache, a goatee, and medium-length hair.

In the early seventeenth century, young men had long hair down to their shoulders. In the course of the 1630s and 1640s, this new fashion was not only followed by the trendy youngsters known as the *jeunesse dorée*, but also became more commonplace among the more traditional and conservative young men who worked as schoolteachers, professors, and even ministers. When the latter group of young men started growing their hair, the older generation of ministers became alarmed, fearing that these respectable young ministers were not setting the right example for the impressionable youngsters in their congregations. Godefridus Udemans (1582-1649), one of the most outspoken Dutch Reformed pastors of the early seventeenth century, believed that young ministers with long hair were offensive (as was long hair on men in general). In a 406-page discourse entitled *Absalom-Hayr* [Absalom's Hair] (1643), Udemans explained in detail why everything was wrong with men with long hair. The title alluded to the biblical story

of Absalom, the third son of David. Absalom was a good-looking young man with long hair. As an adult, he led a rebellion against his father at the Battle of Ephraim Wood, and his long hair was caught on oak tree. He was then captured by his father's soldiers and killed.

The 'Hair War'

When his book was published in 1643, Udemans was already a well-known author of many moralistic treatises and essays. Given the number of young men with long hair, Udemans knew *Absalom-Hayr* would be a controversial work. For this reason, he used the pseudonym Irenaeus Poimenander. The publication touched a nerve with theologians, and sparked a wave of pamphlets about long hair that went down in history as the 'Hair War'. This was primarily a moralistic conflict, conducted by theologians from Leiden and Utrecht. Udemans' arguments were based on the Old Testament, in which short hair sometimes signified sorrow and grief, and long hair did not necessarily imply triumph and joy. He compared men with long hair in the Dutch Republic to the pagan American Indians. The comparison with barbarians should have been reason enough for young men to keep their hair short. But that was not all; heathens were 'uncouth, arrogant, and promiscuous'. Moreover, long-haired men risked disturbing the economic and social order. According to Udemans, until then, the men who had traditionally worn their hair long were the French nobility, kings, and princes. Udemans argued that it was another matter altogether for commoners to imitate their behavior. If young people from the lower classes tried to mimic the wealthy, there would no longer be a visible difference between the ranks in society. It would be entirely inappropriate for young people to copy the nobility, because today's youngsters were already pretentious enough. Udemans himself, however, had nothing to worry about; he was slightly balding and kept his hair short.

Most of Udemans' claims and allegations came too late. By the 1640s, most young men, and often older ones, had long hair. Youths, students, university scholars, the urban elite, and even members of the clergy, especially the younger ones, were all letting their hair grow long. Maybe Udemans wanted to fire his arsenal of arguments for short hair because he knew he was fighting an uphill battle. Udemans cited every conceivable motive, from vanity to conspicuous consumption. But the argument that struck a nerve was that young men with long hair were endangering their masculinity. Simply put, Udemans thought men with long hair had become *she-men*; *wijven*, or wenches. With his use of the derogatory term *wijven*, Udemans was hinting at the mundane and flamboyant fashion of the French court and the Roman Catholic king; Dutch Reformed Protestants such as Udemans considered the latter the epitome of corruption and immorality. Men who had long hair not only resembled women, they also started to behave like them. In Udemans's opinion, men with long hair were vain, squandering endless hours in front of the mirror washing, brushing, and perfuming their hair. They were just like women. Vainly caring for one's hair was a woman's activity, not a man's. But now, if they wished to look their best, men with long locks were more or less forced to engage in these grooming rituals. As a middle-aged man, Udemans recognized that young men had the good fortune to grow their hair long, but considered this a waste of time that would be better spent on more important matters.

The timing of his publication could not have been better. In August 1641, men with long hair had been discussed at the annual synod of North Holland. *Absalom-Hayr* was published two years later, just before the annual synod of the Dutch Reformed churches. It had not been Udemans' intention to offend young men with long hair, but it was a slap in the face for young chaplains who followed the latest fashion and had long locks of hair. According to Udemans, young pastors were supposed to be role models for youngsters in the congregation. They were not supposed to follow the latest trends. The delegates from

Groningen, in particular, considered young pastors who had long hair and dressed in the latest fashions to be a thorn in the side of the church. The complaint was also directed at their wives. The delegates from Zutphen were furious that schoolmasters were letting their hair grow long, and the members of the delegation from Woerden bemoaned the students who were following suit.

For the synod, the theology students were the straw that broke the camel's back; it could not get any worse. After all, according to the old ministers, they were role models for the younger members of the congregation. As role models, ministers were supposed to radiate respect and wisdom with their short haircuts. It was one of the physical characteristics of the profession.

In 1645, the Hair War reached its climax. During the annual synod, the supporters and opponents of long hair stood across from each other as if they were armed and ready to engage in battle. Naturally, Udemans was leader of the faction against long hair, but his opponent Claudius Salmasius (1588-1653) was equally passionate about the cause. Salmasius, who succeeded the French classicist Joseph Scaliger at the University of Leiden and was a professor of classical languages, turned every one of Udemans' arguments on its head. In Leiden, Salmasius was known for not backing down and for engaging in lively discussion with his colleagues. As a rebuttal to Udemans' discourse, he wrote a 484-page treatise (even longer than Udemans') on why long hair was a non-issue. The work, entitled *Briefvan Claudius Salmasius aen Andr. Colvium, belangende naamwoord het Langh haren der Mannen nl de lokken der Vrouwen* [Letter from Claudius Salmasius to Andr. Colvium, about long hair on men and locks on women], was originally published in Latin. One year later, it was translated into Dutch, so that it could be read by those who had not been to Latin school or university. Like a true scientist, Salmasius based his arguments on examples from history, pointing out times in the history of mankind when there had been different hairstyles. There were times when men had had short hair, or long hair, and even times when they had shaved their heads. According to Salmasius, long hair on men did not affect their masculinity in

any way. It is likely that Salmasius felt personally attacked in the Hair War. The 57-year-old had a thick mane of bushy hair, which most of men of his age probably envied.

The debate about men with long hair was intense, but short. Salmasius had time (and hair) on his side. After 1645, long hair disappeared as an item of discussion at the synod. Long hair on men had become a fact, and the fashion continued to make its way through the social classes. More and more men, including theology students and young pastors, had long hair that dangled below their shoulders.

The fashion had originated at the French court. Already in the early seventeenth century, the French king and his courtiers were the prime trendsetters in Europe. The princes, elites, graduates, and students who traveled through Europe on the grand tour wanted to be seen donning the latest fashions from Paris after they returned home. The other classes also wanted to be fashionable and followed the trends of the elite. It was one of the few ways in which commoners could still belong. In addition, there was a further social element to fashion: people also followed fashion trends as a courtesy to the people around them. It would have been an insult not to wear the same style as one's superiors. In 1673, when the French King Louis XIV was 35 years old, his long locks of hair started to thin and his hairline began to recede. It obviously became difficult for the young, vain monarch to maintain the long-hair look. Louis decided to shave his head and have a wig of curly long hair made, and his subjects never knew about his balding. From that moment, the trend of wearing wigs became popular, and remained in fashion until the end of the eighteenth century and the French Revolution of 1789. After that, short hairstyles for young men back came back into style.

Youth fashion

The vanity of the young was not limited to the length of their hair; fashions in headwear were pushing the conventional

boundaries of manhood as well. Young men started wearing wide-rimmed hats decorated with feathers. In the sixteenth century people started collecting feathers, which were considered a sign of masculinity and virility, just as the feathers on a rooster or a peacock symbolize pride and self-confidence. In addition, the young men of the early seventeenth century started growing a mustache, goatee or pointed-beard, which were also signs of masculinity. However, this was the only body hair that was fashionable on young men; according to the fashions of the time, young men should not have any other hair on their bodies. The aforementioned book *De Secreeten* advised men on how to remove hair from under their armpits, chest, and even groin area. This was recommended for hygienic purposes. A young man should not allow his private parts to get sweaty and start to stink. For young adolescents who had just started to sprout a beard, *De Secreeten* also included a remedy for permanently removing hair under the armpits and wherever undesirable hair might start to appear. Besides being hairless, the ideal young man was muscular, with full calves and clean feet.

There were several remedies for removing or hiding pimples and other spots on the face. Youngsters who had been scarred with smallpox as children could cover the blemishes with white powder or black dots (known as 'beauty marks'). In the early modern period, it was not uncommon to have had smallpox as a child. If someone were fortunate enough to survive smallpox, however, they were usually marked with facial scars for the rest of their life. For aesthetic reasons, early modern men wanted to hide them.

Just as with their hair, young people took a meticulous approach to their clothes. They left little to chance. The latest trend in the 1620s and 1630s was the new flat collar, which made a clean break with the older fashion of wearing a millstone collar. The new flat collar was more practical and did not require having 15 meters of folded fabric around one's neck. One of the reasons why long hair became fashionable among young men was simply so that their long hair would not get stuck in the many ruffs

of the millstone collar. Long hair and a millstone collar were impractical bedfellows.

Young men started wearing a flat version of this collar that gently rested over the top of their doublet overcoat. At the end of the sixteenth century, this corset-like jacket was lined on the inside and buttoned up at the neck. In the first few decades of the seventeenth century, however, the shape of the doublet changed drastically. Instead of having a tailored shape, it became a loose-fitting garment that more or less draped over the upper body.

The sleeves, which had initially fallen at the wrist, were worn rolled up. Besides the loose doublet, the trousers also were different. Young men wore pants known as 'bombasts' that were baggy and puffy. They were fitted at the knee, where they were fastened with a garter, ribbons, or buttons. This style was in stark contrast to the tight, leotard-like pants that had been in vogue at the end of the sixteenth century; a style that most young men's fathers had worn when they were young. This new fashion originated at the French court.

In fact, everything that French king and his court wore influenced the young urban elite in the Dutch Republic; at least, if they could afford it. The new trousers were wide around the waist and tight at the knee. Unlike the fashion of the older generation, this new style, with its excessive use of fabric, seemed to drape and hide the contours of the buttocks and legs. In many ways, it defied the norms of masculinity of the older generation, who had wanted to emphasize their muscular legs and buttocks with tights that included a codpiece. The latter, a flap-like piece of cloth that covered the reproductive organs, had accentuated the size of the genitals. In the late sixteenth century, the codpiece became fashionable among young men at the court of Queen Elizabeth I of England, known as the 'Virgin Queen' because she turned down all her suitors. No doubt, the men did everything they could to attract her attention. The garment had originally become fashionable among young Italian men, as it made it easier for them to play sports, while at the same time drawing attention to their physique and private parts. The new, baggy-look fashion

must have felt like a challenge to the older generation's codes of masculinity.

The new fashion for baggy pants also had its advantages. The old-style tights with their codpieces had restricted the movement of young men. With looser-fitting clothing and bombasts, young people could move more freely and even play sports.

They wore high, silk stockings that extended down to the shoe. The stockings were fastened at the knee with garters and ribbons, and the male knee became a prominent eye-catcher. Silk was a popular fabric for stockings and clothes, especially for the wealthy, who could afford the expensive material from Persia.

Bling-bling

As if all the shiny, silk clothing were not extravagant enough, young men also decorated their clothes with gold and silver accessories. By the early seventeenth century, demand for gold and glittery metals for clothing had increased dramatically. Youth fashion in the early seventeenth century was all about *bling-bling*. The shinier, the better.

Historically, it was nothing new; European history was characterized by periods such as the Italian Renaissance, when fashion was dominated by luxury and extravagance. The Italian republics of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in particular were affluent societies where it was fashionable to wear expensive fabrics, decorated with precious metals. In Venice, the young trendsetters of the late fifteenth century made their appearance more flamboyant by wearing gold and silver. The Senate of Venice thought that clothing and fashion had become too extravagant, and introduced measures in 1456 to fine young people who wore expensive fabrics. Taking the opportunity to improve its own financial situation, the city council forced wealthy citizens who wore ornate clothing to loan the city 1,000 lire each.

Dutch youngsters not only used expensive fabrics for their wardrobes, but they also accessorized with costly materials,

such silk-spun ribbon for shoelaces. Shoes were fastened with gold and silver ribbons and knotted in the form of a rosette. This new style among the youth resembled the uniforms of the cavalry soldiers known as *cuirassiers*. These rugged men wore a breastplate as a harness, gloves, and wristbands. In the course of the seventeenth century, metal for the uniforms slowly was replaced with fabric. The harness-shaped coat was decorated with slashes in the fabric, so that one could see through to what was underneath. The outfit resembled the uniforms that Leonardo da Vinci had designed for the Swiss Guard – the same uniforms that can be seen at the Vatican today.

Adolescents and young men growing up in the early seventeenth century were spellbound by everything that had to do with the military. During that period, the Dutch state army had soldiers who fought at the front and kept the Spaniards outside Holland. In addition, the Dutch state continued to use war propaganda to keep the fight for independence from Spain alive. This propaganda served an important purpose; after all, the population had to bear the costs of the war, and the States General and local cities and towns imposed excise duties on various products. Without this income, the States General could not afford to keep the war going. The young people in Republic's cities, on the other hand, found the war exciting, especially the heroic soldiers that protected the country against the Spanish fury. Their uniforms, and the way they spent their leisure time drinking, smoking and going after women, were considered the epitome of manhood by adolescent boys and young men.

Until his death in 1625, Prince Maurits, the stadholder, was also the commander in chief and seen as the savior of the country. This was the role that his father, Willem of Orange, had assumed when the Revolt broke out in the sixteenth century, and it was a role played by all of the princes of Orange in the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. However, there was another reason why army fashions became popular among young men in the early seventeenth century. In general, the image of the military under Maurits' stadholdership had changed drastically.

The stadholder and his military advisors modernized the army and made it more organized and disciplined. Under Maurits' helm, the Dutch army became the most modern in Europe. The troops were trained in the latest fighting techniques and fitted with proper uniforms and weapons. Most importantly, they were a paid army. Before that, most armies in Europe had been paid from what they could loot. Local populations therefore had a disdain for armies and soldiers. But now, with their fancy uniforms and discipline, people started to look up to them with respect. Young men in particular, who sought male role models, idolized them and copied their clothing style.

Bright colors

The contrast between the older and younger generations in the seventeenth century was captured best by Bartholomeus van der Helst in a pair of portraits that he painted. In 1642, he was commissioned to paint Andries Bicker and his 20-year-old son. Father Bicker (1586-1652) was a wealthy merchant who traded with Russia and Scandinavia. He had also been mayor of Amsterdam several times. Van der Helst painted the slightly balding Bicker with cropped hair, dressed in a black doublet and with a snow-white millstone collar around his neck. That he wore black was no coincidence; during the first decades of the seventeenth century in particular, black was in fashion. Wearing black was also a status symbol, because it was expensive and difficult to produce. The white millstone collar around his neck likewise emphasized that Andries Bicker had money, because he could afford to have his clothes whitened. Every spring and summer, all the white garments of the country's wealthy citizens were packed up and brought to the bleaching fields outside Haarlem. The area around Haarlem was the ideal place for bleaching clothes, as there was an abundance of clean water and buttermilk, which was used to make clothing whiter. After the garments were washed and cleaned, they were laid out in the fields so that



Gerard Bicker's father, Andries, dressed in black and wearing a millstone collar, a style preferred by elderly people that had been fashionable twenty years earlier. Painting by Bartholomeus van der Helst, *Andries Bicker* (1642) (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam).

the sun and wind could lighten them further. Andries Bicker's generation believed that the whiter one's clothes, the cleaner they were.

Van der Helst portrayed Bicker's son, Gerard Andriesz Bicker (1622-1666), quite differently. The 20-year-old wears a



The *fashionista* Gerard Bicker sporting the latest fashion for young people: a flat collar, a salmon pink-colored coat and long hair. Painting by Bartholomeus van der Helst, *Gerard Andriesz Bicker* (1642) (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam).

pink salmon-colored velvet coat with a flat collar. In his hands, Gerard is holding yellow leather gloves. In addition, his hair is long and reaches the top of his shoulders. The most striking feature is that Bicker's son is corpulent. His large body takes up almost the entire 70.5 centimeter-width of the canvas. Gerard probably suffered from obesity, a disease that he most likely

inherited from his mother, who was also heavy. In Gerard's day, there were rumors that he weighed 220 kilos, and he was called 'Fat Bicker' behind his back.

In the early seventeenth century, young people started wearing more colorful clothing. Many of the same bright colors that can be seen in the portrait of the young Bicker were also represented in the painting genre known as the 'merry company'. In this genre, fashionable young people were dressed in bright-colored clothing and represented the prosperity of the Republic. Young men were often dressed in cheery shades such as bright red, yellow, and moss green. The painter Willem Buytewech from Rotterdam specialized in this genre. His young male figures are shown dressed in pants that come to the knee and accessorized with silk ribbons. During the 1620s, Constantijn Huygens (1596-1687), secretary to stadholder Frederick Henry, sneered at the latest trend among affluent young people. He was contemptuous of the new fashion:

pants tied at the knee with ribbons, a hanging shoulder flap, a doublet as stiff as a harness, shoes that are so deep that the vamp is barely attached to the heel, and hats that look more like a dish turned upside down meant to house lice, flashy pleated collars that could house rats, tight-fitting stockings in which the legs look like a sausage about to squeeze out of its casing, too many rosettes on the shoes, high heels, and an impractical outer coat which is more like a flag than providing coverage, and is more ballast than protection.

Calculated sloppiness

Young people's fashion in the early seventeenth century was utterly nonchalant. The older generation considered it casual and sloppy. Instead of wearing hats the traditional way, straight on the head, youngsters wore theirs tilted slightly backwards. Overcoats were worn hung loosely over the shoulders and dou-

blets were only half-buttoned. The strings that fastened shirts were barely attached, which meant that the collar came loose. To the older generation, with their tight-fitting doublets, millstone collars, and hats placed firmly on the heads, the new fashion looked disheveled. It resembled someone who had been called out of bed in the middle of the night. Still, youth style left little to chance. Every detail of this new look was considered carefully by the fashion-conscious young men of the early seventeenth century. In the 1630s and 1640s, the English referred to this style as 'calculated slovenliness'. For the Dutch youths of the 1620s and 1630s, it was certainly calculated. They had invested a lot of time and money in creating that nonchalant look.

In the early seventeenth century, affluent youths in Dutch cities were the first in Europe to embrace this calculated, slovenly style. The *fashionistas* of the Dutch Republic probably followed the royal courts of Europe as an example for trends. The younger monarchs of Europe in particular were the trendsetters of new fashions for young people. In the early seventeenth century, it was King Louis XIII of France and King Charles I of England who determined men's fashions. For the affluent young men who finished their education with a grand tour of Europe, a visit to Paris was an absolute must. One of the first things young men did was to shed their provincial garments and shop for a new wardrobe. It was practically a ritual; the last thing a young man wanted was to be mistaken for a country bumpkin while he was visiting Paris. He had to look like a *honnête homme* or gentleman, which was more fitting to his station in early modern society.

Pimped-up clothing

Not everyone could afford the newest Parisian fashions; only young men from the wealthiest families were able to purchase the latest designs from France. For the majority of the population in the early seventeenth century, clothing was expensive. When Dirck Alewijn, a wealthy cloth manufacturer from Amsterdam,

died in 1637, he left his wardrobe of expensive clothes to his sons Frederick and Abraham. Because his clothes were costly and still valuable, he left some pieces to his wife so that she could sell them afterwards.

Young men who could not afford expensive clothes and still wanted to follow the latest trends were forced to be creative. They had to rely on an *uitdraagster*, a woman who sold second-hand clothes door to door, acquired through bankruptcies and dissolved estates. Another option was to buy clothes at a second-hand clothes market. The used garments were usually mended, patched up, and decorated with accessories. By dyeing them or adding stitch-work, and filling the shoulders, old clothes could be easily updated and pimped up in the latest styles.

There were other ways to be trendy, even if one had little money. An old suit could look fashionable again if it was accessorized with new gloves, collars, ribbons, or feathers. Even with a modest income, a young man could avoid looking outdated. In Amsterdam, youngsters who had very little money usually purchased second-hand clothing at the Nieuwmarkt, Westermarkt, or Noordermarkt – where still to this day there is a second-hand clothes market every Monday morning. However, buying second-hand clothes did have its downside. Already in the sixteenth century, these markets were derogatively known as ‘flea markets’. They were given that name for a reason, mainly because some of the garments sold there were teeming with fleas and other insects. Especially during outbreaks of the plague, these markets were considered places that spread pestilence.

During periods when there was no plague, however, second-hand markets were the most popular place for young people to buy clothing. Because the supply could not fulfill the demand for used clothing, as the original owners did not dispose of their clothing quickly enough, an odd situation arose. Thieves played an important role in speeding up the process. By the middle of the seventeenth century, there was a gang of juvenile thieves in Amsterdam that operated in neighborhoods with second-hand clothing markets. The boys specialized in stealing

expensive clothing made of linen and silk. They were especially good at heisting garments from stores while their owners were distracted. One of the most common ways to steal clothing was from a barber's shop, where customers' overcoats were hung at the entrance. While the client went for a shave and was paying close attention to the sharp knife gliding across his neck and chin, it was an opportune moment for a young crook to sneak inside the barber's shop and nick his coat. By the time the innocent victim realized that his coat was gone, it was too late. In most cases, stolen goods were already resold and had a new owner within the hour.

Fashion and moralism

Many moralists criticized young people's new fashions as improper. In their view, fashion caused many social and moral problems, let alone the fact that poor young people were more or less forced to keep up with the latest trends. Their criticisms were sparked by a deeper underlying fear, namely that the newly affluent were spoiling their children with fancy clothes. The young people were not the problem; it was their parents who had failed to teach their offspring the virtue of moderation.

During the economic boom of the Golden Age, for many merchants, money was not an issue. Their accumulated wealth became visible in every aspect of their lives. Fortunes were lost just as quickly as they were made, however, and for the new affluent class in the Dutch Republic, who amassed their wealth in a period of ten to twenty years, losing their money was their greatest fear. In the satirical pamphlet *Den Rechten Weg nae 't Gasthuys* (1536) [The Direct Road to the Poorhouse], the nightmare of economic ruin and losing all one's worldly goods is portrayed in great detail. The story tells how a wealthy merchant family that lived beyond its means was forced to sell everything and go to the poorhouse. This fear was not unrealistic in the seventeenth century, and the author emphasized how important

it was for parents to teach their children the virtue of moderation. If they did not, then the family could lose everything. They were likely to end up in the poorhouse and depend on charity.

The word 'rechten' in the title was ambiguous. On the one hand, it literally meant 'directly to the poorhouse'. One could also read a note of moral judgment in the term, as right or 'just'. In the early seventeenth century, the affluent young people of the Republic became a symbol of the country's modernity and newfound prosperity. Young people were exuberant and excessive, with their long hair, flat collars, calculated sloppiness, bright-colored clothing, golden buttons, silk ribbons and feathered hats. They reflected how abundant the material culture of the Republic had become, and how those excesses could flow into other facets of daily seventeenth-century life, such as eating food and drinking alcohol.

4. Alcohol

In the early seventeenth century, Dutch and foreign students in the Republic had many traits in common. For one, they knew how to get drunk. In their inebriated state, students would disturb the peace and cause social mayhem. If a Dutch student was regularly arrested for drunken behavior, he risked ruining his family's reputation. On the night of Thursday 7 March 1624, Petrus Robertus, together with ten other students in Leiden, caused so much disturbance and destruction of private property that he was arrested by the municipal bailiff. The University of Leiden's academic court recommended that Robertus' father keep him at home until he learned how to behave himself. If the young man were to return to the university before that time he would be disgraced, and this would permanently tarnish the family's reputation.

Students who were enrolled at a university were well aware of the risk they were taking when they participated in violence. For the ruling families of the Dutch Republic, who all knew each other, a dent in the family's reputation could be especially detrimental for their future. A decent name and reputation were essential preconditions for maintaining an individual's economic and social position, as well as that of an entire family and the family's extended network. Ruining one's reputation meant squandering one's chances of obtaining a political office, closing commercial deals, and even finding the right marriage partner, which was of strategic importance for the entire family. Often a family's name was most at risk when a young man was under the influence of alcohol.

Students did anything and everything to maintain their good reputation and honor their family name. In 1623, Reinier van Leeuwenhuijzen, a Swedish law student in Leiden, petitioned the academic court to erase his name from the ledger of student transgressions, after he had agreed to compensate a local innkeeper for his outstanding bar tab. Although he was

not necessarily concerned about his reputation in the Dutch Republic, he was worried that one of his fellow Swedish students in Leiden, also from the nobility, would tell of his wrongdoings once he returned to Sweden. For the elite of the Dutch Republic, gossip about immoral behavior spread like wildfire, and there was much at stake for a young man from a noble family.

No one knew that better than Hester della Faille. In Leiden, she and her son-in-law asked the academic court to lock up her 29-year-old son, Daniel, who had become violent and was in a state of delirium. Moreover, he was consorting with the wrong kind of people. After the death of her husband, Daniel van der Meulen Sr., Hester della Faille had become the *mater familias* of the Van der Meulens, a wealthy merchant family that fled Antwerp in 1585 and had established a good reputation in their new home country. When her husband was still alive, he was a respected merchant in Leiden with an extensive trade network throughout Europe. Daniel Jr., however, was a troubled young man who had enrolled as a student at the University of Leiden a year earlier. Although there was no mention of alcohol as the problem, his widowed mother and friends had hoped a period of confinement would shield him from the bad influence of his friends.

College life

One of the major factors that contributed to the excessive consumption of alcohol by students (and professors) in Leiden was that they could buy duty-free liquor. As a way of attracting more students to Leiden, students and staff enrolled at the university were exempt from paying excise taxes on alcohol. This special privilege, which had been established in 1577, gave students the annual right to purchase 194 liters of house wine and 10 barrels (approximately 1,500 liters) of beer tax-free. This amounted to more than half a liter of wine and four liters of beer a day. When the University of Franeker was founded in 1586, the university granted the same rights to students.

Besides universities, several illustrious schools were founded in the early seventeenth century. These were academic institutions comparable to today's community or junior colleges. They allowed students to follow the first couple of years of an academic curriculum, but were not certified to give degrees. On many levels, illustrious schools competed with universities in trying to attract students. The illustrious school of Middelburg, for example, granted its pupils the same duty-free liquor privileges as the universities. Despite the fact that students were renowned for their excessive drinking habits and causing violence, these academic institutions would not think of abolishing the privilege.

For the students and university staff, it was a lucrative system. In Leiden, some citizens even took advantage of it and had their sons enrolled as students at the university without their ever attending a single class. The miller Harmen van Rijn and his wife Neeltje were one example of a couple that wanted to take advantage of the tax break. In 1620, they enrolled their 14-year-old son Rembrandt as a student at the University of Leiden. Rembrandt probably never saw the inside of the building. Local magistrates and universities soon realized that people were taking advantage of the special privilege, and started applying stricter regulations for enrollment.

While cities tried to lure as many students as possible by offering duty-free alcohol, the university administrators also wanted to curtail binge drinking. They tried to introduce every possible measure that might prohibit students from imbibing too much. For example, students who received a scholarship were not allowed to consume alcohol where students played sports.

Students at the University of Groningen did not receive a tax-break on alcoholic beverages and had to pay the full price, just like ordinary citizens. Unfortunately, we do not know whether this had a negative effect on student enrollment. In any case, it did not prevent students from drinking too much. In 1616, the German students Johannes Fabricius from Oldenburg and Hieronymus van Lengen from East Friesland were

admonished for public drunkenness and wayward behavior. Indeed, the academic court in Groningen had apprehended and reprimanded them earlier for delinquency. Van Lengen was a known prankster and troublemaker. Two years earlier, he had been caught throwing stones at the window of a fellow student, Moerling, and had injured him in the face. On another occasion, Van Lengen had hung provocative posters up all around town, and another time he had hired a street musician to play music outside the university building to disrupt a lecture. Despite Van Lengen's licentious behavior and tomfoolery, he turned out all right in the end. He later became mayor of his town.

The students in Groningen certainly knew how to binge drink. In 1618, Bertholdus Beilen was arrested by the municipal guard for wandering around in an inebriated state. According to eye-witnesses, the philosophy student was spotted entering a cafe as early as 10 o'clock in the morning. His drinking binge continued throughout the day and only ended at 11 o'clock in the evening. Beilen was a violent drunk. After he left the cafe late in the evening, he became aggressive and was arrested by the municipal guard. The academic court had him incarcerated and put on bread and water.

After numerous cases of drunkenness, the senate of the University of Groningen decided to restrict the excessive consumption of beer and wine among students. In 1619, the senate endorsed new measures that forced bar owners to regulate how much alcohol students consumed in their establishments. Students were not allowed to consume more than a *rijksdaalder* worth of alcohol in an evening, which resembles a current restriction that prohibits grocery and liquor stores from selling alcohol to minors. Thus in Groningen, bar owners, not students, became responsible for curbing excessive drinking. Moreover, in the seventeenth century a *rijksdaalder* bought a lot of alcohol, and a student could easily get drunk for that amount. Getting drunk was simply a part of being a student.

Symposia

In the early seventeenth century, the consumption of alcohol was just as important to student life as books, if not more. In the humanist tradition, the ancient Greek ‘symposium’ was originally a convivial meeting where the consumption of alcohol was combined with stimulating intellectual conversation. Drinking was the mainstay of intellectual life, and alcohol was consumed in abundance when professors and students had deep scholarly conversations. In the academic world, students looked up to their professors, who were often heavy drinkers. Unlike today, in the early modern period professors and students interacted and socialized with each other outside the classroom. It was not uncommon for students to rent a room at a professor’s home, and professors were less likely to remain within the confines of their study. They mingled much more with their students, often at the pub. Some men chose to take up a professorship so they could pursue their academic interests and continue to be a bachelor. Among the professors at the University of Leiden, one-fifth of the academic staff was unmarried. Some professors felt that marriage and family life would interfere with their scholarly pursuits.

Daniel Heinsius (1580-1655), who was a professor of Greek and Latin at the University of Leiden, thought a wife would be an inconvenience to his career as a scholar. Because he liked to read in bed, the professor laid out his books all over his bed at home. There was literally no place for a woman in his bed, and consequently in his life. In Leiden, Heinsius was known as a drunk. On one occasion, students found a note tacked to the classroom door stating that the lecture had been canceled because Heinsius had a hangover. Heinsius’ tippie of choice was wine and he made no secret of it. In his collection of poems *Nederduytsche poemata* [Dutch Poetry] (1616), which was a compilation of stories and engravings about love, he devoted an entire chapter to wine entitled *Het Lof-sanck van Bacchus* [The Song of Praise for Bacchus], which honored Bacchus, the

Roman god of wine. In the early seventeenth century, it was not uncommon for deeply religious men such as Heinsius to honor the pre-Christian gods, even pagan ones; the epitome of excessive drinking. While writing his chapter, Heinsius knew exactly who his readers would be. They were young academics and colleagues who had a humanistic education and were acquainted with the classic Greek and Roman authors.

In his story, Heinsius portrayed Bacchus as an older man who felt young again after drinking wine and hanging around with young people. Drinking wine made him feel as though the world lay at his feet. The way Heinsius told the story aroused the interest of young readers. As the story progressed, a bitter truth was revealed. The story had an educational message: wine was a magical elixir that would make the elderly feel better. According to Heinsius, wine was not meant for the young, because their temperament was warm-blooded and sanguine. Young people were better off drinking water; according to myth, Bacchus, as a motherless young child, was raised by water nymphs.

The story about Bacchus was an allegory. Young people have to drink water, just as a vineyard needs to be watered, or it will not grow. In essence, *The Praise of Bacchus* relayed the same message as other seventeenth-century publications in which Bacchus was revered. In *Satyra or Schimpdicht. Prijsende den Godt Bacchuys, oft Droncken drincken* (1632) [Satire or Farce. Honoring the God Bacchus or Intoxicated Drinking], the author H. Rulant satirically warned young and old about the dangers of drinking too much alcohol.

When Rulant's second edition *Satyra or Schimpdicht* was published in 1634, he changed the subtitle for educational reasons to *Proces Van Drie Gebroeder-Edellieden: den eenen zynde een Dronckaert, den Tweeden een Hoereerder, den Derden een speelder* [Trial of Three Noble Brothers: The First a Drunkard, the Second a Whoremonger, and the Third a Gambler]. The story was an entertaining portrayal of three brothers named Philip, Carel, and Maximilian. The brothers were from an affluent family and were aged around 16 or 17 years old. Their parents invested a lot

in ensuring they had a good moral education. One might think, *so far, so good*. However, from the moment they started their academic education and enrolled at university, everything went downhill. It did not take long for Philip to become an alcoholic, for Carel to become a whore-hopper, and for Maximilian to become addicted to gambling; a nightmare for any parent.

In the course of Rulant's satire, one brother, Philip, is also given a voice, and turns to the reader to defend his 'thirst' for alcohol with the remark that 'een goed gezel zig wel dronken drinkt, maar een schelm zelden, ende een verrader nimmermeer' [a good man drinks in company, but a scoundrel seldom, and a traitor never]. In other words, if a virtuous man becomes drunk, he has nothing to fear, an immoral one plenty. The readers could recognize in the brothers all three vices – alcohol, sex, and gambling – but they probably identified the most with Philip, because consuming alcohol was a social activity in which many people participated. Frequenting prostitutes and gambling, on the other hand, were individual acts and took place in secrecy.

One of the professors at the University of Leiden was Dominicus Baudius (1561-1613), who was a celebrated scholar of rhetoric, law and history. But he was also known as a notoriously heavy drinker. It was no secret in Leiden that the professor had problems with money, women, and alcohol. He liked to gamble and play dice, but his greatest problem was squandering money on alcohol and women. After it became public knowledge that he had fathered an illegitimate child, the senate of the University of Leiden suspended him. His crime was not necessarily fathering an illegitimate child from a prostitute; his wrongdoing was that he had broken his promise to marry the child's mother. The situation only became more dramatic after Baudius decided to marry another woman. In Leiden, people gossiped that she was richer than him, and he was only marrying her for her money. Unfortunately for Baudius, his life with his wealthy wife was short-lived. A few days after the wedding, he died. It was rumored that his early death was the result of his alcohol addiction.

In Leiden, Baudius was not an ideal role model for his students. Neither was Everardus Bronckhorst (1554-1627), a professor of law at Leiden. Bronckhorst liked to go out barhopping with his students. In his diary, he narrated on several occasions that he wanted to stop drinking – something he usually wrote on days when he was suffering a bad hangover. Drinking at graduations and other academic celebrations started to take its toll on his health. When it came to alcohol, Bronckhorst had little self-discipline (he also chased women, despite the fact that he was married).

In 1631, a conflict erupted in Leiden between the students and one of the professors. The newly appointed professor of ethics, Johan Bodecher Benning (1606-1642), authored a satirical pamphlet in which he portrayed Leiden's students as drunks and whore-hoppers. In the pamphlet entitled *Satyricon in corruptae iuventutis mores corruptos* [Satire on the corrupt morality of depraved youths], Bodecher Benning did not use recognizable names and places. However, due to the detailed descriptions of the taverns and brothels around Leiden, his readers knew exactly which venues the professor meant. In the story, a freshman student becomes friends with older students who seduce him into the immoral world of alcohol and tobacco. His new friends are a bad influence on him, which eventually leads to his downfall.

After Bodecher Benning's work was published, the students in Leiden felt attacked by his accusations. Leiden's students did not take his accusations sitting down, however; some of them retaliated and wrote their own satirical pamphlet about 'a certain 22-year-old professor who was still wet behind the ears'. The pamphlet, entitled *Juventus Academia ad Hermophilum Tanugriensem* [The student's Hermophilis Tanugriensis], portrayed an experienced young professor and criticized him for being an academic nobody. Although the pamphlet was anonymously authored and Bodecher Benning's name was never used, the similarities between the main character and Bodecher Benning were uncanny.

The conflict did not stop there. In another pamphlet, entitled *Sermo in Corrupti Hermophilis Tanugriensis Corruptos Mores*

[Sermon on the corrupt ways of the wicked Hermophilis Tannugriensis] (1631), another anonymous student-writer depicted Bodecher Benning as an alcoholic. With the same logic that Bodecher Benning had used in his pamphlet, the student argued that Bodecher Benning's insightfulness about alcohol consumption could only come from a man personally acquainted with drinking. In other words, professors should consider their own behavior before lashing out at students. In Leiden, where the drinking problems of professors like Heinsius and Baudius were public knowledge, the residents of the town probably sided with the students.

Before most young men enrolled at university, they already knew that going to the pub was part of being a student. Crispijn de Passe's *Academia sive speculum vitae scolasticae* [The University or Mirror of Student Life] (1612) prepared them for college life, which included visiting pubs and taverns. The book provided valuable insight into what every prospective student could expect in academic life. A young man was advised to spend his leisure time painting, fencing, and playing music. After all, it was a known fact that students had a lot of free time; indeed, they had too much. In the academic year of 1595, there were only 144 days with lectures for students. In the academic year of 1650, there were only 101 days when classes were taught. In reality, this meant that students had 264 days off and nothing to do. Most of them passed the time drinking in pubs and visiting inns.

De Passe knew that a large part of student life took place in the pub. In *Academia*, one of the emblems depicts a tavern scene where young men and women are playing games, drinking, eating, and kissing. Ironically, hanging on the wall behind the young people are four paintings: a landscape, a seascape with a boat, a portrait of a woman, and one of Venus and Cupid. Each painting has a moral message for the viewer. However, prospective students are not supposed to get too excited about consuming alcohol, because behind the amorous couple the engraving shows a fool (always a warning). The accompanying text spells out that 'chastity and moderate drinking agree with

the Muses and Apollo, but the combination of wine, playing dice, and womanizing is apt to ruin a scholar's character'. The moral of the story is that students are better off staying at home and avoiding the pub. In reality, however, students did not stay at home. Drinking was just as important to student life as reading books and attending lectures, if not more.

Drinking games

There were several drinking games in the early seventeenth century. The best-known game was played with a *pasglas* or measuring glass; a long cylindrical glass marked like a measuring cup. The marks indicated how much a player had to consume from the glass. In seventeenth-century Dutch paintings, the *pasglas* was often depicted in the still life genre because it symbolized the transience and temporal nature of life. After a player had sipped exactly to the mark indicated on the glass, he was allowed to pass the glass on to the next player, who was required to do the same. If they missed the mark, they had to take another swig until they got it right. It did not take long for the players to get drunk, especially the younger, inexperienced ones.

Another game was played using a *molenbeker* (windmill cup). This goblet-like cup was often made from silver, and had a foot on its base in the shape of the arms of a windmill. The only way to set it down was by putting it on its top. When someone blew into a pipe, the sails turned a dial that indicated how many times the contestant would have to empty the cup. And because the goblet could not be put down, it would have to be completely emptied. The unlucky player would have to drink everything to the last drop, or risk having to take another turn. With these drinking games, young people would quickly become drunk. But as they played, they soon learned how to be cautious with alcohol and know their limits.

Like the symposia where students and professors drank together, drinking games in the seventeenth century had a social



Drinking games commonly played by young people included the 'pasglas' or measuring glass. Painting by Jan van de Velde, *Still Life with 'Pasglas'* (1647) (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam).

function. Consuming alcohol together strengthened cohesion between all groups in society, from the poor to the rich. The many drinking bouts gave rise to life-long friendships between young men. Unconsciously, an element of trust that emerged from drinking together, which created a mutual commonality. In the early modern period, having trust in someone was considered a form of social capital. If an apprentice wanted to become a member of a guild, a round of drinks was often served with the rest of the guild members. This ensured that the older men in the guild could trust the new member. It was a ritual of being accepted as an equal. Moreover, becoming a member of the guild

also implied that a young man was accepting responsibility. For a young man it was a rite of passage in which male members bonded, like a brotherhood. This was known as 'contractual drinking'. A contract was created, whereby men learned to trust each other and accept newcomers in their midst.

The Bentvueghels

Ritual drinking was also customary among young Dutch painters in Rome. After they had finished their apprenticeship with a master painter, they completed their education with an extended sojourn in Rome, during which they usually practiced and studied works from Antiquity and the Renaissance. When these artists returned to the Republic, their stay in Rome was regarded as an asset to their painting range.

During their stay in the eternal city, the young artists from the Dutch Republic, just like university students, were organized in groups according to their country of origin. The Bentveugels (Birds of a Feather) were such a group. They were founded in 1623 at a Dutch inn in Rome called *De Witte Valck* (The White Falcon). Run by a Dutch innkeeper, the inn was a popular meeting place for travelers from the Low Countries. The young founders also chose the name of the inn for another reason, namely because it was a bird known for its speed and its ability to change direction quickly, which had an allegorical meaning for the young painters. The falcon was the symbol of youth.

Most of the members of the group were between 20 and 24 years old. They often rented the same house together, and would have their studios on the upper floors where the light was good. To belong to the Bentveugels, prospective members had to go through an initiation ceremony. These usually took place in a local tavern and started with a *tableau vivant* performed with characters from ancient history. Antiquity played an important role for the Bentveugels; it was the period in history that had produced the most art. During the initiation of Joachim von San-

drart and Michel le Bon in 1628/1629, there was a performance featuring Apollo on Mount Parnassus, accompanied by Mercury reciting poetry about sculpture and painting. Of course, Bacchus the Roman god of wine was also included in the *tableau vivant*.

Bacchus was the patron of the Bentveugels. During each initiation ceremony, novices were given a comical nickname, which was part of the Bacchanalian tradition. The ceremony usually ended with a toast. The first drink and toast were contractual. However, the numerous drinks and binge drinking that followed were just as important in the initiation ceremony, known as the *doopfeest* (baptismal feast). The initiation lasted until the early hours of the next day and ended with a pilgrimage to the tomb of Bacchus located in the Santa Costanza Church, a few miles away from the city gate. For the Bentveugels, drinking together was an important social lubricant, and Bacchus played a cohesive role. In a drawing made by one of the Bentveugels in 1623, Bacchus was portrayed standing naked in the middle, surrounded by the other founding members. The message is clear. The group of young men living abroad liked to drink. Every time a novice became a member or one of them returned home, there was a reason for celebration, which usually ended in a night of excessive drinking.

Chambers of rhetoric

Members of another group, the chambers of rhetoric (*rederijk-skamers*), were known for their heavy drinking. These groups of men, which included all age groups, shared a love of writing and reciting poetry. The chambers of rhetoric originated in the Southern Netherlands during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and spread to the Dutch Republic in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Just as today, every city or town has a local Rotary Club, in the seventeenth century every town and every village had its own chapter of rhetoricians who shared poetry with each other. Young men who wished to develop their intellectual faculties were particularly drawn to the chambers of

rhetoric, where they learned to write poetry, the art of rhetoric, debating, and also how to write and stage plays. They were by no means homogeneous groups. Besides being from all age groups, the members were also from various social and professional backgrounds. With such diversity, drinking functioned as an important social lubricant. After the performances, but also during them, copious amounts of alcohol were consumed. They also drank a lot during their parades and other festivities.

For the Gouda chamber of rhetoric, taking a swig of alcohol was integrated into a literary game. A filled goblet was passed around, and all the members had to take a sip and pass it to the next person. With every gulp, a member was required to recite the verse of a poem to the chairman of the meeting. The member had to address the chairman every time as 'prince'. The poem had three or more stanzas, in which the last verses were repeated at the end. This determined the theme of the poem. The members had to keep their wits about them and not get drunk, otherwise they would forget the last lines of the poem. This kind of social drinking had a ritual character. The older members taught the younger ones how to consume alcohol in moderation, or at least drink a lot and act as if they still had their wits about them, which is a talent in itself.

Foreign youths

Compared to the ritualized or 'tolerated' drinking behavior of young men from the upper and middle ranks, the drinking habits of the lower classes were quite another thing altogether. As far as we know, there were no ritualized drinking games with fancy silver goblets or verses recited before opening the *ole hatchet* and guzzling away. In the Dutch Republic during the seventeenth century, young people with a foreign background were notorious for their excessive drinking. They often came from rural areas of Germany, Norway, Sweden, or Denmark. Many of them came from the Southern Netherlands, and these young people were renowned for their wayward lifestyle. In 1629, Gillis Quintijn,



Young people in the early morning after a night of partying, portrayed in: G. Quintijn, *De Hollandsche-Lijs met de Brabandsche Belij* (1629) (Courtesy of the Special Collections, University of Amsterdam).

a merchant from Haarlem, revealed how immoral this group of young people could be. In his book, *De Hollandsche-Lijs met de Brabandsche-Belij* [Holland's Tortoise with Brabant's Greenhorn], he portrayed these young foreigners as vulgar sots and lambasted them for not conforming to Dutch customs and morals.

Just like today, in the seventeenth century foreigners in the Dutch Republic preferred to reside in the same neighborhoods. The Flemish, whom the Dutch called 'garlic eaters', all lived in the same neighborhood, where they continued to follow their own customs and raise their youngsters in the way they would have done at home. According to Quintijn, the most offensive aspect of the Flemish was how they allowed their young people to drink excessive amounts of alcohol. During the neighborhood parties in the Flemish district, young people drank exorbitant amounts of booze. The youngsters then lost all control, usually by first dancing provocatively with each other. Their parties went on into the small hours. Afterwards they would descend onto the streets, where they made noise and disturbed the peace as they

headed towards the beach. Along the way, they defaced doors, destroyed window boxes with flowers, molested cats, and vomited on people's doorsteps. However, the orgy of misconduct was not over yet. When they arrived at the beach, their tomfoolery became more serious. The young men splashed the blouses and dresses of the young women, and eventually their breasts and buttocks became visible. According to Quintijn, this was foreplay, and it did not take long before the young men were coupling with the girls, who were coerced into having sex with them in the dunes. Quintijn exaggerated these incidents, and even accused Haarlem's promiscuous young people of murder. Two corpses of babies had been found floating in Haarlem's Spaarne River, and Quintijn insinuated that the babies had been conceived out of wedlock during one of those youthful orgies at the beach.

From bad to worse

According to Quintijn, excessive drinking formed a slippery slope for Haarlem's immigrant youngsters. One carnal vice led to another. In the pedagogical treatise *Practijcke* [Practice] (1632), young readers were told in detail how they could avoid all the cardinal vices. Godefridus Udemans, the author of the treatise, was a Protestant Reformed pastor from Zierikzee, who was mentioned above in the account of the 'Hair War'. He was obsessed with the immoral behavior of young people, especially their excessive drinking habits. He tried to safeguard young people from playing dice and frequenting pubs by scaring them with stories about God's wrath. One of his examples was based on an old story of how in 1546 a bolt of lightning had struck a tavern in the town of Mechlin in the Southern Netherlands, where 800 barrels of gunpowder had been stored. One of the victims was an innkeeper named Kroes, whose corpse was found with cards in his hands. 'Kroes' is also a Dutch word for 'goblet', a pun that the young reader would have picked up on, and according to Udemans this was no coincidence. God had punished him.

In the seventeenth century, the calls for moderation in the consumption of alcohol were quite different from those of the temperance movement two centuries later. In the nineteenth century, advocates fought for complete abstinence. In the seventeenth century, that was almost impossible. Consuming alcoholic beverages such as beer, wine, and brandy was safer than drinking water from canals and other waterways; especially in the cities, where there was no safe drinking water available. Before coffee and tea became affordable for the general public in the 1670s and 1680s, beer was the most widely consumed and safest beverage.

That is why seventeenth-century moralists like Udemans emphasized 'moderation' when it came to drinking, and not complete abstinence. In *De Christelycke Zee-vaert* [The Seafaring Christian] (1611) and *Geestelick Compas* [Spiritual Compass] (1617), Udemans offered young sailors moral advice for the nine-month voyage to Batavia. These devotional booklets were especially helpful for inexperienced boys and young men who were at sea for the first time and had to go ashore at ports such as the Cape of Good Hope, where veteran sailors sought rest and relaxation at inns and brothels. Udemans urged young seaman to be chaste, but in order to stay chaste, they first needed to remain sober. In a poem, Udemans described what could go wrong for a sailor once he went ashore:

*drincken en schrinken,
brassen en suypen,
dansen ende springen,
ende soo worden sy dickwils hoere-vast
eer sy het weten.*

(Drinking and being served,
bingeing and guzzling,
dancing and jumping,
then comes the whore,
before you know it.)

In other words, being drunk was in itself not so bad; it was what happened when young men were in an inebriated state that caused most concern. In the early modern era, parents and moralists knew exactly what was hidden in the dark when young men were drunk, namely promiscuity; and that was the gravest of all vices.

Daniel Souterius

Drinking was the ultimate sin for Daniel Souterius, a pastor in Haarlem. In his treatise *Nuchteren Loth* [Sober Lot] (1623), he used the biblical story of Lot as an example of how the excessive drinking of alcohol could unleash a chain of events that led to disgrace and dishonor. According to Souterius, Lot had initially been a pious man, but he was seduced by alcohol to commit incest with one of his daughters. Souterius re-interpreted the story of Lot for the modern context of the Dutch Republic in the early seventeenth century, which, in his view, had lost its moral compass to prosperity and material excess. He considered alcoholism to be a grave sin and a sign of barbaric behavior. Souterius argued that the alcoholic ruined his mind and his body. After all, he stammered and acted like an animal, and Souterius emphasized that the mind is what distinguishes man from animals.

According to Souterius, alcoholism opened a Pandora's box. It could lead to idolatry, blasphemy, defying the Sabbath, the breaking of laws, murder, adultery, theft, dishonesty, and greed. Souterius believed that pubs, wine taverns, and *suypkotten* (drinking holes) were the root of all evil in the Dutch Republic. He called for city governments to take harsh measures to crack down on drinking establishments. Souterius urged municipal councils to follow the example of the English town of Sandwich, where individuals had to pay a penalty if they were caught drinking in taverns on Sunday. For those who were drinking and playing cards, their fines were doubled.

Dirck Pietersz Pers

The most effective means of keeping young men from drinking too much was through moral education. Moralists were more successful when they presented their message to young people as a form of self-control, instead of one that came from an external authority such as a parent, minister, or civil ordinance. Today, the most successful anti-smoking campaigns are those that emphasize the health dangers of smoking and passive inhalation. In the seventeenth century, the publisher Dirck Pieterszn Pers used the same tactic to influence young people. Many of the books he published were geared towards young audiences, and Pers was quite notorious among the young people of Amsterdam. He knew how to convince them that it was better to drink in moderation than to drink until they were completely intoxicated. In his book *Bacchus. Wonder Wercken* [Bacchus Working Miracles] (1628), Pers sketched how alcoholism could lead to an immoral man's downfall and demise. It was a realistic depiction of someone with an alcohol problem. Pedagogically, it was quite effective. The young reader quickly realized that the alcoholic was far from being a role model. The message was clear. Pers did not have to bore his readers with pedantic warnings; he knew his young readers and was aware of the best way to present a message. His book *Bellerophon tot Wysheyd of Lust* (1614) was aimed at the affluent young readers of Amsterdam. Pers recognized that the youth of Amsterdam's elite and middle classes were potential buyers of his books. He also knew the problems that adolescents faced and the trials that parents experienced with adolescent children.

Pers was a professional when it came to selling books. He had a sixth sense for what the consumer wanted and knew exactly what young people were not interested in buying. By choosing the title *Bacchus. Wonder Wercken*, Pers knew that he would attract young readers. The title referred to the ancient Bacchanalian culture that honored Bacchus, the Roman god of wine. Pers knew that young people were interested in alcohol,

but what they did not know when they bought the book was that it was a satire with an educational message.

As Souterius had done, Pers referred to the biblical story of Lot, a man who lost his wisdom through his love for the bottle. In the preface, Pers urged his readers to drink in moderation, and stressed that it was better for young people to lead a sober life. For the older generation, Pers had less hope; they were already ruined. Pers had used the same technique to market other books, but with *Bacchus, Wonder-werken* he also tried something new. When buyers bought the book, they were given the booklet *Suyppstad of Dronckaerts-Leven* [Guzzle-City or Life of a Drunk] as a supplement. This was an extra perk that made the book more appealing for youngsters. Similar to other stories in which the world was presented upside-down, *Suyppstad* was a story where being drunk was the norm. Many of the rogue scenes in *Suyppstad* resembled those in the 'merry company' painting genre. The life of a drunk was praised. It did not take long to realize that the story was a satire, but first the young reader had to witness the main character's bout of alcohol abuse. The message was subtle, but also crystal clear: young people were better off staying away from alcohol or only drinking in moderation. The young public that Pers targeted were the affluent, gilded youth with long hair, dressed in bright and colorful outfits. They were the same youngsters that Willem Buytewech and Pieter Codde had portrayed in merry companies, playing cards and throwing dice.

Yet the portrayal of merry companies was no moral admonishment to the young. These depictions were meant as a joke, and were intended to make the viewer laugh. The early twentieth-century series *Dogs Playing Poker* by the painter C.M. Coolidge had the same effect. For seventeenth-century viewers, paintings of frolicking and boozing young people were just as absurd as Coolidge's cigar-smoking and card-playing dogs. They made people laugh. The primary intention of painters of merry companies was not to reprimand young people for their behavior. However, viewers did need to understand the prevailing mores if they wanted to get the humor. In the early seventeenth century,

humor was one of the most effective ways to communicate a message. The biggest problem experienced by moralists was that excessive drinking was deeply rooted in Dutch culture. For an adolescent, consuming large quantities of alcohol was an important rite of passage in becoming a man. For moralists, curbing young people's thirst for alcohol was truly an uphill battle.

Father Cats

Jacob Cats, the bestselling author of didactic books in the seventeenth century, understood the nature of young men like no other. In his popular *Spiegel vande Oude en Nieuwe Tijd* [Mirror of the Old and New Times] (1632), he argued that parents needed to give leeway to their adolescent children so they could find their own boundaries. In his proverb *Men moet een paer narre-schoenen verslijten, eer men recht wijs wort* (one has to wear out a pair of fool's shoes before one can be wise), Father Cats, as he was known in the Golden Age, understood that youth was a psychologically turbulent and confusing phase. Cats emphasized that it was a difficult period for parents, who tried to teach their adolescent children moderation, but he also recognized that youngsters had to make mistakes before they could get on the right path. That was part of becoming an adult, and parents understood his logic. Cats' advice consoled parents; he comforted them with the idea that there was light at the end of the tunnel. The proverb was illustrated with an emblem of a slightly inebriated young man who is dancing and wearing a jester's shoes, while on the ground lie a tennis racket, a stack of cards, and other attributes associated with youth. For a seventeenth-century audience, the message was clear. Only a fool would wear shoes like that, and his behavior was foolish and should not be taken seriously.

Yet the young man's foolish behavior was risky. In the late Middle Ages and the early modern period, young men had been repeatedly warned about the dangers that came with

adolescence. According to the humoral theory of the Roman physician Galen (131-201/216 A.D.), which was still being used in the seventeenth century, the human body had four bodily fluids or humors: phlegm, blood, yellow, and black bile. The doctrine was based on the theories of Hippocrates, who believed that each bodily fluid represented a certain temperament. Galen linked the fluids in the body to four basic qualities, namely hot, cold, moist and dry, which were associated with phases in a human life. For example, youth was represented by warmth and humidity, and had a sanguine temperament. Due to their temperament, young people had a strong desire for alcohol. In art, Venus and Bacchus were commonly used to represent young people. They symbolized unrestrained youth, unable to control body or mind. Johan van Beverwijck, a physician from Dordrecht, argued that when young people drank alcohol, their bodies became unbalanced. In his *Schat der Ongesontheyd* [Treasury of Ill-Health] (1644), he warned that drunkenness was a 'disease of the mind', a *razernye sonder Coortsche* (frenzy without fever), because alcohol disturbed the mind's reasoning. Alcohol and the hot-blooded nature of the youngsters were a bad combination. This argument was a recurring theme of many educational and moralistic treatises in the seventeenth century.

This fear was not unfounded. In the early seventeenth century, children who were unable to control their urges were a common topic in Dutch society. During a period of unprecedented wealth and material riches, pedagogues and moralists were especially concerned about the children of upper and middle-classes parents who had come into money in a short period of time and who spoiled their children. It was also a period when many consumer goods came onto the market for the first time, and parents bought everything for their children. Children with wealthy parents had become accustomed to getting everything their hearts desired and had trouble controlling their urges. Consequently, temperance was not a strong character trait of this generation of pampered young people, and this would have detrimental consequences.

5. Sex

If young people in the seventeenth century were unable to drink alcohol in moderation, then there was another evil lurking around the corner that was far worse for their well-being: namely, promiscuity. In the early modern period, getting drunk and having sex went hand in hand. According to the story that Gillis Quintijn told about the young people of Haarlem, foreigners were a bad influence on the Dutch, and Quintijn did not mince his words when it came to expounding the consequence of excessive drinking. Groups of single men such as students, sailors, and apprentices were the most likely to engage in licentious behavior. For them, going to brothels and picking up prostitutes was a way of life.

Whore-hopping

In his satire *Satyricon in corruptae iuventutis mores corruptos* (1631), which depicted the corruption of the students of Leiden, professor Jan Bodecher Benning described how a young student lost his virginity after visiting a brothel. As we saw in the previous chapter, in the same book Bodecher Benning had already castigated students for their excessive drinking. One thing led to another. Bodecher Benning had left too many clues in his descriptions, however, and the students picked up on them. The keen student recognized many details of the local brothels in Bodecher Benning's depiction, and figured out that the young professor must have visited them himself, and not only for field research. One student scathingly commented that the ethics professor should have consulted Kaspar Barthius' Latin translation of *La Celestina* (1624). The original was published in Latin (*Pornoboscodidascalus* [Teacher of the Brothel Master], 1499). The student viciously pointed out that if Bodecher Benning had read *La Celestina* Benning, it would have helped him with his jargon.

What Bodecher Benning failed to understand was that womanizing was an important part of academic life. It was just as relevant as attending classes. In the popular academic albums where students recorded their poems and witty expressions, a student named R. Schatton scribbled down a verse for another student about how arousing he found girls' bottoms. The thought alone helped the young man get out of bed, more than the ringing of 25 church bells:

*Laat de lide seggen wat sie willen
Ick seg dat twie wackere Juffren billen,
Meer jonggesellen komen locken
Als vijftwintich koters mit haer locken.*

(Let people say what they want,
I say that a nice woman's bottom,
Awakens more young men
Than the ringing of twenty-five church bells.)

The student who is seduced by a licentious woman was a popular theme in the seventeenth century. In *Academia* (1612), a handbook on academic life, Crispijn de Passe the Elder warned students about excessive drinking and vice. His son, Crispijn de Passe the Younger, was more explicit and went one step further. In his book *Spiegel der Alder-schoonste Cortisanen des Tijds* [The Looking Glass of the Fairest Courtiers of These Times] (1631), he cautioned young men about the dangers of visiting brothels. The engraving on the title page depicts two young men in a house of ill repute. One sits in front of a fireplace with a pipe in his right hand. The other scans the portraits of beautiful girls that hang on the wall, as though he were ordering from a menu at a restaurant or swiping through profiles online. There are also two women present: one is a prostitute and the other is the madam of the brothel. The fireplace in the scene is a metaphor for the young men's burning desire, and the extra-long pipe held by the seated man symbolizes his sexual excitement.



Young men visiting a brothel, in: Crispijn de Passe, *Spiegel der alder-schoonste Cortisanen des tijds* (1631) (Courtesy of the Special Collections, University of Amsterdam).

De Passe the Younger's book starts with a series of dialogues and illustrations of pretty young girls from France, Italy, England, Germany, Bohemia, and East Prussia. In an emblem, De Passe shows his young readers the naked bosom of 'La belle Zvonare Courtisan'. In the early seventeenth century, it was highly unusual to display nudity, as the first books with titillating and erotic illustrations were published only after 1680. However, it was no coincidence that most of the women depicted were from abroad, for young men who went on a grand tour of Europe after graduating from the university were likely to visit these countries.

Students did not need to go abroad if they wanted sex, however; in early modern cities, temptation lurked around the corner of every street, literally and figuratively. In an industrial city such as Leiden in particular, many young women who worked in the linen industry supplemented their meager income with prostitution. Susanne Jans, for example, earned a living as a seamstress by day and as a prostitute by night. When she was arrested in

July 1626, she explained to the bailiff that she could not survive on the low wages that she earned in the textile industry. Near the buildings of the university in Leiden, certain neighborhoods that were notorious for street prostitution had earned suggestive names such as 'Joy Empire' and 'The Promised Land'. At a walking distance from their lecture halls, these addresses were well known to students, who could pursue their carnal urges there. Despite the fact that students in Leiden could easily indulge their sexual appetites, discretion was required. It was an unwritten rule that young men were obliged to be vigilant and not boast about their sexual conquests. What happened during the night was supposed to remain there.

The grand tour was considered the last stage of education for the young men of the urban elite. It was the last stop before adulthood, the phase of life when they would have to behave responsibly. Many young people were aware of this, and saw the grand tour as their last chance to pull out all the stops and sew their wild oats. The young men from the Dutch Republic considered Roman Catholic countries in the 'South', such as France and Italy, to be particularly sexually exciting. The women of these countries were known for their loose morals. It was no secret that young men on the grand tour pursued such forbidden fruit.

Once they violated the 'male code' and bragged about their sexual escapades, however, they not only risked harming their own reputation, but also the good name and honor of their family. Matthijs van Merwede failed to follow this golden rule of manhood. In 1647 the 22-year-old Van Merwede, who was the son of the Lord of Clootwyck, visited Rome. His parents hoped that he would gain inspiration and wisdom from admiring the beautiful paintings and sculptures in Italy. What his parents did not anticipate was that their son was also a womanizer. After his return from Rome, he published two volumes of poetry, *Uyt-heemsen oorlog ofte Roomse min-triumfen* [Foreign War, or Roman Love Conquests] (1651), and *Geestelyke minnevlamme* [Spiritual Love Affairs] (1653), in which he blabbed in detail about his sexual escapades.

In juicy detail, he revealed how he had bedded many young Italian women. In the introduction he stated that it had never been his intention to marry a foreign woman, merely use them 'recreationally'. His poetry, which referred to *verwaende pop* (prostitutes) and *heeten kerkgang* (syphilis), left little for the imagination. Van Merwede, who was known for his blue eyes and blond hair, was without a doubt a popular young man among the dark-haired Italian women. The parents of his last romantic conquest had had to send their daughter to a convent, because her reputation had been ruined by Van Merwede's sexual relations with her. She would never be able to find a marriage partner after her fling with the Dutchman.

Van Merwede turned seducing young girls into a true art form. His preference for 'the younger the better' was probably in line with the advice that he received from his physician, who may well have told him to sleep with virgins because that would reduce his chance of getting syphilis – which is probably why he was later accused of deflowering a 12-year-old girl. When his first book was published, it provoked a wave of criticism. Critics thought that Van Merwede had gone to too far and overstepped the boundaries of morality. In no time, Van Merwede became a *persona non-grata*. He had to flee his home in The Hague, and booksellers were fined 25 guilders if they had a copy of his book in stock. Even Jacob Cats, the country's most moderate moralist, condemned the book because of its scandalous content, and stated that Van Merwede had flaunted his promiscuous behavior. In other words, Van Merwede had clearly broken the 'gentlemen's agreement' whereby young men were supposed to be discrete and modest about their sexual escapades.

Public courting

The most popular meeting place for young men and women was at the annual *kermis* or fair. This was the yearly event where young people from all walks of life gathered and socialized.

Originally, the kermis had been an annual mass to celebrate the church. Each village and town hosted its own kermis, and specific social groups would attend the kermis on specific days. On Thursdays for example, the kermis at The Hague was attended by the middle classes, the elite, and members of the stadholder's court. The upper classes avoided visiting the kermis on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, when the horse and cheese markets were held. On those days, farmers and peasants flocked to the kermis. The kermis was a combination of annual market and entertainment. There was a potpourri of stalls selling cheese and other foods. There were also exotic caged animals, humans with deformities, and entertainers ranging from musicians, tightrope walkers, acrobats and magicians to charlatans who sold special remedies for every imaginable human ailment.

For local youngsters, the annual kermis was nothing short of a meat market where young men and women would strut and compete for the attention of the opposite sex. The young ladies' attempts to gain the affections of popular young men sometimes degenerated into scratching and hair-pulling. Besides the cat-fights, there was a lot of drinking, which heightened the sexual tension. According to one eyewitness, one kermis in Zeeland was transformed into a veritable Sodom and Gomorrah, with prostitution and other immoral behavior. For the impoverished laborers working in Leiden's textile industry, the kermis was the only form of recreation in their dreary lives, and often the only place where unmarried workers could meet and pick up sexual partners.

In the countryside there was another sexual outlet for young people, known as 'night-walking'. On the island of Texel, where the tradition was known as *kweesten*, a young woman would leave her bedroom window open at night. This was not only for fresh air, but also to draw the attention of her lover, so that during the night he could climb in and spend the night with her. Rural parents were not as open-minded and liberal as this might suggest, however. The young man was supposed sleep on top of the blankets, and not next to the girl underneath. The young

couple were allowed to lie side by side in bed, fondle and kiss each other. Although we have no records of what took place, most likely their activities included everything from heavy petting to mutual masturbation, but absolutely no coital penetration. There were cases when a young man wanted to go all the way and risked the honor of the girl. Then she would alarm her parents and neighborhood by banging on a kettle that was next to her bed. By doing so, she protected her honor, which was especially important if she hoped to have any other prospective husband. If she was deflowered or became pregnant, her reputation would be permanently damaged. When a young man proved reliable after a few years of *kweesten*, he was considered a suitable marriage partner.

Puberty in the Golden Age

In 1642, when Mary Stuart of England married the Dutch Prince Willem II, she was only ten and a half years old. Her marriage to the son of the Dutch stadholder, Frederik Hendrik, was considered a good match from a political and economic standpoint. Both families benefited from the prearranged union. The House of Orange became aligned with the English monarchy and the Stuarts married into the family that held the highest office in the richest country in Europe at that time. It was a win-win situation for both families. However, Mary and her 16-year-old prince were not permitted or expected to have intercourse yet. For Mary it was physically impossible, in any case. At the stadholder's court in The Hague, she was referred to as Willem's 'child-bride'. It is unlikely that Willem was ready for intercourse, either, and the couple had to wait a few years. In 1646, when Mary was 15 years old and Willem was 20, they finally consummated their marriage.

In the Dutch Golden Age, parents and moralists became concerned about their children's sexuality at a much later stage than parents nowadays. Today, boys start growing facial and

pubic hair around the age of twelve, and girls have their first menstruation as young ten or eleven years old. Every decade, the age at which puberty starts is getting earlier. In 1860, girls had their first menstruation, on average, when they were 16.6 years old. Since then, this age has gradually become younger. In 1920 it was 14.6 years old, in 1950 13.1 years old, and in 1980 the first menstruation came at 12.5 years, on average. There has been a similar development for boys, and they have their first ejaculation and become sexually mature at a younger age.

Rembrandt, the late bloomer

One of the best-known characters of the early seventeenth century is a miller's son from Leiden named Rembrandt van Rijn. In an early self-portrait from 1629, the painter depicted himself with a messy mop of hair, and without a trace of a beard or five o'clock shadow on his chin. The 23-year-old painter had a baby face as smooth as milk. In the same year, Rembrandt met Constantijn Huygens. The statesman mentioned in his diary that the young painter *still* had no beard growth. This comment alluded to a previous encounter with Rembrandt. Two years earlier, Huygens had met Rembrandt and the 20-year-old Jan Lievens, with whom he shared a studio. He described them both as being beardless. In their physical appearance and their features, Huygens considered them boys rather than men.

Later, in 1629, Rembrandt painted another self-portrait of himself. This time he had a downy mustache and some whiskers on his chin, but he still did not have the beard of a grown man. It was not unlikely that Rembrandt wanted to portray himself on canvas looking more mature and 'manlike'. Two years later, when he was 25 years old, the painter looked more mature. By then, he had a full mustache with a curl in it, although he still did not have the full beard of a grown man. In the seventeenth century, facial hair was important for young men. It was the only physical feature that showed others that they had

matured into a man. Growing a beard also signified that they could reproduce.

There are no sources from the early modern period that tell us when boys first became sexually mature. However, one can assume that it was at an older age than in today's affluent society. According to physiologists, the early sexual development of young people in recent decades has mainly been due to the increase of fat in the body. The age of sexual maturation can be delayed by external factors such as hunger, poverty, war, and political and social unrest. A lifestyle with a balanced diet and minimal stress accelerates the age of sexual maturity. The economic welfare and prosperity of the twentieth century thus played a decisive role. In the seventeenth century, conditions were not always stable. Early modern society was plagued by frequent crop failures, famine, pestilence, war, and political and social unrest. At this time, the wealthy Dutch Republic was an exception in northern Europe. The country escaped the recurrent famines and epidemics. However, its population was affected by the social unrest and conflict caused by the Reformation and the Eighty Years' War, and diseases such as the plague and syphilis posed a threat to public health. Many residents came from areas in Europe where they had experienced war, disease, stress, and trauma, which according to some modern biologists can be imprinted in human DNA and passed down to future generations.

There was also a difference in the age of sexual maturity between the economic and social classes. Youngsters from the upper classes did not suffer from hunger and famine, and were more likely to mature sexually earlier than their peers from poorer classes, who did not always have a balanced and stable diet. Differences in physical growth between the classes remained until the early twentieth century, and can be seen in school photos of pupils who were all the same age, but some were amazingly tall while others were significantly shorter. Today, the age of sexual maturity in the Netherlands and most Western countries is more or less the same for all children regardless of their social and economic background. Young men in the

seventeenth century probably had their first ejaculation around their sixteenth or seventeenth year. It is also unlikely that there were many teen fathers in the seventeenth century. Although little can be gleaned from letters and diaries, baptism, marriage and burial records do reveal that unmarried young men were sexually active. There were many 'shot-gun weddings', where couples were forced to marry because the woman had become pregnant. Yet this group was still small compared to the number of women who gave birth to their first children nine or more months after they married. Nevertheless, young people sought channels for their sexual urges.

Masturbation

The easiest way for young people to satisfy their sexual urges was masturbation. Seventeenth-century primary sources leave us in the dark on this subject, largely due to the division between the public and private spheres. What happened in public received attention and was recorded. Masturbation in general, was an activity that took place behind closed doors. Sometimes it did not: in 1613, Harmen Jansz from Delft dropped his trousers and exposed himself in front of the church building in broad daylight. The women who were leaving the church at that moment were given a front row seat of him fondling his genitals. This act of exhibitionism was not tolerated and was considered a felony. But functional nudity such as swimming in the buff was accepted by seventeenth-century society. In the cities of the Dutch Republic, men easily stripped naked and jumped in the water without any sense of shame or prudishness.

In the Dutch Republic during the seventeenth century, pedagogues and moralists never wrote a word about masturbation in their treatises. Neither was it mentioned in the diary of Constantijn Huygens, who blabbed about the sexual intrigues of the nobility at the English court and that of the stadholder in The Hague – despite being surrounded by a wide range of sexual

deviations ranging from whore-hopping, homosexuality and lesbianism to cross-dressing. Almost every taste on the sexual palette was noted, with the exception of masturbation.

The only intimate glimpse we have into the sex life of an adult male in the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic is from the diary of the Frisian stadholder Willem Frederik. He proudly noted how he was able to control his lust every time he saw a beautiful woman. Instead of following his 'John Thomas', he would masturbate at night thinking of her. For him, there was no shame involved. The Frisian stadholder thought jerking off was a healthier solution than getting the clap. This was a common attitude until the eighteenth century, when 'shame' became associated with masturbation. In the seventeenth century, autoeroticism was still considered one of the most natural bodily urges, as long as it was done privately. It was neither condemned nor considered an immoral act. Moreover, it was considered a practical solution to a man's natural urges.

By the eighteenth century, the age of innocence had officially ended. In the Dutch Republic, masturbation as a sexual outlet became morally laden with guilt and shame after 1730, following the translation into Dutch of the English book *Onania; or the Heinous Sin of Self-Pollution, and All Its Frightful Consequences* (1730). The anonymous author and translator admonished young people of both sexes for participating in masturbation, claiming it caused a wide variety of medical conditions, ranging from back problems to early blindness. The reader was maliciously led to believe that their autoeroticism, which was a widespread practice, was in fact 'self-pollution' and a profanity that would unleash a long list of medical ailments. *Onania* would not have had such a sustained impact on eighteenth-century Western society if it had not been published in an era with a booming trade in books and quackery medicine.

The book had a long-term impact on the mentality of the eighteenth-century. Within a few years of the publishing of the first edition, it became a huge success. The publisher used advertisements in newspapers to promote sales of the book.

In newspapers throughout the country, ads were placed and the work was discussed in other books. Within a short period, masturbation became a social issue and topic of public debate. It was one of Europe's first media hypes. Affordable books had become a new mass media and *Onania* became a commercial bestseller, with the result that masturbation became a popular topic.

The reason why *Onania* became a bestseller was simple. The publisher's marketing techniques were similar to those used in TV commercials that advertise pharmaceutical products, by asking leading questions such as 'Do you ever feel tired?' The author of the *Onania* described how a masturbator suffered from fatigue, back pain, and other ailments. In the eighteenth century, it was no wonder that readers should suffer from such symptoms. In the early years of the Industrial Revolution, the average man worked long hours and did hard physical labor. People slept on poor mattresses, and exhaustion and back pain were commonplace.

As with many media hypes, there were numerous victims. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, people became ashamed of self-arousal. Initially, masturbation became associated with guilt in the public psyche. According to a study on prostitution in the early modern period, before 1750, arrested prostitutes' accounts of the tricks they performed on their clients never made mention of masturbation. By the late eighteenth century, Amsterdam's bailiff was frequently using the term 'vergaande vuyligheden' or extreme vulgarities, to refer to this practice. In 1771, after a prostitute was arrested in the woods outside The Hague, she confessed that a man had asked her to jerk him off, which at first she had refused to do because she thought it 'unnatural'.

Masturbation also became associated with sin because of the story of Genesis in the Old Testament. According to the story, Onan was obliged to marry Tamar, the widow of his elder brother, which was known as levirate marriage. Onan had to procreate in his deceased brother's name, but not beget offspring in his own.

However, Onan failed to produce children because 'he spilled his seed on the ground' and the Lord struck him dead. It is unclear whether Onan masturbated or practiced *coitus interruptus*, as onanism later became known in Roman Catholic moral theology.

Not only did *Onania* associate masturbation with guilt, shame, and self-pollution, more importantly, it became associated with sodomy. Masturbation was a private vice committed in secrecy, as was erotic male friendship. It is probably no coincidence that *Onania* was translated into Dutch and published in 1730 at the height of the first wave of sodomite persecutions in the Dutch Republic (1730-1732), when homosexual men were arrested, interrogated, and executed.

Sodomy

Sodomy was a far graver matter than masturbation for young men. According to early modern usage, the term sodomy referred to a wide range of sexual deviations, from having sex with animals (bestiality), having oral and anal sex, and fornicating with Jews, to bugging other men. The latter became the eventual meaning of the term. German reformers accused the pope and the cardinals in Rome of being sodomites. Many of the reigning popes in the sixteenth century were suspected of having sexual relations with the younger men at their court. The pope and 'his sodomitical court' became a stock phrase in Protestant treatises, but many authors' use of the word was vague, and sodomy remained more or less a term of sexual innuendo.

During the Renaissance in Italy, sodomy as we understand it today was regularly practiced. In Florence, it was almost a normal phenomenon for young men to have sexual relations with older men before they married. This usage resembled the Ancient Greek pattern of an active mature man engaging in relations with a passive youth. Italian women usually married when they were teenagers, but young men sometimes had to wait until they were 30 years old. A man had to hold off for ten

to fifteen years before he could satisfy his sexual urges. Sex with an older man was a practical solution, a sexual outlet during the long wait for the conjugal bed. Once young men married, their same-sex encounters ended. In the northern Italian republics, homosexual relations between unmarried men were common.

But the practice was different in the rest of Europe, especially in the northwestern countries of the Continent. According to judicial sources, there is little evidence that sodomy and homosexual relationships occurred in the Republic on the same scale as in northern Italy. There were a few reported cases of sexual acts between a younger and an older man. Three of the six reported cases of sodomy in Middleburg between 1545 and 1655 involved adult men who were forty and older and young men who were still minors. In the early modern period, it was common practice for people to share a bed with more than one person, usually of the same sex. In some cases, it was considered a social honor for an apprentice to sleep in the same bed as his master or pedagogue.

On the downside, there were also older men who took advantage of the situation. In 1596, there were rumors in the town of Arnhem that a teacher had sexually abused his students, and in 1633 it was suggested that a master had sexually abused his apprentice. In 1620, the boatman Jan Symons Bossuyt of Leiden was burned at the stake in Delft after he was found guilty of raping several *jonggezellen* or youths. Most cases of sodomy were brought to light after a young man turned down the sexual advances of an older man. The young men in question were not prosecuted because they were minors, but the older men were sentenced. In other all-male environments, such as universities and aboard ships, sexual relations between men took place in secret. Once these acts were discovered, however, the men involved were convicted. While on board a VOC ship sailing to the Far East, two adolescent boys (one was 11 years old and other 16) were caught masturbating together with a soldier. The three were tied together, thrown overboard, and left to drown in the open sea. There was an enormous taboo around same-sex relations.

We have to assume that most homosexual acts in the early seventeenth century went undetected. Homosexuality only became a problem when one of the boys or men did not consent. Fooling around and mutual masturbation took place in various forms and guises. Men could easily find willing sex partners in green and wooded areas. At night, these were ideal cruising spots for men not only to pick up prostitutes, but also to have sexual encounters with other men in the bushes and woods. Regardless of their sexual orientation, handsome young men knew they could attract the attention of older men. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, for example, one 33-year-old man described how easy it had been to earn a lot of money when he was 16 by selling sexual favors, and how difficult it had become once he grew older.

Sex education

We do not know for certain how young people in the seventeenth century learned about sex. Personal documents such as letters and diaries from this period reveal little about how young people were introduced to the birds and the bees. Not a word is uttered about sex in educational and moralistic books, simply because moralists were afraid they would induce immoral thoughts in young people (even if they were giving them a warning). Youngsters probably found out what happened on the wedding night from older brothers, parents, uncles, other family members, or even friends and neighbors. The topic was certainly not considered inappropriate. People talked a lot about sex. It was a popular topic of discussion in the streets, in taverns, and in the cafes frequented by young people. Most likely innuendos about sex were relayed to children and young people through language, humor, and even gestures. One common gesture was to hold the thumb between the index and middle fingers. This was the precursor to holding up the middle finger, and meant the same as: 'fuck you'.

In the early modern period, youngsters did not need to know any details in addition to the sexual act itself; at least, not how conception worked. From an early age, children and adolescents most have known how babies were made. Some teenagers felt comfortable and at ease with their naked bodies, and frequented bathhouses and were not embarrassed by nudity. They slept naked, often with several people in the same bed, and sometimes even with the opposite sex. In addition, people in the early seventeenth century were used to physical contact. They stroked, caressed, hugged, and kissed each other more easily than people in the West do today. In this regard, the Dutch of the seventeenth century resembled southern Europeans. In the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth century, this open attitude towards sexuality underwent a drastic change, as society became more concerned with controlling carnal urges. People had to learn to control and hide their physical and sexual desires.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, however, there was still an open attitude towards sex. Despite their carnal urges, young men between the ages of 14 and 21 were advised to wait before having sex. In *Schat der Gezondheyt* [Treasury of Health] (1636) the physician Johan van Beverwijck argued that the act would only weaken the young body. If young men had sex before they were ready, their bodies would become cold, dry, and numb. This would upset the balance of their young bodies and have an effect on them for the rest of their lives.

Beverwijck's old friend Jacob Cats approached the topic of sex for young people from a different perspective. In his book *Spiegel vande Oude en Nieuwe Tijd* [Mirror of the Old and New Times] (1632), Cats devoted in an entire chapter to the issue of sex. It was the first book in the seventeenth century to address the sexuality of young people. When it was first published in 1632, Cats was already a celebrated author. Previously, he had been the national advocate or prime minister of the Dutch Republic – the most important office in the country. After he retired, he started writing moralistic books and earned much fame as a writer, just like a retired prime minister or president

of a country does after retiring from office today. However, Cats' books were especially known for their moralistic bent. He earned the nickname 'Father Cats' because his advice crossed all social, economic, and religious boundaries, and was not aimed at one specific group. Because his advice was non-denominational, his books were popular throughout Dutch society.

In *Spiegel*, Cats revealed how much he understood of human psychology and the sexual frustrations and problems experienced by young men. In the first chapter, '*Eerlijke Vrijage*' [Earnest Courtship], he explained how important it was for a young man to find a suitable marriage partner. Cats made a clear distinction between 'fooling around' with women and seriously looking for the right woman and life partner. Cats empathized with his young readers and advised them to have patience, stressing that he knew how difficult that was. In retrospect, Cats understood all too well what it felt like to lose patience and submit to one's carnal urges. When he was a student, Cats feared that his housemaid was pregnant with his child. It turned out to be a false alarm and that someone else was the father. Nevertheless, Cats had the scare of his life.

In another part of *Spiegel*, Cats explains what happens to a young man who is not patient and cannot curb his sexual desires. Under the title 'Hoeren, ende ongemacken van de selve herkomende' [Whores and the Discomforts that Originate from Them], Cats lists the diseases that young men can catch when they go to prostitutes. This message was reinforced by an illustration titled *Een rupse op een kool, een hoer in huys* [A Caterpillar on a Cabbage is like a Whore in a House]. The illustration depicts an elderly man walking next to a young man in a vegetable garden. He is pointing to a head of cabbage that has been half-eaten by caterpillars. The scene is a metaphor: the cabbage swarming with caterpillars is like a young man who longs to have sex with women. Once a young man gets started, he will not be able to control his urges and will want more.

However, there was an even more important message. The cabbage was also a metaphor for the dangers that faced young men,



A word of advice from 'Father Cats' about visiting prostitutes: *Een rupse op een kool, en een hoer in het huis* [A caterpillar on a head of cabbage is like a whore in a house]. In: Jacob Cats, *Spiegel van de Oude ende Nieuwe Tijd* (1632) (Courtesy of the Special Collections, University of Amsterdam).

namely becoming contaminated with syphilis. The half-eaten cabbage symbolized the pockmarked face of a young man who suffered from this disease. Besides having blemished genitals, it was common knowledge that victims of syphilis could easily be recognized in public from their scarred faces, perforated noses, baldness, missing teeth, and paralyzed legs. Not only could the physical appearance be horrifying in its advanced stages, but also having the disease or being related to someone who did would ruin the reputation of a young person. The social stigma and social implications of syphilis in the early modern period were similar to those ascribed to HIV-AIDS in the 1980s.

In another example, Cats did not resort to a metaphor to express the dangers to a young man's health if he visited prostitutes. In the chapter 'Hoeren en Slimme Streken van de selve' [Whores and Clever Tricks of the Same], an illustration portrays an attractive woman offering a young man a pan of burning coals. The burning coals symbolize the young man's inflamed sexual desire. In the text, Cats explains that although a woman might be offering a *geschenk* (gift), the young man might end up with something he does not want: '*U kool doet als haer vrouw, sy brand, of sy besmet*' [Your coal is just like a woman, she burns or she infects]. In other words, by giving in to his carnal desires, the young man is likely to become burned or infected.

Cats purposely warned young men about the dangers of syphilis. In the early modern period, it was single young men (pupils, students, sailors, and soldiers) who suffered the most from syphilis. Venereal diseases were the most dreaded diseases of the era, and cut down young people in the prime of life. They were a vital group in society. In addition, they were the group that traveled the most and could easily spread the disease.

Venereal diseases

In the early modern period, syphilis was a common disease for soldiers. Although we do not have any statistics on how rampant venereal disease was in the early modern period, in the eighteenth century the French philosopher Voltaire estimated that approximately two-thirds of soldiers were infected with syphilis. Based on this, soldiers in the Eighty-Years War were more likely to be a victim of syphilis than to suffer from a gunshot or cannon wound.

One way of being cured of the dreaded disease was to be admitted to a hospital where a *pokmeester*, or pox healer, administered a laxative, followed by daily steam baths and drinking an extract made from Guajak wood, a tree native to South America. In the Dutch Republic, people infected with syphilis were often removed from densely populated city centers and relocated to

facilities on the outskirts of cities and towns, known as *pesthuisen* or 'pestilent homes', where syphilis patients were treated together with the victims of smallpox. As the sufferers of both diseases were treated together in the same facilities, it is difficult to determine how widespread syphilis was in the Republic.

Cats repeatedly warned how addictive visiting prostitutes could be for young men. His emblem, *De katte die veel snoepen wilt, wort licht eens op de neus geknilt* [The cats that eats (=womanizes) too much, will be caught by the nose], was a direct warning to young men about the risk of contracting syphilis when they had sex with prostitutes. The word 'nose' reminded young men about the perforated nose that syphilis victims had when the disease was at an advanced stage. In the text, Cats tells an anecdote about a young man who returns from a voyage at sea. Upon arrival, nobody can recognize him. He had lost his hair, his nose is flat, his lips have no color, his eyes are full of tears, his teeth have fallen out, and he has bad breath. Moreover, his hands are covered with blue pockmarks and he cannot move his legs. The young man contemplates the fact that his youth has vanished and that he is to blame for his sickness (syphilis).

In another example, Cats warns young men how tempting it is to fall for an easy woman, and in yet another, he shows an image of an attractive woman strolling around late at night, holding a lantern. She is walking in a remote area outside the city where young men often seek easy women. In the accompanying text, Cats explains to his male readers how easy it is to fall for the beauty of a young woman. She has a pretty face with pink cheeks and beautiful hair; she is sociable and fun. But Cats quickly points out that she is not the right woman for this young man to marry. She is not a woman who commits to one man. She is a woman with no shame; she is a whore, and her beauty is tarnished. The message of both the text and the image was clear to seventeenth-century readers. The woman that a young man encounters at night will be a woman of poor virtue. Good girls were already at home, sleeping.

Cats had what we would nowadays call 'emotional intelligence'. He could easily empathize with young readers and understood

how they felt. This was also evident in another illustrated warning, where a woman is shown sitting in a young man's lap, caressing his face. The young man's body language betrays his lust for the young woman. The message of the scene is reinforced by the presence of the roaring flames in the fireplace. The accompanying text reads:

*Ick was eens gestreelt, gekust
en ick swom in volle lust,
Want men boodt my hooger gunst...
Alsser oyt een echte man
Van sijn wijfgeworden kan*

(I was once caressed and kissed
And I was burning with lust,
Because I was offered ... greater favors,
than any man could
ever get from his own woman.)

Cats' message is that sexual desire is fleeting. After a young man has been to bed with a whore, the fun is over. Once he is out of money, he will be tossed out on the street and replaced by the next paying customer. Cats emphasized that the worst thing was how young men would feel afterwards:

*Vrienden, wat ick bidden magh
Wort toch wijs uyt mijn beklagh,
Let niet op de geyle lust,
Want haer vyer (vuur) is haest geblust,
Maer denck om het ongeval
Dat vry langer dueren sal.*

(Friends, how I do pray
Please listen to my complaint
Don't yield to your horniness
It will only be quenching
Think of the mishap
and how its effects will last longer than your lust.)

In this poem, Cats is again referring to syphilis. After reading Cats, many a young man must have been less eager to go to prostitutes and, moreover, petrified of syphilis. Cats hoped that his young readers would curb their sexual urges and opt for self-restraint. After all, in the early modern period self-restraint was the safest way of staying physically and morally healthy until marriage. In theory, the conjugal bed, was a safe haven where a young man could go wild and have as much sex as possible, without the risk of contracting venereal diseases. Cats advised young men to take finding a marriage partner seriously. In his earlier mentioned work *Houwelijck* [Marriage] (1625), Cats had already warned young men with his adage *Niemand koopt edelstenen bij nacht, zoek dus geen meisje bij kaarslicht* (Nobody buys jewels at night, so don't go looking for a girl by candlelight). The message was both clear and practical.

With this adage, Cats was revealing a change in attitudes to sex and courting in the seventeenth century. The young men of the early seventeenth century were used to looking for marriage partners in the evening and at night; this had been the custom of young people from the countryside, who had moved to the cities. However, a new trend was underway: the modern youth was one who learned to control his desire. That was Cats' underlying message.

Cats also had advice for young unmarried women. He recognized the dangers to which they were exposed if they went to bed with a man before they were married. If she became pregnant, the young woman would be stuck with the child, while the young man in question had no obligations. In *Spiegel* [Mirror], Cats relayed this message to young women with an illustration depicting a young woman walking next to a pig wearing a golden earring in its nose. In the accompanying text, Cats and the young woman are engaged in dialogue. Cats points out to the young woman that the golden earring belongs in the ear of a young virgin bride, instead of in the nose of the pig. During their dialogue, a prostitute interrupts, adding that young women should not throw the gold of their youth in the muck; in other

words, a young woman should not squander her virginity before she is married.

Unmarried women who had sex with men were taking great risks. There were no reliable methods of birth control, and terminating an unwanted pregnancy was dangerous, to say the least. Women secretly shared all kinds of recipes for ending a pregnancy, ranging from various herbs to oral remedies. Wearing tight clothes or even self-injury were also known means to induce a miscarriage. Herbs were the most widely used method, but the ultimate means of birth control was simply not to go to bed with a man.

That was the theory. In reality, it was a different story. For the young men from the elite class who had to wait until they were in their late twenties or early thirties before they could marry and have sexual intercourse, abstaining from sex was almost impossible. The period between becoming sexually mature and the age for marriage could last ten years, sometimes even longer. Not all young men could remain chaste and wait until marriage.

For students in the early seventeenth century, society often turned a blind eye to their sexual horsing around. That was certainly the case for students who came from another village or town. In a university town, there were few or no social controls on young men. In Leiden, for instance, there were many romantic relationships between students and lower-class women. According to the academic court, students made numerous promises of marriage to girls from Leiden. It was not uncommon for a woman to have sex with a young man if he promised to marry her. However, a student's parents would never have allowed him to marry a girl from the working class. Too often, these young men never married such girls.

In April 1625, Neeltje Jorisdochter filed a complaint with Leiden's academic court against Jacob Porret, a 29-year-old medical student. Jorisdochter demanded that Porret marry her daughter Marijtje. If he did not, Porret would have to pay 1,100 guilders for violating her daughter's honor. This amount also included the cost of the midwife and the food for her daughter's baby.

In her complaint, Jorisdochter emphasized that the child bore Porret's name. However, Porret had no intention of ever marrying Marijtje, and the academic court refused her claim. Moreover, the academic court also considered the requested amount to be too high, and made Porret pay only 200 guilders for 'deflowering' the woman. Porret did have to pay for the midwife, however, and 60 guilders a year in child support.

A similar case was brought to the academic court in Groningen. Johannes Goldbach had promised to marry Anneken Babelers. On 22 December 1632, the couple filed a license to marry, which meant that they were required to marry within four to six weeks. In the meantime, however, Goldbach got cold feet and fled Groningen. The student was still young, only 20 years old, and far from home. His father was a well-respected Lutheran preacher in Ratingen, in the Duchy of Berg in Germany. Goldbach's future bride, on the other hand, had been previously married and was a widow. The pressure to get married probably came from Anneken, who was eager to find a husband. Another factor that probably played a role was the fact that Anneken had agreed to sleep with Johannes only under the condition that he would marry her. It was a condition that Johannes had all too willingly accepted.

For Anneken Babelers, the public shame must have been great. In March 1633 she filed a complaint with the academic senate of the University of Groningen. Babelers argued that the couple had had sexual relations and she demanded that Goldbach return to Groningen. He had to justify himself for breaching his promise of marriage. In the meantime, Babelers requested the senate treat her as a widow, and that she would henceforth only dress in black, the color of mourning. In the next two and half months, letters were exchanged between the university senate and Johannes' father. The entire situation must have been a disgrace for the Goldbach family; the incident threatened to drag the good reputation of Reverend Goldbach through the mud. It would only be a matter of time before the news of Anneken Babelers and the Reverend's son reached the Duchy of Berg. To

prevent the affair from turning into a public scandal, Reverend Goldbach must have convinced (or threatened) his son to marry the widow. Shortly thereafter, Anneken Babelers traveled to Ratingen, where she was married to the minister's son.

It ended well. But if the incident had escalated, Johannes Goldbach would not have been the only one to pay the price. It could have become a scandal that engulfed the entire Goldbach family. Anneken Babelers' reputation would have also been ruined, and she would not have been able to find a suitable marriage partner. The University of Groningen's senate would also have found itself in an awkward position. The academic body was supposed to protect the interests of its students. An incident such as this one reflected badly on the university, and would have cost the university students in future. The senate was aware of what had happened and shortly thereafter took action to prevent further incidents. The university introduced a new regulation stating that all student requests for marriage had to be first approved by the university.

Thus besides internal control of one's sexuality, as advocated by Cats, now there was also an external regulator, namely the university. These two control mechanisms were intended to discipline the sexuality of young people in the early seventeenth century and put youngsters on the right track. This did not imply, however, that parents no longer needed to worry about their young adult offspring. On the contrary, the youngsters of the early seventeenth century had too much leisure time on their hands, and that posed an even greater threat.

6. Drugs

In August 1622, the young guests that attended the wedding party of Manuel Colyn and Catharina Cloppenburgh would have been smokers; or at the least, they would have known the lyrics to the song 'Lof van de toback' [In Praise of Tobacco], written by Jan Jansz Starter. The lyrics describe how wonderful it is to take a puff of tobacco. In another poem in his bestselling songbook *Friesche Lust-Hof* [Frisian Paradise] (1621), which he published a year earlier, Starter included a snappy verse about how Jupiter encouraged the other gods to start smoking tobacco. In the poem, Jupiter enjoys sipping a beer and smoking from his pipe. These were two bad habits that went hand in hand. At weddings and garden parties, young people amused themselves by reciting poems and singing songs. In the early seventeenth century, Starter's was one of the most popular songbooks of the period. His lyrics were certainly not moralistic and they had a salacious undertone. When *Friesche Lust-hof* was first published, Starter was only 27 years old, not much older than the young people for whom he wrote. His poems and lyrics were the ultimate form of entertainment. The topics that he wrote about were popular; and in the 1620s, smoking tobacco was the latest fad among the young.

A new trend

The new fashion among the young also became a new subject and attribute for artists. In his painting *The Merry Company* (circa 1620-1622), Willem Buytewech portrayed three young men and a woman sitting around a table with a tobacco pipe lying in the middle. The 'merry company' genre was very popular in the early seventeenth century. Such paintings often portrayed wealthy young men dressed in the latest fashions, playing cards, drinking wine, and flirting with pretty girls. As a new symbol of

all the vanities of life, painters in the early seventeenth century added a tobacco pipe to the scene. Buytewech's *Merry Company* was the epitome of *la dolce vita* of modern young people.

The characters portrayed were the rich children of foreign-born merchants who had become wealthy in the Dutch Republic and spoiled their offspring with worldly goods. The youngsters were happy-go-lucky and carefree, and had far too much leisure time on their hands. Although the genre of the merry company was already established and was similar to the theme of the Prodigal Son, contemporaries of Buytewech, including Dirck Hals (the brother of Frans Hals) and Pieter Codde, were fascinated by the topic. It was also popular among art-lovers and those who purchased paintings. The painters modernized the theme of the Prodigal Son by adding the latest vice to the portrait, namely smoking. Pieter Codde's portrait of a young student at his desk, for example, depicts him with a pipe in his hand.

Adriaen Brouwer

The Flemish painter Adriaen Brouwer (1606-1638) was also fascinated by the new trend. Brouwer, who worked in Amsterdam and Haarlem, enjoyed painting rowdy peasant scenes, usually in taverns. Most of the time his subjects were peasants and social outcasts who were playing cards, drinking, and smoking tobacco. Brouwer was a bohemian long before the term was invented, and rebelled against the norms and conventions of his time.

In his group portrait *The Smokers* (1636), Brouwer placed himself in the middle. If the painting had been a photo, Brouwer would be looking right into the lens of the camera. Brouwer has mischievous eyes and puckered lips, and is exhaling rings of smoke. The men next to him are his friends and fellow painters, Jan Davidsz de Heem and Jan Koessiers. Like Brouwer, they are also enjoying their tobacco. However, when we take a closer look, we notice their gaze is not at the camera, like Brouwer's. They seem to be staring at the ceiling, as if in a deep trance. Upon

closer examination, Brouwer's smokers do not seem to be puffing on their pipes, but rather sucking on them. Most likely, pipes did not only contain tobacco. According to Brouwer's biographer, the painter and his friends were probably smoking cannabis or hemp.

It is difficult to say how widespread smoking hemp was in the early seventeenth century. This herbaceous fiber was an important crop in the Republic. It was mainly cultivated in the region between Gouda, Utrecht, and Dordrecht, which was the largest supplier of hemp. The plant was used by the VOC to make cables and ropes. Together with tar, it was used as a sealer to waterproof the underside of boats. In the early seventeenth century, it was already known that cannabis had an effect on humans. However, not everyone experienced it as a positive one. After begging was outlawed in Amsterdam in 1613, offenders were punished and forced to work in the house of corrections, where they processed hemp. It was generally known that inmates became sedated after working many hours with the cannabis.

In the Republic, everything that was mixed with alcohol or tobacco and had a hallucinogenic effect was called *belladonna*, meaning 'beautiful woman' in Italian. The term had its origins in the Po Valley of Italy, where hemp was grown. The Italians who worked in the fields or in the factories where the hemp was manufactured into other products knew that the plant had a narcotic effect. During the Renaissance, women placed a few drops of the hemp juice in their eyes. It made their pupils larger, making their eyes appear darker and shinier. Although these women could not see very well, this was a price they were willing to pay to be beautiful.

Belladonna

After people started using tobacco in the early seventeenth century, many medicinal herbs such as *atropa belladonna* and *datura stramonium* were added to tobacco and beer. They were also called 'belladonna', because they had the same mind-altering

effects as cannabis. These mixtures were strictly forbidden by the Church and were probably only consumed in special clandestine pubs. In the seventeenth century, tobacco had a heavier quality than the tobacco that is found in cigarettes today. It resembled the loose tobacco that can be purchased for rolling one's own cigarettes and was smoked in special pipes made of clay. According to a description by the sixteenth-century physician and botanist Rembert Dodoens, tobacco had a calming effect on people.

In a seventeenth-century reprint of his *Cruydt-Boeck* [Book of Herbs] (1554), Dodoens explained to readers that smoking tobacco 'relieved the body of its pain and grief'. In this aspect, it resembled cannabis. But then he added, tobacco 'also alleviated hunger and thirst,' which is not the effect of hemp. After all, one of the main side-effects of smoking cannabis is that it increases the appetite and makes people hungry. Dodoens declared that tobacco makes smokers happy, as if they had drunk wine, and ultimately makes them tired, 'as if they have taken opium'.

The strong and penetrating odor of tobacco made some people unwell. In the beginning, tobacco was only smoked in special smoking rooms or parlors that were known as 'tobacco houses'. They must have resembled today's smokers' clubs, where members are allowed to smoke a cigarette with the purchase of their beverage. In the beginning smoking was a social habit, similar to the consumption of alcohol. Smokers lit up a pipe with other smokers, and they probably had their own rituals. And there are several reasons why young men and students from the upper classes were the first in Dutch society to take up smoking tobacco.

Young people and novelty

In general, students (then and now) had more freedom to experiment. For one thing, they often did not live at home and were not supervised by parents, professors, and other people in authority.

And second, these young men were in an academic environment where they were exposed to new thoughts and ideas. They came into contact with students and professors from other cultures with different customs. Students embraced smoking because they were more open to new ideas and wanted to experiment with novelties.

The first group to have taken up smoking tobacco was that of Spanish sailors who had been to South America and the Caribbean, where they had witnessed native Indians rolling up leaves of tobacco and smoking them in a pipe. They discovered how tobacco stilled their appetite and thirst. Moreover, they noticed how it gave them energy while at the same time calming their minds and giving them a high. It did not take long for sailors and soldiers to take up smoking.

In principle, burning leaves and hoping for an intoxicating effect was nothing new. Since antiquity, young people had been experimenting with inhaling the vapors of all kinds of plants that were known for their narcotic effects. The only real novelty of tobacco was that it was inhaled into the lungs. This could only be done with the help of a special pipe, something that Columbus had encountered when he met the Indians in 1492. It took more than a century for this new practice to come in fashion. Students from the upper and middle classes in the Dutch Republic copied the habit from sailors and soldiers, whom the urban elite and middle classes regarded as low-class and uncivilized.

In the 1620s and 1630s, smoking lost its connotations with the low life and peasantry after students started consuming tobacco. This change partly occurred because tobacco became an object of research at universities. Otto Sperling, an 18-year-old student from Hamburg, first tried smoking shortly after he arrived in Leiden. In 1620, the young man was suffering from pleurisy and constipation. Sperling had tried all the known remedies to relieve himself, but nothing worked. A good friend advised him to smoke a pipe of tobacco and see if that would help. Sperling thought he had nothing to lose. He smoked tobacco and his problems disappeared shortly afterwards. He wrote euphorically that it



Wealthy young people addicted to tobacco, symbolized by a tobacco pipe on the table. Painting by Willem Buytewech, *Merry Company* (c. 1620-1622) (Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam).

felt as though he had been reborn. Sperling considered tobacco to be a miracle healer. Later in life, after Sperling had become the personal physician to the Danish King Frederick III, he noted that smoking had cured his constipation when he was a student but he had become a lifelong addict of tobacco. He died at the age of 79.

It was no coincidence that Sperling, like his fellow students, had started smoking tobacco. Sperling studied medicine in Leiden and was therefore acquainted with the experimental plants that were grown in the university's *Hortus Botanicus*, a botanical garden that collected specimens from all over the world, and especially the Dutch East Indies and other Dutch colonies. The botanical garden was part of the medical department of the university, but it was also used by apprentices who were training to become pharmacists. In the early modern period, pharmacists did not have an academic education, but learned about their field by studying plants and their medicinal properties.

Willem Willemsz. van der Meer was also enrolled in the medical department at the University of Leiden. In 1592 he was a

student in Leiden when the botanical garden first opened. Van der Meer experimented with tobacco, not because he was suffering from constipation, but because he thought it was interesting. He was encouraged by a couple of English and French students, who also smoked. Van der Meer, who became a physician in Delft, recalled later in life what his first puff of tobacco had been like. He immediately had problems with his stomach. Most of the students who tried tobacco, however, were immediately hooked, and not only students who studied medicine. After 1620, smoking tobacco became a rage among all the students. From the university towns, smoking spread throughout the entire country and infiltrated every layer of Dutch society. By 1650, smoking tobacco had been completely integrated into the Dutch way of life. As one traveler to the country remarked: 'the Dutch Republic stank of tobacco'.

Doom and gloom

Moralists watched with dismay as this new vice, which had been introduced by the country's young people, became a mainstream habit. Some moralists proclaimed that young people were going too far in pursuing their hedonistic desire for amusement and entertainment. With their vain leisure activities, they were neglecting to read the Bible and other religious books. Besides their flamboyant clothing, excessive drinking, and tendency to chase women, now there was the vice of smoking.

Samuel Ampzing, a pastor from Haarlem, saw doom and gloom on the horizon. Just as some people today resent the obsessive use of smartphones, in the seventeenth century, Ampzing was annoyed by the way in which young people squandered their time in tobacco houses smoking tobacco. In his book *Spiegel ofte Toneel der IJdelheyd ende Ongebondenheyd onser Eeuw* [Mirror of the Vanity and Uncontrollable Spirit of Our Age] (1633), Ampzing remarked that society should expect little from the younger generation. The caption under the engraving 'A young man holding a pipe and tankard' reads:

*Smoke is my passion and beer my life,
yet, I would give up the pipe for a tankard.
I am a stinking rotter, I am a drunken sot.
I like smoke too much, and the precious malt more.*

Five years earlier, in 1628, Dirck Pietersz Pers had given the same warning. In *Bacchus. Wonder Wercken*, in which he poked fun at binge drinkers, Pers also lashed out at those who smoked too much. Pers stressed that too much tobacco was just as bad as too much liquor. The text is accompanied by an emblem featuring a monkey that is sucking on a pipe of tobacco on the foreground. The animal is surrounded by young children who are also smoking. Pers could not hide how ridiculous he thought smoking was:

*Tobacco is the banquet that is consumed in company everywhere,
supposedly it was first used by monkeys
now it is imitated by other monkeys.*

The emblem and text transmitted a clear message about parenting in the seventeenth century. Pers uses the word ‘monkey’, which gives us a clue as to how parents regarded their children in the seventeenth century. The Dutch word *aap*, or ‘monkey’ in English, was a common nickname that parents gave to their children when they did foolish things such as break objects or imitate silly adult behavior. The verb ‘to ape’ or imitate stems from this, and was the seventeenth-century version of ‘monkey see, monkey do’. The illustration warned young people not to imitate their parents or other adults.

Parents were again being reminded that they had to be good examples for their offspring. Moralists encouraged parents to live piously when raising children. This was not only for their own salvation, but also because they were role models for their children. Whereas young girls looked up to their mothers at home, boys looked up not only to their fathers, but also to other men outside the home. Unlike girls, young men grew up outside of the house in the public sphere, and had to find good examples

to copy in the public domain. This was an important factor for moralists, as they had to warn against bad behavior that took place in public, where they had little or limited control.

Smoking: a burning issue

In the emblem book *Sinnenpoppen* [Dolls for the Spirit] (1614), the well-known poet Roemer Visscher recognized the human fascination with novelty, but conservatively dismissed it as 'no good'. He argued that new hypes were seldom good: *Veeltijds wat nieuws, seldom wat goets* (New things are frequent, but are seldom good). The 67-year-old saw little promise in the latest fad. In general, the youth of the seventeenth century had a fascination with novelty and new things. Young people wanted to express themselves differently from the older generation. They had to have their own hairstyles and clothing, and needed to experiment. Today, that is still the hallmark of the younger generation.

Smoking became a controversial issue. Moralists and physicians discussed whether tobacco was good or bad for the body and the mind. The greatest opposition to tobacco came from a conservative movement within the Reformed Church. This group, known as the Further Reformation, believed that the Reformed Church had become too lenient. The supporters of this movement hoped that after the Roman Catholic Church had been ousted from the country, the population of the Dutch Republic would become pious and live devout lives. Although the country had become materially wealthy in the meantime, the Further Reformation complained that people had become spiritually impoverished. The supporters shared many of their ideas with English Puritans, including William Perkins.

In the Republic, the best known leader of the movement was a man named Gisbertius Voetius. In 1634, when Voetius was appointed as a professor at the Illustrious School in Utrecht, he complained that the students smoked like chimneys. Voetius saw evil and vice in everything. He also had a sense of drama,

which led his admonishments to become even more exaggerated. According Voetius, the students smoked so much that they resembled 'the burning flames of Sodom and Gomorrah'.

The moralist Jacob Cats, however, regarded the adolescent phase as a turbulent period in a human being's life. He integrated this insight into his writings about smoking. In the preface to *Proteus ofte Minne-Beelden verandert in Sinne-Beelden* (1627), an entertaining moralistic treatise, Cats addressed his readers as foolish youngsters who surrendered to the *mallicheden der jonckheydt* (silliness of youth). Cats considered the latest fashion among the younger generation to be a foolish addiction. In the illustration that accompanies the text, Cupid, the god of love, is depicted holding three pipes, while across from him at a table, a young man sits furiously puffing on his pipe. The emblem entitled *Fumos Vendit Amor* means that love can be just as fleeting as tobacco smoke. According to the riddle in the accompanying text, it can be concluded that the young man is addicted to smoking: 'Smoke comes from his nose, it comes from his mouth, smoke swarms around his eyes so that they start to water. Nevertheless, he still likes it. Smoking is everything to him'. Cats was arguing that the youth had become addicted. He had failed to master the art of moderation, which meant he did not belong to the world of men; not yet, in any case. Cats understood adolescent behavior all too well, and how young people sought immediate gratification instead of thinking about the long-term consequences of their actions.

Today, neuroscientists know that the desire for quick gratification is caused by the *nucleus accumbens*, the part of the brain known as the pleasure center. It is strongly influenced by emotions and is sensitive to reward, gratification, and laughter, all of which play a role in addictive behavior. When tobacco is inhaled, this area of the brain releases a chemical called dopamine, which gives a feeling of pleasure. According to modern neurological research, during adolescence the collaboration between the emotional and rational parts of the

brain is not yet optimal. During puberty, the rational frontal cortex is dominated by the emotional part, overruling rational behavior and moderation. As we saw in the chapter on sex, Cats understood that young people had a tendency towards addictive behavior. However, he thought that smoking was a passing fad, just as fleeting as the phase of youth. The moralist was right about one thing and wrong about another. Youth was a passing phase in life, but smoking did not turn out to be a fleeting whim.

Because the urge to smoke was too strong, external restrictions were placed on smokers. For example, university administrators tried to curb students from smoking and even banned smoking in some areas. In Leiden, theology students who received a scholarship risked losing it if they were caught smoking. In Groningen, scholarship students were forbidden to smoke in their homes. Universities were generally in a precarious position when it came to placing restrictions on student behavior. After all, early modern universities were commercial enterprises.

Local and national governments, on the other hand, did not have a problem imposing excise taxes on tobacco. In 1621, after the Twelve-Year Truce ended, the States General desperately needed to find new sources of revenue to finance the costly war against Spain. Consequently, it was decided in 1623 to impose a tariff on tobacco. Unlike the universities, municipal governments made no effort to restrict people from smoking. Oddly enough, not in one criminal case in the seventeenth century did a young man confess and report that he had been under the influence of tobacco when he committed his mishap. Early modern urban magistrates were well aware of how important it was to reduce hunger and limit unrest in the streets. The fact that excessive smoking, unlike excessive drinking, was not considered a crime suggests that magistrates profited from having 'sedated' young people who remained calm and quiet. It made their task of maintaining law and order much easier.

Medical discourse

The medical discourse on smoking was much more substantial than the moralistic one. In 1622, a 26-year-old student named Johann Neander became fascinated with the new tobacco plant from South America. Neander, who was from Bremen and enrolled as a student of medicine at the University of Leiden, undoubtedly knew Otto Sperling, the German student from Hamburg who had experimented with tobacco two years earlier. Neander researched the medical properties of tobacco and published his findings in a scientific work, *Tabacologia: Hoc est tabaci seu nicotianae* [Treatise on tobacco and nicotine. Tobacco as a medicine] (1622). The work praised tobacco as a miracle drug. Neander argued that the plant had healing properties and that tobacco could cure diseases such as syphilis. To support his findings, Neander used various testimonies from doctors who had also experienced the same healing effects. This marketing ploy was similar to that used in American commercials for cigarettes in the 1950s, which quoted doctors' recommendations that cigarettes were good for the health. This practice is still used today to promote products, in the form of labels stating 'scientifically proven' and 'recommended by doctors'.

The role played by Leiden's *Hortus Botanicus* in initiating the use of tobacco among students in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries should not be underestimated. When the first tobacco plants were cultivated in the botanical garden, there were two types: *Nicotiana rustica* (Tabacum minus) and *Nicotiana tabacum* (Tabacum majus). It is a matter of 'chicken and egg' as to which happened first. Did the scientific cultivation of tobacco in the gardens cause students to experiment with smoking, or was smoking the reason for scientific interest? Nevertheless, the lion's share of medical discourse about the use of the plant in the early seventeenth century was researched by students and graduates from the University of Leiden.

In *Schat der Gesontheyt* [Treasury of Health] (1636), Johan van Beverwijck, the renowned doctor and alumnus of the University

of Leiden to whom we referred earlier, recommended smoking for its medicinal properties. Before he visited the homes of plague victims, Van Beverwijck first smoked tobacco. For him, smoking was a preventative. Just the same, the good doctor considered it a filthy habit and thought that it smelled awful. Van Beverwijck advised young men to keep their hair cut short so that it would not stink of tobacco. Ijsbrand van Diemerbroeck, a physician and professor at the University of Utrecht, believed tobacco to be a reliable form of prevention against smallpox.

Van Diemerbroeck, who studied medicine in Leiden shortly after Neander, smoked tobacco as a prophylactic against pestilence. During the 1630s the plague swept through the country, and in Leiden the outbreak of 1635-1636 claimed more than 20,000 victims. Van Diemerbroeck, who had visited more than 120 pestilence patients and corpses in Nijmegen, advised readers to take 'a short puff ... and then exhale'. According to him, this was the best preventative. The smoke counteracted the effects of inhaling the foul miasmatic air. According to Van Beverwijck, this prevented the disease from spreading.

Some doctors advised pregnant women to smoke just before delivery, as the nicotine high was believed to ease the pain during contractions. The scholar Petrus Scriverius (1576-1660) also praised tobacco. He applauded the medical effects of tobacco, but condemned those who used it recreationally. In *Saturnalia. Ofte poëtisch Vasten – Avond Spel. Vervatende het gebruykende misbruyke van den Taback* [Saturnalia, or the Poetical Shrove Tuesday Game. Concerning the Use and Misuse of Tobacco] (1630), he argued that the weak (women and children) should be forbidden to use tobacco for any other reason than medical purposes. However, Scriverius felt that the fine line between the medical and recreational use of tobacco had been crossed. He recommended that young people stay away tobacco because they consumed it much more than they needed and it made them act as though they were crazy. By calling his treatise *Saturnalia*, Scriverius was associating the use of tobacco with the Roman festival to honor Saturn. This winter festival was known for immoral and orgiastic behavior.

There were not only admonitions against the excessive consumption of food and drink, but also against smoking. In most moralistic works, it was called 'drinking a pipe of tobacco'. The narcotic state it induced in people was not new in the seventeenth century. Many Europeans in the early modern period lived in a sedated or drugged state on a daily basis. Sometimes this was accidental, such as induced by famine, or by eating moldy bread and stale food. Sometimes it happened deliberately, as when people consumed fermented beverages, mushrooms, poppy seeds or other distillations, or sniffed lotions, or rubbed oils and other essences on their bodies. Throughout history, man – and young people in particular – has always looked for new ways to reach ecstasy. In the late Middle Ages, brewers spiked beers with herbs such as black henbane seeds, thorn apples, and belladonna, perfectly knowing this would give consumers a hallucinogenic kick. In the late seventeenth century, young men visited coffee houses to drink the new beverage of coffee and experience the effects of caffeine. In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, smoking tobacco was a habit of the same caliber; in fact, only the 'smoking' part of it was new. In the late sixteenth century, the Dutch historian Emanuel van Meteren described smoking: 'you put a bit of dried powder in a small bowl the size of a hazelnut, light it with a candle or glowing coal, and inhale the smoke through a pipe-stem, then blow it out through your nostrils'.

In a relatively short period of time, from 1590 to 1650, the Dutch Republic had gone from being a country of non-smokers to being the *tobaccophile* of Europe. During the early seventeenth century, smoking had become so widespread in Dutch society that it was not uncommon for an executioner to allow a convicted criminal a pipe of tobacco as a last request. The craving for nicotine had become addictive, and commerce tried to profit from this as well. To satisfy the growing demand, the WIC started a lucrative trade with the English Colony of Jamestown in North America. This trade was later extended to the WIC colony of New Netherland in the same country. Numerous people who had settled in New

Netherland grew tobacco as a cash crop to supplement their incomes. Even the pastor of New Amsterdam, the famous Evert Willemsz Bogardus, grew tobacco in order to supplement his salary.

As the supply outstripped the demand, farmers in the Dutch Republic started to cultivate tobacco. In the 1620s, farmers in Zeeland and around Amersfoort began growing the plant. In the following decades, Amsterdam emerged as one of the major tobacco centers in Europe. It became the depot for the tobacco harvest, which was distributed throughout Europe. Tobacco could not be smoked without a pipe. In Gouda, clay pipes were produced on a large scale. Clay pipes were fragile objects that broke easily, and users often threw them away and bought a new one. According to archaeological excavations, Amsterdam's canals were filled with them. The clay pipes of Gouda were the first mass-produced disposable products of the seventeenth century. Today, clay pipes from Gouda can be found in former Dutch settlements including those in New York and Indonesia.

In the early seventeenth century, young people's appetite for novelty turned smoking into a mainstream habit in Dutch culture, and eventually in Western society. Four centuries later, the craving for nicotine is still part of Dutch culture, although it is slowly disappearing now that government policy and social norms are changing. Whether smoking will remain part of Dutch culture in the next 400 years remains to be seen. According to a recent survey, smoking is on the rise among young Dutch people, while the older generations are quitting. In hindsight, we know that the moralists of the Golden Age, with their warnings of doom and gloom, were not far off the mark. Smoking's harmful effects on health have been scientifically proven. In view of their tobacco and alcohol consumption, it would appear that the youth of the Golden Age were a self-destructive crowd. Yet there was more: this generation of young people had other distractions that were also time-consuming and addictive. There was even more for Dutch parents in the early seventeenth century to be alarmed about.

7. Rock 'n' Roll

Besides smoking, the young people of the Golden Age had another habit that they indulged to excess: namely, their own form of rock 'n' roll. Obviously the seventeenth-century version was very unlike that of the 1950s, but it was equally entertaining and addictive. The young people of the age were musically inclined and loved to sing, preferably from specially compiled songbooks. In the Dutch Republic, singing was a popular pastime for young and old alike. The Dutch were known for their love of singing, and singing was the rock 'n' roll of the youngsters of the Golden Age.

They sang from songbooks that were usually compiled by one songwriter. The music consisted of familiar old tunes that had been modernized with new lyrics. These seventeenth-century songwriters were similar to today's DJs, who remix old songs and add a techno-beat. Some songwriters became celebrities, such as Gerbrand Adriaensz Bredero (1585-1618). His songs were included in many songbooks. By the time he released his own songbook, Bredero enjoyed an idol-like status, especially in his hometown of Amsterdam. He proudly named his first songbook *Bredero, Amsterdam* (1617). The lyrics of the songs praised everything that was Dutch and made fun of foreign habits. Bredero had a talent for such things. He satirized peasants and low-class foreigners, portraying them as boorish while at the same time glorifying the Dutch and their cities.

Bredero

Bredero was a well-known figure in Amsterdam, especially among young people. His lyrical style and topics touched the hearts of youngsters; Bredero could easily relate to them. His songs were primarily about love, and no doubt the 32-year-old poet and bachelor based his lyrics on his own amorous adventures and heartbreaks. Bredero had a reputation for falling in

love with beautiful women who eventually turned him down and broke his heart. His songs and poems refer to at least eight different women.

The most famous heartbreak was caused by Maria Tesselschade, the daughter of Roemer Visscher, who was also a well-known poet and writer. Maria's father had named her after one of his grain ships that had been wrecked off the island of Texel. Hence the name *Tessel* (the name of the island) and the Dutch word *schade* (meaning loss). Later in her life, this curious name suited her personality. Tesselschade was an eccentric woman, acclaimed for her charm, beauty, and intellect. Tesselschade also painted, made music, and could even engrave glass. She drove men crazy and was pursued openly and covertly by numerous men. They included Constantijn Huygens, who was secretary to the stadholders in the seventeenth century, and Caspar Barlaeus, the poet and professor of philosophy and rhetoric at the illustrious school of Amsterdam.

Bredero's last great love (and heartbreaker) was 19-year-old Magdalena Stockmans. With her blonde hair and brown eyes, Magdalena was the ideal of beauty in the early modern period. Stockmans was flattered by Bredero's interest, but instead chose to marry Isaac van der Voort, a silk merchant from Antwerp who was 22 years older than her. After they were married in June 1618, Van der Voort and Stockmans embarked for Naples, Italy, where they planned to live. Bredero was devastated by Magdalena's decision. He wrote a poem for her entitled 'Things Can Happen', with high hopes that she would change her mind and return:

*Oogenblik vol Majesty
Vol grootse heerlyckheden
Hoe comt, dat ghy nu scheyt
Van U eerwaerdicheyt
En soete aerdigheyt
Laes wat lichtvaerdigheyt
Anneemdy sonder reden*

(Eyes full of majesty,
Full of great delightfulness,
How can it be that you leave
From you grace
And sweet charm
Leave some frivolity
Do you take for granted, without reason)

By the time Magdalena received Bredero's poem in Naples, the lyricist had already died. It was unclear what caused his death at the age of 33. It may have been a neglected case of pneumonia, exhaustion, syphilis, or even a broken heart. Within hours of his death, other poets honored Bredero with a laurel wreath, the highest honor that could be bestowed on a poet. More than twenty fellow poets commemorated him in a collection of poems that also included one of Bredero's plays. The anthology contained an illustration of Bredero wearing a laurel wreath on his head.

The tragic love life and early death of Bredero dealt a hard blow to Amsterdam's young people. The poet had been a welcome personality in the city's cafes and theaters. During his life, Bredero's farces and plays were extremely popular, and with his early death, his notoriety only grew. That was reason enough for Lodewijcksz Cornelis van der Plasse, who ran a publishing house, to request exclusive rights from the States General to publish the rest of Bredero's work. When the poet died, he had left a pile of unpublished songs and poems. Three years later, Van der Plasse published Bredero's *Geestigh Liedt-boecxken* [Comical Songbooks]. This publisher was an expert in marketing; he knew exactly how to sell Bredero's book to young consumers. Van der Plasse was sure young people would buy the book if it had a good illustration of Bredero on the title page. With his mustache and goatee, Bredero looked hip and trendy. Above his head were printed the words 't *Kan Verkeeren*' [Things Can Happen], the title of Bredero's love poem for Magdalena Stockmans.

The compilation became an instant bestseller, and had to be reprinted three times within that year. A year later, Van der



't kan verkeeren' [Things can happen], the title of a poem by the jilted Dutch poet, Brederode, after Magdalena Stockmans rejected him and married somebody else. Title page of posthumous volume of poems dedicated to Garbrandt Adriaensz Bredero after his untimely death: G.A. Bredero, *Geestigh liedt-boecxken* (Amsterdam: Cornelis Lodowijcksz Van der Plasse, 1621) (Courtesy of the Special Collections, University of Amsterdam).

Plasse published an extensive and more luxurious edition. He commissioned six well-known artists for the illustrations, and sold it for 1.70 guilders. Taking into account that the average

laborer earned only a guilder a day, the book was not for everybody; it was intended for Amsterdam's wealthy young people, whose parents had acquired their fortunes in the early days of the Dutch Golden Age. With the posthumous publication of Bredero's works, the poet became even more famous in death than he had been in life. Bredero's turbulent lifestyle was truly a seventeenth-century version of *live fast, die young*.

Jan Jansz Starter

One of the greatest admirers of Bredero was a 23-year-old man named Jan Jansz Starter. Like Bredero, he was also a poet and playwright, and member of one of the chambers of rhetoric, a group of amateur poets and writers. As mentioned above, Starter was well known in the 1620s for his compilation of songs *Friesche Lust-hof* [Frisian Paradise] (1621), which included a special tribute to Bredero. The work was a compilation of verses, wedding poems, and drinking songs that was illustrated with emblems, and later became the best-selling songbook of the decade. It should come as no surprise that it was a great success. The lyrics were about everything that could go wrong when dating and the trials of finding a suitable marriage partner. *Friesche Lust-hof* addressed matters of the heart, such as the rejection suffered by a young person before they found the right partner. Opposite the title page, there was a portrait of Cupid, the son of the goddess of love, who was pictured at the helm of a boat that was pulled by two swans. Underneath Cupid, there was an illustration of the good-looking writer himself, wearing the latest fashion. In the picture, Starter has medium-length hair and is sporting a mustache and goatee.

In the seventeenth century, book covers were made of leather and therefore did not feature illustrations. The first picture was on the title page of the work. From a quick glance at the title page, it is clear that *Friesche Lust-hof* was meant for young people. The illustration depicts a group of young people who are singing, dancing, and playing music. They are located on the main

square in Leeuwarden, the capital of the province of Friesland. Starter dedicated the book to the women of Friesland and added a few sentences in the Frisian language. Despite the reference to Friesland, the book was certainly not just for young people from that northern province. It was sold across the country and was a bestseller, being reprinted 31 times between 1621 and 1634.

Like Bredero's songbook, more luxurious editions of Starter's book were also published that featured high-quality illustrations and fancy leather covers. These were primarily for the wealthy young people who could easily afford the price of two guilders. For young people with less money, there were also cheaper editions that only cost three *stuivers* (15 cents). Just like Van der Plasse's editions of Bredero's *Groot Liedt-Boeck*, the marketing of *Friesche Lust-hof* was canny. Starter used his social network and friends in the publishing industry to help him sell the book. It is likely that Catharina Cloppenburgh and Manuel Colyn, for whom he wrote and recited a poem at their wedding in 1622, helped him to promote his book.

What is more, Starter had already been a famous writer before *Friesche Lust-hof* was published. He had previously authored a satirical play called *Jan Soetekauw* that had been so successful that it had been reprinted 19 times. We can draw many parallels between Starter's popularity among youth audiences during the 1620s and 1630s and that of Bredero. By seventeenth-century standards, Starter lived an adventurous and somewhat bohemian-style life. His personal life was chaotic and his finances were a disaster. Starter had his fair share of failed business ventures, was involved in a number of lawsuits, and even had to file for bankruptcy.

Not everyone was charmed by Starter. His plays, which often glorified romance and excessive drinking, were banned several times by ministers who protested at their corrupt content and considered them unsuitable for young people. In 1625, at the height of his success, Starter died on the battlefield in Bosnia, where he was fighting in the Thirty Years War. Starter was only 32 years old, just a year younger than his role model Bredero when

he died. It is unclear why Starter had joined the army. We can only speculate that it was for financial reasons, or perhaps motivated by idealism. Starter was employed as reporter by Count von Mansvelt, a famous war hero who fought for the Protestant cause. In the Republic, he was considered a distinguished and successful military commander and a living legend. When he dined in a tavern, people would gather from far and wide to catch a glimpse of him. Like Bredero, Von Mansvelt must have been a hero and role model for Starter. In the appendix to the *Friesche Lust-hof*, Starter devoted a drinking song to the German Count and honored him for fighting the Spaniards and the emperor.

Songbooks such as those written by Bredero and Starter formed an integral part of the song culture of the early seventeenth century. They were first marketed in 1610 and sold as emblem books. In subsequent decades, many more songbooks followed. Some of them were written and published especially for a young audience. Songbooks had a profound impact on Dutch culture, because singing in the early modern period was also a means of transmitting information. In the first decades of the seventeenth century, a transition took place and books gradually filtered through to the less wealthy classes. Due to technological advancements, the printing press could produce books more cheaply, and they became affordable for the middle and poorer classes. The very poorest people could not afford them, and as they did not have any education, nor could they read them.

In the early modern period, singing tended to be a group activity. Singing was a social event, and songs were usually sung after a dinner or on special occasions such as weddings and other parties. In order to compose songs, one first had to master the art of poetry. Because books and paper were expensive, rhyming was an important facet of early modern education. Students were graded by their teachers for their ability to memorize long texts and rhymes. In an educational sense, learning was facilitated by the use of rhyme.

Educationalists believed that younger pupils in particular would learn more easily if the words sounded sweet and pleasant

in the ear. This was the didactic approach that was taught to boys at the Latin school, and a device that they continued to use after they had joined literary societies such as chambers of rhetoric, as Bredero and Starter had done. At the weekly meetings, their poetic skills were fine-tuned during the opening ritual, when each member was required to address the chairman, called 'the Prince'. The last word of each phrase had to rhyme with the word 'prince'.

Rhyming, playing with words, and composing poetry were not only pastimes for the educated. All strata of Dutch society expressed themselves through poetry, from rich to poor. Sellers at the market tried to peddle their wares and attract the attention of customers with catchy slogans. Acclaimed and professional poets such as Vondel and Bredero earned a living composing eloquent poetry for the country's rich and famous. No wedding celebration or party was complete without a poem tailor-made for the occasion. Reciting verse was *the* Dutch national pastime. The current practice of writing a poem for the feast of St Nicolas is a remnant of that tradition.

Besides writing poetry, young people also enjoyed writing lyrics to music based on existing melodies. In the early seventeenth century, this became an integral part of Dutch culture, as the Dutch regarded singing as second nature. People would sing at every opportunity that presented itself – especially weddings, which were the favorite. Many of the songs collected in songbooks from the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries had already withstood the test of time, because they had been used over and over again with different lyrics.

In the early seventeenth century, there were two predominant types of songbook, namely the religious and the secular genre, which regularly overlapped in content. Some of them were clearly religious, such as Cornelis Pietersz Biens' *Handt-boecxken of Christelijcke Gedichten* [Handbook of Christian Poems] (1627). This songbook was intended for youngsters from a devout background and included several religious songs that praised God for his great miracles.

The songbook *Den Amsterdamschen Geestelijcke Lust-hof* [The Comical Paradise of Amsterdam] (1637), written by I. Teerincx, took this religious message a step further. Young readers were supposed to dedicate every part of the day by singing a pious song to God. There was a song for before morning prayers, a song before eating, a song for after eating, a song of gratitude for good health, and so on. The compilation also included a special song that had to be sung during periods of plague. Teerincx aimed to cultivate piety in young people by giving them songs that would protect them from their worldly desires. There were numerous other songbooks with lyrics that aimed to protect the hearts and souls of young people and urged them to become pious Christians.

Secular songbooks

Between the spiritual and secular songbooks, there existed a large gray zone of songbooks that contained a moral message, but were neither entirely devotional nor purely for amusement. These were often marketed as entertainment books. Many writers and compilers of spiritual and secular songbooks knew young readership all too well, and were aware of how they needed to present or market their message; or rather how *not* to. Nobody sold moralistic books better than Father 'Jacob' Cats. He understood that youngsters would never purchase a book with a pious title; he knew for a fact that they would not even look at it, let alone pick it up. If it had a catchy title and featured an appealing illustration with Cupid on the title page, however, then it was another story.

Cats had previously applied this same method in many of his moralistic books. He wrapped his moral message in amusing and witty poems, packaged with entertaining illustrations that required little explanation. With this sugar-coated approach, Cats managed to convey practical advice to youngsters, so that they could understand and swallow it better. Cats had copied this

method from physicians who prescribed the herb *worm cruyt*, or tansy, often used to cure digestive problems. Because the herb tasted horribly bitter and was almost impossible for young children to swallow, physicians such as Johan van Beverwijck recommended mixing it with something sweet. Cats used the same method to relay bitter moral truths to his young readers.

*Niet anders dan gelijk men
de kinders, tot haer eygen voordeel
Somtijts bedriegt, wanneer men
Desselve het bitter, doch gezond
Worm-kruyt met suycker.*

(Nothing's different than what parents do
they give their children, for their own benefit
despite being deceptive
the same bitter pill, for their health
and sugar-coat it so they can swallow it.)

In other words, sometimes parents had to disguise the truth to children for their own well-being, and give them tansy with sugar for the sake of their health.

Many compilers of songbooks used Cats' method and disguised their hard-to-swallow moral message with a catchy title and an enticing illustration on the title page. During the 1620s and 1630s, a new subgenre of songbooks became quite popular. They were known as Arcadian songbooks, characterized by idyllic texts and illustrations of pastoral settings. 'Arcadian' as a general theme had become fashionable in the early seventeenth century. A school of artists and painters, mainly from Amsterdam, Utrecht and Haarlem, specialized in portraying Arcadian surroundings, which had become increasingly popular among the art-buying public. Members of the Republic's elite were particularly fond of paintings that depicted pastoral settings and rough foreign landscapes, especially Greek ones. The Arcadian landscape radiated something exotic to a Dutch audience.

Around 1650, an estimated 30-40% of all paintings were landscapes. The Arcadian was the complete opposite of the flat meadows and marshlands with which the Dutch were familiar. Since the Middle Ages, nature had been cultivated in the Dutch Republic. With the exception of the sandy dunes around Haarlem, the province of Holland was largely urbanized and intensively farmed. Moreover, remote areas such as forests and wild landscapes were considered dangerous, because criminals and other social outcasts had traditionally sought refuge there. These uncultivated and untouched landscapes had a magical effect on audiences and were romanticized in literature.

The few wooded areas and pastoral surroundings in Holland were crowded locations, especially on Sunday afternoons, when urban dwellers sought leisure and relaxation outside the city. In Amsterdam, which had been a huge construction site since 1612 due to the building of the city's three major canals (Herengracht, Keizersgracht, and Prinsengracht), the city's residents sought peace and quiet in the countryside. In the balmy summer months, the constant noise of construction, traffic, and the stench of polluted water must have been unbearable. The inhabitants of Haarlem took refuge in the nearby dunes and wooded area known as the Haarlemmerhout. Local writers from Haarlem praised the natural beauty of the environs of the city. The painter and writer Karel van Mander was especially fond of the white dunes near his hometown, which were known as the *Wittebrink* (White Crest). He lyrically compared them to the mythological Helicon, the Greek mountain of poetry where the muses lived in ancient times. At a height of 30 meters, the Wittebrink towered above the surrounding flat, monotonous landscape of the countryside like a mountain. For Dutch poets, the Wittebrink became an inspiration for the new Arcadian trend in poetry.

The lyrics and illustrations in songbooks glorified the beauty of the uncultivated countryside, and promoted it as the place to be for young people. When we consider that young people had to spend more than three quarters of the year inside due to the weather conditions, we can see that summer and the beauty of

nature were glorified in these books in a way not unlike that used by travel brochures nowadays to illustrate pristine beaches and stunning scenery. (Today in the Netherlands, most summer vacations in southern destinations are booked in February, the middle of winter.) The illustrations in songbooks depicted fashionably dressed young people on warm summer days in idyllic locations. Although the lyrics praised summer and warm weather, in practice, young people sang from songbooks throughout the year. Weddings and other special occasions, such as picnics, were the most common occasions for a song. In the Zaan Region, known for its green wooden houses and located only a few kilometers from the northwest of Amsterdam, a young woman would carry her songbook in a special wooden *mopsjestrommel*, or box. This wooden box had an ornately decorated handle and lid, and was a precursor to the lady's handbag.

In the early seventeenth century, the countryside symbolized freedom for young people. That was especially the case for youngsters who lived in cities, and whose lives had become more regimented. Municipal ordinances and regulations tried to restrict young people from gathering in public squares, on bridges, and in the streets, whereas in the countryside youngsters were free to do what they pleased. This sense of freedom was expressed in the lyrics of many songs.

In songbooks about Amsterdam, the lyrics idealized the tranquility and Arcadian beauty of the city's rural surroundings. The lyrics often described how young people would stroll through the countryside and take boat trips on the Amstel, Amsterdam's main river. For a country with an abundance of canals, rivers, and lakes, sailing was by far the most popular way for young people to enjoy Holland's nature.

On the title page of the songbook *Schoonhoofs Lust-Prieelken* [Schoonhoven's Summer Joy] (1624), the authors, J.C. Weydstraet and A. E. Drost, dedicated the book 'to the happy maidens and youngsters of Schoonhoven'. The engraver depicted a sailboat full of young people who were fishing, singing, and having fun. Most songbooks for young people included a 'Mei-liedt' [May Song],

a song dedicated to the month when life returned and flowers started to bloom again. In *Schoonhoofs Lust-Prielken*, the lyrics to the May song were accompanied by an illustration featuring Cupid, depicted as the captain of a boat filled with young people. The engraver wanted to stress that love and matters of the heart dominate the month of May and the phase of life known as youth.

De Speeljacht van Venus d' Godinne
'k Sagh daer docht mijn ontmoet d' jeught verselt
Daer Cupido d' regentes der minne
Als meester was aen 't roer ghestelt

(In the pleasure yacht of the Goddess Venus
I saw myself in the same boat with the youth
Where Cupid, and the regent of love,
Is made the skipper at the rudder)

For the young people of Dordrecht, a city located on the Merwede River south of Rotterdam, Abraham Aertsz Plater wrote *Dordrechts Lijstertje* [Dordrecht's Lark] (1624). The songs were mainly satires, and young people could easily identify with the descriptions of well-known locations outside the city, and references to eating duck and salmon and drinking Rhine wine, the city's main culinary specialties. Since the Middle Ages, Dordrecht had had exclusive rights as a staple market for Rhine wine. The illustration on the title page depicted young couples strolling in the countryside on the outskirts of the city, with Dordrecht's church tower looming in the background.

Besides boat trips, the youngsters of the seventeenth century also enjoyed taking rides in the countryside in an open carriage. This cart was known as a *speelwagen* or 'recreational wagon', because it was purely for recreation and leisure. The vehicle held two to three couples and a driver, and was made for taking trips through the countryside. During the trips, the couples passed the time singing. In a song from *Minne-kunst, minne-baet* [Art of Love, Profit of Love] (1626), Johan van Heemskerck romanticized

the fresh country air and joy of taking rides in the wild. In the illustrations in songbooks, the recreational wagon was often decorated with branches and had moss growing on the sides. In the seventeenth century, it was the ultimate symbol of youth.

The clearest evidence that the recreational wagon was associated with youth comes from Jacob Cats, who described in one of his many dialogues how an elderly man suddenly became nostalgic for his own youth when he heard the galloping of horses, cracking of whips, and roar of laughter after a recreational wagon filled with young people passed by. The elderly poet P.C. Hooft cheerfully recollected how much fun he had had as a young man, sitting in the back of a recreational wagon. He added, 'It was the best place to cuddle and kiss, without being seen by others'.

In *Eerlycke Tytkorting* [Honest Recreation] (1634), Jan Harmensz Krul described how aroused a young man became during a country ride. He sat next to a girl, whom he wanted to kiss. She only ignored him, however, and he became more frustrated. The young man in the story feared he would suffer the same fate as Acis, the lover of the Greek nymph Galatea. The latter had turned Acis into a river after having to listen to his whining. In *Haerlemsche Duyn-Vreucht* [The Pleasure of Haarlem's Dunes] (1636), the songs also described the sexual tension between young men and their girlfriends as they took country rides in the recreational wagon. The author, Wesbusch, described how Haarlem's young people would take a trip to the beach at Zandvoort, and how excited the young men became while sitting next to their girlfriends and kissing them. After they arrived at the beach, the young men needed to take a swim to 'cool off' from their aroused state.

In *Batavische Arcadia* [Batavian Arcadia] (1637), Van Heemskerck also idolized the fun that was had by young people while journeying in a recreational wagon. The backdrop of the Dutch countryside was presented as idyllic. Van Heemskerck had written the story a decade earlier, and it was probably based on his own experiences as a young man. During their trip, the young people stop at an inn, where they sing songs. Afterwards, they continue to



Carrying young women into the sea, an old Dutch ritual practiced by young people. Adolf van der Laan, *Ritual of dragging young girls from Katwijk into the sea* (c. 1750) (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam).

the beach at Zandvoort. According to Van Heemskerck, it was not uncommon for young men to carry the girls – especially those who talked too much – into the sea and dunk them in the cold water.

The Dutch called this type of horseplay *in zee dragen* (carrying into the sea), and it was another form of innocent physical contact between the sexes and part of the courting ritual. The girls, usually dressed in their best outfits, did not go voluntarily, and would yell and scream at the top of their voices. For the young men, it was a way of showing off and proving to the ladies that they were in charge. On the other hand, the whole charade of carrying the girls into the sea tempered the passions of the young men and women after all the kissing and petting in the recreational wagon. Having dunked the ladies in the sea, the young men carried them back to the beach, where they helped them dry off in the sand. For some couples, this was a perfect moment to kiss and make up before seeking an isolated place in the nearby dunes and woods.

The woods symbolized danger in the Middle Ages, but they also had an ambiance of sexual excitement, especially after dark. Having sex outdoors is something people have done throughout the ages. According to a recent survey in the Netherlands, 39% of respondents find having sex in the woods very arousing, 30% prefer the beach, and 13% find the sea exciting. People also made love in the great outdoors in the seventeenth century, but then it was often out of necessity. Nature provided a 'private' place where young people could have sex without being disturbed. The forests around The Hague and Haarlemmerhout in Haarlem were popular rendezvous for young lovers. At night, these green and wooded areas were the places where men tended to look for sexual encounters. In the seventeenth century, every town and city in the Dutch Republic had its green space where people would walk and exercise in the daytime, and that would turn into the ideal place to look for sex at night.

The texts and images from the songbooks reveal that Dutch parents in the seventeenth century were more indulgent when it came to their offspring than English parents, who would have had their unmarried daughters chaperoned on such trips. Dutch young men and women knew the consequences of premarital relations all too well – especially children from the upper and middle classes, where a forced marriage due to a pregnancy reflected badly on the entire family, not just the individual. The children of the urban elite usually had arranged marriages that strategically maintained or improved the economic and political standing of the family. However, that does not mean that no physical contact was permitted between unmarried young people. In the ritual of courting, young people flirted, caressed, kissed, and innocently horsed around.

One of the best-known examples of tolerated horseplay between young men and women is captured in Gerard ter Borch's sketchbook from around 1620. In one of his drawings, Ter Borch portrayed a young man lying on the ground while five girls pick grass and throw it over him. The scene is in Dutch called *te grazen nemen*, literally to be taken to grass, and meaning to be

thoroughly taken for a ride. This harmless activity reveals the playfulness with which Dutch young people could interact with each other. Romping between the sexes was not only something for the upper classes; the children of the lower classes did the same. In his satire *Moortje*, a play about the life of commoners, Bredero referred to the custom of rolling around in the grass with a woman named *Trijntje*.

*Hoe plech ick onse Trijn
In't lange gras te graeslen.*

(How can I get our Trijn
to go for a romp in the tall grass)

The caption below states:

*Ick bin int soet gewellt
En leg nu onverbaest/
Neer in het groene vellt
Alwaer ick werd gegraest.*

(I am pleasantly rolled up,
and now lie unsurprised/
down in the green field
where I am being taken for a ride.)

Making music

The most common innocent physical activity in which young people engaged was to make music together. In *Ultrajectina Tempe ofte S. Jans Kerck- of-versch wandel-groen* (1640), the songwriter Regnerus Opperveldt described how the young people of Utrecht would dally in the courtyard of the medieval church of St John. During the evening hours, they would go there to listen to singers and lute players. In the seventeenth century, the lute

was a popular instrument among young men, similar to how teenagers regard the guitar today. A young man with a lute in his hand was a common attribute of emblem books and paintings. The ideal combination was a young man playing the lute and a young woman accompanying him singing. Between 1590 and 1630, the painting genre of the 'musical company' became popular. The depiction of a man playing and woman singing symbolized harmony, and consequently, if a young man and woman could play and sing well together, it promised to be a good match.

A couple's harmony and ability to collaborate were also tested in the games that young unmarried adults played with each other. Playing games was a popular pastime, especially during the long winter evenings. The winters of the 1620s and 1630s were extremely cold and long; in meteorological history, this era is known as the 'Little Ice Age', because of the extremely cold winters when the canals and waterways remained frozen for months on end. During the long winter months, the young people of the country were confined to indoors. To relieve the boredom, the young people played games and sang songs from their songbooks. Jan Jansz. Starter's *Steeck-boecxken* [Pin Book] (1624) was exactly what young people needed during the long winter nights. With its subtitle *Ofte 't Vermaak der Jeugdelijker herten* [Or the Pleasure of Youthful Hearts], audiences knew that it was a game for groups of young couples to play. The book was a better alternative to playing cards, checkers, or game-of-geese, which parents considered a waste of time. *Steeck-boecxken* was, as the title implies, a book that one poked at random with large knitting needle or pin in order to select a page. The page that was pricked described a character trait of a young man or woman. The opposite page was decorated with a heart, and other attributes associated with the depicted character. The other players had to say whether the character sketch described the couple correctly. The game was played by around six couples, usually at parties, weddings, and picnics.

The art of love

The pin book was by no means unusual; it was typical of the genre of emblem books known as *ars amatoria*, or the art of love, which had become popular in the early seventeenth century and was re-invented in other forms. If the description on the page did not fit the couple, there was usually a roar of laughter from the other players. But if it did match, then it was even funnier. The accompanying illustrations were often salacious and full of sexual innuendo. For example, on page 102, the word 'birding' actually refers to copulating, and if the book were opened at page 133, the young couple would see an image of a tennis racket, tennis balls, and a tennis court. The associated text reads as follows:

*Hoe wel 't een vreugd is in de baen
Te kaetzen en de bal te slaen.
Zo is 't nogtans veel meer plezier
Te kaetzen met een Venus-dier.
Ja zulken baen, daar koord nog, Net
Dan doen is/maer het zagte bed.*

(Even though it is a pleasure to be on the court
To chase after and hit the ball.
It is even more delightful
To chase after a woman
Yes, such a court would be a catch
Then to do it, in a soft bed.)

It is clear tennis has its charm, but life gets really fun when the tennis court is swapped for a soft bed: the texts of *Steek-boecxken* were risqué, to say the least. But after all, that is what young people wanted. Their parents would doubtless have disapproved of such provocative texts, but only if they had read beyond the book's preface. In this, Starter encouraged his readers to be virtuous, and to 'keep the savior Jesus Christ faithfully in their hearts'. Unfortunately there are no surviving copies of *Steek-Boecxken* from

the seventeenth century. However, according to an edition from 1725, we know that the book was only 10 cm x 8 cm in size, which suggests that it could have been hidden under a skirt or placed in a pocket to conceal it from disapproving eyes. It was probably not the intention that parents should know its true contents.

The writers and compilers of songbooks, such as Bredero and Starter, knew exactly what their young readers wanted. They gave voice to young people's experiences in their quest to find the ideal marriage partner. Bredero and Starter often drew on their own experiences, which struck a chord with young people. In the major cities such as Amsterdam and Haarlem, songbook writers were well known personalities in the streets and taverns and honored guests at wedding celebrations. Their seventeenth-century contemporaries revered them as celebrities.

After 1640, that all changed. A new generation arose, with its own notions of fashion and recreation. The number of *new* songbooks that were published each year declined drastically. The same songbooks were either reprinted, or more religiously themed songbooks were produced for young people. By the 1650s, the pastoral and Arcadian themes had gone out of fashion, and were replaced by themes such as the *kermis* and binge-drinking. In the late seventeenth century a new genre of books for young men came onto the market, namely pornographic novels such as *De Haagsche Lichtmis* [The Courtesan of The Hague] (1679) and *D' Openhertige Juffrouw* (1680), which was a translation of *The London Jilt*. In many respects, these autobiographical novels containing tell-all sex stories left little to the imagination of young men. As such, they often resembled a seventeenth-century version of Xaviera Hollander's *Happy Hooker*.

8. Conclusion

While finishing this book, I was struck by the desire to return to Heidelberg. Since I first visited with my eldest brother, I had never been back. Once I was there, I realized that it had been nearly 30 years since I had seen the university's *Studentenkarzer* (student prisons) for the first time. Standing there, admiring the walls with their early modern graffiti, I also realized that my fascination with the history of education and adolescence had been sparked by those walls. In a flood of memories, I reflected on everything that had happened in my own life in the last three decades, and had an overwhelming sense that things had come full circle. I also wondered whether those long-haired, gun-carrying, binge-drinking young men of the Dutch Golden Age had also reflected on their own youth, once they became older?

Otto Copes, 1650

Let us return to Otto Copes, and fast-forward his life 21 years to the year 1650. By that time, the world had changed dramatically and the Dutch Republic was a different country. In 1648, the Dutch Republic had negotiated peace with Spain, the first period of peace for 80 years. But the following decades did not bring the same level of economic prosperity that the country had experienced in the early seventeenth century. Peace in Europe brought hard times for the Republic, which had profited from the lucrative arms trade. The economy went into decline, growth stagnated, and upward social mobility stalled. The Dutch Reformed Church realized that it would never become a state church, like the Roman Catholic Church had been before the Revolt. Population growth slowed down and fewer foreigners came to the Republic. And the young men who had caused so much trouble in the early seventeenth century by breaking windows, fighting, dueling, and drinking excessively, had become adults.

By 1650, they had become fathers and middle-aged men. Moreover, this generation had now become the Dutch establishment, and the non-natives had integrated and were longer foreigners. This was a new generation, which helped to shape a new identity for the country.

A new generation

In the two decades after 1650, the Dutch Republic endured a series of setbacks. In 1651, parts of Amsterdam were flooded during a storm. Between 1652 and 1654, the country became entangled in a series of trade wars with England, causing it to slide into further economic decline. The WIC lost its territories in Brazil to the Portuguese. In 1664, the British conquered the North American colony of New Netherland and the Dutch Republic lost the prized port city of New Amsterdam (later New York) in the New World. In the late seventeenth century, moralists considered this series of setbacks to be a sign of God's wrath. In their view, God was punishing the Republic for the economic prosperity of the Golden Age, which had spoiled the country with an excess of wealth. Once again, moralists were quick to put the blame on young people. A new generation of youngsters had come of age by the middle of the century, and they, too, were guilty of excessive drinking and of wasting their leisure time reading lewd books.

By 1650, Otto Copes, the drunken young man who was arrested in 1629 for opening fire on Groningen's municipal guardsmen, had become an upstanding citizen of the community. He was married and was the father of five children. Four months after he was arrested in 1629, he left Groningen and enrolled at the University of Leiden to study law. In the following years, he completed his law degree, became a member of the municipal council for the city of Den Bosch, and represented the province of Brabant in the States General. He established a good social and political network, and was on good terms with the stadholder and his advisors. Moreover, he became an elder of the Walloon

Church and, ironically enough, officer of Den Bosch's municipal guard.

Founding fathers

With the benefit of hindsight, we can say that Otto Copes landed on his feet. His unruly behavior as a youth was not unusual for someone of his rank and generation in early modern Dutch society. In comparison to other young men from the same background, Otto's behavior and life course was quite normal for that period. Despite the temptation posed by sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll, the influence of institutions such as universities and city regulations were decisive in steering youngsters such as Otto onto the right path. In the years after Otto had been arrested, Dutch society had witnessed many changes. From this perspective, Otto and his cohorts were the founding fathers of the new Dutch Republic.

Juvenile violence had declined considerably and those youngsters who still engaged in violent behavior were considered barbaric and uncivilized. The academic court gave us a glimpse of how this change took place during the early seventeenth century. This important source reveals how young people began to refrain from using physical violence when their honor had been violated, and instead resorted to the legal system. The government also discouraged young people from using violence. Municipal councils became less tolerant of violence and tried to curb juvenile troublemaking with legislation, banning uncivilized behavior. Even to this day, physical violence is relatively rare in the Netherlands. The Netherlands has one of the lowest levels of private gun ownership in Europe, and there are fewer deaths from shootings than in other European countries.

Municipal governments and universities offered young people alternative means of letting off their pent-up energy and frustration. In the Golden Age, sports such as tennis and fencing were popular among students and young people. In general, young

people in the early seventeenth century started to pass their time doing sports and civilized activities, such as playing music and singing from songbooks. To this day, this aspect of Dutch culture is still visible and strongly embedded in Dutch identity. Not a wedding or birthday party goes by without family and friends composing (and performing!) a special song. The same is true of the celebration of St Nicolas on 5 December, when poems are composed for every family member and read out loud.

Moderation

In the Golden Age, moderation was an important virtue that was promoted in the upbringing of Dutch youngsters. The prosperity that went with the economic boom enabled young people to become more interested in their personal appearance. They demanded expensive clothing made from costly fabrics, accessorized with precious metals. Young people rebelled against the older generations with their 'calculated slovenliness' or sloppy, disheveled look and long hair, causing their parents and moralists to admonish them for their excessive behavior. Moralists were all too quick to draw a parallel with the biblical story of the Prodigal Son. They blamed the younger generation for squandering their parents' hard-earned money on alcohol and sex.

Like every generation of youngsters, Otto and his peers had to master the art of moderation. That was especially true when it came to consuming alcohol. Dutch youths of the Golden Age were most challenged, however, when it came to learning to temper their sexual urges. Even though sexual morals were not stricter than those in other ages, sexually transmitted diseases such as syphilis were life-threatening. In the seventeenth century, young men were the most common victims of this disease. Syphilis was accompanied by a social stigma similar to that associated with HIV-AIDS in the 1980s. What was new for this generation was that they were the first to be warned about the disease through educational books. Father Cats advised them not to have sex until

marriage, because this was the surest way of avoiding infection. The echoes of this tradition of educating children about sexuality are still visible in today's approach to raising teenagers. Today, the Netherlands has the second lowest teen pregnancy rate in the world. Only 14 births in every 1,000 are to 15-19 year-olds. Other developed countries, including the UK (England and Wales) with 47 per 1,000, and the USA with 57 per 1,000, are still battling with how to reduce the number of teen pregnancies.

In the Golden Age, Dutch parents were worried about their children smoking tobacco. Having children who experimented with smoking was a new phenomenon for parents in the Golden Age. This generation of young people was the first in history to make smoking tobacco a national pastime and popular habit. They were also the first to manifest a distinctive youth culture, which was portrayed in the lyrics and themes of their songbooks. It was a youth culture produced *by* young people *for* young people. Entertaining books such as emblem and songbooks also became a new means for moralists to instruct and provide young people with moral guidance. The youngsters of the early seventeenth century were the first generation in Dutch history to be raised and informed with these new printed media. These books also show us how young people spent their leisure time, taking boat trips, riding in recreational wagons, and enjoying horseplay on the beach.

Contemporary youth culture and child-rearing practices have their roots in the Dutch Golden Age, when educational institutions and city officials were influenced by humanism. After the outbreak of the Dutch Revolt against Spain, they tried to create a new Republic, one in which Church and State were separated. It was a new country, dominated on the one hand by liberal mercantilism, and on the other by a multi-confessional society, in which many religions co-existed without one dominating the rest. University administrators, city officials, and parents all played an important role in creating a new Dutch mentality in the Golden Age. Today, the belief that Church and State should be separate and that the market should be free remain keystones of Dutch culture, as typically Dutch as windmills and wooden shoes.

Education and the Dutch mentality

In the early seventeenth century, the Dutch Republic was a state in the making. Like an adolescent, it was a country that was maturing and growing, its gangly body taking on an adult physique. Young people played a major role in the maturation of the Dutch state. And like a teenager, it was a country that was preoccupied with its identity. This is clear from the number of pamphlets that addressed the question of what it was to be Dutch.

Johan van Beverwijck, a physician and historian, stressed how important it was for the young republic to have a common identity. In order for the country to remain united, it needed a sense of cohesion. He argued that the solution to the problem was a 'Dutch' upbringing. A republic that valued respectable citizens should focus on the education of its children. In the seventeenth century, nowhere in the world were there more paintings of children with attributes that symbolized the importance of a good education. In addition, there were numerous books on how to raise children, emphasizing the importance of education for the betterment of society. Raising good citizens would help to make the Republic a strong secular state. Young people not only looked up to religious men, such as clergymen, as role models, but they also looked beyond the church. In the secular realm, military men were key role models. As the Dutch military became a professional army in the early seventeenth century, young people looked up to these men for their discipline and training.

Moreover, the soldiers of the early seventeenth century were national heroes. They defended the country against Spain. Adolescents admired them and began to imitate their dress and behavior. On the other hand, the soldier was also notorious for his wayward lifestyle. The paintings of the *Kortegaard* (*corps de garde*) formed a popular genre in the Golden Age. These minute paintings often depicted the licentious side of a soldier's life. Young soldiers often squandered their copious leisure time drinking, chasing womanizing, and smoking.

In 1650, Otto Copes commissioned a painting of his wife Josina Schade van Westrum, together with the couple's five children. In the painting, his wife is shown pointing her finger up to the sky. At the lower left-hand corner of the portrait, we see the vices that Copes family hoped their children would eschew: alcohol and sex, symbolized by a depiction of Venus, Cupid, and Bacchus. The painting is an allegory; Copes and his wife were concerned about the moral upbringing of their children. They seem to have wanted to say that sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll are associated with youth, but a good education will always prevail. Otto was living proof of that.

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